

Learning with a beat: A study on the implementation of students' music interests in high school humanities curriculum

Emma Huerta¹ and Lisa Jones¹

¹Cooper City High School, Cooper City, FL, USA

ABSTRACT

From the first-ever Pulitzer Prize for a hip-hop album awarded to rapper Kendrick Lamar in 2014, to the development of entire websites dedicated to popular music analyses, music has become a form of accessible humanities-like education, as people listen to the deeper meaning within a song's beat. Contrarily, the traditional humanities education in today's high schools has hardly seen change, if any at all, with student apathy rapidly rising. Thus, this research paper asks, "*Can the music interests of high-achieving high school students be implemented in humanities-based curricula to combat apathy in learning? If so, how?*" The study was conducted in a three-part mixed methods approach. First, an action research survey collected data on the favorite "thought-provoking" songs of high-achieving high school students from two high schools. Next, content analyses on the three songs most frequently mentioned by students were conducted based on humanities-derived categories— theme, rhetoric, and context. Finally, the content analyses were compiled into a hermeneutics-based survey for head teachers in the humanities (reading, English Language Arts, and social studies) departments at the schools. This study supports the general conclusion that the music interests of high-achieving students can be implemented into humanities-based curricula, in multiple ways, to combat learning apathy. The results of this study give a proven basis for reducing apathy in humanities-based learning with music, as the vast majority of students and teachers surveyed advocate for this implementation. Teachers' reported interpretations provide a framework for new curricula that could improve students' learning appeal and engagement.

Introduction

In the dawn of a digital age with instantaneous media streaming and sharing, music has become more widely attainable, especially for young generations. It has developed into something more than solely entertainment, serving as a form of communication between members of society and portraying reflections of the world. Musicians are making thought-provoking messages through this unique platform, with some even being recognized for these intellectual contributions. For example, rapper Kendrick Lamar's 2014 album "DAMN" was the first hip-hop album to ever receive a Pulitzer Prize. As a result, the analysis of music has become a commonality in popular culture— entire websites, such as Genius ([genius.com](https://www.genius.com)), and pages, such as YouTube channel "[theneedledrop](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtneedledrop)" have been dedicated to breaking down songs' lyrics, meanings, and other aspects. Music has transformed into a form of accessible humanities education, as people gain more than a beat when they listen.

Contrarily, the traditional education system in today's high schools has hardly seen change, if any at all. Students in humanities-based courses study typical, archaic materials. Selections like "To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee and "Fahrenheit 451" by Ray Bradbury, along with factual textbooks, form foundational high school curricula. With these continuously utilized materials, derived from decades prior and thus arguably lacking in relevant appeal, it is no surprise that student apathy in learning has become a growing concern among teachers throughout the U.S.

While these two forms of learning— via music or school— have been proven to be evolving differently, there are few studies on the possible combination of the two in high school classrooms. Specifically, there is little to no research regarding the possible addition of students’ music interests to humanities curricula to prevent apathy in learning. Therefore, this research study will be using a mixed methods approach in order to explore that possible correlation between music and traditional humanities-based classrooms— reading, English Language Arts, and social studies, primarily. The study’s findings aim to provide an innovative basis for new humanities-based education in high schools, and as a result resolve apathy in learning via the introduction of materials more gravitated towards students.

Literature Review

Traditional Curriculum in Music Education

As a consequence of both the multiple types of music and the diverse courses taught in schools, research has been conducted regarding the interconnectedness of these two learning forms. Specifically, one of these studied trends is the benefit of adding traditional classroom materials into a music class. For example, the 2018 study “Biography Breaks in the Music Classroom” from the journal *General Music Today* explores how music classrooms can be enhanced with “biography breaks,” or periods in between actual music lessons to read musicians’ biographies. This included music from artists such as Elvis Presley and Bach, accompanied by biographical books, significant musical terminology, and a vast variety of music cultures and historical context, such as the origins of Caribbean music. The study discusses the noticeable benefits for students following this experience: increased vocabulary proficiency and improved historical connections. This pinpoints how two seemingly different subjects—music and literature—can be combined to make an overall more intuitive experience for students.

The 2014 “The Effects of Music Education on Society” article from *Canadian Music Educator* is another study that reviews this correlation and its importance. It does a content analysis on the definition of society described by philosopher Friedrich Baerwald (1944) as “...the process of widening and deepening the range of individual existences into systems of extended frameworks of time and space,” in regards to music education. The author of this article relates the two by describing how music allows for the expansion of multiple mindsets— music history, abstract creativity and creating societal frameworks— for the improvement of society. As a result, music education benefits students and society in ways that traditional education cannot. The study thus relates Baerwald’s ideals about expanding knowledgeable frameworks within society to musical philosophy and its plethora of functions, specifically highlighting how increased high school music education would facilitate this beneficial relation. This study supports that music education is a large facilitator of students’ expansion of knowledge that should be continuously implemented. Despite the exemplifications in the aforementioned studies of how music education and traditional skills can be combined for a more effective learning experience, they fail to address the more uncommon combination of the two curriculums: music supplementing a regular humanities-based classroom. These studies are useful in identifying viable connections between music education and school, but are missing an important consideration of music in regular education.

Music in Non-Humanities Education

An additional trend in the literature regarding the mix of music and traditional education is the implementation of music in some regular, non-humanities-based courses (elementary, middle or high school) for academic improvement. For instance, a 2019 study from the academic journal *Anales de Psicología* was conducted to analyze this, particularly how music can be incorporated in mathematics courses to benefit school children struggling in the subject. It studied students in a classroom with numeracy music training— which includes the recognition of sounds and counts within music— being used as a supplement to regular arithmetic for aiding students having trouble with math. The results

reported not only that student grade improvement increased, specifically regarding numerical cognition and working memory skills, but student anxieties towards math were also reduced. This study therefore shows the correlation between regular classes students frequently take in school and music– the incorporation of music in this way allows for students’ academics and attitude improvement.

In another study, Rafai mentioned the connection between music education and increased student academic performance in a 2019 *Music Educators Journal* article, which studied how incorporating music in elementary students’ daily curriculum allows for teachers to introduce them to advanced vocabulary. Rafai discussed ways in which teachers can create this unique coursework, such as by having students explicitly describe songs, they listen to in class with vocabulary ranging in difficulty, and how this has already caused benefits in a first grade classroom. The report concluded that students had increased vocabulary proficiency as a result of this supplemental activity, which represents overall how beneficial music in a traditional classroom could be for younger students.

Although these two research articles showcase the possible benefits of having music as supplemental material in traditional classrooms, they do not discuss how songs students enjoy themselves can benefit them in high school humanities-based courses. For instance, the studies refer to either mathematics or vocabulary skills being improved, respectively, which improve memorization and cognitive ability. Conversely, humanities courses utilize a student’s ability to connect ideals, so comprehension and critical thinking are learned instead. Also, the articles refrain from improving student apathy to irrelevant classroom materials. Thus, the literature ceases to inquire about how music can be implemented in a classroom setting for a purpose other than honing systematic thinking.

Evidently, the previously cited studies have provided insight into the curricular correlations between music and traditional education. However, there exists a research gap amidst all of these studies, as they fail to observe how students’ own music interests as a form of humanities education may be of some benefit to them not only in broadening their understanding, but also improving their appeal to school with relative class lessons. The gap exists because studies focus on either traditional coursework embedded into music education or the effects of music on courses other than those relating to humanities. The pre-existing studies also do not consider how students benefit from musical classroom materials– such as in greater appeal to class– other than in academic performance. These inconsistencies are what led to the development of the research question at hand: *Can the music interests of high-achieving high school students be implemented in humanities-based curricula to combat apathy in learning? If so, how?*

Methodology

Due to the qualitative complexities students’ music interests and their humanities-based education have, a three-step mixed methods approach was decided for this study. Action research, context analysis, and hermeneutics research were used to fully find an answer to the question. This study adopts the term “thought-provoking,” defined as “making you think a lot about a subject” by Cambridge Dictionary, in order to describe the possibly educational qualities of music. Also, the term “apathy in learning,” defined as “expression of indifference, lethargy, and/or disengagement [disinterest] in the classroom environment” by *Encyclopedia of the Sciences of Learning*, is adopted to depict the study’s purpose.

Action Research

The first step of the mixed methods study is to survey the high school student population about their favorite “thought-provoking” songs or artists through action research. Juniors and seniors with a Grade Point Average (GPA) ranking in the top 20% of their respective classes at two high schools– High School A and High School B in Broward County, Florida– were chosen as the target population. Although this study assumes that this demographic would provide the most intellectual responses, this assumption is supported by the fact that they have generally been exposed to more rigorous courses. Specifically, both High School A and High School B have multiple programs available for capable, upperclassmen students, including dual enrollment classes at the nearby community college, Advanced Placement

(AP) courses, and/or Cambridge Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) classes, with immersive curriculums and deep themes to comprehend. In fact, college-level humanities-based courses, which high-achieving High School A and/or High School B students most likely have taken, often use materials like songs or movies. Additionally, studying two schools allows for more diverse data.

The Google Forms survey was digitally sent to qualifying High School A and High School B students via their respective Broward Advisors for Continuing Education (BRACE) counselors. Preceding the assessing questions, the survey provided respondents with the definitions of “thought-provoking” and “apathy in learning.” Respondents were also asked to provide their grade level and class rank for demographic verification. The form surveyed students about their perspectives regarding apathy in humanities-based learning, whether they think this is caused by irrelevant educational material, and if music may work as supplemental material to resolve apathy, all on a Likert scale. It also asked for their top three “thought-provoking” artists, top “thought-provoking” song per artist, and what subject– thematic or academic– each song relates to. Finally, the survey asked students, via a Likert Scale, to evaluate the possibility of incorporating each song they mentioned in a humanities-based classroom. The survey questions, noted in **Appendix A**, were crucial for the following steps in the approach, as students’ responses to them provided some possibly educational songs– according to students– for future evaluation via content analyses and hermeneutics research.

Content Analysis

Next, a content analysis on the three most frequently mentioned songs by students was conducted. The analysis was based on the five humanities subjects outlined by Common Ground Research Networks: Critical Cultural Studies; Communication and Linguistics Studies; Literary Humanities; Civic, Political, and Community Studies; and Humanities Education. These themes cover the skills within humanities that are also prevalent in a high school curriculum, primarily in reading, English Language Arts, and social studies classes.

Songs were thus analyzed for three specific categories included in the five humanities subjects: theme, rhetoric, and context, as defined by Purdue University. Breaking the analysis into such qualities allowed for the educational capabilities of the songs to be efficiently taken into account. More detailed aspects of the songs– meanings, historical references, rhymes, figurative language, etc.– were included in the notations for each song, along with certain lyrics that demonstrated each of the three qualities. The music analytical service “Genius.com” was used to analyze songs’ content, since all the songs’ lyrics are on this platform and the site provides verified citations from music analysts and/or musicians themselves about each song. Additional resources were used to support the analyses, respective to each song.

Hermeneutics Research

The last step of the study was hermeneutics research, in which High School A and High School B’s humanities-based– reading, English Language Arts, and social studies– department heads were surveyed. These teachers in particular were surveyed as they teach and lead the curriculum of each discipline in High School A and High School B, respectively, and they would have the most input regarding any new curriculum changes (i.e., music implementation). This allows for a hypothetical test of the implementation of students’ music in humanities-based curricula.

A Google Form survey was directly emailed to these department heads. The survey provided the definitions of “thought-provoking” and “apathy in learning,” then asked the same Likert Scale questions asked to students regarding apathy in humanities-based learning, and music as a possible resolution. It then provided a description of each song’s content analysis, further asking them to evaluate the possibility of incorporating these songs in a high school humanities-based curriculum on a Likert Scale. These questions are outlined in **Appendix B**.

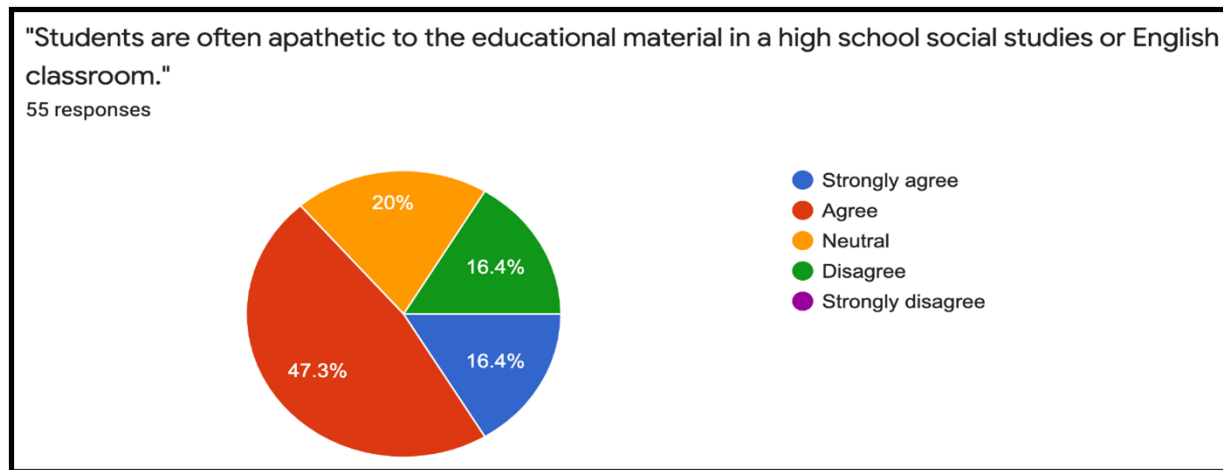


Figure 1: Students' perceptions of apathy in specifically humanities learning.

By finding students' top "thought-provoking" songs, the music interests of high-achieving high school students are addressed. By analyzing such songs and asking teachers about their connections to humanities-based learning, the ability and details of implementing such music in education are tested. The purpose of combating apathy in learning is addressed throughout the approach. Consequently, the compilation of this data showcases how music could be included in humanities-based learning in light of student apathy, resolving the research question.

Results

Students' Music Interests Survey

The action research survey, "Students' Music Interests Survey," inquired about high-achieving students' "thought-provoking" music interests. Although the survey had some quantitative results via the Likert Scale structure, it had a qualitative basis, seeking to find each students' idea of music they see fit for humanities-based learning. The survey yielded results from 55 students from both High School A and High School B.

Page 1 - Apathy in learning

The first section of the survey asked respondents about their views on apathy in learning via three Likert Scale questions. Figure 1 shows the students' responses to the first statement of the survey, "Students are often apathetic to the educational material in a high school social studies or English classroom." The respondents demonstrated high levels of agreement with this statement: 16.4% strongly agreed and 47.3% agreed, for a total of 63.7% agreement. Therefore, most students identified that apathy in high school humanities is an issue.

Next, the responses to, "Apathy in learning is often caused by outdated, irrelevant or repetitive materials that the student body is not generally interested in," is shown in *Figure 2*. A larger majority of respondents portrayed agreement with this statement: 36.4% strongly agreed and 41.8% agreed, for 78.2% total agreement. Thus, students believe that there is a deficiency of engaging material for them in high school curriculums, magnifying this study's purpose.

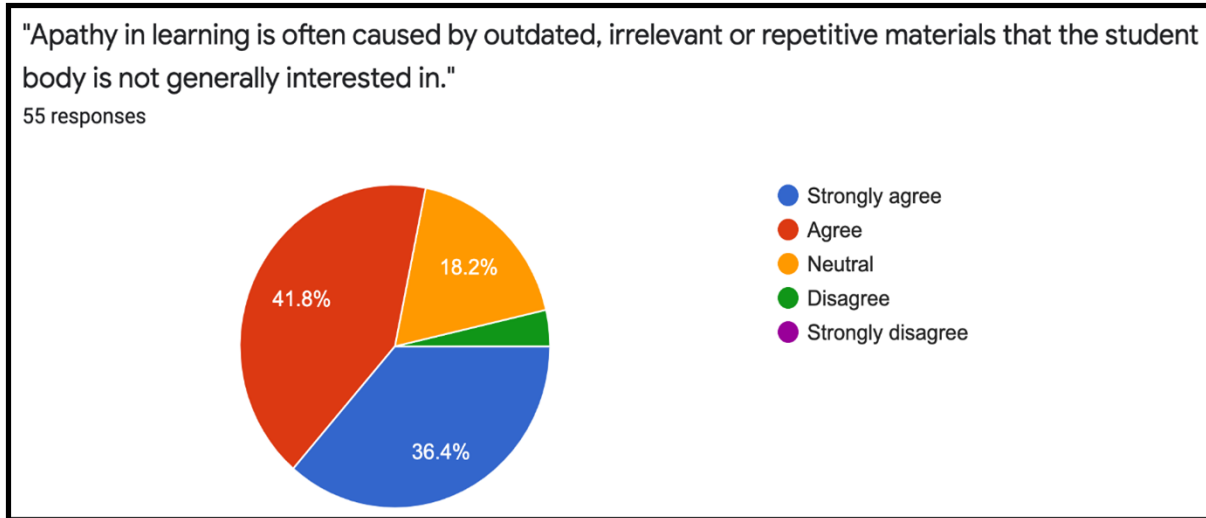


Figure 2: Students' perceptions of uninteresting educational materials causing apathy in learning.

Finally, the students were surveyed regarding the statement, "Student apathy can be resolved by incorporating more modern and interesting materials– such as popular music– in the classroom." Similar to the results of the previous two questions, a majority of respondents agreed with the statement, visible in *Figure 3*– 20% strongly agreed and 49.1% agreed, for a total of 69.1% agreement. This indicates that a large portion of students believe that new materials, like music, can be used for education to get students engaged, rather than uninterested, in school.

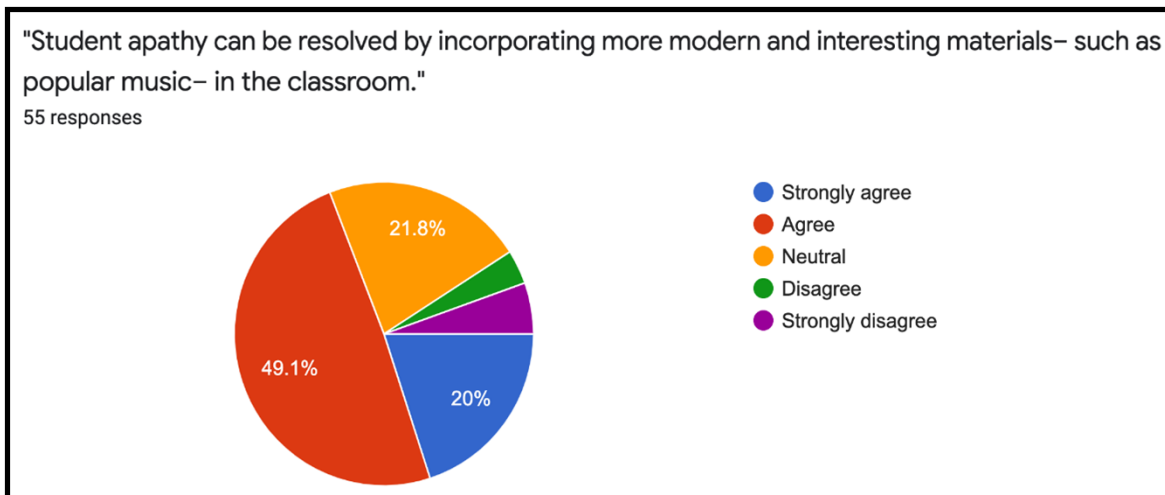


Figure 3: Students' perceptions of mediums like music in education to combat apathy.

Page 2 - Students' "thought-provoking" music interests

The second section of this survey asked students to name their top three most "thought-provoking" artists and the most "thought-provoking" song for each artist. Additionally, students evaluated each song in regards to the statement, "I believe that my song can possibly be incorporated into a traditional classroom as supplementary educational material," on a Likert Scale. Although the results of this more-qualitative question were expected to be highly variable, there was some noticeable continuity among students' answers.

After reviewing all 55 responses, it was decided that only songs students evaluated with "strongly agree" or "agree" would be compiled, in order to highlight songs most supported by students. This tallied 106 "strongly agree" or "agree" song evaluations and 96 different songs mentioned, represented in *Table 1*.

Table 1: Total number of songs students evaluated with “strongly agree” or “agree”

Songs:	
"Strongly agree" songs	50
"Agree" songs	56
Total song mentions:	106
Total songs:	96

Each song was compiled in *Table 2*. The number of times each song was mentioned, as well as how many “strongly agree” or “agree” evaluations it received, was noted. As evidenced by the table, there were a wide variety of songs that students picked. However, there were also a number of songs that were mentioned and highly evaluated by multiple respondents.

Table 2: Students’ “thought-provoking” music interest results, by song frequency and evaluation.

Song name	Artist	# of mentions	# of "Strongly agree"	# of "Agree"
xanny	Billie Eilish	I	I	
Speechless	Dan + Shay	I		I
Wintertime	YBN Cordae	I		I
9	Drake	I		I
Focus	H.E.R.	I	I	
Triggered (freestyle)	Jhene Aiko	I	I	
Too Good at Goodbyes	Sam Smith	I	I	
Perfect	Ed Sheeran	I	I	
The Lazy Song	Bruno Mars	I	I	
Congratulations (feat. Quavo)	Post Malone	I	I	
Blue Lights	Jorja Smith	I		I
Between the Bars	Elliott Smith	I		I
Hero	Family of the Year	I		I
Chlorine	twenty one pilots	I		I
Darkness	Eminem	I	I	
Mother	Pink Floyd	I		I

You should be sad	Halsey	I		I
Chanel	Frank Ocean	I		I
Therapy	Khalid	I	I	
Carry Me Home (feat. Maverick Sabre)	Jorja Smith	I	I	
Clean	Taylor Swift	I	I	
Miss Americana & the Heartbreak Prince	Taylor Swift	I	I	
Nightmare	Halsey	I	I	
Hopeless (feat. Cashmere Cat)	Halsey	I	I	
Graveyard	Halsey	I	I	
The Story	Conan Gray	I		I
Right Side of Wrong	Bon Jovi	I		I
Trapped in the Closet	R. Kelly	I		I
Love It If We Made It	The 1975	II	I	I
Numb	LINKIN PARK	I		I
Anxiety (feat. Lucy Rose)	Logic	II	II	
Castle on the Hill	Ed Sheeran	I	I	
Waiting Room	Rex Orange County	I	I	
Falling	Harry Styles	II		II
I Will Always Love You	Whitney Houston	I	I	
Fireflies	Owl City	I		I
Here Comes a Thought	Estelle & AJ Michalka (Steven Universe)	I	I	
House of Gold	twenty one pilots	I		I
All of the Lights	Kanye West	I		I
Ribs	Lorde	I		I
No Role Modelz	J. Cole	II		II
How Much a Dollar Cost (feat. James Fauntleroy & Ronald Isley)	Kendrick Lamar	III	I	II

Chicago	Sufjan Stevens	I	I	
USA	Jeff Rosenstock	I	I	
Forward (feat. Rex Orange County)	Tyler, The Creator	I		I
New Slaves	Kanye West	I		I
Boredom (feat. Rex Orange County and Anna of the North)	Tyler, The Creator	I		I
lovely	Billie Eilish & Khalid	I		I
Chamber of Reflection	Mac DeMarco	I		I
Crooked Smile (feat. TLC)	J. Cole	I	I	
This Is America	Childish Gambino	III	III	
Scars to Your Beautiful	Alessia Cara	I	I	
Holler If Ya Hear Me	2Pac	I		I
LAND OF THE FREE	Joey Bada\$\$	I		I
Nina Cried Power	Hozier	II	II	
Ascension (feat. Vince Staples)	Gorillaz	I		I
DNA.	Kendrick Lamar	I		I
Merry Go 'Round	Kacey Musgraves	I		I
Curious	Rich Brian	I		I
Trauma	NF	I		I
Ride	Lana Del Rey	I		I
The Chain	Fleetwood Mac	I	I	
1-800-273-8255 (feat. Alessia Cara & Khalid)	Logic	I	I	
Black Bear	Andrew Belle	I		I
FEEL.	Kendrick Lamar	II	II	
Everything I Am (feat. DJ Premier)	Kanye West	II		II
Bohemian Rhapsody	Queen	I		I
Take Me to Church	Hozier	I		I

Sweetie Little Jean	Cage the Elephant	I		I
Two of Us	Louis Tomlinson	I	I	
Spring Day	BTS	I	I	
From the Dining Table	Harry Styles	I	I	
Red Water	Earl Sweatshirt	I		I
Outro (Its Time)	Ovrkast.	I		I
untitled 05 09.21.2014.	Kendrick Lamar	I	I	
All of One Direction's Discography	One Direction	I		I
Lover Is a Day	Cuco	I		I
Walk Me Home	P!nk	I		I
Lonely	Palaye Royale	I	I	
Someone You Loved	Lewis Capaldi	I	I	
Wolf in Sheep's Clothing (feat. William Beckett)	Set It Off	I	I	
Stronger	Kanye West	I	I	
Magna Carta... Holy Grail (whole album)	JAY-Z	I	I	
Wake Me Up	Avicii	I		I
HUMBLE.	Kendrick Lamar	I	I	
The Nights	Avicii	I		I
I'm Not Racist	Joyner Lucas	I	I	
The Times They Are A'Changin'	Bob Dylan	I		I
We Didn't Start the Fire	Billy Joel	I	I	
Brink of Time	Yasunori Mitsuda	I		I
Agniratha, Mechonis Capital	ACE+	I	I	
More London Streets	Tomohito Nishiura	I		I
Migraine	twenty one pilots	I	I	
American Idiot	Green Day	I		I
Same Drugs	Chance the Rapper	I		I

Out of this summarized list, the top three songs from the survey were selected for content analysis. The most frequently mentioned and highly evaluated song was “This Is America” by Childish Gambino, with three total mentions and all three evaluations of “strongly agree.” Next came “How Much a Dollar Cost” by Kendrick Lamar, with three total mentions: one “strongly agree” and two “agrees.” The third song was “Nina Cried Power (feat. Mavis Staples)” by Hozier, with two total mentions and all two evaluations of “strongly agree.”

Content Analysis

In the second part of the research, the three selected songs were analyzed for humanities-based aspects of themes, rhetoric, and context via Genius.com. At least two instances of each aspect were identified for explicit analyses.

In “This Is America,” hip-hop musician Childish Gambino¹ illustrates the pitfalls of modern American society via simple, yet profound lyrics. The primary theme— represented by extended juxtaposition— is the duality of American life, which tends to overlook injustices many citizens still face amidst surface-level success and materialism. Gambino also portrays the continued injustices against African Americans, especially through emphatic repetition. He sings in the context that there still exists racial discrimination. The song also connects Gambino’s theme of materialism to the context of the ‘American Dream’ and how the idea has deteriorated over time.

In “How Much A Dollar Cost,” rapper Kendrick Lamar tells a story about a homeless man asking for money at a gas station. The main theme is the value— both literal and the figurative— of money, as Lamar explores both its concrete and abstract representation in society. Additionally, this song portrays character development with a story-like structure and repetition: Lamar goes through refusal, reflection, and repent throughout his interaction with the man. Lamar uses exemplum to relate his narrated experience to paralleled things. Contextually, this song refers to the CIA-Contra-Crack Cocaine Controversy, which exemplifies how society has been corrupted resulting in economic troubles and stereotypes, as well as the Bible, to show how a humble figure (*messiah*) is necessary for progress.

In “Nina Cried Power,” singer-songwriter Hozier alludes to historically pivotal artists and musical protests. One theme is standing up for one’s beliefs, as the song repeats references to musicians that demonstrated this. One reference is to singer Nina Simone (“Nina”), whose historical activism for the Civil Rights Movement encapsulates the song’s message. Another theme is the perseverance/leadership needed for movement progression. Hozier sheds light on musicians’ leading actions, and uses various metaphors to represent the “power” accompanying protest music. The current situation of political apathy in modernity provides significant context for “Nina Cried Power”; Hozier is urging others to ‘cry power’ like historical figures did.

Table 3 evidences the described aspects of each songs’ content. It was proven that these songs have substantial humanities-based qualities, specifically to be presented to teachers for hermeneutics evaluations. It must be noted that a connected theme throughout all three songs is African American history.

SONG NAME	THEMES	RHETORIC	CONTEXT
1. “This Is America” By Childish Gambino	Duality of American Society “I’m so fitted (I’m so fitted, woo) / I’m on Gucci (I’m on Gucci) / I’m so pretty (Yeah, yeah, woo),” “this is guerilla,” “Police be trippin’ now.”	Juxtaposition “Ha,” “Yeah.” “Yeah, this is America (Woo, ayy) / Guns in my area (Word, my area)” Gambino draws	Political uneasiness and African American life “Black man” and messages of police violence and discrimination. Police officers reportedly kill more African Americans:

	<p>Gambino seems to be flaunting his wealth, until he incorporates morbid lines regarding American injustices and societal violence.</p> <p>Injustices against African Americans <i>“Get your money, Black man (Black man),”</i></p> <p>Gambino wants to exemplify the injustices experienced within the African-American community, yet have also become embedded into American culture.</p>	<p>listeners in with seemingly fun lyrics that have an impactful message underneath.</p> <p>Repetition <i>“This is America.”</i> <i>“Don’t catch you slipping’ now,”</i></p> <p>Gambino shows the discrimination, materialism, and duality in America by resounding simple yet strong lines, almost like a wake-up call.</p>	<p>about 31% of all killings in 2012, though they make up only 13% of the US population. These numbers represent controversial persecution, as well as the cause for groups like the Black Lives Matter movement.</p> <p>Role of materialism <i>“You just a black man in this world / You just a barcode, ayy.”</i></p> <p>The term ‘American dream,’ defined by historian James Trsulow Adams (1931) has encapsulated citizens’ goals. But, since the early 20th century, this ideal evolved into greediness and inequity for material wealth. Increased discrimination towards African Americans in an age of materialism has resulted in more believing that they’ll never achieve the ‘American Dream,’ according to a study by Florida State University.</p>
<p>2. “How Much a Dollar Cost” By Kendrick Lamar</p>	<p>Literal versus figurative value of money <i>“He begged and pleaded / Asked me to feed him twice, I didn’t believe it / Told him, ‘Beat it’ / Contributin’ money just for his pipe—I couldn’t see it.”</i></p> <p><i>“How Much a Dollar Cost”</i></p> <p>With his quick refusals, Lamar represents how greediness/prejudice make money more than an economic measure. The title also</p>	<p>Story-like structure <i>Story of interaction with homeless man</i></p> <p>By using a chronological, first-person narrative and dialogue to represent a story, Lamar is able to illustrate his message.</p> <p>Repetition <i>“He’s starin’ at me, his eyes followed me with no laser / He’s starin’ at me, I notice that his stare is contagious /</i></p>	<p>CIA-Contra-Crack Cocaine Controversy <i>“Blue magic”</i> <i>“Deep water, powder blue skies that crack open / A piece of crack that he wanted, I knew he was smokin’”</i></p> <p>Lamar refers to a controversy that found that a counter-revolutionary guerilla group— the contras— supported by President Reagan were smuggling/selling heroin in vulnerable American communities to raise funds for a conflict to ‘democratize’ Nicaraguan</p>

	<p>demonstrates this theme, asking the rhetorical question about money's real worth in the world.</p> <p>Character development <i>"I looked at him and said, 'Every nickel is mines to keep' / He looked at me and said, 'Know the truth, it'll set you free...'"</i></p> <p>Eventually, Lamar realizes the man's pure intentions in the story of provoking open mindedness in him, even singing, <i>"Turn this page, help me change to right my wrongs."</i></p>	<p><i>'Cause now I'm starin' back at him..."</i></p> <p>The repetition of the word "staring" illustrates the paranoia the man is causing Lamar in the story, with the simple request for a dollar.</p> <p>Exemplum <i>"The liberal concept of what men'll do"</i></p> <p>This line directly correlates to the liberal economic theory (laissez-faire, Adam Smith's economics) that runs American society, yet drives some to madness.</p>	<p>communism.</p> <p>The Bible <i>"'You're lookin' at the Messiah, the son of Jehovah, the higher power / The choir that spoke the word, the Holy Spirit / The nerve of Nazareth, and I'll tell you just how much a dollar cost...'"</i></p> <p>Lamar alludes to a Biblical story from Matthew 25:40: Jesus allowing individuals to enter Heaven, and additionally quotes the figure's statement from John 8:28. This lyric carries important historical significance because it connects a famous Biblical figure, Jesus, by showing how a similarly humble figure is needed to improve society, especially.</p>
<p>3. "Nina Cried Power" By Hozier</p>	<p>Standing up for one's beliefs <i>"Nina cried power," "Billie cried power," and "Dylan, power"</i></p> <p>By describing multiple impactful singers who left behind a legacy with their momentous music—Nina Simone, Billie Holliday, Bob Dylan, others—Hozier portrays the message that such leaders became world-wide namesakes with truthful messages.</p> <p>Perseverance and leadership for successful action <i>"It's not the waking, it's the rising."</i></p> <p>This shows how the</p>	<p>Repetition <i>"(Musician) cried power"</i></p> <p>The repetition of this paralleled phrase with various musicians echoes Hozier's message about a commonality between all these artists: a legacy of activism and inspiration.</p> <p>- Metaphors <i>"It's the heat that drives the light / It's the fire it ignites," "It's not the wall, but what's behind it."</i></p> <p>These examples in the song serve to represent the leadership and</p>	<p>Modern political apathy <i>"And I could cry power"</i></p> <p>Political apathy towards solely voting, let alone leading or participating in a movement, has been of high concern since the U.S. has the lowest average voter turnout throughout all the world's mature countries. Voter participation has been at an all-time low in Europe for years now as well.</p> <p>Nina Simone's activism <i>"Nina Cried Power"</i></p> <p>Born in 1933 and professionally active during the American Civil Rights Movement, Nina Simone rose to fame with her jazz/blues music,</p>

	<p>effectiveness of a movement/protest is not merely due to complaints about obstacles; instead, it's caused by overcoming said obstacles.</p>	<p>impact of the musicians (and their respective platforms) that Hozier gives tribute to.</p>	<p>accompanied by her unique voice and thoughtful lyrics. Simone's music, such as the song "Four Women," frequently portrayed racial/gender rights as early as 1963. She became an emblem for liberal activism.</p>
--	--	---	---

Table 3: Content analyses of the three most mentioned songs by surveyed students.

Hermeneutics Research

For the final part of the mixed methods approach, a hermeneutics-based survey was conducted to analyze if students' music interests can serve as educational material, according to teachers. Three humanities-based instructional department heads from each High School A and High School B were individually emailed the Google Form "Teachers' Music Opinions Survey." Out of the six teachers contacted, five completed the survey. Specifically, one English Language Arts head, two social studies heads, and two reading heads answered. Besides preliminary information, the survey consisted of five parts. Teachers' were asked to show their perspectives on apathy in learning, and evaluate the three top songs mentioned by students in the action research survey— "This Is America," "How Much a Dollar Cost," and "Nina Cried Power"— based on the content analysis findings. The complete song explanations provided to teachers for the hermeneutics-based survey can be found in **Appendix C**. Like the action research survey, although this survey has some quantitative aspects (Likert Scale), it is mostly qualitative (short/long answer questions).

Page 1 - Apathy in learning

First in this survey came questions regarding student apathy, as perceived by teachers. They were asked the same Likert Scale questions students answered in the action research survey (see subheading **A. Action Research**). *Figure 4* demonstrates results from the first question, which asked teachers' views on the statement, "Students are often apathetic to the educational material in a high school social studies or English classroom." For the most part, teachers showed agreement: one (20%) strongly agreed and two (40%) agreed, a total of 60% agreement. No teachers expressed disagreement, as the remaining two (40%) expressed neutrality. Therefore, the majority of surveyed teachers seem to agree that there's a prevalence of student apathy in humanities-based classrooms.

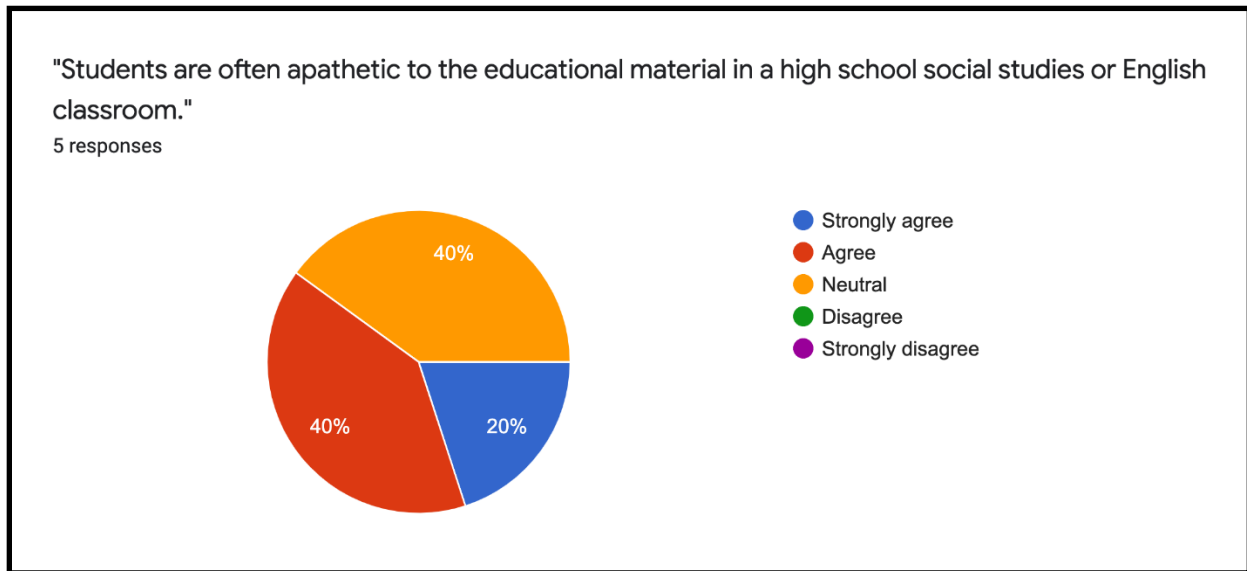


Figure 4: Department heads' perceptions of apathy in specifically humanities-based learning.

Next, *Figure 5* shows results from the second question, which asked teachers for their opinions on the statement, "Apathy in learning is often caused by outdated, irrelevant or repetitive materials that the student body is not generally interested in." Like in the previous question, teachers exemplified majority agreement. Two (40%) teachers strongly agreed and two (40%) agreed, for a total of 80% agreement. Although no teachers disagreed, one (20%) felt neutral. In hindsight, these results show that humanities-based teachers also feel that student apathy is caused by materials unappealing to students.

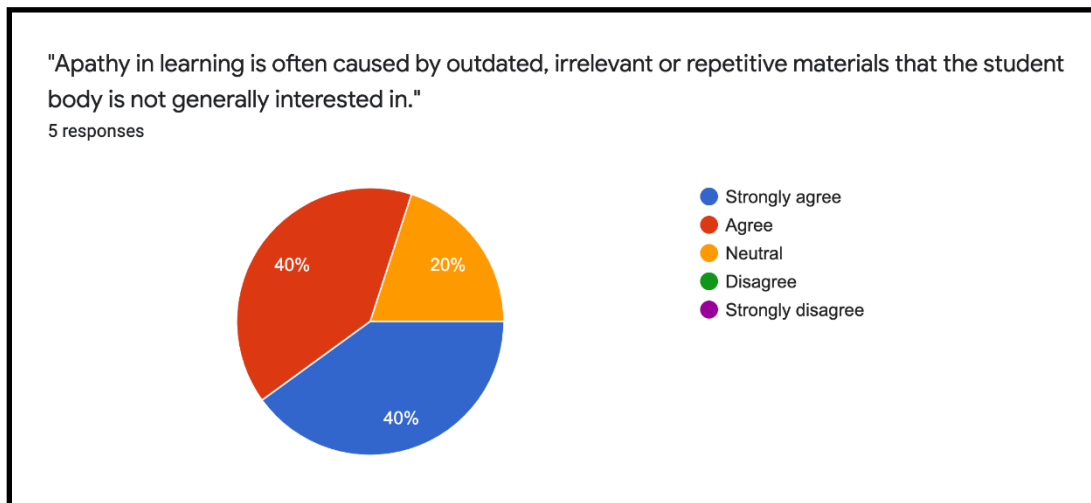


Figure 5: Department heads' perceptions on uninteresting educational materials causing apathy in learning.

The final question, depicted in *Figure 6*, in this portion of the survey asked teachers for their views on the statement, "Student apathy can be resolved by incorporating more modern and interesting materials— such as popular music— in the classroom." Similar to the previous two questions, teachers showed majority agreement. However, all five (100%) teachers expressed agreement this time: three (60%) strongly agreed and two (40%) agreed. As a result,

there is a consensus among teachers of humanities-based curriculums that new materials like music can reduce apathy when incorporated in education.

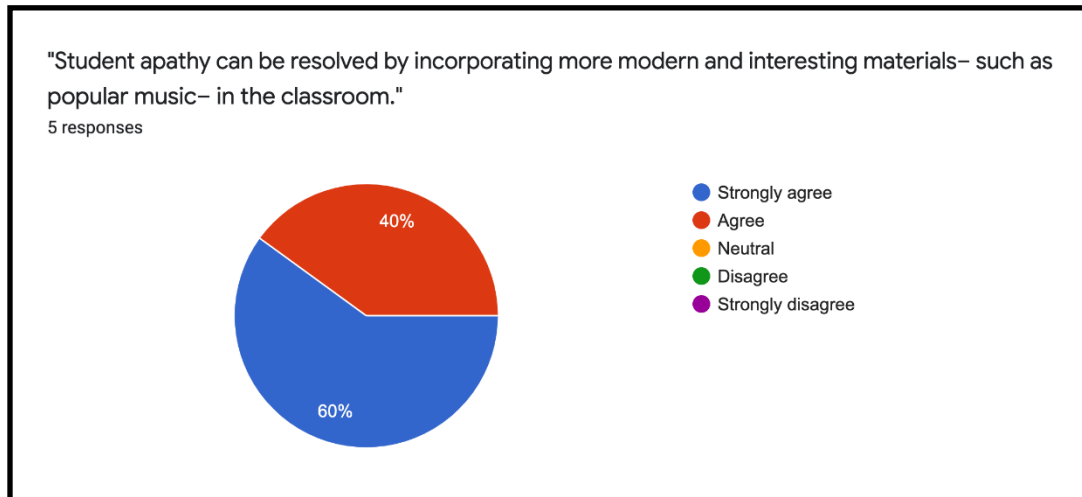


Figure 6: Department heads' perceptions of mediums like music in education to combat apathy.

Page 2 - Song #1 evaluations

For the second part of this survey, teachers were asked to evaluate whether the content (see subheading **B. Content Analysis**) in students' most mentioned song– "This Is America" by Childish Gambino– can be taught in high school humanities-based classrooms. For the first question, respondents were given an explanation of the song's analyzed themes, 'Duality of American society' and 'Injustices against African Americans,' then asked their opinion on the statement, "The following themes described in the song can be implemented as educational material in a high school humanities classroom," illustrated in Figure 7. For the theme 'Duality of American society,' four (80%) teachers strongly agreed with the statement, for 80% total agreement. No teachers disagreed, while one (20%) felt neutrally. For the second theme, 'Injustices against African Americans,' three (60%) teachers strongly agreed and one (20%) agreed, for 80% total agreement. Solely one (20%) teacher answered neutrally.

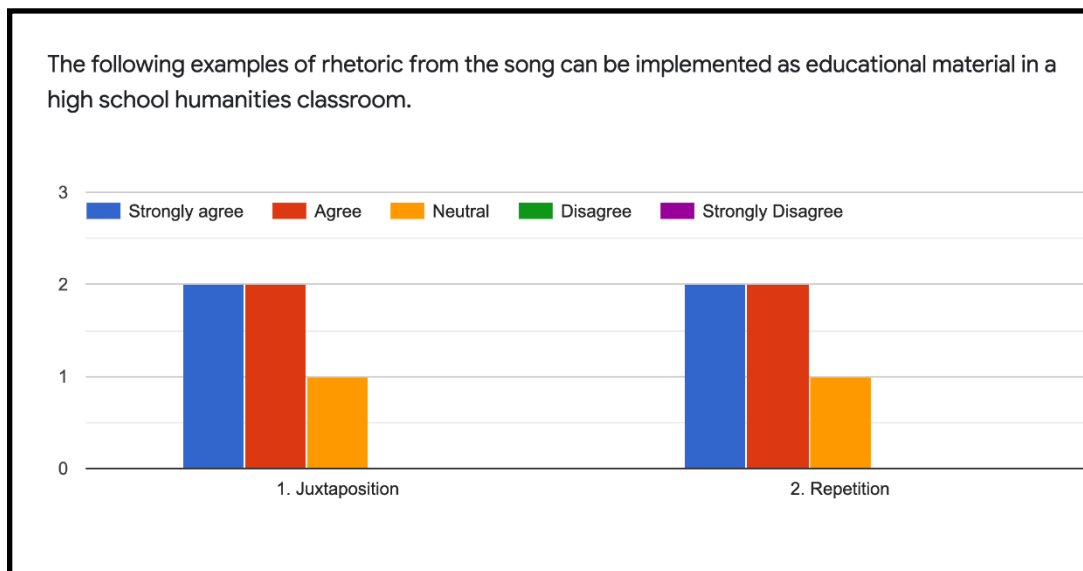


Figure 7: Teachers' opinions on the educational elements of the themes in Song #1.

In addition to Likert Scale questions, teachers were asked to explain their answers, and describe which humanities-based subject each theme could be incorporated into. Below are three notable answers:

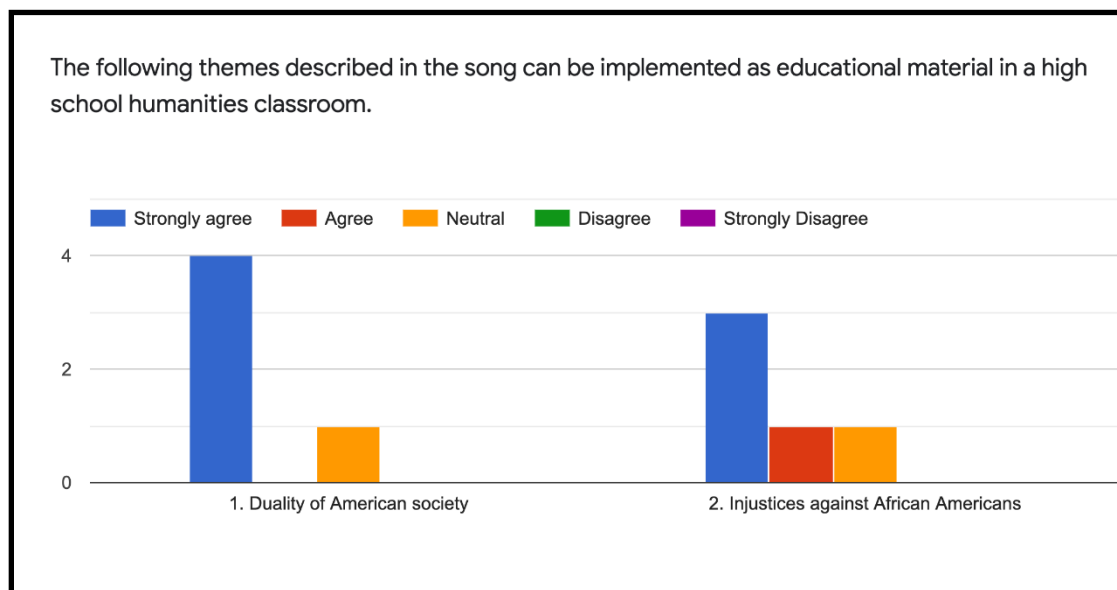
“Pending permissions, this would be excellent to use in AP Language or other courses where the subject and parameters for discussion of the subject are set and agreed upon in an academic fashion. I could see it fitting in well with a social justice unit also- perhaps with *Of Mice and Men*. I would maybe consider using it toward the end of 9th grade.”

“The duality of American society can [be] taught both in a sociology class and/or an economics class. Discussing class division - economic divisions, etc. injustices against African Americans is much more limited - perhaps in a history class, or in an African American history class.”

“Any English, Reading or Social Science Class- This song, like a book can be used to explore many themes, historical factors; comment on modern day social injustices.”

The teachers thus seemed to mostly agree with the inclusion of the song’s themes in humanities-based education.

The next question in this section asked teachers about their opinion on the statement, “The following rhetoric described in the song can be implemented as educational material in a high school humanities classroom,” after ex-



plaining how “This Is America” utilizes juxtapositions and repetition. Regarding the song’s juxtapositioning, two (40%) teachers strongly agreed and two (40%) agreed with the statement. There was a majority (80%) agreement, no disagreements, and one (20%) teacher responded neutrally. The results regarding the song’s use of repetition were exactly the same: two (40%) teachers strongly agreed and two (40%) agreed. Again, there was a majority 80% agreement, with no disagreements, but one (20%) neutral response. These results are illustrated in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Teachers’ opinions on the educational elements of the rhetoric in Song #1.

Teachers were also asked to explain their answers, as well as hypothesize which humanities-based subject each rhetoric example could be incorporated into. Below are three notable answers:

“This aspect of the song in particular would be more fitting in an English class.”

“We can use rhetoric in APUSH since many political leaders use it in their speeches.”

“I think it would be a good example of the elements in song, but would still need to be accompanied by classic examples from speeches, etc.”

Thus, teachers mostly exemplified confidence that the rhetoric in the song can be used in a classroom.

The last question in this section of the survey asked teachers to evaluate the statement “The following context described in the song can be implemented as educational material in a high school humanities classroom,” regarding the context of “This Is America”: ‘Political uneasiness and African American life’ and ‘Role of materialism.’ Two (40%) teachers strongly agreed and one (20%) agreed ‘Political uneasiness and African American life’ is suitable for humanities classroom use. Although two (40%) teachers responded neutrally, there was overall 60% agreement. For ‘Role of materialism,’ teachers seemed slightly more confident in its educational aspects– two (40%) strongly agreed and two (40%) agreed, for 80% agreement. Solely one (20%) teacher answered neutrally. These results are illustrated in Figure 9.

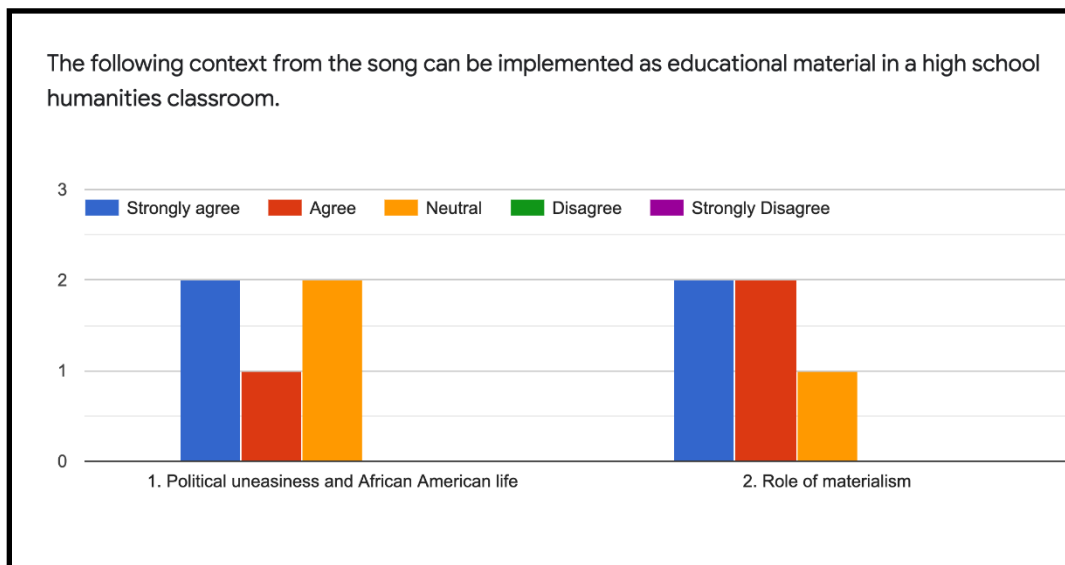


Figure 9: Teachers’ opinions on the educational elements of the context in Song #1.

Again, teachers explained their answers and predicted which humanities-based subject each context could be incorporated into. Below are three notable answers:

“This would be a relevant/more attention-grabbing way of exploring topics that the US has struggled with since its beginning. Would be more fitting in a social studies classroom or even sociology.”

“I believe the concept of materialism could be used in either a psychology or a sociology class room. It fits well into social construct, and understanding human behavior. Not so sure about political uneasiness and African American life. Politics in high school is often best taught objectively, and with little to no slant or personal opinion, or subjectivity. Too often a student can feel insulted or agitated - not worth taking a chance.”

“I think this could certainly be used in conjunction with other pieces or as an opener to discussion; however, there are many more issues of inequality that could accompany the piece. The question also states "African American Life," and I would argue that this is very broad and political uneasiness is not the only element of African American Life, although I may have misread the question.”

As a result, most respondents felt that the context in “This Is America” can be used in humanities-based education.

Page 3 - Song #2 evaluations

In the third section of this survey, teachers were asked to evaluate if the content (see subheading B. Content Analysis) in the second song students mentioned most– “How Much A Dollar Cost” by Kendrick Lamar– can be taught in high school humanities classrooms. For the first question, illustrated in Figure 10, respondents were given an explanation of the song’s analyzed themes, ‘Literal versus figurative value of money’ and ‘Character development,’ then asked their opinion on the statement, “The following themes described in the song can be implemented as educational material in a high school humanities classroom.” Regarding the ‘Literal versus figurative value of money’ theme, three (60%) teachers agreed with the statement, no teachers disagreed, and two (40%) felt neutrally– 60% total agreement. Reception of the second theme, ‘Character development,’ was slightly different: two (40%) teachers agreed, no teachers disagreed, yet three (60%) felt neutral, for a majority 60% neutral consensus.

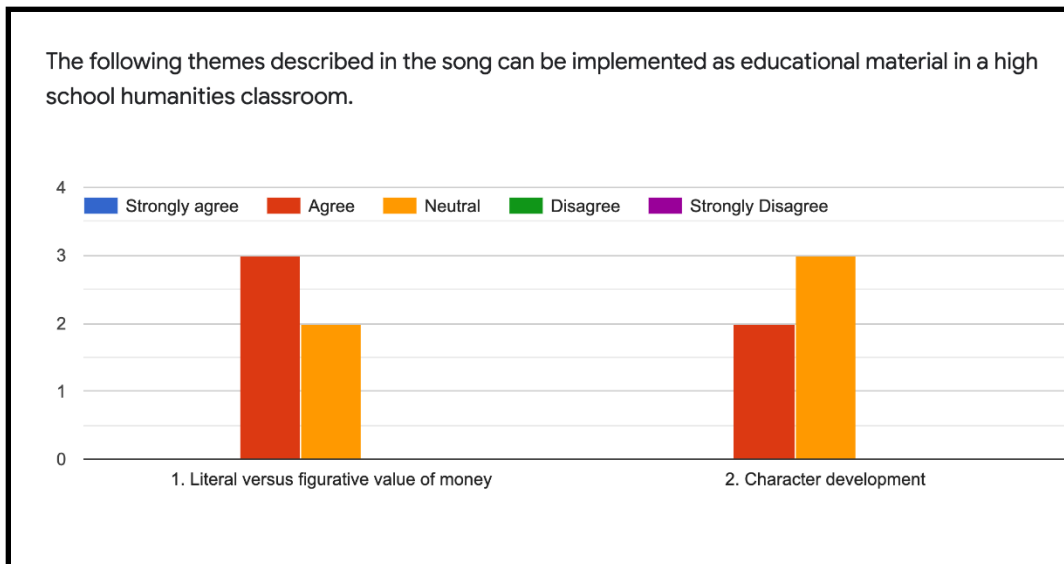


Figure 10: Teachers’ opinions on the educational elements of the themes in Song #2.

Teachers were also asked to explain their answers and hypothesize which humanities-based subject each theme could be used in. Below are three notable answers:

“Character development - great in psychology - maybe sociology; value of money - also societal - not so sure about an economics classroom.”

“The song definitely demonstrates both, although I would argue that more is needed to teach true character development. As an opener or discussion point, it has merit. The metaphorical value is higher.”

“Reading, English and Social Studies but guiding students in a positive debate based on facts, NOT just what the singer says.”

Overall, teachers felt optimistic with the inclusion of the song’s first theme in humanities education, yet less confident about the second theme.

The next question in this section asked teachers for their opinion on the statement, “The following rhetoric described in the song can be implemented as educational material in a high school humanities classroom,” regarding the story-like structure, repetition, and exemplum in “How Much a Dollar Cost.” One (20%) teacher strongly agreed and two (40%) agreed with the statement about the song’s story-like structure, totaling 60% agreement. There were no disagreements, and two (40%) teachers responded neutrally. Regarding the song’s repetition, three (60%) teachers agreed, two (40%) felt neutral and none disagreed– a majority of 60% agreement. The results for the song’s exemplum were exactly the same as for repetition: three (60%) teachers agreed and two (40%) felt neutral. These results are all shown in *Figure 11*.

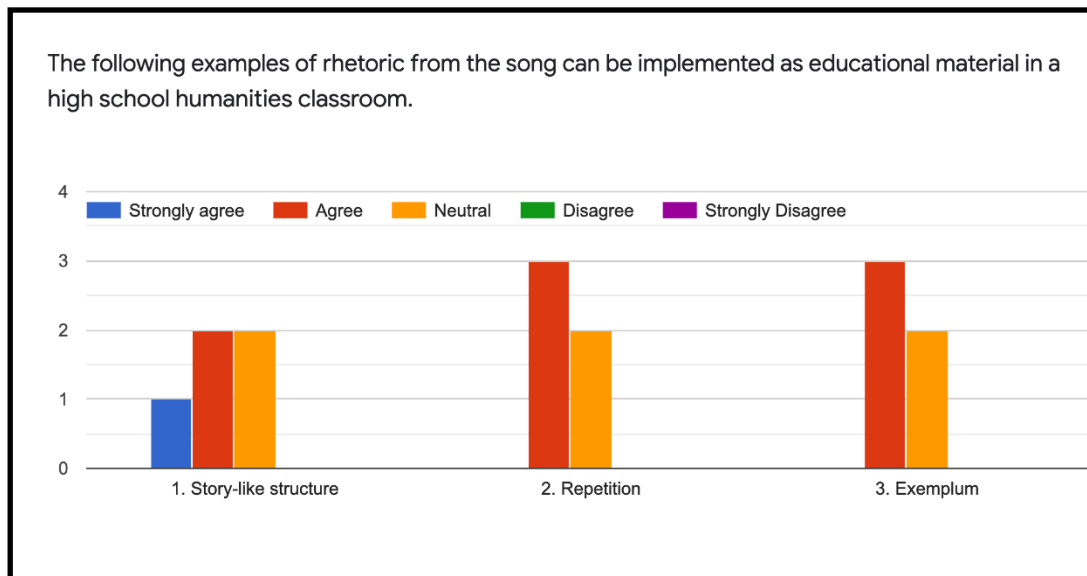


Figure 11: Teachers’ opinions on the educational elements of the rhetoric in Song #2.

Additionally, teachers both provided both reasoning for their answers and depicted which humanities-based subject the rhetoric could be incorporated into. Below are three notable answers:

“As much as I love Kendrick [Lamar], I feel as if there are other artists and other songs which would serve to teach similar topics. Most (good) songs can be use[d] to teach story-like structures.”

“I think all three concepts have class room possibilities. My only concern when thinking about both songs - is that as an older teacher, should I want to bring in a song like this, I would personally not be able to properly interpret what the song is saying without research. I am wondering how much of that is necessary to use a song like this successfully?”

“These are definitely solid examples of these elements at work, as well as engaging.”

In hindsight, these results show that the teachers mostly exemplified confidence that all the song’s rhetoric could possibly be used supplementary for humanities education, but other, maybe more appropriate songs could work better.

The final question in this part of the survey asked teachers to evaluate the statement, “The following context described in the song can be implemented as educational material in a high school humanities classroom.” They were provided with explanations of the context in “How Much a Dollar Cost”: ‘CIA-Contra-Crack Cocaine Controversy’ and ‘The Bible.’ Regarding the ‘CIA-Contra-Crack Cocaine Controversy,’ teachers demonstrated a unanimous neutrality towards its educational aspects, all five (100%) answering with neutral. For ‘Role of materialism,’ teachers generally showed slightly more doubtfulness: one (20%) disagreed and four (80%) answered neutrally. These results are illustrated in *Figure 12*.

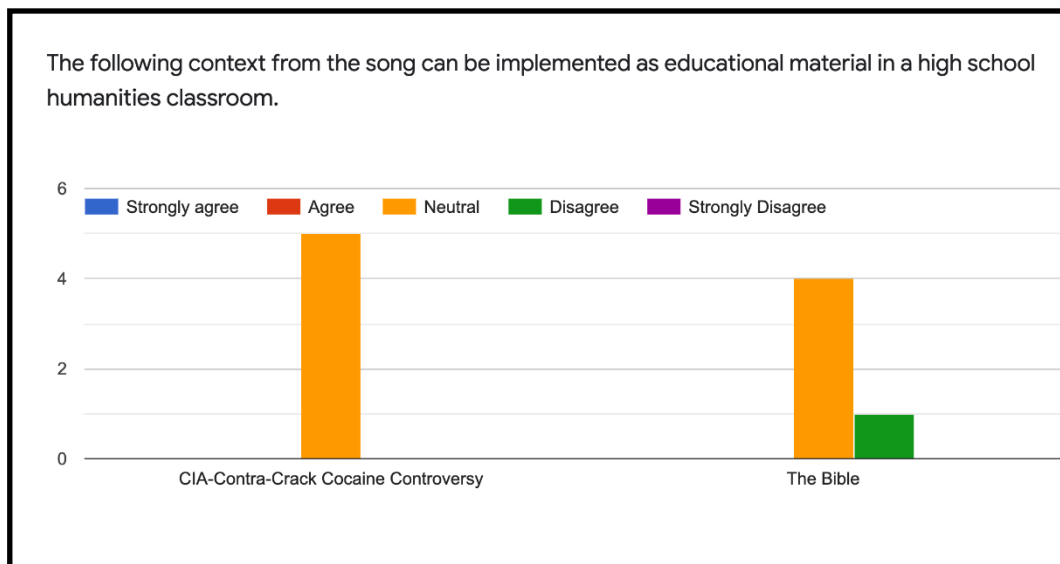


Figure 12: Teachers’ opinions on the educational elements of the context in Song #2.

Teachers were asked to explain their answers, and describe which humanities-based subject each context description could be incorporated into. Below are three notable answers:

“Personally wouldn't see it fitting for a high school classroom. More so a college classroom.”

“Not sure about either of these. These subjects, especially religion, can be very sensitive subjects and often not recommended for discussion in school - maybe only unique circumstances.”

“These allusions oversimplify the whole, but I suppose they could be used as an introduction to the CIA piece. This alludes to the Bible but doesn't seem to be useful material to understanding The Bible. Biblical allusions are everywhere; mentions in this piece do not make it a stand out.”

These results demonstrate that teachers felt that the context of “How Much a Dollar Cost” is not exactly suitable for high school humanities classrooms, perhaps due to the topics’ maturity.

Page 4 - Song #3 evaluations

For the fourth part of this survey, teachers were asked to evaluate whether the content (see subheading **B. Content Analysis**) in students’ third most mentioned song– “Nina Cried Power” by Hozier– can be taught in high school humanities-based classrooms. In the first question, respondents were asked for their evaluation of the statement “The following themes described in the song can be implemented as educational material in a high school humanities classroom.” For the first theme, ‘Standing up for one’s beliefs,’ one (20%) teacher strongly agreed with the statement, and

two (40%) agreed, for 60% total agreement. No teachers disagreed, while two (40%) felt neutrally. The results for the second theme, ‘Perseverance and leadership for successful action,’ were the same: one (20%) teacher strongly agreed, two (40%) agreed, none disagreed, and two (40%) felt neutral, equaling 60% total agreement. These results are illustrated in *Figure 13*.

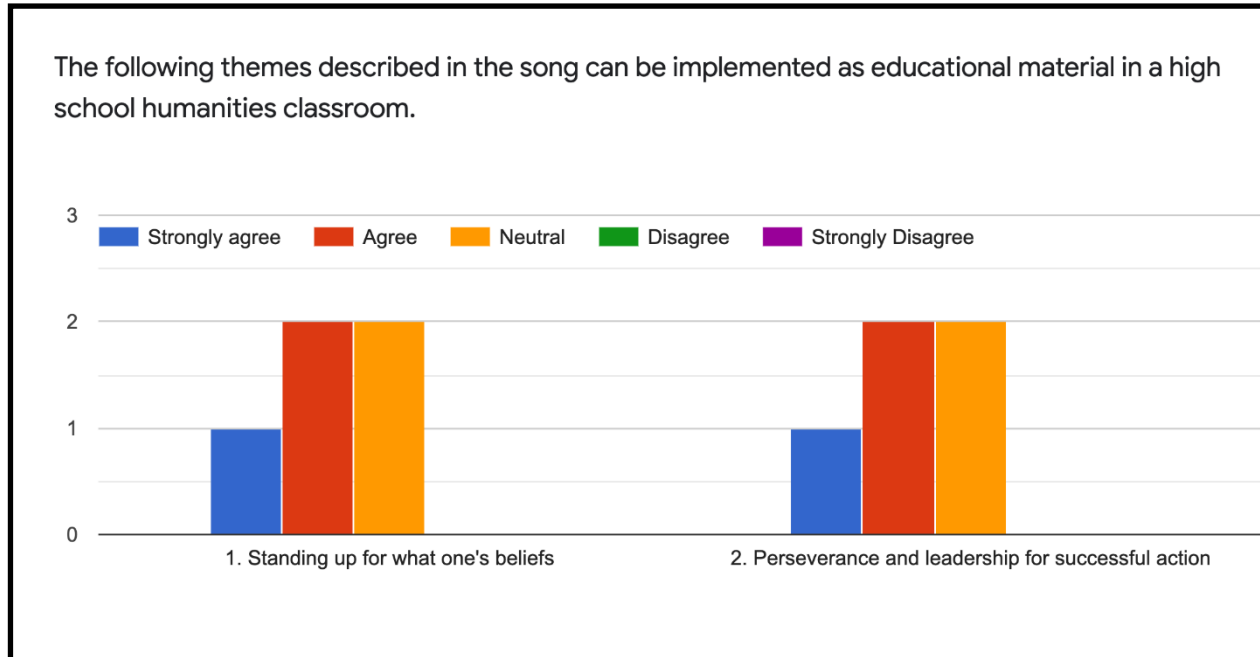


Figure 13: Teachers’ opinions on the educational elements of the themes in Song #3.

Teachers were also asked to explain their responses, and hypothesize which humanities-based subject each theme could be placed into. Below are three notable answers:

“Reading, English and Social Studies but guiding students in a positive debate based on facts, NOT just what the singer says.”

“I think both themes would work in history class, psychology, or for that matter, in any humanities class where these themes can be woven in. These are recurring themes throughout history and would relate to multiple curriculum and subjects.”

“These are definitely examples that would tie into a bigger unit as examples and perhaps to engage. Again, not stand alone material, but a good lesson hook or for more in depth understanding.”

Overall, the teachers seemed to mostly agree with the possible inclusion of both themes in humanities education, especially to support existing coursework.

The next question in this section asked teachers about their opinion on the statement “The following rhetoric described in the song can be implemented as educational material in a high school humanities classroom,” referring to repetition and metaphors in “Nina Cried Power.” For repetition, two (40%) teachers strongly agreed and one (20%) agreed with the statement. There was a majority 60% agreement and no disagreements, but two (40%) teachers responded neutrally. The results regarding metaphors were the same: two (40%) teachers strongly agreed, one (20%)

agreed, none disagreed, and two (40%) responded neutrally– majority 60% agreement. These results are illustrated in *Figure 14*.

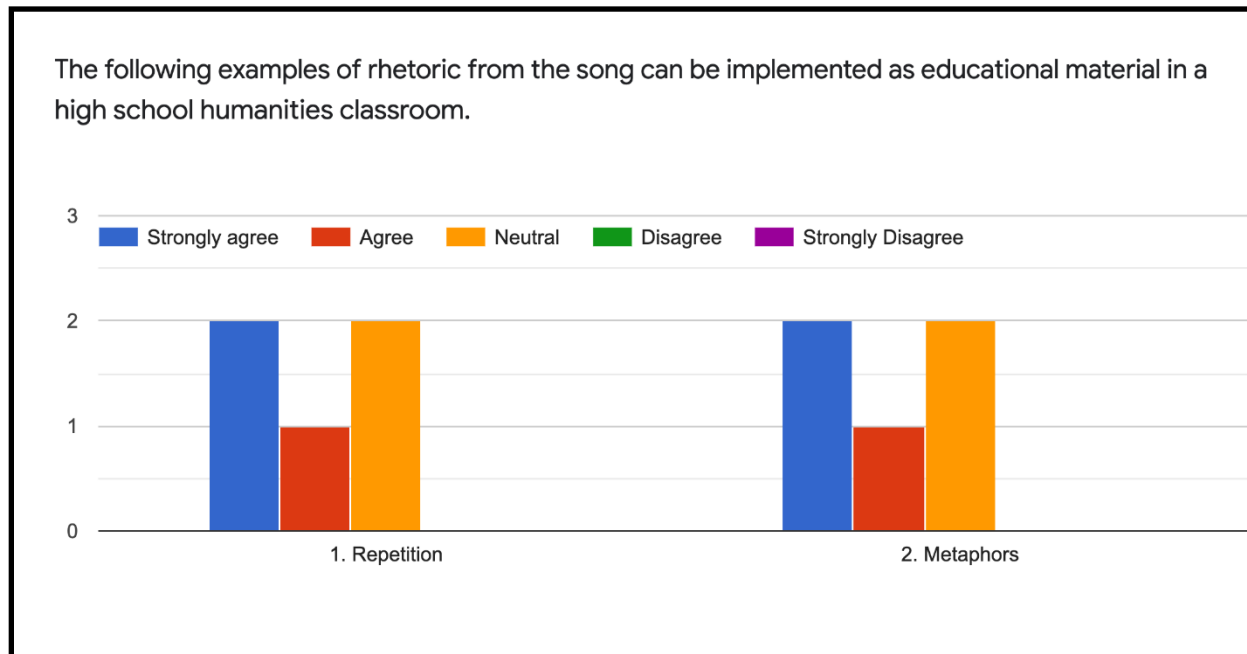


Figure 14: Teachers’ opinions on the educational elements of the rhetoric in Song #3.

Teachers were asked to explain their responses, and describe which humanities-based subject each example of rhetoric could be incorporated into. Below are three notable answers:

“English, Speech, Reading.”

“I think I can see this song being used in a language arts class room - breaking down the meaning of the song, and then looking at the use of repetition and metaphors for deeper understanding.”

“Music is a great way to teach repetition and metaphor, but again, any song wi[ll] have these elements. In order to be effective with the instruction through song, teachers need to be well-versed with the material (pun intentional).”

As a result, teachers for the most part represented confidence that the rhetoric in this song can be used for humanities education.

The last question in this section of the survey asked teachers to evaluate the statement “The following context described in the song can be implemented as educational material in a high school humanities classroom.” They were provided with the context of “Nina Cried Power”: ‘Modern political apathy’ and ‘Nina Simone’s activism.’ Regarding ‘Modern political apathy,’ three (60%) teachers agreed with the statement. Although two (40%) teachers responded neutrally, there was overall 60% agreement. For ‘Nina Simone’s activism,’ teachers felt slightly more confident in its educational aspects: one (20%) strongly agreed and two (40%) agreed, for a total 60% agreement. Solely two (40%) teachers answered neutrally. These results are illustrated in *Figure 15*.

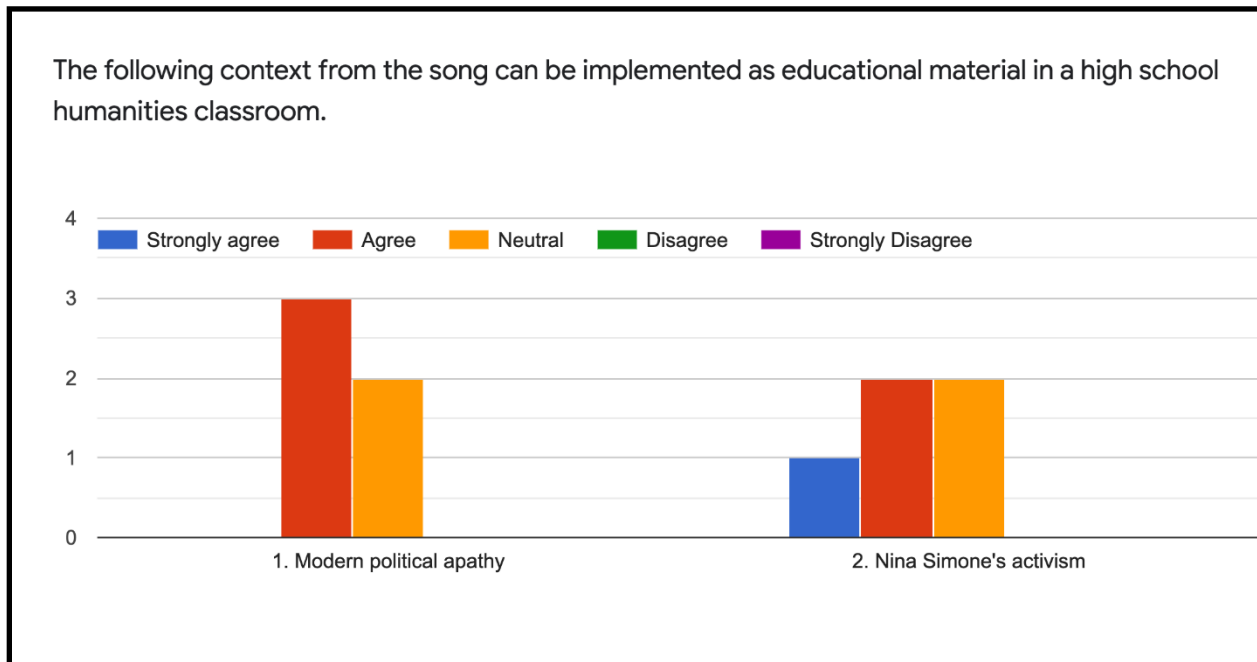


Figure 15: Teachers’ opinions on the educational elements of the context in Song #3.

Teachers additionally explained their responses and which humanities-based subject the context could be placed into. Below are three notable answers:

“Reading, English and Social Studies but guiding students in a positive debate based on facts, NOT just what the singer says.”

“I think both topics can be well discussed in a humanities class room. Could go well in a history class, any class dealing with human behavior, or current events.”

“This is specific to Nina Simone, so a direct connection and important piece, for sure, in a lesson about her. Similarly, Elton John’s ‘Goodbye, Norma Jean,’ and subsequently, ‘Goodbye, England’s Rose,’ would be important to include in studies on Marilyn Monroe and Princess Diana, respectively. A good accompanying piece for activism.”

Hence, teachers mostly believed that the context in this song, as well as similar songs, can be used for humanities-based education.

Page 5 - Final thoughts

The final section of this hermeneutics-based survey was composed of two questions about overall perspectives on the songs.

The first question inquired about a common theme within all three songs: ‘African American life and injustice in the US.’ Respondents were asked to explain why, in their professional opinion, this theme seemed to be recurring among students’ “thought-provoking” song suggestions. The vast majority of teachers explained that students often want to feel that they and their struggles are represented, and these topics allow them to further express themselves in educational settings. Below are three notable answers:

“Not only is it extremely relevant but unfortunately close to home. There is a huge issue with the topic of equity in our public-school systems. [These] issues are ramifications of our history, political struggles and battle with social injustices. These songs also bring a great shock factor into things. They are catchy, modern, heavy on the imagery and call its listeners to action. I think it speaks in any progressive person's language (whether young or old).”

“The history of African Americans is the history of the United States as told from their perspective and must be acknowledged throughout the history course and not just a one time or one month lesson. Students want to feel that they have self-worth and that they matter. Being able to express themselves is very important and lets them be participants in their educational journey.”

“These are topics that are meaningful and real and they are often omitted from a 'standard' education because they are often difficult to teach. Students probably need an outlet to express their concerns about 'American life' as they see it, in a setting that is non-judgmental, and safe. In many cases that is not the school setting. Perhaps courses that offer purely 'discussion' opportunities - to talk about the stresses of living in America in the 21st century. Unfortunately, most high school courses do not allow for purely discussion. But this makes me think that it's probably a good idea.”

The last question in this section asked teachers for their overall opinion on utilizing songs’ for humanities-based education to combat student apathy. In general, respondents demonstrated high levels of encouragement for the inclusion of music in classrooms, even suggesting ways to do so. They advocated for the unique benefits students can attain with such materials. Below are three notable answers:

“I strongly believe not only music, but art, social media, and many other examples... one's life experience[s] i[s] relevant to the learning process. A student must be able to view themselves in the story of this country, bot[h] the good and bad of it. Music and other artistic forms help in this development.”

“I think music is a great vehicle. However it does depend on how the teacher presents the material and lets students interpret it based on facts, and honoring everyone's viewpoints and experiences. If you keep hearing something over and over you can start believing it's true - even when it is not true. It's so important to understand [the] background of the sources, so you can understand where that perspective is coming from. It may be valid or students may find it isn't.”

“Perhaps there could be a course - modern music interpretation - where students can do just this - listen, talk, discuss and learn - could be very interesting and sounds like the students would be engaged. Historically, American culture has always represented the times - if you were to listen to our music, watch our movies - we can understand the tenor of the times and learn about life. I had taken a course in college: the American film, and we did just that. We watched several different movies and dissected them to help us

understand the issues and concerns of the given time period. it was fascinating. The same could be done with music!”

Discussion

Conclusions

This study supports the general conclusion that the music interests of high-achieving high school students can be implemented into humanities-based curricula, in multiple ways, to combat apathy in learning. There existed a majority consensus between both students and teachers surveyed that apathy in humanities-based high school learning could be resolved with the incorporation of materials, primarily like music, that appeal to students. Specifically, 69.1% of students and 100% (five out of five) teachers supported this. However, the research question at hand also asks *how* such music interests could be implemented. Although this is a complex question, the multifaceted results from teachers regarding students’ music provide various answers. On multiple occasions, teachers described that music could be incorporated into classes as supplemental material added to current courses to further support principal lessons. Some teacher responses also advocated for the creation of new humanities-based courses that use music to teach, thus supporting students’ interests while providing humanities education. They frequently mentioned that certain controversial topics in songs, such as politics or religion, should be avoided, and that discussions on songs should additionally take perspectives/resources outside of the musicians’ into account. Teachers emphasized that although this material sometimes seems difficult to teach, it allows for further student comprehension of topics by analyzing material relevant to their lives. These conclusions address the research gap by exploring the immersion of music in traditional, humanities-based classrooms for the specific purpose of reducing apathy.

Limitations

The limitations of the research must be addressed, as results may be impacted. The assumption this study takes regarding high-achieving students, yet supported by research [10, 11], may have imposed bias on the preceding analyses by limiting music interests to that of arguably the most academically applied students. The content analyses, although focused on educational aspects of theme, rhetoric, and context [14, 15, 16], may have overlooked parts of songs regarding educational fit. Despite the extensive mixed methods approach utilized, taking experienced students and teachers into account, this study does not examine the effectiveness of specific classrooms with music, and is thus based on the subjective, surveyed perspectives. Pursuing hermeneutics research via a digital survey, due to COVID-19 pandemic-induced school closures at the time of study, may have limited the study’s scope.

Future Directions

The results of this study give a proven basis for reducing apathy in humanities-based learning with music, as a vast majority of most students and teachers advocated for this implementation. Teachers’ interpretations of possible applications of music material in classrooms provides a framework for new curricula that could improve students’ appeal to learning.

A future application of this study may be carried out via descriptive research or case study on humanities-based high school courses with/without supplemental music materials. These methods would remove the limiting remoteness of this study by directly surveying how music in humanities classrooms, at any level, impacts student apathy.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge everyone who played a role in the creation of this paper. First and foremost, thank you to my research advisor Mrs. Lisa Jones for all of your amazing support and guidance throughout this year-long process, especially amid a worldwide pandemic. Secondly, thank you to all who participated in the study—teachers and students alike. Your input is greatly appreciated. A specific thank you to Cooper City High School for providing immersive opportunities like the Advanced Placement Capstone Program which allow me to expand my intellectuality in ways I did not know were possible. If not for this program, this research would not have been possible. Finally, thank you to all the amazing individuals in my life—my family, my peers, my teachers, and more—who continuously push me to explore new things, academically and elsewhere. A special acknowledgment is due to the incredible music artists that continue to break barriers in the industry and create sonic art. Thank you for inspiring me to explore the applications of music. Immense gratitude to all.

Bibliography

Allen, Jeff, Krista Mattern, and Edwin Ndum. “An Empirically Derived Index of High School Academic Rigor.” *Educational Measurement: Issues & Practice* 38, no. 1 (March 2019): 6–15. doi:10.1111/emip.12236.

Allsup, Randall Everett. “A Place for Music Education in the Humanities.” *Music Educators Journal* 100, no. 4 (June 2014): 71–75. doi:10.1177/0027432114530169.

Amadeo, Kimberly. “What Is the American Dream? The History That Made It Possible.” *The Balance*, April 21, 2020. <https://www.thebalance.com/what-is-the-american-dream-quotes-and-history-3306009>.

Arguello, Rosendo, and Manuel S. Orozco. “The Sandinista Government.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, March 21, 2020. www.britannica.com/place/Nicaragua/The-Sandinista-government.

Armstrong, Joslyn, Fiorella L. Carlos Chavez, Julia H. Jones, Shar’Dane Harris, and Gregory J. Harris. “‘A Dream Deferred’: How Discrimination Impacts the American Dream Achievement for African Americans.” *Journal of Black Studies* 50, no. 3 (April 2019): 227–50. doi:10.1177/0021934719833330.

Benders, David S. “Student Apathy: The Downfall of Education.” SSRN. Last modified December 15, 2011. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1968613.

Biography.com Editors. “Nina Simone Biography.” The Biography.com website. Last modified July 17, 2019. <https://www.biography.com/musician/nina-simone>.

Briggs, Kenneth. “Money, Morals, and the Cry of Matthew 25.” Reflections, Yale University. Issued 2017. <https://reflections.yale.edu/article/god-and-money-turning-tables/money-morals-and-cry-matthew-25>.

Cambridge University. “THOUGHT-PROVOKING: Definition in the Cambridge English Dictionary.” Cambridge English Dictionary. Accessed May 21, 2020. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/thought-provoking>.

Cano, Juan Jesús Yelo. “La Recreación Artística De Textos e Imágenes Como Modelo Para El Desarrollo De La Creatividad y La Integración De Los Lenguajes Expresivos En El Aula De Música.” *Revista Electrónica De LEEME* 2, no. 42 (July 2018). <https://doi.org/10.7203/leeme.42.13171>.

Common Ground Research Networks. “Themes.” New Directions in the Humanities Research Network. Accessed May 21, 2020. <https://thehumanities.com/about/themes>.

Dukes, Charles. “Curriculum Planner: ‘The Total Blues Experience.’” *Black History Bulletin* 68, no. 2 (Winter/Spring 2005): 24–28. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=asn&AN=24551915&site=ehost-live>.

Feldstein, Ruth. “‘I Don’t Trust You Anymore’: Nina Simone, Culture, and Black Activism in the 1960s.” *Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (March 2005): 1349–79. doi:10.2307/3660176.

Gajanan, Mahita. “Childish Gambino's 'This Is America': Breaking Down Symbols.” *Time Magazine*. May 7, 2018. <https://time.com/5267890/childish-gambino-this-is-america-meaning/>.

Genius.com. “Childish Gambino – This Is America.” Genius. Accessed May 21, 2020. <https://genius.com/Childish-gambino-this-is-america-lyrics>.

Genius.com. “Hozier (Ft. Mavis Staples) – Nina Cried Power.” Genius. Accessed May 21, 2020. <https://genius.com/Hozier-nina-cried-power-lyrics>.

Genius.com, and James Fauntleroy. “Kendrick Lamar (Ft. James Fauntleroy & Ronald Isley) – How Much a Dollar Cost.” Genius. Accessed May 21, 2020. genius.com/Kendrick-lamar-how-much-a-dollar-cost-lyrics.

Givens, Abby. “The Plague of Apathy in Public Schools.” *Education as a Civic Issue*, Penn State University. April 12, 2018. <https://sites.psu.edu/cieducation/2018/03/22/the-plague-of-apathy-in-public-schools/>.

Lewis, Judy. “Equity in Music Education: The Music We Speak: Language and Power in the Urban Music Classroom.” *Music Educators Journal* 105, no. 3 (March 2019): 66–68. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432118815153>.

Lopez, German. “There Are Huge Racial Disparities in How US Police Use Force.” *Vox*. November 14, 2018. <https://www.vox.com/identities/2016/8/13/17938186/police-shootings-killings-racism-racial-disparities>.

Marshall, Jeff C. “Apathy in Learning.” In *Encyclopedia of the Sciences of Learning*, edited by SpringerLink. Boston: Springer, 2012. https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-1-4419-1428-6_997.

May, Brittany Nixon, Amy Baird Miner, and Terrell A. Young. “Biography Breaks in the Music Classroom.” *General Music Today* 32, no. 2 (2018): 24–30. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1048371318814910>.

McCorkle, Mark. “The Effects of Music Education on Society.” *Canadian Music Educator / Musicien Educateur Au Canada* 56, no. 2 (Winter 2014): 23–27. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=asn&AN=109155601&site=ehost-live>.

McLeod, Saul. “Likert Scale Definition, Examples and Analysis.” *Simply Psychology*. August 3, 2019. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/likert-scale.html>.

Oxenham, Simon. "The Rise of Political Apathy in Two Charts." *Nature News*. June 6, 2017. <https://www.nature.com/news/the-rise-of-political-apathy-in-two-charts-1.22106>.

Pareles, Jon, and Zachary Woolfe. "Kendrick Lamar Shakes Up the Pulitzer Game: Let's Discuss." *The New York Times*. April 17, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/17/arts/music/kendrick-lamar-music-pulitzer-prize-damn.html>

Pierpont, Claudia Roth. "A Raised Voice." *The New Yorker*. August 4, 2014. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/08/11/raised-voice>.

Public Broadcasting Service. "NewsHour Extra: Voter Apathy." *Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)*. 2020. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/spc/extra/features/july-dec00/brokensystem.html>.

Purdue University. "Elements of Analysis // Purdue Writing Lab." Purdue Writing Lab. Accessed May 21, 2020. https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/visual_rhetoric/analyzing_visual_documents/elements_of_analysis.html.

Purdue University. "Literary Terms // Purdue Writing Lab." Purdue Writing Lab. Accessed May 21, 2020. https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/writing_in_literature/literary_terms/index.html

Purdue University. "Rhetorical Situations // Purdue Writing Lab." Purdue Writing Lab. Accessed May 21, 2020. https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/rhetorical_situation/index.html.

Rifai, Ayah. "Promoting Sophisticated Word Use in the Elementary Music Classroom." *Music Educators Journal* 105, no. 4 (June 2019): 28–36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432119846255>.

Roberts, Frank Leon. "How Black Lives Matter Changed the Way Americans Fight for Freedom." American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). August 22, 2019. <https://www.aclu.org/blog/racial-justice/race-and-criminal-justice/how-black-lives-matter-changed-way-americans-fight>.

Rodriguez, Indira Arias, Jessica M. Nascimento, Marcos F. Voigt, and Flavia H. Santos. "Numeracy Musical Training for School Children with Low Achievement in Mathematics." *Anales de Psicología* 35, no. 3 (October 2019): 405–16. doi:10.6018/analesps.35.3.340091.

Stanford University. "Study the Humanities at Stanford." Stanford Humanities. Accessed May 21, 2020. <http://shc.stanford.edu/what-are-the-humanities>.

The George Washington University. "The Contras, Cocaine, and Covert Operations." The National Security Archive, The George Washington University. Accessed May 21, 2020. <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB2/index.html>.