

Music for Healing: Addressing the Social-Emotional Needs of Students in the Elementary Setting

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“Where Words Fail, Music Speaks” – Hans Christian Andersen

Introduction

At Richardson Park, located in Wilmington, Delaware, I am entering my 4th year as the General Music, Chorus, and Drumline instructor. I am also a member of the Building Leadership team as well as the Red Clay School District’s Diversity and Equity team and Social Justice Workgroup. I am always seeking out ways to stay active within my school and district community in order to build upon my skills and improve as an educator. I even hope to become Nationally Board Certified once I get a bit more experience.

My involvement within the education field has sparked my interest in how students learn and interact within their learning environment. As a graduate student studying Music Therapy and Clinical Mental Health Counseling, I am interested in how music can assist students in improving their social-emotional development and their overall interpersonal relationships within their environments. The changes due to COVID-19 have greatly impacted how students learn as well as how they interact socially. It has taken a toll on both children and adults. My hope is to create a curriculum that can be used both virtually and in-person and provide students with the opportunity to be creative, active and successful in their social interactions and emotional development.

I love teaching and I deeply care for my students. I am always seeking out ways to better connect with them and make them feel comfortable within the learning environment. Music can appear intimidating at first glance, but I try my best to approach it in a way that “meets the students where they are” and builds upon their previously learned skills. From my experiences in these past four years, most students seem to enjoy music and find a sense of joy and cathartic release from their other academic courses. My biggest goal is to develop positive relationships with all of my students. This goal comes with a bit of difficulty as I service the entire school. The modifications due to COVID have allowed me to see cohorts of students for a longer period of time than usual which gives me a sense of hope that our relationships will improve. Although I may not be able to connect with every student I teach, I am hoping to provide them with the tools needed to be successful in creating future connections and lasting relationships in their future years.

Rationale

Richardson Park Elementary School is a public, Title I school located in the Newport section of Wilmington, Delaware. It is part of the Red Clay Consolidated School District, which is the largest district in the state of Delawareⁱ. The district includes areas of northwestern Wilmington and its suburbs. It serves more than 16,000 students between 15 elementary schools, 6 middle schools, 5 high schools and 2 special education schoolsⁱⁱ. The student population at Richardson Park is close to about 600 students with the male students outnumbering the female students 55% to 45%. The demographic of the student population is predominantly of Hispanic decent at 56%, black at 23%, white at 19% and the other percentages including biracial students or other ethnic backgrounds. The vast majority of the school, at 99%, come from low-income families and qualify for free and reduced lunch. Most of the students who attend this school live in the neighboring communities within walking distance to the campus.ⁱⁱⁱ Most students who attend Park have or have had other relatives who attended the school.

Students at Park come from a variety of socioeconomic statuses, educational levels and diverse backgrounds, thus these facets being a central component of our mission statement. The mission of Richardson Park Elementary School is to be “committed to developing high academic and social-emotional growth in an effort to reach all learners by offering a safe and positive school community”^{iv}. It is with keeping this mission in mind that I model my teaching and engage all of my learners. Fueled with great dedication, I teach to inspire, engage and inform students of the qualities they possess and how they can utilize them to have a successful and positive impact on the community.

This curriculum combines music with social-emotional learning in an effort to educate the students on how to be proactive in navigating through and managing their emotions. Social-emotional learning is a big concept within my school and across the district, but there really is no standard curriculum in teaching the concepts. Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults understand and manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions^v. Many of the guidance counselors address social-emotional learning in their groups; however, with only one counselor to about 600 students, being able to connect with all of those students through just one counselor is an overwhelming and nearly impossible task.

According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning^{vi}, relationship building, and emotional regulation skills are crucial to the development of school-age children and are supported by high-quality, evidence-based instruction. Students need to be reinforced with these concepts and coping skills as often as possible so that they become an integral part of their daily lives. Many times, due to the pressures of administration and district officials, teachers are mandated to focus on content more than relationships; however, it is the relationships with the students, especially during this era of COVID where they have been separated from friends and loved ones for months,

that will make teaching the content more effective. My goal is to establish a positive relationship with all of my students and equip them with the tools needed to establish positive relationships with others.

Many of our students have experiences within their homes and/or communities that they cannot properly process and work through on their own. As a result, these unresolved emotions travel with them to school and result in what many educators perceive as misconduct, inattention, and/or defiance. Although the behaviors may be counterproductive, the students may be displaying these behaviors not to misbehave, but because of experiences and stressors that they try to navigate on a daily basis. According to the American Psychological Association^{vii}, trauma is an emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, rape or natural disaster. The results of these responses on the brain can last for an extended period of time, depending on the resiliency of the person, and have adverse effects on a person's everyday interactions. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that about 61% of adults surveyed across 25 states have reported to experiencing at least one type of adverse childhood experience (ACE) and 1 in 6 reported that they experienced 4 or more^{viii}. This shows that in every classroom, there are many students with at least 1 adverse childhood experience and fewer experiencing 4 or more; however, these experiences affect each child differently. Some students are very resilient and can navigate through the experiences with little to no help. Some may need a moderate amount of counseling and intervention. Others may need to undergo years of interventions in order to successfully navigate through their experiences. If left untreated, ACEs can lead to chronic illnesses, substance misuse and even mental illness in adulthood^{ix}.

As an educator, future counselor and someone who has experienced his own adverse experiences, I am very passionate about my students and helping them navigate through difficult experiences. As a music therapy, clinical mental health and school counseling graduate student, my goal is to use music to help address social-emotional skills and mental health challenges within both youth and adults. The findings of Porter et al^x suggest that music therapy interventions may have a positive impact on students with comorbid conditions within a routine setting. Porter also suggests that there were improvements in communicative and interactional skills over a period of 26 weeks^{xi}. Further research suggests that there were significant increases in communication and decreases in problematic behaviors as well as hyperactivity/inattentiveness^{xii}. There have also been findings that suggest increases in expression with the use of improvisation in the music therapy setting, especially those who have been exposed to trauma and changing situations^{xiii}.

Through this curriculum, I hope to help my students recognize certain feelings and emotions, process through their inner emotions and develop the necessary tools needed to work through these experiences in a productive way. Students will learn how to identify emotions evoked in pieces of music, use rhythms, melodies and lyrics to express emotions and identify ways they can use music to express and manage emotions in their

own personal lives. According to Linda Wilmschurst in *Child and Adolescent Psychopathology*, a typical problem-solving skills training or intervention would teach children how to logically and appropriately approach a problem^{xiv}. Teaching these skills effectively may have a positive impact on a student's everyday interactions and problem-solving skills. Music for Healing is designed to educate and empower all students and their families in their social and emotional development. It is my hope that more reinforcement of these social-emotional skills will help reduce emotional dysregulation, counterproductive behaviors and incidents of misconduct.

I am hoping to use this curriculum opportunity to not only improve the lives of my students and my teaching, but also to enhance my work as an educator, as a well as a future school counselor and music therapist. At the beginning of the unit, students will be assessed in their social-emotional competence, if they can identify emotions displayed in music and current ways in which they manage their emotions, as well as in their interpersonal relationships. By the end of the unit, students will be able to identify ways that music expresses emotion, be more self-aware of their own emotions and how to regulate them, and also identify different ways they can use music to process through emotions. It is the hope that this unit will produce a more community-based classroom environment and enhance the teacher-student relationship as well as peer relationships. The goal of this unit is to reinforce current evidence on the benefits of music on the brain and emotions as well give myself and building insight on how effective it can be with elementary school students.

This curriculum takes the approach that the students' realities are created by their individual experiences. The student experience has an impact on their everyday lives through their thoughts, behaviors and interactions. This curriculum, through the conduit of music, is designed to introduce the concepts of emotional vocabulary, coping skills, neuroscience, and trauma while also destigmatizing the concept of therapy and thus normalizing the experience of mental health needs. This approach is preventative and seeks to teach all children the healthiest ways to handle their emotions, build relationships, and manage difficulties regardless of their baseline strengths or needs.

The curriculum can be divided into trimester, quarter or marking period blocks based on the system utilized by the school with assessments at the beginning and end of each block. Each block will be divided into topics such as: Exploring Identity, Peer Interactions, Understanding Emotions, Integrating of Self into the Community or any topic relevant to the student population and needs. Discussed within each week of the block will be subtopics such as: choices and consequences, self-awareness, communication skills, and conflict resolution. Students will discuss their understanding of the topics within a group setting and continuously assessed on how the use of music helps to improve their social-emotional skills.

Student progress will be assessed through various qualitative and quantitative means such as behavior reports, referrals, attendance academic performance, observation of

social interactions, and feedback from teachers and staff who work with those students. Progress will be monitored on an on-going basis throughout the students' time at the school with the hope that the student will have developed the appropriate skills as well as emotional and behavior management techniques that will enable them to be resilient and successful in the future challenges they will face throughout their lives. This will allow for data to be compared to social-emotional competence and achievement before, during and after the program's completion. This data will be used to address the effectiveness of music in social-emotional interventions with K-5 elementary age students and allow for further measurements and improvements if needed. The data will be used to assess whether or not the support within the music groups showed an increase or decrease in academic performance, socialization and social-emotional competence or whether the data in these areas remained the same.

Objectives

This curriculum combines ideas from the national core arts standards, American school counselor association standards as well as the teaching tolerance social justice standards. The main themes derived from these standards are an understanding of self and how we relate to others, understanding differences, and how this newfound learning can be used improve ever day interactions.

The curriculum draws on the national core arts standards to teach students how to use music and other artistic forms to inform their understanding of themselves and their emotions as well as use it as form of creative expression. Music is an avenue that can be used to foster creativity, emotional expression, boost self-esteem and improve connections^{xv}. Music provides a sense of creative freedom that can allow students to feel safe in expressing what words cannot capture.

The American School Counselor Association standards seek to help students understand their emotional self and how this understanding can improve their interactions with others. Before relating to and interacting with others, one must have a deep understanding of themselves. They can then use this knowledge to help them build and maintain relationships with others. Once learned, it is the hope that students will apply these skills to help maintain a safe and resilient emotional experience.

Finally, the Teaching Tolerance Social Justice Standards is divided into 4 domains that allow students to dive deeper into how social relationships influence our everyday interactions. The first domain, identity, encourages the student to take a look deep within themselves to discover their unique cultural identity and develop a positive self-image. The second domain, diversity, helps students discover and understand how similarities and differences connect them to others. The justice domain will recognize how certain things can be harmful to oneself or others social-emotional well-being. Lastly, the action domain helps students develop the skills to display empathy and understand their role in protecting their own social-emotional well-being as well as not causing damage to others.

With the unique combination of these different content standards, the goal is to help students excel in the following areas: (1) identifying possible stressors and how they shape experiences, (2) identify how tone conveys meaning and intent, (3) identify and display how music can be used to convey the human experience, (4) identify how music can help one process emotions and experiences, and (5) identify how music can strengthen human connection.

Essential Questions

In what ways can music be used to support behavioral development, identity development, and social emotional learning experiences in elementary school age students grades K-5?

Goal

Students will discover how to use musical experiences as a means of expressing, recognizing, and regulating emotions as well as improving communication and social interactions.

Content

The program layout will follow a consistent and familiar format across the various grade levels in the K-5 elementary school setting. This provides a routine structure that the students will learn and expect during each lesson. Through my own personal practice, this has been known to relieve a bit of anxiety that comes with participating in something unfamiliar as well as give the students some anticipation to the various transitions and/or portions of the lesson they enjoy. Each week will discuss a topic centered around social-emotional development and the activities will be built around that topic. These topics will fall under a broad umbrella topic that encompasses the topics for each week. For example, the unit/block topic may be “Self-Awareness” and the subsequent topics could be understanding emotions, choices and consequences, body awareness, emotional regulation and empowerment.

Trauma

Trauma is an extremely stressful and devastating experience that, if left untreated, can seriously impact a person throughout their development. Traumatic experiences differ from person to person and some people are more resilient than others. There are a wide range of experiences that can be categorized as trauma, including, but not limited to bullying, divorce, chronic illness, types of abuse, homelessness, violence and death of a loved one. Trauma can be a one-time, multiple time, or repetitive series of events, all of which affect everyone differently^{xvi}. These types of events can have immediate, and/or long-lasting impact on a person’s emotional, physical, cognitive, behavioral, social, and developmental abilities^{xvii}. Within students, trauma may look like inattention, withdrawal, lack of trust, lack of impulse control, avoidant behaviors, difficulty with transitions, or explosive behaviors, just to name a few. In an effort to combat the effects of trauma and

build resilience, this curriculum is designed to help increase bonding among students, teachers and peers, and also help students to redefine or increase their sense of purpose and meaning within their lives.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs for short, are types of traumatic events that occur within children between birth and 17 years of age^{xviii}. As stated earlier, ACEs are very common and can have severe effects on the brain and body; however, preventing more severe types of ACEs may potentially reduce a large number of future health conditions. Without being treated, ACEs may lead to future health conditions, substance abuse, violence or even death. Although many people experience some type of trauma throughout their lives, no matter how big or small it may be considered, the impact of these events may be prevented or lessened by creating and sustaining healthy, stable and nurturing relationships and environments for children and their families^{xix}. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs lays out the framework of what individuals need in order to have healthy personal growth and development. Children must first have their physiological and environmental needs met, such as food and shelter. Next, they need to feel safe, loved and that they belong. They then need to boost their esteem and feel accomplished before they can continue to grow and develop into the best version of themselves^{xx}. It is these needs, along with healthy connections, that can help build resiliency and keep children on the path toward success in their overall development.

Program Layout

Each week follows the same opening and closing rituals as well as 3-4 activities within the sessions. The "Hello" or "Greeting" Song always opens the session and is typical of a music therapy or music education session. This routine helps the students to transition into music more smoothly as opposed to just coming in and beginning content. This type of greeting can even be used while the students are in the hallway as a musical transition to prepare them for the lesson. The "Goodbye" or "See you later" song serves a similar purpose but prepares the student for the transition out of the lesson. These routines help to create a safe and predictable environment where the students can feel safe and thrive.

The activities between the opening and closing of the lesson help to expand upon the topic and strengthen the relationship between the group. Each lesson always begins with a check-in that asks the students to respond to a prompt. This can be done by passing a "talking piece," having students pick numbers from a bag, discussing an order in which to respond, or some other way to decide who will share. Some students may choose not to share, but it is the hope that they will grow more comfortable as time passes and the relationships strengthen. During this era of COVID, some variations of this activity could include using the Mentimeter website or app to have students respond to a prompt anonymously and share their answer if they wish or have students right on sticky notes or index cards and stick them in certain areas of the room depending on their response. The

main purpose of this opening is to establish a sense of trust and safety between the teacher and peers.

The second activity is always some type of rhythm activity with body percussion, or any other type of non-pitched instrument such as drums, shakers or rhythm sticks. These instruments can be substituted for items such as buckets, desks, pencils, containers, plastic bottles, or anything else that makes a non-melodic sound. The purpose of a rhythmic game or improv activity is to create a safe, non-threatening musical experience. Improvisation can take a “non-threatening approach to music making to address the following: communication, social/emotional skills, behavior skills, academic skills, motor skills, and leisure^{xxi}. Rhythm activities take the focus off of written music so that focus can be strictly on what is being played. Rhythm instruments provide the opportunity for an immediate musical response and instant gratification and validation for the player. Improv can also help the player to realize that there are no mistakes in music. A mistake depends on your interpretation of the music. Improv provides opportunities for unique musical variations and how a person can turn those variations into something meaningful for them. Rhythmic improv and music in general can also be used to relate music to pictures as a form of communication to initiate conversations, respond to others, or address wants and needs^{xxii}.

Activity three can be a songwriting, lyric substitution or movement activity. Instrument playing, singing and action songs have been found to be effective in improving social and communicative behaviors in children^{xxiii}. Music and movement are such important tools, especially at the elementary school level, because they provide opportunities for children to freely express themselves creatively and emotionally as well as provide an opportunity for them to work on their social skills. Research states that listening to and playing music is known to have the following impacts on a child’s development: emotional regulation & mood regulation, pleasure and arousal of positive emotions, self-esteem, social bonding, and improvement of cognitive functioning^{xxiv}. Active music listening can provide a student the opportunity to process their innermost emotions and provide talking points in which they can be expressed. It can also provide opportunities to make connections with others who may relate to the music in a similar way. Writing down these thoughts can provide an attempt to piece together these thoughts in a constructive and creative way.

Movement is also an important component of creative and emotional expression. It can also provide a meaningful opportunity for socialization and body awareness. According to recent research, music provides an opportunity for flexibility and adaptability^{xxv}. Just as with instrumental improvisation, movement can also be a way to freely express your thoughts and emotions in their relation to music. Eurhythmic body movement within music, can be used to stimulate the physicality and embodiment of pulse, tempo, patterns, phrases, etc. with automatic and intuitive responses^{xxvi}. Movement can be used as a discussion point in how one’s body intuitively responds to the mood, instruments, or tempo of music.

The final and optional activity is creative drawing. Drawing can help a student conceptualize their thoughts and place them on paper. It is also a form of communicating thoughts they may not know how to express verbally. A lot can be expressed in an artistic format. Various colors, shapes, and imagines can give insight on what a person may be feeling, thinking or experiencing in that moment.

Classroom Strategies

Interactive student activities are central to the student learning experience. The following activities will explore ways this curriculum can help students accomplish the above goals and enhance the overall student experience.

Modeling

One of the most effective strategies that teachers have at their disposal is modeling. Teachers use modeling to demonstrate their work and visually explain to students what they are trying to accomplish. Teachers can walk the students through the experience step-by-step, answering questions along the way. Modeling can also help to reduce some anxiety within the students, especially if the teacher makes a mistake because it shows them that teachers make mistakes as well and mistakes are a sign of growth. Throughout this curriculum, teachers can model how to play rhythms, make words rhyme in a song, use various movements to express emotion and even how to substitute words in a song to make a completely new song. This experience is designed to not only be enriching for the students, but also to help the teachers discover new things about themselves and their students.

Reflection

A crucial component to this curriculum is the reflection of content and meaning. Using phrases such as “I notice, I hear, I appreciate” and other positive and affirming words can help build student confidence and create a connection between them and their peers. The reflection piece teaches students how to engage in positive dialogue and to be respectful, even if they disagree with something. Being able to hear each other’s thoughts and experiences can provide a sense of comfort in knowing that there are others who may feel the same way. It also fosters connections between the members in the group. Reflecting on personal and group experiences and learning how to apply them to everyday life is one of the most important parts of the curriculum.

Empowerment and Respect

Being respectful and uplifting each other is at the center of the curriculum. These are skills that have to be taught, especially if students have not grown up in that type of environment. These expectations should lay the framework of the entire process. Things such as respecting the feelings of others, active listening, only one person speaking at a time and being accountable for your thoughts, feelings and actions by using “I” statements should be modeled, practiced and reinforced throughout the duration of the curriculum.

Modeling these types of behaviors and even praising or providing a tangible reward for students who use them as well can aid in reinforcing the behaviors as well as getting all of the students on board with this change from the norm. The goal is to get students used to using this language not only within the classroom, but throughout their travels with the hope of developing empathy and reducing unneeded conflict.

Songwriting – Experiences Through Words

Songwriting, especially those that are student-composed or improvised, can give students the opportunity to creatively explore their inner thoughts and emotions. Songs have long been described as a means of containing and channeling difficult and terrifying emotions^{xxvii}. They are a means of communicating and conduit for connecting students with their everyday challenges. Songwriting also provides an opportunity for others to hear your story and make connections within their own lives.

Group songwriting can provide students the opportunity to make social connections as well as increase self-esteem^{xxviii}. It gives them a means to be authentic and vulnerable in expressing feelings that may be harmful to their social-emotional development. The following activity describes an opportunity to utilize songwriting within the classroom setting.

This activity can be completed with a pre-written song or with a student creation. It may be beneficial to discuss what types of music interest your students and decide on a school-appropriate song that can be used for this activity. The goal of this particular activity is to have students identify positive affirmations and how they can use them to connect with others and be successful within their own lives. Each student can identify a positive statement about themselves by preferencing it with “I am...” or “I can...” and filling in the blank with a positive attribute or goal. Once the students have identified their affirmations, they can put those phrases in a particular order to create a song. You can provide the students with the opportunity to sing, rap or speak their affirmations to a steady percussive backbeat or pre-recorded instrumental track.

This activity can also be adapted for virtual teaching by using the Zoom whiteboard feature to list the students’ affirmations, or by using a word document or slide presentation. A few good songs for this activity are “You Gotta Be” by Des’ree, “I am Light” by India Arie or “Gotta Be Me” by Agent 23 Skidoo. You can have the students come up with their own words to fill in the ends of the phrases and perform them for the class or even submit them on Flipgrid work other students to watch and comment.

Instrument Play – Play Your Experience

Instrument play can aid in the creative and social development of children. Children’s ability to express feelings can be limited by underdeveloped verbal skills as well as their immature processing of fantasy versus reality^{xxix}. Rhythm and melodic musical play can remove the barrier of words and allow students to communicate their experiences in a

creative way. This activity will share how students can share and make connections with their emotion experiences through musical play.

The teacher and students will brainstorm various scenarios where students will be able to identify what and how they would feel during each experience. The teacher can also have some premade scenarios to jump start the thinking process for the students. The class will discuss the scenarios and share how they would experience each scenario. What would their body feel like? What would be their facial expression and affect? They will then translate that experience into sound either vocally or through some type of rhythm. The teacher will then facilitate a conversation to make connections between the students and their feelings in relation to others.

An adaptation of this lesson for virtual learning could be to have each student share their experience individually and each student can individually share feedback. Students can also share, via Flipgrid or another video recording platform, their experience and have fellow classmates comment or even use visual art to describe and discuss their experience.

Music and Art – Draw It Out

Just as instrumental music can provide opportunities for non-verbal communication, the same can be done through visual art. The purpose of this activity is to help students become aware of their inner emotions in relation to their lives and their environment. Students will listen to instrumental music tracks or popular music without the lyrics (possibly jazz, classical or meditation/nature music) and draw what emotions, images or experiences the music evoked. Students can use pictures, words, shapes and other designs to portray their images. Students will then sit in a circle and share with each other their experiences making a connection with other students.

An adaptation of this activity can include giving the students the opportunity to use digital art (such as gifs, clipart or web images) or recycled materials (paper, cardboard, magazines) to depict their inner thoughts and feelings. You can also encourage the students to use the music to envision themselves rising out of their challenges and headed toward where they want to see themselves in the future or also have prompts for them to respond to through visual art.

Round and Round – Making Choices

In this activity, students will learn that every choice they make has a consequence. The consequences can be positive or negative; big or small. The purpose of this activity is to help students at the upper elementary level, become aware of how choices affect their everyday life experiences. Students will be asked to identify at least two times when their choices had positive consequences and one time when it had negative consequences. The teacher will introduce the topic of the lesson and play the song “Circles,” by Post Malone, asking students to pay close attention to the lyrics. The class will discuss key

words they heard in the song that gave them insight into what might be the meaning of the song. They will then be given the opportunity to share their thoughts of the lyrics and their interpretation of the song. Students will then write down or share with the group times when they felt like they kept making the same mistakes over and over and how they changed and/or what they could have done differently. The teacher will then write them on the board and invite students to explain their choice, if they wish, and see if they recognize any similarities. Students will then insert their phrases into the chorus to the song, perform the new song, and share their experiences.

Another way that a teacher could facilitate this activity is to pre-select a song or discuss as a class an appropriate song, and then have the students analyze the meaning of the lyrics. They could then take those analyzed lyrics to substitute words within the song or use them to create an entirely new piece of music.

Music and Movement

Movement can also be an effective way to communicate thoughts and emotions. Dancers use movement to share an experience and tell their personal stories. Movement can be used to express experiences that cannot always be encapsulated through words. In this activity, the teacher can select music from a variety of styles, tempos, dynamics and tones and use prompts to direct the students on how to use music to facilitate their story. Many students may be self-conscious about using movement to express themselves in front of their peers so it may be beneficial to begin modeling simple movements such as stomps, hand claps or other simple body percussion. Students can be asked questions such as “what feelings do you think this music evokes” or “how would your body move to music at this tempo?” The teacher will use the music and prompts to facilitate a conversation based around how music can promote a reaction within the body. What happens naturally when the body hears music? How can you use movement to convey the story the music is attempting to portray?

Group Music Making

Making music with others has been known to help foster social bonding, improve quality of life, teach tolerance, create positive emotions and build a sense of community^{xxx}. Activities such as karaoke or playing along to a favorite song can help to establish trust and build relationships among students and peers. As a way to make karaoke appear less intimidating, the teacher could model a performance and assure the students that it is just for fun. The teacher could even purposely, but not to the students’ knowledge, make a mistake, which can help create an atmosphere of safety in being vulnerable around their peers.

In order to ease into the idea of performing an entire piece of music, the teacher can model singing, speaking or playing only at the ends of phrases as opposed to performing the entire piece and risking students becoming overwhelmed. From there, they could add on the first and last lines of the chorus or each verse and continue to scaffold until the

students can experience the entire piece of music. The goals of this entire musical experience can include all of the following: (1) being expressive through singing and instrument playing, (2) building confidence and creativity, (3) improving communication and decision making, and (4) building community and respect^{xxxix}.

Student Activities

The following are examples of interventions that may be used within a traditional session that can be adapted based on the developmental level and needs of the students. These sessions are designed for in-person learning but can be easily adapted for the virtual learning platform. Utilizing the virtual platform opens the door to a plethora of resources that can enhance the process and engagement, especially for our older learners.

Representing Feelings

In this lesson, students will be able to recognize and portray various emotions musically or through eurhythmic movement. The objectives for this session are that students will be able to identify how they are feeling, display that feeling on their instrument, use pictures and/or portray it in their bodies. Students will be able to identify emotions in at least two other students based on their playing, affect and/or movement. The purpose of this intervention is to help elementary school students understand and recognize their zones of regulation, different feelings, how they feel within their body and how to identify emotions within others.

Students will watch a video about emotions. The teacher will ask students to choose between a drum or a shaker and represent how they are feeling with the instrument. Next, the teacher will identify and discuss commonalities amongst the group and explain that feelings are ok, but it is all about what you do when you are feeling a certain way. Students will then be able to share at least two feelings they remember from the video either vocally or through alternative communication and what they think that emotion looks, feels, and sounds like. The students will then listen to the “Emotions Song” by Patty Shukla (found on YouTube) and play their instruments along with the teachers.

Movin’ and Groovin

In this lesson, students will improve body awareness and motor skills through movement. The purpose of this is to help students in grades K-5 become aware of their body and movements in relation to those around them. Students will also learn how movement can have an impact on mood. The objectives of this lesson are for students to improve awareness of their body in relation to their environment and describe at least 2 ways to be safe while moving within the classroom. Students will work on gross and fine motor movement and identify at least 2 other ways to move with their bodies. Facilitator will invite students to sit or stand during the music and freely move around the room.

The teacher will introduce the students to body awareness and being mindful of staying safe as they move around the room. The teacher will proceed to ask students to identify ways to stay safe within the classroom environment. Before moving, the teacher will do a check-in to identify how each student is feeling. The teacher will play the song “Better When I’m Dancin’” by Megan Trainor (found on YouTube) and ask the students how they feel after moving to the music and what they noticed about their movements in relation to the room and those around them.

Stop and Go

In this lesson, students will improve regulatory skills, body awareness and strengthen their ability to follow directions. The objectives are for students to improve regulatory skills by stopping when the music stops during the song and to follow the movement directions.

The teacher will introduce the song “Stop, Go,” by Patty Shukla (found on Youtube), explain the directions, and discuss safety when moving around the room. The teacher will ask individual students to identify one of the directions mentioned as well as one of the safety expectations. The teacher will then play the song, “Stop and Go,” stopping and giving movement directions throughout the song. The students may also be given the opportunity to create their own movements.

How Do You Feel When?

The goal of this lesson is for students to be able to identify their emotions and play those emotions on their percussion instrument or a percussive surface. The objectives are for students to identify at least 2 emotions discussed during the activity and express it on their instrument. Students will also identify at least 2 other emotions they felt during the day or past week and discuss what caused that emotion. Finally, make connections of emotions with at least 2 other students.

Students will sit in a circle and each student will pick an index card from a pile. The prompt is “How do you feel when…” and the student will pick a card that has a scenario. The student will explain how they feel when “x” happens and play that emotion on the instrument. They will then explain why they felt that way. An adaptation to this lesson can be a student writing how they feel on the back of the card instead of saying it out loud or drawing/showing a picture and explaining it to the class. The teacher will then collect the cards, write the emotions on the board and read the prompts, asking the students as a whole who can relate to feeling certain emotions with regard to each prompt. Students will then discuss thoughts and feelings that came up during the lesson and make connections between how their feelings relate to others within the group.

Music and Visual Art

In this lesson, students will use music and drawing to reflect on personal feelings and experiences. The objectives are for students to identify emotions the activity evoked through listening to the music. Students will also identify at least 2 personal experiences/images the activity evoked if comfortable. Students will then connect their experience to at least 2 other students in the class.

The purpose of this lesson is to help students in grades K-5 become aware of their emotions in relation to their experiences and environment. Students will listen to instrumental music (possibly jazz, classical or meditation/nature music) and draw what emotions, images or experiences the music evoked. Students will then sit in a circle and share with each other their experiences making a connection to at least 2 other students. An adaptation to this lesson can be for the teacher to give students a prompt/image to think about and have them draw in response to it. They can also give students other craft materials, such as pictures from magazines, and have them respond to the music/prompts through visual art.

“Gotta’ Be”

In this lesson, students will reflect on positive attributes they possess and express them through lyric substitution. The objectives are for students to identify at least 2 positive attributes about themselves. They will then identify at least 2 positive attributes they see within another student and make connections based on their experiences. The purpose of this lesson is to help students in grades K-5 build self-esteem through becoming aware of their positive attributes.

The teacher will introduce the topic of the lesson and play the song “You Gotta’ Be,” by Des’ree (or ‘Gotta Be Me by 23 Skiddoo or some other song about self-esteem) asking them to pay close attention to the lyrics. The group will discuss what they heard and thought of the lyrics and if they could explain what they think the song is about. Students will then write down or share with the group some positive attributes/goals they have or wish to achieve. The teacher will then write them on the board (or have students write them) and invite students to explain their choice, if they wish, and see if they recognize any similarities. Students will then insert their phrases into the chorus of the song, perform the new song, and share their experiences.

Pass the Beat

In this lesson, students will focus on regulatory skills, teamwork and following directions in a passing game. The objectives are for students to start and stop passing the beat at when prompted by the teacher, and to safely pass the egg shakers during the activity. The teacher will use live or recorded music of the song “Tingalayo” by Raffi and show students how to safely pass the shaker in a circle. When the music stops, the passing

stops. The teacher may have the students switch directions, pass over their head, behind their backs, etc. Also, instead of a passing game, the teacher can have students pass the beat while playing drums, tossing a ball to one another, clapping, stomping etc.

Rhythm Rap

In this activity, students will be able to identify positive affirmations and include them with spoken word in a drumming activity. The objectives are for students to identify at least 2 positive affirmations/qualities of themselves to include in the rap, identify at least 2 affirmations/qualities from others within the group and identify at least 2 ways they can apply these positive qualities to their lives.

The purpose of this lesson is to help students in grades K-5 build confidence, improve self-esteem and connect with positive experiences within their lives. The teacher will keep a steady beat on a drum, percussive surface, with their voice or using body percussion. The teacher can also use a recorded track. Students will create a short, rhyme or phrase to accompany the beat. The teacher and/or students will create a theme for the rhyme, such as positive affirmations or goals. The students can also come up with silly themes and also lead the group with the steady back beat once comfortable. The teacher will then lead a discussion on thoughts and feelings that came up during the lesson.

Fairness and Equity for All

In this lesson, students will reflect on what it means to be fair and equitable, why these terms are important and identify a time where they felt they were treated unfairly or inequitably. Students will respond to various prompts created by the teacher and identify if the situation was fair and/or equitable or unfair and/or inequitable. Students will be able to distinguish between the two terms and identify situations regarding the terms.

The teacher will begin the lesson by defining the terms and give examples of various situations regarding the terms. They will then listen to the song “One Love” by Bob Marley (or another appropriate song regarding fairness and/or equity) and the teacher will remind the students to pay close attention to the lyrics. The teacher will ask questions such as “What did you hear,” “What do you think the song is about,” or “How do you think the song’s meaning is reflected in the instrumentation, tone and tempo?”

After the discussion, students will be given the lyrics of the song with certain words left blank. Students will be encouraged to fill in their own lyrics within those phrases that depict what these terms mean to them, such as what they look like, sound like, and/or feel like. Students can then share their songs, if they are comfortable, with the rest of the class.

Another way to adapt this lesson could be to give the students the lyrics at the beginning and have them analyze and follow along with the recording. If this is distracting, the teacher can go over the lyrics with the class together after listening to the

song. Students could also use movement, body percussion, or any percussive surface to depict how they felt when they were treated unfairly or inequitably and how that music may change if they weren't treated in that manner. This lesson can also be adapted to reflect on important periods in history such as the civil rights era or times of civil unrest and have the students perform how these eras may have looked using music and movement. Finally, the students could act out scenarios that depicted positive and negative experiences surrounding these terms and even have some students accompany the skit with music they feel would be appropriate for the behaviors displayed in that scenario.

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This text focuses on what is trauma, what leads to trauma and what are various types of traumatic experiences. It gives the reader insight on how to address trauma in various situations, what to look for and how to prevent the lasting, harmful effects that trauma can cause.

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This text focuses on addressing music as a social-emotional wellness tool in addressing various experiences of students with cognitive, physical, and psychological impairments and how to provide them with the skills necessary to transition into being active and successful members of the community.

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This text focuses on the use of group drumming in wellness as well as addressing the mental health needs of participants. It gives insight on how drumming can be an effective tool in helping those with mental health challenges reach their goals and become successful in their environment.

Berger, Dorita S., and Stephen M. Shore. *Eurhythmics for Autism and Other Neurophysiologic Diagnoses: A Sensorimotor Music-Based Treatment Approach*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2016.

This book focuses on how movement and music can be used as a gateway to connect with and address the needs of students with autism and various neurophysiologic disorders. It focuses on how music and movement can be combined to address the sensorimotor needs of this population.

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This book focuses on the use of music and the other creative arts as a way of addressing trauma experienced by inner-city youth, particularly, youth of color. The book explores various activities using the creative arts that will address the various social-emotional needs of this population.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020, April 7). Retrieved October 08, 2020, from <https://www.cdc.gov/>

This website gives insight on trauma, what it is, how it affects the body and the resources used in order for it to be addressed. It also gives examples of various tools and resources to help in trauma recovery.

Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (US). "Understanding the Impact of Trauma." Trauma-Informed Care in Behavioral Health Services. U.S. National Library of Medicine, January 1, 1970. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK207191/>.

This website takes a dive in understanding how trauma can impact the mind and body. It gives various examples of areas that trauma impacts as well as things that can be done to prevent and/or reduce the impact of trauma.

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This text explores various music techniques that can be used to address various areas of the adolescent well-being and experiences. It describes various ways that music can be used to address individual needs.

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McLeod, Saul. "Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs." Simply Psychology. Simply Psychology, December 29, 2020. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html>.

This website explores that various the levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and how fulfilling these basic needs can aid in combating trauma as well as supporting children in their overall develop. It also gives examples of various essential resources children need at each level.

Pasiali, V., & Clark, C. (2018). Evaluation of a music therapy social skills development program for youth with limited resources. *Journal of Music Therapy*, 55(3), 280–308. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jmt/thy007>

This article discusses how music can be used to address and improve social skills and interactions amongst youth, especially those from low socioeconomic backgrounds. It gives examples of various musical activities that teach children the various skills needed to engage in positive social experiences with others.

Porter, S., McConnell, T., McLaughlin, K., Lynn, F., Cardwell, C., Braiden, H.-J., ... Holmes, V. (2017). Music therapy for children and adolescents with behavioral and emotional problems: a randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 58(5), 586–594. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.12656>

This article reviews the various ways that music and music therapy can be used to address various social-emotional and behavioral concerns within children. It gives specific activities that can be used to address key areas in social-emotional and behavioral development within children.

“Richardson Park Elementary School Profile (2021): Wilmington, DE.” Public School Review. Accessed January 11, 2021.
[https://www.publicschoolreview.com/richardson-park-elementary-school-profile#:~:text=Richardson%20Park%20Elementary%20School%20serves%20589%20students%20in%20grades%20Kindergarten%2D5.&text=The%20student%3A%20each%20ratio%20of,\(majority%20Black%20and%20Hispanic\).](https://www.publicschoolreview.com/richardson-park-elementary-school-profile#:~:text=Richardson%20Park%20Elementary%20School%20serves%20589%20students%20in%20grades%20Kindergarten%2D5.&text=The%20student%3A%20each%20ratio%20of,(majority%20Black%20and%20Hispanic).)

This website gives basic demographic background on the students, teachers and staff at Richardson Park Elementary School. It also gives various data on information such as test scores, student teacher ratio and the surrounding community.

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<https://doi.org/10.1093/jmt/6.4.98>.

This text gives the reader insight on how music and music therapy approaches can be applied to addressing the needs of children with autism in the areas of cognitive, academic, social, communicative, psychological and sensorimotor development.

Wilmshurst, Linda. *Child and Adolescent Psychopathology: A Casebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA, California: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2018.

This case book gives an overview of the pathology of various mental health and behavioral disorders that can be seen in school-age youth and adolescents. It also gives examples of approaches and treatment modalities that can be used to help support youth in these areas depending on their specific needs.

Appendix A: Implementing District Standards

Content Standards

Concepts from the following standards will be combined and utilize to address not only the musical requirements if this curriculum is an extension of a general music class but will also cover concepts related to social-emotional development, identity, diversity and interpersonal relationships

National Core Arts Standards – Music

Creating

In this area, students will learn and develop the fundamental skills needed to create instrumental and vocal musical experiences. The points covered are as follows: (1) MU:Cr1.1 – Experience and generate musical concepts; (2) MU: Cr2.1 - Explore musical ideas; and (3) MU:Cr3.2 – Share musical ideas with peers.

Performing

Under performing, students will develop the skills needed to become competent and confident performers, thus building their confidence to display their abilities for a variety of group and performance settings. The concepts covered are as follows: (1) MU:Pr4.2 – Demonstrate awareness of musical contrasts; (2) MU:Pr4.3 – Explore music’s expressive qualities; and (3) MU:Pr6.1 – Perform music with expression

Responding

Under the responding section, students will develop the skills needed to intuitively react to their musical playing and listening abilities through their thoughts, emotions and experiences within themselves and the world. The concepts covered within this section are as follows: (1) MU:Re9.1 – Talk about personal and expressive connections to music.

Connecting

In the connecting section, students will relate their musical experiences to other artistic forms, their community and their environment. The concepts covered in this section are as follows: (1) MU:Cn10.0 – Demonstrate how interests, knowledge and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing and responding to music; and (2) MU:Cn11.0 – Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the arts, other disciplines, varied contexts and daily life.

ASCA National Standards for personal/social development

PS:A1 – Acquire self-knowledge, helps students to address the following objectives: (1) PS:A1.5 – Identify and express feelings; (2) PS:A1.6 – Distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behaviors; and (3) PS:A1.8 – Identify the need for self-control and how to practice it.

PS:A2 – Acquire interpersonal skills, helps students to achieve the following objectives: (1) PS:A2.3 – Recognize, accept, respect and appreciate individual differences; (2) PS:A2.6 – Use effective communication skills; and (3) PS:A2.7 – Know that communication involves speaking, listening, and nonverbal behaviors.

PS:B1 – Self-knowledge application, helps students to achieve the following objectives: (1) PS:B1.1 – Use a decision-making and problem-solving model; (2) PS:B1.4 – Develop coping skills for dealing with problems; (3) PS:B1.6 – Know how to apply conflict resolution skills.

PS:C1 – Acquire personal safety skills, helps students achieve the following objectives: (1) PS:C1.7 – Apply effective problem-solving and decision-making skills to make safe and healthy choices; (2) PS:C1.10 – Learn techniques for managing stress and conflict; and (3) PS:C1.11 Learn coping skills for managing life events.

Social Justice Anchor Standards

Identity

The identity domain addressed the students' ability to create a positive image of who they are and how their identity relates to the world around them. The objectives to be addressed are as follows: Anchor Standard (1) Students will develop positive social identities based on their membership in multiple groups in society; Anchor Standard (3) Students will recognize that people's multiple identities interact and create unique and complex individuals; and Anchor Standard (4) Students will express pride, confidence and healthy self-esteem without denying the value and dignity of other people.

Diversity

The diversity domain addresses various cultural, environmental and community differences, respect for them, and how they relate to our own diverse background. The objectives to be addressed are as follows: Anchor Standard (7) Students will develop language and knowledge to accurately and respectfully describe how people (including themselves) are both similar to and different from each other and others in their identity groups; Anchor Standard (8) Students will respectfully express curiosity about the history and lived experiences of others and will exchange ideas and beliefs in an open-minded way; and Anchor Standard (9) Students will respond to diversity by building empathy, respect, understanding and connection.

Justice

The justice domain addresses fairness and equity in all areas of life regardless of differences. The objectives that will be addressed are as follows: Anchor Standard (11) Students will recognize stereotypes and relate to people as individuals rather than representatives of groups; Anchor Standard (13) Students will analyze the harmful impact of bias and injustice on the world, historically and today; and Anchor Standard (14) Students will recognize that power and privilege influence relationships on interpersonal, intergroup and institutional levels and consider how they have been affected by those dynamics.

Action

The action domain addresses how students can stand against injustice, inequity and unfairness and do their part to treat everyone with respect and dignity regardless of

differences. The objectives that will be addressed are as follows: Anchor Standard (16) Students will express empathy when people are excluded or mistreated because of their identities and concern when they themselves experience bias; Anchor Standard (17) Students will recognize their own responsibility to stand up to exclusion, prejudice and injustice; and Anchor Standard (19) Students will make principled decisions about when and how to take a stand against bias and injustice in their everyday lives and will do so despite negative peer or group pressure.

Appendix B: Curriculum Adaptation for a Virtual or Hybrid Setting

Although this curriculum is designed for in-person instruction, during this era of COVID, adjustments have to be made in order to accommodate both virtual and hybrid learning environments. All of these activities can be completed via virtual learning platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, Skype or other videoconferencing platforms. Digital platforms provide opportunities for students to chat with both the educator and their fellow students either to the entire class or individually. This is especially important for the social-emotional development of students who may not always feel comfortable in asking certain questions in front of their peers. Some platforms even make use of tools such as mute and spotlight which allow the participants to focus their attention on the speaker without distractions within the virtual class. There are even opportunities to use emojis and other features such as digital backgrounds and pictures that provide a little enjoyment for the students, as well as be used as talking points in order to build a strong community by learning more about each other.

There are other video recording platforms such as Flipgrid and TikTok which can allow teachers to record fun videos of lesson instructions and also provide the students with opportunities to share their work, such as musical performances, songs, poems, raps, movements and other visual ways to show progress. The Red Clay District uses a platform called Schoology where all of the students are uploaded by grade. This allows for students to be separated into specific classes and for them to communicate privately with the teacher. The teacher can even post lesson instructions, videos and discussion boards to make virtual learning more interactive. The screen share option on Zoom makes it simple for the teacher to share with the students, step-by-step, the contents of the lesson. It even allows the user to give remote access to students individually so that they can use the teacher's screen to answer questions and perform tasks.

The mute option allows for students to practice music without the fear of making a mistake in front of the class. They can then unmute themselves and play individually for assessment purposes or even send the teacher a private video of their progress. There are also online boards such as Padlet and Mentimeter where students can answer questions or post ideas anonymously without worrying about judgement from others. The teacher can then assess the class based on the online board answers and decide whether to move on or

if a specific topic needs a bit more practice. They even allow for collaboration with other students or just provide a means of gathering ideas together in one space.

The Google platform has many ways in which students can interact with each other. Google Drive allow for students and teachers to upload documents, games, and/or activities in which everyone can access. Activities such as songwriting can be completed as a whole group by using Google Docs and allowing students to input ideas into the chat or by unmuting and saying them aloud. Google even has a program where you can create your own website, which could be used by educators to post content and links to various websites that will support their development in a specific academic area, or by students to complete various creative projects. Even though the pandemic has limited our social interactions and impacted school in-person learning, technology still is able to provide students the opportunity to collaborate, socialize, create and learn together in an effective and efficient manner.

Notes

ⁱ “Richardson Park Elementary School Profile (2021): Wilmington, DE.” Public School Review.

ⁱⁱ “Richardson Park Elementary School Profile (2021): Wilmington, DE.” Public School Review.

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^x *Music therapy for children and adolescents with behavioral and emotional problems.*

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