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Transferring Writing Skills to a 3rd Grade Music Classroom

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Eastern Illinois University

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BY

Megan A. Wilson

THESIS

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Transferring Writing Skills to a Third Grade Music Classroom

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A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Masters of Arts, Music Education Concentration

Eastern Illinois University

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ABSTRACT

Transferring Writing Skills to a 3rd Grade Music Classroom

Megan A. Wilson

The purpose of this action research study was to examine the use of writing skills in a third grade general music classroom. Students wrote narratives based on music they heard, used an interactive notebook to reflect on musical experiences, conducted a short composer research project and wrote a biography about the composer. The study was designed to investigate the following research question: Will the use of writing in the music classroom help the students apply writing skills from their general education classes while learning music content? The duration of the study was for an entire semester and the students attended music class once a week for forty minutes. The data collected consisted of interview questions and answers, writing graphic organizers, interactive notebook entries, student writing samples, and journal notes kept by the researcher. The results of this study revealed that the students demonstrated an average growth of 10% between their pre-writing and post-writing samples. This project encouraged cross-curricular lessons and working with colleagues outside of the music content area.

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Introduction

Education standards and trends are constantly changing, but the purpose of education remains the same: to prepare students for the future. One current trend aiming to do just that is cross-curricular teaching, which includes curriculums that combine more than one topic and skill. The teaching standards, which are based on research and policy, are constantly changing and adapting as well. The newest standards are known as the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). 2014-2015 was the first school year for full implementation at my school. As a music teacher, my administrator did not require that I use the CCSS in my curriculum. However, I felt the need to provide a cross-curricular experience for my students. For this study, I incorporated writing skills into each of my music lessons with a focus on the use of interactive notebooks.

This is my fifth year teaching in the same district and I am still trying to set classroom standards. At first, several students and parents had trouble adapting to how I conducted my music classroom. I even had a parent say, “Isn’t music just supposed to be singing?” This troubled me and I realized that I needed to set up my classroom to where learning music was not “just singing,” but also creating, connecting, responding, and performing.

The fine arts have been cited as a core subject since 1994 in the Goals 2000: Educate America Act. Kenneth Elpus believes it is important for the arts to follow the trends of the new CCSS to maintain “core status.” He states that “the investment of both capital and effort to draft core arts standards is likely justifiable on these grounds alone—were the profession not to act, gains already made by the arts as a “core” subject might be lost” (Elpus, 2013, p. 23).

In order to establish the classroom that I desired, I began with my young third graders. When I first met my third grade students, they had just begun classes in a new building with new teachers, and they were feeling very “grown-up.” This was the perfect time to introduce a more “grown-up” music setting. This new classroom setting consisted of higher expectations, interactive journaling, assessments, research and group activities.

I have always struggled with determining what content to include in my curriculum and in what order to introduce this content. With limited requirements, the possibilities are endless. The first place I looked for guidance was the state music standards. The state music standards provided me with great content, but I wanted my students to get more than just facts out of my classroom. I wanted my students to bridge gaps between their academic classes and the valuable experiences they had in music class, as well as to develop critical thinking skills.

My mother is a special education teacher and has recommended that I use the Common Core State Standards in my music classroom. Since the CCSS only focuses on English Language Arts and Mathematics, they have not been in the forefront of my curriculum plans. Through my struggle with developing curriculum, I have found value in using material that can be cross curricular. The CCSS inspired me to try and bridge a gap between the general education classroom and the music classroom by including writing into my lesson.

The purpose of this action research study was to incorporate writing into my class in many different ways. For example, we developed stories based on the music to which we listened, the students used interactive notebooks to reflect on musical experiences, conducted a short composer research project and wrote a biography on that composer.

The primary research question for this study was: Will the use of writing in the music classroom help the students apply writing skills from their general education classes while learning music content?

Action research is a continuous cycle of planning, acting, observing and reflecting to help improve as an educator. My research design was influenced by the work of Colleen Conway and Tom Jeffers. I modulated my design after their study. Conway and Jeffers conducted an action research study entitled: *The Teacher as Researcher in Beginning Instrumental Music* (2004). Their data consisted of student and parent interviews, logs of interactions, student and parent questionnaires, parent evaluations and a video tapes of Mr. Jeffers' teaching (2004). Similarly, I collected data consisting of student and teacher interviews, a journals of weekly happenings, and a video tapes of my lessons and student work. I used this data to analyze the effectiveness of writing in the 3rd grade music classroom.

LITERATURE SUMMARY

Introduction

Curriculum integration has become a leading topic in the music education world. Curriculum integration occurs when two or more content areas are combined in a single curriculum plan. Many educators advocate for curriculum integration and others have expressed concern that music content is lost when other subjects are included in music instruction. Amy Munroe (2015) strongly advocates that curriculum integration can be a great opportunity for our students in the music classroom. She talks about the educational experience preparing the students for the “real world.” Munroe said “real-life problems require a synthesis of knowledge to achieve a solution” (p. 14). She questioned why we divide our subjects when the real world is not divided into specific problems. Real world problems require pulling knowledge from all over the place. Munroe referred to the National Core Arts Standards and talked about the anchor standard -- “connecting.” This standard calls on students to “relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding” (State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education, 2014, p. 13). Nancy Thompson Smith (2014) also advocates that by providing students with cross-curricular experiences, they are able to extend their comprehension of the relevance of music to their everyday lives.

Music educators have questioned whether or not curriculum integration will cause music content to lose its central focus in the music classroom. Munroe discussed why most educators do not want to change their curriculum, which is simply because of lack of time and resources. Many music teachers do not have the same planning period as general education teachers, which may cause the first problem in working together.

Munroe suggested starting with the art teacher or someone else in the “special” teacher category, because most of these teachers run on the same daily schedule. She stated that “it is our job to make our colleagues aware of these similarities and opportunities for integration” (p. 14). One way to collaborate with general education teachers is to use the Common Core State Standards.

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) consist of English Language Arts Standards and Mathematics Standards. Many music educators have evaluated how to use these CCSS in their own classrooms. CCSS are often used by music educators as a form of advocacy for music in schools. Paul and Ann Kimpton state in their book titled, *Common Core: Re-Imagining The Music Rehearsal and Classroom* (2014), that all music educators should embrace CCSS for a couple of reasons. “First, they connect music educators to the school community. Music educators are seen as contributing to student skills” (p. 23). “Next, reading and writing offer opportunities for music students to reflect and set goals, thus improving attainment of musical skills” (p. 23). All types of educators have been known to use music to teach concepts such as reading, fluency, and mathematics. In retrospect, English Language Arts and Mathematics also can be used to help teach music content. This literature summary includes the following three categories: Writing Instruction, Music and Common Core State Standards, and Interactive Notebooks.

Writing Instruction

Teaching with the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts Grades 3-5 (2013) was edited by Lesley Mandel Morrow, Karen K. Wixson and Timothy Shanahan. This book informs teachers about the new CCSS and includes suggestions on

how to implement them. Chapter three, written by Steve Graham, focuses on the writing standards alone. Graham refers to a national survey (Gilbert & Graham, 2010) that was undertaken to evaluate how much time teachers spent on writing instruction. This survey reveals that most teachers only have their students spend 25 minutes a day writing and “on average, teachers spent 15 minutes a day teaching writing strategies, knowledge and skills” (p. 88).

The CCSS include four applications of writing skills which include Text Types and Purposes, Production and Distribution of Writing, Research to Build and Present Knowledge, and Range of Writing. The author stated that these applications are not independent of each other, but can and should overlap. “It is also important to realize that these applications depend, at least in part, on students’ facility and mastery of a range of other writing skills, including handwriting (or typing), spelling, conventions, grammar, word choice, and sentence structure” (p. 89).

Technology use is greatly stressed in the CCSS. However, this may cause a challenge for schools, teachers and students. The Gilbert and Graham (2010) national survey revealed that 50% of teachers have their students use word processing once a month or less. “Empirical evidence supports the use of these electronic modes of writing. For instance, children in the elementary grades make greater gains in writing when they do most or all of their writing via a word processor versus paper and pencil (Graham, et al., in press; Morphy & Graham, 2012)” (p. 91). Many teachers may also struggle with the use of technology because of the limited availability of computers. Chapter three provides several ways to work around this problem, by investing in a computer lab to be

used exclusively for writing purposes, using a rolling lab that classes can share, or placing a few computers in the classroom that students can share.

A few concerns about the writing standards were listed in this chapter. One is that the author feels a few of the standards underestimate the students' capabilities. Another being that the standards are vaguely written. The author's final concern is that the standards include "With guidance and support from (peers) and adults..." (p. 92). The students need to learn how to act and write independently.

Writing instructional activities are often used in the classroom, but *Writing Instruction in Elementary Classrooms: Making the Connection to Common Core State Standards* focused on which activities are used most in the classroom and which genres of writing are used most by the students. The authors, Richards, Sturm, and Cali (2012), concentrated on how this new information can be linked with the Common Core State Standards.

The information was collected from a survey that was given to first, third and fifth grade primary general education teachers. One hundred and seven teachers completely finished the survey, however 166 surveys were started. The results from all surveys were used in data presented, even though some surveys were unfinished.

Means were then calculated to determine the average frequency of use of each activity for teachers of each grade level. In addition, the range of teacher responses was determined to examine the variability of instructional practices and genre uses among teachers at each grade level. (p. 134)

The results showed that there is a high variability among all of the categories included in the survey (writing activities, writing instruction, instructional strategies,

writing types), “with reported frequencies often ranging from near 0 to over 100” (p. 134). For the writing environment category, there was a wide range of responses. “Teachers at all grade levels felt that district or state testing influenced their instruction a moderate to strong amount, and writing was integrated into various content areas across grade levels” (p. 135). The authors summarize by stating that since students’ writing varies by grade level, it is important to review each student’s educational history and expand the curriculum in areas that they may not have had as much work. Teachers should keep writing samples completed by each student to pass on to their next grade level teacher. This will help the new teachers in deciding what areas of writing they may need the most help.

Common Core: Re-Imagining the Music Rehearsal and Classroom (2014) made the connection between music and language as being two universal languages. Each concept is used to communicate and portray ideas. Paul Kimpton and Ann Kimpton said that in order for students to develop skills in music and language they must use “a certain amount of effort, and thus the development of skills in both areas necessitates motivation on the part of the student if a high level of competency is to be reached” (p. 37). The authors of this book said that there are three basic desires that motivate students: the students’ desire to be in control, to feel a sense of competence, and to believe there is a connection or purpose for them. “If students see that literacy skills are valued in more than one class, then they are more likely to be motivated to develop these skills that will serve them for a lifetime” (p. 40).

Chapter nine stated that writing can “elevate musical skills and knowledge” (p.71). This is done by having the students “explain, describe, analyze, evaluate, and

create” through their writing (p. 71). Teachers can use writing to more fully evaluate student growth. Graphic organizers are suggested to help the students track and lay out their thoughts. Students should then use their graphic organizer notes to complete their writing. The different types of writing strategies that the Common Core State Standards focus on are argumentative writing, informational/explanatory writing and expository writing. These types of writing are expected to be “coherent and organized (Writing Standard 4) and that students plan and revise their writing (Writing Standard 5)” (p.72). Kimpton and Kimpton suggested collaborating with the language arts teacher and sharing rubrics and writing strategies to assess student writing (p. 81).

“The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) consists of a group of states working together to develop a modern assessment that replaces previous state standardized tests” (PARCC, Inc. 2016). All of Illinois’ students are currently required to be assessed in writing through PARCC, which measures written expression and knowledge of language. There are many forms of writing that the students may be asked to produce during the test. Neither the teachers nor the students will know what form of writing will be expected until the test is distributed. Different forms may include autobiographies, descriptions, fables, how-to-do-it articles and many more.

The Literacy Implementation Guidance for the ELA Common Core State Standards was a document presented by International Reading Association in 2012 to clear any confusion concerning the implementation of the new CCSS. This document discussed recommendations for challenging texts, foundational skills, comprehension, vocabulary, writing, disciplinary literacy, and diverse learners. The summaries of recommendations for writing are:

- “Provide opportunities for students to write in response to reading across the curriculum.
- Provide research opportunities that involve reading both print and digital texts, and that require writing in response to reading.
- Teachers will need professional development in teaching students how to write the types of text required in the CCSS. This professional development should include teachers doing their own writing, as well as analyzing annotated student writing” (p. 3).

Nancy Thompson Smith (2014) wrote in her article, *Strengthen Your Music Program by Incorporating Aspects of the ELA Common Core State Standards*, that “strong speaking and writing skills are necessary for success in college and careers, and not simply the careers of English majors” (p. 12). Her article outlines that incorporating CCSS into the music classroom will help improve speaking and writing skills, develop critical thinking, provide cross-curricular learning opportunities and encourage data driven instruction.

Smith stated that students may show understanding of content more clearly through speaking rather than writing and vice versa. “One way to determine how well students understand music terminology is by encouraging them to use these words in their speaking and writing” (p. 13). Another activity could be to have the class write a paragraph. She provided a graphic organizer to help assist with the requirements of building a paragraph. Students should include a topic sentence, three detailed sentences and finally a concluding sentence.

Developing critical thinking skills are emphasized in the CCSS in order for students to be college and career ready. Smith provided two music class examples of times when students are engaged in critical thinking. The first is comparing and contrasting two pieces of music, the second is composing melodic or rhythmic patterns (p. 13). “When describing, analyzing, or evaluating, expect your students to support their thoughts with reason and evidence” (p. 13). There is also a new awareness that cross-curricular opportunities aid in a student’s success in being college and career ready. These cross-curricular experiences allow the students to have authentic learning experiences that can connect the relevance of music to everyday life.

Music and Common Core

All but eight states and territories have adopted the CCSS, according to the CCSS website (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers 2010). As of 2016, the states and territories that have not adopted these standards include Minnesota, Nebraska, Indiana, Texas, Virginia, Oklahoma, Alaska and Puerto Rico. The standards were written by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers in 2010. As students matriculate from each grade level, they are expected to ascertain a certain level of content.

“The standards are:

- 1) Research and evidence based
- 2) Clear, understandable, and consistent
- 3) Aligned with college and career expectations

- 4) Based on rigorous content and the application of knowledge through higher-order thinking skills
- 5) Built upon the strengths and lessons of current state standards
- 6) Informed by other top-performing countries to prepare all students for success in our global economy and society” (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers 2010).

Core concepts are to be the focus in the early grades so that there is more time for the students to master these concepts. “The development of the standards began with research-based learning progressions detailing what is known today about how students’ mathematical knowledge, skill, and understanding develop over time” (2010, Mathematics Standards section, para. 4). The CCSS have set “grade-specific goals.” However, the CCSS do not tell teachers how these goals are to be taught. The recurring theme of the CCSS is that the students are to be college and career ready by the time they graduate from high school.

The Common Core State Standards include English Language Arts as one of the core subjects. This subject was found to be an important aspect in a student’s education, so that he or she is college and career ready. They are included in the standards because each subject requires reading, listening, and writing. Under the English Language Arts Standards, literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects are included. The CCSS states that it is important to remember that these standards were created to enhance the content standards in these subjects and not replace them.

The Common Core asks students to read stories and literature, as well as more complex texts that provide facts and background knowledge in areas such as

science and social studies. Students will be challenged and asked questions that push them to refer back to what they have read. This stresses critical-thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills that are required for success in college, career, and life. (2010, English Language Arts Standards section, para.2)

CCSS includes anchor standards, which are the “bigger picture” standards that students are expected to accomplish. The CCSS anchor standards for writing include: text types and purposes, production and distribution of writing, research to build and present knowledge and range of writing. Then, within these anchor standards are more specific grade level standards that each student must meet by the end of the school year. For example, under the 3rd grade text types and purposes writing anchor standard for opinion pieces is the standard that students must “introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons” (2010, 3rd Grade English Language Arts Writing section, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.1.a)

Mathematics is the second subject that is included in the CCSS. It has been established that mathematic standards in the United States must become more concentrated for the students to show great progress. To ensure more clarity, the statements written in the standards are specific rather than general.

As of 2016, the CCSS website includes an “Application to Students with Disabilities” link (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers 2010). This source states how the standards can be applied to students with disabilities. These students are individuals eligible under the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). These students must be challenged in their academics, so that they can be successful in their life after high school. The source states

that all students with disabilities must have supports and accommodations included in their instruction. This would include “supports and related services designed to meet the unique needs of these students and to enable their access to the general education curriculum,” an Individualized Education Program (IEP), and “teachers and specialized instructional support personnel” (para. 4). The CCSS promotes high standards for all types of learners.

The Common Core State Standards Initiative website includes a “Frequently Asked Questions” section. This document simply defines the education standards and the Common Core State Standards. It explains why the standards are important. The document reinforces that the goal is to ensure that students are college and career ready when they leave high school. One of the questions is, “What guidance do the Common Core State Standards provide teachers?” (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010, p. 10) The answer states that the standards provide goals and expectations of knowledge, but they do not tell teachers how the material should be taught. Instead, the document reveals how the standards should be cited. It also discusses why the standards are only written for English Language Arts and Mathematics and it addresses whether or not they plan to expand the subjects in the future.

The “Myths vs. Facts” section of the Common Core State website is very similar to the “Frequently Asked Questions” section. Some of the myths include:

- “Myth: Adopting common standards means bringing all states’ standards down to the lowest common denominator.”

- “Myth: The standards are just vague descriptions of skills and do not include a reading list or any other reference to content.”
- “Myth: No teachers were involved in writing the standards.”
- “Myth: The standards are not based on research or evidence.”
- “Myth: The standards tell teachers what to teach” (2010).

The list of myths and facts continues and essentially contains the same material in this document as was written in the “Frequently Asked Questions.”

State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education (SEADAE) released a new set of art standards in summer 2014. These new standards are titled the National Core Art Standards (NCAS). Included in these standards are dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts. Similar to the CCSS, the NCAS has four anchor standards that include more specific grade level standards. These anchor standards are creating, performing, responding and connecting. The NCAS are not affiliated with the CCSS, but the CCSS concepts and design was highly researched during the writing process. “Educators familiar with the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, in particular, will find similarities in structure that should aid in the smooth implementation of the National Core Arts Standards” (p. 7).

Scott C. Shuler, Martin Norgaard, and Michael J. Blakeslee (2014) discussed the purpose and intent of these new standards in their article, *The New National Standards for Music Educators*. They stated that they “new national music standards was charged with authentically reflecting the discipline of music, while providing a learning framework designed to help music educators thrive in today’s educational environment” (p. 41). The new standards were created to embrace the idea of supporting students to be

college- and career-ready and armed with 21st-century skills. The NCAS have performance standards similarly compared to other subject areas, including CCSS. These performance standards set goals for all grade levels, which will help leave fewer gaps in curriculum planning.

Brian N. Weidner (2013), an instrumental music instructor at McHenry High School-East Campus, provided supporting evidence that stated music can include literacy and therefore CCSS. He summarized examples in his article titled, *Supporting Common Core Reading Literacy in the Music Performance Classroom*. The “NCTE (The National Council of Teachers of English) directly recognizes music as a contributor to these skills, ‘Multiple ways of knowing also include art, music, movement, and drama, which should not be considered curricular luxuries’” (p. 55). All areas of discipline should be used to enforce literacy instruction. “Music is explicitly defined as one of the technical subjects by the CCSS” (p. 55). In this article, Weidner discusses different ways in which a performing ensemble can incorporate literacy. Weidner lists “Components of Common Core Literacy,” also known as anchor standards, as

- “key ideas and details,
- craft and structure,
- integration of knowledge and ideas, and
- range of ready and level of text complexity” (p. 56).

To incorporate key ideas and details, Weidner asked his students to complete a guided reading assignment. His students were asked to read the assignment, discuss their findings, and answer questions that he provided. He also said that his ensemble used

graphic organizers when discussing theme and variations. These graphic organizers could also include concept maps to display main ideas and supporting details.

Throughout the school year, Weidner had his students keep a word journal. In these journals, the students copied any words or markings they did not know from their music. Before they were allowed to look them up in the dictionary, they were asked to try and define the word themselves. They looked at contextual clues in an attempt to glean the meaning of the words, which supports the skill, “craft and structure.”

CCSS includes the skill to “recognize and evaluate content in various formats, including non-text based media” (p. 57). Performers can demonstrate these skills by interpreting the composer’s intent. “Literacy study in this area is aimed at developing the same skills - an understanding of not only how materials should be interpreted but also the critical skills for understanding why a specific interpretation is accurate” (p. 57).

Lastly, Weidner stated that the CCSS wants students to be able to “read and comprehend complex material proficiently and independently” (p. 57). He says that even though students have the skill to play more complex material, the director must also provide simpler materials so that the students can work on analyzing and comprehending the music.

Audrey Berger Cardany (2013) contemplated the usefulness of the CCSS in the general music setting in her article titled *General Music and the Common Core: A Brief Discussion*. She gave a brief background of the CCSS and stated how some individuals disagree with the standards and the quality of them. “As ELA (English Language Learners) common core was written for the language domain, implementing ELA common core during music instruction may divert focus from developing music literacy”

(p. 36). Cardany was also concerned that music educators would become too focused on teaching ELA and would divert attention from the music content. She stated, “I believe it to be a misapplication of these standards if music instruction looks and sounds like ELA instruction” (p. 36).

Cardany designed a workshop titled, *KBLAM! Kids, Books, Language and Music*. After she designed and presented this workshop, Cardany “sought to answer the following question: ‘How does this workshop content align with Common Core Standards for ELA?’” (p. 36). She discussed in detail which standards were addressed through the workshop. Cardany reinstated the anchor standards for literacy and provided a few examples of activities undertaken in the music classroom that support these standards. Many of her activities included reading or listening to a story, or identifying characters and interpreting them through music. “The music instruction experienced in the workshop that highlighted how music teachers provide a supportive, rather than a direct, role to implementing Common Core Standards was the integration of knowledge and ideas” (p. 38).

Kenneth Elpus (2013) evaluated the Goals 2000 and reflects on the adaption of the Common Core State Standards through his study. The title of his study was *Music in U.S. Federal Education Policy: Estimating the Effect of “Core Status” for Music*. This study was used to determine if the Goals 2000 influenced schools to create unique music courses and how many schools decided to make arts courses a requirement for graduation. The method used to conduct this study was “the empirical methodology and framework,” which was “deeply influenced by econometric data analysis methods” (p. 17).

The results of this study concluded that there were no significant differences in the number of unique music courses offered. However, “the results of the interacted model suggest that in states with no prior arts mandate, there was a 60.8 percent greater chance of high schools requiring the arts study for graduation in 2004 than there was in 1992” (p. 20). Elpus stated that even though there were no significant differences in the music courses offered, there might have been a change in other arts subject courses offered, such as dance or drama.

In the discussion section of the article, Elpus mentioned the Common Core State Standards. He talked about the law that declares the arts as a “core subject.” This was a huge step forward in arts education. Elpus was concerned that if fine arts teachers do not incorporate the new Common Core State Standards, then fine arts teachers may lose that “core subject” status.

Patricia O’ Herron and Dennis Siebenaler (2007) wrote a literature review titled: *The Intersection between Vocal Music and Language Arts Instruction: A Review of the Literature*. The research they reported focused on how vocal music instruction and early literacy instruction can benefit students by improving auditory processing and the quality of speech. The authors stated that the “teachers become the vocal model for instruction when children are learning both language and music” (p. 16). Young students often hear and repeat to learn articulations and pronunciations. O’Herron and Siebenaler said that the sounds (phonemes) become words that then turn into ideas. Lastly, the authors stated that “while we focus on the importance and value of our own content areas, we cannot ignore the commonality of lifelong learning and success for all students” (p. 23).

The National Reading Panel published a report titled *Put Reading First* by Armbruster & Osborn, which stated that phonics are very important for the students to know in order to learn to read (2003). The authors discussed the use of prosody, which is the grouping of words into phrases as you read out loud. This includes “pausing and changing dynamics on specific words and syllables” and even rhythm (p. 20).

This report included results from a study that supported the idea that music helps improve reading scores on standardized tests. This “study (Hurwitz, Wolff, Bortnick, & Kokas, 1975) showed that first graders who received daily Kodaly music instruction for seven months improved their ability to perform spatial-temporal reasoning tasks compared with control groups” (p. 21). They highly suggest that literacy and vocal educators collaborate when preparing for class.

In the same report by the National Reading Panel, Armbruster and Osborn quote O’Herron & Sibenaler (2007) with several ways that students can practice reading and singing out loud to improve fluency: “(a) student-adult reading with feedback, (b) choral reading in a group, (c) tape-assisted reading to be echoed or spoken simultaneously (but without background sound or music), (d) partner reading with a more fluent partner, and (e) reader’s theatre that rehearses and performs before an audience” (p. 21).

All educators must work together to achieve the common goal, which is student success. O’Herron & Sibenaler (2007) said that “while we focus on the importance and value of our own content areas, we cannot ignore the commonality of lifelong learning and success for all students” (p. 23). This statement shines light on the mission and goals of education, which are reiterated in the CCSS.

Bill Harp (1988) is another advocate who believes music and reading should go hand in hand. “Children’s language naturally has rhythm and melody,” says Harp. He discussed the whole language approach in his article titled, *When the Principal Asks: ‘Why Are Your Kids Singing during Reading Time?’* The whole language approach is the idea that the children must find meaning in their materials. Often these units consist of sentences and story units. Harp discussed a program that is run by Sheila Fitzgerald at Michigan State University. Fitzgerald outlines five steps to ensure that children are learning to read through music. These steps are: “1) learning favorite songs, 2) meeting the lyrics in print, 3) reading song charts and booklets, 4) comprehension extension activities, and 5) writing activities.” (p. 455)

Harp suggested the concept that the act of reading should include the ability to comprehend ideas not words. Students have not “read” until they can interpret these ideas. Children should be able to show and extend their understanding through activities. “These (activities) are important because they build bridges between reading and movement, reading and drama, and reading and art” (p. 456). The CCSS also finds making connections and building bridges between subjects an important skill that students should be able to accomplish.

The next step to Harp’s whole language concept is to apply it to an entire classroom. Beth Ann Miller (2003) conducted a collaborative action research study titled *Integrating Elementary General Music Instruction with a First Grade Whole Language Classroom*. The purpose of this study was to integrate a music classroom with a general education classroom. The collaborating teachers used “qualitative techniques such as journaling, videotaping, interviewing, and peer de-briefing” (p. 43). The whole language

idea encourages students to find meaning from the materials they are using. They are to search for connections and relationships in not only their school and home life, but also among all subjects within the school curriculum.

The research was conducted over a two-year period. There were four classes of first grade students included in the study. Three classes were considered the control group and one class the research group. Each of these classes was given a pre-test and a post-test to measure student music knowledge. The research group not only had music instruction, they had a combination of whole language and the integrated approach. The results showed that “the research class scored lower than two of the three control classes on both tests, but improved slightly more than any of the groups on the second test” (p. 48). The research class scored 27.3 points out of 35 points on the pretest and 30.2 on the posttest, which means they improved by 2.9 points. These students showed more enthusiasm during music lessons than the non-research students. The classroom teacher of the research class was also enthusiastic about the integration of both classes. Five categories of integration were identified and described: “topical, related skills, conceptual, higher level thinking and pedagogical” (p. 54).

Audrey Berger Cardany discussed the history of nursery rhymes in her article entitled *Nursery Rhymes in Music and Language Literacy* (2013). She included John Newbery’s 1760 *Mother Goose’s Melodies*, which include *Pat-a-cake* and *This Little Piggy Went to Market*. Some nursery rhymes are linked with history, such as *Ring around the Rosie*. This song is about the symptoms of the Great Plague. There are some rhymes that were intended for adults only, yet are still sung by children. Victorians would take these rhymes and “sanitize” them and make them parlor room appropriate.

These nursery rhymes are used by both music and language teachers. “Classroom teachers of preschool and primary school-age children use nursery rhymes to teach reading content such as alphabetic knowledge, vocabulary building, and phonemic awareness through rhyme and alliteration” (p. 32). Musical concepts are often taught through the use of rhymes and their melodies. One example of a nursery rhyme set to music would be Mozart’s “Twelve Variations in C,” most commonly recognized as “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.”

Cardany takes some of these nursery rhymes and applies them to a music classroom. She has sample lessons for *Old Mother Hubbard*, *Tommy Snooks and Bessie Brooks*, *Horsey Horsey*, and *Jack Sprat*. Often times educators are searching for new ways to teach their students, when the classic nursery rhymes continue to provide students with pleasure and knowledge (p. 35).

Interactive Student Notebooks

The article, *Using Guided Notes to Enhance Instruction for All Students*, by Moria Konrad, Laurice M. Joseph and Madoka Itoi (2011) gave teachers ideas on how to develop guided notes and how to combine them with effective teaching strategies. Several students have trouble taking notes, especially those with learning disabilities. Guided notes, also referred to as interactive notebooks, is a useful tool to help students stay on track, take accurate notes, and promote higher order thinking. It has been found to “improve students’ quiz and test performance” (p. 131). There are several figures and tables included in the article to show examples of what guided notes might look like. The authors discuss how to study guided notes and how students will benefit from their notes

when studying for upcoming tests. One sample included in the article shows that the guided notes can be easily cut out and used as study cards (p. 137).

Guided notes are also used to promote higher order thinking. Similarly to the CCSS, “teachers can encourage students to reflect on the lecture by including within the guided notes stopping points for students to pause and think critically, ask questions, connect with personal experience, relate to prior knowledge, and generate new ideas” (p. 138). Overall, guided notes help the students pay attention during the lecture and prepare for tests.

Marcia Carter, Anita Hernandez and Jeannine Richison (2009) have written a book to describe interactive notebooks and how they can be used in the classroom. *Interactive Notebooks and English Language Learners* is centered on students who are English language learners. The authors describe that an interactive notebook is “a collection of notes taken from reading, listening, discussion, and viewing, including corresponding responses, either in graphic or written form” (p. 3).

Interactive notebooks can be assessed through formal evaluations, informal assessments, student self-assessments including possible peer assessments, and parent review. In chapter five, there is a sample of a grading rubric that should be placed in each student’s notebook before they turn it in. It is a checklist of all of the materials that should be included in the notebook. This rubric evaluates whether the student has completed the notebook and followed directions. The students are also expected to keep their notebook neat and in a specific order with page numbers and dates.

The authors state that the interactive notebooks are a living document. These notebooks should be able to be used from grade to grade. Students can use their

notebooks as a resource for several years to come. Lastly, the authors include a lesson idea section, which can be easily adapted by teachers with English language learners.

Joanne M. Moore (2011) provided a detailed lesson plan that a school librarian used with second and third grade classes in her article titled *Keywords, Bullets, and Note Taking with Grades 2 and 3*. The librarian spends one hour with the students. The students spend time “identifying keywords and creating a bulleted list” (p. 14). The students then listen to her read a story out loud. While they are listening, the students hear keywords and take bulleted notes on the story. To visually portray their notes the students draw a picture that corresponds with their notes. In the end, the “students will assess their work through comparison of their printed artistic composition and their bullets” (p. 15).

This literature summary included important publications that informed the design of this research project. The major topics included in this literature summary were Writing Instruction, Music and Common Core and Interactive Student Notebooks.

METHODOLOGY

Design

An action research design was used to evaluate the use of writing skills in a 3rd grade music classroom. The primary research question was: “Will the use of writing in the music classroom help the students apply writing skills from their general education classes while learning music content?” “Action Research aims at the direct improvement of teaching and curriculum within a particular classroom, gaining a more critical perspective from which the teacher/researcher can reflect and change” (Bresler, 1995, p. 15). The process of action research is a continuous cycle of planning, acting, observing and reflecting to help one improve as an educator. Al Legutki (2013) states that “through action research, we each can help add to the strength of data driven advocacy efforts, collaborate with our colleagues for positive change, and remain at the forefront of developing meaningful teaching strategies that address curricular mandates while preserving a core of music in our classrooms” (p. 66).

Richard Sagor (2000) defines action research as being “a disciplined process of inquiry conducted by and for those taking the action. The primary reason for engaging in action research is to assist the “actor” in improving and/ or refining his or her actions” (p. 1). Action research is considered to be more informal than other types of research due to the personal reflection required by the researcher. For this project, I began implementing the Common Core (CC) writing standards into my music classroom lesson plans. Listed below are Sagor’s (2000) seven steps to conducting action research and a description of how I incorporated these steps into my own research:

1. “Selecting a focus.” The focus of this study was to incorporate writing skills into the music classroom. The participating classroom teacher and I used the Common Core State Standards to guide our planning. We focused on narrative and informative writing skills.
2. “Clarifying theories.” Sagor explains this step in the research process as identifying the researcher’s “values, beliefs and theoretical perspectives” (p. 2). Throughout this project, I want to emphasize my belief in music as a cross-curricular subject. I still believe that music can and should be taught simply for what music naturally has to offer. However, I believe incorporating other subjects into the music curriculum gives the students a holistic approach to solving problems and experiencing music in an authentic way. (Munroe, 2015 & Smith 2014).
3. “Identifying research questions.” My research question for this study is “Will the use of writing in the music classroom help the students apply writing skills from their general education classes while learning music content?”
4. “Collecting data.” I collected several different forms of data, including student writing samples, entries from their interactive notebooks, and video recorded weekly lessons. I also conducted teacher and student interviews.
5. “Analyzing data.” To analyze the data, I observed any evidence of student growth, reviewed weekly journal notes, video recorded several lessons, compared and coded teacher and student interviews and evaluated student writing samples to find any trends among the data.
6. “Reporting results.” The results are reported in this document.

7. "Taking informed action." The results of this study have informed my actions and future goals, which are described in the conclusion section.

Participants

Participants included eighteen third grade students and five third grade teachers. The entire third grade had 89 students. I saw five sections of third grade students once a week for forty minutes. My study was focused on one of the third grade general music classes. I chose this class based on the cooperating teacher's willingness and interest. This class consisted of nine females and nine males, 17 Caucasian and one Asian. Seven of the students received free lunches through the Illinois Free Lunch and Breakfast Program. There were no students with an IEP (Individualized Education Program) or any major health concerns. Each of the five third grade teachers participated in an interview, all of whom are female and Caucasian. The teachers' years of teaching experience ranged from six to 37. The cooperating teacher had a total of seven years of teaching experience. Every participant signed a permission form stating that they were willing to participate in this study and could withdraw from the study at any time. All of the student permission forms required a parent permission signature. All of the participants' names have been changed to protect their identity.

Trustworthiness

To ensure trustworthiness, I triangulated my data sources including student work and interview questions. After the interviews with both teachers and students, I asked the participants to read their interview and make sure that it was 100% accurate (member checking). I encouraged them to add anything that may be missing or skewed from the truth. Along with my thesis committee, I had a few of my peers read and provide

feedback on my research (peer debriefing). There are positives and negatives to using one's own students as the participants in a study. One positive is that I could easily change and adapt lesson plans to best fit my students. A negative aspect of having my own students as participants is that I may have grown biased opinions about their efforts and success. I was the only teacher evaluator for this study, outside of the students performing two self-evaluations. Self-reflection was a constant part of this research project to ensure that I minimized any unintentional biased opinions. I kept weekly journal notes, and I recorded several of the lessons to make sure that I documented exactly what happened and how it happened.

Materials

The CCSS for English Language Arts Writing Anchor Standards along with the National Core Arts Standards were used simultaneously in planning our weekly music lessons. The cooperating teacher and I used all four of the writing anchor standards, which included text types and purposes, production and distribution of writing, research to build and present knowledge and range of writing. The National Core Arts anchor standards include creating, performing, responding and listening. The students provided a writing sample (see appendices A and B) at the beginning of the semester and at the end of the semester to demonstrate student growth. I also evaluated their progress through their use of interactive notebooks (see appendices C-F) and a composer research project (see appendices G and H). Details about specific assignments and lesson plans can be found in the procedures section (see appendices I-N). Lastly, I conducted six student interviews (see appendix O) and five third grade teacher interviews (see appendix P) that were transcribed and included in my data collection.

Procedures and Timeline

“Fortunately, classrooms and schools are, by their nature, data-rich environments” (Sagor, 2000, p. 2). Richard Sagor states that data materials could be “already swirling around the classroom” or could simply include classroom discussions and questionnaires (p. 2). I modeled my data collection after Conway and Jeffers’ research (2004), whose data consisted of student and parent interviews, a log of all interactions, student and parent questionnaires, a parent evaluation and a video tape of Mr. Jeffers’ teaching. I chose to model after this study because of the types of data they collected and the reflective nature of their research. My students’ work included writing samples, interactive notebook entries and writing graphic organizers. These items were collected and used to analyze student progress. I collected work at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the semester. Each of my lessons was video recorded and all interviews were audio recorded and transcribed.

1st Quarter- Narrative Writing

In the first quarter (August 31st through October 16th), the third grade cooperating teacher and I focused on narrative writing skills, which include standards CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.3, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.4, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.5, and CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.10. (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers 2010) (see table 1). As for the National Core Arts, I touched on all of the four anchor standards, which include: Creating, Performing, Responding and Connecting (SEADAE, 2014). See appendices I-K for the lesson plans.

Table 1

First Quarter Learning Standards

Common Core English Language Arts Standards for Writing	National Core Arts Anchor Standards for General Music
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details and clear event sequences.	MU:Cr1 Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.4 With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.	MU:Cr2 Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.5 With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.	MU:Pr4 Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.	MU:Pr6 Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.
	MU:Re7 Perceive and analyze artistic work.
	MU:Re8 Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
	MU:Cn10 Synthesis and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

August 31st -September 4th: The students wrote about the following prompt: “Writing about music makes me feel...” This was the students’ first writing sample from their interactive notebook, which I collected as data. See appendices E and F for the first writing sample.

September 8th - 11th: Students wrote about their first experience performing music in front of an audience, using a graphic organizer. Most of our writing activities this semester

were introduced with a graphic organizer and during this week we talked about how to understand and use graphic organizers to write narratives in music. Each writing sample was evaluated using a student self-assessment rubric as well as a teacher rubric. The students were required to have included a topic sentence, details, conclusion, temporal words and correct sentence structure. See appendix A for the pre-writing narrative assessment, appendix R for the narrative graphic organizer and appendix Q for the rubric.

September 14th-18th: Form: the musical plan- This week we compared the parts of a story with musical form. We focused on AB and ABA musical form and the students compared their own stories to musical form. See appendix I for the lesson plan.

September 21st- 25th: Peter and the Wolf was the first example of music as a narrative. First, I introduced all of the characters and their assigned instruments, using the examples given on Phil Tulga's website (<http://www.philtulga.com/Peter.html>). Then, we watched an edited short animated Walt Disney Book and Record on YouTube (Franklin, 2011) of the story and discussed the characters, plot and the storyline. See appendix J for the lesson plan.

September 28th- October 2nd: This week we continued the idea of "music as a narrative." I had the students listen to Saint-Saens: *Carnival of the Animals- March of the Lions* from Royal Duke Jam's YouTube channel and then create a story based on what they heard. Students were instructed to simply listen to the recording and make observations. Next, as a whole class, we discussed instruments that they heard and what characters they could include in their stories. The students also decided on a setting. I played the recording for them again, so that they could determine a beginning, middle and end. The class voted on

the best storyline that fit the music. Finally, we listened to the music one more time with our characters, setting and storyline all in place. See appendix K for the lesson plan.

October 5th and 9th: First, we reviewed our musical narrative that we devised the previous week. We needed to begin preparing for a performance, so our writing activities slowed down for a couple of weeks while we rehearsed.

October 12th - 16th: This week we continued to rehearse for our performance, and it was suggested to the classroom teacher to use the musical narrative as an individual writing prompt for their regular classroom time. Unfortunately, the teachers did not have time to include this prompt into their class time, which is further discussed in the discussion section.

2nd Quarter- Informative/ Explanatory Writing

During the second quarter (October 19th through December 18th), we focused on informative writing skills, which include standards CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.2, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.5, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.6, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.7, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.8, and CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10. (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers 2010) (see table 2). The National Core Arts Anchor Standards that were focused on this semester was Connecting and Performing (SEADAE, 2014). See appendices L-N for the lesson plans.

Table 2

Second Quarter Learning Standards

Common Core English Language Arts Standards for Writing	National Core Arts Anchor Standards for General Music
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and	MU:Pr5 Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

information clearly.	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.5 With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.	MU:Cn11 Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.6 With guidance and support from adults, use technology to produce and publish writing (using keyboarding skills) as well as to interact and collaborate with others.	
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.7 Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.	
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.8 Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.	

October 19th -23rd: We continued to prepare for our performance that was coming up, but this week marked the start of our research project. The students were briefly introduced to Bach and Beethoven as their “Composer of the Month.” We quickly reviewed facts and music by these composers. The students were asked to complete a writing sample from the following prompt: “My favorite composer is _____ because _____.” See appendix L for the lesson plan.

October 26th - 30th: First, we had a quick performance rehearsal. Then, we began to discuss the definition of research and ways we could use research in music class. The students could choose to research Mozart, Handel or Tchaikovsky. I passed out the biography research guide graphic organizer that they would use throughout the project to

help organize their information. See appendix M for the lesson plan. See appendices G and H for the biography research guide graphic organizer.

November 2nd-6th: Before heading to the computer lab, we had our last performance rehearsal. Most of this lesson was instructing the students how to open Internet Explorer and find the New York Philharmonic Kidzone Webpage (nyphilkids.org), which they used to find most of their information. They were instructed to fill in their biography graphic organizer based on what they found from the website. The students were encouraged to listen to the musical example that the website included.

November 9th- 20th: This week we continued researching in the computer lab using the same website. Once the students had gathered all of the information they could from the New York Philharmonic Kids website, they were encouraged to look through a collection of books that I had available for them. See appendix S for the list of the books.

November 30th- December 4th: In this lesson, some of the students opened up Microsoft Word for the first time, so most of the lesson was about Microsoft Word and a few of its features. After the students had a general idea how to use Word, they began typing their research essay using their biography research guide (see appendix G). See appendix H for a student sample.

December 7th – December 11th: The students completed their research essay and then exchanged it with a neighbor to have them read and give positive criticism. The students polished their essays and printed them out to be turned in.

December 14th -18th: The last day of class was a bit more informal. We reviewed the treble clef staff and what notes go on it. The students used a graphic organizer to write out a “How to” draw a treble clef staff with note names. The students were asked to write

in full sentences and give a drawn picture example. See appendix N for a more detailed lesson plan. See appendices T and U for examples of the “How to” graphic organizer.

Lastly, I conducted six randomly selected student interviews and five third grade teacher interviews. To remain unbiased, I chose every fourth student in alphabetical order to participate in an interview, which made a total of six students. See appendices O and P for interview questions. I recorded, transcribed and coded these interviews. The students were asked questions based on what they have learned and connections they made to their general education classes.

RESULTS

Students were required to complete a “pre-writing” sample (see appendix A) and a “post-writing” sample (see appendix B). These writing samples were evaluated by the student and myself using a rubric. See appendices Q and V for the pre and post writing rubrics. To protect the students’ identities I have numbered them 1 to 18. Table 3 displays the students’ rubric pre-writing scores, post-writing scores and the growth they made between these two writing samples. The average percent correct for the pre-writing sample was 68%. The average for the post-writing sample was 78% correct. The entire class made an average growth of 10%. The students performed a self-evaluation on both writing samples using the same rubric and scoring with either a smile face (4 points) or a frown face (0 points). These scores reflect that the students made a 2% growth from pre-writing to post-writing. I did not include results for Student #1 and Student #7 into my calculations because they did not complete a self-evaluation on their pre-writing sample. This information is displayed in Table 4.

Table 3

Student Growth Results

<u>Student Name</u>	<u>Interview Name</u>	<u>Student Pre-Writing Evaluation</u>	<u>Pre-Writing</u>	<u>Student Post-Writing Evaluation</u>	<u>Post-Writing</u>	<u>Growth</u>
Student #1	Claire	not completed	13	Not included	19	6
Student #2		16	9	8	13	4
Student #3		14	14	20	15	1
Student #4		20	19	12	14	-5
Student #5		8	9	16	8	-1
Student #6		12	4	16	13	9
Student #7		not completed	17	Not included	16	-1
Student #8		16	16	8	15	-1

Student #9		0	5	20	17	12
Student #10	Kurt	12	17	12	15	-2
Student #11	Allie	20	13	12	18	5
Student #12	Sean	12	19	20	16	-3
Student #13	Tom	20	16	12	16	0
Student #14		20	17	12	18	1
Student #15		8	12	16	16	4
Student #16	Susan	20	16	20	19	3
Student #17		12	12	Never Finished		
Student #18		not completed	not Completed	20	20	

Table 4

Average Student Growth

<u>Pre-Writing Percent Correct</u>	<u>Pre-Writing Student Evaluation Percent Correct</u>	<u>Post- Writing Percent Correct</u>	<u>Post-Writing Student Evaluation Percent Correct</u>	<u>Average Student Evaluation Growth</u>	<u>Average Growth</u>
68%	62%	78%	64%	2%	10%

Student Interview Results

Question #1- After we started writing in music class, do you feel that you have improved your writing skills? If so, how?

Answer- All students expressed that they improved their writing skills. Susan (name changed for identity protection) said, “I wasn’t as good at writing as I am now. At the beginning of the year and coming in here and writing more I just get better” (Susan, interview transcript, p.1). Kurt said, “I didn’t write that much in class. We didn’t write as much as we did in music and practice makes perfect” (Kurt, interview transcript, p. 1).

Questions #2- Can writing help you learn music? If so, how?

Answer- All students compared writing music notes to writing in general, including stories. Tom said, “Yes, because you need to know how to write before you write music, because music is actually writing” (Tom, interview transcript, p. 1). Claire similarly stated that yes writing can help learn music, “by like... to learn how to write the notes and read the notes” (Claire, interview transcript, p. 1).

Question #3- Have you learned anything in music that has helped you in your regular classroom?

Answer-

- One student said it helped with research. Tom answered, “We wrote that report on about Mozart. That helped me do more research” (Tom, interview transcript, p. 1).
- Two students said it helped with writing stories.
- Three students said it helped with writing in general. Kurt said, “It helps me write more in class than I actually did” (Kurt, interview transcript, p. 1). Claire said, “Writing goes with the music. You can write music and then you have to read it” (Claire, interview transcript, p. 1). Allie said, “really only writing” (Allie, interview transcript, p. 1).

Question #4- What exactly helped you from music class in your regular classroom?

Answer-

- Two students did not have any answer for this question. Tom and Kurt both felt that they answered this question in the previous question (Tom and Kurt, interview transcripts, p. 1).

- One student said it helped with writing in general (Claire, interview transcript, p. 1). Claire also stated that writing is one of the most important subjects that a student could learn.
- One student said it helped with getting more details (Susan, transcript data, p. 1).
- Two students said it helped with writing stories. Allie said, “It helped me because, it helped me be able to actually write stories without other people” (Allie, interview transcript, p. 1). Sean said that he was able to compare stories from their general education class to the stories we created or learned about in music class (Sean, interview transcript, p.2).

Question #5- Has the research project helped you learn anything new?

Answer-

- One student said the research did not help them learn anything new (Allie, interview transcript, p. 1).
- One student said they learned how to take notes. Sean said “Yes, it has like now I know how to write some notes” (Sean, interview transcript, p. 2).
- Four students said they learned about a new composer and music facts. Susan said, “I learned about composers and we learned about that in here” (Susan, interview transcript, p.1). Claire and Tom even listed a few facts to demonstrate what she learned. Claire said, “It taught me that Mozart died when he was only 35 and he played the piano when his sister...after his sister got done. And so he could read the notes real quick. He was a fast learner” (Claire, interview transcript, p. 1). Tom included that “he did duets with Bach (Johann Christian

Bach)” (Tom, interview transcript, p. 1). Kurt said, “the research it helped, because I didn’t really know about composers” (Kurt, interview transcript, p. 1).

Teacher Interview Results

*Some teachers gave more than one answer to a question.

Question #1- Do you incorporate writing into all of your subject areas? If so, to what extent and how do you incorporate writing?

Answer-

- All five teachers said they incorporated writing into reading in some way. Jane said, “In reading, many times for the reading test we will have two responses as well as five written responses” (Jane, interview transcript, p. 1). Kim said, “I would say all of the subject areas, some more than others. Reading is our busiest extended writing” (Kim, interview transcript, p. 1).
- Three teachers said they write some in math with word problems. Amy said, “Math is a little harder to get that in, but we do have them write story problems from time to time” (Amy, interview transcript, p. 1). Kari said she will give the students an equation and then says “you create a word problem with this equation” (Kari, interview transcript, p. 1).
- Two teachers said they write in spelling. Amy and Olive both said that they have their students write sentences using their spelling words. Olive said, “Spelling we do a lot of writing with that... writing sentences and they get so many points per sentence for capital, punctuation, complete thoughts, spelling the word correctly...” (Olive, interview transcript p. 1).

- Two teachers said they write in social studies. Olive said they compare and contrast in social studies (Olive, interview transcript p. 1). Amy did a “Christmas around the World” unit where the students wrote a five paragraph paper about their family’s Christmas traditions. Amy said, “they still did a lot of research with ‘Christmas around the World’ social studies” (Amy, interview transcript, p. 1).
- Two teachers said sometimes they write in social studies and science. Kim and Jane both expressed that in these subjects the students did not write as much as they do in other subjects. Jane states, “Science and social studies is pretty hit and miss. We don’t do an actual informative every time or a narrative. So, it is just kind of answering questions or if we do research we might write about a country or something like that” (Jane, interview transcript, p. 1).
- One teacher said they write in science. Olive said, “sometimes we will write a ‘How-to’ with some science that we have done” (Olive, interview transcript p. 1).

Question #2- Which subjects do you use writing in the most and why?

Answer-

- Five teachers said they used writing in reading the most. Kari said, “It’s primarily done in reading. That’s when we do the most and it usually has something to do with the story we just read” (Kari, interview transcript, p. 1).
- One teacher said they used writing in social studies the most. Amy felt that in the last nine weeks of the semester her class wrote in social studies the most, because of the “Christmas around the World” unit. However, Amy expressed that in all other times her students write more in reading (Amy, interview transcript, p. 1).

Question #3- When you introduce a new writing assignment, what is the process in which you teach this assignment?

Answer-

- Two teachers said they simply talk about the writing assignment or they include a personal connection to help get the students started. Kim expressed that they need to “find a personal connection, because if they don’t have a personal connection or something that they can relate to they are done” (Kim, interview transcript, p. 1).
- One teacher said they show or read an example to introduce a writing assignment. Jane said, “I might start off with reading them a story that’s in that form or show a PowerPoint and go through the different steps and read different examples... choosing which one we think is the kind of style of writing it is” (Jane, interview transcript, p. 1).
- Two teachers said they start with a writing prompt. Olive said, “First of all we talk about when you have the prompt... how to turn the prompt into a statement, especially if it is a question” (Olive, interview transcript p. 2). Kari stated that she tries to always put the prompt on the StarBoard, an interactive white board, for the kids to constantly refer to during their writing (Kari, interview transcript, p. 1).

Question #4- How do you grade your writing assignments?

Answer-

- Three teachers said they do not grade writing assignments.
- Two teachers said they used a rubric to help grade their writing assignments. Kim said she usually grades with a rubric that she has found online to fit what they are

writing about. Kim also stated “those are very loosely graded, especially at this grade level” (Kim, interview transcript, p. 1). Olive uses a rubric and gives points for each item required. Olive said, “There’s a point for capital, punctuation, right answer per sentence...” (Olive, interview transcript p. 4). Amy uses a rubric and said she grades “on neatness and content...relevance...” (Amy, interview transcript, p. 2).

- Two teachers said they meet with the students individually to discuss their writing. Kari said she calls the kids back individually to talk about their writing. She stated, “I see no reason to sit with a red sharpie and mark up a writing paper. They get nothing out of that” (Kari, interview transcript, p. 2).

Question #5- What outcomes did you expect by having the students write in music?

Answer-

- Two teachers said they hoped students would learn music as well as writing skills. Kim said, “It shows them (the students) that writing goes on all aspects of life and all aspects of academics” (Kim, interview transcript, p. 3).
- One teacher said she hoped the students would learn non-fiction writing skills. Kari said, “I would expect them to learn about composers and to develop some writing skills that were non-fiction... not a narrative, because so much of ours is narrative” (Kari, interview transcript, p. 4).
- One teacher said she hoped the students would have more opportunities with research. Amy said, “It’s good to get them started in research, because they have never done that before. You know maybe together as a group, but to actually have to do it on their own...” (Amy, interview transcript, p. 3).

- One teacher said she had no expectations.

Question #6- Have you noticed a difference in your students' performance in writing since this study? If so, please describe.

Answer-

- Three teachers said yes. Olive feels that kids are not afraid of writing as much as they used to be (Olive, interview transcript p. 5). Kari said, “the more experience they have with writing no matter what... it’s going to help” (Kari, interview transcript, p. 5).
- Two teachers said writing was focused on more this year than last. Jane said, last year “we were so overwhelmed with the PARCC testing and this and that and we were trying to get everybody up to par with math and reading” (Jane, interview transcript, p. 4). Writing seemed to lose priority in her class.
- One teacher did not have an answer.

Question #7- Have the students made any verbal or written connections between music and another subject that you teach?

Answer-

- Three teachers said the students made connections with materials and content conversation, including research. Kari said, “they are excited and they say ‘oh, today we are keyboarding’ or ‘today we need to take our pencils we are doing more research’” (Kari, interview transcript, p. 5).
- One said the students made connections in class with composer facts.
- Two teachers said the students made no written or verbal connections in their classroom. Kim thought this might be because they go straight to lunch after

music and she does not get to talk with them right after class (Kim, interview transcript, p. 4).

Question #8- Are there any other observations you have made throughout this study?

Answer-

- Four teachers said they made no other observations.
- One teacher said the students love music.
- One teacher said she liked how the lessons were interactive. Kari said, “I like that you made it more interactive not just sitting there. They are actually doing something. They’re involved” (Kari, interview transcript, p.5).

DISCUSSION

Three themes emerged throughout this action research study. The first was the amount of growth the students made with their writing skills. My results show that the class improved their writing skills by 10%, but my students felt like they improved by 2%. The second theme was the importance of collaborating with other teachers in my building. Lastly, time management was a major hindrance when it came to incorporating writing in to my lessons. My colleagues have expressed the same time management issues are being displayed in their own classrooms.

The average growth results speak for themselves. The class average growth was 10%, which means that the class writing skills improved by 10%. Not all students improved based on the rubric. However, they may have improved in other aspects of my class, such as following class rules, building listening skills or simply improving their ability to follow directions. The students only evaluated themselves at a 2% growth. I found this very interesting and I was disappointed that they felt this way. Several of the students graded harder on themselves in the second evaluation compared to the first. On the bright side, they may be grading themselves harder because they have gained more knowledge of the requirements. As a teacher, I want my students to be good critics of themselves and others, but I also want them to gain and establish self-confidence. In the student interviews, Allie expressed that she now feels that she can write stories without other people (Allie, interview transcript, p. 1).

Many times music teachers feel alone in their building. In some cases, they might be the only music teacher in their district. However, our profession is teaching and not just teaching music. For this study, I collaborated with one third grade teacher. She was

working with all of the third grade teachers, which certainly had some influence on the decisions she made with her writing curriculum and ultimately the decisions we made together. O'Herron and Siebenaler (2007) discussed in their article the importance of literacy and vocal teachers collaborating. Content is so often taught and learned independently. O'Herron and Siebenaler stated that, "while we focus on the importance and value of our own content areas, we cannot ignore the commonality of lifelong learning and success for all students" (p. 23). I believe the collaboration with all teachers and subjects can and will be a way of verifying validity in my content area and maintaining "core status."

Some aspects of the collaboration did not always work out as planned. I ran out of time to have the students write their musical narratives in paragraph format and it was my hope that the collaborating teacher would be able to include this as one of her writing prompts. Unfortunately, due to the amount of time allotted for writing she could not fit the musical narrative writing into her schedule. Many of the third grade teachers I interviewed believe there is not enough time to have the students write. A national survey (Gilbert & Graham, 2010) revealed that most teachers only have their students spend 25 minutes a day writing and "on average, teachers spent 15 minutes a day teaching writing strategies, knowledge and skills" (p. 88). This leads to show the importance of collaborating and combining some of these skills with other content areas. Each of the third grade teachers that I interviewed shared the numerous subjects in which they incorporated writing skills. I believe this helps with time management. Since I only see my students once a week for forty minutes, I tried to accomplish a lot in one class. After preparing for a concert and teaching music content I had very little time left for the

students to write. Often, I think the students felt rushed in their writing, which made them feel stressed and unsuccessful.

CONCLUSION

The primary research question for this action research study was: Will the use of writing in the music classroom help the students apply writing skills from their general education classes while learning music content? The evidence from the data collected concluded that the students did transfer writing skills to the music classroom and learned music content in the process. The students were able to learn about music styles and moods while listening to a recording of music and writing a narrative based on the style of music they were listening to. The students successfully conducted a research project about a composer's life and music through the writing of a biography about the chosen composer. Overall, the students showed a class average growth of 10% in their writing skills and they evaluated themselves at having a 2% class average growth. A couple of the students expressed in their interview that coming into music and practicing writing is one thing that helps them improve their writing. Susan said, "I wasn't as good at writing as I am now. At the beginning of the year and coming in here and writing more I just get better" (Susan, interview transcript, p.1). Similarly, Kurt said, "I didn't write that much in class. We didn't write as much as we did in music and practice makes perfect" (Kurt, interview transcript, p. 1).

Richard Sagor's list that was previously stated in the methodology section of this document listed the last step of action research as "Taking informed action." Based on my research, I will continue to use writing activities throughout my lessons. However, I will not use writing as often as I did during this study. Time was a major constraint when it came to preparing for a concert, as well as including writing into each lesson. My next informed action step is to incorporate more cross-curricular lessons. I would like to

expand my work with other teachers in my building and with different subjects and grade levels.

Possible future research might be to replicate this study with another grade level. Researchers could replicate this study with another subject. One area that needs to be evaluated from the study is time management. Researchers could study how to effectively teach cross-curricular lessons while managing their time appropriately. I believe that collaborating with teachers in other fields would be a positive direction for music educators to take. This may simply mean working on at least one lesson with a colleague outside of music content. Collaborating multiple topics and skills gives the students the opportunity to be college and career ready. This is the direction that Common Core State Standards encourages, and I believe this should be the next step for music education.

The primary research question was to look at how writing in the music classroom might help the students apply writing skills from their general education classes while learning music content. The students showed an average growth of 10% in their writing skills based on a rubric. However, the students only graded themselves at improving by 2%. The main drawback discovered during this study was the lack of time available in music class as well as in general education classes to devote to writing instruction. It was revealed that collaborating with another teacher outside of the music content area was very effective and beneficial for both the teachers and the students. In conclusion, incorporating writing skills into the music classroom has proven to be effective among third grade students.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Narrative Pre-Writing

(This was based on a document found on Teachers Pay Teachers by Brandy Shoemaker. Retrieved from https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Third-Grade-Writing-Assessment-Kit-1585217)

© Brandy Owens

Narrative Writing Pre-Assessment

Name _____ Student # 1 _____ Date _____ ^{not a full sentence}

was a poon a time^{er}

I had to perform

in front of

an ^{audience} ~~advice~~ I was

~~very~~ ^{because} ~~scared~~ ^{scared} ~~especially~~ ^{especially}

~~because~~ ^{there} my ~~whole~~ ^{family} family

was ~~that~~. I had the

jitters. I hoped I

~~would~~ ^{don't} forget the

~~lyrics~~ ^{lyrics}. ~~At~~ In the end,

I was so ^{excited} excited

that ~~the~~ ^{next} ~~next~~ day

I forgot all the

lyrics.

Appendix B
Informative Post-Writing Student Example
(Student #18)

George Frederic Handle

Student #18

George F. Handle was a famous composer. George was born in North Germany in 1685. When he was seven, it was clear that he had musical talent. George moved to Italy. He became famous for operas. Then, he moved to London. He became the leading musical citizen of the city. His song *Messiah* only took him three weeks. George died in 1759, nine years after Bach did. He was a good man.

↑
to write

Good job

Appendix D

This semester in music class” student sample
(Researcher Created. The writing prompt was based on a document
found on Teachers Pay Teachers by Jennifer Hibbard. Retrieved
from <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/3rd-Grade-Music-Interactive-Notebook-1153218>.)

THIS SEMESTER IN MUSIC CLASS I LEARNED...

How to read music notes and
how to draw a quarter note, half note
and treble clef. I also learned
about Handel.

Appendix E

“Writing about Music Makes Me Feel...” Worksheet
(Researcher Created. The writing prompt was based on a document
found on Teachers Pay Teachers by Jennifer Hibbard. Retrieved
from <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/3rd-Grade-Music-Interactive-Notebook-1153218>.)

Teacher

Name

3

Writing about music makes me feel...

Appendix F

“Writing about music makes me feel...” Student sample
 (Researcher Created. The writing prompt was based on a document
 found on Teachers Pay Teachers by Jennifer Hibbard. Retrieved
 from <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/3rd-Grade-Music-Interactive-Notebook-1153218>.)

Teacher	Name
3 _____	_____
Writing about music makes me feel...	
Writing about Music Makes me	
feel awesome, Because I feel like	
I'm a real <u>Musician</u>	
musician	

You are a real musician! 😊	

Appendix G

Biography Research Guide

(This was based on a document found on Teachers Pay Teachers by Schenk. Retrieved from <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Biography-Research-Guide-201338>.)

NAME: _____

biography research guide

My topic: _____ Hook/Intro _____ _____ _____	
Birth/Childhood Notes ~ ~ ~	_____ _____ _____
Early Adult Life Notes (marriage, education, etc.) ~ ~ ~ ~	_____ _____ _____ _____
Important Accomplishments ~ ~ ~ ~	_____ _____ _____ _____
Death, Late Life ~ ~ ~	_____ _____ _____
Conclusion _____ _____ _____	

Appendix H
Biography Research Guide
Graphic Organizer Student Sample
 (This was based on a document found on Teachers Pay Teachers
 by Schenk. Retrieved from
<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Biography-Research-Guide-201338>.)

$\begin{array}{r} 1756 \\ + 1791 \\ \hline 3547 \end{array}$	
NAME: Biography research guide	
My topic: Wolfgang Amedeus Mozart	
Hook/Intro	
Birth/Childhood Notes both 1756 He started composing at age five.	He started composing at age five. His birth was 1756.
Early Adult Life Notes (marriage, education, etc.) He would write that song.	He wrote with his He wrote 41 symphonies.
Important Accomplishments/Music He can write with his body.	He wrote the song The Marriage of Figaro.
Death, Late Life He got ill and died at age 35.	He lived
Conclusion	

Appendix I

Musical Form and Parts of a Story (Researcher Created)

- 40 minutes
- Materials:
 - Interactive notebook worksheet-“Form- the musical plan”
 - Whiteboard and markers
- Lesson:
 - Discuss the performance stories from last week. Offer for a few of the students to read their narratives out loud.
 - Talk about all of the different parts that are in a story.
 - Next, have the students open up their interactive notebooks to “Form- the musical plan”. Talk about how music also has parts, similar to a story. In music, they are not called the “beginning, middle and end”. Musicians label them with letters of the alphabet (A,B,A).
 - Compare ABA form with the order of a story. The topic and concluding sentences should relate to one another, just as in music we would label the beginning section and the repeated section at the end, “A”. All of the details in the middle of the story would be labeled “B” in musical form.
 - Listen to ABA musical examples and have the class listen and distinguish the different A and B sections.

Appendix J

Peter and the Wolf

(Researcher Created)

- 40 minutes
- Materials:
 - YouTube video: *Walt Disney: Peter and the Wolf*
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v+Otm9i70JDg>
 - Phil Tulga's *Peter and the Wolf* Website
 - <http://www.philtulga.com/Peter.html>
 - Narrative Graphic Organizer Worksheet
- Lesson:
 - Introduce the characters of the story and discuss the instruments assigned to each of the characters using Phil Tulga's website.
 - Watch *Peter and the Wolf* on YouTube.
 - Next, have the students work in partners to fill out the narrative organizer for *Peter and the Wolf*.
 - As a class, discuss all that contributed to the story. The music, characters, instruments, storyline (beginning, middle and end).

Appendix K

Writing a Musical Narrative (Researcher Created)

- 40 minutes
- Materials:
 - Notebook paper
 - Whiteboard and markers
 - Narrative Graphic Organizer
 - YouTube video: Saint-Saens: Carnival of the Animals~Marche Royale Du Lions (March of the Lions)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rE4CATvZ188>
- Lesson:
 - First, have the students close their eyes and listen to Carnival of the Animals: March of the Lions.
 - Then, have the students briefly discuss what they heard. They might mention dynamics, tempo, instruments, etc.
 - As a class, listen to the song again and write down parts that stand out. The students can either do this on their notebook paper or the teacher can do this activity together on the whiteboard.
 - Discuss what stood out and how these unique moments in the song could possibly work into a story.
 - Next, have the students begin thinking of a story that would follow the characteristics of the music.
 - As a class, have the students fill out a narrative graphic organizer.
 - After the organizer is completely filled out, the students could begin writing their story in paragraph format.

Appendix L
“My Favorite Composer is...” Opinion Writing
(Researcher Created)

- 20 minutes
- Materials:
 - Interactive Notebook entry: “My Favorite Composer is...because...”
- Lesson:
 - First, review both of the composers we have discussed since the beginning of the school year (Johann Sebastian Bach and Ludwig van Beethoven).
 - Have the students choose which of the composers they like the best.
 - Then, the students should complete the Interactive Notebook entry: “My Favorite Composer is...because...”
 - Have the students turn in their opinion paper.

Appendix M

Composer Research Project (Researcher Created)

- 30 minutes
- Materials:
 - Biography Research Guide
 - Computer lab
 - Internet
- Lesson:
 - First, introduce the project that they will be spending the next few weeks on.
 - Biography of a composer
 - Mozart, Handel or Tchaikovsky
 - Discuss rules for the computer lab, as well as the benefits of using the computer lab for their project.
 - Pass out the Biography Research Guide and discuss the details that are required for a thorough biography.
 - Give the students the rest of the class time to decide the composer they are going to research.
 - They should begin filling out the biography research guide before the class is over.

Appendix N

Explanatory- Treble Clef (Researcher Created)

- 40 minutes
- Materials:
 - Notebook paper
 - Blank paper
- Lesson:
 - First, discuss treble clef notes and how they are important to music. Next, show the treble clef line and space notes on the staff.
 - After the students fully understand what the staff and treble clef notes are, they should begin filling out the step by step “How to... Draw a Treble Clef Staff” graphic organizer.
 - On the graphic organizer they are required to write step by step instructions as well as drawing a picture to describe their instructions.
 - If there is enough time remaining in class, have the students trade “How to” guides and try following their classmates instructions. Corrections and edits may need to be made.
 - After they have edited their work, they will turn in their instruction guide.











Appendix O
Student Interview Questions
(Researcher Created)

1. After we started writing in music class, do you feel like you have improved your writing skills?
2. Can writing help you learn music? If so, how?
3. Have you learned anything in music that has helped you in your regular classroom?
4. What exactly helped you in your regular classroom?
5. Has the research project helped you learn anything new?


Appendix P
Teacher Interview Questions
(Researcher Created)

1. Do you incorporate writing into all of your subject areas? If so, to what extent/how do you incorporate into each subject?
2. Which subjects do you think you use writing in the most?
3. When you introduce a new writing assignment, what is the process in which you teach this assignment?
4. How do you grade your writing assignments?
5. What outcomes do you expect by having the students write in music?
6. Have you noticed a difference in your students' performance in writing since this study?
7. Have the student's made any connections (either verbally or written) between music and another subject?
8. Are there any other observations or comments you would like to make?

Appendix Q
Pre-writing Rubric
(Researcher Created)

Pre- Writing Self-Assessment	Teacher Rubric
  <p>I have a topic sentence that tells where I first performed.</p>	____/4
  <p>I include details about actions, thoughts and feelings to describe the events of the performance.</p>	____/4
  <p>I finished my writing with a conclusion</p>	____/4
  <p>I used temporal words to show event order.</p>	____/4
  <p>All of my sentences are correct (capital letter, spacing, end punctuation) & complete.</p>	____/4

Appendix R
Narrative Graphic Organizer Worksheet
 (This was based on a document found on a Blog titled, "Working for the Classroom" by Heather)

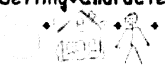


 **NARRATIVE ORGANIZER:**

Title: _____
 Author: _____ Theme: _____

Setting+Character(s) <small>(Quick Draw)</small> 	Problem X : _____ _____ Goal ●: _____
--	--



Attempts to Reach Goal or Solve Problem

Beginning	Middle	End
Setting+Character+ Start of Problem  X	Action (Events)  (PLOT)	Solution 

-Outcome-

Resolution:

 Lesson/Message/Theme



Appendix S

Composer Biography Book List

Handel, G. F. (1912). *The messiah: An oratorio*. New York, NY: G. Schirmer, INC.

Lynch, W. (2000). *Mozart*. Chicago, Illinois: Heinemann Library

Mirsky, R. P. (1960). *Mozart*. Chicago: Follett Publishing Company.

Rachlin, A. (1993). *Tchaikovsky*. New York: Barron's Educational Series, INC.

Rachlin, A. (1992). *Handel*. New York: Barron's Educational Series, INC.

Rachlin, A. (1992). *Mozart*. New York: Barron's Educational Series, INC.

Ventura, P. (1988). *Great Composers*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Wheeler, O. (1959). *Peter Tchaikovsky and the Nutcracker Ballet*. New York: E. P.

Dutton & Company, INC.

Wheeler, O. & Deucher, S. (1941). *Mozart the Wonder Boy*. New York: E. P. Dutton &
Company, INC.

Wheeler, O. (1943). *Handel at the Court of Kings*. New York: E. P. Dutton and
Company, INC.

Appendix T

“How- to...” Graphic Organizer

(The document was found on oakdome.com. The title of the page is “How to...” Common Core Graphic Organizer - Informative writing. Retrieved from <http://oakdome.com/k5/lesson-plans/word/common-core-how-to-graphic-organizer-informative-writing.php>.)

Name:

How to...

Step 1

→

Step 2

→

Step 3

→

Step 4

→

Appendix U
“How- to...” Graphic Organizer
Student Sample

(The document was found on oakdome.com. The title of the page is “How to...” Common Core Graphic Organizer - Informative writing. Retrieved from <http://oakdome.com/k5/lesson-plans/word/common-core-how-to-graphic-organizer-informative-writing.php>.)

name Student # 15

How to...

horizontally

Step 1

First, you must draw five lines.

Step 2

Next, we will add a treble clef.











Step 3

Then, we will add the line notes.

Step 4

Finally, we will add in our space notes.

Appendix V
Informative Writing Post Assessment Rubric
(Researcher Created)

Post- Writing Self-Assessment Teacher		Rubric
 	I have a topic sentence that tells what I am writing about.	____/4
 	I include details to describe the composer's life.	____/4
 	I used linking words to connect ideas.	____/4
 	I finished my writing with a conclusion	____/4
 	All of my sentences are correct (capital letter, spacing, end punctuation) & complete.	____/4