

Given the frequently negative effects each person imposes on their environment (e.g., resource consumption, use of private and public land, and waste production), the public needs to be included in conservation messaging to sustain a healthy, functioning planet. However, there is a disconnect between conservation research and presenting such information to the public in a coherent, accessible format. People are generally not informed about conservation topics, which creates difficulties in creating a conservation mindset. Thus, conservation education messaging strategies need to be evaluated to determine what is most effective in conveying important topics. The objective of this research is to determine the effectiveness of using different strategies related to messaging format and music to teach conservation topics. Specifically, I will

use a 2 x 2 factorial design with messaging type (traditional lecture versus storytelling) and song inclusion (included or not) as factors. Following Institutional Review Board Approval, I will use each combination of strategies (4 combinations total) to teach sixth or seventh grade students about invasive species at three different schools (n = 3 per treatment combination). A pre-survey will be given to the students before the lesson is given to determine their prior knowledge of the conservation topic of invasive plants. Following the pre-survey, the lesson about invasive plants will be completed. A post-survey will then be provided to determine how much knowledge about invasive plants has been gained during the lesson. The surveys will be analyzed to measure the effectiveness of messaging type and the use of music on student learning and ultimately will contribute to our better understanding of how to communicate conservation messages to middle school aged children.