

Transformative Music Engagement through Song Writing and Music Video Production: Youth Perspectives on an Inner-city Community-based Program

(Música Transformativa Engajamento Através Canção Escrita e Produção Musical Vídeo: Perspectivas da Juventude em um Programa Baseado na Comunidade da Cidade Metropolitana)

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MODAL Research Group

Multimodal Opportunities,
Diversity & Artistic Learning

MODALresearch.com

Symposium:

Transformative Music Engagement: New Perspectives on Motivation and Music Learning

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Drawing on a transformative music engagement framework (O'Neill, 2012), this study explores expansive forms of music learning with inner-city youth during weekly songwriting and music video production classes.



The focus for this paper is on the following question:

Are music and video production pedagogies capable of providing autonomous, emergent, and expansive learning opportunities that result in youth empowerment, positive music engagement, and transformative learning?

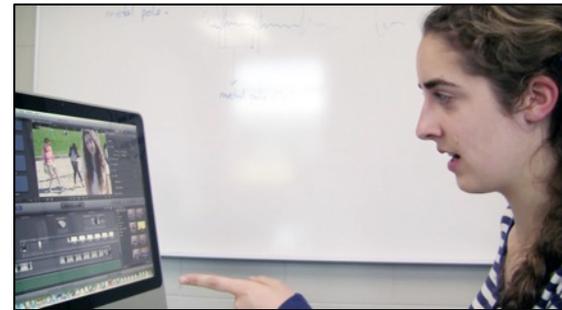
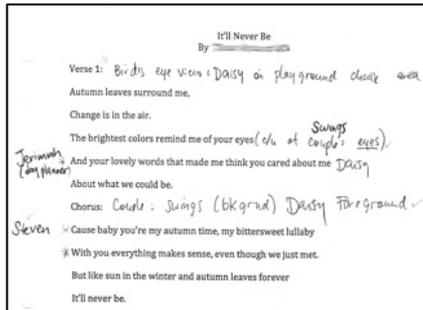
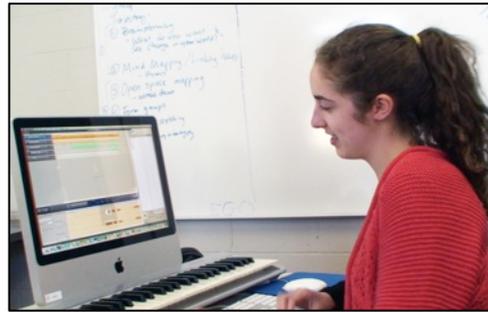
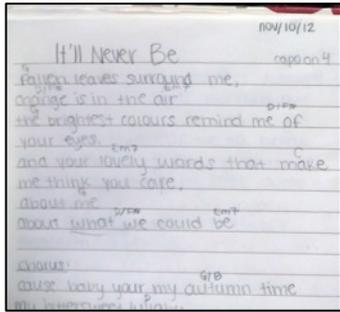
A Música e vídeo são uma produção capaz de fornecer pedagogia autônoma, emergente, e as oportunidades de aprendizagem expansiva que resultam em capacitação da juventude, o envolvimento da música positiva e aprendizagem transformadora?

Youth, Music & New Digital Media (Juventude, Música & New Digital Media)

- The affordances of digital media provide opportunities for today's young people to live agentive music lives through creative and collaborative forms of music making (O'Neill, in press).
- Influenced by new methods of meaning making and innovative forms of working in the world, youth have access to information and modes of communication that are unprecedented in human history (Cercone, 2012).



Many songwriters today are using digital media and multimodal composing practices (Miller, 2010; Miller & McVee, 2012) to communicate and represent meaningful ideas and expressions of self through multiple modes such as text, sound, and image.



There is a need for research that examines to what extent songwriting and music video production pedagogies inspire and empower music learners to become agentive and autonomous musical artists.

Há uma necessidade de uma investigação que examina em que medida canção escrita e música pedagogias de produção de vídeo inspiram e capacitam alunos de música para se tornar artistas musicais agentivo e autônomos.

Transformative Music Engagement

- Affordances of digital media and MVP pedagogies include expansive music learning opportunities that are autonomous, self-directed and capable of acting as a vehicle or catalyst for *change or transformation* across a diverse group of music learners (O'Neill, 2012).



Transformative Music Engagement (TME)

Transformative



learners having the power to transform or change (themselves, others and the world around them) by acting on and negotiating their own purposes, values, feelings and meanings in ways that they find worthwhile and derive a sense of purpose and fulfillment, and that make a valued contribution to their community



agency
empowerment
choice
identities
purposefulness

Music



Engagement



learning in action - being involved in activities that generate interest, inquiry, dialogue, critical reflection (what students do when they move from being motivated to learn to *actively* learning (positive development and making meaningful connections))



experiential
capacity building
holistic-integrated
relationships
connectedness

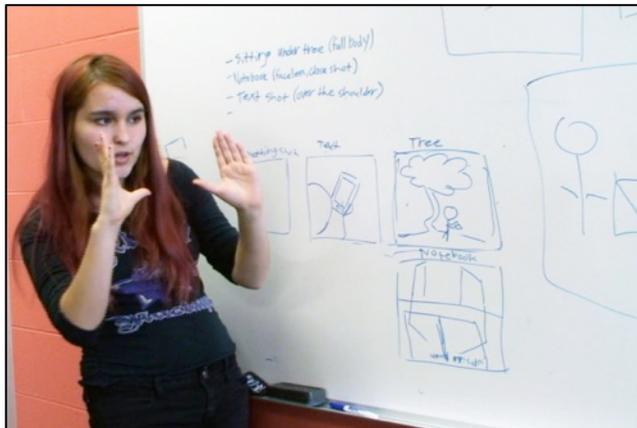
**Values &
Meaning Making**



Participatory Cultures and Learning Relationships (Jenkins, 2009)

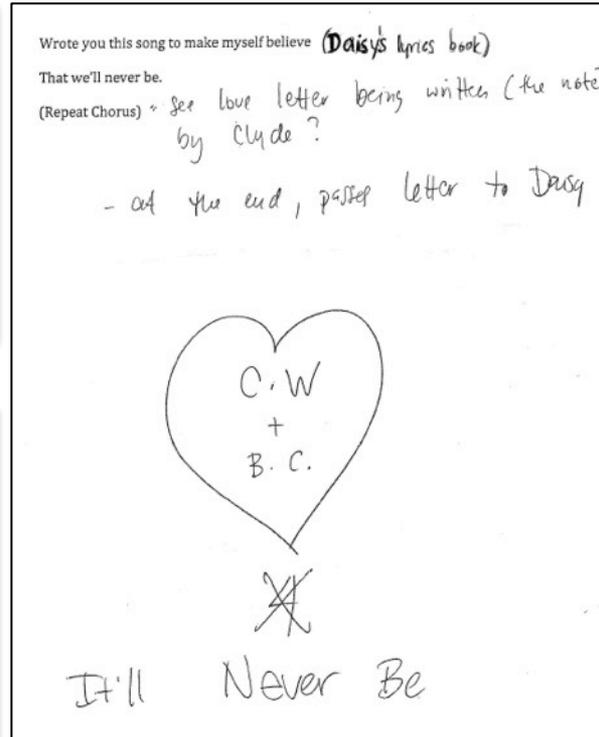
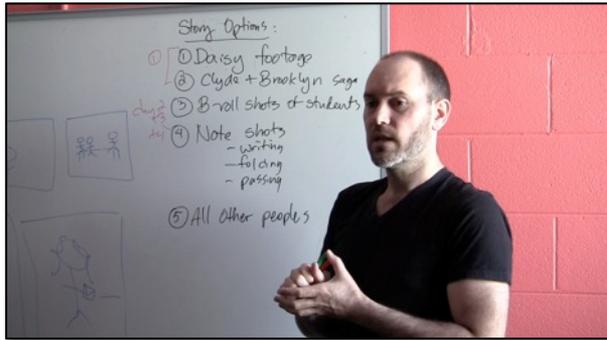
(Culturas participativas e Relacionamentos de Aprendizagem)

- Peer to peer learning: MVP pedagogies provide a platform for students to learn from each other, to share in each other's strengths, and to expand knowledge of MVP techniques within a participatory culture (Jenkins, 2009).
- Music learners own the process, making key decisions, influencing creative trajectories, and making contributions that they believe matter.
- Instructor role is more one of mentorship as compared to expert or leader.
- Such relationships can support a music learner's willingness to take risks and become agentive within MVP activities.



Dialogical Inquiry (Wells, 2000) (Perguntando e Conversando)

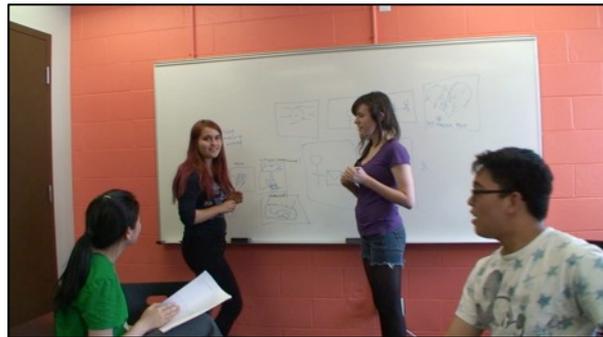
- The Classroom is seen as a collaborative community.
- Purposeful activities involve whole persons.
- Activities are situated and unique.
- Curriculum is a means, not an end.
- Outcomes are both aimed for and emergent.



Transformative Pedagogy (O'Neill, 2012) (Pedagogia Transformadora)

Transformative pedagogy is a set of principles that guide teaching and learning interactions. It has several key elements:

- Teaching begins with student knowledge.
- Skills, knowledge, and voices develop from engagement in the activity.
- Teaching and learning are both individual and collaborative processes.
- Teaching and learning are transformative processes.



Participants and Music Program (Participantes e Programa de Música)

- Participants were 5 females and 5 males (aged 13-16 years)
- At-risk youth from an inner-city area
- Attended a 32-week community-based music program taught by the first author



- The mandate of the school is to accept 80% of students who are socio-economically at risk and 20% of students who are socially, academically or emotionally at risk but may have the means to study music
- The school aims to provide as many styles of music education as possible (classical, jazz, rock, hip-hop)
- Students attend weekly group classes in their chosen discipline: piano, guitar, voice, choir, percussion, ensemble, music theory, songwriting, Hip-Hop, and music video production
- Most disciplines also provide biweekly private lessons
- Tuition for students is free, and students within instrumental disciplines are provided with an instrument to use at home
- Students of all experience levels are admitted without having to audition
- Age range is grades four through twelve
- The program is run independently of the public school system

Student Participants (Os Participantes do Estudante)

- Class consists of students from music disciplines (adders) and students from outside the regular program
- Equal numbers of males and females in a technology–based class
- Range of backgrounds and interests



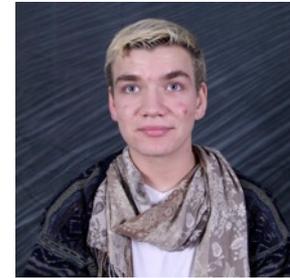
Richard: percussion



Kat: writer



Zoe: voice



Finn: voice



Daisy: songwriter



Steven: guitar



Jade: piano



Clyde: actor



Jeremiah: photographer



Brooklyn: percussion

Research Procedure (Procedimento de Investigação)

- The classes were video recorded, participants were interviewed at various points during and at the end of the program, and all completed videos were collected for analysis.

Analytical Framework (Quadro Analítico)

- The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using the *constant comparison method* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967)



- Music videos were transcribed and analyzed using *multimodal microanalysis* (Scott Curwood, 2010)

Screen Shot/time	Lyrics	Music	Action	Filming	Editing	Student Interpretation (from interview)
 00:00		Guitar chords	Tree branches blow in the wind	C/U of branches	Camera continues to pan down the tree	R: Ok, uh, so, the intro's right there.
 00:10		Guitar chords	Tree branches still blowing, as camera pans down we see a girl (Daisy) sitting alone on a bench looking sad. She looks upwards and the camera pulls up again into the branches of the trees.	Camera moves down towards wide shot of girl, central framing.	Same shot	
 00:12	Falling leaves around me, change is in the air.	First phrase of verse 1	Daisy is lying on the ground, surrounded by leaves singing.	Medium C/U, central framing, above POV	Straight cut	
Transcription Narrative: 00:12 to 00:22: We hear Daisy sing the lyrics "Falling leaves around me, change is in the air." In the action, we see Daisy lying on the ground surrounded by a variety of leaves in the background. The framing is a medium C/U, central position, and the camera angle is captured in an above POV, looking directly down on Daisy. Daisy uses her gaze indirectly, not making eye contact with the camera but instead looking around to the side and above her.				Themes: multimodal discourse, semiotic transduction, creative collaboration		
Interpretation: This edit represents one of the more successful multimodal discourses that emerged out of this production. This particular shot was originally captured in the springtime, and there were no leaves anywhere to be found in the park. A number of students and myself brought in leaves from our own neighborhoods, and the students arranged the leaves around Daisy to create the façade of a fall landscape. By doing so, the students and Daisy are passing the meaning represented within the lyrics into the background of the shot. We hear the word "leaves" in the vocals, we see Daisy sing the word "leaves" in her performance, and see actual leaves in the background. Semiotically, this illustrates how the process of transduction is used to pass the meaning of the word "leaves" from the mode of text to the modes of sound (music) and image.						

It'll Never Be (Ele Nunca Será)

Song written by Daisy

Music video by Finn



Findings: Transformative Music Engagement

Agentive Musical Lives: Connectedness

(Resultados: Connectedness)

“...it enabled us to have all these different people involved when it used to be just me and the person I wrote the song about. And it was...it turned into this whole different project and it became not my song, but everyone’s song.”

Daisy, age 15

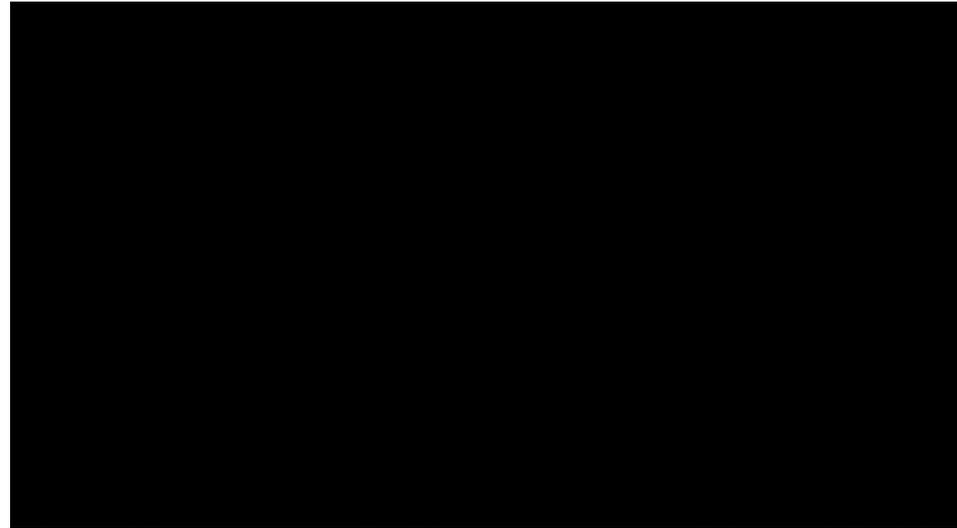
“I mean, I got to know everybody better. Got to know everybody’s interests better. It was like, they’re all really laid back and they’re all really helpful and we kinda help each other along the processes which is nice. ”

Brooklyn, age 16

“I think it’s creative because I didn’t see anyone else doing it when they were editing their video and I really wanted something that kind of stood out and I guess that was it. ”

Steven, age 16

“I think that being able to say that I can make a music video and not just write songs and stand there and perform is, um, a really good thing to have.” *Daisy, age 15*



Findings: Transformative Music Engagement

Agentive Musical Lives: Engaged Agency (Engajamento e Agência)

“I had, um, a certain influence in the film. That I was able to kind of, um, direct, in a way, kind of the way the direction that I wanted the film to go. So, personally, I think, um, the direction that my film went was, was great. And, and the direction that I chose, I feel like it, it turned out pretty well in the end.”

Jerimiah, age 15

Over the summer, I made two music videos with my friends and they helped me film it and I was able to bring it into the classroom and edit it all myself and, and it was just...if I hadn't learned what I did during the year, I would've never been able to go outside of this school and be able to make this video myself and then bring it back and say, look what I did with what you taught me.”

Daisy, age 15

“Because no one else helped me make it. Because I did it all by myself. Umm..like, of course, I was... everyone else helped film it but then I'm part...I'm the person telling the story. I'm the narrator now, not Daisy.”

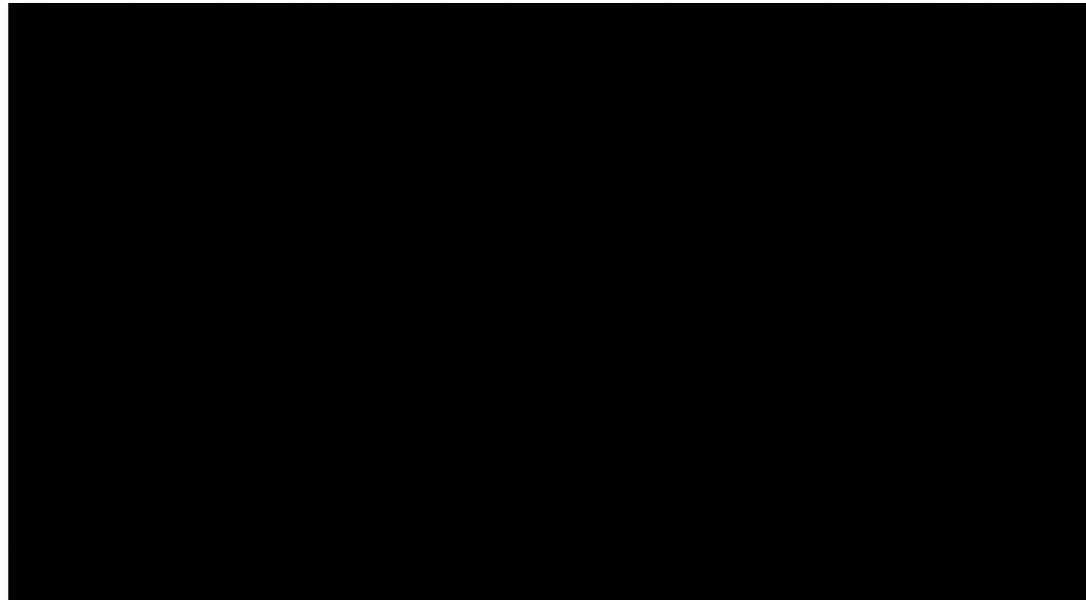
Brooklyn, age 16

Findings: Transformative Music Engagement

Autonomy – Youth Voice and Choice (Voz da Juventude e Escolha)

“I was there for one of the planning days where, um, we were talking about the part when all the characters share hands and it was uh, uh...I, I noticed that all the hand sharing was all heterosexual couples and so I raised my hand and said well, not everyone in the class is heterosexual how uh, how can we incorporate um, homosexual/transsexual couples into the...the mix. And um, yeah, it was...it was cool. And after that we had a uh, you know, things got uh, everything got a bit... everything got a bit queer up in here. It was a lot of fun. “

Finn, age 15



Findings: Transformative Music Engagement Empowerment and Transformation (Direitos e Transformação)

“I like sitting down and um, and just watching all the clips and putting them all together myself. I, like, get to choose where...what goes where and like, people don't get to tell me what to do and I get to be creative by myself.”

Brooklyn, age 16

“...creating the music video because it could be told on whoever's point of view so I get to use a lot of my own ideas.

Jade, age 16



“Um, I was a little scared at first because, I...I knew the group fairly well - we'd been together for a year but I'd never really...we'd never really sort of brought up this sort of a topic before. But then, it went over really well and everyone was very... um, you know, accepting of it and they were like yeah, yeah that sounds better. And so, you know, it was...it was very fun and easy to incorporate and it was just, hmm. It was...I'm glad I, I stood up and said that.”

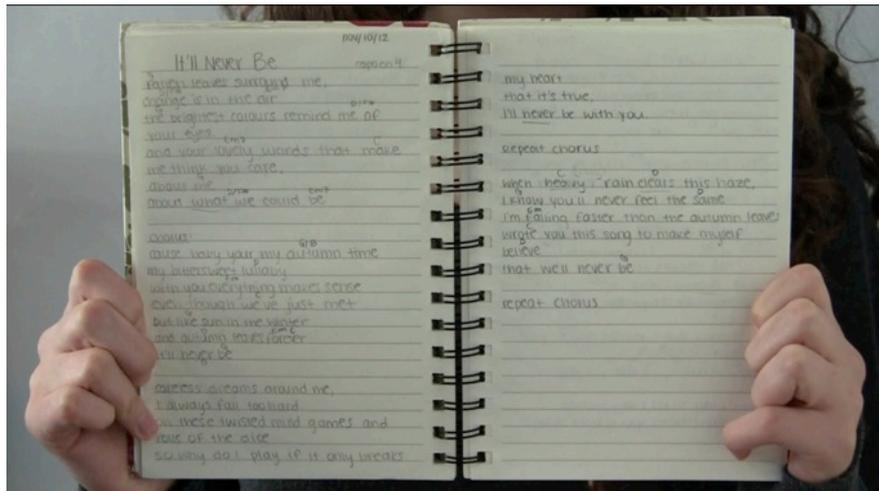
Finn, age 15

Summary of Findings (Resumo dos Resultados)

- Findings indicate that MVP students are empowered, inspired, and engaged as active agents within the creative collaborations that occur within all stages of music video production.
- Students experience both individual and communal agency, working together, teaching together, and learning together.
- MVP processes and technologies are autonomous, providing music learners with the freedom and control to create music videos that reflect not only each student's individual voice, but the beliefs and values of the entire class.



- The music video as a musical production provides the potential to express ideas in a unique manner that would not be possible within songwriting or music composition alone.
- Many students became active agents in the direction of their music education, and all students were inspired, engaged, and empowered by their work as producers of music videos.
- These affordances also create expansive learning opportunities associated with transformative music engagement, with prominent characteristics including **agency**, **autonomy**, and **empowerment**.





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