

# Canadian youth's artistic learning and arts engagement

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MODAL Research Group

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**MODAL Research Group**

Multimedia Opportunities,  
Diversity & Artistic Learning

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# Youth-Engaged Multimodal Research in Action

## EDUC 399 Positive Youth Development

*Supporting Youth Engagement, Empowerment and Social Innovation in Practice*

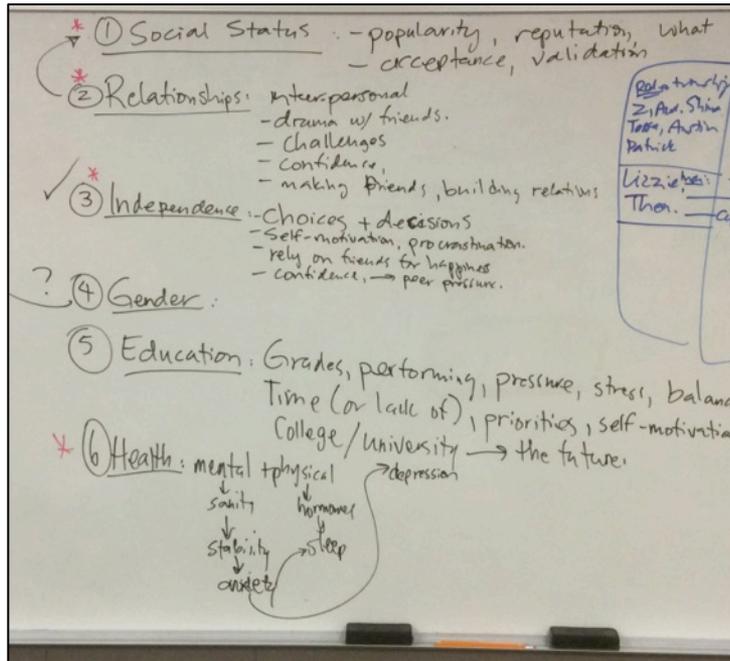


- Simon Fraser University's vision of community-engaged research aims to increase experiential learning opportunities and support integrated community engagement projects.
- This innovative education initiative brought together SFU students in education to work with senior secondary students on interests and issues that concern youth.
- This work focused on putting multimodal research into action to support knowledge sharing, communication and social innovation.



MVP student sharing their song sketches with SFU students

- This project provided experiential learning opportunities for university and high school students to work collaboratively, creatively and equitably.
- Youth chose projects and topics of interest and concern, providing them with a voice to tell stories that matter to them.
- Projects culminated in a final product, performance or presentation at term end.



Topics of interest generated by MVP students



Richard works on lyrics in a collaborative writing session

- A blended learning approach integrated knowledge sharing through online and classroom learning.
- Key concepts and theories in positive youth development were examined critically, reflected on, and put into practice.



Steven answers questions prompted by SFU students



MVP and SFU students share ideas using Skype

SFU undergraduate students collaborated and interacted with MVP students as they developed new lyrical materials for future music video projects.



Richard and Ella converse with SFU students using Skype

Using topics chosen by MVP students, both groups (SFU and MVP) engaged in writing (free-writes, poetry, or song lyrics) that were shared and compared through various dialogues and discourses taking place during the fall 2014 term.

SFU students were required to write a term paper based on the topics chosen by MVP students, and MVP students shared their work with SFU students at the Burnaby SFU campus in a final sharing evening.



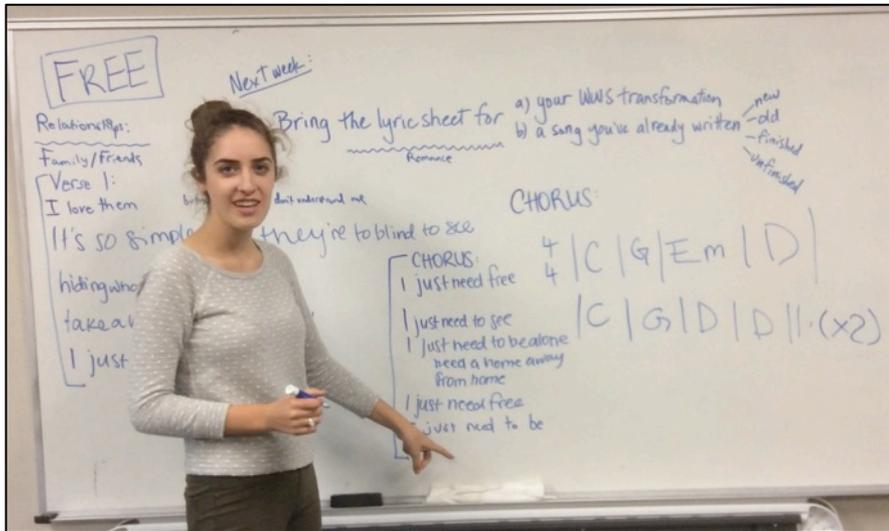
SFU students also had opportunities to share what they learned about positive youth development as it related to each specific song topic, reflecting upon their interactions and collaboration with SoM students.

# Participants and Music Program

- MVP participants were 6 females and 4 males (aged 14-16 years)
- At-risk youth from an inner-city area
- Attended a free 32-week community-based music program taught by the first author
- SFU students were 9 females and 9 males
- Attending EDUC 399 – Special Topics (Seminar) – Positive Youth Development

# Research Procedure – MVP and SFU Students

- The MVP classes and Skype sessions were video recorded
- SFU students provided MVP students with a questionnaire at the beginning of the course as a departure point for their EDUC 399 research papers
- MVP participants were given a reflective questionnaire at the end of the program



Class footage of Daisy generating lyrics with her group



Class footage of Daisy and her group creating music

# Research Procedure – Questionnaires

## POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please take a deep breath, these questions are not hard and will probably take you around 15 minutes to answer. Thank you for taking your time, and your help is highly appreciated and valuable to us.

Gender: Female

Age: 16

Current Grade: 11

How long have you been studying at Sarah McLachlan? 24 (Months)

How much did you like music or music related work, e.g: song writing, playing music instruments, performances, music productions, or music video shooting before you came to Sarah McLachlan? (Please circle)

- 1) Very much liked    2) Liked    3) Did not like    4) Really did not like

Did this affect your decision to apply Sarah McLachlan? yes, it made me love music even more.

1) Yes, it was mostly my decision

2) No, it was mostly someone else's decision (parents, teacher, etc.). Who \_\_\_\_\_?

Why do you come to Sarah McLachlan music school? (Please give a brief description)

Because I love music and its such a great program. It has improved my music a lot and I would like to keep learning more here. :)

How much do you like the music or music related work now? (Please Circle)

- 1) Very much like    2) Like    3) Dislike    4) Really do not like

## Survey Questions: Reflecting Upon Participation in the EDUC 399 Project at SFU

1. What was your favourite part of the production?

[Why? Can you describe what happened and what you were doing?]

My favourite part of the production was recording my song. I had never done it before and it was really fun.

2. How would you describe your main role in the production?

I wrote the lyrics of the song and sang.

3. How pleased are you with the contribution you made to the production on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is not very pleased and 10 is very pleased. [Why do you think this?]

8 1/2 because i feel like I contributed a lot to the production but when it came to actually putting the music video together it was harder for me because I had never done it before.

4. What do you think is the most creative thing you did during the production? [Why do you think this was creative?]

The most creative thing I did during the production was film next to the elevator. The video looked really neat there and the lighting really fit with the theme of the song.

5. What motivated you the most to work on this project?

I had never created a music video before and I have always wanted to, so it was a really great experience that I looked forward to coming to work on every week!

6. What was the most challenging or difficult moment or problem you experienced when working on the production? [How did you feel about it? What did you do about it?]

A challenging moment for me was putting the music video together because it was new to me. I found myself getting frustrated with trying to fit the lyrics to the video.

7. How well were able to communicate with your other classmates during the production? [Can you explain why you feel that way?]

I was able to communicate pretty well with my classmates. I'm not very bossy so sometimes it was difficult for me to say if I didn't like the sound of something but other than that it was great.

8. What was the most important goal you wanted to achieve in the production of the video? [How well do you think you achieved it and why?]

My most important goal was to learn the process of music video making. I definitely achieved my goal because I learned a lot about what goes on behind the scenes and hope I can make more music videos in the future!

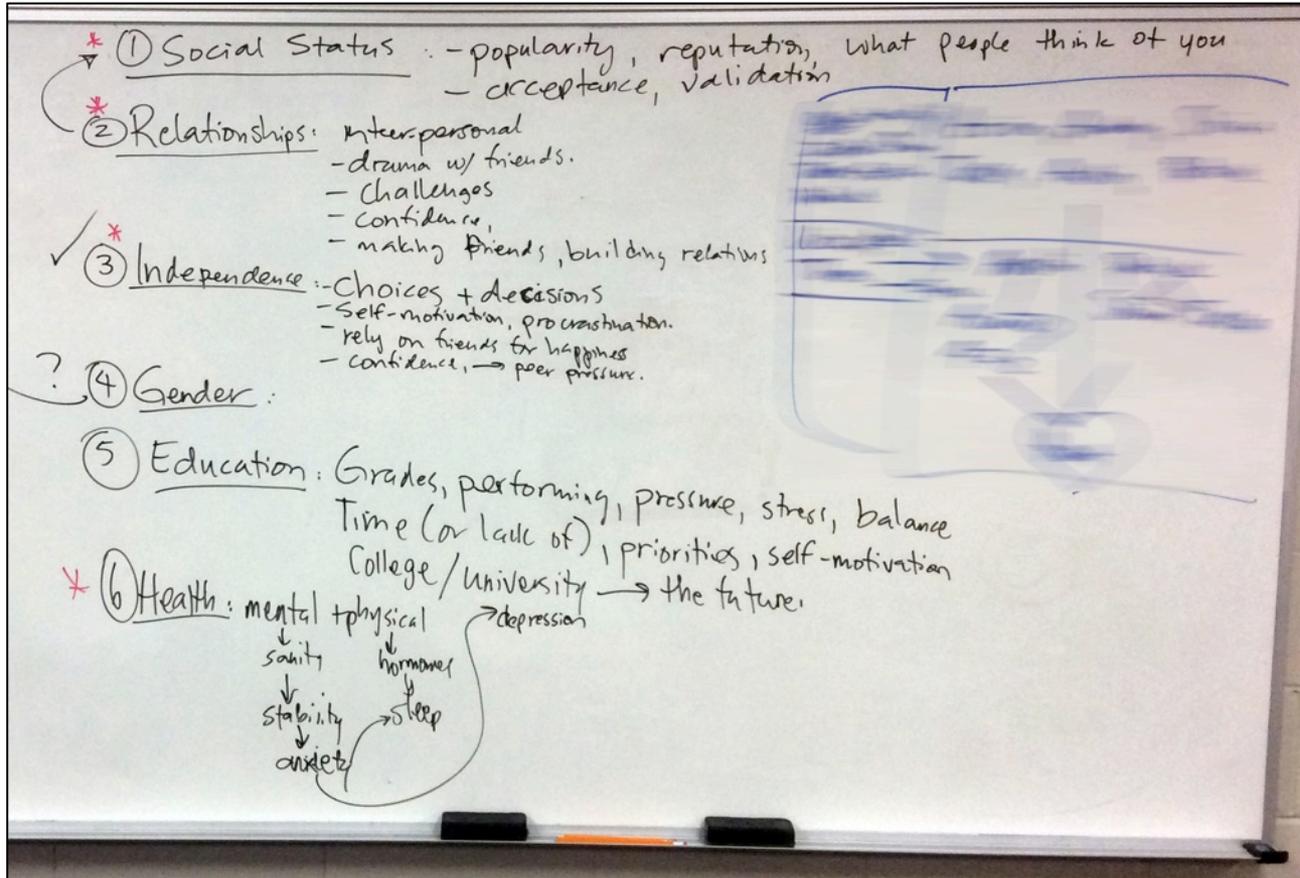
9. How helpful do you think the technology is at enabling you to express your own ideas?

MVP student questionnaire provided by SFU students

MVP student questionnaire provided by Dr. Cobb and Dr. O'Neill

# Song Topics– MVP Students

- Students were formed into three groups.
- The class developed a list of topics that they felt were important and/or relevant to them.



Six topics of interest generated by MVP students which were later narrowed down to three

# Creation Procedure – MVP Students

- Students recorded their songs in Garage Band with the help of instructional staff.
- Students filmed their videos with DSLR cameras
- Students edited their videos in Final Cut Pro X.



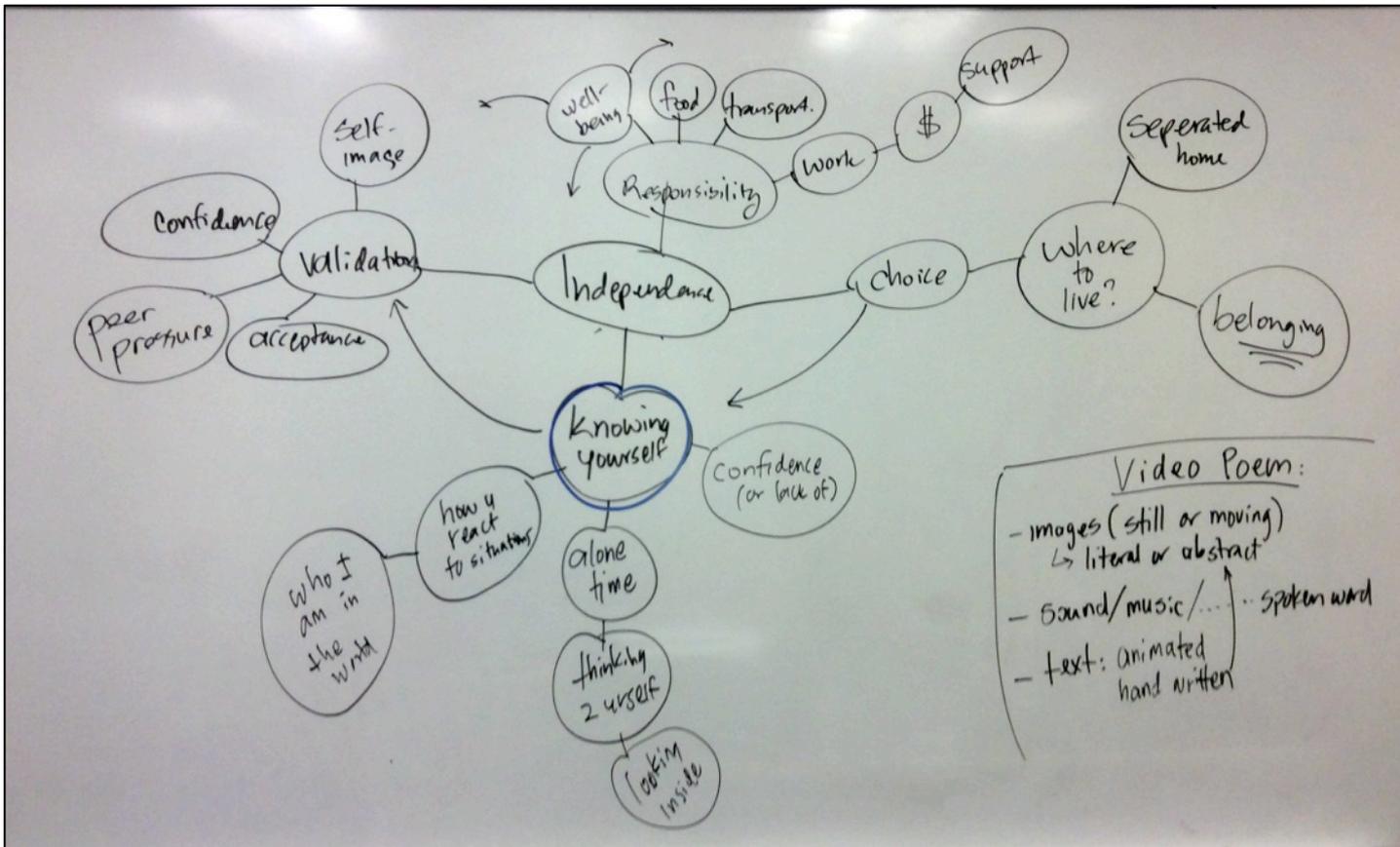
Garage Band session for Need Free



Final Cut Pro X session for Love is a Storm

# Project One - Independence

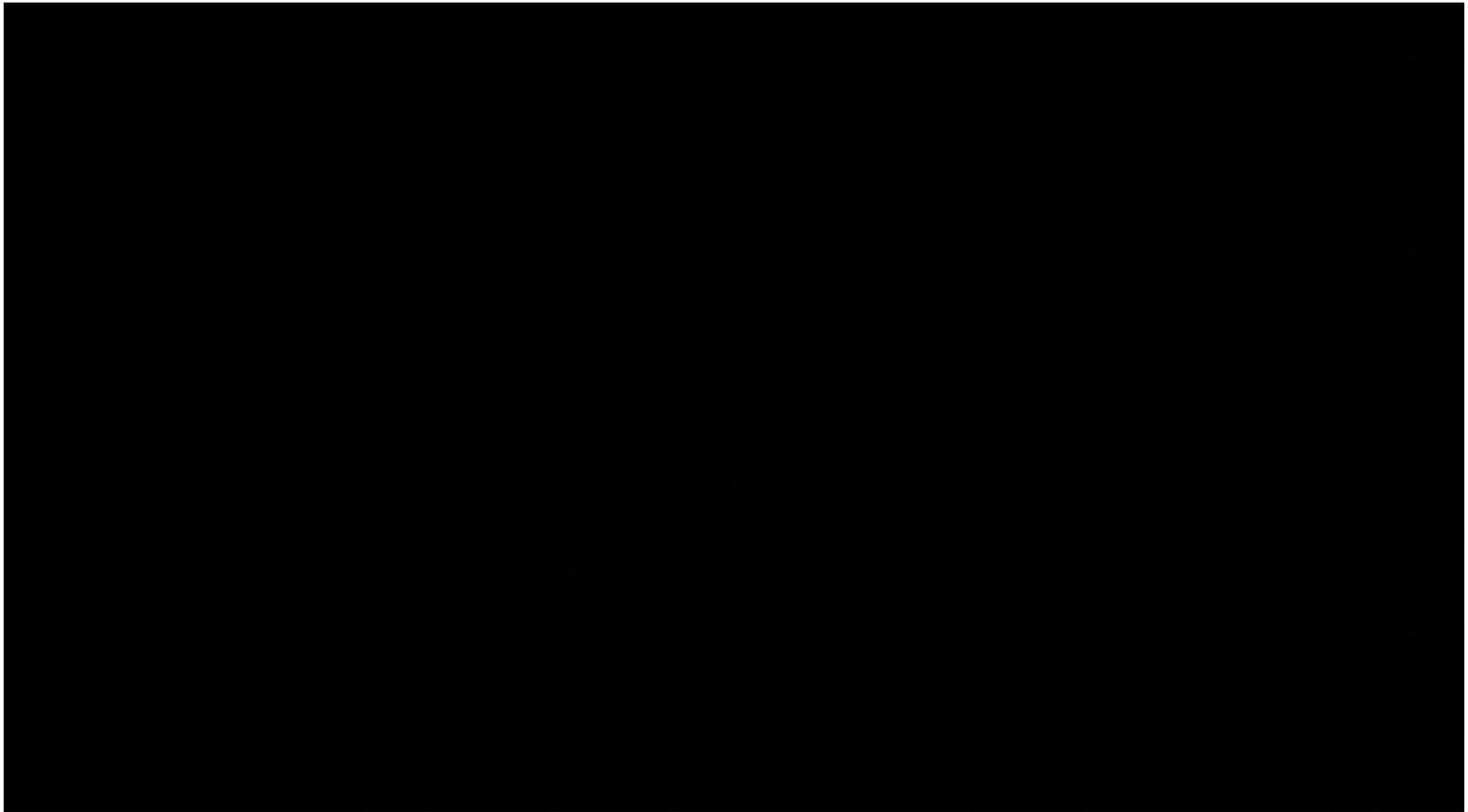
- This group consisted of 4 students – three musicians and one filmmaker.
- All four students wrote the lyrics, the three musicians wrote the music.



Concept map created by Group One exploring the idea of young adult independence

# Completed Music Videos

Project One: Tightropes (Edit by Iris)



# Project Two - Relationships

- Students consisted of 3 musicians
- Students created the lyrics and music together

LOVE  
Soul

RAIN  
GREY overcast  
ocean deep black  
Bell  
love at first sight  
love in rain Dream  
Wish Hope Beautiful eyes  
personality interest subtle  
something about them/you  
feeling sometime of way. you don't know what it is  
Smile laughter Sunshine  
not sure where im going  
or how i get here

Synthesis

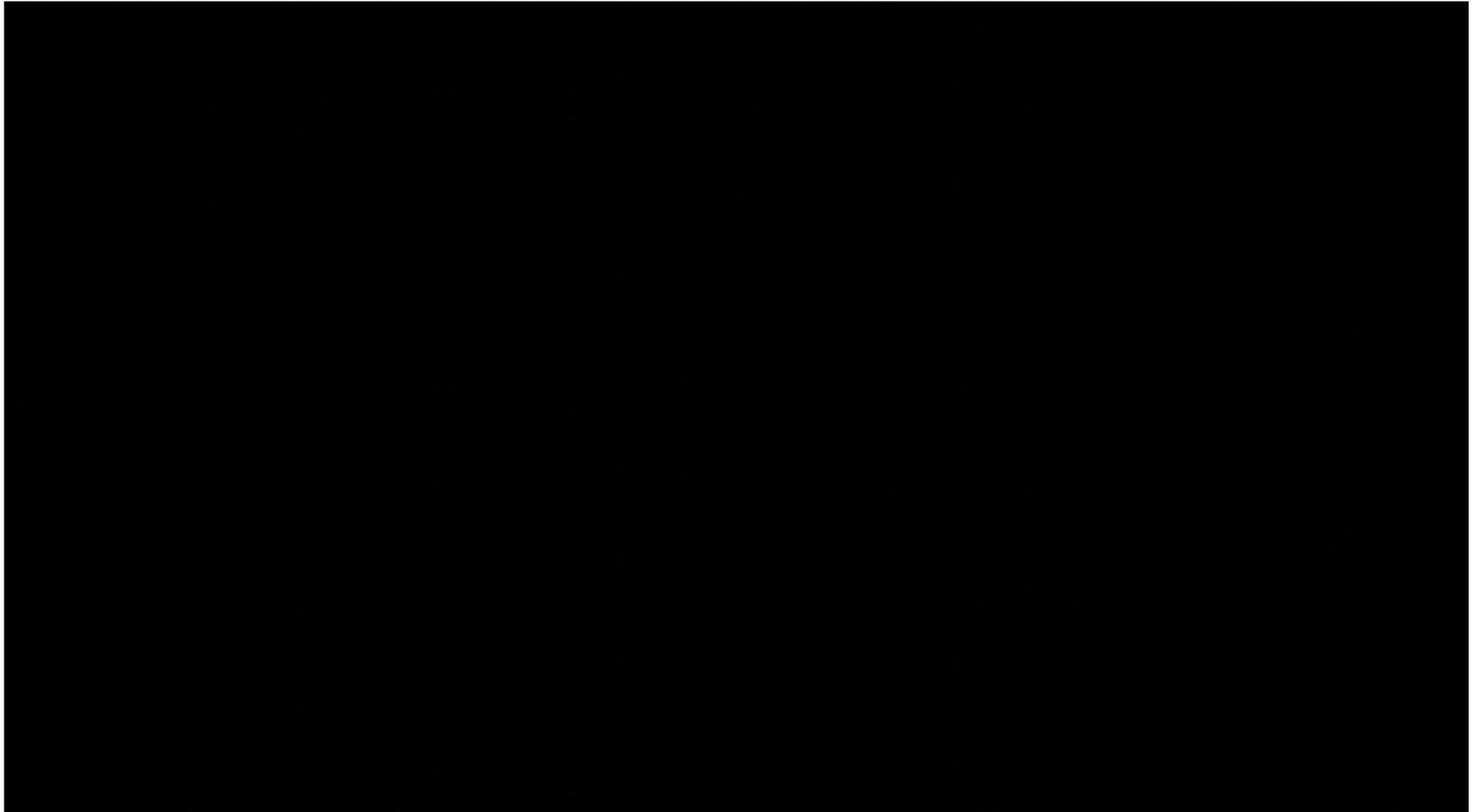
VERSE - set up environment/storyline 4 lines  
VERSE - how she feels.  
CHORUS: How she want him feel

Just out of my reach  
impossible to see

First draft of lyrics generated by Group Two

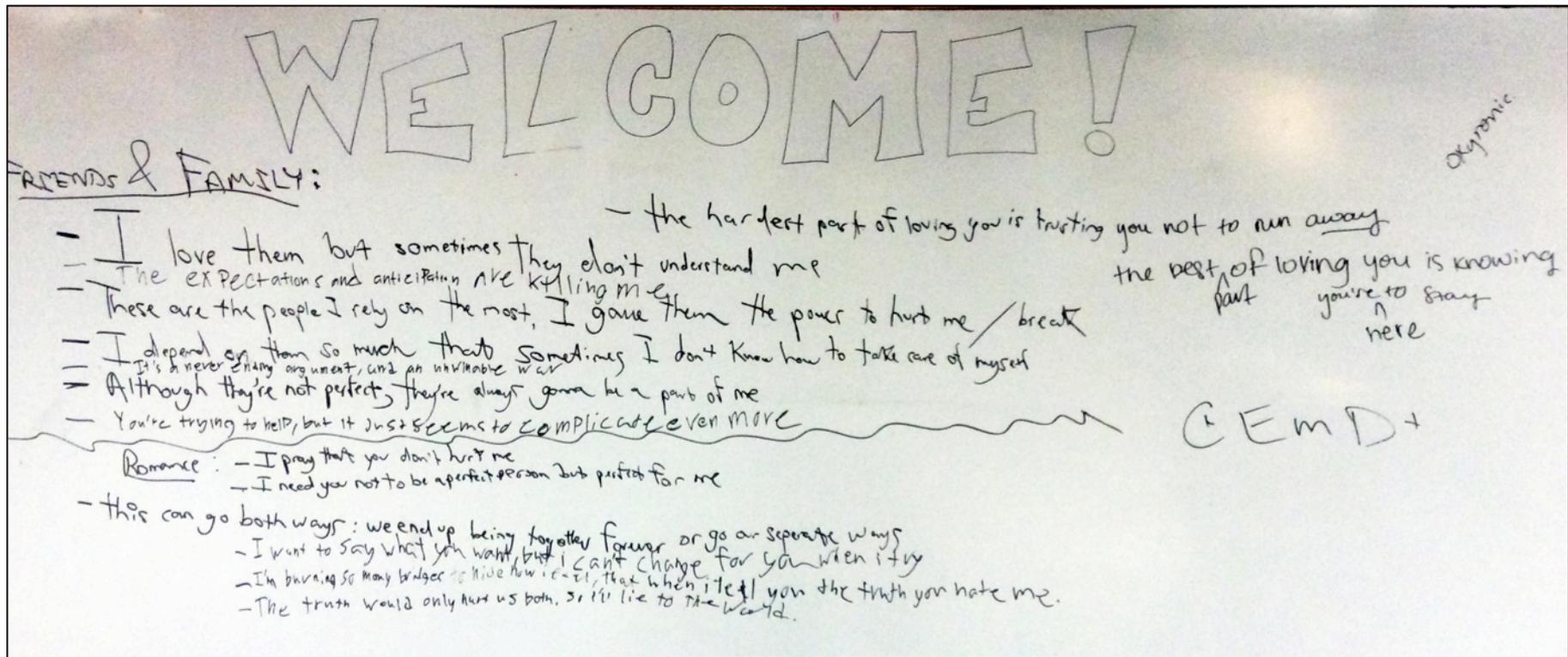
# Completed Music Videos

Project Two: Love is a Storm (Edit by Will)



# Project Three - Family

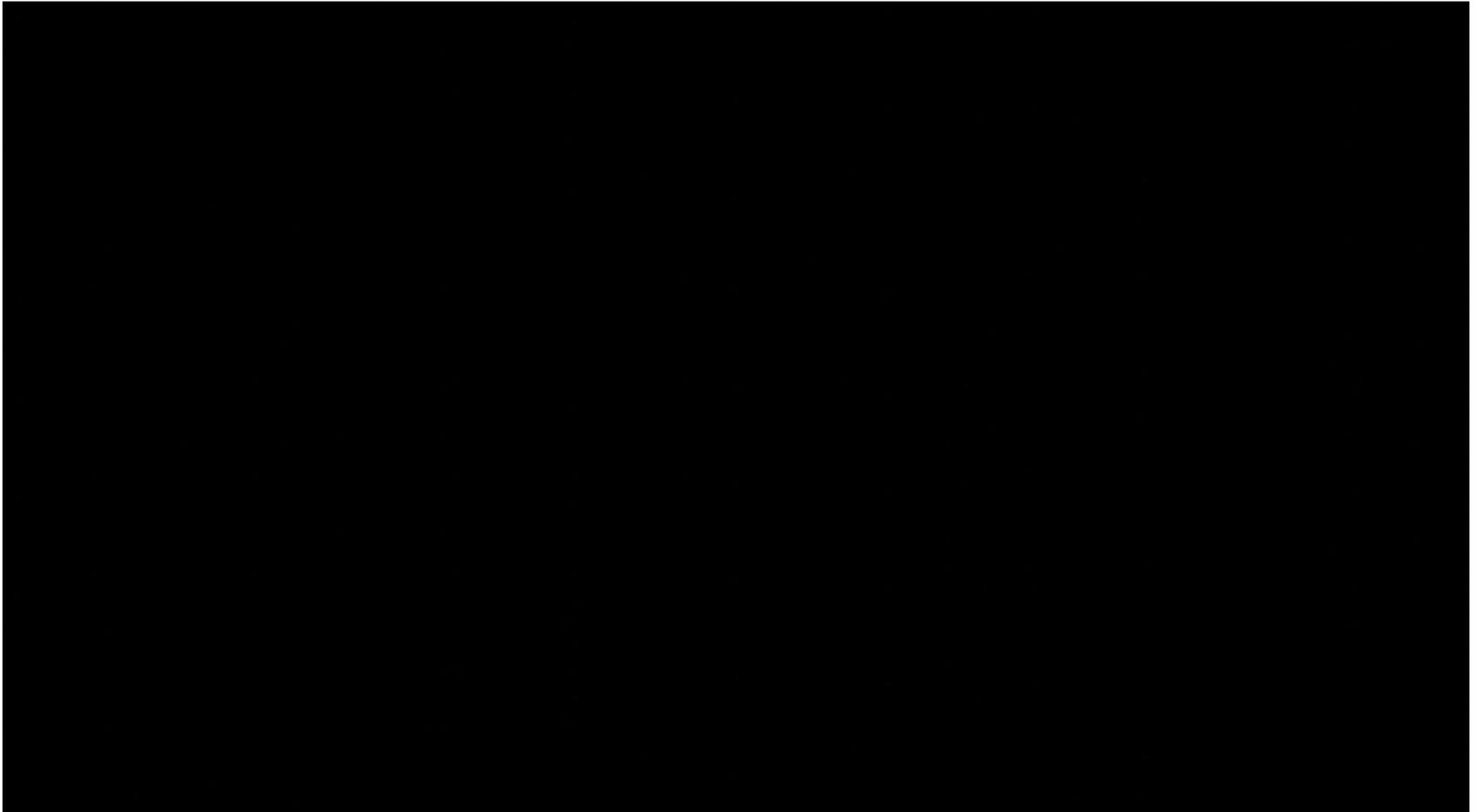
- Students consisted of three musicians.
- The class developed a list of topics that they felt were important and/or relevant to them.



First draft of lyrics generated by Group Three

# Completed Music Videos

Project Three: Free (Edit by Ella)



# SFU Student Research Papers and Presentations

## Paper Titles:

- Performance as a Form of Community
- Building a healthy relationship toward positive youth development



# SFU Student Research Papers and Presentations

## Paper Titles:

- Positive Youth Development in an After School Music Program: Investigating the Effects of Collaboration
- Singing, Song Writing and Video Production: Promoting Positive Youth Development in an After-School Music Program



# SFU Student Research Papers and Presentations

## Paper Titles:

- How does emotional development affect youth in their positive development?
- Positive Youth Development: Musical Programs as Transformation of Youth's Inner Voice



# Findings: Positive Youth Development

## Engagement and Musical Autonomy

We found that the practices and learning opportunities that emerged through the pedagogical approach was engaging for both MVP and SFU students, fostering a sense of agency and musical autonomy (Green, 2005).

“There are so many options with the technology these days that it makes it really fun to play with and try new things.”

*Iris, age 14*

“The ideas I had on how the music video could look and how I brought those ideas to life. This was creative because it’s not something I’ve ever done (editing a music video) so it was really amazing that I was able to present my ideas in the music video. ” *Ella, age 15*

# Findings: Positive Youth Development

## Engagement continued

“My favourite part of the production was recording my song. I had never done it before and it was really fun.” *Rachel, age 15*

“My biggest motivation was the fact that I got to collaborate with other musicians. Something about creating with other artists in terms of music makes me want to never stop working on the project. It gives me a larger sense of duty and responsibility than if I were to be working alone.”  
*Richard, age 16*

“We got to listen to some interesting facts they found regarding the main topic of our song which was *independence*. I also really enjoyed seeing the campus of SFU and eating free food they provided for us.”  
*Victoria, age 16*

“It was fun being able to talk to them in person and express my opinions. It was cool talking to a group of adults who actually cared about what we had to say.”  
*Daisy, age 16*

# Findings: Positive Youth Development

## **Engaged Agency (O'Neill, 2011b)**

We found the learner-centred activities within this project enabled participants to “make meaningful connections and build relationships that facilitate youth empowerment” (O'Neill, in press-a, p. \*). Agency and empowerment were found to be interrelated outcomes stemming from numerous experiences described by the participants.

“My most creative contribution would have been the actual writing of the song's lyrics. From my view point, it was a chance to pour in my thoughts, ideas and feelings into the project.”

*Richard, age 16*

“My favourite part of the production was filming the music video. It was fun being able to collaborate with my peers in terms of performance, camera angles and overall video concept. I was also happy to have been given freedom in terms of videography as I had less of a role in front of the camera. This allowed me more control in the overall composition of the video and it was fun being able to see the video unfold mid-production.

*Daisy, age 16*

“My most important goal was to learn the process of music video making. I definitely achieved my goal because I learned a lot about what goes on behind the scenes and I hope I can make more music videos in the future!” *Rachel, age 15*

# Findings: Positive Youth Development

## Collaboration

We found the project functioned as a *participatory culture* (Jenkins, 2009), with SFU students providing support and mentorship for the MVP student's creations. The experiences of the SFU students, and the findings of the research conducted within the EDUC 399 class was passed along to the MVP students. This process facilitated expansive learning opportunities for the MVP students as they engaged in their musical expression. The songwriting process for MVP students was also found to be democratic and shared equally between the students.

"I believe I had an equal part with the others in my group when it came to the writing and instrumental contribution, as well as the editing of the video."

*Richard, age 16*

"It was really interesting to see all of the research that the SFU students came up with about our topic." *Maverick, age 16*

"My favourite part of having the SFU students involved was that they had to research things on based on our songs." *Rachel, age 15*

"They were really supportive overall!! They gave us a lot of good feedback about our project as well as our future which inadvertently ties into our songs theme."

*Zoe, age 16*

# Findings: Positive Youth Development

## **Collaboration continued**

“I found it easy to communicate with my other classmates during the production, especially when songwriting. While we did run into some minor conflicts, I was never afraid to express my opinion and was glad that, with my band members doing the same, we were able to come to a happy agreement.”

*Daisy, age 16*

“Pretty well, my whole group was very open to new ideas so I think we all communicated with each other well.”

*Victoria, age 16*

“My classmates are very different from me in their own way (different interests, hobbies etc..) but the one thing that brought us all together was our love of art so I felt that I can communicate with them both casually and musically.”

*Ella, age 15*

# Findings: Positive Youth Development

## Connectedness

We found this project provided the appropriate social conditions for learning relationships that created a sense of connectedness and a desire to learn with others.

“It was very helpful because we could connect on personal levels with our songs and they told us about times in their life that this song reminded them of.”

*Rachel, age 15*

“Having the SFU students allowed for us to share what we were doing with a large group of people. It also created motivation so that we could create something that could be shown of with a great amount of pride.”

*Richard, age 16*

“I learned about their perspective on our topic and although their life stories were a lot different than mine, I could understand the things they had to deal with because as a teenager in a way, I deal with them too.”

*Ella, age 15*

# Next Steps in the Research

- We plan to use multimodal microanalysis (Curwood & Gibbons, 2010) to analyze the students' music videos
- We are also interested in analyzing SFU EDUC 399 students' reflections on their learning experience as well as their analysis of '*what* the MVP students learned' and '*how* the MVP students learned'.



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Thank you

Please feel free to contact me  
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