

Reflective/Contextual Essay

For my reflective/contextual essay, I will be looking at the song I wrote reflecting on my project and experience working with students on songwriting and storytelling. The song was a way for me to describe this process, my thoughts, summaries, and reflections in a concise manner.

Below are the lyrics for my song:

Chorus: C F Am G

Let the nerves fall down

Let the fears wash away

You don't have to prove yourself

It's okay to make mistakes

Verse 1: C F Am G

Walk into the classroom

It's 9:20 AM

Forty eyes staring back at me

What do I say?

Chorus

Verse 2:

Kids bouncing off the walls

They don't even want to try

I'm so tired, can't see straight

Hoping for the best today

Chorus

Verse 3:

A child's sitting in the corner

Third week in a row today

The song he wrote starts to play

A smile shines on his face

Chorus x2

The song begins with the chorus, the main message of the song, because these words were phrases that I had to constantly remind myself of during my creative process. I did not realize that these were the words I was repeatedly saying until I coded my transcriptions and noticed this pattern of fearful and nervous emotions. I would constantly question my teaching style and get nervous about what to say to the students and how I was presenting myself in front

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of the classroom. However, through this process, I learned that I did not need to be afraid to make mistakes because that was where I grew the most. In my transcriptions, the places where I became most articulate and explained my thoughts and feelings best were items that I had been wrestling with and talking through in the past three months. Items like feedback from the cooperating teacher on my teaching style and presence or my reasoning behind every action I made.

The verses of this song describes some key elements of my time in the creative process. Verse 1 highlights my first day walking into the classroom coming in to a new setting and situation. It also describes the feeling of nervousness that I felt every time I walked into the classroom and had to teach and help facilitate the students in the songwriting process. I was uncomfortable doing this, but I kept repeating the lines of the chorus to myself for comfort and understanding. Verse 2 describes the theme of exhaustion and hopefulness that I found repeated in the coding of my transcriptions. Phrases such as “I’m so exhausted” and “Hopefully today goes well” were commonly used by myself and a significant amount of that was because I never knew what to expect from the kids. I understood that investing my time and energy every week was tiring and I had to mentally and physically prepare myself for it all. Verse 3 describes a particular moment of victory with a student, which applies to the broader topic of the little victories that I had to be aware of and celebrate when teaching or else I would experience burnout.

I chose the chords CM, FM, Am, and GM in that order because I eventually want to make this song a duet or mash-up with one of the students’ songs. Our songs and growth in this process were intertwined with one another and I desired to show this physically. This experience was amazing and allowed me the opportunity to get experience in the field and consistently see a

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group of children and their progression overtime which is different than what my normal practicum experiences look like. I learned about lesson planning, scaffolding, and reflecting for improvement. I also learned about data analysis and what the process of coding and analyzing narrative material for overarching themes consisted of.