

Wheeler Avenue Elementary School Classroom Evaluation

Richie Havens and Pals: *Mixed Bag For Kids*

For: Sharing World Entertainment, LLC

Submitted by: Mariah Martin

The Effectiveness of Lyrics-4-Literacy -- A New Teaching Methodology

“A child’s love for words comes from music”

Rosemary Dellapina, educator

Sharing World first introduced its Lyrics-4-Literacy Book/CD product, Richie Havens and Pals: *Mixed Bag For Kids Of All Ages*, to Wheeler Avenue Elementary School in Valley Stream, New York. A proposal was presented to the school board to implement a study that would gauge the Book/CD’s effectiveness in teaching children how to read, using popular music/lyrics coupled with a unique interactive, responsive teaching model.

After assessing that the Book/CD content and lesson plans incorporated a positive interpersonal, environmental and global message, the board voted to accept the proposal presented by Rosemary Dellapina, an educator with over twenty-five years experience in teaching reading to school children, and by Ms. Danielle Vitulli, a student instructor, who had expressed interest in exploring the importance of music in language and literacy development. The teachers were consequently given permission to administer the study in an after school program.

Nineteen to twenty-nine children became involved in the study at different times. Their ages primarily ranged from four to eight, with an approximately equal numbers of boys and girls. The children and parents, in collaboration with the teachers, were then asked for feedback using an evaluation form provided to them by Sharing World.

The Book/CD product consists of a music CD of eleven songs sung by Richie Havens, six of which were commissioned by Sharing World, and a fully illustrated

printed book containing song lyrics and written exercises and puzzles related to each song. Throughout the book are suggested activities for the readers, children and adults to undertake together. The overarching theme is “Reading Encouragement.”

The following is a summary of the evaluation forms filled out by the children, parents and teachers at the culmination of the study.

STUDENT EVALUATIONS

Kid Hop Rhyme (1)

Kid Hop Rhyme, written by Patrick Noth, is a hip-hop inspired story in rhyme that leads the reader to create his or her own rhyming stories. There were 19 children in the first exposure to Kid Hop Rhyme.

1. Did you enjoy the music?

(14) – A lot

(4) – Not really

(1) – Undecided

2. Did you enjoy the words of the music, the lyrics?

(14) – A Lot

(5) – Not Really

Conclusion: Some of the students felt that the lyrics were peaceful; others commented that the lyrics made them want to move and sing. Two students said they enjoyed hearing the lyrics but had a hard time reading the lyrics.

3. Did you enjoy the activities for this song?

(17) – Yes, a lot

(2) – Not really

Conclusion: Many students enjoyed the book and games. The older children felt the puzzles were too easy.

4. Do you want adults and other people to read with you less or more?

(12) – Yes- a lot more

(4) – Undecided

(3) – Less

5. Do you think book and CD packages like this will help motivate adults to read to children more often?

(6) – Yes, a lot more

(8) – In the middle- not quite sure – undecided

(5) – Less

Conclusion: The majority of students enjoyed both the music and the exercises and found that it stimulated their own creativity.

Children’s written comments after completing Kid Hop Rhyme (1)

“I like the music because it has rhymes. I like the music because it has a cool beat.

I like the music because it has a lot of rap and hip-hop”

“Ms. Dellapina, I wish I had this CD because after I finish my homework I would like to listen to this song again and again. I Love Kids Hop Rhyme!!!!!!”

“I Like the song Kid Hop because I like the beat and rhyme and also keeping up with the song”

“I liked this song because it taught us to rhyme and rap while it was rhyming and rapping on its own. I love this song and it is also fun to read.”

“I liked the song a lot because the song teaches you how to rap. I liked the beat too. I think the games were fun. My favorite game was dancing. I enjoyed doing the puzzles. I liked the idea of making your own rap song but I couldn’t think of one. One of my favorite activities was finding the rhyming words. It was fun to read the words to the song. I think Kid Hop Rhyme is one of the best rap songs in the world!”

Kid Hop Rhyme (2)

Kid Hop Rhyme was presented a second time to a different group of 29 students, whose ages, in this particular after school class, ranged from five to twelve.

1. Did you enjoy the music?

(14) – Yes

(13) – Undecided

(2) – No

2. Did you enjoy the words of the music, the lyrics?

(11) – Yes

(10) – Undecided

(8) – No

3. Did you enjoy the activities for this song?

(14) – Yes

(9) – Undecided

(6) – No

4. Were you able to read along while singing the song?

(13) – Yes

(8) – Undecided

(8) – No

Conclusion: The answers to the questions for this after school class were much more varied. The majority of students enjoyed the music, lyrics, and respective activities and were able to read along with the song; however, there were more undecided. The ages in this particular class were from five to twelve, a seven-year age difference. Only one child added a comment:

“I like this song because I like rhymes and because it is an exciting song.”

What A Wonderful World

The often-recorded *What A Wonderful World* by Bob Thiele and David Weiss celebrates life’s simple pleasures.

1. Did you enjoy the music?

(18) – Yes, a lot

(1) – Not really

(1) – Undecided

2. Did you enjoy the words of the music, the lyrics?

(16) – Yes, a lot

(2) – Not really

(2) – Undecided

3. Did you enjoy the activities for this song?

(16) – Yes, a lot

(3) – Not really

(1) – Undecided

4. Were you able to read along while singing the song?

- (18) – Yes, A lot
- (1) – Not really
- (1) – Undecided

Conclusion: Children sincerely enjoyed and appreciated the music and content of this song and lesson plan. A few students mentioned that the music was peaceful and helped them to calm down. The comments were all positive and many were both reflective and value centered: *“I like activity two because it had something to do with politeness and making people happy about themselves”*

Grassy, Grass, Grass

Grassy, Grass, Grass was written by Woody Guthrie and sung as a duet by Richie Havens and Kris Kristofferson. It uses word repetition to illustrate pleasant moments in life.

Did you enjoy the music?

- (9) – Yes
- (8) – No
- (4) – Undecided

Did you enjoy the words of the music, the lyrics?

- (8) – Yes
- (6) – No
- (7) – Undecided

Did you enjoy the activities for this song?

- (16) – Yes
- (1) – No
- (4) – Undecided

Were you able to read along while singing the song?

(19) – Yes

(2) – Undecided

Conclusion: Half of the students liked the music and the other half considered it too slow and boring, perhaps because there was a four-year age difference in this class. Rosemary Dellapina mentioned that it was like a lullaby for the younger children and appreciated it being slow because it was easier for them to follow along and read. The older students responded more positively and enjoyed the activities where they had to make up their own songs. A few students appreciated it being slow, so that it was easier for them to follow along. The song's activities in the book were enjoyable to the majority of students. Finding the magic words and making up their own lyrics was notably interesting to most.

Welcome To My Castle

Welcome To My Castle, written by Leah Sarah Price, is Mister Word Wizard's theme song. It welcomes the listener and reader to his wonderful world of words.

1. Did you enjoy the music?

(6) – Yes

(4) – Undecided

(2) – No

2. Did you enjoy the words of the music, the lyrics?

(6) – Yes

(3) – Undecided

(3) – No

3. Did you enjoy the activities for this song?

(8) – Yes

(2) – Undecided

(2) – No

4. Were you able to read along while singing the song?

(7) – Yes

(3) – Undecided

(2) – No

Conclusion: A majority of the children enjoyed the song and the lyrics. Several commented that they had some difficulty in reading along with the song, that it was too hard to follow.

Did You Know

Did You Know was written by Leah Sarah Price and Richie Havens. It focuses on the connections between all people and a sense of belonging to the human family.

1. Did you enjoy the music?

(17) – Yes

(4) – Undecided

(2) – No

2. Did you enjoy the words, the lyrics?

(17) – Yes

(4) – Undecided

(2) – No

3. Did you enjoy the activities for this song?

(18) – Yes

(4) – Undecided

(1) – No

Were you able to read along while singing the song?

(21) – Yes

(1) – Undecided

(1) – No

Conclusion: By the time the children were introduced to this song, they had already listened to *Kid Hop Rhyme*, *What A Wonderful World* and *Welcome To My Castle*. *Kid Hop Rhyme* seems to top the charts with most responses. A few students mentioned that they enjoyed, *Did You Know*, “*because it reminds me of the things I already know*”

The majority of the students enjoyed this song’s puzzles and games, mentioning that they were “fun.”

Additional comments written by the children:

“I think that Did You Know, Kid Hop Rhyme and What a Wonderful World are all the best. I think Did You Know is a good song, because it tells you things that you should always remember. My favorite line was that “you should know wrong from right.”

“I loved doing the heart map because I’m sharing what’s important in my life.”

“I Love singing Did You Know!!!!!!”

“I wish I had this CD so I can listen to it 100 times a day.”

“Reading the song was fun!”

Lyrics For Literacy Questionnaire: Given to Parents

1. What has your child said about the Lyrics for Literacy program?

All of the parents commented that their children thought it was fun and seemed very excited about it. "Reading the song was fun!"

2. What activities did they like?

"Dancing, singing, drawing and the word search"

"Writing poems"

One parent wrote: *"I enjoyed drawing pictures, singing the songs and thinking about the questions as well."*

3. Did they ever come home singing the songs and remembering any words?

Yes, all students (except one) remembered some of the words to the songs. There were several songs learned and sang, and the children all seemed to have a favorite.

4. Please ask them if they liked reading the lyrics to the songs while singing to them?

All the parents said, "Yes" to this.

"He (my son) liked reading them while singing, especially the rhyming one. He said it made it a little easier."

5. Do you think that you would enjoy having a CD that had the lyrics printed in large print and activities to go along with each song, so that you and your child would have something to do together?

All parents said yes. They seemed to appreciate the interaction with their child after school. The children went home singing the songs they had heard. The parents also liked the idea of owning a CD, so they could reinforce what the child learned at home.