

Know Thyself: Reflections of the Adolescent Identity Crisis in Music

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Rationale

Knowing oneself and attaining a mature identity is the developmental task of adolescence. Successful resolution of the identity crisis involves making healthy choices and personal commitments to an occupation, religious belief, and a personal value system. The search for identity is often reflected in popular music as many song writers and artists struggle to define themselves through song. In this lesson, students will analyze song lyrics which express the states of identity as proposed by the psychologist James Marcia (1966) and reflect upon their own journey towards a sense of self.

Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. name and describe James Marcia's four identity states.
2. analyze four popular songs which reflects Marcia's identity states.
3. listen critically for a deeper appreciation of music by applying Paul Friedlander's "Rock Window" to the analysis of the four songs.
4. reflect upon and examine his or her own sense of identity through song.

Audience

12th grade psychology students.

Time Frame

2-3 class periods; 2 weeks of student time for project.

Materials

cassette player and selected songs on tape; handouts including songs lyrics, copies of "Rock Window" (see additional resources), Marcia's Identity States; text Zimbardo & Weber, Psychology (New York: Longman, 1997).

Background

1. Students will have learned Erik Erikson's Identity Crisis in the unit on human development.
2. Students will have read pp. 139-142 of Zimbardo & Weber text entitled "The Maturing Individual." (See additional resources section.)
3. Teacher will be familiar with "Rock Window" as a strategy for analyzing popular music. (See additional resources section for more information.)

Procedures

Day One

1. Present James Marcia's theory of identity states. Describe each of the following and provide examples: IDENTITY FORECLOSURE, IDENTITY MORATORIUM, IDENTITY DIFFUSION, and IDENTITY ACHIEVEMENT. Provide students with handout.
2. Pass out lyrics to the four songs to be used in class. Play each song for the students. Ask students to identify the identity state that is being expressed by each of the songs. Have students circle phrases or underline words which support their choices.
3. Ask students to think about the music that they like to listen to; are identity states expressed in their music?

Day Two

4. Present the "Rock Window" and provide handout.
5. Model the use of the "Rock Window" with the song "Like a Rolling Stone," Ask students to help complete each category as they are able.
6. Assign and explain the class project. Students will find four songs which they believe illustrate Marcia's identity states and reflect upon their present status in the identity crisis.
7. The typed project must include:
 - a. four completed Rock Windows
 - b. four taped songs
 - c. four copies of lyrics
 - d. a 3-5 paragraph reflection exploring their own identity status
 - e. bibliography

Evaluation

Informal

Can students successfully identify Marcia's identity states (use "dipstick" questions)?
Can students successfully apply the "Rock Window" to the song provided by teacher (in class)?

Formal

On a test or quiz, students should be able to name, describe and apply Marcia's identity states. In the project, students will demonstrate their understanding of Marcia's identity states by their musical selections and will also articulate their present status in the identity crisis.

Selected Recordings

IDENTITY DIFFUSION

"Like a Rolling Stone" recorded by Bob Dylan (*Bob Dylan Unplugged*, Columbia, 1995); written by Bob Dylan; M. Witmark & Songs.

IDENTITY FORECLOSURE

"The River" recorded by Bruce Springsteen (*The River*, label, 1980); published by Bruce Springsteen.

IDENTITY MORATORIUM

"I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For" recorded by U2 (*The Joshua Tree*, label, 1987); written by Mullen, Clayton, Hewson, Evans; Polygram International.

IDENTITY ACHIEVEMENT

"Real Woman" recorded by Roseanne Cash (*Interiors*, label, 1990); written by Rodney Crowell and Roseanne Cash; Sony/ATV Tunes Inc, A BMI Publisher and Sony Tunes Inc.

Enrichment/Additional Resources

Friedlander, Paul. *Rock and Roll, A Social History*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1996 (for explanation and copy of "Rock Window").

Green, Jeff. *The Green Book of Songs by Subject, The Thematic Guide to Popular Music*, 4th ed. (Nashville: Professional Desk References, 1995).

Marcia, James E. "Developmental and Validation of Ego and Identity Status." In Muss, R.E. (ed.), *Adolescent Behavior and Society, A Book of Readings*, 194-203. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1990).

Zimbardo & Weber. *Psychology*. (New York: Longman, 1997).

Zimbardo, Philip. 14th edition. *Instructors Manual* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1996).

Retrieved from: <http://www.rockhall.com/teacher/sti-lesson-29/>