ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study examined the effects on students’ comprehension of music theory, when project-based learning and technology were implemented in an eighth grade general music class. Nineteen students participated in the seven-week study. The project required students to create lyrics in AB form, compose an original rhythm and melody based upon the lyrics, perform and record the composition, create an accompaniment for the song, and film and edit a music video. The technology required to complete the project included: Finale Note Pad, midi files, GarageBand, Flip Cameras, iPhoto, and iMovie. Throughout the process, the teacher’s responsibilities included: planning and implementing the project; whole class, small group, and individual instruction; conferencing with group; monitoring student progress; and assisting with technology implementation. Finally, student progress was monitored through the use of exit slips, rubrics, a survey, and a comparison of a pre-test and post-test given.

As a result of the study, it was determined that traditional instruction is needed prior to the implementation of project-based learning, in order to provide students with a foundational understanding of the necessary concepts needed to work through and complete the project. Also, the use of technologies such as Finale Note Pad, Garageband, iPhoto, flip cameras, and iMovie motivates most students to remain on task, complete assignments, and have a positive attitude.
towards learning. Finally, it was determined that while project based-learning in a general music classroom might improve student understanding of music theory based upon pre-test and post-test data, student performance ability showed no comparable gains.