Project Smart Team Action Report Form

Using Common Core Learning Standards & Data to Improve Student Achievement

Teacher(s)/School: Oswego Middle School

SUNY Oswego faculty member: Dan Wood

Teacher Participant Names: Paula McKenney-Myers

Project or Team Name: Recording Our Future

Please answer the following questions:

Action: Describe your CCLS project. Which CCLS standards will you target?

I will teach the students how to use Pro Tools and Ableton Live8 in order to create original compositions. Student work will be compiled on a CD. Students will present their projects at a CD release party to be held at Oswego Middle School. OMS students will take a field trip to SUNY Oswego to explore musical opportunities, and increase their overall college awareness. SUNY students and staff will assist with student recordings and the running of the CD release party.

CCR-R #4, 5, 10
CCR-W #1,2,3,4,5,6,9,10

Rationale: Fully state your **rationale** for the project. Why is this work important?

The process of creating and recording music is a real world application of the subject. Students will be able to make connections between what they have learned in class and the professional music recording industry.

We are providing 2 different ways for them to make music this year. Pro Tools and Ableton Live offer different approaches to music making. We are hoping that the use of Live will fill any gaps left in students' success.

Through assisting OMS students, SUNY students will learn their software better in preparation for their audio classes and they will learn about other career possibilities.

Responsibilities/Timeline: Identify a series of **action steps** you will take to complete your project. Next to each step, identify person(s) **responsible** for carrying out that task. For each step also identify your **timeline** (during what month(s) you plan to complete each step).

Paula McKenney-Myers is responsible for creating and teaching the lessons, all materials, and assessments.

Dan Wood is responsible for managing the SUNY students, mixing, mastering, and duplicating the CDs, and planning the SUNY field trip.
Both plan the CD release party.

October-start recording projects
October- field trip to SUNY
January- finish composition projects and cd release party

March- start 2nd semester recording projects, field trip to SUNY
June- finish composition projects and cd release party

Evaluation: What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on student achievement of CCLS? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

I am hoping that this will be a positive experience that the students will always remember. Having the actual CD in their hands will help with that. The student data will show me what they have learned and how effective my teaching has been for them. The teacher data will show me ways that I can improve my lessons.

Data for student learning:
Project recordings
Project grades
Student self reflections on the project and the class
Pre/post test

Data for teacher learning:
Teacher journal
Students self reflections on the projects and the class

Resources: What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any, will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

- Ableton Live Intro site license $1,000, was covered by Project SMART
- Transportation for field trip $300, covered by OMS
- CD supplies $309, covered by Entergy
- t-shirts $475, covered by Entergy
- student lunch on field trip $293, covered by Entergy
- 3 iPads $1500, covered by project SMART

Analysis of Data on Teacher Learning: We examined our reflections on the 6 shifts, and CCLS and found the following: (Support each claim with examples/evidence)

Teacher reflective journal (See document entitled "TeacherJournal_2012-13")

Shift 1- Informational and Literary Texts:

Student reading was primarily in the form of informational texts. The "8th Grade Composition Project" and "ProTools Tutorial" texts (attached below) was developed in response to problems that occurred with student projects during the previous two years. This text proved invaluable as a visual organizer for students, and required close reading on their parts as the progressed through the nine stages of the project. An additional text, "Composition Song Map" (attached below) further served as a visual organizer as students developed the parts and song structure of their compositions. These two texts helped considerably in organizing the process for students, and will be used on future projects. Literary texts were not used in this project.

Shift 2- Knowledge in the Disciplines:

Both the "composition" and "song map" texts were key elements in student acquisition of knowledge in the discipline of music. Both of the documents contain multiple examples of domain-specific text. Both musical and technical vocabulary were introduced and used throughout the texts, and a working musical grammar was developed as one of the outcomes of the project.

Shift 3- Staircase of Complexity:

Although the texts used on the project were grade appropriate, not all students were adequately prepared- or willing- to read carefully and follow project instructions. Many students resisted reading the documents, and

simply tried to have the instructor or teaching assistants answer questions that they could easily find for themselves by reading closely. In these cases, the instructors referred the students to the appropriate section of the texts, and provided the necessary scaffolding for the students to answer their questions on their own by reading the texts.

Shift 4- Text-based Answers:

Students had several opportunities to engage in critical self-reflection of their work, and the work of their peers, by offering opinions in the form of written text. With a common musical vocabulary, and increased awareness of the process of musical creation, they were able to take more informed and accurate positions as they judged overall quality.

Shift 5- Writing from Sources: N/A

Shift 6- Academic Vocabulary:

Through work in ProTools and musical projects, students built up a vocabulary. Words were posted around the room on the walls and used often in instruction and group work.

Analysis of Data on Student Learning:

Project grades and recordings:
On paper, the students were able to achieve all project goals so according to this, they learned 100% of the intended information. Everyone had completed projects that sounded good. When looking at the process of learning, the students were not at 100%. There were some lower functioning students who had difficulty but with my help, they were able to complete the projects successfully. The students were reluctant to follow all instructions for the recording projects as they wanted more freedom to create what they wanted. The recording projects took longer than expected. There were many vocabulary words tied to the mixing portion of each project. Since we had to cut the projects short in order to complete them on time, the students were unable to complete this final stage of the project. Mr. Wood and I did the mixing for the students in the studio. The students learned how to create a song, what the parts of the song were according to form in music, and how to play each part. They learned to use ProTools and how musicians in the music business build and record a song from the bottom up. Because the composition project took such a long time, the non-musical students didn't really put all the elements together to realize what a real-world experience they were having. The non-musical students made up the bulk of each class. The few musically advanced students I had in each class finished quickly and became bored as they had to wait for others to finish. This would have been a great opportunity for them to explore ProTools, learn new keyboard songs, or create some new music but some chose not to.

Pre/post test:
According to this data piece, the students didn't adequately learn what I had intended. For example, a question about what a track was should have been a 100% correct response. While the correct responses were high, all students should have gotten this correct in the post test since they were using tracks for over half of their time in the course. This could be due to the fact that the testing environment was removed from the actual experiences from the lesson (the ProTools environment). If screen shots and pictures were possible to include in the test, the students may have done better. Due to the time requirements of the projects, the students were unable to spend any significant amounts of time on the mixing portion and the equipment needed for recording which made up over half of the test. The test has to be re-written or the projects modified to incorporate these elements. The students learn these things more as 7th graders but not all 7th graders get to take my course as 8th graders. I will be modifying the course and the test for next year.

Student self reflections:
Some students felt that because we were using ProTools, software they used in 7th grade, that the class was the same as last year. They lost sight of the skills they were using. Those that didn't take the class as 7th graders did not

feel this way. Some students felt that they weren't learning things because they were doing projects all the time. Most students thought the projects were OK. Those who liked working with computers generally liked the recording projects. Those who didn't like computers were split between liking the recording because they got to learn new things and not liking the recording because it was too hard for them. Students were also split between feeling like they learned new things and wondering what the projects had to do with music. Some students formed strong opinions about the class for reasons I do not know. Some of the musical students didn't like the class- they felt that it stifled their creativity. As a teacher, I often walk a fine line between teaching musical elements and teaching technology. I need to find a way to get the students to internalize what they have learned with each new project.

Data Analysis

Pretest/Post-test Data

Recording Pretest Fall 2012 - 3	
Click on any answer below to drill the results down to just those people if necessary.	
What is ProTools?	
recording software	37 (84.09%)
I don't know	6 (13.64%)
a word processor	1 (2.27%)
Have you ever recorded anything into a computer?	
Yes	28 (63.64%)
No	16 (36.36%)
What is a synthesizer	
a computer tool	23 (52.27%)
musical instrument	16 (36.36%)
I don't know	5 (11.36%)
What is a microphone used for?	
to record sound	40 (90.91%)
a stage prop	3 (6.82%)
to record video	1 (2.27%)
What does a quarter inch or TRS cable look like?	
I don't know	28 (63.64%)
has a single plug at the ends like a guitar chord	7 (15.91%)
Has five pins on the inside of one end and 5 holes on the other end	6 (13.64%)

Has 3 pins on the inside of one end and 3 holes on the other end	3 (6.82%)
What does a microphone cable look like?	
Has a single plug like a guitar chord	32 (72.73%)
I don't know	9 (20.45%)
Has five pins on the inside of one end and 5 holes on the other end	2 (4.55%)
Has 3 pins on the inside of one end and 3 holes on the other end	1 (2.27%)
What is a microphone stand used for?	
To hold a microphone	44 (100.00%)
What instruments use a quarter inch or TRS cable?	
Guitar, bass, keyboard	24 (54.55%)
I don't know	17 (38.64%)
Piano, trumpet, acoustic guitar	2 (4.55%)
Violin, viola, cello	1 (2.27%)
What is a Y chord or splitter?	
It splits an audio signal into 2 paths	23 (52.27%)
I don't know	16 (36.36%)
It is used to split audio files	5 (11.36%)
What is a track?	
a spot to hold recorded information	36 (81.82%)
I don't know	4 (9.09%)
a page of a word processor	4 (9.09%)
What is reverb?	
I don't know	16 (36.36%)
It spreads out the sound, changes the room size	15 (34.09%)
It's an English term for repeating verbs	8 (18.18%)
It is a diagnostic tool for fixing synthesizers	5 (11.36%)
What is delay?	
It makes a sound repeat at a later time, like an echo	28 (63.64%)
I don't know	9 (20.45%)
It's when the power goes out in a computer	4 (9.09%)

It's a tool used to change drum pitches	3 (6.82%)
What is pitch shift?	
It makes the pitch of a note higher or lower	36 (81.82%)
I don't know	6 (13.64%)
It's something that changes the timing of sound	2 (4.55%)
What is EQ?	
I don't know	18 (40.91%)
It alters the frequencies within a sound (treble, bass, mid frequencies)	18 (40.91%)
It alters the timing of sounds	4 (9.09%)
Recording studios put up an EQ sign when they want "extra quiet"	4 (9.09%)
Rate your liking of music class.	
It's OK	28 (63.64%)
I like it a lot	8 (18.18%)
I don't like it sometimes but others its ok	5 (11.36%)
I don't like it at all	3 (6.82%)

Recording post Fall 2012 - 3 - 2	
Click on any answer below to drill the results down to just those people if necessary.	
What is ProTools?	
recording software	34 (100.00%)
Have you ever recorded anything into a computer?	
Yes	29 (85.29%)
No	5 (14.71%)
What is a synthesizer	
musical instrument	19 (55.88%)
a computer tool	13 (38.24%)
I don't know	2 (5.88%)

What is a microphone used for?

to record sound	32 (94.12%)
a stage prop	2 (5.88%)

What does a quarter inch or TRS cable look like?

I don't know	14 (41.18%)
has a single plug at the ends like a guitar chord	10 (29.41%)
Has 3 pins on the inside of one end and 3 holes on the other end	7 (20.59%)
Has five pins on the inside of one end and 5 holes on the other end	3 (8.82%)

What does a microphone cable look like?

Has a single plug like a guitar chord	27 (79.41%)
I don't know	3 (8.82%)
Has 3 pins on the inside of one end and 3 holes on the other end	2 (5.88%)
Has five pins on the inside of one end and 5 holes on the other end	2 (5.88%)

What is a microphone stand used for?

To hold a microphone	33 (97.06%)
Used for holding audio cables	1 (2.94%)

What instruments use a quarter inch or TRS cable?

Guitar, bass, keyboard	23 (67.65%)
I don't know	9 (26.47%)
Piano, trumpet, acoustic guitar	2 (5.88%)

What is a Y chord or splitter?

It splits an audio signal into 2 paths	25 (73.53%)
I don't know	6 (17.65%)
It is used to split audio files	3 (8.82%)

What is a track?

a spot to hold recorded information	31 (91.18%)
I don't know	3 (8.82%)

What is reverb?

It spreads out the sound, changes the room size	16 (47.06%)
It is a diagnostic tool for fixing synthesizers	12 (35.29%)

I don't know	5 (14.71%)
It's an English term for repeating verbs	1 (2.94%)
What is delay?	
It makes a sound repeat at a later time, like an echo	27 (79.41%)
I don't know	6 (17.65%)
It's a tool used to change drum pitches	1 (2.94%)
What is pitch shift?	
It makes the pitch of a note higher or lower	27 (79.41%)
I don't know	4 (11.76%)
It's something that changes the timing of sound	3 (8.82%)
What is EQ?	
It alters the frequencies within a sound (treble, bass, mid frequencies)	15 (44.12%)
I don't know	11 (32.35%)
It alters the timing of sounds	7 (20.59%)
Recording studios put up an EQ sign when they want "extra quiet"	1 (2.94%)
Rate your liking of music class.	
It's OK	16 (47.06%)
I don't like it sometimes but others its ok	8 (23.53%)
I like it a lot	7 (20.59%)
I don't like it at all	3 (8.82%)

Recording Pretest Spring 2013

Click on any answer below to drill the results down to just those people if necessary.

What is ProTools?

recording software	42 (87.50%)
I don't know	5 (10.42%)
a word processor	1 (2.08%)

Have you ever recorded anything into a computer?	
Yes	37 (77.08%)
No	11 (22.92%)
What is a synthesizer	
musical instrument	20 (41.67%)
a computer tool	17 (35.42%)
I don't know	10 (20.83%)
a tool for a camera	1 (2.08%)
What is a microphone used for?	
to record sound	44 (91.67%)
a stage prop	4 (8.33%)
What does a quarter inch or TRS cable look like?	
I don't know	37 (77.08%)
has a single plug at the ends like a guitar chord	9 (18.75%)
Has 3 pins on the inside of one end and 3 holes on the other end	2 (4.17%)
What does a microphone cable look like?	
Has a single plug like a guitar chord	23 (47.92%)
I don't know	14 (29.17%)
Has 3 pins on the inside of one end and 3 holes on the other end	9 (18.75%)
Has five pins on the inside of one end and 5 holes on the other end	2 (4.17%)
What is a microphone stand used for?	
To hold a microphone	46 (95.83%)
Used for holding audio cables	1 (2.08%)
I don't know	1 (2.08%)
What instruments use a quarter inch or TRS cable?	
Guitar, bass, keyboard	29 (60.42%)
I don't know	18 (37.50%)
Piano, trumpet, acoustic guitar	1 (2.08%)
What is a Y chord or splitter?	
I don't know	24 (50.00%)

It splits an audio signal into 2 paths	19 (39.58%)
It is used to split audio files	4 (8.33%)
It splits the computer into 2 screens	1 (2.08%)
What is a track?	
a spot to hold recorded information	40 (83.33%)
I don't know	6 (12.50%)
a page of a word processor	2 (4.17%)
What is reverb?	
I don't know	24 (50.00%)
It spreads out the sound, changes the room size	14 (29.17%)
It's an English term for repeating verbs	5 (10.42%)
It is a diagnostic tool for fixing synthesizers	5 (10.42%)
What is delay?	
It makes a sound repeat at a later time, like an echo	31 (64.58%)
I don't know	16 (33.33%)
It's when the power goes out in a computer	1 (2.08%)
What is pitch shift?	
It makes the pitch of a note higher or lower	28 (58.33%)
I don't know	19 (39.58%)
It's something that changes the timing of sound	1 (2.08%)
What is EQ?	
I don't know	29 (60.42%)
It alters the frequencies within a sound (treble, bass, mid frequencies)	15 (31.25%)
It alters the timing of sounds	2 (4.17%)
Recording studios put up an EQ sign when they want "extra quiet"	2 (4.17%)
Rate your liking of music class.	
It's OK	18 (37.50%)
I don't like it sometimes but others its ok	12 (25.00%)
I like it a lot	12 (25.00%)

I don't like it at all	6 (12.50%)

Recording post Spring 2013

Click on any answer below to drill the results down to just those people if necessary.

What is ProTools?

recording software	41 (97.62%)
I don't know	1 (2.38%)

Have you ever recorded anything into a computer?

Yes	39 (92.86%)
No	3 (7.14%)

What is a synthesizer

musical instrument	28 (66.67%)
a computer tool	9 (21.43%)
I don't know	4 (9.52%)
a tool for a camera	1 (2.38%)

What is a microphone used for?

to record sound	38 (90.48%)
a stage prop	2 (4.76%)
I don't know	1 (2.38%)
to record video	1 (2.38%)

What does a quarter inch or TRS cable look like?

I don't know	20 (47.62%)
has a single plug at the ends like a guitar chord	16 (38.10%)

Has 3 pins on the inside of one end and 3 holes on the other end	4 (9.52%)
Has five pins on the inside of one end and 5 holes on the other end	2 (4.76%)
What does a microphone cable look like?	
Has a single plug like a guitar chord	20 (47.62%)
Has 3 pins on the inside of one end and 3 holes on the other end	14 (33.33%)
I don't know	5 (11.90%)
Has five pins on the inside of one end and 5 holes on the other end	3 (7.14%)
What is a microphone stand used for?	
To hold a microphone	40 (95.24%)
Used for holding audio cables	1 (2.38%)
I don't know	1 (2.38%)
What instruments use a quarter inch or TRS cable?	
Guitar, bass, keyboard	27 (64.29%)
I don't know	11 (26.19%)
Piano, trumpet, acoustic guitar	4 (9.52%)
What is a Y chord or splitter?	
It splits an audio signal into 2 paths	31 (73.81%)
I don't know	8 (19.05%)
It is used to split audio files	2 (4.76%)
It splits the computer into 2 screens	1 (2.38%)
What is a track?	
a spot to hold recorded information	41 (97.62%)
I don't know	1 (2.38%)
What is reverb?	
It spreads out the sound, changes the room size	21 (50.00%)
I don't know	15 (35.71%)
It's an English term for repeating verbs	4 (9.52%)
It is a diagnostic tool for fixing synthesizers	2 (4.76%)
What is delay?	
It makes a sound repeat at a later time, like an echo	37 (88.10%)

I don't know	3 (7.14%)
It's a tool used to change drum pitches	1 (2.38%)
It's when the power goes out in a computer	1 (2.38%)
What is pitch shift?	
It makes the pitch of a note higher or lower	39 (92.86%)
I don't know	3 (7.14%)
What is EQ?	
It alters the frequencies within a sound (treble, bass, mid frequencies)	21 (50.00%)
I don't know	14 (33.33%)
It alters the timing of sounds	6 (14.29%)
Recording studios put up an EQ sign when they want "extra quiet"	1 (2.38%)
Rate your liking of music class.	
It's OK	19 (45.24%)
I don't like it sometimes but others its ok	11 (26.19%)
I don't like it at all	7 (16.67%)
I like it a lot	5 (11.90%)

Pre/Post Test Analysis

What Is ProTools?

Fall pretest- 84% got the right answer; Fall post-test- 100% correct; Spring pretest- 87% correct; Spring post-test- 97% correct.

I was very surprised that I didn't have 100% correct across the board on this. I had many students who took music class with me last year and were experienced with the software. Even on the post test for the spring, I should have had 100% correct since we used the software so much in class.

Have you ever recorded anything into a computer?

Fall pretest-63% have; Fall post-test-85% have; Spring pretest-77% have; Spring post-test-92% have

I don't understand how the post-test isn't 100% for this question as by that point, all of them have recorded into the computer.

What is a synthesizer?

Fall pretest-52% correct; 11% didn't know; Fall post-test-55% correct, 5% didn't know; Spring pretest-41% correct, 20% didn't know; Spring post-test-66% correct, 9% didn't know

I am surprised by the responses. We use synthesizers in every class. We should have had 100% correct responses at least in the post test. At least the "didn't know" responses decreased with the post test. Perhaps I need to label every keyboard in the room with an index card that says "synthesizer" so they will recognize the term.

What is a microphone used for?

Fall pretest-90% correct; Fall post-test-94% correct; Spring pretest-91% correct; Spring post-test-90% correct

There wasn't an "I don't know" response for this question. Since students didn't use vocals for their composition projects, I'm not surprised they weren't 100% accurate. The commercial project did require the use of a mic so I should have had 100% correct responses at least on the post test.

What does a quarter inch or TRS cable look like?

Fall pretest-15% correct, 63% didn't know; Fall post-test-29% correct, 41% didn't know; Spring pretest-18% correct, 77% didn't know; Spring post-test-38% correct, 47% didn't know

We did not have time to cover the cables involved in making the connections for our setups. I told the students once what the cable was and showed them what it looked like. Unless a student used an electronic instrument to connect it to an amplifier, I wouldn't expect them to know this.

What does a microphone cable look like?

Fall pretest-2% correct; Fall post-test-5% correct; Spring pretest-18% correct; Spring post-test-33% correct

The students were shown the microphone cable once. They never had to connect any cables when using the computers. The only thing they had to worry about were headphones. This is probably a question I will omit in the future.

What is a microphone stand used for?

Fall pretest-100% correct; Fall post-test-97% correct; Spring pretest-95% correct, Spring post-test-95% correct

This is a pretty obvious question and I'm surprised that I didn't have 100% correct on this. I have used this term a lot with them and they should know what it is but it is not a term I am actively teaching the students. I will probably omit this question in the future.

What instruments use a quarter inch or TRS cable?

Fall pretest-54% correct, 38% didn't know; Fall post-test-67% correct, 26% didn't know; Spring pretest-60% correct, 37% didn't know; Spring post-test-64% correct, 26% didn't know

Only 2 students brought in electric guitars. We used the keyboards with the computers but the students weren't in charge of hooking up instruments so they probably wouldn't know this answer.

What is a Y chord or splitter?

Fall pretest-52% correct, 36% didn't know; Fall post-test-73% correct, 17% didn't know; Spring pretest-39% correct, 50% didn't know; Spring post-test-73% correct, 19% didn't know

We use splitters all the time. The students should have known about this piece of equipment. Perhaps if I included a picture of the item, they would have answered correctly.

What is a track?

Fall pretest-81% correct, 9% didn't know; Fall post-test-91% correct, 8% didn't know; Spring pretest-83% correct, 12% didn't know; Spring post-test-97% correct, 2% didn't know

We used ProTools (computer software) for at least half of the course. I am glad to see such a high percentage of correct answers. I would have liked to have seen 100% correct on the post test. Students should be using this term quite often as they worked on their projects. Perhaps giving them a verbal quiz of the ProTools screen parts will help them know this term better.

What is reverb?

Fall pretest-34% correct, 36% didn't know; Fall post-test-0 correct, 17% didn't know; Spring pretest-29% correct, 50% didn't know; Spring post-test-50% correct, 35% didn't know

We didn't have time to learn this concept. I demonstrated it for the students and taught them how to get it into their projects but we ran out of time for them to actually work with reverb. I was very surprised about the fall test- 34% knew the term on the pretest but 0% knew it on the post test. I do not have an explanation for that. At least the percentage that didn't know the answer decreased in the fall and spring.

What is delay?

Fall pretest-63% correct, 20% didn't know; Fall post-test-79% correct, 17% didn't know; Spring pretest-64% correct, 33% didn't know; Spring post-test-88% correct, 7% didn't know

We didn't have time to learn this concept. I demonstrated it for the students and taught them how to get it into their projects but we ran out of time for them to actually work with delay. In both the fall and spring, the numbers changed in a predictable manner from the pre to post test. Delay seems to be an easier concept for students to grasp than reverb. Delay is really an echo effect but they want to think of reverb as an echo too.

What is pitch shift?

Fall pretest-81% correct, 13% didn't know; Fall post-test-79% correct, 11% didn't know; Spring pretest-58% correct, 39% didn't know; Spring post-test-92% correct, 7% didn't know

This is probably the easiest effect for the students to understand. In the fall, more students knew the correct answer on the pretest than the post test. In the spring, the responses were more predictable. Students often confuse pitch and dynamics. We did work with dynamics in the listening logs but very little with the term pitch.

What is EQ?

Fall pretest-40% correct, 40% didn't know; Fall post-test-79% correct, 11% didn't know; Spring pretest-31% correct, 60% didn't know; Spring post-test-50% correct, 33% didn't know

EQ is a very difficult effect to grasp. The fall numbers reflected improvement but the spring numbers did not show a significant improvement. When I demonstrated obvious uses of the EQ effect, the students understood but had trouble connecting what they heard to the term.

Rate your liking of music class.

Fall pretest-63% thought it was OK, 6% didn't like it at all; Fall post-test-47% thought it was OK, 8% didn't like it at all; Spring pretest-37% thought it was OK, 12% didn't like it at all; Spring post-test-45% thought it OK, 16% didn't like it at all

There were other responses to this question but I used the most extreme responses. In the fall, the number of students who didn't like music at all slightly increased. In the spring, the number of students not liking the class also rose but so did the numbers who thought it was OK. The composition project was very difficult to run this year. These students were different than the ones I had in previous years. This year, the students were very reluctant to do the project. Every few classes, the students would enter the room asking what we would be doing today in music. They were eager for activities but when I told them they were working on their projects, they seemed disappointed. They didn't seem to like working on projects for very long. 8 classes on an activity seemed to be their limit. Many felt that the class was hard. Many wanted to play more music instead of exploring the process of creating it. They would have liked to form groups and play a song like a band would. Many seemed interested in playing music live instead of recording. Many did not look favorably on using the computers. They seemed to get caught up in how to use the technology instead of focusing on making the music.

We always get a variety of students. Sometimes, the fall classes are a better mix and sometimes the spring classes are a better mix. Success rates depend on the mix of students, the amount of special needs students in class, and the amount of musical ability in each class. If students are in class with their friends, they will have a better time. I predict that if music class consisted of book work, students would be more appreciative of the hands on projects that we do and our ratings would go up. The test results were not very different between pre and post-test. If students had the same music teacher as 7th graders, they have already formed their opinion and the test results in those cases may not be very accurate. I may consider adding a question about their experience with me as a teacher or give a separate test to those students who had me in 7th graders.

Anecdotal Data

This year, we didn't have any data to report from parents. Parents did comment, "thanks for doing this", "it was a great evening", "what a fantastic event". We didn't receive any emails or publicity this year.

Composition project:

-some didn't like making their own song- too hard

-exciting to make a song

-liked being able to edit their song

-they got to be creative and expressive

-liked making a real song

-none commented on the song map this year

-those not good with computers didn't like doing the project

-some felt that there were too many choices in the software

-some thought there were too many rules to the project, they wanted more freedom

Use of ProTools:

-liked it

-it was easier to use with the 2nd project

-it's awesome

-there are a lot of options in the program

-liked the editing

-it was fun and easy to use

-some felt that they could have used more written instructions

-some felt that more step-by-step instructions would have been better for them to learn

Commercial project:

-not enough time to complete it

-didn't understand the musical connection with this project

-they liked making their own video and sound effects

-over half the students liked the project

Things they would change about the class:

-have smaller projects

-more work with instruments

-more free time on the keyboards

-less computer, more keyboard playing

-loved the cd release party and the field trip to SUNY

-wanted more freedom to do what they wanted, didn't like the rules and limitations

-use music they know and like for the listening log activities

Things they liked about the class:

-loved the freedom with the computers

-liked learning about protocols

-liked learning how to play songs

-liked being able to create their own songs

-liked working with their friends

In summary, students seemed bogged down by the composition project because of its length and the amount of restrictions in the project. They enjoyed the commercial project- being able to act and work with sound effects. They also liked playing the keyboards and would have liked more time to learn music already written. They would also like to recreate a commercial sound track instead of creating their own. In general, the majority of kids in this group were into learning to play things instead of creating their own. The field trip to SUNY was a very positive experience. Those who went really enjoyed themselves.

The cd release party was not as well received in the spring as it was in the winter. The spring group of students was not into the whole experience. The fall students were not much more enthusiastic but seemed more willing to participate in

the event. This year really inspired me to make changes to my 8th grade curriculum. Perhaps composing a full length song using electronic instruments isn't the best thing for students. Perhaps giving them a choice of using instruments to play the song live or to record may be in order. I also didn't feel like their take-away was very musical. Since we used ProTools so much it may be perceived that the technology was the focus instead of learning about musical elements. I would like to change this.

I am left with questions. How do I accommodate for those students who want more time to work with project and those who want less time while making each group feel like they have accomplished something meaningful? How do I differentiate instruction in projects to accommodate those who need less help, those who need some help to function independently, and those who cannot function independently? How do I get the kids to see that using ProTools 2 years in a row doesn't make the class the same as it was in 7th grade?