**Lesson Plan Template**

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Lesson Title: “Love is the Message”: Affirmation and Erasure of Black Queerness in Music

Grade Level: 12 (Block period!)

Compelling Question: How was disco a vital part of the BIPOC and LGBTQ+ communities in the 1980’s?

**Lesson Foundations**

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| Content Standards | D2.His.1.9-12. Evaluate how historical events and developments  were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts. | | |
| Learning Objective(s) | LO1: SWBAT assess the positive role that disco and house music was for BIPOC and queer communities  LO2: SWBAT argue that the “death of disco” and “Disco Sucks!” was a direct attack to queer/BIPOC communities and their visibility. | Assessment(s)  Include LO being addressed | A1 (LO1): Song + Image Analysis Big Paper  A2 (LO2): Reading + Randomized Responses  A3 (1/2): Whole Class Discussion |
| Materials & Resources | Isoke, S. (2021). *Love is the message: Black, queerness, and Disco*. PBH. Retrieved February 3, 2022, from <https://www.picturingblackhistory.org/love-is-the-message>  “You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real),” Sylvester, 1978.  “I’m Coming Out,” Diana Ross, 1980.  “Got To Be Real,” Cheryl Lynn, 1978.  <https://www.theguardian.com/music/musicblog/2009/jun/18/disco-sucks>  <https://www.blkgirlculture.com/blog-2/the-night-disco-died-the-racist-amp-homophobic-end-to-disco>  Break my Heart, Dua Lipa (00:59 – 1:32) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nj2U6rhnucI  Say So, Doja Cat, (2:45 – 3:55) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pok8H_KF1FA&t=165s>  Soul Train Clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8bm9hsSojAo> | | |

**Instructional Procedures/Steps**

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| Opening  \_\_25\_\_\_ Minutes | As students enter the classroom, they will be a given a number 1-6, designating the group number they will be put into. As students settle in to their groups, they will be asked to listen to their given song.  Groups 1 + 6 will listen to, and have lyrics provided, for “You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real) by Sylvester  2 + 4 will listen to, and have lyrics provided for, “I’m Coming Out” by Diana Ross  3 + 5 will listen to and have lyrics provided, for “Got To Be Real” by Cheryl Lynn  While listening to the songs with their groups, students will be asked to list out common themes of the songs, the overall tone, and lyrics that stand out to them, on their own big sheet of paper.  The teacher will be around the room to ensure students are finding the right song, staying on pace, and writing what needs written. All instructions will be orally given and written on the projector.    After students are finished listening and writing their responses to the prompts, the teacher will begin to show the images from the time period and ask students to write out, once again, common themes they notice within the photos, how they believe the photo are feeling, and what sticks out to them.  Once all the photos have been shown and students are done writing, the teacher will ask students to come up to the board and post their big papers.    As a class, the teacher and students will go over common themes, lyrics, and the images that stood out to them.  Students are expected to write themes such as “love”, “true love,” “validation,” “fun,” “being yourself,” “extra” etc.  This will lead to an overall discussion of the larger themes from disco as a whole. Disco is all about being unapologetically yourself, free love, having fun, being seen, and living life genuinely. (A1) |
| Instruction  \_\_35\_\_ Minutes | The teacher will then ask the entire class:  -With themes like these, by artists that you saw, what kind of people listened to disco?  -Who needed to hear themes such as these?  -Who was the target audience for this kind of music?  After a small discussion, the teacher will tell students in a small lecture :  The clubs and spaces that regularly played disco music were some of the only LGBT friendly clubs in big cities, aside from specifically gay clubs.  Disco music was a staple in the Ballroom Scene, a scene created and sustained by trans women of color; it is a historically queer space that is still active today.  The Disco scene was pivotal for Black queer people, as it offered glamour, fun, and unapologetic love in a society that hushed and degraded the existence of LGBT individuals. We can see that African Americans were foundational in the creation and popularity of disco.  Additionally, with television shows like Soul Train, the popularity of Disco music in mainstream media was booming. Disco was completely different from the common music scenes at the time. White men singing rock n’roll with guitars and a minimal accompaniment was OUT. Synths, funk, bass, and layered vocals, along with intricate hair/makeup/costumes were IN. Some didn’t take to this kindly and targeted disco as an outlet for their frustration.  Students (still in groups) will be provided their readings and will be asked to answer the following questions. Further guiding questions have been written in blue.   1. What caused the “Disco Sucks!” Movement?   -Who was at the center of this movement?  -How did one radio show host make this movement expand?   1. What does race and sexuality have to do with the growth and popularity of disco? Why did certain people hate disco?   -What kind of spaces played disco music?  -Who made disco music? How did their visibility make people feel?  -What prompted people to hate disco so much?   1. Why do you think the hatred of disco was so intense at this time?  * Did it have to do with the people creating disco music? What about the audience who loved disco? Where was the hatred of disco pointed at?  1. What happened at Disco Demolition Night? How was this a direct attack to BIPOC queer artists?   -What artists’ music was being destroyed? Was it all disco?  Group numbers will be put into a randomizing “wheel of names” that will choose a group at random to answer each question. The floor will also be opened up to the class after the originally chosen group has responded to facilitate further discussion (A2). |
| Closure  \_\_\_\_20\_\_\_ Minutes | The teacher will then ask students:  -Is disco is really dead?  -Did these people who hated “disco” get what they wanted?  -Referencing the songs that they listened to at the beginning of class, are there songs that sound similar that are popular today?  If students cannot think of any, the teacher will show them songs like “Say So” by Doja Cat, and “Break My Heart” by Dua Lipa. The teacher also will include songs like “Let’s Groove” by Earth, Wind, and Fire, and how it just recently blew up on Tik Tok, as well as ‘More Than a Woman” by the Bee Gees.  Disco surely isn’t dead;,it is a foundation for today’s pop music!  The teacher will then ask students:  -Are there are any genres of music that have faced similar backlash simply for existing?  -Why do you think the genre is so hated?  -Are there any common themes that connect to why disco was so hated?  Students are expected to discuss how rap music is commonly disliked by older generations.  As an exit ticket, students will be asked: “Why did people want disco to die?” |
| Accommodations/ Enrichment | Lyrics will be provided for each song during song analysis  Students who wish to work alone rather than in groups can do so  Images are provided with captions + years to provide context  Readings will have main ideas and key details **bolded** and underlined  During the randomizing of students to respond, students will have a choice within their groups to be the representative.  For students who finish their final activities early, the teacher will ask students to look for viral/popular songs that are influenced by disco. |