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As teachers, we are always looking for creative ways to engage our students. We start the school year determined to bring to the classroom creative projects that generate student interest and foster critical thinking skills. Think back to your schooldays. What is the one learning experience you remember the most? What was it about this experience that makes you remember it today? Was it the teacher, the topic, the way the material was presented? As you look back on that memorable experience, you are likely to find that it appealed to your emotions. You learned because you connected to it. You remember because you were engaged.

Reaching today's Gen M (millennial) student is challenging and changing the way we teach. Children now spend, on average, 14 hours per week watching TV and 2.75 hours per week using home computers (Swanbrow, 2004). A Harrison group study reports teens spend more than 72 hours per week using electronic media. They spend their free time listening to iPods, networking, downloading, uploading, and instant messaging (IM), and one-third of teens report owning an Apple iPod (Olson, 2006). Teens report their number one choice of "must-have" tech gadgets is a computer, followed by the cellular phone and the iPod/MP3 player (Pechacek, 2007). Added to this mix of ubiquitous high-tech gadgetry is the tendency for Gen M students to "display an increased proficiency in multitasking" as well as "attention problems and an inability to delay gratification," (Tucker, 2006). It is no wonder students in the classroom often seem bored. All of these factors can make it quite daunting for teachers to create memorable learning experiences for today's digital natives. One technique with some promise involves incorporating technology that most Gen M teenagers own and frequently use—the iPod or MP3 player. These devices store music, which is the perfect medium to deliver a powerful emotional impact. The idea of using music to teach academic content is well-established. David B. McCall, president of an advertising agency, noticed that his son was having trouble remembering his multiplication tables, but he could recite all the song lyrics from his favorite band, The Rolling Stones. McCall wondered what would happen if he put the multiplication table to music. He used this as his inspiration for *Schoolhouse Rock*, the television program that successfully used music to teach children history, math, and grammar from 1973 to 1985 (quoted in Yohe & Newall, 1996). More recently, the American Political Science Association discussed the advantages of using the iPod to link popular music to learning objectives at its 2006 Annual Teaching and Learning Conference in Washington, DC. Sharp (2006) described a political science seminar he conducted in 2003 at the University of Central Oklahoma. In this one-credit course, he selected songs and then had students listen to them, discuss their reactions in class, and write essays. He found that students' familiarity with the popular music led to new levels of understanding. He also found that after paying close attention to songs, the students found it hard not to recall the project when they heard the songs in the future. Over the past 20 years, a number of studies and publications indicate a strong link between emotion and the teenage brain. In *Secrets of the Teenage Brain*, Feinstein (2004) noted that instruction including emotional experience leads students to learn more information and retain it longer. Similarly, Berry, Schmied, and Schrock (2008) investigated the use of imagery to stimulate emotions and concluded that incorporating emotions into instruction produces

learning that is deeper and longer lasting. They noted, based on their research, that “emotional events create more vivid memories” (p. 439). McGlynn (2005) noted that active learning facilitates long-term memory. By using examples to which students could relate and then asking them to create meaning between their life experiences and the material being taught, she found she could gain students’ active participation and improve learning.

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