

STUDY GUIDE: Jessica Rodriguez

This study guide is to support virtual and in-person classes for students and teachers inspired by the movie *Respect* about the life of Aretha Franklin.

Overview

Jessica Rodriguez is the Chief of Staff and Artist Manager of Love Renaissance (LVRN), an R&B and Rap-based label, combined with a creative management firm. She is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the company. Jessica Rodriguez gives a master class that is full of insights and encouragement about the various roles non-performers sustain in a record company while supporting artists. Many avenues in the music business are open to music enthusiasts who are passionate about music and have good communication skills. In this session, Jessica gives candid behind-the-scenes details about how Creatives who are members of an artists' team, best support artists.

She talks about how to think about your contribution in a work setting and the importance of being confident and collaborative. This is an inspiring talk for students interested in routes to careers in arts and entertainment, but who are not required to be in front of the camera or on stage. And, who despite their musical experience, still have a huge impact in the lives of others. Jessica covers personal qualities needed for success, gender roles in music and "being a boss."

Learning Objectives

A career in the entertainment industry can be developed out of many kinds of interest. If someone has an interest in music and music education, the possibilities cover many intersections of other fields.

Students can learn the following:

1. The role of education.
2. Finding where your interests intersect.
3. The role of communication skills.
4. How to develop a career from your passion.
5. Choosing a career path.
6. Aspects of the entertainment industry for non-performers.
7. Advanced: Skill-building in intercultural maturity.

Essential Questions for Reflection and Critical Thinking

1. How might you use Jessica Rodriguez's strategy for choosing a career in which you love your work?
2. What does it mean to support people in the music industry with your professional training?
3. Why is it important to understand how working well with others impacts the lives of people?

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Suggested Student Activities

Activity 1a: What Do You Know?

Before viewing the master class, students brainstorm facts that they already know about roles for people in the music industry.

Activity 1b: What Do You Want to Know?

Students generate a list of at least ten questions that they would like to know about different jobs and the people who work in the music industry.

Activity 1c: What Did You Learn?

After viewing the master class, students review answers gleaned from Jessica’s discussion from the list of ten+ questions.

Activity 2:

Active Listening. Prior to viewing the master class, student’s brainstorm associations they have for each of the program’s key terms. After viewing the master class students discuss their definitions of each term.

Connect to the Curriculum

English Language Arts

Journal Prompts:

- What surprised you about Jessica Rodriguez’s career?
- What skills from Language Arts might record executives need?

Reflection:

Jessica talked about moments in her life that helped confirm her calling to be a Chief of Staff. Which pivotal moments in your life can you use as inspiration for a career?

Social Studies: A community is a group of people connected by something they share. How do people in the music community of all genders, abilities, and ethnicities support the goals of one another? Support your answer with evidence.

‘What If’ Questions:

1. What does Jessica Rodriguez mean with her advice to young women: “It is okay not to know everything?”
2. How might the music industry change if more women were hired to be the boss of creative teams?
3. What do you think that Jessica Rodriguez means when she speaks about LVRN as a “one stop shop?”
4. How might Jessica’s experience playing several instruments help her in her present role?

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The Arts: Music, Theatre, Dance, Visual Arts

In a musical setting, improvisation is the collective or individual music created by making up new melodies to fit the structure of a song. It is a vehicle by which a performer demonstrates his/her mastery. Improvisation is common in African-based music, like Jazz, R&B, Hip-Hop, and Gospel. Improvisation is also used in many Classical art forms.

1. Identify improvisation in songs you know.

Jessica Rodriguez uses improvisation in her work as Chief of Staff by doing something called “creating a space” for the work to flow between her teammates. This space allows artists to feel safe, develop ideas, and organize their creative thoughts.

2. Discuss what types of environments help you to study, organize ideas, or be creative and invent something new or different.

People can also work in their careers using the concept of improvisation. Discuss how improvisation can be a way of thinking about your life.

3. What does it look like if one creates from a mindset of learning and manifesting opportunities?

Developing Your Ideas

Jessica talked about “being prepared for the unprepared,” using her work as a collaborator and executive to make sure Creatives feel supported while making their art.

The things Jessica says are important to prepare for her role(s): a) be very organized; b) feel confident in your ideas to solve problems that emerge; and c) pay attention and focus your awareness on your identity as a person to draw strength in the moment.

1. What are your ideas for creating these three types of situations in your life?
2. Name 3 accomplishments in your life for which you are most proud. How might you turn these accomplishments into a career?

Sample Lesson Plan

Create a mock record company that matches what Jessica described as an ideal company, supporting women artists and music professionals.

Objectives:

1. View the master class video a second time. This will help you hear things you may have missed in the first listening.
2. Discuss the possible name of the new recording company your class will create.
3. Write individually, your interpretation of what a record company with a unit designated to support women artists and record executives would do.
4. Discuss roles that students can create. Design the jobs in the mock record company.
5. Create a list of tasks, a timeline, and materials needed (props, supplies) for the support of artists' projects.

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6. Stage an Open House or Grand Opening of your new mock record company.

Materials Needed:

- Video player & speakers
- Board, eraser, and markers/chalk
- Loose leaf paper or journal

Process:

- Re-Watch the Jessica Rodriguez master class
- Complete the following tasks:
 - Develop a tool for choosing a name for this portion of the business. Be sure to consider everyone's suggestions.
 - Create a method for making decisions. Be sure to match tasks with your peer's strengths.
 - **Discuss** necessary steps for creating the mock record company
 - **Write** a press release about your (mock) record company.
 - **Share** your ideas with another class.

Ideas for future activities:

- Make a Playlist of the artists Jessica mentions.
- Put on a presentation with a Playlist Reveal party

Advanced Discussions:

Intercultural maturity is the ability to communicate and behave with people who are different from you. How would an artist demonstrate and promote the ability to get along with people who are different from themselves in gender, ethnicity, or country of origin?

Resources

The following websites can serve as valuable resources and references:

- <https://www.berklee.edu/careers/essentialsofsuccess.html>
- [22 Great Jobs for Musicians & Non-Musicians](#)
- [The-U.S.-Music-Industries-Jobs-Benefits-2020-Report.pdf](#)

Key Terms

Assertiveness, bass, bassoon, cello, drums, organization, preparation, self-awareness, teams.

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