

# **AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSICAL TRADITIONS:**

## **A CULTURAL STORY**

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### Abstract

This paper provides an analysis of the educational foundations for a curriculum resource targeting middle school grades titled *African American Music in Antebellum America 1800-1860: A Study Guide and Resource for Middle School Grades*. The paper addresses the following inquiries: *How can students engage in the culture and history of African Americans in the 1800s through African American musical traditions?* and *How can I help to foster this learning in middle school students?* This curriculum resource utilizes the music of African Americans of the period to provide an experiential story of African Americans, and to accomplish Social Studies, English Language Arts and Music curricular objectives.

The Study Guide and Resource described in this paper is assessed in light of theories of adolescent development, as well as the instructional and pedagogical aspects of educational theory. Additionally, since these materials are based on the arts of African Americans, multicultural education and multicultural music education are considered as well. An examination is also offered regarding the rationale for studying history in this arts-integrated, culturally diverse manner. The Study Guide and Resource shows itself to be a positive alternative strategy for engaging students in a more authentic study of African American history, US history, social studies and music.