Teaching on the Continuum: Reaching Special Learners in K-2

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Why Special Learners?
Over 90% of music teachers feel unable to adequately adapt instructional goals for students with special needs (McCord & Watts, 2010).

- Limited knowledge of assistive technology in the music classroom (McCord & Watts, 2010)
- Discomfort teaching students with specific diagnoses (Gfeller, Darrow, and Hedden, 1990; White, 1981)
- Lack of adequate resources or administrative support (Atterbury, 1986)
- Lack of exposure in teacher preparation programs (Colwell and Thompson, 2000; Heller, 1994; Salvador, 2010).
Philosophy

Students First.
- Know and understand IEP & 504 plans.
- Know what motivates students.

Teaching Second.
- Extra-musical goals prioritized.
- Differentiation drives lesson planning.

Music Third.
- Musicianship over performance.
- Music-ing as a vehicle for student learning.
# First Steps

1. Familiarize yourself with the IEP and 504 plans (get involved in the process!).

2. Communicate with classroom teachers, special educators, and therapists.

3. Get to know the student individually (parent phone calls, shadowing, interviewing past teachers, etc...)

4. Establish individualized student goals (year, semester, quarter, unit, etc.)
Preparing for Instruction

Classroom Environment
Designing Activities
Implementing Activities
Modification: Classroom Environment

When you look at this picture, what do you see?

Consider:
- What might a typically developing student see?
- What may a student with ADHD see?
- What may a student with Autism see?

What would you change to increase success for students with special needs?
Modification:
Classroom Environment

- For students who need routine and predictability:
  - Pocket Chart Schedule
  - Pictorial Schedule (velcro for changes).
  - Flip Book Schedule

- For students who struggle with focus:
  - Provides clear outline of expected tasks.
Modification: Designing Activities

Two questions:
- What extra-musical goals am I trying to achieve?
- How can I best address the extra-musical goals, musically?

Differentiation Strategies:
- Draw on ideas from other pedagogies (MLT, Orff, Kodaly, Dalcroze, Conversational Solfege, etc...)
- Utilize peer mentors and small groups effectively.
- Utilize teacher assistants and one-on-one aids.
Modification: Designing Activities

.props and Manipulatives

.individual

.bean bags**

.scarves

.puppets

.body sox

.pairs

.scarves

.hula hoops

.group

.parachute

.stretch band**

.octa-bands
Grade: K  
Classification: Physical Impairment  

Jorge is a 5 year old boy who struggles with gross motor coordination. He sees a PT twice per week to work on balance, locomotor and non-locomotor movement, and parallel and alternating movement.  

Modification: Designing Activities  
Learning Targets:  
I can use movement to show musical expression.  

New York State Standards:  
Describe the music in terms related to basic elements such as melody, rhythm, harmony, dynamics, timbre, form, style, etc.  

Prop selection: Bean bags  
Activity:  
Students will move, using locomotor and non-locomotor movements, while the teacher introduces a new song.
Grade: 1  
Classification:  
Autism Spectrum Disorder  

Toby is a 6 year old boy with ASD. He struggles with peer interaction, but enjoys participating in music class. He is actively working on working with others during his daily OT pull-outs.

Modification:  
Designing Activities  

Learning Targets:  
I can keep a steady beat in triple meter.

New York State Standards:  
Identify and use, in individual and group experiences, some of the roles, processes, and actions used in performing and composing music.

Prop selection: Scarves  

Activity:  
Students will keep a steady beat through movement while listening to a familiar song.
Grade: 2  
Classification: Multiply Disabled

Jess is a 7 year old with CP. She is wheelchair-bound, has limited speech, and has a one-on-one aid. She is very active in music class; however struggles with making music with instruments.

Modification: Designing Activities

Learning Targets:
I can use classroom instruments to accompany familiar songs.

New York State Standards:
...Sing or play simple repeated patterns (ostinatos) with familiar songs, rounds, partner songs, and harmonizing parts.

Props: Boomwhackers OR Handbells

Activity:
Students will sing a familiar song and accompany themselves using classroom instruments.
Implementing Activities
Resources

Shop Props
- Early Childhood/Music Therapy
  - Bear Paw Creek
  - Music Therapy Suite
  - Folkmanis Puppets
  - Etsy.com
- General Props
  - West Music
  - Amazon

Read Up/Attend Sessions
- Ryan Hourigan
  - Ball State University
  - Prisim Project at BSU
- Alice Hammel
  - Virginia Commonwealth University
  - Council for Exceptional Children – Division for the Arts
- Karen Salvador
  - University of Michigan-Flint
Resources
References


Questions?

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