TEACHING MUSIC TO STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

A Practical Resource

ALICE M. HAMMEL

Teaching Music to Students with Special Needs

Teaching Music to Students with Special Needs

A PRACTICAL RESOURCE

Alice M. Hammel

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CONTENTS

1

Introduction

When we chose to become music educators, we had some pretty specific ideas about whom we wanted to teach, what kind of classroom we preferred, and the type of music we hoped to share with our future students. These ideas change over time and with knowledge and experience. One type of student sometimes not considered early in the ideas of our future careers is a student with disabilities or differences. It is not a sign that we are uncaring or thoughtless, but rather that we have not had recent or meaningful experiences with students who do not learn in the traditional way.

Once preservice teachers begin their coursework and field experiences, the presence of students who learn differently begins to come into focus. We begin to see and learn about students who may be unfamiliar to us. While preservice teachers will prepare as well as possible for the inclusion of students with learning differences, some teaching experiences require, well, experience. Once a career has begun and there are students in our music classrooms who need adaptations, accommodations, and modifications, the practice of creating experiences to meet their needs becomes a daily occurrence. It is then that our differentiation process begins.

Rationale for the Resource

This resource was created to accompany the second edition of *Teaching Music to Students with Special Needs: A Label-Free Approach*. The specific purpose is to bridge the gap between the policy and theory presented in the book and a need for practical applications and transfers of global information to specific music classrooms. It is designed to provide examples and practical materials to help teachers create their own plans and materials for the students they teach.

Distinguishing Features

Features included in this practical guide include situation-specific vignettes that lead the reader to learn about a student. This knowledge is immediately put to use as the reader encounters a lesson plan and materials used to assist that student in a music classroom or ensemble. Lesson plans range from early childhood through high school and include as many specific teaching situations as were realistic for the size of the resource. Several unit plans are also included to provide a longer term set of ideas for teachers.

Each lesson plan and unit have already been used with students in music classrooms and ensembles. Authors of plans are active teachers in the field of music education who have offered their ideas as suggestions when teaching students who have disabilities or differences. I thank them for their participation in the creation of this resource.

How to Apply Size, Color, Pacing, and Modality to the Six Domains

In our 2011 resource, Ryan Hourigan and I identified five domains as an alternative to the more traditional use of labeling each type of disability according to the most recent Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The domains we chose to use are communication, cognition, sensory, physical, and emotional/behavioral. As part of the updated second edition to *Teaching Students with Special Needs: A Label-Free Approach*, we decided to separate behavioral and emotional into two separate domains. These now six domains are the way I will refer to various differences in this resource as well.

Through using domains rather than specific disability types, we are not limiting ourselves to the incidence and etiology lists in most textbooks. We are recognizing that students come to us with many varied needs and are not limited to their disability categories. Each student has strengths and weaknesses that present together as they walk into our classrooms and ensembles. If a student has a specific disability, it is not a bad idea to become familiar with some of the traits and specific challenges associated with that disability. It is not a good idea, however, to rely on these generic boiler-plate descriptions instead of learning about the individual student.

Through use of the six domains, we can understand the wide variances in strengths and areas of challenge among our students with differences. We can see their individual profile in the way they communicate, in their cognitive function, as they process sensory information, in their physical needs, and in the way their emotional and behavioral responses fit the classroom or ensemble on a daily basis. We are also ensuring that we place the person (or student) first and the disability label second. In this manner, I have found an increased understanding of my individual students and a more compassionate approach to instruction and assessment.

Once we understand the needs of our students, the process of planning for instruction can begin. When writing lesson and unit plans, many students will need either adaptations, accommodations, or modifications to the objectives, presentation of instruction, and assessment. For our work, the differences between these three types of individualization of plans are as follows:

Adaptations: Individualization to materials and teaching style that results in a more fair presentation and assessment experience for students with differences and disabilities. Adaptations can be used for an entire class as long as they also meet the needs of students who require them for instruction and assessment.

Accommodations: Individualization of a classroom or rehearsal space to accommodate the needs of students with differences or disabilities. This may include the physical space or procedures that more appropriately meet the needs of a student who needs them. These may also be put in place for an entire class.

Adaptations and accommodations may be selected from the Four Teaching Principles outlines in both editions of *Teaching Music to Students with Special Needs: A Label-Free Approach*. They include size, color, pacing, and modality (kinesthetic, aural/oral, and visual). Through these strategies, it is possible for students with differences to meet the same objectives as students without differences.

Modifications: Individualization of materials, teaching style, classroom or rehearsal space, presentation of material, and assessment that meets the needs of an individual student. In *Winding It Back* (2016), we presented the idea of winding material back for students who are currently performing at an earlier step in a sequence and winding material forward for students who are currently performing at a later step in a sequence. Modifications change the objective a student is asked to achieve to create a more equitable teaching and learning situation and to enhance the overall classroom and ensemble culture when teaching in inclusion settings. Modifications are also utilized in self-contained settings as a wide variety of skill levels may be represented within students in the class.

When we are aware of the adaptations, accommodations, and modifications effective for individual students, we can begin to apply them. Unfortunately, our students do not come to us with lists of effective strategies taped to their clothing. A first step in knowing more about the needs and preferences of specific students is to engage in collaborative information gathering. The ideas in the following sections have been effective.

Reading IEP and 504 Paperwork

Through obtaining and reading the legal documentation regarding a student, you gain information regarding that student's current level of functioning; strengths and areas of challenge; goals for the current year and longer term goals; any therapies the student engages in through the school system; what adaptations, accommodations, and modifications are being utilized in the general and special education classrooms; and assistive technology and other devices used to assist the student. This paperwork is a vital piece of information necessary for a complete overview of the student. It is also your professional right and legal obligation to review and apply the adaptations, accommodations, and modifications listed in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 documents.

Discussions with Special and Regular Education Staff

It is difficult to overstate the importance of becoming an integral part of the IEP or 504 team. Attendance at student meetings is an excellent way to do this; however, it is more important to develop relationships with each faculty and staff member who interacts with students who have disabilities. These team members include:

• General education teacher
• Special education teacher
• Therapists (occupational, physical, music, speech, etc.)
• Paraprofessionals or teacher assistants

• Guidance counselors
• Case managers
• Social workers

By having frequent contact with these professionals, you will learn more about the day-to-day lives of your students and be able to apply this information to your teaching. Often, we can use classroom management ideas or specific skills learned in various therapies in the music classroom or ensemble. We can also share our successful ideas with team members, which they can then use in their work with the same students. If everyone is working with complete knowledge of what is happening in each educational situation and of what strategies are working well, we have a greater opportunity to meet the needs of our students.

Discussions with Adult Assistants Who Work with the Student

Adult teacher assistants, or paraprofessionals, are often assigned to work with a student in a one-on-one or small group situation. This is a very important role that is sometimes overlooked by faculty and staff. Teacher assistants are sometimes with students from the time they leave their home to ride the bus to school until they arrive home again in the afternoon. Some have personal care duties that can include taking the student to the bathroom, brushing teeth, and changing diapers. Often, a teacher assistant will help students eat lunch and travel with the students during the entire school day. Unfortunately, because these professionals do not always hold higher education degrees or certifications and because they are not always paid according to the salaried staff scale, they are sometimes not treated with the professional respect they deserve. I highly encourage you to engage teacher assistants as often as possible to learn more about the students and how you can be the best teacher possible to them.

Observations of the Student in Other Settings

We only see our students in a music setting. Because of this, it can be difficult to discern how they react and thrive in other classes and situations. By taking a few minutes to observe students on the playground, in the cafeteria, in their special education classroom, or when working with a therapist, we can see an entirely new approach to meeting their needs. It can be interesting to watch a child working in a language arts setting or running track and field in physical education. It also shows that we have a sincere desire to know more about that student and to be a part of the larger school experience.

Contact with Parents/Guardians

The parents or guardians of a student are the first and best experts regarding their child. They sometimes feel intimidated or even unwelcome in educational settings. Some may have had negative school experiences themselves or lack some social or academic skills regularly utilized in school situations. By reaching out to parents and guardians and

letting them know we value their perspective and ideas, we can begin a conversation that can increase our success with their children. I have found it helpful to begin a conversation with all the positive attributes the student brings to music. Some parents refuse to answer the phone when they see it is from the school district because the news is so often negative or punitive. Be prepared to leave messages in the beginning in case no one answers the phone.

Talking with the Student

It seems so simple. Let's communicate with the student when we are designing music education strategies. For students who have verbal or other forms of communication, this can be very valuable. For students who do not readily have ways to communicate, yes-and-no responses can also give us information regarding preferences and choices. We sometimes forget to give our students voices in the process of their own education.

With clear ideas regarding the preferences and needs of our students, we can begin to introduce some strategies to see how they work in our teaching with a specific student. By thinking through size, color, pacing, and modality (kinesthetic, aural/oral, visual) ideas and aligning them with our lesson and unit plans, the process of developing adaptations and accommodations begins. In reality, many ideas are good ones and it takes several (or more) attempts to find what will work with a particular student in a particular situation. The process of finding the most helpful adaptations and accommodations can be ongoing and may need to begin again when something changes in a student's life (medication, school or home schedule, therapy, emerging skill levels). This does not mean that either you or the student has made an error—it just means things change, and as with many other aspects of teaching, we are flexible and ready to adapt.

Ideas From *Teaching Music to Students with Special Needs: A Label-Free Approach,* 2nd Edition

When we follow the ideas listed previously, we will have an idea of the domains of difficulty for a student and an idea regarding his or her preferred ways of learning. Through applying some of the practical strategies in the *Label-Free* book, our lesson plans and units can become more individualized and differentiated.

The first list is taken from Chapter 4 of the *Label-Free* book. It lists some practical strategies that are likely to be effective with students who struggle in various domains. It is also entirely possible that a specific strategy may work for a student even when it is not listed for a particular domain you have identified.

CG = Cognitive
CM = Communication
B/E = Behavioral/Emotional
P = Physical
S = Sensory

Table 1.1 Strategies for Providing Accommodations and Adaptations

Accommodations and Adaptations	CG	CM	B/E	P	S
Use an overhead projector or computer-enhanced image to enlarge materials (music, books, sheet music) as much as possible and provide written materials for all spoken instruction. A "picture" schedule is good for nonreaders and students with autism.	X	X	X		X
Allow students a hands-on examination of all new materials, equipment, and instruments during introduction of a concept. This kinesthetic approach combined with the visual and aural instructional elements will help students learn according to their modality.	X	X	X	X	X
Allow students to record rehearsals or lectures and record a test or assignment. Allow students to respond to tests or assignments by recording, orally, or in writing.	X	X		X	X
Provide music or reading materials in advance to allow time for arrangements to be made for students with special needs.	X	X	X		X
Use Velcro strips to help students hold mallets or small instruments. Sticks can also be wrapped with tape or foam rubber to facilitate handling.			X	X	X
Jingle bells, or cymbals, can be sewn onto a band or ribbon and tied to the wrist. Straps and cords can be used to attach rhythm instruments to wheelchairs or walkers for students who may drop them during class.			X	X	X
Code music or instruments with colors or symbols to help students remember notes or rhythms. A highlighter or colored pens/chalk can be used to help a student focus on a specific part of the music or book.	X	X	X		X
A felt board or other raised textured board can be used with heavy rope to demonstrate the concept of a staff to students who learn kinesthetically or are visually impaired.	X	X		X	X
Provide written rehearsal schedules for students to follow. These can be on the chalk or bulletin board or placed in folders.	X	X	X		X
Individualize some assignments for students who may not be able to complete the quantity of homework other students can. Check the IEP to make sure you are following the modifications listed.	X	X	X	X	
Make use of computers for students who need extra drills and practice.	X		X		X
Separate rhythmic and melodic assignments until students with special needs can combine the two.	X			X	X
Limit the use of words not yet in the student's vocabulary and be consistent with the terminology you do use.	X				X
Allow students to help plan their own instructional accommodations and be partners in the process.	X	X	X	X	X

Table 1.1 Continued

Accommodations and Adaptations	CG	CM	B/E	P	S
When preparing music for use by students with special needs, several adaptations can be made. The teacher can indicate tempo and meter, mark the student's part, allow students to highlight music, write measure numbers and breath marks in the student's part, create visual aids for difficult words, and provide visual cues for score markings and phrase lengths.	X	X	X		X
When using written assessments with students with special needs, provide accurate and complete study guides. Help focus study efforts on important events, ideas, and vocabulary. Use this tool to help students organize and sequence information.	X	X	X		
Use short tests at frequent intervals to encourage students to work at an even pace rather than postponing the study of a large amount of material until just before a long exam. This also provides a student "some room" to perform poorly on a single test without significantly compromising the grade for the entire marking period.	X	X	X		
Allow students to use a word bank. They may remember concepts but have difficulty recalling spelling.	X	X	X		
Vary the style of test items used. Using a variety of test items will prevent a student from being unduly penalized for having difficulty with a particular type of question.	X	X	X		
Place a rubber strip on the back of a ruler or use a magnetic ruler to help students measure or draw lines without slipping. Use adhesive-backed Velcro to attach items to a desk or wheelchair laptray.	X			X	
Allow students to use pens (felt tip) or pencils (soft lead) that require less pressure or use a computer to complete assessments or assignments.		X	X	X	X
Wait to prompt students for verbal answers to questions after at least 5 seconds have passed. They may need a longer period of time to process the question and determine an appropriate response. It may help to "call on" the student only when his or her hand is raised. This may lower any possible frustration level and prevent student embarrassment.	X	X	X		
If an accommodation or modification is listed in the IEP, it must be followed by all teachers.	X	X	X	X	X
Create a special seat or seating area so that a student knows and can expect where he or she will sit during class (chair, disc or carpet square, taped area, special mat).		X	X	X	X
Allow movement during class from one chair or special seating place to another.		X	X	X	
Allow a student to participate for a small amount of time. Increase this time slowly as the student becomes acclimated to the class-room routine. This may begin with the start of class or the end of class depending on the student and his or her preferences.		X	X		X

Examples of Accommodations, Modifications, and Adaptations for the Music Classroom

The second set of information taken from the *Label-Free* book addresses the Four Primary Teaching Practices (size, color, pacing, and modality). Some of these are similar to the ideas in Table 1.1. The difference is that they are organized by type of adaptation. I often try several of these to determine which ones are most effective for a particular student. Many of these ideas are also good for use with an entire class or ensemble.

Four Primary Teaching Practices to Consider When Teaching Students with Disabilities in a Modified or Adapted Curriculum

Any of the previous approaches to curricula can be adapted for students with special needs. However, there are certain overarching teaching techniques to consider when adapting curricula. These four techniques include modality, pacing, size, and color. When we consider these techniques in the way we adapt or modify our curriculum and instruction with students with special needs (with obvious consultation with the special education documents and personnel), students will have more opportunities to learn in our classrooms. We realize that each of the four is also considered a teaching and accommodation technique; however, in teaching students with special needs, these practices should be considered when adapting or modifying curricula.

Modality

When teaching any students, particularly students with special needs, it is critical to introduce each concept and skill through all modalities (aural, visual, kinesthetic). Everyone learns differently, and students with special needs sometimes have great preferences, or limited options, for the modality they use to process information. In preparing to adapt a curriculum for students with special needs, an effective strategy is to brainstorm the number of ways a concept can be taught. This list is universal, meaning it can be used for all students in a classroom, and all students will benefit from being introduced to material through multiple modalities.

Whether a material-, content-, experience-, or method-centered approach is utilized, lesson planning can be enhanced through the use of multimodal approaches. It may be helpful to list the modality choices aural (A), visual (V), and kinesthetic (K) on scope and sequence charts and lesson plans to guide the use of multiple modalities in teaching.

Pacing

Our lives as music educators move very quickly. We often speak, walk, and teach at a rapid pace because we have a great deal of material to teach, have numerous performance deadlines, and want to give students the very best (both in quality and quantity) we have to offer. For some of our students, our pacing will still be considered too slow! Many of our students will be able to follow our scope and sequence well. Conversely, some students will not be able to learn the amount of music studied in a class or ensemble

and may become frustrated by the pace of instruction, amount of materials, performance expectations, and sheer sensory overload (visual, aural, and kinesthetic).

For students who need adjustments to the pace of materials, instruction, and overall curriculum, consider adaptations to pacing. These adaptations require careful consideration, as it is important that the needs of all students in classes and ensembles are honored and that the alternative pacing procedures put in place are effective and appropriate for everyone.

Size

Processing time and effectiveness can be compromised by the size of materials. When students with special needs are working very hard to process information, the relatively small size, faint font, and large amount of material on one page can be frustrating. When material is made larger and bolder and when information not essential at the moment is removed, students often find they are more able to understand and respond to instruction.

- Use raised textured board (perhaps a rope on a board to show a five-line staff) for students to touch as they are introduced to the concept of lines and spaces. This adds a kinesthetic element to a primarily visual concept.
- Use movement activities to accompany some listening experiences.

Many students learn best when their bodies are in motion and concepts such as tempo, style, dynamics, and genre can be practiced through movement. Using this to accompany the aural experience of listening can be very effective. These activities are enjoyed by students of all ages and do not need to be considered elementary in nature.

- Have students track measures in their parts or a score (possibly via a projected image) while listening to a recording. We often do this with beginning performance groups and with elementary students; however, this is still a useful activity with more experienced students as well. Score study is a complex yet extremely useful skill, and a multimodal approach can be an enriching experience for all students.
- Create three-dimensional figures to represent abstract concepts (notes, rhythms, solfège, dynamic and artistic markings). Some students must touch a three-dimensional object to grasp the meaning of some higher level concepts.
- A picture or written schedule to accompany the aural directions and procedures in class can ease student frustration.

Students may excel when given the choice of modality for response to a quiz or performance test. They may also perform best when given the choice to respond in two or more ways to a question or task.

Color

It can be very difficult for some students to read music or books with font that is black and white. These two colors are very stark, and the contrast can create issues within the eyes that cause the processing of information to slow. Color softens this difference and can drastically improve the ability of a student with special needs to read music. Color is also an excellent modification to draw student attention to details and items of importance.

- Part revisions may be necessary. Some students will be unable to read a part as written by the composer. It may be necessary to simplify a part (use bass line, chord outlines, first note of each measure, etc.) to meet the musical needs of a student. As the student improves, these modified parts may become adapted parts.
- A student may need to begin with a "blank score" that is filled in slowly as his or her abilities increase. For some students, the amount of ancillary information on a page (title, composer, tempo and dynamic markings, pictures) can be distracting and frustrating. Placing only the amount of information a student actually needs to perform successfully may be very effective.
- Some students may need to learn less material than others. For example, learning the A section of a piece, memorizing the chorus rather than the verses, practicing the rhythm only rather than the rhythm combined with the melody, or mastering one movement instead of four may be the most beneficial way to begin with a student.
- For students who have sensory differences, partial participation in class or a performance may be necessary. If the pace of a class becomes too fast or the amount of sounds, sights, and textures overloads the sensory system, a student may need to participate in music for a shorter amount of time or learn less material for the concert and only perform the portions of music learned.
- Student assistants (buddies) can be valuable in the pacing process as they can repeat directions, refocus attention, and answer questions a student may have if the pace of class/rehearsal is too fast. We suggest having several buddies take turns working with a student to avoid "buddy burnout" among our assistants.
- Wait time is another important element of pacing. Some students take up to 10 times the amount of time we need to process a question or a piece of information. When asking a question of a student, wait at least 5 seconds before reprompting or redirecting. If a student has difficulty with aural questions, try a modality and pacing adaptation and write the question on a piece of paper or draw a picture of the question or information. This combined with a longer wait time honors the student and the process of teaching and learning.
- Remove all extraneous material from a page and create a large space for the staff and musical notation.
- Use a large and bold font. You may also wish to use a card or piece of paper to cover the words or notes not needed at that moment. The card or paper may move along the page to assist the student as he or she reads the notation or words.
- Project material onto an overhead projector and allow students to stand near the projected image or touch the information as you are teaching.
- Use a font that is simple and has no decorative elements.
- Colored transparencies placed over music or written pages may assist students in reading. Another option is to cut strips of colored transparencies for students to use as they track their reading.
- Music and text can be highlighted for ease of score and staff reading. For students who are learning to play band and orchestra instruments, specific notes may be highlighted for practice. For example, a beginning flutist who is learning to play D, E♭, and F may only be able to finger D at first. Highlighting all the Ds in a line can help him or her track and play the note he or she is practicing. Some highlighters have erasers at the

opposite end. These can be used to erase notes and highlight new notes if needed, or to erase highlighted lines for use by other students who do not need highlighted materials.

For students who have difficulty remembering the note name, fingering, and playing procedure in the amount of time allowed in an ensemble setting, notes may be color coded at first to remove some of the steps required for this type of reading. For example, a beginning recorder student may be learning B, A, and G. B may be highlighted in blue, A may be highlighted in red, and G may be highlighted in green. As a student learns to read the notes, color coding may become less frequent and then be phased out altogether. A teacher may further this adaptation by adding paper hole reinforcers around the holes. The reinforcers can then be color coded to match the highlighted notes in case a student needs to remember the color that matches the fingering.

Finally, the use of color in photographs, diagrams, and pictures can improve student understanding of concepts presented during instruction.

Curricular Modifications in Music Education for Students with Disabilities

Often special educators consider different curricular models when defining the least restrictive learning environment (LRE) for students with special needs. More often this includes constructing a parallel curriculum to the existing general education curriculum. A parallel curriculum follows the path of the existing grade level or subject matter of a student's regular education counterpart with modifications or adaptations as needed. In a sense, the IEP is also a curricular document in itself. However, it does not include the specificity of units and assessments, or a scope and sequence, necessary for a strong curriculum.

A parallel curriculum can be designed using two potential threads. First, a modified curriculum follows the subject and approach (see earlier) but does not have the same expectations (i.e., level of difficulty). An adapted curriculum allows for the same expectations; however, issues such as time, size of assignments, and physical adaptations are made to accommodate the students. Modifications and adaptations to curricula work together throughout the preparation, presentation, and assessment cycles in a classroom. Evaluating your curriculum and determining best practice (through modifications and adaptations) for students with special needs and individual learning differences is really just good teaching. This process follows the same principles used with all students. The difference is that students with special needs require an intensification of good teaching practices (modality, pacing, size, and color).

Specific Ways to Utilize the Resource

While learning about adaptations, accommodations, and modifications can seem fairly straightforward in a text, it is when we apply that information to our own classrooms that we are required to make transfers to individual lesson plans and create meaningful experiences for each of our students. These transfers can be more difficult than we initially assume as they are complicated by many variables. It is here that some teachers

struggle. In writing this resource, we hope to alleviate some of this with enough examples from real K–12 classrooms to assist in making the first few transfers of information to our daily teaching and learning. Once these examples have been used, perhaps the idea of creating adaptations, accommodations, and modifications will become more fluid with time and experience.

2

The Communication Domain

Introduction

Communication is a necessary component of social learning and is the way we let the world know our wants and needs. It is also the key to companionship with others. We communicate through our eyes, voice, sensory input and output, and behaviors. In a way, communication is the most essential of the six domains for learning. Without communication, a child can withdraw into a silent world that does not include the connections we all need to join with others throughout our lives.

Description of Students Who Struggle with Communication

When babies are born, they begin a journey via eye contact that leads them to gain information about their environment. There are billions of opportunities for knowledge acquisition, communication moments, and a bonding with their environment prior to the day the child begins kindergarten. When communication is limited because of a lack of contact, the communication domain can be severely hindered. Social awareness and skills are delayed when the young child has not learned to communicate.

The reciprocation required for give and take in conversation and the sharing of turns is also learned through eye contact and the many opportunities for communication babies and toddlers experience. Children who struggle in this domain are often delayed in their ability to take turns, wait for instructions, or understand the social cues required for a reciprocal exchange. These are among the challenges music educators face when including students with special needs who have communication delays.

The processing of information by a student who has communication differences can be delayed because he or she must process the question asked, the appropriate response, and then the best way to communicate the response to another person. As music educators, we are often focused on the flow of information to and from our students, as well as the pacing of our classes and ensembles. Honoring the process time of our students must be weighed with the needs of the other students in the class.

To appropriately communicate with others, we must engage in both receptive and expressive language processes. Through our receptive language, we gain an understanding of those around us and of the topic at hand. We must process this information and store it in our memory. Expressive language involves letting others know what we know

or are thinking about the topic at hand. This can be expressed in several ways and is not limited to verbal communication. Expressive language can be visual, oral, or kinesthetic. Offering these response choices requires flexibility and thought regarding the possibilities we can create for our students.

Alternative communication provides access to students who are not able to express themselves clearly through written or oral communication. There are many ways to create these response choices for our students. A list of technological choices is available in the resources section of this book. The list includes Boardmaker, iPad apps, the Skoog, and text-to-speech programs that are accessible by students who need them for effective communication.

Vignettes and Lesson Plans for Music Classrooms and Ensemble Situations

LESSON PLAN: JOINT ATTENTION

Vignette: Jake

Jake is in first grade at Highland Elementary School. He has been diagnosed with several disabilities and struggles with expressive language. Jake's classroom teacher has been using short fill-in sentences to encourage him to complete sentences and express his wants and needs. In music class, Jake is sometimes frustrated because the pace of the class moves very quickly and he is sometimes unable to produce the correct word or rhythm during class activities. His music teacher begins to include some activities that will meet Jake where he is and help encourage him to use more verbal communication. She introduces a "Hello Song" and "Goodbye Song" structure that she modifies for Jake. The following lesson plan offers a peek at her process.

Teacher Name and School/District Affiliation

Nadia Castagna, master's in music education with an autism concentration, Boston Conservatory

Domain Addressed

Communication, listening, joint attention, eye gaze

Objective(s)

These songs are designed to bring attention to each individual child. This will boost confidence and self-worth, as well as encourage the children to acknowledge their classmates by singing the song and improve joint attention and eye gaze by having the children look at whoever is being sung to.

Materials

Instrument is optional; it can be sung to the students. I play it on the ukulele, but guitar or piano will do just fine.

Procedures

• At the beginning of class have the children sit in a circle either on the floor or at a table.
• Begin singing the "Hello Song," starting out by singing it as seen in the following musical example: