

## STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS IN THE INCLUSIVE MUSIC CLASSROOM

Amy Furman Music Therapist/Music Specialist Minneapolis Public Schools

### INITIAL QUESTIONS:

How do/will you receive information about the students?

How are the classrooms the students are integrated into selected?

When do students join you from self-contained rooms? How long do they stay?

What are the age spans and developmental skills within self-contained classrooms?

Are there pre-requisite skills that would improve student success in the music setting? This may include sitting, looking towards teacher, raising hand, etc.

Is there a need to have a consistent staff person during units such as drumming, guitar, or guest artists to ensure skill development for the students? Be sure to let classroom and assistants know when a consistent staff is needed.

### ADVANCE PLANNING:

Consider any adjustments that may be necessary for the health and safety of students, e.g., allergies, seizures, assistance with toileting, accommodations for wheelchair or other equipment, assistance during fire & severe weather drills, and available universal precaution materials.

Careful environmental engineering can maximize participation and minimize distractions for students who have special needs; consider proximity to the teacher, edge of group vs. middle, proximity to other students, field of vision, etc.

Not everyone should be expected to stay for the entire class. Consider students who may benefit from participating in just part of the class period. They might come in late or leave early at a predetermined time. (Note: you must be in charge of when the student leaves the group. Be very careful about what is accidentally rewarded.)

### REVIEW LESSON PLANS AND DEVELOP STRATEGIES TO ENSURE:

Skills & materials are developmentally age appropriate musically, academically, & socially

Respect cultural diversity

Environmental Engineering can maximize participation and minimize distractions, a circle works well for many settings consider: close vs. far from adult, location in a circle, however...

Especially with some older groups you do **not** want the eye contact a circle sets up.

Think about your format and style of direction giving including use of visual cues.

Communication has multiple levels including: non-verbal, receptive, and expressive.

Provide visual, auditory and kinesthetic models before you ask the children to perform tasks.

Have selected children model the activity or response for the rest of the class, be sure the question or task is understood before calling on students with special needs.

Establish consistent routines for coming into music and leaving.

Teach flexibility, and tolerance of change (a critical skill especially for students with ASD): loud/soft, fast/slow, all ways to be flexible in music including changing a number (not 10 in the bed, but 7), a color, or the instrument being played.

Break skills down into small steps to ensure success. Pre-teach skills in other songs and layer on more skills gradually.

Find another way to utilize a skill a student has mastered, or one they like and do well.

Select instruments based on weight, grip, modified instruments and grips, and safety. Look for commercially available smaller versions of instruments. The student with special needs should not be the only one playing an instrument.

## MOVEMENT

In special education classes, many teachers use a variety of materials by artists or web sites such as Greg and Steve, Laurie Berkner, and Go Noodle. However, most of these wonderful movement songs and activities have students moving individually not working together or dancing as a group.

Use the known to lead into new skills to build community and self-regulation skills. Start with sitting in chair, or standing in front of chairs, hold hands while seated if it is necessary step, a stretchy chord or theraband can help everyone be involved.

Build imitation skills of both staff and peers, which will allow students to develop a repertoire of movements and vocabulary.

Teach in layers and sections with a few simple moves first. Do your students need to perform the piece sitting down before standing?

Establish consistent routines including a “parking lot” for students who need to slow their motors and a place to find a partner (I use the middle of my room because once these students get to the edge it can be harder to get them back into the group)

## UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

MN Department of Education: Options for Supporting Universal Design for Learning (UDL) In the Low or No Technology Classroom. Charts with suggested multiple means of Representation, Expression and Engagement are attached.

## PROMPTING HIERARCHY (Adapted from AFIRM Module on Prompting)

**Independent:** Performed in the natural environment with no prompts.

**Visual:** These prompts might include checklists, schedules, or visual instructions.

**Indirect Verbal:** Tell /Ask the student about something that is expected but not what to do

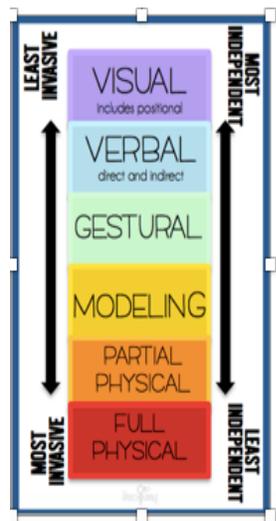
**Direct Verbal:** Tell the student what they are expected to do

**Gestural:** Indicate with a motion what you want them to do

**Modeling:** Show the student what you want them to do

**Partial Physical Assistance:** Provide minimal supported guidance

**Full Physical Assistance:** Hand-over-hand, Hand-under-hand support to complete a task



## 10 THINGS MAINSTREAM TEACHERS CAN DO TODAY TO HELP ELLS SUCCEED

1. Enunciate clearly, but do not raise your voice. Add gestures, point directly to objects, or draw pictures when appropriate.
2. Write clearly, legibly, and in print-many ELL students have difficulty reading cursive.
3. Develop and maintain routines. Use clear and consistent signals for classroom instructions.
4. Repeat information and review frequently. If a student doesn't understand, try rephrasing or paraphrasing in shorter sentences and simpler syntax. Check often for understanding, but don't ask, "Do you understand?" Instead, have students demonstrate their learning in order to show comprehension.
5. Try to avoid idioms and slang words.
6. Present new information in the context of known information.
7. Announce the lesson's objectives and activities, and list instructions step by step.
8. Present information in a variety of ways.
9. Provide frequent summations of the salient points of a lesson, and always emphasize key vocabulary words.
10. Recognize student success overtly and frequently. But, also be aware that in some cultures, overt individual praise is considered inappropriate and can therefore be embarrassing or confusing to the student.

<http://www.colorincolorado.org>

## SELECTED REFERENCES

- Adamek, M. (2001) Meeting special Needs in Music Class. *Music Educators Journal*, 87, 23-26.
- Adamek, M. & Darrow, A.A. (2018). *Music in special education*. Silver Spring, MD: American Music Therapy Association.
- Bernstorf, E. (2001). Paraprofessionals in music settings. *Music Educators Journal*, 87, 36-40.
- Gadberry, A. (2005). Reaching students with special needs through the Orff approach. *The Orff Echo*, 38 (1), 27-32.
- Humpal, M.A. & Colwell, C. (Ed.) (2006). *Early Childhood and School Age Educational Settings: Using Music to Maximize Learning*. Silver Spring, MD: American Music Therapy Association
- Lapka, C. (2006) Students with disabilities in a high school band: "We can do it!" *Music Educators Journal*, 92, 46-52.
- McCord, K. & Fitzgerald, M. (2006) Children with disabilities playing musical instruments. *Music Educators Journal*, 92, 54-59.
- Orff, C. & Keetman, G. (1950). *Orff-Schulwerk music for children, volume I*. (English version adapted by M. Murray). London, England: Schott & Co., Ltd.
- <http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/10-things-mainstream-teachers-can-do-today-help-ells-succeed>

## ORGANIZATIONS

- American Music Therapy Association, 8455 Colesville Rd. Suite 1000, Silver Spring, MD 200910 (301) 589-3300 [www.musictherapy.org](http://www.musictherapy.org)
- Music Therapy Association of Minnesota, <http://www.musictherapymn.com>
- West Music Company, P.O Box 5521, 1212 5 Street, Coralville, IA. 52241  
Phone: 1-800-379-9378 This company has a music therapy consultant who is available for questions and information. <http://www.westmusic.com>
- Velcro: Textol.com 800-624-8746 (smooth on one side) available in different colors, check the clearance section. (to mark carpets without creating a cleaning issue)