



## An Adaption Tool Kit for Teaching Music

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*A Feature Article Published in*

*TEACHING Exceptional Children Plus*

*Volume 6, Issue 3, February 2010*

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### Abstract

Music-education majors often struggle when making classroom and curricular modifications for their lesson plans during their university coursework. This article offers behavioral, curricular, environmental, motivational, organizational, and presentational strategies for planning instruction for various disabilities in the music classroom.

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### Keywords

Adaptations, music, strategies

In memory of Gale A. McMahan, Department of Elementary, Early, and Special Education, Southeast Missouri State University.

### SUGGESTED CITATION:

McDowell, C. (2010). An Adaptation Tool Kit for Teaching Music. *TEACHING Exceptional Children Plus*, 6(3) Article 3. Retrieved [date] from <http://escholarship.bc.edu/education/teplus/vol6/iss3/art3>

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Special education services are provided for students with mild disabilities during their school-aged years. Mild disabilities may be categorized into three groups: (a) learning disabilities, (b) emotionally disturbed/behavioral disorder, and (c) mild mental retardation. The total number of students in these three categories comprises more than half of the total special education population (Henley, Ramsey, & Algozzine, 2002, pp. 211-212).

Regardless of their category, children with mild disabilities are more alike than different in their educational needs. Special education professionals observed similar teaching skills and instructional and behavior management strategies among educators for children with different categorical areas (Yseldyke, Algozzine, Shinn, & McGue, 1982). Through the years, faculties have adopted the concept of 'cross-categorical' approach, where "students are placed together for learning, rather than separated into distinct classroom 'categories' that describe their identified physical or learning disabilities ([www.nea.org/specialed/ideabrief6](http://www.nea.org/specialed/ideabrief6), 2008). One subject where children of all ability levels are combined is the general music classroom.

During the early history of music education in the United States, music was an important part of the school curriculum where students with disabilities were taught. Adamek (1996) reported that music was "an important part of the training and education of students classified as deaf, blind, and 'mentally defective' dating back to the early 1800s" (p. 5). Solomon (1980) discovered that music was an integral part of the pioneering attempts to educate and train handicapped children. Much diagnostic work in the special classroom involved music activities; an example would be using singing to involve the

nonspeaking child in speech as well as improve his breathing and develop proper articulation (p.241).

Early educators found music to be a reinforcing, valuable tool to facilitate learning and reinforce students' achievements. Schools for deaf or blind children included singing, clapping, playing drums and other rhythm instruments, and playing other simple instruments such as bells and whistles (Solomon, 1980). Singing and rhythm activities were also developed for mentally retarded children in institutional settings. In addition, music activities were used to prepare children for interacting in the community (Sheerenberger, 1953).

**“During the early history of music education in the United States, music was an important part of the curriculum where students with disabilities were taught.”**

Music educators today find themselves teaching special learners with far greater needs and more severe disabilities than in years past. Music teachers must make adaptations in music curriculum, classroom activities, and materials in order for students to be successful in a cross-categorical setting. An adaptation is defined as "any adjustment in the environment, instruction, or in materials for learning that enhances the students' performance and allows for at least partial participation" (Darrow, 2008, p. 32). The teacher who possesses a generic set of effective teaching strategies and behavioral interventions can have successful teaching in a

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cross-categorical classroom. Teaching strategies are not categorical, but instead reflect quality instruction that can benefit all learners in the music classroom.

Education majors at Southeast Missouri State University must enroll in a three-credit-hour course on the psychology and teaching of diverse learners in inclusive settings. This course is designed for future teachers who are pursuing certification in either elementary, early childhood, or secondary education. Professors who teach this special education course noticed that music-education majors struggled with the classroom and curricular modifications that must be made in the music classroom. These students' apprehension reflects research which indicates music-education majors are not prepared to work with students with disabilities (Hourigan, 2009; Culton, 1999; Heller, 1994).

A final crucial inclusion issue concerns teacher preparation. Teachers cite lack of preparation, limited time, no staff assistance, and no involvement in the decision-making team as reasons for negative attitudes toward and fear of inclusion (Atterbury, 1987; Colwell, 2000; Kaiser & Johnson, 2000; Hammel, 2001; VanWeelden & Whipple, 2005; Hourigan, 2007). Gfeller, Darrow, and Hedden (1990) reported 15 years after PL 94-142 that 38% of music educators in Iowa and Kansas had no formal training in special education. Frisque, Niebur, and Humphreys (1994) surveyed Arizona music teachers and reported similar results, while Atterbury (1998) found that only 21% of Maine music educators had even attended workshops in special education. Lack of preparation has contributed to music educators' reluctance of including exceptional students into their classrooms and performance groups.

Music educators realize that making adaptations is an ongoing process based on

the ever-changing needs of the individual student. Music teachers can learn about the strengths, skills, needs, and learning styles of special-needs students by consulting with the student's special education teacher and Individual Educational Program (IEP). IEPs do not include music adaptations, only behavioral and/or assistive technology. Since music teachers are rarely involved in the IEP process, they are rarely informed of its contents; the reality of serving so many students and having so little time often prevents their participation (Rose, 2005). Once music educators understand the possible adaptations for special-needs students, they may plan for student differences and appropriate instruction for the entire class.

Before the passage of Public Law 94-142, the Education for all Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142), only one in five children with special needs was educated in the public schools. Most children with disabilities were denied access to their neighborhood schools and attended segregated institutions (Adamek & Darrow, 2005). Since the passage of PL94-142 in 1975, music educators are still learning how to include special learners in their classrooms over 30 years later. Many music educators admit they received little or no training in teaching music to students with special needs. Experienced music educators would also agree that student teachers need to observe and teach special learners before entering the profession (Pontiff, 2004). After three semesters of fieldwork prior to student teaching, music-education majors at Southeast Missouri State University stated that classroom management and working with students with disabilities were still weak areas in their elementary and secondary field experiences as well as their student teaching (McDowell, 2007).

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Although students with disabilities have access to musical opportunities, it should be remembered that for all students, the extent to which they participate in music activities depends on the type of school they attend. All elementary students receive instruction in a general-music class and often continue with general music during middle school. However, middle schools also provide an opportunity to participate in a music ensemble such as band, choir, or orchestra. It is unusual to find general-music classes at the high-school level, which is typically focused on the ensembles that require an audition, and are dependent upon continuing practice (Pol-loway, Patton, & Serna, 2005, p. 510). McCord and Fitzgerald (2006) provide general strategies for teaching beginning band and string instruments for children with dis-

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abilities (See Appendix A). Fitzgerald (2006) also lists questions for parents that music educators should ask before the child joins a music ensemble (See Appendix B).

Music educators must consult with their schools’ special education faculty to learn how students with special needs can fully participate in music activities. Special educators may also assist with curricular modifications. They can help with the following: behavior-management plans, and the physical arrangement of the music room ([www.people.vcu.edu/~bhammel/special/1\\_in](http://www.people.vcu.edu/~bhammel/special/1_in)

[tro/topten/index.htm](http://tro/topten/index.htm), 2008; (Hagedorn, 2004).

When music teachers make decisions concerning adaptations to meet students’ diverse learning needs in their music classrooms, the following strategies can be used for planning instruction: (a) behavioral strategies, (b) curricular strategies, (c) environmental strategies, (d) motivational strategies, (e) organizational strategies, and (f) presentational strategies. The following behavioral, motivational, and organizational strategies may be used with all disabilities discussed in this report. Specific music adaptations are provided for the various disabilities.

*Behavioral Adaptations for Mental and Physical Disabilities; Hearing, Visual, Speech/Language, Learning, and Emotional-Disorder Impairments*

- Establish and teach classroom rules
- Determine whether student has a different set of rules regarding behavior
- Define expectations for classroom behavior and be consistent in administering consequences for misbehavior
- Know what reinforces a behavior for each student
- Give clear, uncomplicated directions
- Remove instruments from a student for mistreating the instrument, playing at inappropriate times, or for misbehavior
- Remove student from a music game for misbehavior or for not following the rules of the game
- Assign student to a “time out” for misbehavior and/or breaking classroom rules
- Assign a friend to help with classroom activities; for example, sitting next to a student and acting as a role model,

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helping a student use materials; working with a student outside of class

- Use a picture schedule for daily activities
- Use a signal or word that alerts the student that his/her behavior is inappropriate
- Teacher moves closer to student to monitor behavior
- Give positive feedback

**Motivational Adaptations for Mental and Physical Disabilities; Hearing, Visual, Speech/Language, Learning, and Emotional-Disorder Impairments**

- Discover something the student does well in music and let him develop leadership skills
- Allow student to select a song to sing, accompany with instruments, dance or play a game with
- Allow student to conduct a song
- Allow student to choose an instrument to accompany a song
- Allow student to lead a music game or dance
- Allow the class to earn a Talent Show (students perform various singing, dancing, or instrument playing activities) or a Music Game Day (such as Music Bingo, Music Trivia, Music Jeopardy, Name That Tune, etc.)
- Present information in a manner that increases students' correct response; for example, "This is a xylophone – what is the name of this instrument?"
- Discover something the student does well in music and let him offer leadership

**Organizational Adaptations for Mental and Physical Disabilities; Hearing, Visual,**

***Speech/Language, Learning, and Emotional-Disorder Impairments***

- Make student aware of room arrangement

***Music Adaptations for Mental Disabilities***

Curricular

- Ask student to perform one musical task at a time – read the words, clap a rhythm, notice how the notes move (up/down/repeat)
- Break tasks down into small units and teach with simple directions. Speak in short, simple sentences without "talking down" to a student
- Use hand movements to practice dance patterns ahead of time
- Practice instrument patterns (rhythmic or melodic) on student's lap first before transferring to the instrument
- When learning a new song, have student join in on the repeating part
- Use icons to represent notation patterns (moving up, down, or repeating)
- Let student develop his own method of writing music down (his own notation system to show notes that move up/down/repeat)
- Work to expand voice range upward – it is often low
- Respect student's chronological age when selecting songs and listening materials; do not treat older students like little children

Environmental

- Have student sit next to an effective singer and encourage him to match that singer's voice
- Have student work with a partner who can monitor and assist him
- Ensure good classroom lighting

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- Keep the classroom neat and free of clutter
  - Seat student near the equipment he will be using that day
  - Ensure comfortable classroom temperature and adequate ventilation

#### Organizational

- Use color highlighting for melodic and rhythmic patterns
- Notate student's part separately, away from the accompaniment

#### Presentation

- Use brightly colored visual aids such as scarves, streamers, parachutes, balloons, cutouts, pictures, instruments, bubbles, mirrors, simple costumes, paper bags, or Popsicle sticks to represent note direction, rhythm, tempo (speed), dynamics (volume), characters, or words
- Teach songs without help of recordings to hear if child matches pitch
- Keep musical patterns for echo clapping or singing short, simple, and slow; repeat them if necessary
- Use visual cues to help remember order of events/words in a song
- Repeat materials, skills, and concepts across several lessons
- Teach some ideas by rote (memory) rather than note

#### ***Music Adaptations for the Physically Disabled***

##### Curricular

- Determine if instruments one-handed (castanets, jingle bells) or two-handed (triangle, boomwhacker)?
- Insert mallets, strikers, or small handles through a foam or rubber ball for

easier gripping

- Attach mallets or small instruments to hands or gloves with Velcro
- Use baby teething rings or rubber doorstops to strum guitars or auto-harps if child lacks pincer grip
- Restring guitars or ukuleles if child requires so he may strum with left hand and chord with right hand
- Tape soprano-recorder holes closed to allow children with missing fingers to play
- Tape or clamp instruments to desks or music stands for children to strike
- Use magnetic tape to attach lightweight bells or other small instruments to metal surfaces
- Place drawer gripper on desks to prevent instruments from sliding off

##### Environmental

- Create large space for wheelchairs for activities
- Use a standing table or walker for support for movement activities
- Perform patterned dances in a space large and open enough that nonambulatory students can dance in their chairs; use music with a tempo students can manage
- Assign an ambulatory partner to dance with a nonambulatory student
- Have one child hold an instrument while a partner with limited mobility strikes it
- Keep the classroom neat and free of clutter
- Seat student near the equipment he will be using that day
- Ensure comfortable classroom temperature and adequate ventilation

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### Organizational

- Make student aware of room arrangement
- Create spaces large enough to accommodate wheelchairs, walkers, and crutches

### Presentational

- Have child move a mobile part of his body: open and close his mouth to the beat, click the rhythm pattern with his tongue, sway to the beat, lift your legs up and down to the beat
- Have student nod head instead of taking steps for a dance pattern
- Have student walk using hands in the air
- Have student hold a mallet in his mouth to strike an instrument
- Strap simple rhythm instruments to a hand or foot for striking
- Consider the size of the target – striking a bass drum versus a woodblock
- Minimize distractions – striking one resonator bell versus a xylophone
- Manipulate various textures for hypotonic grasps (open hand – give student something soft/squishy) versus hypertonic grasps (closed hand – give student something firm to keep hand open)
- Use weighted pencils or pencil grips for writing

### **Music Adaptations for Hearing Impairments**

#### Curricular

- Have child touch instruments to feel vibrations – piano sounding board,

body of a guitar, frame of a drum, or body of an Orff bass bar

- Have student feel sound vibrations through an inflated balloon held in front of a speaker
- Give student instruments that have low frequencies (bass bars, hand drums) or can be felt through the hand such as rhythm sticks
- Avoid instruments with bright, piercing sounds
- Use sustaining instruments (finger cymbals, triangles, metalophones) to provide longer aural feedback

#### Environmental

- Place stereo speakers on a hard-surface floor, select music with a strong beat, and encourage student to dance with shoes off
- Inform student by touch or signal to evacuate building in case of emergency
- Use a wooden platform to increase the resonance potential of sounds from instruments like pianos or xylophones
- Keep the classroom neat and free of clutter
- Seat student near the equipment he will be using that day
- Ensure comfortable classroom temperature and adequate ventilation

#### Presentational

- Use visuals such as pictures, icons, charts, overheads, chalkboards, or written notes for page numbers, rhythm, notation, or words to songs
- Be sensitive to microphone distortion from ambient noise and instruments
- Model fingerings and mallet techniques



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- Tap patterns on desks or other sound-conducting surfaces to help student feel meter and rhythm
  - Teach some songs by signing – it is important for children to understand that there are many ways to communicate

### ***Music Adaptations for Visual Impairments***

#### Curricular

- Identify autoharp chords by different textured dots
- Use contrasting backgrounds for printed materials and avoid clutter on the page
- Colored overlays on top of printed material may also help with figure/ground difficulties

#### Environmental

- Keep chairs, tables, and instruments in the same place
- Use sighted partners for dancing or hula hoops, ropes tied in circles, or parachutes for circle dances
- Talk through movements for dances or instrument playing
- Guide individual movement in personal space in time with the music
- Help student move by walking next to him while supporting with a hand or elbow
- Ensure good classroom lighting
- Keep the classroom neat and free of clutter
- Seat student near the equipment he will be using that day
- Ensure comfortable classroom temperature and adequate ventilation

#### Presentational

- Develop manipulatives to use for sensing through touch: sandpaper or felt notes; notes outlined in string; individual staffs to use at seats with raised layers of Elmer's glue or tape; tongue depressors for rhythm work; listening maps with raised patterns using glue or string; Braille notation or labels, if necessary
- Enlarge notated patterns with black pen on tagboard; magnify notation on a copy machine; place large notation on chalkboards or overheads; use chart books available with music series using an *Optacon*
- Use auditory sense by: recording on tape lessons or song materials; explaining unusual noises; training auditory perception of sounds in foreground and background; verbally cueing when they are to play instruments or change chords; using balls with bells or activities using balls in music; identifying persons who are speaking by name
- Allow student to feel differences and shapes when holding instruments
- Give recordings and access to playback equipment to learn by rote
- Describe/Name instruments when heard, felt, or played

### ***Music Adaptations for Speech/Language Impairments***

#### Curricular

- Use songs to help produce new and difficult sounds for individuals with a cleft palate
- Use rhythmic television commercials, jingles, finger plays, and popular songs to practice difficult sounds

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### Environmental

- Keep chairs, tables, and instruments in the same place
- Ensure good classroom lighting
- Seat student near the equipment he will be using that day
- Ensure comfortable classroom temperature and adequate ventilation

### Presentational

- Listen to songs on tape for pronunciation
- Model and reinforce correct grammatical usage and articulation
- Preteach vocabulary/lyrics for correct grammatical usage and articulation
- Use visual aids for correct grammatical usage and articulation
- Sing a favorite song, leaving off the last word/words for the child to supply
- Record the child's voice while singing and speaking and play the tape back to him as a self-assessment

### ***Music Strategies for Learning Impairments***

#### Curricular

- Highlight visuals using large print, color, and frames that isolate patterns on overhead or in student books
- Use concrete manipulatives to reinforce musical ideas such as notation; magnet boards or hand staff for pitch work; Popsicle sticks for rhythm work; and felt or sandpaper notes for note values
- Use a song with letter/visual cues
- Transfer "left to right" book skills to music
- Use sign language, rhythm activities, and stories with music

- Simplify motor tasks (dance steps, body percussion, and instrument playing)
- Learn songs by rote, then add the tracking of words; print only one line of words under a song, not multiple verses

### Environmental

- Simplify motor tasks (dance steps, body percussion, instrument playing)
- Place stickers on the floor where each student is to sit or outline an area in masking tape –many students with learning disabilities are unable to stay in their own spaces
- Have students sit on rug samples or inside hula hoops
- Keep chairs, tables, and instruments in the same place
- Ensure good classroom lighting
- Seat student near the equipment he will be using that day
- Ensure comfortable classroom temperature and adequate ventilation

### Presentational

- Highlight visuals using large print, color, and frames that isolate patterns overhead or in their books
- Slow down verbal input and recording; teach difficult parts (rhythm/melody) separately
- Separate the reading of rhythms from pitch
- Practice instrument parts kinesthetically away from the instruments
- Teach children to perform something in a series of smaller steps

### ***Music Adaptations for Emotional-Disorder Impairments***

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### Environmental

- Place instruments under chairs when finished or collect them immediately by instrument type
- Remove instrument from a student who is not respecting it
- Place Xs on the floor with tape or white washable shoe polish to form a circle or dance Formation
- Keep chairs, tables, and instruments in the same place
- Ensure good classroom lighting
- Seat student near the equipment he will be using that day
- Ensure comfortable classroom temperature and adequate ventilation

### Organizational

- Use colored tags, shapes, numbering off to select partners
- Establish groups of four to five and have them meet in the same area of the room each time they work on a project

### Presentational

- Model correct ways to hold mallets or other instruments and correct playing technique
- Distribute instruments one at a time rather than passing them all out at once

The National Center for Education Statistics reports that the number of special-education students nationwide has increased steadily for the last three years (Wagman, 2004). The center's most recent figures place the number of special-education students at 6.3 million, more than 13 percent of the total public-school enrollment. Music was one of the first areas to provide interaction between

disabled and non-disabled students; therefore, music educators must be prepared for the challenges and opportunities of inclusion. Classroom teachers should also be informed of these music adaptations because they may be responsible for delivering music instruction if their schools do not have a music teacher. Most research indicates that teacher education programs do not provide adequate training in special education, identifying this area as one that needs research about the preparation that pre-service and practicing teachers receive (York & Reynolds, 1996).

The goal of this document is to provide an organized list of strategies for making music more accessible to students with disabilities. The author invites readers to add to this list. Karl Gehrkins stated in 1923: "Music for every child, every child for music" (Britton, 1962, p. 27). Music educators, especially elementary general music educators, usually meet with all students at least one time a week; therefore, mainstreaming or inclusion has a direct impact on the elementary music teacher. All students deserve the opportunity to experience, participate, and learn about music, but in order for this occur, music educators must have proper training and be willing to explore new teaching approaches. Music educators must provide more models, more hands-on-activities, more multi-sensory experiences, more repetition, more practice, more time to learn, and more individual attention to ensure successful learning for all students (Thompson, 1999, pgs. 8-9). Only then will they be prepared to make the best possible choices and adaptations for students with disabilities.

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Appendices:

*Appendix A*

## Recommendations and Cautions for Specific Instruments

### *Strings*

- Strings are a good choice for children with cystic fibrosis and other physical disabilities that affect breathing.
- Viola or violin can be a good choice for students who are deaf or hard of hearing because they can feel vibrations from the instrument to the jawbone, as string teacher Margot Ehrlich (Metcalf School and University High School, Normal, Illinois) has found.
- Bass is a good choice for children with ADHD or ADD. Because the player is standing up, the student is free to move more and can focus a little more easily. (Of course, students need to know they can't get too wild with the instrument.)
- Cello and bass may be a better choice than violin or viola for students with gross motor disabilities because there is more room to maneuver uncoordinated fingers.
- Violins that are strung in reverse can help students with some physical disabilities. String teacher Margot Ehrlich had success with a child on violin who had the strings strung in reverse and held the bow in the left hand due to some missing parts of fingers. Some additional adjustments were made to sound post and soundboard.
- A homemade bow guide for bass that provides a channel for the bow to travel in can help students with poor wrist control. String music education and bass professor Bill Koehler (Illinois State University, Normal) made a bow guide out of a wire clothes hanger and mounted it at the end of the fingerboard with one screw.
- Tape on the fingerboard can help students find the in-tune fingerings. Tape on the bow will help them to use tip, middle, and frog of the bow.

### *Woodwinds*

- Clarinet and saxophone players who are deaf or hard of hearing benefit from feeling vibrations through teeth on top of the mouthpiece.
- Bass clarinet and saxophone are good for students with certain physical disabilities because the neck strap and bass clarinet pin help support the instrument.
- Saxophone is a popular choice for many students with ADHD, and they do well if you let them stand up as much as possible.
- Woodwinds may be difficult for students with fine motor control problems.
- Articulation on woodwinds may be difficult for children with speech problems that cause them to have trouble coordinating the tongue.

### *Brass*

- Brass instruments are a good choice for students with cognitive impairments because players don't have to use as many fingers as when playing other wind instruments.
- Brass instruments are a good choice for students with missing fingers, as long as three fingers on one hand are fully functioning.
- Brass instruments can help students with asthma increase their lung capacity. It's important that students clean the lead pipes because the accumulation of dirt can affect students with the allergy type of asthma. Students with exercise-induced asthma should check with their doctor for recommendations.
- French horn works well for some students with physical disabilities because they can partially support the instrument on one leg.
- Trombone is easier than other instruments for students with gross motor disabilities because they can coordinate the slide on a trombone more easily than valves, and only two working fingers are required. A student with a working prosthetic arm that bends at the elbow can also play trombone.
- A tube with a stand that holds the instrument can work for some students with physical disabilities.
- A sousaphone with sousaphone chair holder can help students with ADHD or emotional and behavioral disabilities that make it difficult for them to focus and remain in one place for an extended period of time. Band director Beth Nuss (Paxton, Illinois) said, "The child was completely engulfed by the instrument and it kept him from getting out of his seat constantly." Managing large instruments makes it hard for easily distracted students to get up and move around and leaves them with no "extra hands" to bother their classmates.
- Brass instruments pose challenges for children with auditory learning disabilities or deaf and hard of hearing disabilities because they cannot hear the right overtones. Elementary band teacher Donna Humphreys (Metcalf School, Normal, Illinois) has helped these students by teaching them to recognize what the embouchure feels like for various overtones.

### *Percussion*

- The percussion section includes possibilities for students with cystic fibrosis, nasal irregularities, or severe asthma. Band director Beth Nuss says she can always find something for even the most limited child; a triangle, suspended cymbal, or gong helps the student feel like part of the band.
- Percussion instruments (especially mallets) can be less frustrating for some beginners than other instruments, because the tone is acceptable right away.
- Mallet instruments allow students with ADHD/ADD some freedom to stand and move.
- Bass drum works great for students with hearing impairments. They can feel the vibrations by standing on a wooden floor with shoes removed or playing with their left hand on the drum head. They can also lean against the drum and feel vibrations while watching the director to stay with time. It's important to have students who are deaf or hard of hearing watch the director more than the music.



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- Snare drums can be played with one stick while the other hand is used to feel vibrations on the instrument. Students using this technique will not be playing rolls and flams, but they can play slower-moving rhythms. As they become more sensitive players, they can learn to control the drum by the pressure of the stick.
  - Mallet percussion instruments can be challenging for students with gross motor disabilities. Shifting back and forth from diatonic and chromatic bars and playing all bars in the center can easily cause frustration.
  - Mallets can be difficult for students with visual tracking problems because they need to see the music and look for the correct bar to strike. It's hard for them to read, then look, then hit, then read, and so on.
  - Drums are difficult for students with processing delays to play in good time.

Reprinted from: McCord, K. and Fitzgerald, M. (2006). Children with disabilities playing musical instruments. *Music Educators Journal*, 94(4), 46-52.

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*Appendix B:*

**Questions for the First Conference with a Parent**

- Tell me about your child. What does he or she like to do?
- What are some of your child's struggles?
- Does he sing or keep the beat to music at home when it is playing? If so, how do you think he does? Is he able to keep up with the beats?
- Tell me about your child's eye-hand coordination. (Not necessary for choral music.)
- Is your child able to repeat patterns, like dances, rhythms, and chants?
- What instrument do you think she would be successful on? (Not necessary for choral music.)
- Are you available to help your child, if necessary, during home practice? If not, will you arrange for his one-to-one aide to be present? (This must be discussed and written into the IEP at the IEP planning meeting.)
- Does your child require a great deal of structure to stay on task in a setting that is not a regular classroom with desks and chairs?
- Is your child able to read at or near grade level?
- Does your child transition from one activity to another when given a verbal cue? Does she need a prompt or more specific direction to transition?
- When your child is interacting with peers, is he able to maintain his own body space or does he enter into another student's space?
- What should I know about your child and her social behavior? Is she sensitive to sound or noise? If so, what happens when she is exposed to it for long periods of time? Do you think she could become acclimated to this? How do you recommend I do that?
- How does your child begin to show frustration? What are warning signs I need to know so I can be proactive rather than reactive?
- Is there anything else I should know about your child so I can best help him have a great year in my music class?

Reprinted: Fitzgerald, M. (2006). "I send my best Matthew to school every day: Music educators collaborating with parents." *Music Educators Journal*, 92(4), 40-45.



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