

Using Collaboration and Music Therapy Techniques to Teach Music and Communication Skills in Children with Disabilities

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Music educators concerns regarding Inclusion in the music classroom

1. Obtaining information about students, disabilities and IEP goals
2. Adapting curriculum materials, instruments and music
3. Placement of students in the music classroom
4. Socialization between students with and without disabilities in the music classroom
5. Time for making adaptations, gathering information, and collaborating with others



Stories from early teaching experience

- Former music teacher
- My first special needs class



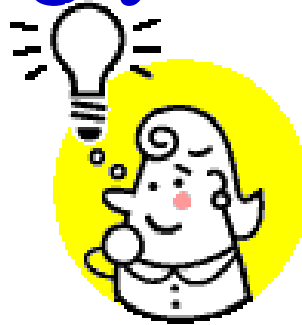
Music Educators



- typically plan lesson plans for general student
- then identify weaknesses of special needs students
- then include adaptations to the lesson plan to address those weaknesses



Different way to think about planning your lessons



- Begin with something designed for the special needs students
 - to find music activity ideas collaborate with special educator or music therapist
- Then alter the lesson to include the general students



Who's That Tapping at the Window

American Singing Game

1 *Call*

Who's that tap-ping at the win-dow?

5

Who's that knock-ing at the door?

9 *Response*

I am tap-ping at the win-dow.

13

I am knock-ing at the door.

If the CALLER covers the eyes of a selected student,
can they tell who is responding?



Example

- “Who’s That Tapping” American Singing Game
- Special needs students work on socialization goals
 - work together with a peer as a team
 - name classmates



Song: *Who's That Tapping?*

- Who's that looking in the window?
- Who's that standing at the door?

Knock, knock, knock, knock

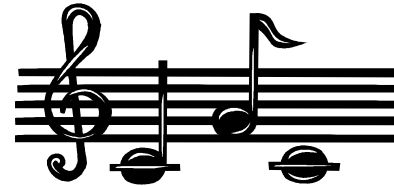
- *[Name]* is looking in the window.
- *[Name]* is standing at the door.



“Who’s That Tapping” American Singing Game

General students work on music goals

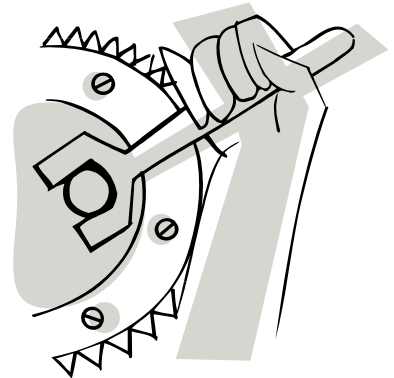
- Name an instrument by tone color
- Read and play from written music notation



Six Inclusion Strategies

just good teaching to benefit all students

1. Structure lessons to include a blend of auditory, visual and hands-on activities



Inclusion Strategy

2. Have high expectations for students



Inclusion Strategy

3. Be flexible



Inclusion Strategy

4. Maintain a positive attitude about working with students with special needs



Inclusion Strategy

5. Be willing to work collaboratively with other adults and professionals



Inclusion Strategy

6. Provide consistency along with a structured and predictable approach





Collaboration

- Develops by creating a **good working relationship** among all people involved with individual student's education
- Happens **formally** through **IEP meetings** or **co-teaching**
- Happens **informally** through **email** or **impromptu conversations**
- Is an **on-going process**



Sharing Goals and Information

- Music educators can request to see a child's IEP
- Information to learn from a student's IEP
 1. Strengths or special skills
 2. Disability characteristics, limitations and weaknesses
 3. IEP objectives that can be addressed in music class
 4. Useful strategies for working with the student



Student Information “At a Glance”

(5x7 note cards)

Student: _____
Teacher/Grade: _____ / _____

Strengths/Special Skills

-
-
-
-

Disability/Limitations/Weaknesses

-
-
-
-

IEP Objectives

-
-
-
-

Useful Strategies

-
-
-
-



Student Information “At a Glance”

Example

Student:	Allen Southward
Teacher/Grade:	Mr. Swanson, 6th grade inclusive class

Strengths/Special Skills

- Active participant in class
- Very energetic
- Responds to music, motivated by music
- Has shown some leadership skills

IEP Objectives

- Follow teacher’s one- and two-step directions
- Focus on task for at least 10 minutes
- Complete tasks when directed
- Ask for help when needed or assistance when frustrated

Disability/Limitations/Weaknesses

- Low frustration tolerance
- Difficulty getting along with other students at times
- Hyperactive with limited focus of attention, easily distracted

Useful Strategies

- Peer buddy to assist with difficult tasks
- Break down directions into one or two clear steps
- Use positive reinforcement for completing work or getting along with peers (likes to earn tokens, social reinforcers)



Communication concepts



In order to improve communication skills

- Establish **Joint Attention**
- Use **Structured, yet Functional method** techniques



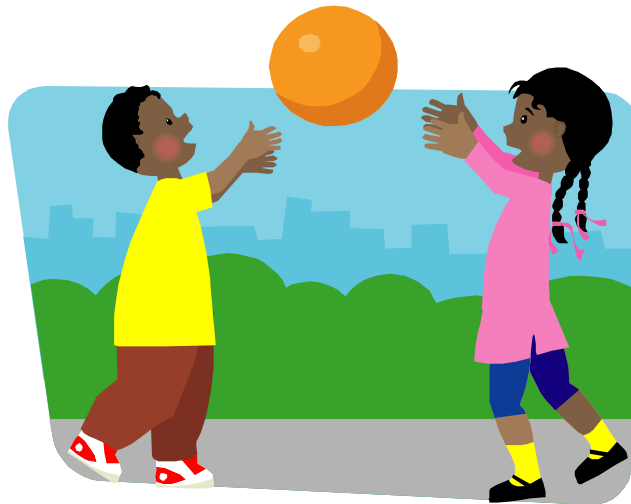
Joint Attention (JA)

- ***Directed attention and interests of another is an underlying motive behind all human communication***
- *Theory of Mind (ToM)* - Refers to the process of sharing one's experience of observing an object or event, by following gaze or pointing gestures
- Understanding ToM and JA are critical for social development, language acquisition and cognitive development



Therapeutic Techniques to encourage natural Joint Attention

- Follow the child's lead
- Talk about what the child is doing
 - *introduce vocabulary*
- Manipulate the environment to engage the child



Turn Taking

(to establish a predictable routine & establish Joint Attention)

- Music interventions to help encourage and establish *intentional communication*
 - Pentatonic bell improvisation
 - Follow the child's lead
 - Manipulate the environment to engage the child
- What IEP goals could be addressed?
- What music education goals could be addressed?



Lesson Example

■ Leader of the Band

■ Communication techniques

- *follow the child's lead*
- *turn taking*
- *joint attention*

■ IEP Goals

-
-
-

■ Music Ed. Goals

-
-
-



Structured, Yet Functional Method



- Structured – the degree to which the teacher/therapist controls stimuli, response acceptability and response consequences
- Functionality – the degree to which the teacher/therapist uses natural events, objects and consequences in the pursuit of practical goals within typical classroom routines



Basic Principles of Structured, Yet Functional Method

1. ***Activities that a child enjoys*** reinforce participation which increases the potential for language learning
2. ***Interactive*** experiences should occur within ***predictable routines***
3. ***Nonlinguistic concepts*** are a prerequisite to functional language development
4. ***Play*** provides a foundation for learning language



To use Structured, yet Functional techniques

The teacher/therapist needs to...

- Create interactive interventions that occur within predictable routines
- Apply techniques of varied directiveness
- Pursue practical communication and language goals (*use natural/practical vocabulary*)



Routines

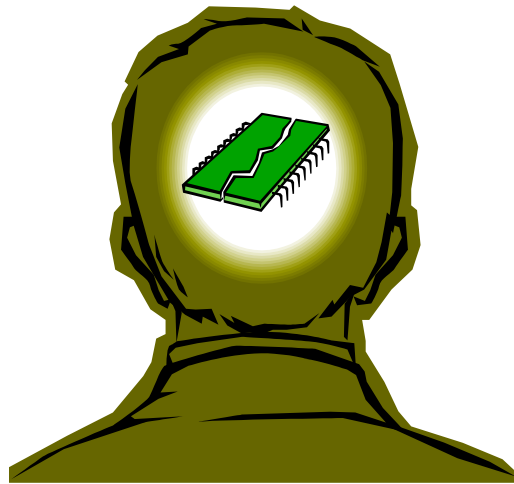
Defined as ritualized interaction patterns that occur in arranged environments

- Should have identified start and end points
- Should have shared focus on objects and events
- Should have opportunities for turn-taking between therapist/teacher, student and peers
- Should incorporate natural events, objects and consequences



During predictable routines

- Memory and processing demands are reduced
- Opportunities for specific language learning is available



During less predictable routines

- The child is exposed to more varied language use
- Boundaries are expanded which helps the child achieve greater flexibility



Therapeutic Techniques using Structured, yet Functional method

Once a child begins to anticipate turn-taking, the therapist can ...

1. Delay with expectant waiting
2. Use novel objects or actions
3. Omit or forget a critical object needed
4. Sabotage materials so they do not work as expected



Lesson Example

- Jump Down, Turn Around

- *Communication techniques*

- *use of novel actions*
- *manipulate the environment to engage the child,*
- *omit a critical object*
- *sabotage materials so they don't work as expected*

- IEP Goals

-
-
-

- Music Ed. Goals

-
-
-



Lesson Example

- What Do You Do?

- Communication techniques

- *delay with expectant waiting*
- *expand on the child's utterances*

- IEP Goals

-
-
-

- Music Ed. Goals

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-
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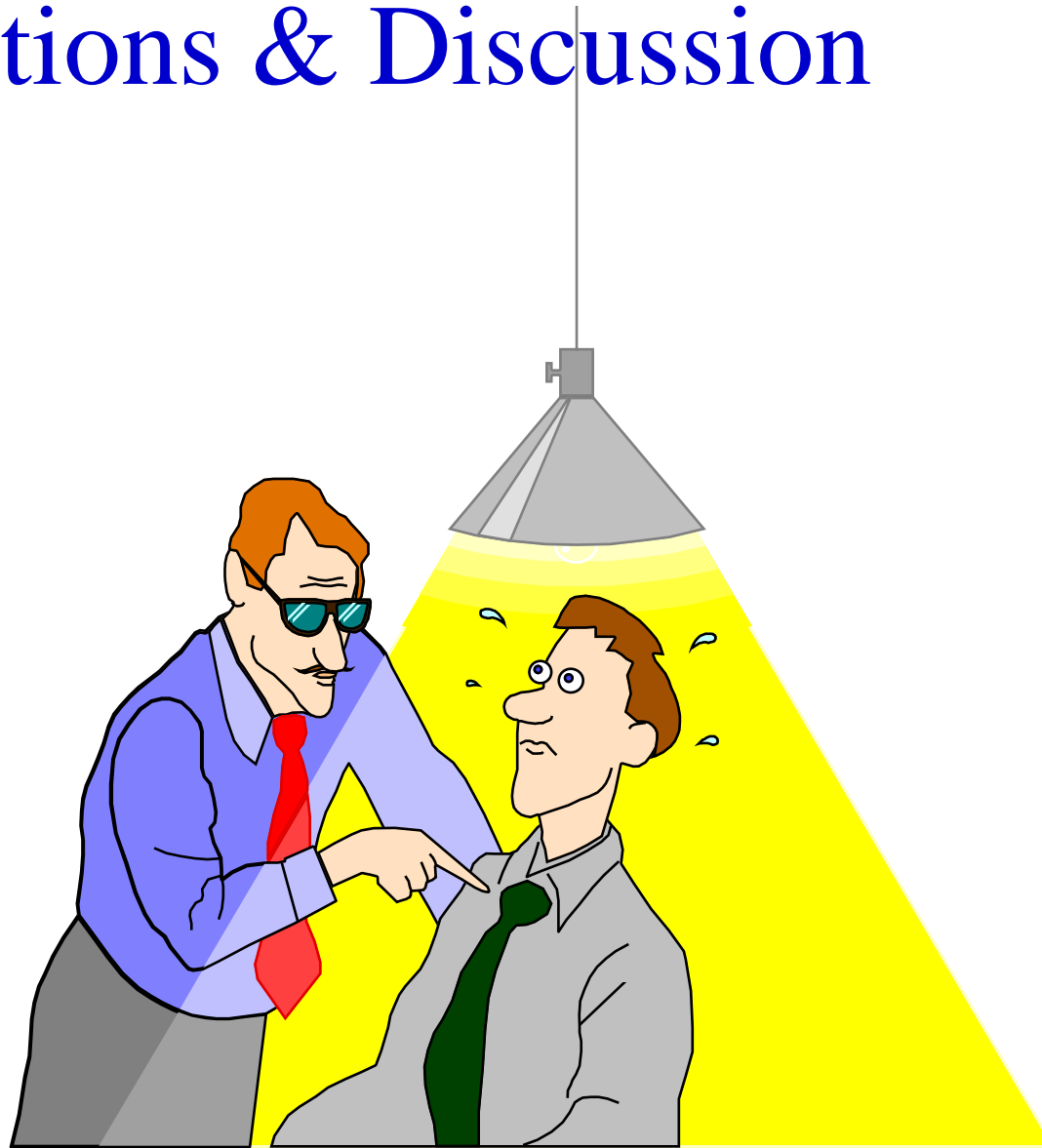


Review of session concepts

- Collaboration between music educator, special educator and music therapist
- Intentional communication skills
 - Establish Joint Attention
- Structured, yet Functional method
 - Techniques to establish intentional communication



Questions & Discussion





References

- Adamek, M. and Darrow, A. (2010) ***Music in Special Education***, American Music Therapy Association
- Kim, J, Wigram, T and Gold, C. (2008) **The Effects of Improvisational Music Therapy on Joint Attention Behaviors in Autistic Children: A Randomized Controlled Study**, *J. Autism Dev. Disorder*, 1758-1766.
- Lapka, C. (2007) **Opening the Door**, *Illinois Music Educator*, 70.
- McCord, K. and Watts, E. (2006) **Collaboration and Access for Our Children: Music Educators and Special Educators Together**, *Music Educators Journal*, 26-33.
- Ogletree, B. & Oren, T (1998) **Structured Yet Functional: An Alternative Conceptualization of Treatment for Communication Impairment in Autism**, *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, 228-233.



Music Examples

- Who's That Tapping? *(American singing game)*
- Pentatonic Bell Improvisation *(P. Farlow)*
- Leader of the Band *(P. Farlow)*
- Jump Down, Turn Around *(based on "Pick a Bale of Cotton" adapted by P. Farlow)*
- What Do You Do? *(K. Coleman and B. Brunk, Prelude Music)*





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