

A LABEL-FREE APPROACH TO TEACHING MUSIC TO STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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THE BASICS OF A LABEL-FREE APPROACH

- ◉ Use labels to gain general information
- ◉ Concentrate on Music Teaching and Learning

5 DOMAINS

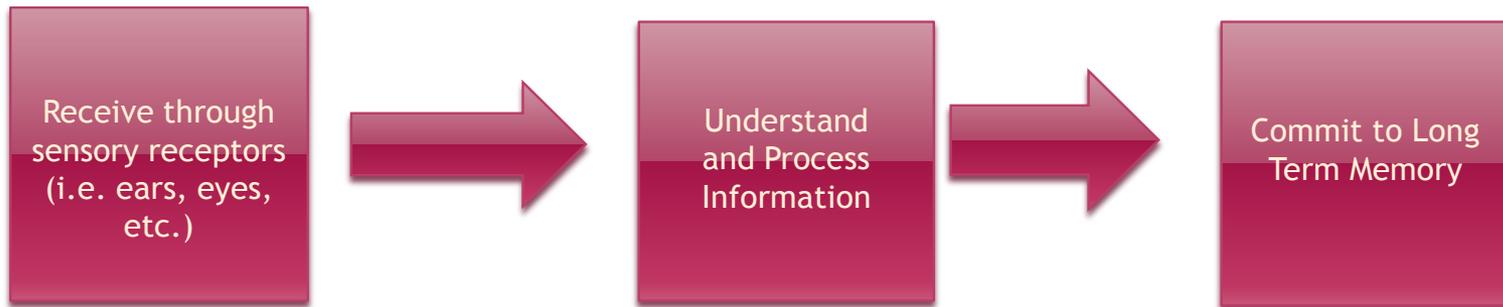
- ◉ Cognitive
- ◉ Communication
- ◉ Behavioral/Emotional
- ◉ Sensory
- ◉ Physical

COGNITIVE DOMAIN

- The ability of a student to receive, process, and commit information to memory

COGNITIVE DOMAIN

Cognitive Processes



STRATEGIES FOR MUSIC TEACHERS

- Observe student in other settings and look specifically at cognitive issues
- Self-assess your delivery of music material
 - Are there ways to make the cognitive process easier for the the student
- Discuss and strategize with Special Ed. Team

MUSIC LESSON EXAMPLE

○ Elementary

- I Love My Little Rooster (video)
- Jack in the Box (video)
- Ali Baba

MUSIC LESSON EXAMPLE

◉ Secondary

- Modify playing/singing exams to include less material but same expectations (if possible)
- Provide peer support for re-directing or simplifying directions
- Allow for pull out time with a peer or team teacher

MUSIC LESSON EXAMPLE

○ Secondary

- Have the student perform only what they can contribute a meaningful performance.
- Provide music well in advance.
- Rehearse a segment and allow student to go and practice this exact segment before moving on (see #3 above as well)

COMMUNICATION

○ 4 areas of concern

- Receptive Language
- Expressive Language
- Cognitive Functioning (discussed before)
- Cultural use of Language

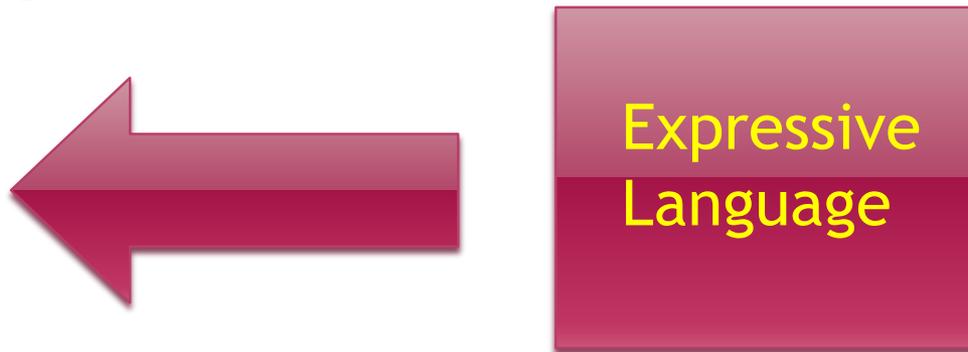
RECEPTIVE AND EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE

Receptive language refers to the ability of a student to receive and process information.



EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE

Expressive language is the ability to use symbols of language to express thoughts
(Lewis & Doorlag, 2006)



MUSIC LESSON EXAMPLES

○ Elementary

- Jim along Josie
- Find your family
- Charlie over the ocean

MUSIC LESSON EXAMPLES

◉ Secondary

- Provide simple clear instructions. May need to provide individual instructions for the specific student.
- Partner written instructions with modeling (either by a peer or teacher).
- Establish a communication journal between you, the special education team and the parents (if possible).

MUSIC LESSON EXAMPLES

◉ Secondary

- Utilize digital video and audiotape for students to bring home and practice
- Provide music well in advance.

BEHAVIOR OR EMOTIONAL CHALLENGES

- ◉ Emotional Disturbance (from IDEA)
- ◉ an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors
- ◉ an inability to develop and maintain interpersonal relationships with peers or teachers
- ◉ inappropriate types of behavior or fears in normal circumstances
- ◉ a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression
- ◉ a tendency to develop physical symptoms related to fears associated with personal or school problems

ISSUES IN THE MUSIC CLASSROOM

- ◉ Outbursts
- ◉ Inattentiveness or lack of engagement
- ◉ Other?

BEHAVIOR CHALLENGES

- ⦿ is there an antecedent to the behavior?
- ⦿ is the behavior considered inappropriate for a student's sex or age?
- ⦿ is the behavior interrupting his learning (e.g. attention, impulsivity, hyperactivity)
- ⦿ is the behavior external (e.g. aggression) or internal (e.g. withdrawal)
- ⦿ is the behavior interrupting the learning of other students in your classroom?

MUSICAL EXAMPLE

○ Elementary

- The goodbye song
- Play the drum
- Folk dances
- Cooperative singing games

MUSIC LESSON EXAMPLE

◉ Secondary

- Establish a clear rehearsal routine.
- Be aware of anxiety with concerts, festival/assessment trips, and special events. This may lead to new behaviors.
- Try to praise appropriate behavior as well as ignore inappropriate behavior.
- Attempt to use positive reinforcement (i.e. earning privileges) rather than negative.
- Be aware of students who are introverted. Consult counseling staff when you have questions. These students may need assistance with socialization.

SENSORY

- ◉ Often associated with vision or hearing impairments
- ◉ Hypo or Hyper sensitivity
- ◉ Sound, sight, touch, smell, and/or taste etc.

TEACHING MUSIC TO STUDENTS WITH SENSORY CHALLENGES

- ◉ Establish communication (e.g. reading lips, Braille, etc.)
- ◉ Examine your learning environment (e.g. seating, lighting, volume, etc.)
- ◉ Adaptations and Accommodations

SENSORY INTEGRATION ISSUES

- ◉ Often occurs in many persons with disabilities
- ◉ Seeking sensory input
- ◉ Issues in the music classroom

SENSORY MUSICAL EXAMPLES

○ Elementary

- On my Toe There is a Flea
- Grandma's Glasses
- Circle dances that include hands and arms

MUSIC LESSON EXAMPLES

◉ Secondary

- Be mindful of dynamics (extreme louds and softs). Student may need a warning before rehearsing.
- Be aware of proximity to unpredictable sounds or instruments (e.g. drums).
- Try to understand your learning environment from the students prospective (e.g. someone who has visual challenges) and make adjustments.

MUSIC LESSON EXAMPLES

○ Secondary

- (for students who have visual impairments) set up room exactly the same way every day.
- Understand that performance environments (e.g. concert hall) are different than rehearsal environments. Adjustments may need to be made.
- Provide music well in advance

PHYSICAL AND MEDICAL CONDITIONS

- ⦿ Permanent or Temporary
- ⦿ 504 plans
- ⦿ Assumptions
- ⦿ Gross and Fine motor abilities

PHYSICAL MUSIC EXAMPLES

○ Elementary

- Seven Jumps
- Head and Shoulders Baby
- A Ram Sam Sam

MUSIC LESSON EXAMPLES

○ Secondary

- Place students on instruments that have less fine motor requirements (e.g. percussion, trombone) Modify music based on these requirements.
- Allow for extra space around student.
- Seat student near a good model

MUSIC LESSON EXAMPLES

◉ Secondary

- Understand that marching band /show choir are very physical activities. Many students with special needs may not appear to have coordination and muscle tone challenges. Consult with special education staff.
- When learning marching band drill or choreography have the section leader run through sets/charts/counts without the rest of the band/choir being present.
- Provide music well in advance.

ADDRESSING SOCIAL CONCERNS

○ Elementary

- I Roll the Ball
- Shake a Friend's Hand
- Go In and Out the Window

GENERAL MUSIC IDEAS

○ Elementary/Secondary

- Allow students more time on written exams.
- Allow for oral exams for students who struggle with writing.
- Review the difference between accommodation, and modification. Check IEP to see what they are doing in other academic classes.
- Many students with special needs have fine motor challenges. This may require less writing, manipulation of certain instruments (such as guitar).
- In guitar class, use open tuning and tapes.

TIPS FOR ALL STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

○ Secondary

- Seek IEP or 504 Document and consult with special education staff.
- Allow time to speak with the student before and after class to clarify.
- Utilize assistive technology (i.e. Braille music, amplification devices, Smart Music).

TIPS FOR ALL STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

○ Secondary

- Be aware of bullying. This might lead to outbursts in class.
- If behavioral intervention is needed, work with special education staff to provide an individual behavior plan.
- Work to provide a social connection in the music classroom for the student.

FOR ALL STUDENTS

- Always being thinking about the personhood and dignity of the student. They can sometimes be very aware of their peers perception of them.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

- ◉ Use labels to gain broad understanding
- ◉ Focus on music teaching and learning
- ◉ Each child is an individual