



**Teaching General Music to Children with Dyslexia and other Language-Based Learning Disabilities - Successful Strategies**

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## ABSTRACT

### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this empirical study is to investigate the most effective teaching strategies used in general music at the elementary school level for children with dyslexia and other language-based learning disabilities. This will be accomplished through reviewing the existing research and surveying teachers in the field.

### Rationale

Dyslexia is a language-based learning disability (LBLD). Children with dyslexia may have difficulty reading, writing, and speaking effectively. Often, short-term memory, motor, auditory and visual processing skills are affected as well. Common co-morbidities include ADHD and anxiety/depression. There are numerous private schools in the US that are dedicated to the education of children with dyslexia and other language-based learning disabilities. Music educators who are preparing to teach must study applied music, music theory and history, and methods classes. However, most music teachers may have very little, if any, training in teaching children with language-based learning disabilities. Most of the current research on teaching music to individuals with dyslexia discusses teaching private music lessons.

This study will investigate the most effective methods for teaching general music to children with dyslexia and other language-based disabilities, based on a review of the current research on dyslexia and a survey of teachers in schools for children with language-based learning disabilities. General music teachers will be asked to rate several methods of preparing to teach children with LBLD. They will be asked to identify the strategies that have been most effective in addressing the following areas: singing, beat and rhythm, music performance, music reading, music writing, memory, and self-esteem. They will be asked to rate the approaches of Orff, Dalcroze, and Kodaly for effectiveness, to address multi-sensory lesson planning and differentiated learning, and to list effective computer programs used in their classrooms.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Dyslexia is a common language-based learning disability (LBDL). Even though dyslexia and LBDL are not synonymous, I have found that they are sometimes used as nearly synonymous terms. I will be specific when using both terms in this paper.

There are numerous private schools in the United States that are devoted to working with children with LBDL. Many of the students have dyslexia. Students in these schools receive special instruction to help them better learn to read, write, speak with fluency, and to manage other difficulties such as large and small motor problems. They have varied curricula, but music instruction is a part of most of them. Since I am teaching in one of these schools, I am interested in how best to teach general music to children with LBDL. Before my first day, I talked to my administrator and my new music colleague about my new assignment and my future students. I attended lectures and read books and articles about dyslexia. However, much of the current research I found on dyslexia and teaching music was about teaching private music lessons, not general music classes. After learning about dyslexia and other language-based learning disabilities, I felt as though teaching music to these children could be a challenge for me. I am an experienced music teacher, but I have always expected that children could learn the basics of music reading, writing, singing, instrument playing, and dancing in my classes. How would I approach this new population? I wanted to learn as much as I could.

I wrote about my new teaching experiences in a journal throughout the fall of 2016. At the same time, I began developing a survey to address the following areas of interest: effective teacher preparation, effective methods for teaching reading, writing, beat, and rhythm; and effective ways to address working memory, motor skills, and self-esteem. I also wanted to find out which approaches in music education (Orff, Kodaly and Dalcroze) instructors preferred when teaching the elements of music to children with LBDL. The existing research recommended differentiated instruction and multi-sensory teaching, so I asked for examples of

these types of lessons. I also learned that creativity can be an advantage for dyslexic students, so I hoped to discover ways to nurture this strength in my students.

The main questions in my mind when embarking on this study pertained to the possibility of having to adjust my methods and strategies of teaching to best reach my new students. Before I began teaching children with LBLD in the fall of 2016, I was certain that my philosophy that “music is for everyone” would still be true. I knew that one did not have to be able to read music in order to enjoy it or even master it. I had a feeling that the magic of music would have the same effect on any child (or adult, for that matter.) I had seen videos, for example, of long silent people with dementia who could suddenly sing their favorite songs when coaxed by therapists. And I knew the value of singing and group-music making, as a teacher and a performer. Music is also a part of STEAM: science, technology, engineering, the arts, and math. To me, this currently ubiquitous acronym suggests both the importance and the interconnectedness of these subjects. The skills needed for making music easily coincide with the list of 21st century skills that are desired in education today: critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. Brain research has shown that singing is an activity that utilizes all parts of the brain. Music is a unique art form, and I believe that when we have the chance to create and perform it, we are privileged to be able to express and experience our humanity. For all these reasons, I thought that music would be integral for my new students’ development.

After teaching and reflecting on my classes in the fall, I wondered if I was approaching my lessons in the most effective way. As an experienced teacher, I realized that there is always room for improvement and that as you teach, you continue to learn. I asked myself whether it was causing unnecessary frustration when I asked children to read rhythms and letter names. Was I expecting too much when I told them to play ostinati on the xylophones? To sing in canon? To remember dance steps? Were there strategies I should know about? Were my students’ attention issues going to prevent their success?

Using a database of schools that focus on teaching children with language-based



learning disabilities, I made a list of music teachers I found on school websites. I contacted the teachers and using Googleforms, requested that they take my survey on teaching general music to children with language-based learning disabilities. It was exciting to see the responses begin to come in. I was so glad to finally recognize the fruits of my labor. After all, I selected the topic of this project after following my adviser's advice to "be selfish" and find out about something that would benefit my very specific situation.

After the preliminary experiences in my new school in conjunction with the literature review that I did, I had some predictions and hopes. I expected that the following recommendations would be confirmed in the survey: learn about dyslexia, teach with a multi-sensory approach, and be well-prepared and explicit with step by step instructions while at the same time attempting to be flexible with lesson plans. I also had a feeling that Orff would be praised by the responding teachers since, in my experience, this approach emphasizes creativity, flexibility, and a multi-sensory enforcement of concepts the most. Lastly, I really wanted to learn about technology that could be helpful since I use a minimum of that in my classroom.

## **Chapter 2: A Review of the Current Literature on Teaching Music to Individuals with Dyslexia**

### **Description of Dyslexia**

Dyslexia, in the simplest definition, is "trouble with words" (Denckla 232). Merriam-Webster's definition is "a variable, often familial learning disability involving difficulties in acquiring and processing language that is typically manifested by a lack of proficiency in reading, spelling, and writing." The International Dyslexia Association and the Director of Reading Research at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development define it as "...a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties

with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge” (Moats 3). The difficulties in reading are not the result of generalized developmental disability (reduced intellectual ability, or mental handicap) or sensory impairment (Vance 1). The British Dyslexia Association defines dyslexia as “a specific difficulty in learning, in one or more of reading, spelling and written language which may be accompanied by difficulty in number work, short-term memory, sequencing, auditory and/or visual perception, and motor skills. It is particularly related to mastering and using written language--alphabetic, numeric, and musical notation. In addition, oral language is often affected to some degree” (Vance 2).

Because dyslexia is “trouble with words,” and not just trouble with reading (a common misunderstanding), dyslexics have trouble with language: pronunciation, spelling, word order, and irregularities in one’s native tongue (Denckla 232). For example, I heard a second grade student say “I scraped the fence on my arm,” and a fourth grade student, in telling a joke, reveal the punch line before the initial question.

### **Brain Structure, Genes, and Dyslexia**

The structure of the dyslexic brain has been found to be different, (Denckla 233, and Eide, 31-43), and “fMRI’s and anatomical brain studies show differences in both brain development and function” (Lynam). The temporo-parietal lobe of the brain, which is involved in phonological processing, and the occipito-temporal lobe, which is involved in orthographic processing, are affected (Hoeft). A number of risk genes contribute to the liability of forming dyslexia, (Hoeft), and shifting from left to right brain thinking is more of a challenge (Eide 34). On a functional MRI, a non-dyslexic brain has three areas in use during reading: visual, word

analysis, and articulation (the phonological process of sounding out words.) The dyslexic brain has little activation in two of the areas and is not efficient in a third (Lynam).

### **Corresponding Problems**

People with dyslexia often have problems with short-term memory and motor skills, and may also have auditory and visual processing problems (Overy 1). There are many conditions that are commonly seen in people with dyslexia. These are called “co-morbid conditions” and include the following:

- ADHD
- Auditory Processing Disorder
- Disorder of written expression
- Dysgraphia
- Dyscalculia
- Dyspraxia
- Anxiety and/or Depression. (Lynam)

ADHD is the most common comorbid condition (Lynam and Hoeft). Dysgraphia, dyscalculia, and dyspraxia are other LBLD's. Dysgraphia is associated with fine motor control (Daunt et al. 21), dyscalculia is difficulty with number calculations, (Daunt et al. 21), and dyspraxia is a disorder affecting fine and/or gross motor coordination (Daunt et al. 20). It can result in trouble coordinating the mouth muscles for speaking. (Lynam).

### **Recognizing Dyslexia**

Dyslexia runs in families (Lynam). The early potential indicators are

- Family History

- Difficulty pronouncing some words correctly
- Difficulty learning to rhyme words
- Difficulty learning the letter names
- Difficulty learning the letter-sound correspondence
- Confusion of letters with similar sounds
- Difficulty with blending and segmentation of phonemes (distinct units of sound)

Learning disabilities vary in type and severity, (McCord and Fitzgerald 2, and Miles et al. A Positive Approach 117) and dyslexia can be severe or mild (Hoeft, Moats 61).

“Every student is different and every dyslexic student is different” (Daunt 36). Children with dyslexia may exhibit some or all of the above symptoms and so they will all be unique learners.

### **The Outlook for Students with Dyslexia**

The good news is that children with dyslexia are “bright kids with tiny areas of weakness surrounded by strengths” (Lynam). Although dyslexia cannot be cured, if treatment begins early, between the age of 6 and 10, ideally, brain plasticity and neuro-pathways can be affected, and evidence-based learning programs in the early years are recommended (Lynam).

After treatment, children will be able to read. They will just need more time. Instead of an optimal “super-highway,” their brain pathways will be more like “country roads” (Lynam).

Some say that dyslexia is found in people of “average or above average intelligence” (Vance, 2), but others believe that people of all IQ levels can have it (Lynam). It is not associated with low IQ (Lynam). It is estimated that 5 to 17% of people have dyslexia, and so teachers may have 1-2 students with the disorder in their classrooms (Lynam). Famous thinkers and public figures such as Thomas Edison, Auguste Rodin, Albert Einstein, John Steinbeck, Agatha Christie, and Winston Churchill had dyslexia (Burrows 1). Cher, John

Lennon, and Florence Welch are some famous musicians with dyslexia (DyslexiaHelp.umich.edu).

Dyslexia not only affects reading and language ability, but may also have an effect on self-perception. Children with dyslexia may have a negative self-concept (Miles et al, A Positive Approach 140). This can lead to anxiety and depression (Hoeft). Frustration (Ogelthorpe 3) and stress (Eide 213) during the learning process and behavior difficulties arising from this are common (Ogelthorpe 3). Developing a healthy self-concept (Eide 205) and cultivating resilience (Hoeft) are skills that should be nurtured, and praise is recommended (Miles et al. A Positive Approach 140).

Some brain studies are discovering that in order to deal with differences in learning, dyslexic individuals may compensate for weaknesses through an increased use of the right brain (Gaab) For example, children who play a musical instrument early in life have been shown to use the right brain more, (Gaab) which suggests that perhaps musical training would be helpful for dyslexic children. The dyslexic brain may have advantages as well, especially in areas associated with right-brain functions. For example, dyslexic individuals may exhibit strengths in the areas of spatial reasoning, storytelling, general problem-solving (Daunt et al. 122) and creativity (Eide 4).

### **How do the symptoms of Dyslexia affect Learning Music?**

How can general music teachers effectively reach children who have dyslexia? Most of the symptoms of dyslexia can affect how a student learns to read music, plays an instrument, or sings in a group. A music teacher may notice many of the following behaviors: problems reading aloud, naming notes, singing or playing out of tempo, remembering the order of verses in a song, problems moving to music in an expected sequence, confusion between right and left, and attention difficulties (Vance 2). Other problem areas are melodic and rhythmic repetition and maintaining a steady beat (Miles et al. A Positive Approach 137).

### **Dyslexia and Reading Music**

One's first thought when preparing to teach children with dyslexia may be about how to teach reading and writing music. Reading and writing music have been important parts of the curriculum of American schools. After the adaptation of the National Standards in 1994, music teachers were to include "reading and notating music" in their lessons. The new standards, adopted in 2014, call for the inclusion of iconic notation beginning in Kindergarten, and the use of iconic/standard notation from grades 1-8 when teaching and creating music in general music classes (National Association for Music Education).

Unfortunately, little information is available on how to teach music to dyslexic children successfully without adding stress (Vance 1). By 1998, only a few studies had been done to document a relationship between dyslexia and difficulty in learning musical notation (Jaarsma, et al 139). In 1994, Ganschow said that research was needed, and in 2008 Altenmueller concluded that further studies were needed to understand how to improve music reading ability in dyslexic individuals (Altenmueller 254).

However, there are many ways to learn and enjoy music without reading or writing it. The lack of reading and writing skills should not prevent a child from learning and enjoying music.

### **The Nature of the Existing Research**

Much of the existing research on dyslexia discusses techniques for successfully teaching private music lessons, such as piano and voice. In "Music and Dyslexia: Opening New Doors," the editors provide anecdotes and tips for dyslexic people on learning music. When a piano student plays, he or she can speak aloud "C two three four, E two three four," and so on (Miles and Westcombe 64). Katie Overy suggests playing musical games to reduce frustration (Miles and Westcombe 66). Following the text with one's finger is recommended both for choral singers and especially for dyslexic singers; (Miles and Westcombe 70-71, Oglethorpe 49, and

Denckla 238) using larger print may also help (Heikkela 3). In one anecdote, a recorder student points out that he enjoys improvisation and has an advantage compared to non-dyslexics because he does not need to “write out absolutely everything” (Miles and Westcombe 45). “Music and Dyslexia, A Positive Approach,” the sequel to the above text, also contains tips, success stories, songs and suggestions for teaching.

In “Instrumental Music for Dyslexics” Oglethorpe refers to the difficulties in reading music for dyslexic individuals, yet states that it is not impossible. Sight-reading may always be poor, but it can improve (71). General advice for piano teachers includes clapping games, (74) methodical approaches to increasing levels of hand independence (79) and allowing much extra time to master passages such as Hanon exercises (86). Remembering fingering, tracking music on the page, and coordinating the use of the pedals may all be confusing for dyslexic students.

In “The Dyslexic Advantage,” Eide writes about focusing on personal strengths (206), building confidence (208), and the necessity for realistic and achievable goals and sincere praise from teachers (210, 212, 213).

### **Differentiated Instruction and Multi-Sensory Teaching**

Teachers must use differentiated instruction with students who have dyslexia, and build on individual strengths and weaknesses (Lynam). This entails the following:

“modifications to *practice* (how teachers deliver instruction to students), *process* (how the lesson is designed for students), *products* (the kinds of work products students will be asked to complete), *content* (the specific readings, research, or materials students will study), *assessment* (how teachers measure what students have learned), and *grouping* (how students are arranged in the classroom or paired up with other students). Differentiation techniques may also be based on specific student attributes, including *interest* (what subjects inspire students to learn), *readiness* (what students have learned

and still need to learn), or *learning style* (the ways in which students tend to learn material best)” (The Glossary of Education Reform)

The Universal Design for Learning Center has identified the following principles for differentiated teaching:

- Provide Multiple Means of Representation (Perception, Language, expressions, and symbols, Comprehension)
- Provide Multiple Means of Action and Expression (Physical action, Expression and communication, Executive function)
- Provide Multiple Means of Engagement (Recruiting interest, Sustaining effort and persistence, self-regulation)

Teachers can provide differentiated instruction when they present lessons that include varied representations of new material. For example, a music teacher may poll students to select a line dance and afterwards show videos of children doing the dance, explain the dance with her words, draw diagrams on the board, and then ask the children to do the dance, checking for understanding along the way.

Multiple means of instruction can include “Multisensory Teaching.” This term is often mentioned as an effective approach for all teachers, but it is recommended specifically for children with dyslexia (Vance 3, Miles, et al. A Positive Approach, 20 and 22, and Daunt et al 45). Learning (music) can occur via the auditory, visual, and tactile senses. The Framework for Twentieth Century Learning mentions multiple measures of mastery, a balance of assessments, and innovative curriculum and instruction, including project-based lessons. (Partnership for 21st Century Learning) Music teachers should “demonstrate flexibility and responsiveness to support student learning” (Sokolowski 35) and consider non-linguistic representation such as graphic organizers and kinesthetic activity (Sokolowski 40).



Dalcroze and Kodaly are two methods for teaching general music that involve a multisensory teaching approach, and are recommended for dyslexic children by Sheila Oglethorpe (Vance 3). In Kodaly, children use designated syllables to “speak rhythms,” and hand signs to show high and low pitches. In Dalcroze, music and movement are inseparable. For example, children can learn about the form of a piece of music when they associate corresponding movements to the sections they hear. Vance suggests breaking down instructions into the smallest steps possible when teaching movement and dance, where motor skills are involved. This may aid memory as well, and provide results that are “similar to those of other students” (Vance 4).

Heikkila and Knight point out that “music is a unique sensory stimulus.” (Heikkila and Knight 2). Teaching the beat may be one of the first steps in music classes, and choosing music with a very strong beat, such as a march, is suggested. Clapping and/or patting the beat to the music and even poetry can demonstrate this concept effectively. An activity making use of chairs in which children sit to represent beats and rhythms is described as a comprehensive multi-sensory lesson plan (Heikkila and Knight 4). The Kodaly hand signs are utilized in music education as a way to show high and low pitches, but Heikkila and Knight also suggest showing physical locations for pitches on one’s body (4). The Kodaly method is also recommended by Gancshow, as an approach to develop rhythm skills (198).

In “Music and Dyslexia: Opening New Doors,” an alternative, multi-sensory way to teach note reading includes utilizing colors and symbols such as making use of fruits for each pitch (85). Many researchers suggest the use of color when teaching the lines and spaces on the staff (Oglethorpe 51; and Heikkila and Knight 5). However, some dismiss the use of colors in teaching music notation, as it may encourage “arbitrary associations” (Jaarsma 139). Jaarsma (152) agrees with Lynam that dyslexic students simply need more time in order to achieve results. Visual aids are often recommended. For example, students can be asked to make illustrations for their songs (Miles et al. A Positive Approach 23).

### **Effective Lesson Planning**

Teachers are encouraged to be extremely organized and methodical in lesson planning (Miles et al, A Positive Approach 21). Lists of tips offered for teachers do not seem to differ very much from the kinds of detailed preparation that is recommended for beginning educators.

Teachers are reminded about effective instruction in “Basic Facts about Dyslexia and Other Reading Problems.” The authors say that poor readers need instruction that is “explicit, systematic, cumulative, multisensory, sequential and incremental, and data-driven” (Moats 58).

### **The Major Approaches and Methods for Teaching General Music**

As stated above, Kodaly and Dalcroze have been cited as effective approaches for children with dyslexia, due to their emphases on multi-sensory learning such as using hand signs, speech syllables, and movement.

Even though the Suzuki Method is used primarily to instruct private and group instrumental lessons, there are reasons to examine its principles, as they may be adapted for general music teachers. It is recommended for dyslexic students by some educators. In “The Dyslexia Empowerment Plan,” the author notes that the Suzuki method avoids reading and emphasizes learning by ear (Foss 169) In “Music and Dyslexia: A Positive Approach,” Jenny Macmillan cites the specific advantages in using this method when teaching students with dyslexia. She believes a music program should be “structured, sequential, cumulative, thorough and multi-sensory,” and concludes that the Suzuki method addresses all of these issues (Miles et al 137). Listening to recordings is a large part of the method, and Macmillan has found success in using it with dyslexic individuals. She agrees that “not using any music notation at the beginning level may be a very effective method for developing important listening skills” (140). It is interesting to note that evidence is growing to refute the notion that children will never learn to read music well if they begin to learn without notation. Delaying teaching the skills of reading until after aural and technical skills have been developed is how Suzuki methods of

instrumental lessons proceeds, and can be useful in preserving enjoyment in music learning in young children in general (Miles et al, A Positive Approach 140).

Finally, the Orff process also promotes experience before notation. This child-centered approach, also called Orff-Schulwerk, was developed by Carl Orff, who believed that children could best learn music in conjunction with speech, movement, and drama. Child-sized xylophones are a hallmark for Orff classrooms and can be used to help teach a multitude of skills. Creativity and group projects are encouraged. Along with Kodaly and Dalcroze, it is cited as a successful strategy by Judith Ritchie, who was a dyslexic student and is now is a music teacher (Ritchie 1).

### **Other Suggestions for Music Educators**

In working with students with dyslexia, music teachers can be flexible, and adapt the methods that they have used in the past. For example, teachers can allow students to write the letters of the pitches under the notes in their music, and they can simplify parts and arrange music (McCord and Fitzgerald 3).

Computer programs, such as Garageband, that represent note duration in alternative ways can help students with dyslexia (McCord and Fitzgerald 8). One resource for the music teacher is the special educator, who can suggest accommodations that have been found to be successful (McCord and Fitzgerald 2). Observing other teachers who teach dyslexic individuals is another way to learn strategies (Vance 2).

Eide suggests that children with Dyslexia should not remain in the conventional classroom (214). This more specifically focused type of setting is the one that I inhabit, and the type that I will be exploring in my survey.

### **Chapter Three: Analysis of a Survey for Teachers in the Field: Teaching General Music to Children with Language-Based Learning Disabilities**

To find out more about teaching children with language-based learning disabilities, I surveyed teachers from schools throughout the United States that were devoted to instructing them. I identified these schools using DyslexiaHelp, a website from the University of Michigan which carries an extensive list of these independent, specialized schools. I searched this database and made a list of schools that include grades 1 through 6, since these are the grades where general music usually is in the curriculum. I looked up each school's individual website and found the contact information for their music teachers. I created a survey using Googleforms (Appendix A) and asked teachers to address the topics stated in my rationale. In all, I sent requests to 33 teachers across the country on Sunday, March 19, 2017. After one week, I sent a reminder and a second plea for help in doing my research. I received a total of 13 responses from schools in 10 states all around the country (Appendix B).

#### **Preparation**

To find out about how teachers prepared to work in their schools, I used a checklist question with "other" as an additional choice for a short response. In preparing to teach children with LBLD, 69% of teachers said that reading books and/or articles about LBLD was helpful or extremely helpful. Only two gave this activity a rating of 2. The majority had consulted these sources and found them to be helpful.

Only 46% said that observing general music classes in their new school was helpful, and even less – 38% - thought that observing general music classes in similar schools was helpful. Almost half claimed that they did not use this option. By contrast, almost all of the teachers found that seeking other experienced teachers and consulting with them was helpful or extremely helpful, (92%) as was attending a lecture, class or workshop on LBLD (77%).

Furthermore, 69% of teachers reported that consulting with administrators for

guidance was helpful or extremely helpful, and consulting with other colleagues in their schools was the most effective tool for preparation to teach children with LBLD, with all teachers rating this as helpful or extremely helpful.

Overall, I found that speaking with other experienced teachers, consulting with colleagues and attending lectures or workshops were considered the most helpful ways for teachers to learn about their new positions, with reading books or articles and consulting with administrators coming in second.

### **Teaching Methods**

In short answer responses, 69% of teachers mentioned Orff as the most effective approach when teaching children with LBLD. One said it was “a great way to keep kids motivated and creating.” Four stated that Kodaly works well for them. One said that Orff was “multi-modal, so they can still participate even if they don’t understand the language/instructions.” Another said that mixing Orff and Kodaly was effective, and that Kodaly was “effective for matching pitch, and is very transferable to using Orff instruments and other Orff movement techniques.” One included World Music, Little Kids Rock, and Garageband. Only one said that she used Dalcroze.

It did not surprise me to see that Orff and Kodaly were touted. In my experience as a musician and general music educator teaching a variety of ages and wide ranges of abilities, these methods include effective tools for understanding musical concepts: Orff with its child-centered instruments and songs and unlimited options for creativity; and Kodaly with the use of hand signs to show pitch and simplified ways to read music such as stick notation for rhythm with solfege syllables. These are effective ways to engage children in musical experiences without an emphasis on reading.

### **Multi-Sensory Lessons**

I suggested many multi-sensory activities and asked teachers if they used them. They were also given an opportunity to list other suggestions. Strong majorities (85%) said they used games in their classrooms when teaching and almost the same number (77%) noted that they used drawing/artwork, and color in notation. Watching videos with students was also very popular and nine said they made videos. Only six included dramatic play as an effective tool, but ten used movement/dance. Ten (77%) utilized creative projects as a teaching tool.

In my opinion, not only is the use of multi-sensory activities more fun, it is a strategy for reaching different kinds of learners. Teaching in this way is consistent with current trends in general music education and also with the research I found on teaching music to children with LBLD. There seems to be no difference in the recommendations for the general population of students versus LBLD students in this regard.

### **Technology**

The majority, eleven teachers, use technology in their classrooms. A variety of computer programs were mentioned in short answer responses, including Teoria.com, which teaches music theory and music reading, musescore.com and Smartboard Notebook which are used for music notation and composition. Google Classrooms was mentioned for teaching in the middle school level; and Promethean, which provides lesson plans for teachers, was also listed. One teacher mentioned Soundtrap, a site to help students record both music and podcasts, and OneMotion Drum Machine, which is an online drumming game. Garageband, which can be used for creating music and recording and analyzing performances, was the only software mentioned more than once in my Survey.

Technology is a popular tool in many schools, and in many different classrooms where computers are available. It is helpful to learn that computer programs are available that have been successful in teaching music students with LBLD.

### **Reading Music**

To modify the teaching of music reading, six of thirteen teachers said they use stick notation in a checklist question. Ten said that they point to letters as students play, and there were also ten who asked students to sing the letter names as they play them. They also wrote the letter names under notes. Seven wrote in “color coding.” One said she allows students to draw dots on their music to show the recorder fingerings. Only two said that they do not teach music reading.

### **Singing**

In the category of singing, I asked two checklist questions. Seven teachers said they used simple canons; the same teachers also used partner songs. Six teachers used vocal ostinati and three teach unison singing only. All teachers use repetition to help with memorizing songs, and ten offer printed lyrics. Ten use visual cues and eight use movement. Ten have their children listen to recordings. A few mentioned watching videos and making videos. One teacher said she makes “lyric videos using imovie for them to practice” and she also “quiz(zes) them by progressively removing lyrics from visual aids.”

Singing is an activity that I have found can be a challenge for LBLD students. They seem to have the same capabilities for matching pitch, but memorizing lyrics, remembering the form of the songs, and singing in more than one part can be tricky for these students. Since I am new to teaching this population of children, I will be using the above recommendations and strategies regularly in my quest for success in the music classroom.

### **Rhythm**

In a checklist question, body percussion was noted as the most effective way to teach steady beat and rhythm to children, with nine positive responses, and close behind was the category of movement games/dances, with eight. Eight also recognized instrument playing to

enhance this skill, and six used rhythm syllables such as ta and ti-ti. Six used visual cues, four used conducting and four included speech pieces.

The rhythmic abilities of my students vary from excellent to poor, and I am not certain how much, if at all, they differ from the abilities of the general population yet. I am hoping to build on the strong foundations that I am laying with my youngest students, and strengthen the skills at each level afterward. I also use the methods that my surveyed teachers suggested.

### **Self-Esteem and Anxiety**

Teachers gave a variety of short answers when I asked about self-esteem and anxiety. One mentioned mindfulness, breathing and yoga. One teacher allows students to “remove themselves from the activity and journal or draw their feelings and then return later to discuss them.” One uses “low-stress performance opportunities.” “Strategy instruction and repetition” is a method for reducing anxiety for one teacher. Two teachers mentioned students making their own choices as a way to reduce stress. One teacher’s quote compared music learning to other kinds of learning: “...it takes practice, and while some people have had more experience, we can all go for personal bests!” One teacher uses drama and improvisation. One said that “just being here in this school does wonders for their self-esteem.” Other quotes include creating a “safe space” and “establishing a positive and trusting relationship with the students.” A school-wide musical boosted confidence in one teacher’s students.

### **Identifying the Biggest Challenges**

In a checklist question, nine teachers agreed that perceived attention issues or ADHD were a big challenge. (I notice this too, and it seems to range from “dreamy” to disruptive.) Eight included “keeping a steady beat” but only four included rhythm skills. Only six teachers said that reading music was the biggest challenge in teaching their children. Perhaps reading music is not the biggest challenge for others because they do not emphasize it? I couldn’t say.



Only one checked “writing music.” In my research on teaching reading and writing music to children with LBLD, I found that it is a challenge, but apparently not impossible. Only four said that short-term memory problems were a big challenge, which surprised me, since I see this when students sing in my classroom, and it seems more pronounced than in students without LBLD. Only four included motor skills as challenges. I notice this problem occasionally, and am glad that we provide support services such as Occupational Therapy for students who need it in our school.

### **General Advice for Teaching Music to Children with LBLD**

When I asked teachers to give short answers to offer advice to music teachers who are getting ready to teach general music to children with LBLD, they gave many, varied responses. Sometimes they agreed with one another, while others gave slightly different responses on some topics. Here are some samples:

- “Treat them like normal students - they’re not different they just learn different...Encourage and motivate no matter what - they are capable!”
- “Scaffold your lessons, making sure that (they) are full of movement and kinesthetic activities.”
- “Go slow. Break everything down step by step. Keep it fun between the periods of concentration.”
- “Celebrate abilities and incremental success.”
- “Be patient beyond your wildest dreams.”
- “Connect with each classroom teacher about what works for certain students.”
- “Partner with their classroom teachers,” and “read each individual student’s file.”
- “It is vital to understand that students with LBLD (do) process information.”
- “Use as many forms of input as possible and allow students to discover what is best for them.”

- “Collaborate with a music therapist.”
- “The more versatile and adaptive one can be...the better chances one has to give students optimal chances for success.”
- “Visuals. Words help but visuals such as pictures really holds their attention.”

### **Survey Conclusion**

In light of the literature review and the teaching journal that I compiled, it was interesting to see how the teachers agreed or disagreed on the many topics. It was not surprising to me that Orff was a favorite approach in their classrooms, so it confirmed that particular expectation. Because I read that many dyslexic individuals were artistically talented and that a multi-sensory approach was recommended, I was also not surprised to uncover these teachers' advice to consider visuals, such as videos and drawing, in general music lessons.

I wondered if singing in two (or even three) parts was too much when I asked it of my students, so I was pleased to see that other teachers also tackle this. To shorten my survey, and because the literature review confirmed that dyslexic people are capable of playing instruments, I did not address instrument playing in my survey except under the question about beat and steady rhythm, so when many teachers mentioned that they used them, it validated my decision to teach students instruments such as xylophones, recorders, small percussion, and ukulele in my own classroom.

I always offer printed lyrics to my students and tell them they can use them if they wish. Sometimes only a few take advantage of this option, but in some groups, more do; so it is not something to completely avoid with students who have LBLD. This idea was confirmed by the survey. I do not ask children to read very much traditional musical notation in my classroom yet. I wondered what other teachers did, and it was useful for me to find out in question #13 that many teachers must attempt to do this, since they said that they wrote letter names under notes.

There was disagreement in my research on color-coding, and I found that some teachers do use it.

I enjoyed reading the short answer responses the most. I think it's because I agreed with the majority of the teachers surveyed: casually consulting with other teachers is extremely helpful! When speaking about their biggest challenges, two teachers referred to praise, which was highly recommended in my literature review. I thought more would mention it, but I surmise that since the responses from the teachers were so thoughtful and supportive, I can't imagine them overlooking this technique.

I agreed with the teachers that ADHD was a big challenge. Keeping children on task is a goal for all teachers, and it is rewarding when you find that you can take them "in the zone" through music.

I noted that repetition is important when teaching songs to children with LBLD. I know that in December, I sang "Deck the Halls" about 500 times. The children did not seem to notice this high number!

One message was quite nice to hear: the fact that the students in one of the teacher's schools did not have to address self-esteem and anxiety because just being in her (specialized) school was so comforting for her students. I know from anecdotes that this is true at my own school. Even though all my students are unique learners, I think they feel less pressured when they are around others more like them when it comes to their disabilities, and teachers who are trained in teaching dyslexic students.

Finally, in understanding why teachers are successful, I feel I should note that at times there are factors that are hard to quantify. For example, do the children like and trust their teacher? Do they find him or her to be motivating? Also, does the teacher value their students' contributions? The last item was a topic that came up in survey responses. Responsive teachers will usually make it a priority to listen to students when they offer ideas, and they will seek them out if not voluntarily given. Teachers wrote in that kids should learn to "advocate

for themselves” and “discover what works best for them.”

I look forward to putting into practice the suggestions given by the researchers and the teachers I surveyed.

### **Limitations of my Research**

It was exciting to watch the numbers go up as teachers filled out my survey. I hoped, as I imagine most researchers would, to receive even more responses than I did. But since I targeted a very specific group, it was gratifying to receive thirteen completed surveys.

My literature review targeted dyslexia as a specific LBLD because dyslexia is a commonly found LBLD. The schools in my survey group mostly use the more general term LBLD when describing the focus of their missions. The children in these schools do not all have dyslexia, but many do; and their disabilities are all language-based, so in this respect they have similar impairments.

I did not know how many years of experience my music teachers had, or what their GPA's were, if they had advanced degrees, or how their administrators rated their classroom performances; so I could not be sure that these were excellent teachers or not. I also did not know if they had the chance to compare teaching dyslexic children to the general population of children, as I have had.

I did not ask my teachers to quantify their answers with test results or to describe rubrics. Often, independent schools do not require teachers, especially music teachers, to supply these assessment tools; and so I did not inquire about them in the survey.

I omitted questions related to motor problems, since I know that my school has support services like occupational therapy for students who need it. In addition, I noticed that students with small motor challenges, such as holding mallets, could be helped with patience and individual attention; and students with large motor challenges, such as learning dance steps, could improve their skills with the appropriate choices of words (“towards the door” or “to the

clock” instead of “left” and “right.”) and modeling appropriately. I also did not include auditory processing problems in my survey, because intuitively, I surmised that slowing down my instructions and being more deliberately explicit was effective. My administrator advised me on this as well. This issue would be a complex topic to explore in another study.

One teacher responded that she did not work in a school for children with LBLD. Her school works with children with more varied learning disabilities.

#### **Chapter 4: Conclusion**

I am grateful to have had the chance to do this research. I did not really know what to expect when I began the process of teaching in my new position this past fall. I felt that I needed to prepare, so I did many of the things I asked the teachers about in the survey. Along with the work I did on this thesis, I feel better equipped for the job, and I enjoy getting to know and teach my new students as much as I did any other students I’ve had.

In my limited experience in teaching general music to students with LBLD, they differ the most from the general population of learners with challenges in the following categories, all of which were identified in my initial literature research: reading, spelling, short-term memory, sequencing, auditory and visual perception/processing, ADHD and anxiety. However, my students seem to have average to above-average intelligence, and have varied strengths and abilities, as all children do.

In order to effectively reach children with LBLD in the general music class, these descriptive words from Louisa Cook Moats in “Basic Facts About Dyslexia,” and Jenny MacMillan in “A Positive Approach” seem to cover the most important points, echoed in both my literature review and in my survey: Poor readers need instruction that is “explicit, systematic, cumulative, multisensory, sequential, incremental, and data-driven” (Moats 58), and in teaching dyslexic individuals, one should be “structured, sequential, cumulative, thorough and multi-sensory” (Miles et al, A Positive Approach 137):

- *Explicit* instruction will help make things easier to understand
- *Sequential* lessons and the use of small *increments* may benefit students with short-term memory difficulties
- Teaching that is *systematic* and *structured* will be more organized and therefore may be more *thorough*
- *Cumulative* instruction may be most useful for building knowledge and skills
- *Multisensory* lessons which include activities such as games, artwork, appropriate technology, videos, body percussion and hand signs (through the Orff process and Kodaly method) will be most effective at reaching different learners and holding students' attention
- Teachers who consult many sources for *data*, including consulting knowledgeable colleagues and attending lectures and workshops, will be well-informed of students' abilities and disabilities and will be best prepared to teach them

Other advice gleaned from this paper's research includes the following:

- Be *flexible* and *adaptive*: be willing to use modified musical notation, to listen to students' needs around emotions and readiness for new activities, and to teach music in large part by rote. Improve your own skills of playing "by ear" to be an effective model.
- With singing, begin with unison songs, then use the steps toward part singing that are easiest first: canons, partner songs and ostinati.
- There is little to avoid, besides relying solely on reading, as you teach.
- Experiment and be *creative*! Your students are too, and they will inspire you.

Because dyslexia has only been diagnosed and addressed with greater frequency and success in the last few decades, and schools devoted to teaching these children are relatively new, there is a lot more to explore on the topic of music, dyslexia, and other language-based learning disabilities. I hope to discover it as I teach and learn in the years to come.

## Appendix A: Survey Form

Teaching General Music to Children with Language- Based Learning  
Disabilities  
Mazza Thesis Survey

\* Required

1) What is the name of your school? \*

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2) Do you teach general music in a school for children with language-based learning disabilities? \* *Mark only one oval.*

☐ Yes

☐ No

3) Please rate the following methods of preparation you may have used in teaching your students: Reading books and/or articles about language-based learning disabilities \*  
*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not considered or used	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Extremely helpful

4) Seeking other experienced teachers and consulting with them \*  
*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not considered or used	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Extremely helpful

5) Observing general music classes in your school \*  
*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not considered or used	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Extremely helpful

6) Observing general music classes in similar schools \*  
*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not considered or used						Extremely helpful



7) Attending a lecture, class or workshop on language-based learning disabilities \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not considered or used	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Extremely helpful

8) Consulting with administrators for guidance \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not considered or used	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Extremely helpful

9) Consulting with other colleagues in my school for guidance \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not considered or used	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Extremely helpful

10) What approaches or programs (Orff, Kodaly, Dalcroze) do you find the most effective in teaching general music to your students? Please explain your choice(s). \*

---

11) Do you use these multi-sensory approaches? \*

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Drawing/artwork
- ☐ Games
- ☐ Use of color in notation
- ☐ Use of props
- ☐ Watching videos
- ☐ Making videos
- ☐ Dramatic play
- ☐ Movement and/or dance
- ☐ Technology
- ☐ Creative projects

Other:

12) Please list the computer programs that you use in order of effectiveness for students with LBLD \*

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13) What modifications have you made in teaching music reading? \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Use of stick notation
- ☐ Pointing to letters as students play
- ☐ Saying letters and singing them
- ☐ Writing letters under notes
- ☐ Use of color coding
- ☐ I do not teach music reading
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

14) What strategies do you use to prepare children for part singing?

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Vocal ostinati
- ☐ Simple canons
- ☐ Partner songs
- ☐ I only teach unison singing
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

15) How do you help children memorize songs? \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Repetition
- ☐ Printed lyrics
- ☐ Visual cues
- ☐ Movement
- ☐ ASL
- ☐ Watching videos
- ☐ Making videos
- ☐ Listening to recordings

☐

Other:

16) What activities/strategies are most effective in teaching steady beat and rhythm for your students? \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Body percussion
- ☐ Movement games/dances
- ☐ Instrument playing
- ☐ Visual cues
- ☐ Conducting
- ☐ Rhythm syllables such as ta and ti-ti
- ☐ Speech pieces
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

17) Did you develop new strategies to address self-esteem and anxiety for the children in your classroom? Please explain.

\*

\_\_\_\_\_

18) What are the biggest challenges in teaching your students in your current position? \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Reading music
- ☐ Writing music
- ☐ Keeping a steady beat
- ☐ Rhythm skills
- ☐ Short term memory problems
- ☐ Motor skills
- ☐ Self-esteem issues
- ☐ Perceived attention problems
- ☐ Lesson planning
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

19) What advice would you give to music teachers who are getting ready to teach general music to children with language-based learning disabilities? \*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B: Survey Responses

1) What is the name of your school?	2) Do you teach general music in a school for children with language-based learning disabilities?	3) Please rate the following methods of preparation you may have used in teaching your students: Reading books and/or articles about language-based learning disabilities	4) Seeking other experienced teachers and consulting with them
Charles Armstrong School	Yes	5	5
Dr. Christopher Geisler, Marburn Academy	Yes	4	5
Ann Arbor Academy	Yes	3	4
Denver Academy	Yes	4	4
The Cove School	Yes	4	5
Benchmark School	Yes	5	5
Groves Academy	Yes	4	5
Kingsbury Day School	No	5	1
Baltimore Lab School	Yes	2	5
Carroll School	Yes	3	4
Landmark School	Yes	5	5
Rawson Saunders	Yes	2	5
Lawrence Elementary	Yes	4	5

1) What is the name of your school?	5) Observing general music classes in your school	6) Observing general music classes in similar schools	7) Attending a lecture, class or workshop on language-based learning disabilities	8) Consulting with administrators for guidance
Charles Armstrong School	1	1	5	3
Dr. Christopher Geisler, Marburn Academy	4	1	4	4
Ann Arbor Academy	2	3	3	4
Denver Academy	4	4	5	5
The Cove School	4	4	5	5
Benchmark School	1	4	5	4
Groves Academy	2	1	3	2
Kingsbury Day School	4	1	5	1
Baltimore Lab School	4	1	1	5
Carroll School	1	4	4	4
Landmark School	1	2	5	5
Rawson Saunders	1	1	5	3
Lawrence Elementary	5	5	5	5

1) What is the name of your school?	9) Consulting with other colleagues in my school for guidance	10) What approaches or programs (Orff, Kodaly, Dalcroze) do you find the most effective in teaching general music to your students? Please explain your choice(s).
<b>Charles Armstrong School</b>	4	Lots of Orff- it's a great way to keep kids motivated and creating. World Music- can cover cultural content while teaching basic rhythms. Little Kids Rock- used for guitar and ukulele- teach tablature but most kids are memorizing chords. Learning by Rote- mostly for our Winter Program material. Smart Music- used for band to help with note reading. GarageBand- used with 2nd-8th- great way to allow students to instantly create.
<b>Dr. Christopher Geisler, Marburn Academy</b>	4	Orff and Kodaly allow for an experiential and constructivist program of musical literacy.
<b>Ann Arbor Academy</b>	4	Music for wellness and personal enrichment.
<b>Denver Academy</b>	5	Orff
<b>The Cove School</b>	5	I tend to mix Orff and Kodaly. I find Kodaly effective for matching pitch, and is very transferable to using Orff instruments and other Orff movement techniques.
<b>Benchmark School</b>	5	Orff, direct strategy instruction
<b>Groves Academy</b>	4	In short, all three. I try to use a mix of all three, so that students receive information in a variety of different ways. For this population, and in most students in general, I find allowing students to "do" rather than listen, read, etc tends to be the most helpful, though, again, I try to present information in different ways, which helps in both repetition and allowing students to hear/see/receive the information in a way that works best for them.
<b>Kingsbury Day School</b>	5	N/A
<b>Baltimore Lab School</b>	5	Orff - it's hands on, uses a lot of modeling - multi-modal, so they can still participate even if they don't understand the language/instructions
<b>Carroll School</b>	5	Orff. We are an O-G school, so all of our kids are used to the idea of "big picture first, then break it down into small, stackable segments"
<b>Landmark School</b>	5	I also teach Language Arts for kids with LBLD so I know my kids fairly well. I don't work with a program or teach the reading of music. We simply learn chord progressions and beats to songs we like and have fun. The goal is to create an interest in music going forward.
<b>Rawson Saunders</b>	5	This is my first year here at this school. My background is in Kodaly, so I figured I would try it and make adjustments as needed. So far, it is going very well.
<b>Lawrence Elementary</b>	5	Orff - Instruments are very useful

1) What is the name of your school?	11) Do you use these multi-sensory approaches?
<b>Charles Armstrong School</b>	Drawing/artwork, Games, Use of color in notation, Watching videos, Making videos, Dramatic play, Movement and/or dance, Technology, Creative projects
<b>Dr. Christopher Geisler, Marburn Academy</b>	Drawing/artwork, Games, Use of color in notation, Use of props, Watching videos, Making videos, Dramatic play, Movement and/or dance, Technology, Creative projects
<b>Ann Arbor Academy</b>	Games, Dramatic play, Movement and/or dance, Technology, Creative projects, directed listening
<b>Denver Academy</b>	Drawing/artwork, Games, Use of color in notation, Watching videos, Making videos, Technology, Creative projects
<b>The Cove School</b>	Drawing/artwork, Games, Use of color in notation, Use of props, Watching videos, Movement and/or dance, Technology, Creative projects
<b>Benchmark School</b>	Drawing/artwork, Games, Use of color in notation, Use of props, Watching videos, Making videos, Dramatic play, Movement and/or dance, Technology, Creative projects
<b>Groves Academy</b>	Drawing/artwork, Games, Use of color in notation, Use of props, Watching videos, Making videos, Dramatic play, Movement and/or dance, Technology, Creative projects
<b>Kingsbury Day School</b>	Drawing/artwork, Games, Use of color in notation, Watching videos, Making videos, Movement and/or dance, Technology, Creative projects
<b>Baltimore Lab School</b>	Games, Use of color in notation, Watching videos, Making videos, Movement and/or dance, Technology
<b>Carroll School</b>	Drawing/artwork, Games, Use of color in notation, Watching videos, Dramatic play, Movement and/or dance, Technology, Creative projects
<b>Landmark School</b>	Use of color in notation, color coded chord charts
<b>Rawson Saunders</b>	Drawing/artwork, Games, Use of props, Watching videos, Making videos, Dramatic play, Movement and/or dance, Creative projects, This is a comment - I used to use color on the staff in my old school with a select few students with dyslexia. (B line blue, G line green, etc.) But it is interesting that I have not used that here now that all my students are dyslexic. I'm not sure why. I have used color in the lyric sheets to show parts.
<b>Lawrence Elementary</b>	Drawing/artwork, Games, Use of props, Watching videos, Making videos, Technology

1) What is the name of your school?	12) Please list the computer programs that you use in order of effectiveness for students with LBLD
<b>Charles Armstrong School</b>	I don't use computer programs that are specific to music. All students have iPads and have apps set up for common use throughout the school.
<b>Dr. Christopher Geisler, Marburn Academy</b>	Teoria.com; musescore.com.
<b>Ann Arbor Academy</b>	music tutor apps, voice coach apps
<b>Denver Academy</b>	smart board technologies
<b>The Cove School</b>	SmartBoard Notebook - for notation and composing exercises GarageBand - recording and analyzing our performance
<b>Benchmark School</b>	Google Classrooms (middle school)
<b>Groves Academy</b>	My Promethean board software, Microsoft office, soundation, Google Classroom (for older students)
<b>Kingsbury Day School</b>	N/A
<b>Baltimore Lab School</b>	No order - Soundtrap, OneMotion Drum Machine
<b>Carroll School</b>	None. Everything is hands (and ears) on.
<b>Landmark School</b>	none
<b>Rawson Saunders</b>	I have just gotten approval to use Rhythm Cat and Music Learning Lab but I haven't started using them yet, which is why I didn't check that box above.
<b>Lawrence Elementary</b>	Yamaha keyboard



1) What is the name of your school?	13) What modifications have you made in teaching music reading?
<b>Charles Armstrong School</b>	Use of stick notation, Pointing to letters as students play, Saying letters and singing them, Writing letters under notes, Use of color coding
<b>Dr. Christopher Geisler, Marburn Academy</b>	Use of stick notation, Pointing to letters as students play, Saying letters and singing them, Writing letters under notes, Use of color coding
<b>Ann Arbor Academy</b>	Pointing to letters as students play, Saying letters and singing them, Writing letters under notes, use of vocables
<b>Denver Academy</b>	Writing letters under notes, Use of color coding
<b>The Cove School</b>	Use of stick notation, Pointing to letters as students play, Saying letters and singing them, Writing letters under notes
<b>Benchmark School</b>	Use of stick notation, Pointing to letters as students play, Saying letters and singing them, Writing letters under notes, Use of color coding
<b>Groves Academy</b>	Use of stick notation, Pointing to letters as students play, Saying letters and singing them, Writing letters under notes, Use of color coding
<b>Kingsbury Day School</b>	Pointing to letters as students play, Saying letters and singing them, Writing letters under notes, Use of color coding
<b>Baltimore Lab School</b>	Pointing to letters as students play, Saying letters and singing them, Writing letters under notes, Use of color coding
<b>Carroll School</b>	I do not teach music reading
<b>Landmark School</b>	I do not teach music reading
<b>Rawson Saunders</b>	Use of stick notation, Pointing to letters as students play, Saying letters and singing them, Writing letters under notes, allowing students to draw dots on their recorder music to show the fingerings
<b>Lawrence Elementary</b>	Pointing to letters as students play, Saying letters and singing them, Writing letters under notes

1) What is the name of your school?	14) What strategies do you use to prepare children for part singing?	15) How do you help children memorize songs?
<b>Charles Armstrong School</b>	Simple canons, Partner songs	Repetition, Printed lyrics, Visual cues, Movement, Making videos, Listening to recordings
<b>Dr. Christopher Geisler, Marburn Academy</b>	Vocal ostinati, Simple canons, Partner songs	Repetition, Printed lyrics, Visual cues, Movement, Listening to recordings
<b>Ann Arbor Academy</b>	Vocal ostinati, Simple canons, Partner songs	Repetition, Printed lyrics, Visual cues, Movement, Listening to recordings
<b>Denver Academy</b>	Vocal ostinati	Repetition, Printed lyrics, Visual cues, Watching videos, Listening to recordings
<b>The Cove School</b>	Vocal ostinati, Simple canons, Partner songs	Repetition, Movement
<b>Benchmark School</b>		Repetition, Printed lyrics, Visual cues, Movement, Watching videos, Listening to recordings
<b>Groves Academy</b>	Vocal ostinati, Simple canons, Partner songs	Repetition, Printed lyrics, Visual cues, Movement, ASL
<b>Kingsbury Day School</b>	I only teach unison singing	Repetition, Printed lyrics, ASL, Watching videos, Listening to recordings
<b>Baltimore Lab School</b>	I only teach unison singing	Repetition, Visual cues, Movement, ASL, Watching videos, Making videos, Listening to recordings, I make lyrics videos with iMovie for them to practice, i also quiz them by progressively removing lyrics from our visual aids
<b>Carroll School</b>		Repetition, Printed lyrics, Movement, Listening to recordings
<b>Landmark School</b>	I only teach unison singing	Repetition, Printed lyrics, Visual cues, Movement
<b>Rawson Saunders</b>	Vocal ostinati, Simple canons, Partner songs	Repetition, Printed lyrics, Visual cues, Movement, Listening to recordings
<b>Lawrence Elementary</b>	Simple canons, Partner songs	Repetition, Visual cues, Listening to recordings

1) What is the name of your school?	16) What activities/strategies are most effective in teaching steady beat and rhythm for your students?
<b>Charles Armstrong School</b>	Instrument playing, Visual cues, Conducting
<b>Dr. Christopher Geisler, Marburn Academy</b>	Body percussion, Movement games/dances, Instrument playing, Rhythm syllables such as ta and ti-ti, Speech pieces
<b>Ann Arbor Academy</b>	Body percussion, Movement games/dances, Instrument playing
<b>Denver Academy</b>	Body percussion, Instrument playing, Speech pieces
<b>The Cove School</b>	Body percussion, Movement games/dances, Visual cues, Rhythm syllables such as ta and ti-ti
<b>Benchmark School</b>	Body percussion, Movement games/dances, Instrument playing, Visual cues, Rhythm syllables such as ta and ti-ti
<b>Groves Academy</b>	Body percussion, Movement games/dances, Rhythm syllables such as ta and ti-ti, Speech pieces
<b>Kingsbury Day School</b>	Body percussion, Movement games/dances, Instrument playing, Visual cues
<b>Baltimore Lab School</b>	Movement games/dances, Visual cues
<b>Carroll School</b>	Body percussion, Movement games/dances, Conducting, Rhythm syllables such as ta and ti-ti
<b>Landmark School</b>	Instrument playing, we break a drum set down and give each student one piece and that beat is their responsibility
<b>Rawson Saunders</b>	Body percussion, Movement games/dances, Instrument playing, Visual cues, Conducting, Rhythm syllables such as ta and ti-ti, Speech pieces
<b>Lawrence Elementary</b>	Visual cues, Conducting, Rhythm syllables such as ta and ti-ti

1) What is the name of your school?	17) Did you develop new strategies to address self-esteem and anxiety for the children in your classroom? Please explain.
<b>Charles Armstrong School</b>	As a school, we do tons of mindfulness, breathing exercises, and yoga. We encourage kids to advocate for their needs, and practice responsive classroom.
<b>Dr. Christopher Geisler, Marburn Academy</b>	I use a rip-cord system which allows the student to remove themselves from the activity and journal or draw their feelings and then return later to discuss them.
<b>Ann Arbor Academy</b>	low stress performance opportunities
<b>Denver Academy</b>	no
<b>The Cove School</b>	No
<b>Benchmark School</b>	Not so much self esteem, but definitely anxiety. I've found that through strategy instruction and repetition, students' anxiety is reduced.
<b>Groves Academy</b>	Yes - once students have tried all parts of a particular instrumental piece, I then allow students to choose the part they'd like to play - I'm putting more emphasis on their comfort level than the "correct balance" of the piece. I also create a safe environment to begin with, and often remind students about how music skills are just like any other skill - it takes practice, and while some people have had more experience, we can all go for personal bests!
<b>Kingsbury Day School</b>	Yes - additional supports as needed
<b>Baltimore Lab School</b>	None
<b>Carroll School</b>	Our drama program is rooted in the philosophy of improv
<b>Landmark School</b>	give a kid something he can play successfully - bottom line.
<b>Rawson Saunders</b>	I didn't really have to. This school is such a confidence booster for students with dyslexia. Just being here in this school does wonders for their self esteem. I did use a big chunk of the first semester to play tons of games and establish a positive, trusting relationship with the students, so I guess you could say that was a strategy. Also, there was a school wide musical in December which boosted confidence, as well.
<b>Lawrence Elementary</b>	Lots of praise for "giving it a try."

1) What is the name of your school?	18) What are the biggest challenges in teaching your students in your current position?
<b>Charles Armstrong School</b>	Writing music, Motor skills, Self-esteem issues, ADD/ADHD
<b>Dr. Christopher Geisler, Marburn Academy</b>	Reading music, Keeping a steady beat, Rhythm skills, Short term memory problems, Motor skills
<b>Ann Arbor Academy</b>	Reading music, Keeping a steady beat, Rhythm skills, Short term memory problems, Self-esteem issues, Perceived attention problems, Lesson planning
<b>Denver Academy</b>	Reading music, Writing music, Keeping a steady beat, Rhythm skills, Short term memory problems, Motor skills, Perceived attention problems
<b>The Cove School</b>	Reading music, Keeping a steady beat, Motor skills
<b>Benchmark School</b>	Keeping a steady beat, Rhythm skills, Short term memory problems
<b>Groves Academy</b>	Reading music, Perceived attention problems
<b>Kingsbury Day School</b>	Reading music, Keeping a steady beat, Perceived attention problems
<b>Baltimore Lab School</b>	Keeping a steady beat, Self-esteem issues, Perceived attention problems
<b>Carroll School</b>	Short term memory problems, Self-esteem issues, Perceived attention problems
<b>Landmark School</b>	Keeping a steady beat, Short term memory problems, Motor skills, Self-esteem issues, Perceived attention problems
<b>Rawson Saunders</b>	Short term memory problems, Perceived attention problems
<b>Lawrence Elementary</b>	Keeping a steady beat, Self-esteem issues, Perceived attention problems

1) What is the name of your school?	19) What advice would you give to music teachers who are getting ready to teach general music to children with language-based learning disabilities?
<b>Charles Armstrong School</b>	Treat them like normal students- they're not different they just learn different. Provide them with lots of tools and help them understanding how they learn. Encourage and motivate no matter what- they are capable!
<b>Dr. Christopher Geisler, Marburn Academy</b>	Scaffold your lessons, making sure that your lessons are full of movement and kinesthetic activities.
<b>Ann Arbor Academy</b>	celebrate abilities and incremental success
<b>Denver Academy</b>	be patient beyond your wildest dreams
<b>The Cove School</b>	I would try and connect with each classroom teacher about what works for certain students. Also, call and response games and activities are great for building rapport and giving the students a sense of clear expectations and success.
<b>Benchmark School</b>	It is vital to understand that students with language based learning disabilities process information. Music is another language and students will need to experiment with various strategies in order to be successful.
<b>Groves Academy</b>	Use as many forms of "input" as possible, and allow students to discover what works best for them. Don't assume that since students have similar diagnosis, they will learn the same way.
<b>Kingsbury Day School</b>	Support classroom activities and strategies with research, collaborate with a music therapist
<b>Baltimore Lab School</b>	Read each individual students file - know what their specific disability entails and what kind of supports they will need - partner with their classroom teachers, find out how THEY support the student
<b>Carroll School</b>	There is no single way to approach any idea, exercise, activity, technique, etc. The more versatile and adaptive one can be with one's pedagogy, the better chance one has to give students optimal chances for success.
<b>Landmark School</b>	What you may think as giving a student something that is "too easy", you're actually giving that student something they can do successfully. Most students will ask for more challenge if they want it.
<b>Rawson Saunders</b>	Go slow. Break everything down step by step. And spend plenty of time on each steps. Keep it fun in between the periods of concentration.
<b>Lawrence Elementary</b>	Visuals. Words help but visuals such as pictures really holds their attention.

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