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Music for Every Child: Facilitating Growth in the Self-Contained Music Classroom

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of self-contained music instruction in the education of students with multiple disabilities. In particular, it aims to answer the question, “Should a music education for students with multiple disabilities focus on providing exposure to music or on developing musical skills?” Students attended a bi-weekly self-contained music class designed using resources geared towards facilitating the musical development of students with multiple disabilities. Growth in both musical and extra-musical skills of four students was recorded over a period of eighteen weeks. Students demonstrated measurable growth in both their musical skills and in their overall engagement and alertness during instruction. According to the data, both musical and extra-musical growth appear to be attainable in the self-contained classroom. The results of this research study may be useful for music educators, special educators, school administrators, and families or caretakers of students with multiple disabilities.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The purpose of this empirical study is to investigate the impact of instructional tools on growth in the self-contained music classroom. This study will explore various resources and teaching tips geared specifically towards providing music instruction to students with multiple disabilities. After the students receive music instruction incorporating the tools, the music teacher and support staff will record observations of each student's music achievement and behaviors during music class and beyond. Observations will be used to determine whether these instructional tools should inform content in future self-contained music classes.

Every child deserves a music education. Unlike a music therapist who uses music as a tool to accomplish non-musical goals, the music educator's responsibility is to provide quality experiences for music learning to all students. This includes those with multiple disabilities. However, resources designed for the musical advancement of this population are few and far between. This may lead one to believe that the focus of a music education for students with multiple disabilities be on acquiring life skills through music rather than on acquiring musical skills. On the other hand, the handful of instructional materials and articles dedicated to this population are intended to foster musical growth in students with special needs. Insights gained from this study regarding instructional materials and areas of student growth will be invaluable in crafting a musical experience that does the best service to students with multiple disabilities.

Delivering instruction to special learners, including students with multiple disabilities, is a common responsibility for many music educators (Hammel & Hourigan, 2011). It has been the researcher's experience, however, that despite pre-service teaching experience with special learners, one may not be truly prepared for designing and delivering instruction in his or her own classroom. After including individuals with multiple disabilities in general music class, the

researcher felt that more could be done to provide meaningful music experiences for these students. As a result, a self-contained music class was created to supplement the inclusion experience. Music instruction in the self-contained environment provided an opportunity for each student to receive specialized attention through instruction using developmentally appropriate material.

While the special education staff spoke highly of the positive effects this new class had upon the students, it was unclear to what extent the students experienced musical growth throughout the year. Upon further investigation, the researcher recognized that many elements of instruction were designed to have music made *for* the students rather than *by* them. This realization generates the question: “What is the goal of music class for students with multiple disabilities?” Or more specifically, “Should the focus of self-contained music class be on experiencing music or on completing achievable musical tasks?” This study has been inspired by those students who may have untapped musical aptitude waiting to blossom.

This study will focus on improving music instruction in order to yield observable growth for a group of middle school students. While the scope and extent of social and behavioral growth will be recorded, special focus will be given to their musical growth. These students will receive music instruction in a self-contained environment twice a week for a total of thirty half-hour classes. A collection of resources and teaching tips targeted towards this population will be reviewed and embedded into the bi-weekly music class. Along with a review of literature, observation from professionals who work with the students will speak to the quality and effectiveness of instruction in facilitating student growth.

Chapter 2: Background Information

One can use a variety of lenses when looking to examine and refine instruction.

Understanding the history of teaching music in special education can illuminate best practices that should continue today. This history includes the earliest documented teaching practices in schools for special learners, landmark legislation like Public Law 94-142, and research studies including the work of Ockelford. In addition, exploring the role music plays in special education through the lens of literature and instructional resources, like the song collection of *All Join In* (Ockelford, 1996) *Let's all Listen* (Lloyd, 2007), and *Tuning In* (Ockelford, 2018), will prove invaluable in designing quality music instruction for students with multiple disabilities. Together, history and literature may lead the way in determining realistic goals for student achievement and growth.

Providing music education for students with special needs is not a new concept. In the United States, an education in music for special learners was first documented at schools for the blind in the early nineteenth century (Graham, 2013). These music experiences gave students very basic exposure to music, and progressed sequentially through more advanced concepts. For its time, this pedagogy was considered to be very contemporary. Later in the nineteenth century, Graham indicated that music education infiltrated its way into residential schools for children with other needs. Building on these early efforts, the practice of adapting music education for students with special needs continued into the twentieth century and beyond.

A major milestone occurred in 1975 when Public Law 94-142: The Education for All Handicapped Children Act became the first legislation enacted that mandated a free and appropriate public education to all students with special needs. Hammel and Hourigan (2011) highlighted the inclusion of music in this legislation. Primarily, it encouraged educators to use music as a teaching tool. In addition, it mentioned teaching music to students with special needs

so that they may appreciate its value. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act underwent several revisions throughout the remainder of the twentieth century. In 1990, it received some significant amendments including a new title: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Hourigan and Hammel noted that in subsequent years IDEA experienced several updates in order to continue equal access to education.

Shortly after the original passage of Public Law 94-142, the *Music Educators Journal* dedicated an entire issue to music instruction for special learners (Heidingsfelder 2014). Each article in this special issue discussed aspects of music education for students with special needs in a positive tone. This stance on music education prevailed through the end of the twentieth century. This is evident through discussions held in 1999 at the Vision 2020: Housewright Symposium on the Future of Music Education. The result of the meeting was a document entitled the Housewright Declaration. On the subject of access to music education, it stated that, “All persons, regardless of age, cultural heritage, ability, venue, or financial circumstance deserve to participate fully in the best music experiences possible” (as cited in Mark, 2013, p. 193).

Today similar ideas endure regarding music for special learners. Public educators continue to have a legal responsibility to provide a free and appropriate education to all students. Due to the nature of this study, special focus will be on music education for students with multiple disabilities. According to IDEA, the term multiple disabilities describes “individuals who have concomitant impairments (such as intellectual disability-blindness or intellectual disability-orthopedic impairment), the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments” (IDEA Subpart A Sec. 300.8). Much research on providing a music education for

students with multiple disabilities has been completed by Ockelford. He developed the Sounds of Intent project which is “the first research project in the world to focus on the musical development of children and young people with learning difficulties, and makes the first attempt to set out how this may occur” (Ockelford 2015). This research began in 2002 and continues, to some extent, today. While a handful of smaller studies have been completed, Ockelford’s work appears to be the most expansive on the subject of music instruction for the severely disabled.

All of the initial Sounds of Intent research was either completed one-on-one or in small homogenous groups of students known as a self-contained environment. Instruction occurs in a self-contained environment when high quality learning cannot occur in a classroom comprised of typical learners. Throughout this study, the term “typical” will refer to learners without disabilities. It has been this researcher’s experience that while there are many social benefits to including students with multiple disabilities in typical music classes, there is little opportunity for them to grow musically. When exploring the famous Karl Gehrkins quote, “Music for every child, every child for music,” Heidingsfelder touches on the matter of musical content and growth sharing that educators are tasked with providing some form of music education to all students through “music of such high quality that he would be fascinated by his delightful experience during the music hour” (as cited in Heidingsfelder, 2014, p. 48). Instruction in a self-contained environment allows for meaningful material, which otherwise may not be appropriate for students in a typical classroom, to be introduced to students with multiple disabilities.

Others have also reached the conclusion that instruction in a self-contained environment is conducive to learning. In her study, Clemens (2011) said students receiving individual attention appeared to reach improved achievement compared to students in a class with a large student-to-teacher ratio. She concluded that a self-contained environment is more likely to

increase a student's individualized attention making it a sensible setting for students with multiple disabilities. When revisiting the effectiveness of a music education for students with special needs, Ockelford (2007) said:

There is a growing body of evidence showing that music can play an important role in the education of children with learning difficulties. Its repetitive, regular and therefore predictable structures could have been (and maybe originally were) purpose-made for young minds in the early stages of perceptual and cognitive development – craving order in a complex and confusing world. (p. 9)

Together Clemens' endorsement of a self-contained environment and Ockelford's case for the importance of a music education for students with learning difficulties suggest that best practice for students with multiple disabilities includes music instruction in a homogeneous environment.

While it is essential to determine in what setting music instruction should be delivered to students with multiple disabilities, the material delivered to the students deserves attention as well. Due to its content, a music class for students with multiple disabilities runs the risk of turning into a music therapy session. The American Music Therapy Association defines music therapy as "an established health profession in which music is used within a therapeutic relationship to address physical, emotional, cognitive, and social needs of individuals" (<https://www.musictherapy.org/about/musictherapy/>). A music class for special learners may also incorporate activities addressing basic physical, emotional, cognitive, or social needs. This is because the musical content, including songs and movement activities, must meet students' developmental age. Because students with multiple disabilities are often far behind their peers developmentally, the content of music class can become quite elementary relying on very basic material. For this and other reasons, it can be difficult to determine what constitutes music

therapy and what constitutes music education (Mawby, 2015). The structure and pacing of a self-contained music class may also resemble a music therapy session. Both typically involve a greeting song, a selection of short songs, exploration of instruments, and movement activities, and end with a closing song further blurring the lines between these two fields.

While materials and class structure in both fields are similar, research does identify a key difference. According to one study, “all practitioners [music teachers and music therapists] agreed that music education is teacher-led and predominantly focuses on musical goals, whereas music therapy is more child-led and predominantly focuses on non-musical goals” (Mawby 2015). Therefore, it is the responsibility of the music teacher to keep learning centered upon musical goals.

However, research also suggests that a child’s education is enhanced when music education and music therapy work hand-in-hand. When introducing her text of compiled activities designed to encourage musical growth among children with special needs, Lloyd (2007) said, “Music is particularly powerful for expressing moods and emotions. On many levels there is much to be gained by supporting the development of students’ recognition and understanding of emotions – both their own and others” (p. 19). When comparing the definitions of music education and music therapy, gaining an understanding of emotion is a skill more likely to be addressed using the latter. However, emotional intelligence is also essential in music education; a basic emotional vocabulary enables students to better understand and respond to music. Many feel that this intertwining of music education and music therapy puts students in a position for more meaningful learning (Lloyd, 2007; Route, 2012; Salvador & Pasiali, 2017).

While it has been established that music-centered activities with a secondary focus on extra-musical skills offered in a self-contained environment are appropriate for students with

multiple disabilities, it takes some investigation to identify suitable content and realistic expectations for learning. As previously stated, many students with multiple disabilities function at a low developmental age making the selection of attainable goals difficult. After completing her study researching teachers' perspectives, Clemens (2011) found that teachers of a self-contained music class often gave standards a back seat to their observed needs of each child. Using this logic, content for this type of instruction should be determined on a case by case basis.

While content goals can vary between class groupings and individual students, research does highlight a few reliable teaching strategies that can be embedded in instruction. The first strategy involves starting small by teaching basic skill and then gradually building skills over time. This idea dates back to the education of students deemed 'intellectually disabled' in the late 19th century. Influenced by the psychiatrist Edouard Séguin, music educators provided "music experiences that led from sensation to perception, from gross to refined, from attention to initiation, [and] from patterned activity to creativity" (Graham, 2013, p. 278). This natural progression of skill acquisition is still a tool used in special education and typical classrooms today.

A handful of other strategies for skill acquisition in the self-contained classroom are worthy of note. Hourigan and Horton's (2013) research suggested that repetition, student choice, and increased response time are effective in the classroom, and Isemenger (2013) recommended using as much visual information as possible in order to compensate for delays in processing verbal language. Suggestions for visual learning provided by Isemenger included displaying song lyrics using words or pictures, using beat icons, and incorporating physical gestures or actions. On the topic of encouraging student participation through vocalization, Ott (2011) suggested singing songs on a neutral syllable or omitting words from songs. This strategy

enables students to join in on an accessible syllable, or encourages them to sing the omitted words. Keeping in mind that students with multiple disabilities often require an individualized approach due to their unique needs, the instructional strategies mentioned are likely to be impactful for most students.

With the collected strategies in mind, one must develop a process for teaching that includes a variety of music activities. A few professionals have recommended an outline for music lessons. While each process varies slightly, they have some major elements in common. Lloyd (2007), Isemenger (2013), and Ockelford (2015) highlighted the importance of keeping the same structure for each lesson. They also mentioned incorporating a greeting song near the beginning of each session in order to signal that the time for music-making has begun. The other activities mentioned involve making music both alone and with a group, listening to music, and moving to music. Most of the authors also promoted ending with a closing song to signal that music time has finished.

While there are few recommendations for the structure of a music session for students with multiple disabilities, there are even fewer resources dedicated to advancing the musicianship of these students. The works of Ockelford and Lloyd are perhaps the most significant resources in the field. Ockelford created the Sounds of Intent Framework which acts as an assessment tool to measure musical aptitude and growth in students with complex needs and visual impairment. Along with the framework, Ockelford developed the song collections *All Join In* and *Tuning In* with songs and suggestions for activities to promote musicianship. In addition, Ockelford endorsed Lloyd's *Let's All Listen*, a similar collection of songs and activities. Many of these songs involve singing a child's name to encourage them to participate in music-making. Another text worth mentioning is Ott's *Music for Special Kids*. It is a collection of

songs and musical activities for children with special needs. However, the activities are mainly geared towards teaching non-musical concepts through music. Of the resources mentioned, the most recent and comprehensive is Ockelford's "Tuning In" which was published in 2018.

Research in the education of music students with multiple disabilities culminates in the following question: Is measurable growth, especially musical growth, possible? Hourigan and Horton's (2013) research measured "significant musical growth" in some students. This information could influence a teacher's planning and instruction for students with special needs. In terms of measuring growth, Ockelford developed three domains labeled "reactive" (listening and responding to sound and music), "proactive" (making sound and music oneself) and "interactive" (engaging with sound and music in the context of others) (Ockelford 2015). After his research, he determined that:

Musical growth, while perhaps following a delayed timeline, may include improved performance of music skills such as demonstrating a beat or rhythm pattern, recognizing music and form, and engagement through singing or playing an instrument in a progression similar to that of students with typical needs. (Ockelford 2008)

This conclusion was driven by the use of the resources in *All Join In* and the assessment tools in the Sounds of Intent Framework. If these tools facilitated growth in Ockelford's students, it is likely that they can do so for other students with multiple disabilities.

A variety of assessment tools have been used to quantify student growth including interview, pre-test and post-test, and observation. Sounds of Intent placed students at the appropriate spot on the framework through observation. Gerrity, Hourigan, and Horton (2013) found success utilizing interview and a pre-test and post-test while Ockelford (2015) described two separate research projects utilizing observation to assess student growth. One of

Ockelford's research studies charted a student's location on the Sounds of Intent Framework over time while the other converted student achievement into a numerical score which was charted over time. On the subject of observation, Lloyd (2007) emphasized the importance of recording student achievement during or after each session. She also encouraged that assessment tools be chosen with the abilities of the students in mind.

Educators have a legal responsibility to provide a free and appropriate education to every child including those with special needs. Emerging research suggests that a homogeneous self-contained environment may be an ideal environment for musical growth in students with multiple disabilities. Content that is music-centered and delivered in a structured manner has the best chance of reaching these students. Music from *All Join In*, *Let's All Listen*, and *Tuning In* are resources focused on teaching musical concepts to students with special needs. Many believe that through observation and student assessment, growth can be observed and measured in students with multiple disabilities.

Chapter 3: Details of Study and Research Findings

This study involved accumulating instructional resources for students and observing student achievement and growth over a period of time. Students attended a half hour music class twice a week. They were observed by the music teacher and by their individual aides. All in all, four students were observed over a total of thirty music classes spanning from October 2019 to February 2020.

The teaching resources and a daily lesson sequence (Appendix A) were developed from the music instruction given to the multiple disabilities students in previous school years. The additional resources discussed in chapter two also influenced lesson design. Each class period began with students choosing an egg shaker from a collection kept in a small box. Once all students were present and had an instrument, the teacher sang “Zip-a-dee Doo-dah” while modeling a steady beat with her shaker. Next, the teacher asked each student how they were feeling. She then sang a song to the tune of “The Muffin Man” where she included the name of the student, a feeling (shared by their aide), and the name of the school they attended. The welcome routine ended with the song “All Join In” written by Ockelford. Students were encouraged to shake their shaker while the teacher sang and shook her shaker.

After the welcome routine, students participated in instrument exploration. Over the course of thirty class periods the students were exposed to shakers, an ocean drum, and a piano keyboard, each for a few weeks at a time. First, the music teacher would model exploration of the instrument while singing “Adelaide’s Got Bells” from Lloyd’s *Let’s all Listen*. Then she would visit each student allowing them to experiment with the instrument and altering the song lyrics to describe the choices the students made (i.e. “(student’s name has a shaker in her hand” or “student’s name shakes the shaker in her hand.”). Singing followed the instrument exploration. During each lesson, the teacher chose three or four short songs involving steady

beat or gross motor movements. Each song was sung twice to reinforce its lyrics, melody, and motions. Additionally, the same songs were often used during lessons held in the same week for continued reinforcement.

The next three activities involved responding to recorded music. First, the teacher and aides assisted students in moving to one of three recorded songs: 1) beat keeping with Henry Mancini's "Baby Elephant Walk," 2) finding the beat and form with Jacques Offenbach's "Can Can," or 3) tactile typing with Leroy Anderson's "The Typewriter." Following one of the above activities, the teacher visited each student with a hand drum or lollipop drum and played along with selections from Handel's "Water Music." The final activity with recorded music involved dancing, or free movement, to music with a strong steady beat, for example, 1950s rock n' roll.

Music class ended with live singing. First, the teacher sang a song or two accompanied by the ukulele. Afterwards, she sang "Zip-a-dee Doo-dah" to signal the end of the lesson. Students and their aides were given the choice to keep the beat, move freely, or to sit still while listening.

Each of the thirty class periods included in the study were videotaped with the permission of the students' families. At the end of each class, the aides completed an observation form (Appendix B) where they used a rating scale to note their student's awareness and engagement before music class as well as after class. There was also a space on the form for the aides to include comments or observations about their student. Additionally, the music teacher completed a more detailed observation form (Appendix C) after each class. The form uses Ockelford's Sounds of Intent Framework as a guideline to document student achievement. Each student was placed on the appropriate level of the framework for the reactive, proactive, and

interactive categories based on the skills they demonstrated in class that day. There was also space on the form for the teacher to note additional comments.

Observations were completed extending over eighteen weeks for four students in the multiple disabilities class. While the study lasted a total of thirty class periods, each student was present for a different amount of classes. This was due to a high rate of absenteeism necessary to manage their many health needs.

Student A was a 7th grade student who also participated in music class in the previous school year. She was nonverbal, but occasionally attempted to use an iPad to communicate. She depended on her aide for help with all activities of daily living. This included patting the beat and playing instruments in music class.

Student B was also a 7th grade student who also participated in music class in the previous school year. He was mostly nonverbal and communicated through moans, grunts, and head nods. He was capable of independent movements with his arms enabling him to play musical instruments on his own. He required help patting the beat.

Student C was a 6th grade student new to the school this year. She was nonverbal and depended on her aide for help with all activities of daily living. This included patting the beat and playing instruments in music class.

Student D was a 6th grade student new to the school this year. He was mostly nonverbal using moans, tongue clicks, and facial expressions to communicate. He was capable of independent movements with his arms and hands, and had the independence to maneuver his wheelchair. He also took pleasure modeling his independence using his hands to knock over chairs and instruments. He was able to play musical instruments and pat the beat on his own.

However, he took more pleasure from holding his aide's arm in order to "help" her play the instruments or pat the beat instead.

This study yielded quantitative and qualitative data. Both the aide rating scale and music teacher observation sheet provided numeric values that could be tracked over time. The rating scale ranked students from zero to four both before and after class focusing on the extra-musical growth in engagement and alertness. Written observations were also ordered chronologically providing insight into student growth.

Student A attended nineteen total music classes. Fifteen (79%) of the classes she attended involved an increase in engagement and awareness as observed by her aide. The lowest level of engagement change from the beginning of class to the end of class was negative one and occurred during her ninth music class. The highest level engagement change was four and occurred during her sixteenth class. A notable additional comment from her aide read, "When the teacher incorporated tactile and physical movements in her instruction, she becomes engaged and alert."

Student B attended seventeen total music classes. Twelve (71%) of the classes he attended involved an increase in engagement and awareness as observed by his aide. The lowest levels of engagement change were zero and occurred during his first, second, fourth, fifth, and thirteenth classes. A mostly active and aware student, his levels of engagement change were one or two on all other days because he began class already at a level of three on a scale from zero to four. On each of the days that there was no change in his engagement level, he began class at a four and remained there throughout. An observation written by the teacher in week eight that speaks to his engagement level reads, "he applied the 'Finding/Giving' song, normally used to collect shakers, to the rain stick that was shared with him." An observation from his aide in

week fourteen reads, “He tolerated much more than usual full/partial physical prompting which means he likes the activity a lot!”

Student C attended a total of twenty two music classes. Twelve (55%) of the classes she attended involved an increase in engagement and awareness as observed by her aide. The lowest levels of engagement change were negative one and negative two occurring during her first and fourth classes, respectively. The highest level of engagement change, three, occurred during her seventh and tenth classes. On nine of the days that her engagement level did not change, it was already at a three or four. Notable observations by her aide include, “[she] smiles when Miss Krall sings her name,” and “Music seems to help her relax.”

Student D attended twenty eight music classes. Twelve (43%) of the classes he attended involved an increase in engagement and awareness as observed by his aide. The lowest level of engagement change was negative one during his seventh class. The highest level of engagement change, three, occurred on his twenty sixth class. Regardless of change, his engagement level at the end of class was a four on twenty six of the twenty eight classes he attended. During week seven, his aide shared that “he was much calmer after music class.” Other notable extra-musical observations include:

Table 1

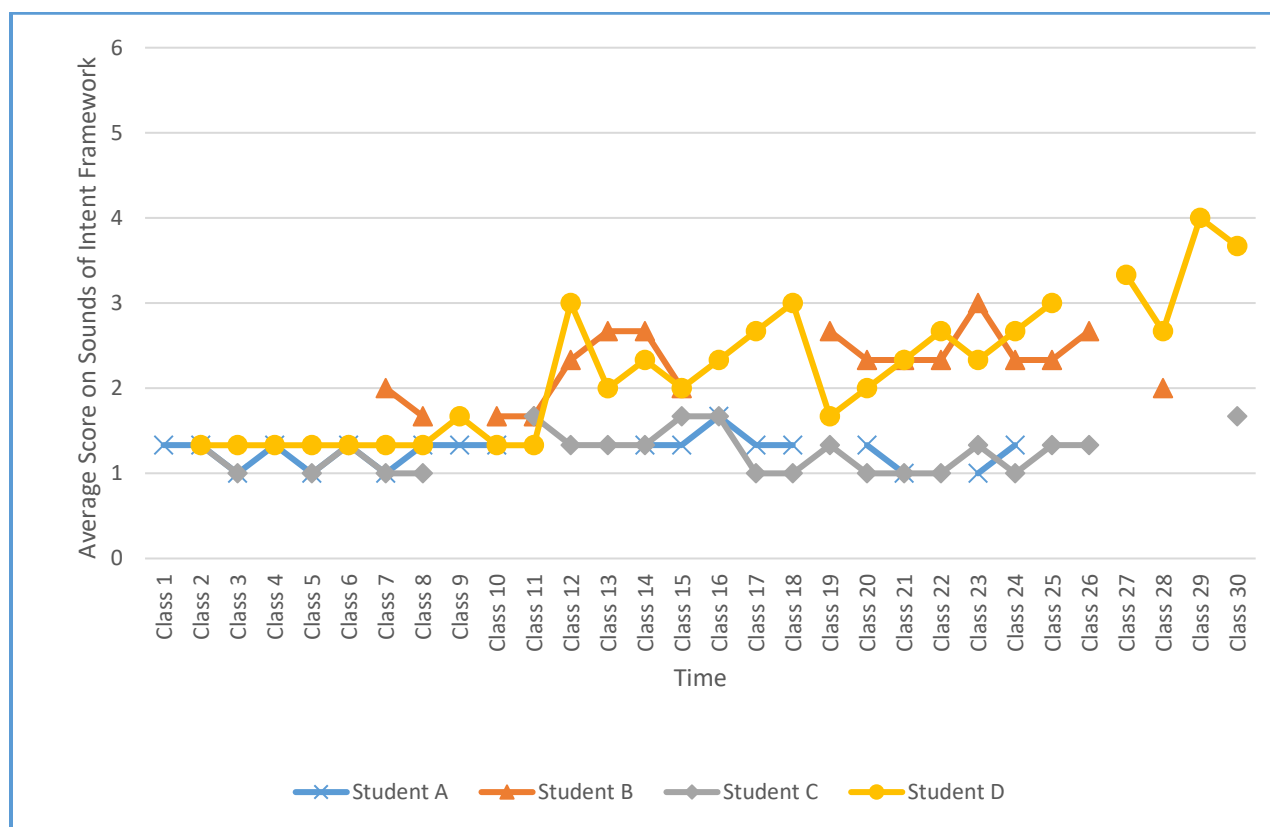
Student D Extra-Musical Observations

Date	Observation
November 26 th	“He put the shaker in his aide’s hand instead of throwing it on the floor.”
January 2 nd	“He gives the shaker and drum back when hearing the ‘Finding/Giving’ song.
January 23 rd	“For the first time, he was presented with the shaker box [instead of the teacher holding a shaker in each hand]. He chose one from the box and handed it to his aide.”

Similar to the rating scale data described above, the data on the students' musical growth was quantified both numerically and in writing. After class, the teacher placed each student on a level of the Sounds of Intent Framework for each of the three categories: reactive, proactive, and interactive. The levels of the framework were assigned a numeric value from one to six. The teacher also recorded specific observations of each student's musical growth. Figure 1 illustrates a summary of the growth data.

Figure 1

Student Musical Growth



When averaged together, Student A achieved an average score of 1.26 across nineteen classes. There were no visible trends in her data. There were however, some notable observations. Table 2 compiles these observations.

Table 2*Student A Observations*

Date	Observation
October 18 th	"The drum vibration and/or sound makes her eyes big and brings a change in facial expression."
October 31 st	"She makes eye contact with the teacher when she sings."
December 5 th	"She looks toward the ocean drum from across the room."
January 2 nd	"She looks at the teacher when she changes from playing the steady beat to only downbeats on the drum."
January 9 th	"When hearing the drum for the first time today, she gets a big smile on her face and looks toward it."

Student B's score appears to increase slightly across the seventeen classes he attended. Many of his early scores were either 1.67 or 2. His scores increased to 2.33 and 2.67 by the end of the study. The observations in Table 3 below highlight some progression in his musicianship.

Table 3*Student B Observations*

Date	Observation
November 14 th	"He shakes the shaker on his own."
November 19 th	"He plays the shaker after the teacher plays hers."
December 3 rd	"He plays his shaker when the teacher sings his name."
January 28 th	"He appears to enjoy playing his instruments (shaker and bells) during times when others are not making music."

Student C's score was an average of 1.25 across 22 classes. There were no visible trends in the data. Some notable observations are included in Table 4.

Table 4*Student C Observations*

Date	Observation
November 19 th	"She vocalizes at the end of class."
November 26 th	"She moves [her] arms and hand to a drum placed in her lap on her own."
December 5 th	"She vocalizes when the teacher sings about her."
January 2 nd	"She jumps at unintentionally loud music."
January 28 th	"She looks at the drum when the teacher brings it to her."

Student D's score increased throughout the study. During the first few classes he scored a consistent 1.33. By the end of the study he was scoring an average of 3.66 or 4. Student D yielded the most interesting observations. A few that chronicle his relationship with steady beat and rhythm are provided in Table 5.

Table 5*Student D Observations*

Date	Observation
October 10 th	"He bangs on the drum; after watching/listening to Miss Krall, his drumming appears to be more controlled."
October 15 th	"He shakes the shaker while it is in his aide's hand."
October 31 st	"His aide was keeping the beat so he put his hand on hers to feel it."
November 14 th	"He grabs the mallet as the teacher plays a drum."
November 19 th	"He uses a mallet to play a drum."
November 26 th	"He finds the beat on his aide's lap and pats the beat on her leg."
January 2 nd	"He laughs when finding the beat with his aide."

January 7 th	"He smiles at the fast 'running' section both times 'Hop Old Squirrel' is sung."
February 20 th	"He shakes with the beat. When playing drums he matches the teacher's steady beat and subdivision. Then he smiles when the teacher matches his beat."
February 25 th	"He shakes the 'Muffin Man' rhythm on his shaker after the song ends."
February 27 th	"He adjusts his steady beat to the tempo changes when the teacher sings 'Riding in a Buggy'."

There are a few factors to note that may have impacted the data in this study. As noted previously, two of the students (Student A and Student B) experienced a very similar music class during the previous school year while two (Student C and Student D) did not. It is possible that the students already familiar with music class exhibited a greater amount of growth the previous year. It is also possible that the students with prior knowledge had an opportunity for increased growth because they already had a relationship with the teacher and an understanding of class routines allowing them to focus more on the music activities.

Another unavoidable factor was the amount of help the aides were able to provide the students. Some aides were much more hands-on with the students than others. Additionally, students did not always have the same aide from day to day. This lack of consistency may have provided a hindrance to student growth. On the other hand, it is possible that a really engaging aide filling in for a student's less involved regular aide may have actually contributed to their growth.

It is also worth noting that there was a disruption in instruction in mid to late December. An illness seemed to go through the multiple disabilities classroom keeping many of the students from school for days at a time. As a result, there was no data collection in classes between December 5th and January 2nd. There is a possibility that this disruption in the regular routine of music class impacted the students' retention concepts learned affecting their growth.

Chapter 4: Conclusions

This study was designed to investigate the impact of instructional tools on growth in the self-contained music classroom. It explored the various resources and teaching strategies geared specifically toward providing music instruction to students with multiple disabilities. After the students received music instruction incorporating the tools, the music teacher and support staff recorded observations of each student's music achievement and behaviors during music class and beyond. The observations provide insight into whether these instructional tools should inform content in future self-contained music classes.

Observations were gathered on four students during thirty self-contained music classes over a period of eighteen weeks. Each student's aide commented on their engagement and awareness before and after class using a rating scale with the option of providing a written observation. Additionally, the music teacher completed an observation that translated student achievement into numeric data. After the thirty music classes, the numeric data and written observations were compiled for analysis.

Some growth was evident in the extra-musical category of engagement and awareness. Overall, the students' lowest engagement change scores occurred early in the study. This supports the conclusion that participation in self-contained music class can encourage a positive change in a student's engagement and awareness. Additionally, music class appeared to retain the attention of students who began class with an already high amount of engagement and awareness. While not necessarily an indicator of growth, it is also worth mentioning that Student A's engagement level increased in 79% of the music classes further supporting the extra-musical benefits of music instruction.

Musical growth was evident in certain students. Students B and D both demonstrated an increase in their music achievement score. Student B improved a total of 1 point (17%)

throughout the study. His ratings on the Sounds of Intent Framework at the beginning of the study indicated that he “shows an emerging awareness of sound” and “relates unwittingly through sound” (Ockelford, 2015). By the end of the study, the framework categorized him as a student who can, “make simple patterns in sound intentionally through repetition or regularity” and “interact through imitating others’ sounds or through recognizing self being imitated.”

Student D improved a total of 2.67 points (45%) over the course of the study. At the beginning of the study, the Framework suggested that he “encounters sounds,” “makes sounds unknowingly,” and “relates unwittingly through sound.” His ratings on the Framework by the end of the study categorized him as a student who can, “respond to general characteristics [in music] (e.g. tempo),” “(re)create distinctive groups of musical sounds and link them coherently,” and “interact through imitating others’ sounds or through recognizing self being imitated.”

Both the numeric data and Framework descriptions support the conclusion that musical growth is possible in the self-contained classroom. While the results for each student varied, the progression Student D made from having little awareness of his relationship with sound to demonstrating the ability to compose and copy distinct musical phrases seems quite significant.

The completion of this study enabled the music educator to quantify the benefits of a music education for students with multiple disabilities. It also cultivated confidence in the materials identified for instruction. While many acknowledge that exposing students in this population to music is “good,” the Sounds of Intent Framework provided language to objectively classify their musical achievement and to track growth. Now when asked why music class is beneficial, one can cite a student’s movement on the Framework from “makes sounds unknowingly” to “(re)creates distinctive groups of musical sounds and links them coherently.” This objective evidence greatly supports the benefits of a music education for all students.

Additionally, the amount of student engagement and growth supports the validity of the teaching resources and lesson structure selected for this particular group of students. While it is important to keep in mind that each individual student has unique capabilities and needs, this study illuminated resources likely to lead to success when teaching this specific grouping of participating students. These resources may prove to be valuable for students with similar capabilities and needs. For example, observation data show that the “Finding/Giving” song from the song collection *All Join In* appears to have taught the concept of returning instruments to the teacher and has proven successful outside the regular routine of music class. Observation also indicates that tactile activities easily adaptable for individual student needs and abilities, for example, listening to, feeling, or playing lollipop drums, encouraged music learning.

Music educators in various teaching situations may benefit from the results of this study. The musical growth evident in Student B and Student D demonstrates that an education in music has positive outcomes for students with multiple disabilities. While music therapy is an undoubtedly beneficial activity, school districts and individuals should consider providing educational time centered upon teaching musical concepts. This could occur integrated into music therapy time, or a separate music learning time. In addition, this study revealed that the songs included in the texts *All Join In* and *Let's All Listen* are excellent resources for teaching students with multiple disabilities.

Another outcome not to be overlooked is the notion of growth. This study serves as a reminder that detecting measurable growth in students may take time, patience, and a great deal of repetition. This perseverance is necessary when educating musicians of any age or skill level. Additionally, it can be rewarding for the educator to keep in mind that any growth, no matter how seemingly small, is a step in the right direction. During the study, the researcher interpreted

most of the students' progress to be relatively insignificant in real time. It was not until she reviewed video footage of music instruction that she gained a true understanding of how far the students progressed in some aspects of their learning. Definite patterns emerged over time with small daily victories acting as building blocks for more substantial growth. This study serves as a reminder that whether in the self-contained music class, general music classroom, or ensemble rehearsal, it is important to track and celebrate the small achievements that will ultimately accumulate to attain an end goal.

In conclusion, the outcomes of this study support the importance of music-centered instruction in a child's development. In addition, the resources explored provide an excellent starting place for music educators wishing to develop their own self-contained music class. The substantial improvement in engagement evident in one participant as well as the musical growth observed in two others indicate that growth is possible in the self-contained classroom. Although certain participants exhibited greater amounts of growth than others, it is possible that music instruction given over an extended period of time may yield greater results. This notion, together with the observed growth and written descriptions of positive student interactions with music during lessons, demonstrates that music instruction is indeed appropriate for every child.

Appendix A: Multiple Disabilities Music Class Sequence**I. Introduction**

- a. “Zip-a-dee Doo-dah”

II. Motivation

- a. “Muffin Man” melody with each child’s name

_____ is the _____ boy

The _____ boy, the _____ boy

_____ is the _____ boy

Who goes to (school name).

III. Music Making w/ Shaker

- a. “All Join In” (Ockelford)

IV. Instrument Exploration (shaker, ocean drum, keyboard, etc.)

- a. “Adelaide’s Got Bells” (Lloyd)

V. Singing w/ Beat and Movement (choose a few)

- a. “Chumbara” (steady beat/name recognition)
- b. “Five Little Ladies” (rhythmic speech/fine motor)
- c. “Hop Old Squirrel” (beat keeping/tempo)
- d. “Jenny Jenkins” (color recognition)
- e. “Jim Along Josie” (beat keeping/ locomotor movements)
- f. “The Little Mice Go Creeping” (beat keeping/tactile stimulation)
- g. “Mail Myself to You” (beat keeping/ tactile stimulation)
- h. “Oliver Twist” (locomotor movements)
- i. “Shake them Simmons Down” (one vs. both/ locomotor movements)
- j. “Telephone Song” (beat keeping/name recognition)
- k. “Two Little Blackbirds” (Lullaby/fine motor)

VI. Movement w/ Music (choose one)

- a. Mancini “Baby Elephant Walk” (steady beat on parts of the body)
- b. Anderson “Typewriter” (‘click’ typewriter rhythm)
- c. Offenbach “Can Can” (find steady beat on head, shoulders, legs, knees)

VII. Drumming w/ Teacher

- a. “Water Music” (Handel)

VIII. Listening to Live Music w/ Ukulele or Guitar (choose one)

- a. "Don't Worry, Be Happy"
- b. "Here Comes the Sun"
- c. "Keep on the Sunny Side"
- d. "Put on a Happy Face"
- e. "Rainbow Connection"
- f. "Smile"
- g. "The Lion Sleeps Tonight"
- h. "Three Little Birds"
- i. "When You're Smiling"
- j. "You've Got a Friend in Me"

IX. Dancing to Music w/ a Strong Beat [usually 50s and 60s Pop] (choose one)

- a. "Blue Suede Shoes"
- b. "Good Golly Miss Molly"
- c. "Great Balls of Fire"
- d. "Hound Dog"
- e. "Johnny B. Goode"
- f. "Let's Twist Again"
- g. "Life Could be a Dream"
- h. "Little Brown Jug"
- i. "Roll Over Beethoven"
- j. "Sea Cruise"
- k. "Shake, Rattle, and Roll"
- l. "Splish Splash"
- m. "Tutti Frutti"
- n. "Twist and Shout"
- o. "Whole Lotta Shakin"
- p. "Wipeout"
- q. "Yakety Yak"
- r. "YMCA"

X. Closing

- a. "Zip-a-dee Doo-dah"

Appendix B: Student Engagement Rating Scale**Student:** _____**Date:** _____

How would you rate your student's alertness/engagement before music class?

Very Alert**Asleep**

4 3 2 1 0

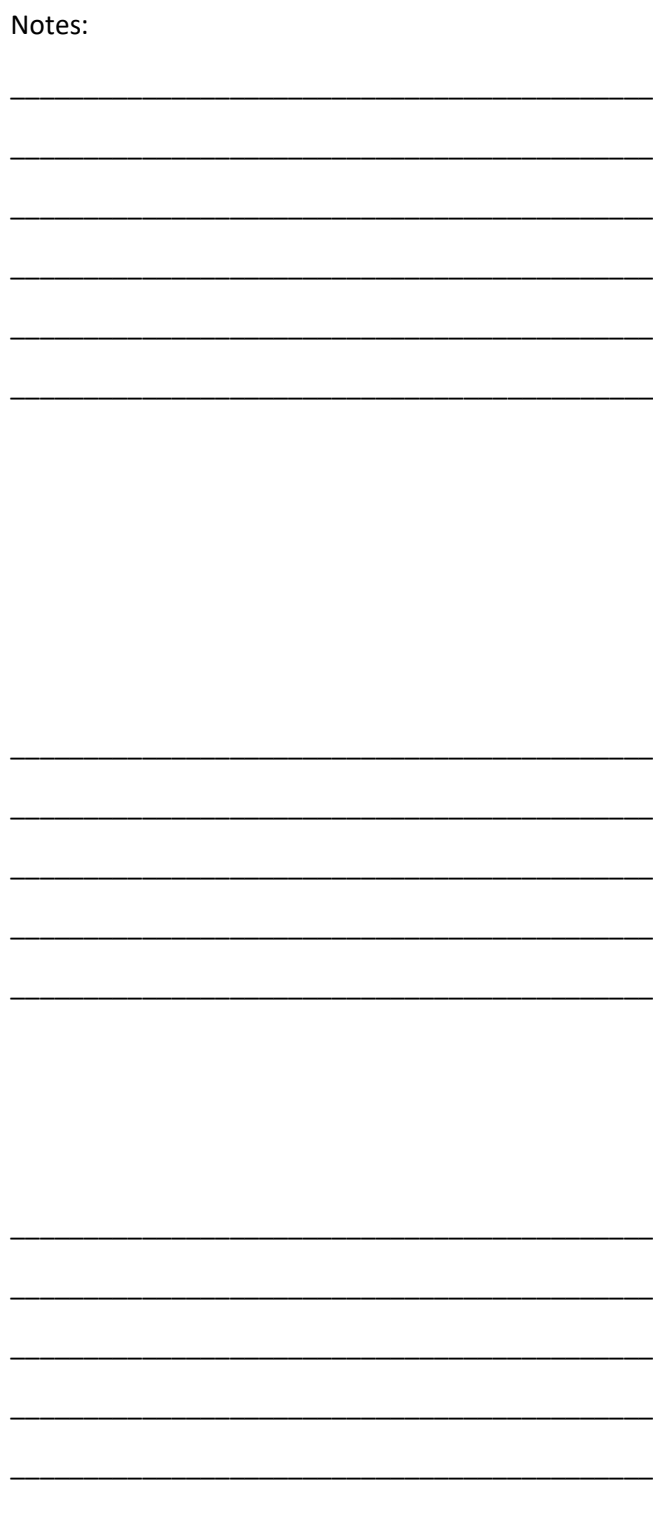
How would you rate your student's alertness/engagement after music class?

Very Alert**Asleep**

4 3 2 1 0

Additional comments:

Student: _____ Date: _____



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