

POS-059

## **Exploring Teaching Strategies in Music Education for Autistic Students**

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### **Abstract**

#### **Background & Research Questions**

Under what circumstances, music teachers can relatively easily communicate with students from different angles and conduct teaching? In this qualitative study, the central question is that in what conditions, by using what strategies do the teachers could communicate with the students successfully, or make the students interact with the others. Three individual autistic students teaching and learning process and responses have been observed, recorded, interviewed and analyzed.

#### **Theoretical Framework**

From the perspective of the learning theory, Lev Vygotsky proposed the theory of zone proximal development under the umbrella of social constructivism philosophy to explore learners' development from what they know to what they don't know. Jerome Bruner specified this process through three main steps: aural, visual, and kinesthetic learning modes. All the learning and teaching behaviors in this study are analyzed in this framework.

#### **Findings**

- A. Teaching and Learning: In an inclusive group music lesson, all the examples and cases teacher gave are common in students' life (e.g. fruits, animals). The teacher spoke fast but never stopped asking questions to lead students' attention. All the requirements for the students were sung in a minor third interval or a tritonic rather than spoken by the teacher.
- B. Initiating Singing: All the music notes were weaved in a lyric based story with beautiful cartoon pictures shown by the teacher while telling the story. Once the music concepts (e.g. notes and intervals) shown up, it would be imitated or responded by the students either individually or together as the code to step into the next plot of the story. Three types of answers were expected from 1) exaggerated movement (kinesthetic) to 2) singing (aural) then finally to 3) Curwen hand signs (visual).
- C. Game Playing: Taking special sound (e.g. animals) or music notes as codes to interact with peers and the teacher to move to activate the next game step or story plots. All questions were encouraged to sing or imitated and all answers were encouraged to present either in singing or in Curwen signs.

#### **Summary**

Findings show that children's attention, the most important starting point, was attracted by beautiful sound, then moving forward to next step small enough to have chances to extend their joint attention and give response effectively. Repeating what the students have been learned for multiple times and helping them to recall to build evolving connections of prior knowledge may help to lower the risk of having tough moments. Reciprocal and appropriate language can help to chain all the things together. Additionally, colors, pictures, and stories help a lot to crystallize the learning goal and process.