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Improvising Melody Creation for Children with Physical Disabilities Using Various Hand Movements

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Abstract

The study aims to examine activities that foster creativity for children with physical disabilities by melody making using hand movement.

Currently, case studies that examine the manner in which physically handicapped children without intellectual disability create music are scarce. In this regard, hand movement may be a teaching intervention. When these children play the piano, they employ several hand movements, such as clustering, using one finger, and holding fingers flat on the keys. By exploring the possibilities of creative expression for children with physical disabilities, the study conducts improvisational piano performances using various approaches and analyzes the form of hand movements observed in their improvisations.

The study uses two methods. First, a teacher and three students with special needs jointly improvise a piano performance. The teacher accompanies the students using a repetitive chord pattern. Afterward, the students improvise a pentatonic (do-re-mi-sol-la) scale using only the black keys without specific instructions on how to play. In this manner, the students are free to produce music using personal methods. Second, the hand movements of the students are analyzed based on the recorded session.

The results indicate that student A played using only the left hand. Although slight tension was noted in the index finger, all fingers independently moved. Student B used two hands to play and alternately used the index and middle fingers. Student C played using the right index finger throughout the performance. All notes were played with the dotted half note rhythm from the first beat.

In summary, the students explored all hand movements possible to improvise and express music by developing their techniques and playing specific rhythmic patterns to the melody. The results suggested that music creation activities for children with physical disabilities can lead to learning that fosters creativity by enabling them to explore and maximize body movement.