*Examining a Universal Design for
Learning Approach in Music Education:
An Action Research Project*

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Outline of Presentation

1. Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
2. Brief Context of Music Education in Ontario
3. Research Method: Action Research
4. Findings: lessons, learning,
UDL principles
5. Implications

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

- Instruction where learning spaces include and support all students in meaningful engagement in classroom activities (Scott, 2017).

3 Principles of UDL

1. Multiple means of representation
2. Multiple means of action and expression
3. Multiple means of engagement

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Representation

- Simple and Intuitive Practice
- Perceptible Information
- Size and Space for Approach and Use

Action and Expression

- Flexibility in Use
- Equitable Use
- Low Physical Effort
- Tolerance for Error

Engagement

- Instructional Climate
- Communities of Learning

Context

- Little research on effective practices for children with disabilities in inclusive music education settings (Jellison, 2015)
- Typical classrooms in Ontario are filled with a variety of learners with diverse needs (Bennett, 2009)
- Important for music instructors to have an understanding of UDL principles and implement them in practice
- Research is therefore needed to look at ways that we can support all learners in music education

Method

Research Goal

To explore music education with atypical learners and examine how you could develop a Universal Design for Learning within practice.

Action Research

1. Develop a Focus
2. Create and Implement a Plan
3. Collect and Analyze Data
4. Reflect on and Modify your practice

Method

- **Participants**
  - 3, 12 year old students, 2 females, 1 male
- **Overview of Program**
  - Initial meetings with parent and child
  - Individualized lessons and content
  - 30 minute lessons over 5 weeks
- **Data Collection**
  - Lesson plans and reflective journals
  - Analyzed according to skill development and UDL principles

Journal

1. Goals of the lesson:
2. What we ended up doing:
3. What went well?
4. What were some challenges?
5. What are your general thoughts of the session?
6. How well is the student progressing?
7. What will you do for the next lesson? Why?
8. Ideas for next lesson

Learner Profile: James

- 12-years old, male, ASD (high functioning)
- Integrated into a regular classroom at school

Musical Strengths

- Singing, some piano experience, interested in ukulele

Learning Considerations

- extra time/breaks
- sensory overload/fatigue

Activities

Ukulele

Singing

Drumming

Theory

iPad

Lesson Title: Lesson 1

Date: November 1st

Instructor: Miriam

Goals for the lesson:

- To get an idea of the student's skills and abilities when it comes to ukulele, singing, rhythm and theory
- Get an idea of where the student wants to go from here – More piano? More singing? More drumming? More digital music?

Time	Activity	Materials
10 mins	Ukulele - Chord refresher (C, G, F, Am) - Play some songs Singing - Could do some singing with the ukulele - Christmas carols?	Ukulele (mine and one of Dr. Brook's) Folk songs to play on the uke Chord chart
10 mins	Bucket Drumming - Call and response style - Translate what we are playing into notation	Bucket drums/cajons Flashcards with different rhythms on them
5 mins	Theory Intro/Review - See what he knows already – note names? Treble and bass clef? - Use the white board or the mini 'white boards' to practice notes names – we take turns)	Whiteboards and markers
5 mins	iPad Time (only if everything else is completed) - Play either of the games that are on the iPad - Record something that we've done today to put in portfolio	

Skill Development

Motivation plays a key role in determining what activities allow for skill development.

- **Drumming:** different areas that can be played on the drum, different sounds, different note values (whole notes, quarter notes etc.)
- **Theory:** duration, time signatures, note subdivisions
- **Ukulele:** chords C, F, Am
- **Singing:** sang along with accompaniment

UDL Principles and Guidelines

Representation

- **Simple and Intuitive Practice** - information presented clearly
- **Perceptible Information** - aural and visual representation
- **Size and Space for Approach and Use** - same setup

Action and Expression

- **Flexibility in Use** - change activities when they are not working
- **Equitable Use** - goals and transitions
- **Tolerance for Error** - extra time

Engagement

- **Instructional Climate**
  - positive teacher-student relationship

Implications for UDL Pedagogy

- Importance of setting goals together
- Consistency, setting up a routine where student has choice
- Musical goals were growth mindset based, but not predetermined end
- Balance of building on strengths and then applying the principles of those strengths in different areas

Next Steps

- Broader understanding of UDL to be used in my future practice
- Provide more inclusive music education opportunities - private and community

Conclusion

By getting to know your student's individual needs and abilities and applying UDL principles to instruction, music education classrooms can be places where meaningful engagement and skill development is possible for all students.

Thank You!

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