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TEACHING MUSIC TO STUDENTS WITH MULTIPLE DISABILITIES:

A STUDY INTO TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES AND PRACTICES FOR

SELF-CONTAINED GENERAL MUSIC INSTRUCTION

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Abstract

This study investigates the experience of elementary teachers providing music instruction to students with multiple disabilities in self-contained classrooms. With legislation mandating public education for students with special needs, music teachers increasingly encounter these students in their classrooms, which range from inclusion to self-contained environments. Research indicates that music is a valid and valuable tool for supporting extra-musical learning as well as fostering musical growth in students with special needs. Additionally, research provides insight into inclusion experiences for teachers and for students. However, research into self-contained instruction is minimal. This study addressed that gap through phenomenological exploration of teachers in northwestern Virginia.

A survey sent to elementary teachers in the target region provided preliminary data, indicating that the study population was small but did share common perceptions. Teachers expressed uncertainty regarding purpose and process. Interviews with three teachers who have experience in self-contained music settings provided more in-depth data. This represents a purposeful sample. Their shared experience again showed commonalities that fell into categories of worth, support, and process. Each teacher described a journey of self-discovery that led to a richly rewarding experience with this specialized form of instruction.

The results, consistent with a review of literature and the personal experience of the researcher, indicate that teachers in self-contained settings value these interactions for musical and extra-musical outcomes. They do not rely on traditional curriculum or

standards and frequently adapt materials. All of the teachers in this study report feeling under-qualified to work with this population and desire more training and resources, though they are typically not aware of resources that are available. Several issues surfaced that were not included in the literature review, including the teaching and learning process, working with aides, and factors involving time.

These findings indicated that teachers would benefit from networking systems, allowing them to share their frustrations and successes. Administrators could support their staff by providing resources and training opportunities. Further study into self-contained music instruction for elementary students is needed. Possible areas of focus include examining the perceptions of students and parents and exploring curriculum development and presentation.

Chapter 1: Introduction

He's been coming to my music room for a year and a half now, his nurse wheeling him down once a week with his three, four, or five classmates. Attendance in this group is quite variable. But not eight-year-old Leon – he's usually here, strapped into his chair. He doesn't talk; in fact, I rarely even hear a sound. However, his nurse reports that he often makes noises to register dissatisfaction. Motor control in his arms is so poor that finding a switch button to make a choice is often hit or miss. But he's been making eye contact and smiling when I sing to him. Last week, rocking back and forth with me to "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," he laughed. And this week, he sang. Not that it sounded like a song, but he used his voice to join with my singing. Progress! Musical growth measured in baby steps.

For the past two years, I have given music instruction to a group of elementary students with multiple disabilities. Since I received no special education training in college or elsewhere, I felt unprepared to reach these students. So when Leon made eye contact with me, it was an unexpected surprise, and when he used his voice, I felt like I hit like the jackpot. I knew from his laugh that he had made an emotional response to music because of what I gave him.

I also have experience as a parent of children with special needs. My children and my students taught me that, just as a seedling requires good soil, sun, water, and space, children with special needs require careful cultivating. I began to seek materials that would help me understand the most appropriate music education methods for students with multiple disabilities.

As legislation regarding public school special education mandated increasing levels of inclusion, music educators encountered more students with special needs in their classrooms. Teachers lacked training and resources to address the needs of these students.

Researchers and teachers began to examine questions of value and purpose as they strove to meet the needs of this new student population.

WORTH OF MUSIC

"Aesthetic sensitivity exists to some degree in all human beings, can provide the same delights for all humans, is capable of development for all human beings" (Reimer 1989, 111). Though not specifically referencing special education, this quote provides an argument for the presence of music in the education of students with disabilities. All human beings have the potential to perceive and react to music at an emotional level. Acknowledging that goals commonly presented in national curricula may not be relevant to students with severe and profound learning disabilities, Ockelford states that "for all children and young people, irrespective of abilities or needs, music is there to enhance the quality of life, potentially providing a medium of self-expression and communication with others" (2008, 39).

The human body is hard-wired to respond to music. Anthropological evidence of music's ancient presence, combined with Darwin's theory of natural selection, suggests that "music does have biological value" (Jensen 2000, 19). If music did not play an important role in human existence, it would have disappeared.

Synthesizing research into brain activity and music, Jensen says, "Music may have a fast track to engaging and enhancing higher brain activities and coherence" (2000, 32). Music activates response across the whole brain.

> Though there is certainly substantial activation in the temporal lobe, there is also activation in the left inferior frontal lobe, right dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, left

cortex, left occipital lobe, and the cerebellum in response to music. (Jensen 2000, 12)

Farnan and Johnson (1988) point out that this means music impacts students regardless of their level of awareness. At the sub-cortex level,

the components of musical sound affect body reflexes, heart rate, breathing, the senses and basic emotional reactions.… A person who functions below the level of awareness is still able to respond to musical experiences. (9)

Musical interactions with the cortex influence attention, memory, meaning, voluntary movement, language, and social skills. Not only does listening to and engaging in music-making promote activity across the entire brain, it also appears to encourage the harmonious communication across the hemispheres known as coherence (Jensen 2000, Bennett and Bennett 2009).

Students with multiple disabilities have the capacity to demonstrate musical growth (Ockelford 2006). Though they move at an atypical pace along the developmental progression, and may demonstrate achievement in non-traditional ways, these students react to music, interact with music, and instigate musical experience. They have the right to guidance and support in this process.

Music Therapy

Interaction with music for students with special needs promotes a wide range of non-musical outcomes including improved academic performance, communication skills, motor development, and socialization (Breeze 2000, Burkett and Hammel 2007, Charles 2010, Frick 1999, Spotlight on Making 2007/2004, Sobol 2008, Zinzar 1987 et al). Music

therapists have long exploited the power of music to reach students with disabilities. Therapy falls under the scope of health care rather than education; music serves as the treatment medium for a client's non-musical needs. Teachers can draw educational implications from the work of therapists. For example, DeBedout and Worden (2006) report that face-to-face interactions between a student with severe intellectual disabilities and a music therapist consistently yielded higher movement responses than interactions with an inanimate music device. Since individualized interactions appear to facilitate improved achievement, this raises questions regarding the potential benefits to students in a self-contained setting. Such interactions are less likely in inclusion environments with larger teacher-to-student ratios.

Didactic function

The intersection of music therapy and music education is often murky and blurred. Drawing on examples from various studies, Ockelford suggests that the "prevalent view among those working in the field (as well as lay people) is that music *therapy* is the appropriate term to use for all formal musical activities undertaken with children and young people with disabilities" (2008, 37). The problem, Lubet argues, is the conception that "music therapy is for the less able" (2009, 730).

While it is important to recognize the unique features of education-driven and therapy-driven programs, "didacticism is by no means inherently problematic. It can be laudable and may even be inevitable" (Lubet 2009, 730). Drawing from the work of music therapists is appropriate for music educators working with students with special needs. Citing Mithen's work involving the melodic and rhythmic elements of infant-

directed speech, Lubet makes the case that in terms of communication, "music *is* education" (729). Music therapists are a worthy, valuable resource for music educators and should be tapped (Spotlight on Making 2007/2004). Regardless of the targeted outcome, educators and scholars recognize the value of music in the lives of students with disabilities.

PLACEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Inequality in education for students with disabilities was at the heart of special education legislation in the United States in the middle of the 20th century. With the advent of civil rights, the dominant educational and legal view of "separate but equal" was no longer culturally acceptable. Legislation through the 1960's and 1970's moved increasingly toward placing children with disabilities in public schools instead of separate institutions (Hammel and Hourigan 2011, Graham and Beer 1980). In 1975, Public Law 94-142 mandated free and appropriate education to all students with disabilities with non-handicapped peers "to the maximum extent possible" (20 USC 1412 Section 612 89 Stat. 780). As a result, teachers in all curricular areas faced classes with increasingly diverse needs. The law specifically referenced the arts, stating, "The use of the arts as a teaching tool for the handicapped has long been recognized as a viable, effective way not only of teaching special skills, but also of reaching youngsters who had been otherwise unteachable" (Code of Federal Regulations 1977, 467).

Special education, defined by Hallahan and Kauffman as "specially designed instruction, which meets the unique needs of an exceptional child" (1978, 4), is developed and managed through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Part of the IEP

process involves determining the most appropriate educational setting. According to the law, educators must identify the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), or "the environment where a student learns best" when determining school and class placements (Hammel and Hourigan 2011, 34). The ethics underlying LRE are not new, nor are they limited to students with special needs. Citing Plato, Gordon says, "There is nothing more devastating and unequal than the equal treatment of students with unequal aptitude" (1980, 41).

The LRE philosophy views the general classroom as the desired environment. However, some students "learn best in an environment that is homogeneous, has a smaller student to teacher ratio, or is at a different time of day" (Hammel and Hourigan 2011, 34). In some cases, self-contained instruction in music is the least restrictive environment. Beyond meeting unique learning needs of students with disabilities, self-contained groupings may also provide social benefits. Lubet has found solidarity and support among members of musical communities who share a specific disability (2009, 730). Making decisions regarding appropriate placements in public school settings, though guided by legislation, ultimately depends on case-by-case evaluation of each student's unique needs.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Emerging research addresses effective teacher training and preparation (Hammel 2000, Hourigan 2007, Hammel and Hourigan 2011). Researchers are also examining musical benefits to students with special needs (Ockelford 2008, Portowitz 2007 et al), investigating the experiences of students with specific disabilities (Spotlight on Making

2007/2004 et al), and exploring strategies and experiences of successful inclusion (Darrow 2009, Hammel and Hourigan 2011 et al). Teaching music to students with multiple disabilities is under-represented in academia. Ockelford says, "Relatively little has been written on music education for children and young people with disabilities, and most of the texts that do exist were published largely before the education of those with severe or profound learning difficulties had seriously got underway" (2008, 39).

Swanson (1986) conducted a content analysis of special music education curricula, concluding, "It is recommended that curricular developers [at the state level] give attention to a multifaceted curriculum including stated music goals, music skills objectives, and basic functioning skills for educable mentally handicapped learners" (65). A team of researchers in England approached curriculum development for students with severe and profound learning needs through a project called *Sounds of Intent* (Ockelford 2008).

Researchers involved in *Sounds of Intent* set out to "critique, refine and extend an original framework of musical development for children with complex needs, specifically for those with PMLD [Profound and Multiple Learning Disorders]" (Welch et al 2009). The team first examined existing music education standards in the United Kingdom, which they found inappropriate for the performance level of students with PMLD. Researchers also explored existing music education models serving this student population. The dominant use of music in those models was therapeutic, but viewed by practitioners as valuable (Ockelford 2002, Welch et al 2009). Welch, Ockelford, Carter, Zimmermann, and Himonides then gathered field data demonstrating musical interactions of students with PMLD, which they used to develop a picture of musical development.

The resulting framework outlines increasing student competencies in three spheres of musical engagement: reactive, proactive, and interactive (Ockelford 2008, 58). Researchers continue to evaluate effective use of this framework through field investigations.

Further research focused on self-contained instruction is virtually non-existent. There is a small but present group of elementary general music educators teaching students with multiple disabilities in self-contained settings. In the target region of this study, three of the five responding school districts offered self-contained music instruction; in one of these districts, a privately contracted music therapist provided services (see Appendix A). In the survey data gathered for this report, seven of the fourteen respondents indicated that they currently teach or have taught in self-contained special education settings (see Appendix B). Given the limited research available regarding self-contained music instruction, this group of teachers is left with serious questions unanswered. What is appropriate music education for students with multiple disabilities? How is it determined? How is it delivered? Gaps in available resources drew me to approach this issue by looking at practicing teachers in self-contained teaching settings.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study investigated the experiences of teachers who provide instruction to students with multiple disabilities in self-contained settings. To that end, I investigated the following research questions:

• What do elementary general music teachers consider to be the purpose of self-contained music sessions with students with multiple disabilities?

• How do teachers formulate their understanding of purpose?

• How do they plan for instruction? What types of goals do they address?

• What helps or hinders the achievement of their goals?

• What do the common threads of these experiences tell us about best practice in music education for students with multiple disabilities?

DEFINITIONS

In any field there is unique vocabulary. The following terms in the fields of music education and special education are relevant to understanding this report and are highlighted in this section to allow the reader quick reference.

Complex needs: A British term categorizing disability that includes "a number of discrete needs – relating to their health, education, welfare, development, home environment" (Ockelford 2007, 2)

Disability (Special learner): "Any student who has an established and documented physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities" (Burkett 2007, 1.1). The United States government defines a student with a disability "as having mental retardation, a hearing impairment (including deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (including blindness), a serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this part as "emotional disturbance"), an orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, an other health impairment, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities, and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services" (IDEA A:300.8, 1).

General music: A music program that offers a broad range of musical experiences. In elementary programs, singing, playing classroom percussion instruments and/or recorder, and basics of music theory and history are typically included.

Intellectual disability: "Intellectual disability is characterized both by a significantly below-average score on a test of mental ability or intelligence and by limitations in the ability to function in areas of daily life, such as communication, self-care, and getting along in social situations and school activities. Intellectual disability is sometimes referred to as a cognitive disability or mental retardation" (CDC 2005).

Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA): United States legislation that mandates public education to students with disabilities. IDEA began with Public Law 94-142 (1975) and includes the 1990 and 2004 revisions.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): A document developed for students with disabilities highlighting their educational plan. An IEP includes goals, expected outcomes, allowed adaptations and accommodations, and plans for implementation.

Inclusion: Programs in which placement for students with disabilities begins by considering the appropriateness of the general classroom. These types of programs may include the assistance of an aide or nurse and may be partial or full-day placements. Inclusion is the preferred term and replaces mainstreaming.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): The education placement that places a child in an environment where they can function with the highest degree of independence. Regarding LRE, IDEA legislation specifies that "to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled" (Building the Legacy 2006).

Mainstreaming: An early term used to refer to incorporating learners with special needs into the general classroom, inferring that initial placement is a specialized setting outside of the "main stream" of education.

Music Educators National Conference (MENC): An organization from the United States providing support for music educators and advocating for music education.

Multiple disabilities: Disabilities in more than one area, most often both physical and mental impairment. IDEA legislation states, "Multiple disabilities means concomitant impairments (such as mental retardation-blindness or mental retardation-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. Multiple disabilities does not include deaf-blindness" (IDEA A:300.8, 7).

Music education: Instruction in music facilitated by a certified teacher in which the intended outcomes are musical.

Music therapy: "Clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship by a credentialed professional who has completed an approved music therapy program" (American Music Therapy Association definition).

Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD): A British term categorizing disability that includes "profound global development delay, such that cognitive,

sensory, physical, emotional, and social development are in the very early stages (as in the first 12 months of usual development)" (Ockelford 2007, 2).

Self-contained: Instruction delivered in an environment separate from learners with typical needs. May be full or partial day placement. Self-contained classrooms are sometimes grouped by ability level, sometimes by age level, and sometimes represent multiple age and ability levels.

Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD): A British term categorizing disability that includes "severe global development delay, such that cognitive, sensory, physical, emotional, and social development are in the very early stages (as in the first 12 to 30 months of usual development)" (Ockelford 2007, 2)

Special education (SPED): Explained in IDEA as "specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including – (A) instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings; and (B) instruction in physical education" (Dept. of Ed. 2006).

Typical needs: Students in a regular general education program who do not qualify for specialized services.

CHAPTER 2: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

With this project, I sought to understand the experience of elementary general music educators teaching students with multiple disabilities in self-contained settings. To that end, I explored the following research questions:

- What do elementary general music teachers consider to be the purpose of self-contained music sessions with students with multiple disabilities?

- How do teachers formulate their understanding of purpose?

- How do they plan for instruction? What types of goals do they address?

- What helps or hinders the achievement of their goals?

- What do the common threads of these experiences tell us about best practice in music education for students with multiple disabilities?

Qualitative research includes a wide range of approaches to understanding lived experience. Consistent among the various research styles are data-gathering in the field, the presence of the researcher, and the acceptance of multiple realities within a common experience. Educational research, in particular music and special education, has increasingly embraced qualitative models. This study addressed the phenomenon of self-contained music instruction to elementary students with multiple disabilities by examining teacher experiences.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

In selecting a research paradigm, researchers must first examine the nature of their questions. Are the questions best addressed through hypotheses, quantitative

analysis, and statistical tests, or do the questions seek deeper contextual meaning? To borrow a musical metaphor from Macmillan and Colwell (Bresler and Stake 1992), the difference between quantitative and qualitative research is like the difference between playing from a musical score and playing off figured bass. A composer prepares a musical score that musicians can reproduce with consistent results, which mirrors the type of process required in quantitative research. Alternatively, just as a figured bass suggests structure and form without specifying the exact musical outcome, qualitative research uses a process that facilitates the investigation of context-specific questions. "When…the starting point is the reality of educational provision or policy and the orientation is toward understanding the provision better or informing policy decisions on it, this further [qualitative] level of insight takes on an inescapable importance" (Hegarty and Evans 1985, 110).

The researcher's voice

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) define qualitative research as "a situational activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible … [Qualitative researchers attempt] to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (3). Qualitative research makes certain assumptions, since it places the observer in a social context rather than in a controlled lab setting. Researchers accept that any given situation may comprise several realities. Drawing on the thinking of Kant, early pioneers in this field contrasted nomena (things understood independent of experience) with phenomena (things understood within experience), contending that we can only ever truly know the latter

(Bresler and Stake 1992). Therefore, qualitative research and its findings should emerge

from the participant's experience. It is each person's perception of reality that ultimately

leads us to understand the experience. Qualitative research seeks out "uniqueness of the

individual case, and the different intentionalities of the actors who populate the case"

(Bresler and Stake 1992, 78).

Qualitative researchers accept an active role in their investigations, and results

include the researcher and her voice (Creswell 2007, Lichtman 2009, Bresler and Stake

1992). This paradigm recognizes and names its presence rather than seeking to eliminate

it in the pursuit of objectivity. "The researcher's interpretations cannot be separated from

their background, history, context, and prior understandings" (Creswell 2007, 39). In

instructing researchers in qualitative methodology, Lichtman (2009) says:

> You are not trying to do away with your role, as you would if you were
> conducting traditional experimental research. You are not trying to be objective.
> You adopt the role of constructing and subsequently interpreting the reality of the
> person being interviewed, but *your own lens is critical* [emphasis added]….
> Accept that you, as the researcher, serve as the filter through which information is
> gathered, processed, and organized. (140)

Presence of researcher in this study

The experience of the researcher is important for the reader to understand, as it is

through the interpretative lens of the researcher that the phenomenon is reported.

Hourigan's doctoral dissertation (2007), in which his experience as a music teacher

educator and parent of children with autism was relevant to his presentation of findings,

served as a model for this study. Noyd (2008) draws on her experience as a music teacher

in an alternative high school to argue for specialized curriculum. Sword (1999) reflected

on her role as a researcher investigating prenatal care among low-income mothers.

> I was cognizant of the fact that my professional background and familiarity with the literature and, to a lesser extent, my personal experiences were influences on my interpretation of data. They not only gave me a prior familiarity with relevant issues but also enhanced my ability to make sense of the data. (275)

Therefore, in this study, it was important for me to acknowledge my bias both as a teacher of students with multiple disabilities and as a parent of children in the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum. Through my classroom experience, I came to value self-contained music education for my students. As a parent, I learned that educating first myself, and then the communities in which my children are present, is the first step toward providing appropriate educational opportunities for them.

I entered this study with these biases, and established my personal philosophy by writing reflection statements and conducting a self-interview. This allowed me to focus more closely on what each participant was saying. I consciously set aside my bias "in a reflective move that cultivates curiosity" (Creswell 2007, 62) as I listened to the participants and worked with the transcripts. Those documents became part of the information I considered in synthesizing my findings. In qualitative research, investigating a topic of lived rather than theoretical experience is commonly accepted (Creswell 2007). The slant of advocacy will surface in the conclusion. Creswell describes this perspective as appropriate in phenomenological work (48).

Multiple pictures of reality

During the qualitative process, "questions emerge as the researcher is sensitized to the meanings that the participants bring to the situation" (Mertens and McLaughlin 2004, 103). As described by Creswell (2007), the emergent design exists as a critical part of qualitative study. "The initial plan for research cannot be tightly prescribed, and…all phases of the process may change or shift after the researchers enter the field and begin to collect data" (39). Qualitative research accepts changes throughout the process, from adapting the research questions to changes in methodological procedure.

Phenomenology "describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon" and seeks to "reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence (a 'grasp of the very thing')" (Creswell 2007, 57, 58). "Phenomenologists do not assume they know what things mean to others. Emphasizing the subjective aspects, they attempt to gain entry into the conceptual world of themselves and others" (Bresler and Stake 1992, 76). Lichtman (2009) offers phenomenology as a valid way to explore "gaps in a discipline, those areas not considered important to research" (78), citing a study done by Rose exploring holes in the broad area of geography.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

Educational research began to embrace qualitative models during the 1980's, complementing the quantitative approach, which had long existed as the dominant paradigm. Emerging from the social sciences – anthropology in particular – the qualitative style of investigation presented "a portrayal of an intact social or cultural

scene" (LeCompte, Millroy, and Preissle 1992, xv). Ethnography served as an early

bridge between anthropology and education (Denizen and Lincoln 2005, Lichtman 2009,

et al). Smith and Hodkinson write that as recently as 2002 educational research was still

being judged by standards most often ascribed to quantitative models. However, they cite

a 2002 report from the National Research Council Committee acknowledging unique

features of this type of educational research:

> They noted factors such as human volition, the central role of ethics that limits
> control group possibilities, rapid changes in educational programs, and so forth.…
> The committee's response to this diminution of control was to say that
> educational…researchers must 'pay close attention to context' when pursuing and
> interpreting the results of their research. (Denizen and Lincoln 2005, 919)

These factors underlie the rise of popularity and acceptance of qualitative research

in education. "Concerns about student achievement yielded concern by some to what

children were actually doing in school" (Bressler and Stake 1992, 79). Qualitative inquiry

had "evolved from that of an upstart, marginal, and often pariah stepchild to a respected

member of the research committee," sometimes even preferred over quantitative

approaches (Lecompte, Millroy, Preissle 1992, xvi).

Qualitative research in special education

The move toward qualitative research has been particularly intentional in special

education, as documented in the reports of the 1982 special education research

symposium funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. In the introduction to

published papers from this symposium, Hegarty and Evans (1985) report the conclusion

that research should move from a focus on children's conditions to "study and evaluation of approaches to intervention" (2). The report continues:

> The various dimensions of the complex development and situation of the exceptional person and his or her education, their interdependence and causal relationship must come into the scope of special education research. To ensure this, such research must not only describe the facts but also strive to understand the subjective definitions and complex relationship; *discovering meaning is as important as evaluating quantitative facts* [emphasis added]. (6)

Special education involves unique factors for research and requires a model that is flexible enough to change through the research process (Mertens and McLaughlin 2004). Because of the small and variable populations, diverse environments, inadequate measurement tools to account for disabilities, and the high risk of participant misuse, researchers must take exceptional care in planning and conducting their studies. The focus in qualitative research on individualization rather than generalization allows researchers to acknowledge and address these concerns without compromising the findings (Hegarty and Evens 1985, Mertens and McLaughlin 2004). Of these factors, population size and variable diverse environments are also issues in music education research.

Qualitative research in music education

Music education research, like educational research, relied exclusively on quantitative models until the later part of the 20th century. However, music educators have long practiced qualitative strategies in their pedagogical approaches, analyzing and drawing conclusions from information gathered through observations in natural settings.

Anthropology, also similar to the broader field of education, served as a bridge for music research and qualitative study through ethnomusicology (Bressler 1992). Qualitative study allows the researcher to "discern the complexities of music education" (83) and promotes investigation into perceptions, assumptions, methodology, and interrelationships. As in special education, these complexities are crucial to the understanding of the field of music education yet difficult to measure empirically.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH AND THIS STUDY

Since my research questions related to perceptions of experience, I needed a model that allowed for possible changes in direction. The intent of this study was not to measure or quantify an experience, but to understand it from the participant's perspectives. The potentially small study population at the intersection of special education and music education presented an additional concern. To avoid broad generalizations, I sought a model that would allow for the voices of a few to be heard. Gathering data in natural settings provided the opportunity to collect authentic accounts of the experiences of self-contained music instruction. Finally, I wanted the researcher's voice to reflect my personal involvement with this topic.

This study used a phenomenological approach. I identified participants who shared the experience of teaching music to elementary age students with multiple disabilities. The research process gave them an opportunity to describe that experience. The lack of information available regarding self-contained special education music instruction, as well as the need to address this void, further supported my choice of approach.

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The research process involves both data collecting and analysis. Data collection in qualitative investigations can take many forms including, as in this study, surveys and interviews. The gathered data, transcripts and survey responses, is analyzed through a process of coding and distilled into themes, which are then reported as shared experience. This report draws accountability through triangulation with outside sources, member checks with participants in the research, and a reporting style that includes thick detail.

Data collection

Though qualitative studies vary dramatically in style and form, they typically follow a common process regarding data collection. Creswell (2007) describes it as cyclical, including locating a site or individual, gaining access and making rapport, purposefully sampling, collecting data, recording information, resolving field issues, and sorting data. The most common form of data collection in phenomenology is interview, though other methods such as survey, observation, and collecting artifacts may be used (Creswell 2007, Casey 1992). I began my study by identifying teachers in my geographic region of interest, soliciting responses from those who potentially shared the experience of teaching music to elementary students with multiple disabilities in a self-contained classroom. I collected names of music teachers from the websites of public elementary schools from eight school districts in my target region. For this study, I collected data in two phases, using a survey and interviews.

Survey

Surveys typically yield standardized information from larger numbers with the aim of representing an entire study population (Bresler and Stake 1992, Casey 1992). Depending on the type of information they seek, surveys vary greatly. Forced-choice questions lend themselves to statistical analysis, but open-ended questions allow respondents to describe their experiences in their own words – a limited interview of sorts. Surveys provide easy access to a broader range of participants than interviews, but may yield lower response rates and do not give researchers the opportunity to follow up (Casey 1992).

Although surveys are not common in phenomenology, there is precedence for this format in the study of teacher competencies by Hammel (2001) and the Sounds of Intent project (Ockelford 2002). Hammel and Ockelford both used survey/questionnaire to gather initial data, which helped shape the next stage of data collection. Using a survey, Hammel gathered data for her study of teacher competencies for music instruction in inclusion settings. She then conducted follow-up interviews with selected music teachers and used her results to develop a unit of study in teacher training programs.

In the *Sounds of Intent* project, Ockelford and his team focused specifically on music instruction in self-contained settings. The authors described this long-term project as "exploratory in nature…attempting to place music education in a broad and realistic context" (2002, 179). Using questionnaires and field observations, the authors worked on "developing accurate descriptions and shared interpretations of musical behavior" (Welch 2009, 355).

Like Hammel, I used a survey to form an initial picture of the problem, also hoping to identify potential interview participants. I created an open question tool that I piloted with music teacher colleagues in my graduate program and modified based on their feedback. The purposes of this survey were to establish a broad picture of how many teachers work with the target student population, identify the elementary public school programs that offer these students music education in a self-contained environment, and identify teachers' perceptions of the purpose of music education for students with multiple disabilities. Additionally, I sought to determine what types of resources teachers use to develop lessons for these students.

I prepared the survey with the on-line tool Survey Monkey (see Appendix B) and distributed it to 58 elementary music teachers representing eight northwest Virginia public school districts. Each music teacher received a cover letter and attached consent file in an e-mail. After reading the consent form, teachers who opted to participate clicked on a link to the survey, which signified consent (see Appendices C and D). The survey generated 14 responses across five school districts for a 24 percent rate of return.

Interview

Interviews allow a researcher to collect information not available through field observations, with a focus on gathering multiple perceptions of a common experience (Bresler and Stake 1992). The conversational nature of interviews also provides the opportunity for the researcher to develop a deeper understanding of the participant's experience. Researchers commonly use interviewing in special education music research investigations. Hourigan's 2009 study of teachers' perceptions regarding special needs,

Hammel's 2001 study of essential teacher competencies for special learners in music, and Frick's 1999 study of the impact of music on developmentally delayed preschoolers all made use of interview as in integral part of the methodologies.

I was able to form an initial picture of the problem from the survey data, which suggested that the target population was small but present, and that there was commonality in the experiences respondents described. This information supported the next stage of data gathering: one-on-one interviews. The interview process offered specific benefits. I was able to respond directly to each participant, hear more in-depth accounts, and seek out uniqueness in each person's experience and personality. All voices received equal representation since individualized interviews allowed each participant to speak without interruption or dominance of another person. Consistent with a phenomenological approach, participants in this study represented a purposeful sample, meaning "individuals are chosen because they represent typical cases in a program" (Mertens and McLaughlin 2004, 146). In this case, the sample was elementary music teachers with experience teaching in a self-contained multiple needs setting. One participant indicated a willingness to be interviewed through her survey response.

While drawing from a close pool of participants may reduce credibility (Creswell 2009), Rumrill and Cook (2001) state, "For some research questions or problems, access to research participants may be difficult to achieve. .… In those cases, researchers often use a strategy commonly referred to as convenience sampling" (168). I contacted three other potential participants who I knew had experience in self-contained special education classrooms. Two of them agreed to an in-person interview, and the third

provided a brief description of her experience in an e-mail message. I met each

participant at a time and location they identified as most convenient for the interview.

I structured each meeting around a basic interview guide that I modified slightly

after the first interview to adjust for gaps in the information I was seeking (see Appendix

F). I asked the first participant follow-up questions in an e-mail to address those gaps.

Each participant read and signed a consent form (see Appendix E) and agreed to be

recorded with a digital audio recorder. The interviews explored music teachers'

understandings of the purpose of self-contained music instruction and how they came to

that understanding, how they organize their instruction, what resources they have

available, what materials they commonly draw on, what approaches they find most

successful and least successful, and how they measure success.

To establish my own position I conducted a self-interview (Rumrill and Cook

2001) following the guide used in the interviews (see Appendix K). The three interviews

combined lasted 1 hour and 30 minutes and produced 31 pages of transcriptions. I

recorded each interview on a digital recorder and transcribed each interview within 24

hours of meeting with the teacher. Inverviewees read the transcripts to ensure accuracy.

Data analysis

Inductive analysis resides at the center of qualitative research (Creswell 2007,

Gibbs 2007). The analysis process moves from identifying broad themes to increasingly

focused issues or themes (Bresler and Stakes 1992). Creswell (2007) describes the

process of analyzing interview transcriptions in three stages. The first produces a

structural description. Coded interview transcriptions, identifying significant statements

and "clusters of meaning," mark this stage (61, Gibbs 2007). Throughout the stages, the researcher keeps notes relating to the codes as well as the process of forming the codes.

In the second stage, the researcher creates a textural description, drawing from the coded material as well as contextual factors. While researchers may include textural descriptions of their own experiences, these may also be included in the introduction or the method discussion.

Finally, the researcher creates a description of the phenomenon that draws on the common experiences of the participants: the essence (Creswell 2007). The essence highlights the core of the shared experience – the structure that remains the same regardless of who experiences it. Phenomenological researchers create a thick description for the reader, acknowledging the validity of multiple realities of an experience that may surface in conducting the research and reporting the findings (Mertens and McLaughlin 2004). Similarly, data collected from open-ended survey questions may be examined for frequently recurring themes and synthesized in narrative form (Casey 1992). Just as exemplary musical performances feature sensitive interpretation, the reporting of qualitative research is an art of expressivity:

> Though unobstructive, the researcher interacts with teaching and learning phenomena, bringing unique experience and scholarship into interpretation. Along with the relatively uncontestable descriptions, traces of the researcher's personal understanding are presented. The character and the art form are not hidden. (Bresler and Stakes 1992, 84)

I transcribed each interview within 24 hours of completing the interview, noting my own impressions and recollections. Each participant read the transcription to check for accuracy and responded by e-mail, either accepting the interview or offering

additional information. I then read the transcriptions and identified significant statements

and experiences. After the first interview, I developed a codebook (see Appendix G),

referencing techniques and questions suggested by Gibbs (2007). Using questions such as

"What is going on here," "What is the person saying," and "What do these statements

take for granted," (41) I identified recurring themes, moving from descriptive to

analytical. I also contacted each participant to solicit follow-up information when I came

across a comment or concept for which I wanted clarification. That information was

added to each interview file. As the process evolved, I refined the codebook, expanding

the codes to address newly emerging themes, returning to each interview to refine the

coding. I coded the self-interview and reflections using the same codes. The coded

transcriptions represent a structural description of each participant's experience.

After completing the coding for the interviews, I examined themes to establish a

hierarchy of perceived priorities for each interview. This allowed me to create a textural

description of each teacher's experience of self-contained music instruction for students

with multiple disabilities. I then examined the combined interview codes following the

same process. The resulting description represents the shared experience of these three

teachers.

Next I looked at the survey data using the same codes from the interview

transcripts. I again created a textural description based on the survey data. Then I

compared the results from the interviews to the data from the survey. In the same way

that the three interview transcripts came together to create a single description, the survey

data was incorporated into the shared experience. The resulting composite represented the

final stage of analysis that Creswell calls "the essence" (2007, 62). I returned to my

coded self-interview and reflections and created a textural description. The report from interviews and survey data were then compared to the findings from my review of literature and my personal experience.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Qualitative researchers' rigorous attention to credibility and confirmability provide accountability in their investigations (Mertens and McLaughlin 2004). Roughly parallel to internal validity in quantitative studies, credibility establishes "a correspondence between the way the respondents actually perceive social constructs and the way the researcher portrays their viewpoints" (105). Member checks, triangulation, and thick detail – strategies for establishing credibility – represent an important part of the qualitative process (Mertens 2004, Creswell 2007). Member checks involve collaboration with participants and peers, ensuring accuracy in reporting and interpreting the data. I used member checks with each interviewee and with my thesis advisor to ensure accurate interpretation of participant experience and appropriate use of my voice.

Through triangulation, the researcher looks for consistencies between several accounts or methods, recognizing that multiple realities may not bring everything onto common ground (Mertens and McLaughlin 2004). Beyond comparing the experiences of the various participants, triangulation "can include comparisons to the researcher's own experiences and the results from literature reviews" (Rumrill and Cook 2001, 173). Triangulation between each of the interview transcripts, the survey data, my personal interview and notes, and relevant literature allowed me to further establish credibility.

Though the burden of connecting to personal context is on the reader, it is the responsibility of the researcher to provide sufficient detail (Mertens and McLaughlin 2004). Thick description "is developed in such a way that judgments about the degree or fit of similarity may be made by others who wish to apply all or part of the findings elsewhere" (151). The participant backgrounds, codebook, and textural descriptions provide thick description in this study.

Confirmability refers to the reader's ability to confirm the accuracy of the report, similar to objectivity in quantitative research (Mertins and McLaughlin 2004). The logic the researcher followed should be explicit. Recognizing change as an integral part of the qualitative process, researchers establish confirmability through careful, detailed accounting of process, field notes, source records, and researcher bias statements. In this study, the extensive appendices provide confirmability.

SUMMARY

This investigation explored the experience of elementary general music educators teaching students with multiple disabilities in self-contained settings. I sought to understand teachers' perceptions of the purpose of self-contained music instruction to students with multiple disabilities, the process of developing goals and instruction, and factors that support or hinder instruction. I hoped ultimately to gain insight into best practice for music education for students with multiple disabilities.

Qualitative research, specifically phenomenology, is a well-established research paradigm in education. Investigations in music education and special education are well-suited to the inductive and flexible nature of the model. This study, with its emphasis on

shared experiences, followed a qualitative process. I formed an initial picture of the problem through an on-line survey, which was distributed to music teachers within a targeted geographic region. I probed more deeply into the phenomenon through interviews with three music teachers whose experiences fell within my targeted parameters. Through a process of coding interview and survey data and writing textural descriptions, I developed a picture of shared experience. Member checks and thick detail ensured accuracy in my reporting. The resulting essence allowed me to triangulate the data gathered in my research with a review of literature, as well as with my own experience and established accountability.

In the next chapter, I present an overview of research into strands relevant to this study: validity of music education for students with disabilities, the purpose of music instruction for students with disabilities, existing models for providing music education to this population, and teacher training and preparation for instructing students with special needs.

CHAPTER 3: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This study explored the experience of general music elementary teachers working in self-contained public school settings with students with multiple disabilities. Educational literature regarding music education for students with disabilities largely focuses on inclusion. While there is a degree of crossover for teachers in self-contained settings, the different environment raises unique issues including purpose, potential, and strategies for implementation. A review of the literature establishes a context for investigations into issues of special education and the experiences of teachers in self-contained settings. For this study, the review of literature addressed a series of questions:

- Is music education appropriate for students with multiple disabilities? What benefits do these students derive from musical interactions?

- What musical purposes are served for students with multiple disabilities through music instruction? What general educational purposes are served?

- How is music education delivered to students with multiple disabilities? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the various models, in particular for students with multiple disabilities?

- How are teachers trained to teach this population? Does the training adequately prepare them for self-contained groups of students with multiple disabilities?

- What resources are available for music educators of students with multiple disabilities?

MUSICAL BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Music educators and researchers overwhelmingly believe that music is an important educational element for students with special needs. Music is a part of life, universal and ubiquitous. Ockelford, Welch, and Zimmerman (2002) point out that while

students with disabilities do encounter music in education and therapy settings, most of

their encounters with music occur throughout regular daily activities.

> For them, the incidental input from, for example, the succession of television
> theme tunes that consistently map out their evenings or the radio played in the taxi
> to and from school for an hour or so each day, may constitute the most significant
> musical experiences of their lives. (179)

In Western education models, Lubet (2009) describes a focus on talent

development, developing performance skills with an ability-based winnowing process

culminating in fiercely competitive school programs. Recognizing an alternative focus on

music as an "activity of daily living accessible to and expected of nearly all," he argues

that "music functions as a didactic tool. And to deny access to participation in music… is

literally dehumanizing" (279).

Music incites physical responses in the brain; all people, regardless of their level

of awareness, respond to music (Farnan and Johnson 1988, Latham 1980). "Many adults

with special needs find social and spiritual identity and purposeful experiences in the arts

that they cannot find through other experiences" (Hammel and Hourigan 2011, 123). A

1980 report of the joint Special Projects Committee of MENC and the National

Committee, Arts for the Handicapped states,

> Although various handicapping conditions may limit the means through which
> individuals can make music and respond to music, the potential for enhancing the
> human experience through music learning does not change. (Thompson 1980, 26)

Students with disabilities demonstrate the potential for musical growth (Graham

and Beer 1980, Farnan and Johnson 1988, Portowitz 2007, Welch, Ockelford, Carter et al

2009). 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).

With evidence for potential growth, physiological responses to music, and recognition of the global experience music provides, music educators have a moral responsibility to provide music instruction to students with disabilities (Thompson 1980, Hammel and Hourigan 2011). A position statement adopted by MENC (1997, under "Access to Music Education") states, "Because of the role of the arts in civilization, and because of their unique ability to communicate the ideas and emotions of the human spirit, *every American student* [emphasis mine], pre-K through grade 12, should receive a balanced, comprehensive, sequential, and rigorous program of instruction in music and the other arts." But to what end? Literature is far less united on this question.

PURPOSES OF MUSIC EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Literature suggests two distinct lines of thought regarding the focus of music education for students with disabilities: "education *in* music as opposed to education *through* music" (Welch et al 2009, 349). Achieving extra-musical goals is the most commonly recognized purpose of music education for students with disabilities (Ockelford 2002, Ropp 2006 et al), and most of the available literature focuses on these benefits. Sometimes these goals are achieved through programs based in music therapy. According to Lubet (2009), the purposes of music therapy are didactic and extra-musical. Lathom further details this as improved communication skills and "social, emotional, academic, and motor behavior" (1980, *ii)*. She assigns the development of aesthetic

sensitivity to the music teacher, placing the responsibility for fostering musical development outside the role of a therapist.

Within music education, Graham and Beer (1980) suggest a priority on developing self-esteem in students with special needs, focusing on the benefits of musical interaction with peers as well as with the music educator. Likewise, Sobol says, "My most important function [as a music teacher of special learners] is to bring them to a happy place in music where they can feel safe, secure, and successful" (2008, 86). Though she provides instruction that fosters musical growth, Sobol believes that

> each child is here to make a contribution with his or her life and that through music, children can communicate and gain skills for academic achievement and social, emotional, and psychological well-being. (vii)

Reichard and Blackburn (1973) state that "the central purpose of music education as applied to special education should be to reinforce specific areas of learning other than music itself" (9). Charles (2010) and Breeze (2000) both found that incorporating music into their general education instruction of students with special needs increased academic and social performance. Charles used music in her self-contained classroom of students with learning disabilities to boost scores in reading and math. She also found a decrease of undesirable behaviors such as distracting classmates, inattention, and inappropriate use of body. Breeze found that the regular use of music in a pre-K program for students with developmental delays improved their basic life skills and ability to communicate.

Beyond professional ethics, music educators have a legal responsibility to address students with special needs. United States law recognizes extra-musical outcomes. PL 94-142 (later amended and known commonly as the Individuals with Disabilities Act, or

IDEA) mandates free and appropriate public education to all students regardless of their disabilities. Specifically referencing music, the legislation states:

> The use of the arts as a teaching tool for the handicapped has long been recognized as a viable, effective way not only of teaching special skills, but also of reaching youngsters who had otherwise been unteachable. (Code of Federal Regulations 1977, 467)

Moving toward musical outcomes, an innovative program from the Baker Center for Research and Treatment of Children with Special Needs at Bar-Ilan University, Israel (Portowitz 2007) uses music instruction to promote cognitive development rather than cognitive goals. The MISC-MUSIC (More Intelligent and Sensitive or Socially Compliant Children) program works from a mediated learning philosophy. One-on-one music activities include listening, performing, and creating. This work suggests that the actual process of musical comprehension and skill development enhances the learning process in general for children with disabilities – understanding the form of a piece of music develops stronger cognitive skills than learning a song about patterns. Teachers and students achieve artistic goals, even if the art serves as a tool rather than the purpose of instruction.

Thomas (1982) suggests the goal of music instruction for "handicapped learners [is] aesthetic growth through participation in music" (26). Going even further, the *Sounds of Intent* project (Welch et al 2009) focuses entirely on promoting musical growth. It is founded on the research-supported understanding that students with special needs, including severe and profound, do demonstrate a range of musical capabilities and that, given time and instruction, these capabilities grow. Within that paradigm, *Sounds of Intent* researchers gathered evidence through field observation and interviews with the

intent of mapping the musical development of students with profound needs. The results of this work led to a developmental framework within three spheres – reactive, proactive, and interactive – that appears "to offer, for the first time, a grounded and empirically verifiable means of measuring musical progress in pupils with profound learning difficulties" (Ockelford 2008, 87).

> Given the two thrusts of music as a tool for basic skill development and as an art that expresses the affective aspects of human being, music teachers have a responsibility to formulate a curriculum that can facilitate both musical skill and basic skill in the educable mentally handicapped learner. (Swanson 1986, 5)

This leads to questions regarding the delivery of such instruction. What models are best able to address the musical and extra-musical growth of students with multiple disabilities?

MODELS OF MUSIC INSTRUCTION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Instructional settings vary significantly, although literature shows that the most common model of music education for students with disabilities is inclusion (Darrow 2009). Alternatively, self-contained classes, where students with special needs receive instruction separately from students with typical needs, are often grouped by ability or age. Inclusion settings place a student with disabilities in a classroom with students with typical needs. These students may be included for the entire school day (full-inclusion) or for selected portions of the day (partial-inclusion). Often but not always in inclusion settings, a nurse or aide accompanies the student. Inclusion placements may be made based on ability or age. In "Spotlight on making music with special learners"

(2007/2004), a collection of articles from MENC publications, 20 of the 32 articles address issues of inclusion. However, none discuss other placement options or explore the merits of alternative placements. Rather, the remaining articles typically address specific disabilities. None of the articles focus on self-contained music education. Only two make specific reference to self-contained classrooms, and of those, one is addressed to special education teachers using music rather than music educators. Hammel and Hourigan, while recognizing that "some students…learn best in an environment that is homogenous, has a smaller student to teacher ratio, or is at a different time of day" (2011, 34), also clearly identify their work "from a paradigm that advocates thoughtful inclusion and honors the teaching and learning relationship between music teachers and their students" (4).

This was not always the case. In the first half of the 19th century, American music education took root in public schools and in specialized institutions for people with disabilities. Following the model established in singing schools, teachers provided music instruction based primarily in singing. As trends shifted toward providing education for students with disabilities in public schools rather than separate institutions, these students generally received instruction, including musical, in a room separate from regular education students (Graham and Beer 1980). PL 94-142 assured all students ages 5 – 21 free and appropriate public education regardless of disability. With the passage of IDEA and its 2004 revisions including No Child Left Behind, educators are now required to place students in the setting that provides the least restrictive environment (LRE) (Hammel and Hourigan 2011). However, in *Hudson v. Rowley* (1982) the Supreme Court did specify that while appropriate education is guaranteed by law, this does not

"automatically guarantee 'maximum possible achievement' in an education setting"

(Hammel and Hourigan 211, 28).

Schools typically place students with special needs in music classrooms according

to age, social development, or reading ability rather than in consideration of musical

ability. This is at odds with the spirit of PL 94-192, which calls for *appropriate*

educational programs (Thompson 1982). A 2010 report from US Secretary of Education

Arne Duncan states that an appropriate education will include:

• education services designed to meet the individual education needs of
students with disabilities as adequately as the needs of nondisabled students are
met;

• the education of each student with a disability with nondisabled students, to
the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of the student with a disability;

• evaluation and placement procedures established to guard against
misclassification or inappropriate placement of students, and a periodic
reevaluation of students who have been provided special education or related
services; and

• establishment of due process procedures (Duncan 2010)

To assist music teachers in advocating for appropriate LRE placements, MENC

developed mainstreaming guidelines outlined in the second edition of *School Music*

Standards and Descriptions (1986). These include involving music educators in

placement decisions, making placements determined on the basis of musical

achievement, and ensuring that placements do not create groups that exceed standard

class size or place a disproportionate number of handicapped students in one class.

Despite these 1986 MENC guidelines and increasingly defined placement legislation in

the various amendments of IDEA, there is little research-based evidence to suggest

significant change from Thomas's 1982 findings.

Ritter, in "Spotlight on making music with special learners" (2007/2004),

follows the cases of two students with Down syndrome. She suggests that the inclusion

model, with its focus on socialization, does not best serve the interests of the students.

Hammel and Hourigan (2011) acknowledge the relevance of placements other than

inclusion in a general education setting.

> We would never deny a child access to music education. There are times,
> however, when changes to the classroom setting may greatly increase the
> educational appropriateness for a student with special needs. (2011, 34)

CURRICULUAR CONSIDERATIONS

Examining the music education models in specialized schools throughout

England, Ockelford (2002) found that even in programs focused on students with

complex needs, curriculum guidelines were drawn from those for students with typical

development. Additionally, the models listed objectives, including musical and non-

musical indicators (Cheng et al 2009). Ockelford and his team present a model of musical

development that is unique in its focus "on the development of musical interests, abilities,

and preferences" of children with complex learning needs" (2008, 111).

Olson (2011) describes music education at a public school for students with

disabilities in Florida. In this instance, the music program is unashamedly that – a music

program. Although curriculum focuses on the development of performance skills, the

educational impetus is collaboration rather than competition. Teacher Don DeVito taps

"into what they are able to do rather than concentrating on their limitations" (45). He develops goals centered in three areas: steady pulse, repeated rhythmic patterns, and improvisation over a beat or rhythmic pattern.

Regardless of the model, music educators have certain rights and responsibilities as outlined in IDEA. Rights include access to a student's IEP, as well as input about that student's music education. The IEP plan provides information about a child's current level of behavioral and academic functioning. The IEP also lists benchmark goals for the term of the plan. Because of the need to respect student confidentiality, these records are not open to public reading but are available to all teachers who have direct contact with that student. Taking advantage of the information available in IEP's is an important tool in providing appropriate instruction to students with disabilities (Hammel and Hourigan 2011, Walter 2006). Music educators also have the right to be present in IEP meetings and to provide input in the formation of benchmark goals. "Because the music teacher is the music expert in the school, only he or she can define and adapt appropriate music goals for students with disabilities" (Walter 2006, under "The Role of Music Educators").

Music educators are considered legally accountable on the same level as a general classroom teacher (Hammel and Hourigan 2011). Only by taking advantage of the access to the IEP process and document can a teacher fully address his or her legal responsibility for a student with disabilities. Music educators have the responsibility to address relevant IEP goals and document evidence of progress – social, academic, and behavioral. Documentation may be formal assessment or anecdotal records, and should address the progress a student is making toward benchmark goals – social and academic – while in

the music classroom (Walter 2006). Given the legal responsibilities and the range of service options, are music teachers prepared to meet this obligation?

TEACHER PREPARATION AND TRAINING

Recognizing that many in-practice music educators feel unprepared to work with learners with special needs, recent studies by Hourigan and Hammel explored issues of teacher preparation. Hourigan (2009) looked at fieldwork experiences of music education students working with students with special needs. This study focused on the experiences of seven participants (preservice music educators, a music teacher educator, an in-service music teacher, and the researcher) in a long-term fieldwork experience in self-contained special education classes at a public elementary school. Data collected through the observation, interviews, and journal entries led Hourigan to suggest that

> (a) the orientation process to fieldwork with children with disabilities…was perceived as valuable; (b) observation, journaling, discussion, and the relationship that emerged were important to the participants; and (c) reflective practice may have occurred in this study. (Hourigan 2009, 152)

As a result, Hourigan concluded that fieldwork experiences led to increased confidence, comfort, and aptitude in teachers preparing to teach music to students with disabilities.

Hammel (2001) studied practicing teachers and college/university training programs to identify teacher competencies. In the first stage of the study, general music teachers responded to a survey seeking information about skills they used in working with students with special needs. The survey also examined teacher-reported coursework and fieldwork preparation for teaching learners with special needs. College and university

instructors provided information about competencies they perceived as important to teacher training curriculum. They also submitted information about preservice teacher fieldwork experiences. In phase two of the study, Hammel interviewed and observed three in-practice teachers in order to identify competencies they viewed as important and those they demonstrated. The researcher also examined course catalogues and syllabi from 15 college and university courses for references to the inclusion of students with special needs. From the data, Hammel developed a list of 14 essential teacher competencies, with the goal of improving teacher training for including special learners in elementary music education. The resulting list falls primarily into two categories: background knowledge (general knowledge into various disabilities and legal aspects) and instructional strategies (including assessment procedures, accommodation practices, and classroom management) (Hammel 2001). While some of these competencies are directly applicable to self-contained settings, the study does not address issues of curriculum development and lesson planning for that specialized setting. What, then, do practicing teachers reference to build self-contained programs regarding curriculum and planning?

RESOURCES FOR MUSIC EDUCATORS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

A wealth of information exists for teachers of students with disabilities for creating successful inclusion experiences. Very often the focus is on teacher strategies and techniques. Other resources provide developmental information, lesson ideas and materials, and learner characteristics of various disabilities. Teachers can easily access a

variety of online sources regarding the law and special education. Finally, some resources specifically address curriculum development for students with multiple disabilities.

The action research project from Charles (2010), and the work of Sobol (2008), Darrow (2009), and Hammel and Hourigan (2011) are excellent examples of resources regarding teacher strategies and techniques. In the first, Charles identifies two important strategies in working with students with special needs – selecting appropriate materials and being aware of students' learning preferences. She also identifies three techniques – choice giving, small segments of instruction with repetition, and communicating clear expectations – as especially effective.

Sobol (2008) refers to 1996 MENC training guidelines. She suggests that providing music to students with disabilities includes four components: modeling; introducing new material in small steps; preparing activities that include multimodal and multisensory experiences; and providing clues to facilitate recall (23). Her teaching strategies connect to the four-prong approach of whole-language instruction, progressing from listening to speaking, reading, and then writing (53). She also follows the four steps of mediated learning. In this technique, students must first want to be involved (intentionality and reciprocity). They can then form meaning through experience, develop analytical skills (transcendence), and arrive at the level of competence (61). Highlighting her whole approach toward successfully reaching learners with special needs, Sobol believes "it all depends on YOU" (100) – Your Own Understanding. While her background experience comes largely from a specialized school for students with moderate learning disabilities and emotional and behavioral disorders, her strategies apply to students with multiple disabilities.

Darrow (2009) identifies three types of barriers that block effective instruction. Organizational barriers include factors relating to school and classroom structure and communication. She recommends open discussions with the school community, narrow focus (one or two students at a time), and careful consideration of the physical space to address organizational barriers. Barriers relating to attitude include "beliefs and attitudes that teachers may have about educational services for students with disabilities" (2009, under "Attitudinal Barriers"). Communication with other teachers, professionals, and students, focusing on student strengths, helps to overcome this. Lack of knowledge regarding disabilities – and how to make accommodations – constitutes the third barrier. Becoming educated in the general characteristics of various disabilities, seeking information from team members and IEP's, and building a tool kit of intervention strategies and classroom accommodation break down the knowledge barrier.

Hammel and Hourigan (2011) identify similar strategies as essential teacher competencies and concur with Darrow that the overarching key to addressing each of these barriers is collaboration. Many strategies, including collaboration, readily transfer to a self-contained program. Their text serves as a comprehensive resource for teachers of students with disabilities. The authors promote a "label-free" approach, "centered in the preservation of the individual personhood of each student" (xxiii). *Parts 1* and *II* look at the current context of special education and methods of music teacher preparation; however, the background information and observation protocols hold relevance for in-service teachers as well. *Part III* provides practical applications for classroom management, curriculum development and delivery, issues involving students with disabilities in music ensembles, and music education issues for students who are gifted

and talented. The book concludes with a section of additional resources from which teachers of students with special needs may draw.

Several other authors provide resources regarding special education and music. The 1980 work of Graham and Beer focuses on mainstreaming and offers development charts, lesson ideas, and examples of annual and short-term goals for students with disabilities in an inclusion environment. They "emphasize the importance of effective esthetic education for the handicapped" (21). Likewise, Nocera (1979) provides activities and song materials for lessons, again focused on inclusion programs. The activities are organized around five learning skills: auditory perception, visual perception, motor skills, language skills, and social skills rather than musical outcomes.

Another resource category informs the educator regarding specific disabilities. Nocera's book ends with a chapter looking at characteristics, learning styles, and learning needs relating to commonly occurring disabilities. Zinzar (1987) devotes each chapter in her book to a disability type, providing typical learner characteristics and possible outcomes. She focuses on extra-musical goals.

Teachers can easily obtain resources outlining their legal responsibilities and rights. These can be found at http://www.nichcy.org/Laws/Pages/Default.aspx and other similar websites. Walter (2006) provides a list of definitions, background, and implications for music educators specifically for IDEA.

Regarding curriculum specifically for students with multiple disabilities, Swanson (1986) discovered only 10 states that had curricula for that student population. She concluded, after comparing them to a theoretical model developed from the work of Nocera and Beal and Gilbert, that there would be value in developing a unified national

curriculum that addressed musical skill and basic skill development. Farnan and Johnson (1988) provide a resource that addresses goal planning and assessment for this population, as well as song materials to address specific goals and skill development. They do not include curricular ideas. The *Sounds of Intent* described earlier can also serve as a guide for music curriculum development and assessment for students with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

CONCLUSION

Pointing to musical and non-musical outcomes, the literature and the law support music education for students with disabilities, even when students' disabilities are profound. Experiences with music support students' ability to master academic concepts and develop communication and social skills. Though delayed, they demonstrate musical growth. While inclusion is the most common model for music instruction, there are cases where self-contained instruction is the most appropriate least restrictive environment. In both models, teacher preparation has fallen short, though colleges and universities are making efforts to develop training opportunities for preservice and in-service music educators, emphasizing fieldwork and observation. Resources for teachers of students with disabilities focus on successful inclusion programs, although teaching strategies for these settings often transfer to self-contained programs.

Self-contained instruction may be the most appropriate model for some students, but little research-based information best practice in that environment exists. This lack suggests the need for research that examines what in-service teachers actually experience in these settings.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH RESULTS

This project sought to identify and interpret the experience of elementary general music educators teaching students with multiple disabilities in self-contained settings. Consistent with phenomenological methods, I approached this investigation by gathering stories from music teachers with experience in these contexts. Teachers provided insight into the challenges and rewards they encounter by describing their planning processes, individual situations, and students.

I collected data in two stages. First, I distributed an online survey to 65 music teachers in northwestern Virginia, with the intention of forming an initial picture of self-contained music education experiences in elementary public schools. Second, I interviewed three teachers with experience in a self-contained setting. Through analysis of these descriptions and survey responses, I identified three main themes: worth, support, and process.

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

The first three questions in the survey provided data regarding background information on the participants, and indicated that the 14 responses represent six public school districts across Northwestern Virginia. Two respondents did not indicate their district affiliation. Thirteen respondents indicated that they had worked with students with multiple disabilities. Of those responses, seven teachers reported experience in self-contained settings, with the remaining six working only in full-inclusion programs. This

data supports the research premise of a small but active target population of teachers providing self-contained instruction.

SURVEY RESULTS

The survey responses also provided data regarding teachers' perceptions of their experiences with self-contained instruction. This report does not include answers from teachers who had only inclusion experiences, since those lay beyond the scope of this study. The next questions asked teachers to comment on their understanding of the role of music education for students with multiple disabilities. The answers reflected that teachers do not have a clear understanding of purpose, typified in these responses:

- *No. I feel that I have not had the training to fully service these students. I sometimes feel that I am flying by the seat of my pants.*

- *No. It has been left up to me for the most part to figure things out.*

- *I only know that they must have some form of education.*

- *I provide teaching that I deem appropriate. I am not certain of the role of music in their education.*

Two participants indicated some level of understanding:

- *I know enough to feel comfortable going in and teaching.*

- *I know music can be used to help them connect to the world around them.*

The next question looked at teachers' perceptions of goals for instruction, asking if teachers focused on social goals, IEP goals, musical goals, or a combination. While no one responded with only musical or only IEP goals, four respondents indicated that they

focus exclusively on social goals, intending, in one case, "to stimulate them so they can learn to respond in healthy ways to their environment." The remaining responses indicate a combined focus of social and other, providing answers such as:

  • *Combination. There are students in my school who do not have a clue of their surroundings and yet they still get the same services all students receive.*

  • *Combination, depending on the students and the environment.*

  • *Develop their musical self, improve instructional skills, and secondary work cooperatively with others.*

The survey then explored the process of planning for instruction, asking who was responsible for developing curriculum, if teachers refer to IEP's, if teachers develop activities specifically relating to musical growth, and if teachers refer to specific resources in planning. All participants responded that they are solely responsible for developing curriculum in self-contained settings. Only three indicated that they do refer to IEP's, though one participant wrote, "I cannot say that I changed my teaching methods because of what the IEP stated." The remaining respondents typically gained background information from the classroom teachers, though they recognized the IEP as a potential source of relevant information:

  • *I would if I were given them. As it is, I refer to the classroom teacher.*

  • *No, but that's a good idea. I hadn't thought of doing that.*

Despite the dominance of social goals indicated above, all but one teacher indicated that they do plan activities that foster musical growth. "Beat keeping and pitch matching are examples of skills that could be measured and developed depending on the

disability." No clear dominant resource emerged from the respondents regarding

resources. Comments ranged from "draw from many" and "a couple of texts" to

"activities with classical music and movement," "Fierabend 'Move It' series, Lynn

Kleiner," and simply "no." However, two comments indicated a longing for more

resources:

> • *I wish there had been a music therapy class I could have taken in college, or perhaps one I could take now.*
>
> • *I would be very interested in having resources available that would pertain to specific disabilities.*

The final question directed respondents to a follow-up website if they were

interested in participating in the second round of data collecting. On the second site, they

could provide contact information in order to be reached for a follow-up interview. This

question generated one relevant response, and that person became one of the three

interview participants.

SHARED EXPERIENCE OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

This data reflects the themes of worth, support, and process. Seeing music as a

way to address music skills, connect to the world, and stimulate students demonstrates

ways in which these participants see worth, though the specific purpose has not been

clearly defined for them. This lack of definition, combined with references to wanting

more resources and training, indicates that these teachers feel a lack of support in

providing self-contained instruction. Participants report that the process of planning for

instruction is primarily driven by social goals, though they address musical outcomes in

the activities they plan. They refer to IEP's and to classroom teachers to determine

appropriate lessons, also drawing on a variety of additional resources.

The survey data, though small, was consistent among those responding. The

responses confirmed the presence of the target population. The tone of the comments,

indicating lack of clarity regarding purpose and method suggested further investigation

was appropriate. Participant comments also indicated that the proposed interview guide

was appropriate for investigating a more complete picture of the experiences of teachers

in self-contained settings.

INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Through the survey and convenience sampling, I identified three teachers to

interview one-on-one for the second stage of data collection. This sample represents

elementary general music teachers whose experience has included teaching students with

multiple disabilities in a self-contained setting. All interviewees are from northwestern

Virginia.

Anna

"Anna" retired from a 40-year career in elementary general music the year before

this study. She holds a Bachelor of Music Education degree and level one Orff

certification. She reports receiving no training to work with students with special needs,

and even though her student teaching experience included a class with severe and

profound needs, she saw that class "only once or twice." Her experiences as an in-service

teacher with self-contained instruction occurred at various points throughout the last 20 years of her career, and in various schools within the same district. In those classes, she encountered students with disabilities including severe physical limitations, hearing impairment, Cerebral Palsy, autism, ADHD, and those she classified as "trainables" – now described as profound intellectual disability. (See Appendix H.)

Beth

"Beth" was identified as an interviewee through her survey response. Beth teaches in a public school district and has 33 years of experience. She holds Bachelor and Master's degrees in Music Education and has Orff and Kodaly certification. She currently teaches in a building that serves as the regional SPED site for her district. She has worked with self-contained classes at various points in the last 28 years, and now works with students with autism, severe brain disorder, severe physical limitations, and communication disabilities. (See Appendix I.)

Carla

"Carla" has taught for 32 years in a large public school district. She began her career as a high school choral director before moving to elementary school. She holds a Bachelor of Music Education degree and reported no specific training in working with children with special needs. During the past 12 years she has taught self-contained pre-K and mixed-age classes of students with severe to profound disabilities. She has worked

with students with visual, hearing, and physical impairments, autism, and Cerebral Palsy. (See Appendix J.)

SHARED EXPERIENCE

As in the survey, the stories of these three teachers included themes of shared experience: worth, support, and process. Within the theme of worth, teachers talked of the value of the music program, perceptions of the students, and of their own worth in their self-contained situations. The theme of support included categories of administrators, aides, barriers to instruction, and suggested resources. Process encompassed issues of teaching and learning, strategies and activities, and goals and objectives. In addition, teachers discussed methods of goal formation and types of goals.

Worth

The theme of worth addresses issues of value and perception. Anna, Beth, and Carla embrace the importance of music education for students with multiple disabilities. They understand these students as individuals with unique potential, and have developed and come to understand these values through journeys of personal encounters and struggle.

Program value

These music teachers saw fundamental value in working with students with multiple disabilities. The joy in the faces of her students, smiles, or a few minutes of

participation told Anna she was "meeting a need" (Anna Transcript page 117). She

considered it a joy to work with students with disabilities because she could "help them

open up to the world" (122). Carla stated firmly that she believed it was appropriate and

valuable to have self-contained instruction for students with multiple disabilities.

> *Just because music is so important. I mean, without learning to read music, the importance of being able to enjoy it no matter how you can. That's my number one goal, to have the children appreciate it and get something from it. Whether it's specific things or just enjoying. You know, I don't know about the deaf child being able to do anything specific, but if they can feel the beat and they enjoy it, that's worth it. In my mind, that's worth it. It might not be worth it to everyone, but it certainly is to me. (122)*

Beth describes the importance of musical interactions.

> *Well, you know the cliché … "well, they can just understand – I mean – they can just experience." Baloney. That is a bunch of baloney. I've got some younger children that when they come in here, that I can put them on my lap, sing to them, and they immediately calm down. And I can start … you know, music for them is something that is … [touches hand against chest, indicating emotional connection] (125)*

> *I've got children that are supposedly severely brain damaged and anywhere else they go they just sit there. They come in here and I start singing to them and they start making all these noises. They're non-musical … but this one child, I know that he has maybe only half a brain, the back of his head, it's just not there. And he mainly just sits there. But when he comes in here, when he hears me sing, something stimulates his brain … maybe we can communicate with him, maybe not. But who's to say what's inside his head. (127)*

Self-contained settings allow for experiences that are not possible in inclusion

contexts. While she works to prepare students for inclusion experiences, Beth says:

> *Why in the world would you put somebody who is severely brain damaged in a classroom of other kids? … The child is not aware in that setting. But when the child comes in and I am directly working with that child individually or with a couple of other kids, that child makes noises and things [that are appropriate for*

them to be doing]. I can't give the child, in the regular ed room, what they need musically – or I can't give them what they need period, whether it is musical or not. (133)

Beth sees in the self-contained setting an environment where teachers can provide appropriate instruction and students have the opportunity to make appropriate responses. Though she advocates for appropriate inclusion, Beth recognizes simply placing students with multiple disabilities in a regular ed classroom interferes with her ability to provide appropriate instruction to the rest of the class. This type of thoughtless inclusion also denies students with severe disabilities the opportunity to engage in music.

Teacher view of students

Anna, Beth, and Carla formed emotional attachments to their students with multiple disabilities. Carla stated, "The children are just – you just want to hug them. [Chuckles] You know, I don't know how anybody could not want to reach them" (140). They see their work as valuable to the student and feel that music is a vehicle that can satisfy these children's need for connection and joy:

Anna: They loved to do like square dancing moves, with people just rolling the chairs. They felt like they were dancing. And you could just see the joy on the face. And you knew you'd accomplished that.

Interviewer: The feedback back from them let you know that what you did was successful with them?

Anna: Was worthwhile, was worth all the trouble ... and the angst! (115)

This bond led them to develop student-first approaches. Each expressed how important it was to see each child as an individual. Beth explained how removing the label from a child allowed her to see a child's potential:

> *I don't look at a child and say, "Well, that child has autism" or "that child has a learning disability" or "that child's not as smart as that." I look at a child as a child [rather than as a disability] and I try to bring them to whatever their potential. I try to raise the bar and I want them to exceed what I think they can do.… I think in the long run if you look at a child that has a physical impairment or a mental impairment, that limits … what you think they can do. But if you take that away, and just think of them as, "Now I've got to find a different way to route" [you can] communicate musically and non-musically. (125)*

Anna recognized that one of the keys to her feelings of success was "the fact that I enjoyed them as individuals. I think if I hadn't liked the kids I probably would have looked on it as a real chore" (117). Carla came to focus on what the child could do, admitting:

> *It's easy to kind of skip over what they're able to do and think about I'm going to do this musical [objective], … I had to get rid of that idea. This is the child thinking now. (139)*

Teacher perception of self

While these teachers clearly express their commitment to their students, they share feelings of inadequacy. Recalling her first experience with a class of students with hearing impairment, Anna remembered she was "scared to death" (114). Carla recounted a similar reaction:

Interviewer: When you looked at your schedule and saw this class on your class load, talk a little bit about your understanding of why they were on your class load as a self-contained group.

Carla: Well, at first I wasn't really sure. I mean, we have labels for things and coming into teaching I wasn't exactly sure what was, you know, preschool handicapped, self-contained. And then I realized that the handicapped, profound handicapped … I realized that, whoa, this is a whole lot more than I've ever had to deal with before. (136)

I just had to get over the frustration and the feelings that I was not doing them any good. I went through that for quite a while. And it was upsetting to me because I feel like I was letting them down, to be honest with you. (Carla 139)

Equally clear is a journey of personal discovery. Each teacher's story shows evidence of personal growth. For Beth, parenting a child with an IEP shaped her journey:

And so having a child with an "IEP" [chuckles] I had to advocate for him so that he would be treated fairly and normally because that's all I wanted for him. To be treated fairly. And so I had to come to different conclusions about the way I … if I wanted him to be treated fairly I had to change my thinking and say, "Well that child can never learn," and that's not true. (127)

For Carla and Anna, the necessity of having self-contained classes in their teaching schedules dictated that they take this journey. But while both expressed frustration, they also expressed deep satisfaction at their involvement in these students' lives. Though her initial starting point was being "scared to death," Anna recalled an experience she had a few months after her retirement, encountering a former student – a child with no verbal skills, seated in her wheelchair.

I squatted down and I was talking to her and I was saying, "Bonnie, Bonnie, this is Mrs. A." And she just kind of looked up and [smiles broadly]. And that just felt so good. So the biggest success is within myself. That I loved them as individuals enough to really work hard and think it was worth it. (117)

Carla described her journey this way:

> *Carla: In my defense, I wouldn't say I had a bad attitude. Not at all. I would say I was frustrated. I wanted to do a good job with them, I think anybody would. … It was just feeling inadequate. I felt so ill prepared. You know, after succeeding with so many other things, to finally, you know, come to something I can't.*
>
> *Interviewer: So if you started with a frustrated attitude, what kinds of words would you use to describe the attitude that you changed to?*
>
> *Carla: [Laughing] Enlightenment?*
>
> *Interviewer: Wow!*
>
> *Carla: Realization …*
>
> *Interviewer: About what? Enlightened about what?*
>
> *Carla: That I can't do everything all at one time, that it was too much. … And just to basically see what they can do. That was my main goal – to have them enjoy what they were doing. … I really went from being extremely frustrated to absolutely loving that class within one year – but it did take time. (140)*

In all three instances, growth and comfort came through interaction and developing relationships with children with special needs.

Worth emerged as a theme among the interview participants as they talked about the value of music in the lives of students with multiple disabilities. Interviewees described their work as valuable and appropriate. Teachers in this study also recognized the personal worth of these students by looking past their disabilities to the potential of each individual. Finally, through a journey of self-awareness, teachers came to understand their own personal worth as music educators in self-contained settings.

Support

Special education support networks include administrators, colleagues, aides, educational systems, and resources. Teachers look to these networks for direction, guidance, and affirmation. Instead, Anna, Beth, and Carla typically experienced isolation, loneliness, and frustration.

Administration

Music teachers in self-contained settings reported little support and direction from their administrators. When asked to describe her district's philosophy about music for her students with multiple disabilities, Anna said:

> *Honestly it was "they're yours for 30 minutes. Whatever you do – just don't burn down the building." Whatever you do, they're yours and you're on your own. ... There was no help, there was no suggestions, there was nothing – just "that's on your schedule – go teach them." (114)*

She described going to her principal, seeking guidance:

> *I was just tired of nobody giving me any help. "What can I do with them? What do you want me to do with them?" This is exactly what she said. "I'm sure they'd enjoy hearing some good music." Ohhh. That's all she could tell me. And I was just, like ... [struggles to find words, obvious frustration on her face] ... And this is the person who is evaluating me. You know – that doesn't have a clue what I am doing or should be doing in my classroom. ... They expect you to do it, but they don't know what "it" is. ... There's never... you are never told what's expected of you with them. (118)*

Carla also felt that she lacked direction from principals and special education teachers:

> *Carla: Because to be honest with you, nobody came to me and said "we expect this from you" or "we expect them to be able to do this" or "this child is able to*

do this but not this." Didn't have any of that, it was pretty much left up to me to figure things out.

Interviewer: And when you say you didn't have anybody coming to you, are there people that you would have expected to give you that kind of information?

Carla: It might have been nice to have something like IEP's or something. I don't recall getting anything like that. That doesn't necessarily happen now unless I ask for it for any students. ...

Interviewer: What about the mindset of the administration? Did you have any feeling of expectation ...

Carla: No, I didn't get a feeling like that – any, no. I mean, I'm not saying good or bad, I just don't recall any.

Interviewer: What about feedback? ...

Carla: None that I recall, not about that. Other things, yes, but not about that. (137)

I really would like to see our school system address [teaching students with multiple disabilities]. I feel like it's been put out there, here they are, and we're supposed to know what to do. (Carla 144)

Beth has self-contained SPED classes in her schedule by choice. "They want us to fill up our time because, well, my principal said if you don't fill up your time with music activities … they're going to pull you and make you do something else" (127). While she feels that her principals support what she is doing, she says, "I've talked to my principals about what I see as a vision for where I want my students to be, and I've had to sell it." (132). She continues:

Beth: I just think there needs to be more awareness…

Interviewer: Awareness of what?

Beth: Awareness of all children, that all children can learn. (133)

Working with aides

Teachers do feel support working with aides, though relating to aides and nurses presents additional issues. While the number of aides and nurses that accompany a class varies, each teacher reports similar takes that aides provide: moving wheelchairs or assisting with mobility issues, and hand-over-hand assistance in playing instruments or doing motions with songs. This type of support was very helpful to Carla. "They were just jumping in and doing everything with [the students]. And just having them was amazing. It was like having a whole bunch of teachers there" (141).

Aides do not automatically know how to assist in a music classroom. Anna expressed frustration in trying to incorporate them into her classroom:

> *You have some that can be so helpful and so wonderful, and then you have some that literally look like they are sitting there twiddling their thumbs, and they're just putting in time, waiting for you to finish up. And you've got others that are up and they're helping and doing and … and I was never real sure how assertive I should be about "I need you over here." … I think I got better at that as time went on. But that was a frustration that some were so helpful and some were really just worthless … If there was a vehicle for you to be able to express to the aide "it would really help the class if I could count on this from you," if there were some way to express without, you know, ticking someone off or … it's just awkward. (119)*

Aides also provide support by giving teachers feedback. Carla and Anna both got information about student potential by talking to the aides. Carla said, "You know, a child might not do anything for me in the classroom; [the aides] would say they were humming that tune later on" (139). "To hear [from aides and teachers] that they were singing to themselves while swinging on the playground was great" (Anna 122)!

Despite the assistance that aides can provide, Beth works to make sure that the child is the focus of the musical interaction. Though she referred to instances where the

caregiver is needed to restrain a child, she also recognized that if the aide is doing all of the work for the child, there is no benefit to the student. Simply moving them from place to place is not adequate or appropriate. When a child is not interacting directly with the activity, "it's not them getting a turn, it's their caregiver, taking a turn for them" (Beth 133).

Barriers to instruction

A lack of time for both preparation and instruction presented a barrier in providing appropriate instruction to students with multiple disabilities. "I spent more time working on a special ed plan than I did on the rest of my week" (Anna, 117). Beth uses her planning time to work with self-contained groups. As a result, meetings may compromise her time with students; time she feels is already at a premium:

> *Beth: I wish I had them every day.*
>
> *Interviewer: Why? Why do you wish you had them every day?*
>
> *Beth: Why? Because if I had them every day like for 20 minutes, I feel like that the more they are exposed to music … the better they're going to become. I don't care whether they're severe and profound, the more I see them, the more you can get accomplished. (131)*

Carla also feels limited in what can be accomplished due to time:

> *You have them only a certain amount of time a week. It's not like you have lots of time and you can see these people separately, you see them all together [in a mixed ability grouping] and it is such a short amount of time. (143)*

Anna views time spent together as primary to any type of achievement. Through time she is able to build trust:

When you first get these kids, they don't know you, don't trust you, are even afraid of you. Building a relationship of trust is always first in my mind. THEN you can begin to build on their skills and abilities. (122)

Teachers mentioned the range of student disabilities they encountered as another barrier to instruction. For Carla, having a heterogeneous group of multiple needs presented considerable challenge, especially when combined with class sizes of seven or eight:

I can recall having a blind student and a deaf student, autistic, cerebral palsy, nonverbal students, all in the same class. I mean, ones that can't even move. [Describes one child with severe brain damage and physical disability.] It was very frustrating, like you said. A real challenge. (135)

Interviewer: As you were planning what you were going to do, can you think of things that hindered you being able to be successful?

Carla: So many disabilities.

Interviewer: The grouping.

Carla: Yes. And so many children in there.

Interviewer: When you talk so much about how important it is to get to know each child, and then you talked about the large class sizes, [these] absolutely seem like they would fit together.

Carla: It takes a while, yeah. (140)

Carla: They might have been able to do this, and then they were able … there were too many in that class. There might have been some [musical growth], there were too many in the classroom. … You can't do so much. (142)

Anna commented on the variability present not only within a group, but also within a specific disability. "A child in a class that has cerebral palsy would have different needs than his classmate who did not have this condition. There are so many combinations. … Every little thing makes such a difference" (121).

Above all, these teachers were concerned about the amount of background knowledge they have. Related to their sense of worth, teachers felt their lack of training was a barrier to their ability to provide appropriate instruction:

I was frustrated that I didn't have the background in how to deal with these things. I mean, just any special ed class would have helped. Of course, it's been awhile since I've been in college. They might have them now, but it would have been helpful to have had. Not only special ed, but also ed classes as well … that would have helped as well. (Carla 138)

And I feel like, for me that [music therapy] is something that I know enough to be [giggles] dangerous. And that frightens me as a music educator. And I really feel like there needs to be more courses that are taught on the collegiate level that will help young teachers be able to teach children with multiple disabilities. (Beth 125)

And the first real class I had like that was a hearing impaired class. I was scared to death, knew no sign language, did not know what I was going to do with these kids … (Anna 114)

Each teacher found ways to address her shortfalls. Carla talks to other teachers and looks in books and textbooks. Anna did a lot of reflection on her own classroom experiences. She said, "we ended up discovering together, as you have to do, teaching is learning as you're doing" (135). Beth reads a lot. In addition, she actively seeks outside training, the only respondent to indicate doing this. "When I go to conferences I try to take in sessions that deal with exceptional children" (e-mail 3/11/11).

Suggestions for support

Teachers would value seeing these gaps in background knowledge addressed through courses, in-services, and print resources. But, in Anna's words, "so often the materials … just weren't out there" (115). And, as Carla said, "Any teacher who's worth

anything should be concerned how do you reach children that you haven't been taught

how to reach them" (144). Participants concurred that they would value print resources

outlining characteristics of and strategies for working with various disabilities.

> *I DO think a compilation of teacher strategies and ideas could be a huge help. This would just be like an encyclopedia of ideas you could turn to. It would need to be divided into "ability/needs" categories. You'd have a section for just hearing impaired (and probably divided into mild impairment and severe impairment.) You'd have a section for ADHD, "trainable" (although that term isn't used any more, I think), emotionally handicapped, autistic, etc ... This would be a HUGE undertaking. (Anna 121)*

> *Carla: I mean, it would have been helpful ... to have some basics, you know, what things can you do with a blind child, what can you do with an autistic child, what can you do with a deaf child, you know, what can you do with a child who has cerebral palsy? With a nonverbal child? What do you do with a child who can't move?*

> *Interviewer: So resources about basic strategies regarding specific disabilities.*

> *Carla: Right, and then it would be helpful to find out how other people had handled a multi-disability class. It would have been helpful if I'd have read their frustrations, or what they had to conquer. I would have felt better about myself in that situation. (142)*

Teachers look to administration, aides, and resources to find direction, guidance,

and affirmation. The participants in this study perceived a lack of support from

administrators, but they also felt that aides did not always know how to assist in music

classrooms. Though they provide valuable classroom support and feedback, aides often

first need to be taught appropriate ways to support music educators' learning goals. Other

barriers to instruction include a lack of time for preparation and instruction, encountering

a wide range of disabilities, and a lack of background knowledge regarding these

disabilities and strategies to address them. This connects back to themes of worth, such as

Carla's reference to feeling better about herself had she had adequate resources and

networking. The participants express a desire for additional support from courses, in-

service opportunities, and print resources but do not know if such resources are available.

PROCESS

Process comprises a philosophy of learning, an approach towards planning, the

development of goals and objectives, and the tools needed – strategies. In some instances,

the process of learning for students with disabilities was seen as part of a larger

continuum of growth; progressive steps to development. In other cases goals were

considered individually, a patchwork approach. Teachers identified goals oriented

towards music growth and goals that facilitated more social, academic, or behavioral

development with varied levels of priority. They drew upon a wide variety of strategies to

meet the needs of their students.

Teaching and learning process

The process of teaching and learning comprises several steps: identifying learning

potential, developing goals, planning for instruction, drawing on appropriate and

effective strategies, and measuring success. Interviewees describe the process of teaching

and learning in the self-contained setting as child-centered. "I think that we need to make

opportunities for the children to be successful" (Beth 133). She explained,

> *I try to bring the same energy [as I do to a regular ed class]. I don't look at a*
> *child and say "well, that child has autism" or "that child has a learning*
> *disability" or "that child's not as smart as that." I look at each child as a child.*
> *(125)*

Anna spoke of process in this way.

> *We ended up discovering together, as you have to do. Teaching is learning as you're doing. ... We discovered that they were great with movement. ... I started teaching them piano lessons and they LOVED it. It was wonderful – so it was just trial and error. See what they could do, see what they can't do, see what they want to do. See where I think I can take them. (114)*

Carla simply said, "Trial and error. It was just trial and error" (127).

Learning potential

Planning what to do in each lesson involves determining student capabilities. For Beth, this is seated in understanding each child's way of learning, to "get around their way of learning and get a handle on *how* they learn" (127). She recognized that despite their physical ages,

> *they don't have the experiences. There's all these missing pieces that they have. I think that for them to learn they need to erase their hard drives. ... [We need to] restructure their hard drives. And that can be done musically. (129)*

Anna and Carla relied largely on their own observations and conversations with aides to come to an understanding of each student's capabilities. Carla said, "I don't recall [ways of learning about the child] other than talking to the teacher and the aides, just finding out what the child can do" (137).

> *A lot of this [determining what the child needed] came from dialogue with the teachers/aides and from my own observations. As you get to know them after a few years, you just know that child and "where he/she IS" and what might be helpful in moving him/her forward. In all my years, I only asked for written information on children twice. ... These two were children with multiple, multiple problems and I felt I needed more information than what I was seeing and*

hearing. Seeing on paper what their teacher was working on gave me a lot of help in seeing how I could help in that whole developmental process. (Anna 120)

Goals

Goals drive instruction. Many instructors derive these goals from district, state, and national curriculum guides. In special education, these guidelines may not be relevant and more individualized goals need to be developed. Self-contained music programs address musical outcomes as well as social, academic, and behavioral development. These non-musical goals are referred to as extra-musical.

Identifying goals. Goal setting grew out of understanding a child's potential. "I look at each child as a child and I try to bring them to whatever their potential. I try to raise the bar and I want them to exceed what I think they can do" (Beth 125). Though the reality of having students come as a class dictates some degree of group work, goals tend to be individualized.

> *My goals for [students with multiple disabilities], that's so personal to each child because each child is so different. And again it's kind of a " learn by doing." You work with each child, see what they're capable of, see, you know, where you think improvement can be made" (Anna 115).*

In Virginia, state developed Standards of Learning (SOL) provide a guide for curriculum development. For Carla, goal setting meant a dramatic shift from the SOL-directed approach she follows in regular education classes.

> *I think that's why I had a real hard time at first. Because I had a mindset of, you know, SOL's [Standards of Learning], they've got to learn this, they're this age, they need to do this. I've got these resources, they have to be able to be able to*

use them. And that, of course, does not work. You just can't do that. So in my mind I just kind of came up with things I thought this child could be able to do – let's work on getting that going. (136)

Beth and Anna also readily dismissed the Standards of Learning for these students.

Interviewer: Do you feel that the standards of learning for elementary level music in Virginia are relevant to this population? What about the [district] elementary music curriculum?

Anna: Absolutely not! Neither Virginia nor [district] has a document of which I am aware that addresses these students' needs. (121)

But, no– they have to pass an SOL. They have to do all of these things. And what we're doing to these children who are SPED children – we are doing them just a horrible dis-service. … If we are going to bring them to their full potential as students – now I'm getting on my soapbox. (Beth 129)

You have to weigh what is important and what is not important. I don't think that the SOL's are … I think you have to have goals, but I don't think you have to weigh them against SOL's or anything like that. You want to set goals. If they grow an inch in a year, then, yeah. They haven't regressed, they've progressed. (Beth 130)

Rather than using standards to determine what to teach in a lesson, these teachers instead focused on what the child needed. "I felt like what the child needed was more important than what I felt I needed" (Anna 115). For Carla this involved a shift in her philosophy. To be successful, she said, I realized I should "not expect what I would of a regular class. And just to basically see what they can do" (119). "To me it wasn't a progression. I really got to realize what the children could do, and got over my frustration" (117). For Beth, however, developmental progression was a factor in planning.

Beth: It's more to do with their development; you've got to work on their building blocks. You wouldn't build something – a brick – you wouldn't put bricks together with play dough. You know what I mean, you've got to set the foundation. It's got to be developmental.

Interviewer: So do you have resources that you feel help you understand the developmental progression, or how do you determine what the progression is going to be?

Beth: I read a lot. (128)

Besides drawing ideas from books, Beth develops lesson plans from information from classroom teachers. "So I just go to the teachers and said 'What do you want me to work on with these students?' And we come up with a plan" (127).

Anna also worked to support classroom teacher's goals in planning her lessons, dialoguing with teachers to find out what they were working. "If they really needed to work on colors, or sizes, or whatever, that's what we did and I just tried to do it in a musical way" (115). She described the process of planning this way: "Look at what we did last week. See what worked, see what didn't work" (115).

Moving away from traditional curriculum guides, teachers looked to other sources to help them identify appropriate goals. The objectives that emerged tended to be individualized, geared towards each child's potential. Besides looking at musical possibilities, teachers referred to goals identified by classroom teachers. This process created goals that reflected two separate strands: musical and extra-musical development.

Musical goals. Though the level of priority placed on musical goals varied among participants, these teachers identified similar musical objectives. Carla clearly identified her main goal with these students as musical. "That my number one goal, to have the

children appreciate it and get something from it. Whether it's specific things or just

enjoying" (143). Her emphasis on enjoying music dictated the types of goals she

developed. Depending on the student's abilities, her goals included such objectives as

feel a beat, move to music, play instruments, and sing.

> *For the deaf child I mainly wanted to have the child be able to feel a beat. You know lots of times they might have some degree of hearing so they might be able to feel, or get up close enough to a speaker or something. Or hand motions to music. Just to be able to experience something like that. For the blind child … you have somebody hand them an instrument or what have you. But, you know, course they can sing, they can listen. (Carla 138)*

Similarly, Anna identified singing, clapping rhythms, playing instruments, moving to

music, and, for one class, recognizing specific classical pieces.

> *I'm remembering a class I had … that were non-ambulatory and non-verbal. You got almost everything through their eyes. I started introducing them to classical music. Eventually I could play a short selection and hold up two or three composers' names. The children would look at the correct composer. (122)*

Beth identified musical literacy as a goal she holds for all of her students. "And

music literacy is so totally different from learning about music. … My goal is to have my

students have an understanding of how to read music at whatever level they can read"

(129). For students with multiple disabilities, Beth understood musical literacy as

emerging musical interaction. "For my SPED kids, if they started out 2 seconds, they're

on to something else … whether they can sit in a circle now and they can play a game,

too" (133).

Extra-musical goals. Beyond musical development, teacher's identified goals in which skills outside of music were addressed though music activities. Anna and Beth both focus on the development of extra-musical outcomes.

> *I would not say really what we would consider musical development. It was more, honestly, their attention, their communication, eye contact, their social skills, trying to make them comfortable and happy within a music setting. But just trying to increase their basic skills, really. And I really have to say it wasn't that important to me that we were working on a musical skill. If they really needed to work on colors, or sizes, or whatever, that's what we did and I just tried to do it in a musical way. (Anna 115)*
>
> *If they [classroom teachers] want me to work on ...we do that, if they're wanting me to work on learning to track from left to right. If they want me to work on colors, or whatever, you know, I'll find an activity that will enhance what they're doing. (Beth 128)*

Beth readily acknowledged her slant towards a music therapy approach.

> *Beth: What upsets me so is that we have speech pathologists, we have physical, you know, OT's, ...we have all kinds of therapists. But no music therapist. ... And I really feel like there needs to be more courses that are taught on the collegiate level that will help young teacher be able to teach children with multiple disabilities.*
>
> *Interviewer: Especially focusing on the advantages through therapy?*
>
> *Beth: Yes, yes.*
>
> *Interviewer: So would you say, to reach non-music skills music benefits… communicating through music. Would that be kind of your take on what music can bring to those students?*
>
> *Beth: Yes. Because I've had some children who are now being able to speak. And…I've got one child that is very musical. And she sings all the time – she sings on pitch – you just can't understand a word she says. But I can hear her singing, and I know exactly what she's singing and so I'll sing with her. So, yeah. We wanna try to be able to get them to communicate. (125)*

Planning for instruction

Teacher-formulated lesson plans grow from their teaching and learning goals. Carla said, "I would talk to other teachers and get ideas. I would look in books to get ideas" (139). Teachers adapt activities from materials not necessarily designed for music or for special education. Beth said

> *I try to find as many activities that I think will help them with their learning process. I have these videos that I look at … I don't use them with the children [because the parents use them with the children.] So I try to take some of these aspects of these videos and do activities that will help them become verbal. (130)*
>
> *I use a lot of [John Feirabend's] materials. … And what I'll do is I'll use some of the same philosophies that I do with my regular preschool children and gear, maybe a different activity with that approach. (128)*
>
> *I found I could take some of the things I'd done with regular ed kids, and just adapt them, change it in some way to make it something they could physically handle. And often that worked. (Anna 115)*

Anna wrote many of her own songs and movement materials. And, when the plans weren't working, she relied on a musician's standby.

> *Sometime I was able, if there weren't enough adults, I was able to pull in some 5th graders to help … If we couldn't find enough people, we just did something different. You know. Improvise! (116)*

Strategies

Anna, Beth, and Carla each developed a toolkit of strategies, which they commonly drew on. For Carla, understanding that individualized goals were appropriate Narrowing her focus became an important strategy. She realized "that I can't do everything all at one time, that it was too much. That I needed to focus on smaller things

– more basic things" (140). Teachers made adaptations to resources and materials. "I would take things I would have for like maybe a Pre-K, or preschool class, and see what I could adapt" (Carla 139). "I also adapted hand-held instruments to meet their needs as much as I could" (Anna 120). Beth made use of assistive technology through Smart Boards and communicators.

Anna and Beth referred to providing visual and tactile experiences to their students.

> *I'll have something in the middle of my circle and guide them to that and let them experiment and experience those instruments. And then a lot of times I have inexpensive instruments that I let them take back and they can have that as a reward. (Beth 128)*

> *Lots of visuals. You know – one little elephant went out to play. I had a great big elephants, I had them in all different colors, but I had great big numbers on them and the kids could come up even in a wheelchair and pick elephant one or elephant two. Just whatever the added visual. Things with magnets that they could come up and put on the magnet board. Things with streamers, hula hoops, ... things they could manipulate. (Anna 116)*

Other strategies Anna identified included repetition, routine, and variety.

> *Anna: And we always had a starting song, we always had an ending song.*

> *Interviewer: So, routine?*

> *Anna: Right. They needed lots of repetition so if they had favorites we tried to work several of those during the class. I would always have some kind of movement. ... So you did, you know switching from one thing to a different thing. From an activity with movement to a sedentary activity. From something with colors or something, you know, skill-development-wise, something with instruments. Changing real often. And like I say, going back so often to their favorites. (115)*

Measuring success

To measure the success of their instruction, teachers used feedback from aides,

teachers, occasionally parents, and observation of the students' participation.

> *You know a child might not do anything for me in the classroom, [the aides would] say "they were humming that tune later in. It wasn't that they'd gotten it right when I wanted them–so that I could see what they are doing, but later on, it had taken some time for them to process. But feedback from the aides. A child smiling ... that's the best one. (Carla 139)*

> *Often, if I just could get a smile or a few minutes of participation, that was a triumph. One girl, in particular, screamed the entire music period. We set a goal of having her scream less each week. I can't say we reached that goal exactly, but over a period of about one and a half years, she finally stopped screaming. Our first break-through came when we discovered she was mesmerized by the sound of the gong. That was HUGE. (Anna 121)*

> *I measure success not by spit out facts. ... I measure success with my SPED kids, they can stay ... if they started out two seconds, they're on to something else and they're caregivers are having to restrain them, whether they can sit in a circle now, and they can play a game, too. I've got some preschool kids that, you know, I have them by themselves, but now we are starting to be able to mainstream with the other preschool classes because they don't sit in there and scream the whole time. (Beth 133)*

CONCLUSION

Study participants, both in the survey and interviews, identified clear themes of

worth, support, and process as they described their experience of self-contained music

instruction to elementary students with multiple disabilities. They clearly saw value in

music for students with multiple disabilities and viewed their students with care. Their

perception of their own skills in reaching these students reflected a journey of self-

discovery. Teachers felt a lack of direction and support from administrators and valued

the assistance of aides and nurses. They identified further barriers they encountered in

providing effective instruction and had suggestions for resources they would find helpful. The teachers looked to the student's potential when approaching teaching and identified goals addressing musical and extra-musical outcomes. They planned for instruction by seeking ideas from teachers and books, and developed effective instructional strategies based on feedback from student behaviors and from aides and teachers.

This small picture portrays exciting and rewarding teaching opportunity undercut by barriers. The experience of the teachers in this study certainly suggests answers to the questions posed at the outset. Holding this sample against the research and experience of others provides insight into what self-contained instruction uniquely offers to students with multiple disabilities and how teachers can successfully approach such programs. It suggests areas for further study, and offers recommendations to all who work with this population.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

As legislation mandating public education for students with disabilities has evolved, elementary music teachers have increasingly encountered students with multiple disabilities in their classrooms. A review of literature demonstrated that music education for students with disabilities is well represented in academia, though what is available tends to address inclusion philosophies and strategies; teaching students with multiple disabilities and self-contained models are under-represented. This study investigated the experiences of teachers who provide instruction to this population in self-contained settings. Specifically, I wished to address the following questions:

- What do elementary general music teachers consider to be the purpose of self-contained music sessions with students with multiple disabilities?

- How do teachers formulate their understanding of purpose?

- How do they plan for instruction? What types of goals do they address?

- What helps or hinders the achievement of their goals?

- What do the common threads of these experiences tell us about best practice in music education for students with multiple disabilities?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS ANSWERED

This study began with five questions to be addressed phenomenologically. Data collected through a survey and interviews, and the relevant literature presented in this investigation, suggest answers for these questions. I first explored answers driven by the

interview and survey data. Then I developed a final synthesis coming back to literature and my own experience.

1. What do elementary general music teachers consider to be the purpose of self-contained music sessions with students with multiple disabilities?

Teachers who participated in this study believed that music serves a dual purpose for this student population, addressing musical and extra-musical outcomes. Both survey and interview data showed more support of extra-musical outcomes: improved social, behavioral, and academic performance. Rather than emphasizing musical growth, musical outcomes predominantly focused on interaction with music through listening, creating sound, and responding to sound.

2. How do teachers formulate their understanding of purpose?

Teachers did not have a clear sense of purpose when they first encountered self-contained students with multiple disabilities. "Hands-on" time with students shaped their understanding of what teachers could and should do. Teachers also gained insight through background reading about the various disabilities. For one teacher, parenting a child with special needs was another contributing factor.

3. How do teachers plan for instruction with students with multiple disabilities?

During the course of data collection and analysis, I came to understand "planning for instruction" as a wide topic, including the process, resources, strategies, and teacher evaluation of success. The process began with identifying student potential and ability. Teachers then developed appropriate goals, and sought activities to achieve those goals.

They drew from special education resources, adapted materials used in regular education, or wrote new materials. To implement the activities successfully, teachers used multiple strategies, including visual manipulatives, movement activities, repetition, and variety. Feedback, primarily anecdotal, provided data for evaluating growth and future direction.

4. What helps or hinders the achievement of their goals?

During data analysis, this question narrowed to address components that help or hinder the delivery of music rather than focusing specifically on meeting goals. This study suggested that teachers were hindered by lack of administrative support, lack of personal background knowledge, limited time, and limited resources. They were helped by adopting positive personal attitudes toward the program and the students, working with supportive aides, and receiving feedback from students, aides, and classroom teachers.

5. What do the common threads of these experiences tell us about best practice in music education for students with multiple disabilities?

In each of the three cases, teachers underwent changes of attitude that improved their effectiveness in working with students with multiple disabilities. This study suggested that attitude is an important part of best practice for music educators in special education placements. As teachers grew to value their work and became comfortable with non-traditional goals, their instructional practices proved more effective.

A second tenet for best practice was the child-centered philosophy expressed through this report. Appropriate and effective instruction became evident when student potential was recognized over disability, and ability rather than standards dictated student

goals. Appropriate instruction involved varied activities (listening, moving, interacting) geared to student ability. Components of effective instruction included repetition, use of manipulatives, and routine.

Finally, this study suggested that best practice for students with multiple disabilities included self-contained instruction. The self-contained environment, while not replacing inclusion experiences, offered unique opportunities for developing student potential. The level of individualization possible in this smaller, more focused setting allowed for truly appropriate instruction for each student. Inclusion placements, in tandem with self-contained sessions, became more effective as well.

RESEARCHER'S VOICE

As a music teacher of students with multiple disabilities, and as a parent of children with special needs, my interpretive lens is relevant to the synthesis of this report. All common experiences present a multitude of possible shadings. As I synthesized the shared experiences of the participants with relevant literature, I returned to my reflection statements and integrated them with my findings. This allows the reader to identify the unique interpretive factors in this report. References to my own experiences are drawn from my reflection statement and self-interview (see Appendix K).

DISCUSSION

Literature on music education for students with multiple disabilities extends into many facets of instruction. This study utilized research regarding benefits from music,

purposes of music education, models of instruction, curricular considerations, teacher

preparation and training, and available resources. The experiences of teachers in this

study related to this literature, in some areas to support and in others to contradict.

Analysis of the data introduced new facets – exploring teaching and learning, working

with aides, and issues of time – not originally reviewed in the literature but addressed

here.

Musical Benefits

I believe music education facilitates the development of musical ability. ... I believe in the principals of multiple intelligences, recognizing that some children are uniquely wired to learn through musical avenues. ... I believe that these principals hold true for all students regardless of ...ability level. (Clemens reflection 146)

Music is a part of human experience. All people, regardless of ability, can and

should encounter and engage with music in their daily living (Ockelford et al 2002, Lubet

2009). Music stimulates brain activity, even below the level of cognitive functioning

(Farnan and Johnson 1988). The brain responds even when there is no outward

appearance of engagement. Music facilitates purposeful experiences, enhancing quality

of life (Hammel and Hourigan 2011, Thompson 1982). Students demonstrate musical

development. Welch (2009), Graham and Beer (1980), Farnan and Johnson (1988),

Portowitz (2007), and Carter (2009) each provide evidence that, though not measured by

traditional standards, the potential for growth is present in students with disabilities.

Therefore, teachers have a moral and professional responsibility to provide music to

students with disabilities.

The teachers involved in this study recognize and acknowledge benefits of musical interaction and a sense of responsibility. They see music as a way to connect with students, enhance students' enjoyment of life, and support and foster their overall development. They provide anecdotes of students who, in other settings, are uninvolved or disruptive, engage in music activities, learn numbers or colors, smile, calm down, and sing or play instruments. Providing musical opportunities for students with multiple disabilities is important to these teachers; it is the right thing to do. Just as Leon reminded me in the opening vignette, musical interactions enhance the quality of life.

Purposes

While there is unanimity in the literature that music education provides benefits to students with disabilities, there is not agreement on the purpose of instruction. Although all agree that music instruction supports multiple purposes, they place priority in different areas. Some advocate music education for the purpose of extra-musical outcomes; others promote musical development.

In this study, teachers express a dual sense of purpose with priority on extra-musical themes. While four survey participants specifically indicate a combined focus on musical and extra-musical outcomes, the others show preference for social outcomes. However, all but one plan activities for musical development. Each of the teachers interviewed plans activities to address musical engagement. Anna and Beth clearly believe that a large part of their responsibility to the students is learning through music. Carla believes that the ultimate purpose of her interactions with the students is musical.

The evidence of success in both realms leaves me firmly in the middle.

This has been an evolving process for me. Currently, I believe that I should provide instruction that addresses the students' growth, musical and otherwise. Through music I can help them develop skills in communication, especially through vocal sound production but also through practice with the communication tools they have available. I can support classroom and IEP goals such as number or letter mastery or pattern awareness. I can also facilitate musical growth, looking to provide experiences in music that fit their current stage of musical development. (Clemens reflection 148)

To not address cognitive, social, and behavioral development through music with these students does them a great disservice. However, to ignore the potential musical growth by not providing sequenced developmental activities is equally unjust

Achieving non-musical goals is the expressed purpose of music therapy (Lubet, 2009 Latham 1980). This view is common among music educators and even referenced in legislation (Ockelford 2002, Ropp 2006, PL 94-192). Graham and Beer (1980) and Reichard and Blackburn (1973) believe that music education should reinforce areas of learning beyond music, while Breeze (2010) and Charles (2000) present research demonstrating that the use of music in instruction strengthens math, reading, communication, and life skills.

On the other side of the spectrum, Thomas (1982) claims that music education for students with special needs should foster aesthetic growth. The *Sounds of Intent* framework (Ockelford 2008) is designed to give educators working with students with severe and profound learning needs a tool to develop instruction specifically geared towards musical growth. The MISC-MUSIC program (Portowitz 2007), while working to strengthen general cognitive processes, does so by direct instruction in music

Literature does not explicitly cover the evolution of a sense of purpose. One relevant factor can be gleaned by a review of author backgrounds. Both Ockelford and Hourigan are parents of students with special needs. In this study, Beth identifies her experience as a parent of a child with ADHD and hearing impairment as key to her developed sense of purpose. Likewise, my own experience with children in the Fetal Alcohol spectrum shapes my professional bias and practice.

Models of Instruction

Recently, my daughter said, "I wish I could be in a class where people learn like me." The pain and loneliness expressed in her plea made me poignantly aware that our desire to embrace diversity, to be inclusive and appropriate, sometimes extends beyond what people with special needs most desire.

> *I have become an increasingly strong advocate of self-contained music instruction. Would you put someone who is just learning addition in a geometry class? The growth I have seen in my little group convinces me that this has to continue. (Clemens reflection 147)*

Because of the self-contained experience with my inclusion students, I interact better with them when they participate in regular education classes.

> *I have noticed that I'm better able to draw my students into inclusion classroom activities … since I've begun to also work with them self-contained. I know more about their abilities, they trust me more, and the aides are more familiar with the musical strengths of these children as well as the way I work. They support the inclusion setting better because of their practice in the self-contained setting. (Clemens reflection 147)*

Given just the inclusion experience, I would have never learned that Leon is motivated by the wind chimes, or that another student has nearly immediate song recall and an impeccable ability to play back the rhythm of a song on the guitar or a drum.

Historically, students with multiple disabilities were educated in separate schools. As legislation emerged mandating public education in the least restrictive environment, these students joined public schools, first in separate classes and now most commonly through inclusion programs (Graham and Beer 1980, Hammel and Hourigan 2011). These programs may be full-inclusion or partial, but in elementary schools, students with special needs typically participate with general music classes.

Though it is the dominant model, inclusion in regular education music classes is not always the best option. Inclusion placements do not necessarily reflect the intent of the law, which calls for placements that allow for appropriate education. MENC suggests that appropriate placement decisions consider musical achievement (1986). Hammel and Hourigan (2011) recognize the relevance of alternative placements. Ritter debates the actual social benefit of two students with Down syndrome who participated in inclusion music classes, suggesting that another placement may have provided a more appropriate experience (in Spotlight on Making 2007/2004).

In this study, the low survey response rate may indicate that teachers are not frequently in self-contained music settings. Of the responses provided, nearly half of the teachers have full-inclusion programs. Carla and Beth both acknowledge that they are not able to address the needs and potential of some of their inclusion students in that setting. They identify instances in which inclusion benefits students, and in which self-contained instruction has made inclusion more successful.

There is very little research available regarding self-contained placements, especially in regular public schools. DeVito (Olsen 2011) teaches in a public school that exclusively serves students with special needs. His successful programs demonstrate that focusing on students' actual potential leads to musical achievement. Sobol (2001) provides strategies and philosophies drawn primarily from her work in specialized school settings.

Curricular Considerations

Teachers typically draw from established curriculum guides to determine appropriate instruction. Ockelford (2002) points out that curricula for students with severe and profound learning needs are generally drawn from guidelines written for students with typical needs. DeVito (Olsen 2011) develops his own curriculum, working to foster musical skills through student-centered, individualized goals.

> *The Sounds of Intent framework has helped me begin to develop a framework for developmentally progressive goals in musical growth since the VA and district SOL's are above the developmental abilities of my students. (Clemens 149)*

> *I look at what we did the previous week and how each student responded. I consider what aspect of their goals I'd like to focus on in the next lesson. Then I look for materials to support those selected goals. ... So I look for resources that support that framework. (Clemens 149)*

Likewise, interviewees find that traditional SOL's and curriculum guides are not relevant for their work with students with multiple disabilities. Rather, they develop curricula by adapting what they have available (typically drawing from pre-kindergarten philosophies), or they create their own materials. And, like DeVito, the teachers from this

study use student-centered approaches in considering curricula. Teachers make curriculum choices based on student potential and current performance level.

One study specifically addresses curriculum for students with multiple disabilities. Swanson (1986) examined available resources, finding 10 state music curricula for this student population. She suggests curriculum developers create a unified curriculum for this population. *The Sounds of Intent* framework (Welch et al 2009, Ockelford 2008) presents perhaps the closest model of what Swanson suggests.

Though none of the teachers involved in this study were familiar with *The Sounds of Intent* framework, they think it sounds like a helpful starting point. They express doubt that a unified curriculum can be developed, due to the diversity of the population. However, this framework provides a guidepost in my work with students with multiple disabilities.

One resource that has specific curricular implications is the IEP. This document outlines goals and benchmarks for students receiving special education services. All teachers who work with identified students have the legal right to access the information it contains, the right to be involved in the process of developing IEP goals, and the responsibility to address all goals relevant to their areas of instruction (Hammel and Hourigan 2011).

The survey responses suggest that music teachers use IEP information minimally. Teachers either do not think to check IEP's for relevant information, have difficulty accessing IEP's, or do not find relevant information when they do read them. No teachers report involvement in developing music related goals for an IEP. Instead, the survey respondents, interviewees, and my own experiences indicate that teachers gain more

relevant information about student learning needs and goals by talking with classroom teachers and aides. Hammel and Hourigan (2011) and Walter (2006) point out that teachers have professional and legal responsibility to the IEP. They encourage teachers to be aware of what is in a student's IEP, and to become involved in the IEP process.

Teacher preparation and training

When I began to work closely with students with multiple disabilities in a self-contained setting, I was frustrated by my lack of knowledge in how to provide appropriate instruction.

> *I believed that music is important in the education of the students I was being asked to teach. I didn't know why. I didn't know to what purpose. And I didn't know how to start. (Clemens 146)*

Over time, this class has grown to become one of the most rewarding parts of my week.

> *I love, love, love working with these students. I wish they could come more often because the small steps I see could become so much greater through increased experience and practice. (Clemens 150)*

Hourigan and Hammel have looked extensively at teacher preparation and training for working with students with special needs. Current teacher training programs for special education in music are lacking (Hamell 2001). Fieldwork experiences appear to increase pre-service teachers' confidence and attitude toward working with students with special needs (Hourigan 2009). Darrow (2009) lists insufficient background knowledge as a barrier teachers face when working with students with special needs.

The data in this study overwhelmingly supports the literature in this regard. No survey participant or interviewee felt prepared for teaching students with multiple disabilities. College training did not adequately address special education for music teachers. Once in the field, teachers find this lack of training frustrating. Building relationships with students with disabilities, however, creates richly rewarding experiences and strengthens teachers' commitments to these children, as suggested by Hourigan's research into fieldwork opportunities.

Resources

Resources regarding many facets of music education for students with special needs exist. The works of Charles (2010), Hammel and Hourigan (2011), and Darrow (2009) address issues of strategies and techniques. Graham and Beer (1980), Nocera (1979), Farnan and Johnson (1988), Ockelford (2009), and Welch (2009) explore curriculum concerns. Nocera, Zinzar (1987), Hammel and Hourigan, and various MENC resources (Porowitz 2004, et al) highlight specific disabilities, providing background knowledge and specific strategies. Teachers can easily access information regarding legal obligations online.

Study participants wish for many of these resources, including descriptions of specific disabilities and strategies to address each condition. The fact that teachers in this study do not reference these materials suggests they are not aware of them. In my own reflections, I noted,

> *I have… been very surprised at the lack of information about teaching in a self-contained setting, or multiple disabilities in general. There is a wealth of information*

about successful techniques and strategies for inclusion, but less about the music education of these students in elementary general music (focusing usually on social and communication goals). (Clemens 147)

Most resources are geared toward inclusion settings. While inclusion strategies often apply to self-contained settings, teachers need to draw these implications for themselves. Interviewees highlight strategies such as modification and adaptation, review and repetition, use of manipulatives, and altered expectations, also referenced in inclusion materials. This suggests that teachers are making these connections. Many resources are not current, which is relevant in a field that is constantly evolving. Some of this need has been well addressed in the recent publication by Hammel and Hourigan (2011), although this book also presents a slant toward inclusion.

Additional issues

The interview data introduces additional issues not directly addressed in the review of literature. The teaching and learning process expands on concepts loosely related to curriculum. Two interviewees identify working with aides and nurses as a dominant consideration in teaching students with multiple disabilities. All participants refer to time as a factor in their experiences.

Teaching and learning process

The interview responses in this study reveal commonalities in planning for, delivering, and evaluating teaching and learning. Teachers begin the process of teaching and learning by becoming familiar with students' potential. Olson's account of a model

program in Florida demonstrates this student-focused approach (2011). Likewise,

Hammel's list of teacher competencies includes developing the ability to monitor the

learning process of students (2001). Awareness of how students learn allows teachers to

access a child's potential in the classroom.

Interview participants form highly individualized goals that focus on small steps,

putting into practice the label-free approach recommended by Hammel and Hourigan

(2011).

> *I totally didn't understand goal setting for these students my first half year. After reading "Music For Everyone" I developed individualized goals for each student in my class. They included things like "makes eye contact with teacher when sung directly to," "holds and uses instruments such as rattles, bells, and drums for increasingly longer period, working toward the duration of an entire song," and "demonstrates ability to echo melodic or rhythmic phrases." (Clemens 149)*

This agrees with Darrow's (2009) suggestion of narrowing the focus as a strategy for

success. To address these goals, teachers plan activities using songs, movement, and

instruments. They often adapt materials from regular education lesson plans, primarily

pre-K level, or write their own. Hammel (2001) and Darrow (2009) include the ability to

adapt and modify as a component of teacher competency.

According to the data in this study, measurement of success is largely subjective,

measured in participation and smiles rather than with assessment tools. Likewise, my

assessment practices with this population were primarily anecdotal.

> *How do I measure success? Noticing when a student couldn't or wouldn't and now they can. Talking with the classroom teacher and aides about what they see. Student feedback, like smiles and sounds and physical response like flapping or bouncing. (Clemens 149)*

Hammel's list of competencies (2001) identifies five skills relating to assessment and evaluation, highlighting the importance of evaluating students with special needs. While some assessment models exist, such as those from Farnan and Johnson (1988) and standards indicators in the *Sounds of Intent* framework (Ockelford 2008), this small sample suggests that they are not well known. There is no commonly accepted set of curricula and appropriate measurement tools.

Aides and nurses

Darrow (2009) and Hammel (2001) suggest collaboration as key to overcoming organizational barriers when working with students with special needs. Interviewees identify working with paraprofessionals as a valued form of collaboration. Aides provide support in managing the class and help the teacher recognize the students' potential. They also provide important feedback. Working with aides adds a level of complexity but is ultimately seen as crucial. Indeed, Hammel and Hourigan say, "A very important, and sometimes overlooked, member of the team is the paraprofessional (aide)" (2011, 61), continuing, "It is critical that music educators develop relationships with paraprofessionals" (62).

Time

Interview participants identify time as an important component of effective instruction. Time is seen as crucial to providing individualized instruction and developing

relationships of trust. Interviewees also recognize that time is generally in short supply when they work with this student population.

> *I'm also aware of the amount of time it takes to do what I think could be done with my SPED kids. Given this wonderful opportunity, I want to capitalize, but since I feel like I'm forging the path, the work is labor-intensive and I don't usually have enough time to make it work as I think it could go. Deciding what the developmental stage is and how to provide the needed experience to practice and grow, creating visuals and adapted resources, finding song materials, thinking of what comes next… (Clemens 147)*

Darrow (2009) includes time as a barrier to effective instruction, noting that gathering resources and developing appropriate curricula and strategies are time intensive. Hammel and Hourigan (2011) acknowledge the strain time restraints put on a teacher.

IMPLICATIONS OF THIS STUDY

This study was limited in scope due to the small sample size and geographic region represented. The low survey response rate also presented a limitation. It is not intended to present a final picture of "what is." Rather, I hope that this small piece can contribute to a larger puzzle as music educators continue to examine appropriate education for students with multiple disabilities.

The emerging picture of self-contained music instruction for students with multiple disabilities presented in this report has implications for music educators, administrators, and professional organizations. Teachers in this study felt isolated and frustrated. This study implies that proactively networking with other teachers in similar situations and taking advantage of resources that are available would reduce these feelings. Hammel and Hourigan provide a website connected to their print resource. An

interactive component to this site could provide teachers with a medium for idea sharing, resource suggestions, and anecdotal sharing.

Best practices identified from literature and teachers' experiences present tenets that teachers should adopt in their own similar situations. Foremost is a student-focused, label free approach toward planning and delivering instruction. Additionally, this study implies that clearly understood teacher attitude regarding purpose is a key component to successful self-contained experiences. Teachers should work to define their personal understanding of purpose.

An implication for music teachers and administrators is that self-contained music education is uniquely important. Teachers can and should be advocates for students whose potential musical connections have been under-developed and under-served. This study demonstrates that administrators remain unaware of the potential for self-contained instruction. Administrators should educate themselves as to relevant and appropriate educational opportunities in music for students with multiple disabilities. In this way, they can better support music staff by articulating their expectations and making more educated and informed responses to teachers seeking guidance. Administrators should take heed of the call for more training, working to develop in-service opportunities and providing resources for music teachers. Both teachers and administrators should work to ensure music teacher participation in the IEP process and develop meaningful musical opportunities for instruction in this student population.

Professional organizations in both music and special education are also in a position to provide training and resources, specifically referencing self-contained instruction and students with multiple disabilities. Dialogue between these two fields

should be fostered. Jointly, these organizations should initiate relevant curriculum and standards development. Specifically, MENC should expand the focus of its 2004 report on reaching learners with special needs with a call for articles and research into this specialized field.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

This study offers numerous paths for further exploration. Continued phenomenological research into shared experience across a larger geographic region would allow for an increasingly accurate picture of self-contained instruction. Teachers' perceptions present only one view of the phenomenon. Therefore, research into appropriate music education for students with multiple disabilities must incorporate the experiences of students, paraprofessionals, classroom teachers, and parents. Comparative case studies between musical interactions of students in exclusively inclusion and self-contained settings would provide insight into these models of delivery. A longitudinal study of students in self-contained settings could track types of interactions and musical and extra-musical development.

This study clearly identified a journey of discovery as teachers came to understand their role in educating students with special needs. Further exploration into the process of discovery, touched on in Hammel's interviews regarding teacher competencies, would provide insight for those involved in developing teacher training programs. Working with aides and nurses also emerged as a theme in this study. Though identified as important, the practice of working with paraprofessionals was not examined in music education research and should be developed.

While this study focused exclusively on public schools where the population is primarily students with typical needs, similar study into shared experiences of teachers in specialized schools, public and private, would provide insight into best practice. Evidence of growth both in and through music suggests that more attention should be paid to developing self-contained programs. Following up on the work of Swanson (1986), a study into the curriculum materials currently guiding instruction for students with multiple disabilities would add support for the development of such programs. Measuring the effectiveness of frameworks such as the *Sounds of Intent* framework (Ockelford 2009) would provide music teachers with data to guide and support advocacy and program development.

CONCLUSION

> Taking a moment to remember the individual child and the lifetime ramifications
> of decisions we make often brings into focus the true importance of the education
> of children with special needs. (Hammel and Hourigan 2011, 38)

The population of music teachers providing instruction to students with multiple disabilities in self-contained settings is small but present. This study explored the relevant literature and the experiences of teachers in those settings in order to understand the purpose and process of self-contained instruction for students with multiple disabilities. Although it can be frustrating and difficult, the resulting snapshot indicates that teachers can overcome a lack of training and background knowledge to provide musical opportunities that are rewarding and worthwhile. In conclusion, I return to the words of one interview participant. At the end of the interview, Anna reflected on her work with

her students with multiple disabilities. Despite the many frustrations and struggles she

faced, the experience of teaching these students brought her professional and personal

reward.

> *Often, if I could just get a smile, or a few minutes of participation, that was a triumph. One girl, in particular, screamed during the entire music period. ... Our first breakthrough came when we discovered that she was mesmerized by the sound of the gong. That was HUGE! Sometimes the teacher would come to my room to borrow the gong because the child was screaming so much.*
>
> *Then there was the boy who threw anything you put in his hands. You give him a cymbal or sticks, they're across the room ("duck!") in an instant. We were slowly able to increase the amount of time he would hold the item before throwing it.*
>
> *One little girl was frightened of puppets. We were able to desensitize her and finally we were able to put a puppet on her hand. I consider that a success.*
>
> *Then there are those who were able to sing and/or clap rhythms. To hear that they were singing to themselves while swinging on the playground was great!*
>
> *I know this is more than you probably want to read, but the children are such gifts and it is a joy to help open them up to the world. (Anna 121)*

APPENDIX A:

Enrollment and services in targeted districts

The enrollment figures were collected from the Virginia Department of Educa
tion Website. Other information was solicited from the Assistant Superintendent of
Special Education of each school district through e-mail.

District A

Total 2011 elementary enrollment: 4880
Students with multiple disabilities: 35 (7%)
Instruction provided through: inclusion
District policy regarding music services: none

District B

Total 2011 elementary enrollment: 2030
Students with multiple disabilities: about 20
Instruction provided through: inclusion and self contained *
District policy regarding music services: none

District C

Total 2011 elementary enrollment: 2107
Students with multiple disabilities: 3
Instruction provided through: homebound/no music; inclusion
District policy regarding music services: inclusion **

District D

Total 2011 elementary enrollment: 2537
Students with multiple disabilities: 37
Instruction provided through: inclusion and self-contained
District policy regarding music services: IEP decision

District E

Total 2011 elementary enrollment: 5758
Students with multiple disabilities: 68
Instruction provided through: inclusion, self-contained ***
District policy regarding music services: none other than specified by IEP

* "We offer in-school music services and then we contract for Music therapy individually as needed and in small groups for students with significant needs.… We match student needs up to the class and have been very successful thanks to great music and SPED teachers working together for the students."

** "No specific policy but the recommended practice is to include students with disabilities with general education students to the extent that is appropriate."

*** Superintendent not aware of how instruction provided across schools, information provided by building SPED teachers

APPENDIX B:
Survey questions

1. Which school district are you affiliated with?

2. Have you provided instruction to students with multiple disabilities? [Multiple disabilities in this service refers to students with disabilities in more than one area, most often physical and mental impairment.] If no, you do not nee to complete the remaining questions.

3. In what environments do students with multiple disabilities experience instruction – full inclusion, partial inclusion, self-contained, other – in your school(s)?

4. Do you have a clear understanding of the role of music in these students' education? If yes, how was this information communicated to you? If no, why not?

5. In your opinion, what is the goal of these students' inclusion in your teaching load – social, address IEP goals, address music goals, or a combination?

6. Are you responsible for developing curricular materials for students in self-contained classes? If no, who is?

7. Do you refer to IEP's in providing instruction for these students?

8. Do you develop activities that specifically address musical development for these students? (This is as opposed to cognitive or social growth.)

9. Are there specific resources you make use of in lesson planning for self-contained classes? If yes, please list them.

Question ten directed participants who were willing to participate in a follow-up interview to a new Survey Monkey link where they could provide contact information.

APPENDIX C:
Survey cover letter

Dear Music Educator,   October, 2010

I am a general music teacher in the elementary schools in Rockingham County Public Schools and also a graduate student in music education at James Madison University. My thesis study involves music education for students with multiple disabilities and I am asking for your input in collecting preliminary data.

Literature (and common sense) establishes that music is worthy of a place in education for all students and literature (and law) establishes that, if music is a part of a school's curriculum, all students to have access to it. There is considerable data regarding the success of inclusion programs as well as teacher strategies for inclusion of students with disabilities. Regarding music and students with multiple disabilities, most of the literature focuses on the extra-musical goals obtained through the use of music. Literature becomes less developed regarding instruction for the musical development of students with multiple disabilities, particularly instruction in self-contained classrooms.

This study will explore the process elementary music teachers in northwest Virginia use in making choices of repertoire and pedagogy for this population. You are being asked to participate in the first phase of the study by completing a short online survey.

If you are willing to participate, please read the attached consent form and click on the link at the bottom. (By clicking on this link, you are giving consent to the conditions outlined in the form.)

Musically yours,

Angie Clemens

APPENDIX D:
Consent to participate in research study

Identification of Investigators & Purpose of Study
You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Angie Clemens from James Madison University. The purpose of this study is to look at the process elementary teachers in the northwestern counties of Virginia use in developing goals and instruction for students with multiple disabilities in self-contained classes. This study will contribute to the researcher's completion of her master's thesis.

Research Procedures
This study involves two phases of data collection. The first phase (which you are being invited to participate in) consists of an online survey that will be administered to individual participants through Surveymonkey.com. You will be asked to provide answers to a series of questions related to your process of planning goals and instruction for students with multiple disabilities. Following data analysis of survey results, a group of elementary music teachers from those who participated in the survey and who indicated willingness to be contacted will be invited to participate in a focus group interview.

Time Required
Participation in this survey phase of the study will require 20 – 30 minutes of your time.

Risks
The investigator does not perceive more than minimal risks from your involvement in this study.

Benefits
The outcomes of the finished study may benefit those who provide instruction to students with multiple disabilities through possible emergence of best practices in curriculum planning for this under-represented population.

Confidentiality
The results of this research will be presented to a committee of professors at James Madison University and may be submitted for publication to music education and special education journals. Additionally, the results of this research may be presented to other music teachers. While individual responses are anonymously obtained and recorded online through the Surveymonkey.com website, data is kept in the strictest confidence. No identifiable information will be collected from the participant and no identifiable responses will be presented in the final form of this study. All data will be stored in a secure location only accessible to the researcher. The researcher retains the right to use and publish non-identifiable data. No longer than five years after the completion of the study, all records will be shredded or deleted from digital storage. Final aggregate results will be made available to participants upon request.
Participation & Withdrawal

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to choose not to participate. Should you choose to participate, you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. However, once your responses have been submitted and anonymously recorded you will not be able to withdraw from the study.

Questions about the Study
If you have questions or concerns during the time of your participation in this study, or after its completion or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact:

Angie Clemens   Dr. Will Dabback (advisor)
10605 Grapevine Lane   Department of Music Education
Dayton, VA 22821   James Madison University
aclemens@rockingham.k12.va.us   Telephone: (540) 568-3464
dabbacwm@jmu.edu

Questions about Your Rights as a Research Subject
Dr. David Cockley
Chair, Institutional Review Board
James Madison University
(540) 568-2834
cocklede@jmu.edu

Giving of Consent
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about this study. I have read this consent and I understand what is being requested of me as a participant in this study. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age. By clicking on the link below, and completing and submitting this anonymous survey, I am consenting to participate in this research.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/BPW3C5M
(If this link does not open, please copy and paste the address directly into your browser.)

Thank you for your consideration.

Angie Clemens, researcher
September, 2010

APPENDIX E:

Interview consent

Identification of Investigators & Purpose of Study
You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Angie Clemens from James Madison University. The purpose of this study is to look at the process elementary teachers in the northwestern counties of Virginia use in developing goals and instruction for students with multiple disabilities in self-contained classes. This study will contribute to the researcher's completion of her master's thesis.
Research Procedures
This study involves two phases of data collection. The first phase consisted of an online survey that was administered to individual participants through Surveymonkey.com. In this second phrase of the study, you will be participating in an interview exploring in more detail the goals and process elementary music teachers use in planning instruction for self-contained students with multiple disabilities.
Time Required
Participation in this interview phase of the study will require 90 minutes of your time.
Risks
The investigator does not perceive more than minimal risks from your involvement in this study.
Benefits
Potential benefits from participation in this interview include idea sharing and networking with other participants. Additionally, the outcomes of the finished study may benefit those who provide instruction to students with multiple disabilities through possible emergence of best practices in curriculum planning for this under-represented population.
Confidentiality
The results of this research will be presented to a committee of professors at James Madison University and may be submitted for publication to music education and special education journals. The results of this research may be presented to other music teachers through conferences or workshops. No identifiable information will be collected from the participant and no identifiable responses will be presented in the final form of this study. All data will be stored in a secure location only accessible to the researcher. The researcher retains the right to use and publish non-identifiable data. No longer than five years after the completion of the study, all records will be shredded or deleted from digital storage. Final aggregate results will be made available to participants upon request.
Participation & Withdrawal
Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to choose not to participate. Should you choose to participate, you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

Questions about the Study

If you have questions or concerns during the time of your participation in this study, or after its completion or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact:

Angie Clemens   Dr. Will Dabback (advisor)
10605 Grapevine Lane   Department of Music Education
Dayton, VA 22821   James Madison University
aclemens@rockingham.k12.va.us   Telephone: (540) 568-3464
dabbacwm@jmu.edu
Questions about Your Rights as a Research Subject
Dr. David Cockley
Chair, Institutional Review Board
James Madison University
(540) 568-2834
cocklede@jmu.edu

Giving of Consent
I have read this consent form and I understand what is being requested of me as a participant in this study. I freely consent to participate. I have been given satisfactory answers to my questions. The investigator provided me with a copy of this form. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age.

☐ I give consent to be (video/audio) taped during my interview. _____ (initials)

_____
Name of Participant (Printed)

_____   _____
Name of Participant (Signed)   Date

_____   _____
Name of Researcher (Signed)   Date

APPENDIX F:
Interview guide

Introduce self and project

•Describe you experience working with students with multiple disabilities
-focus on self-contain settings
-types of disabilities worked with:

•Describe your understanding of the purpose of music education for these students you've been describing.

•In what ways does this differ from your approach towards regular music education classes?

•How did you come to understand the purpose of your work with these students?

•What types of goals do you set for these individuals?
-goals for group? For individuals?
-progression of development?
-resources drawn on to develop goals?
-attitude towards VA music SOL's /MENC goals for this population?

•How do you plan instruction for a self-contained multiple needs class?

•Where do you find resources to support your planning?

•What helps or hinders achieving the purpose you strive to meet?

•How do you measure success?

•Is there anything else you'd like to add that we haven't touched on?

APPENDIX G:
Codebook

I. SUPPORT

A. Administrative
-they're yours
-on your own
-"that's on your schedule – go teach them"
-never told
-lack of direction
-"I was just tired of nobody giving me any help"
-on your own
-"They expect you to do it, but they don't know what "it" is"
-lack of direction
-lack of materials
-lack of materials
-ability/needs categories
-teaching strategies/ideas
-IEP/written information
-curriculum documents/standards
-lack of materials
-more awareness all children can learn
-talked to principles re vision
-teachers forget to bring them
-fill up our time
-more courses – therapy focus
-no music therapist
-"'They can just experience.' Baloney."
-don't recall any (good or bad) expectation communicated
-"nobody came to me and said 'we expect them to be able to do this"
-"nobody came to me and said…'this child is able to do this but not that'"

B. Working with an aide
-an aide
- little bit you get from the aide
-I need you here
-training the aides
-express to the aide
-two to one (adults to children)
-getting the aides on my side
-like having a whole bunch of teachers there
-help of the aides
-playing instruments (aides)
-moving them (aides)

-getting to know the aides
-dynamics in the classroom

C. Barriers to instruction
-meetings (miss students time due to)
-helpful to be aware
-IEP's would be helpful
-class size factor
-see school system address
-only certain amount of time
-too many in that class
-so many disabilities (grouped together)
-so many children in there
-knowing about disability/keeping child comfortable
-so many in one class
-half time spent on things not musical
-"all in the same class"

D. Wish list
-provide resources
-should be addressed in colleges
-wants in-service
-how other people handled multiple disability class
-what things can you do with…(resource)
-sped course would have helped
-would have been nice to have IEP's

II. Worth

A. Teacher view of students
--children are such gifts
-"building a relationship is always first in my mind"
-each child different
-each kid is different
-personal to each child
-"what the child needed was more important that what I felt I needed"
-"I loved them as individuals"
-"you knew you were meeting a need of something"
-liked the kids
-"I enjoyed them as individuals"
-more I see them (including severe and profound) the more you can get accomplished
-"if they grow an inch in a year then yeah. They haven't regressed, we've progressed."
-SOL's – dis-service
-grow to full potential
-'that child can never learn' and that's not true
-advocate for him

-"If you look at a child that has a physical impairment or a mental impairment, that limits…as to what you think they can do"
-"look at the child as a child"
-"bring them to whatever their potential"
-very musical (non-verbal)
-"music for them is something that is here" (heart)
-be the best they can be
-(emotional disabilities) more difficult than physical disabilities
-growth…no
-just want to hug them
-"I don't know how anybody could not want to reach them."
"I think it's easy to kind of skip over what they're able to do and think about I'm going to do this musical…I had to get rid of that idea. This is the child thinking now."
-reach them at whatever level

B. Teacher value of program
-worth all the trouble
-spent more time on these lessons
-wish I had them every day
-music is for everyone
-"bring the same energy"
-appropriate? Yes!
-music is so important

C. Teacher perspective of student's value of program
-joy on their faces
-everything from their eyes
-smile
-smile
-singing on playground
-(perform) rhythms
-kids come up, hugging you
-they enjoy it – it's worth it
-smiles
-child smiling "That's the best one"

D. Teacher view of self
-frightens me (lack of therapy background)
-I got better (regarding aides)
-knew meeting a need
-scared to death (first experience)
-feeling of happiness on my part (how know success)
-"I really went from being extremely frustrated to absolutely loving that class within one year"
-that made me happy
-feeling inadequate

-felt ill-prepared
-frustrated
-realizing I'm reaching this person at least a little bit
-get over feeling that I was not doing them any good.
-felt like letting them down
-"frustrated that I didn't have the background in how to deal with these things"
-very frustrating
-real challenge
-wasn't sure (what to expect)
-"whole lot more than I've ever had to deal with"

III. Process

A. Teaching and learning
-discovering together
-"teaching is learning as you're doing"
-I made
-I created
-something of my own
-adapt
-adapted
-trial by error
-see
-see
-see
-learn by doing
-improvise
-teacher/parent sharing back
-dialogue with teachers/aides
-own observation
-get to know the child
-work with the group
-working directly with child
-make opportunities for children to be successful
-videos (teacher resource, not student)
-"erase/restructure their hard drives" – musically
-gear different activity with that approach (adapt)
-read a lot
-team planning
-reading
-get a handle on how a child learns
-different way to route
-planning time
-go to SPED teachers
-it's hard
-can't to so much focusing

-see what they can do
-can't do everything at once
-talking to the teacher
-get ideas from other teachers
-look in books
-trial and error
-feedback from aides
-trial and error
-trial and error
-adapt from Pre-K
-not a progression
-talking to teacher and aides
-figure things out
-trial and error
-"just thinking on my own"
-not necessary to reach everyone at the same time

B. Strategies/activity types
-movement
-movement
-dancing
-piano lessons
-repetition
-repetition
-favorites
-changing often
-visuals
-visuals
-manipulatives/visuals
-variety
-classical music
-Kodaly
-Orff
-Gordon
-preschool philosophies (Fierabend)
-instruments
-music activities that…(enhance what they're doing)
-individual goals
-group goals
-attention
-musical and non-musical potential
-smart board
-play games
"We just play…because they don't know how to play"
-focus on smaller things
-little bit of this, a little bit of that

-"I would realize that the students were actually older"
-hand motions to music
-finding out what the child can do takes time
-moving
-"taking blocks of those" (grouping students)
-"things I thought the child could do"

C. Goals/objectives
•how shaped
-own goals
-they loved to do that
-goal (did form)
-development/building blocks
-goals for individuals
-SOL's "they've got to learn this" (started here)
-quite a bit different (goals from reg ed)

•musical
-hand-held instruments
-involved
-musically literate
-aesthetics of music (not priority)
-read music at whatever level
-deaf child feel the beat
-being able to enjoy it
-enjoy what they were doing
-instrument
-be able to experience
-feel a beat

•extra-musical (non)
-attention
-hold an instrument
-not really musical development
-basic skills
-make a sound
-less screaming
-hold an item

-can be mainstreamed
-can stay focused
-help become verbal
-help in the learning process
-focus
-communicate
-start making noises

-communicate
-children now able to speak
-"I want them to participate" (inc)
-able to function in regular class
-get them to stay
-not to cry
-get everybody incorporated

IV. Types of disabilities
-hearing impaired
-trainables
-wheelchairs
-wheelchair-bound
-wheelchair
-hearing impaired
-multiple problems
-autism
-trainables (not term)
-emotionally handicapped
-ADHD
-non-ambulatory
-CP
-non-verbal
-non-ambulatory
-wheelchair
-autism
-IEP
-speech/processing issues
-severe brain disorders
-speak with communicator
-wheelchair bound
-son: hearing impaired, ADHD
-autism
-"easier to teach a blind child"
-blind and deaf – completely different approach
-"ones that can't even move"
-Blind
-Deaf
-Autistic
-CP
-Nonverbal

V. Inclusion/self-contained
-not them getting a turn, it's their caregiver (inc)
-not fair
-"doesn't always mean children need to be mainstreamed"
-benefit more by being in self-contained
-get a lot more music
-child disruptive – hard time (inc)
-skipping over things (in inc.)

APPENDIX H
Anna transcript

I: This is an interview taking place on January 20, 2011 with Anna. My first question has to do with your, as we know, past experience with your school and the district, at the district level. When you were asked to work with children with special needs and in particular the more severe, what do you…. what's your impression that the school's philosophy was about…?

A: Honestly?

I: Yeah, honestly.

A: Honestly it was "they're yours for 30 minutes, whatever you do–just don't burn down the building. Whatever you do, they're yours and you're on your own. And the first real class I had like that was a hearing impaired class. I was scared to death, knew no sign language, did not know what I was going to do with these kids, there was no help, there was no suggestions, there was nothing–just "that's on your schedule–go teach them."

I: Did they come to you with an aide or just…

A: Let's see. The very first week the teacher came with them, which was a big help. And then after that it was just the kids and an aide.

I: And that was a self-contained group?

A: Yes.

I: So, obviously you had to come up with your own goals.

A: Right.

I: What did you end up as having the primary goal in working with children with special needs?

A: That particular class, or the other classes…?

I: Maybe start with that class and then …

A: That class, actually, we ended up discovering together, as you have to do, teaching is learning as you're doing, we discovered that they were great with movement so I did a lot of things with hula hoops, flags, and things like that that they could move to together, even if they couldn't hear the music they could feel the beat, you know, because we were all moving together. And so they loved to do that and I made all kinds of routines for that. And the second year I had them–I think I only had them two years, I started teaching

them piano lessons and they LOVED it. It was wonderful–so it was just trial by error. See what they could do, see what they can't do, see what they want to do. See where I think I can take them.

I: See what they respond to?

A: Right, yeah. And my goals for other special needs classes, like trainables and things like that, that's so personal to each child because each child is so different. And again it's kind of a learn by doing. You work with the child, see what they're capable of, see you know, where you think improvement can be made. Is it extending attention, is it increasing a skill or maybe just being able to hold on to a maraca a little bit longer without throwing it down or… that kind of thing.

I: Did you take into account musical development or was it more broad–just growth?

A: I would not say really what we would consider musical development. It was more, honestly, their attention, their communication, eye contact, their social skills, trying to make them comfortable and happy within a musical setting. But just trying to increase their basic skills, really. And I really have to say–it wasn't that important to me that we were working on a musical skill. If they really needed to work on colors, or sizes, or whatever, that's what we did and I just tried to do it in a musical way. I felt like what the child needed was more important than what I felt I needed. You know.

I: Right. So describe your lesson planning process.

A: Mm … Look at what we did last week. See what worked, see what didn't work. And we always had a starting song, we always had an ending song.

I: So, routine.

A: Right. They need lots of repetition so if they had favorites we tried to work several of those during the class. I would always have some kind of movement. Generally the groups liked that, loved circle type things. Or something that they're just moving. So many of my classes were in wheelchairs–I'd want to say "On your feet" but with those kids so many of them were in wheelchairs. But they loved to do like square dancing moves, with people just rolling the chairs. They felt like they were dancing. And you could just see the joy on the face. And you knew you'd accomplished that. So you did, you know, switching from one thing to a different thing to a different thing. From an activity with movement to a sedentary activity. From something with colors or something, you know, skill development-wise, something with instruments. Changing real often. And like I say, going back so often to their favorites.

I: Mm hmm. So …

A: And I found that so often since the materials, as we talked before, the materials just weren't out there, if I didn't have something of my own, or hadn't found a resource, I

found I could take some of the things I'd done with regular ed kids, and just adapt them, change it in some way to make it something they could physically handle. And often that would work.

I: So the next question, kinda you're already into it. But just kind of back up and go through lesson plans. Describe a typical lesson.

A: Like you said, I think that's what I just did. We'd have our opening song, and then we'd just do a variety of songs and activities to incorporate different things, movement, sedentary, …

I: Contrasting, that's the word I'm looking for.

A: Yeah. With some kids all you're trying to do is get them to make a sound. If you can get them to make a certain sound or something, OK. That's what we're working on. Puppets. Just anything visually, you know, exciting to them. Variety, variety. Including a lot of repetition of their favorites. I liked to use visuals–even to let them pick their favorites. 'Cause if a particular class had 5 or 6 favorites I'd have icons for the 5 or 6 songs and they could pick which one they wanted to do.

I: So that's communication again.

A: Yeah. And I always ended up with an ending song.

I: With a closing song …

A: Yeah.

I: Besides you and the students, who would you say was typically present in a self-contained class–when you were working with self-contained classes?

A: Right. At least the aide, and very often possibly as many as one adult to one child if they were all wheelchair bound. If I was lucky. Sometimes I was able, if there weren't enough adults, I was able to pull in some fifth graders to help with that so that each child was able to move in a circle. If we couldn't find enough people, we just did something different. You know.

I: Yeah.

A: Improvise!

I: And, kinda getting into these two typical activities you used–you talked about movement, puppets …

A: Lots of visuals. You know–one little elephant went out to play. I had great big elephants, I had them in all different colors, but I had great big numbers on them and the

kids could come up even in a wheelchair and pick elephant one or elephant two. Just whatever the added visual. Things with magnets that they could come up and put the magnet on the board. Things with streamers, hula hoops.

I: The things that would go with movement.

A: That they could manipulate. Each kid in each class is different….

I: Manipulatives.

A: Is your pen dying?

I: No, these are funny pencils–there, now there's the lead.

A: OK, OK.

I: Thinking back, what do you feel is most successful about your teaching of those students?

A: Probably the fact that I enjoyed them as individuals, you know. I think if I hadn't liked the kids I probably would have looked on it as a real chore. And it was a lot of extra work. I spent more time working on a special ed plan than I did the rest of my week.

I: Mm hmm.

A: But I really liked the kids. I liked working with them. I liked that feeling that they give you, you know the huggy-lovey. Even the ones that couldn't be huggy-lovey, you knew you were meeting a need or something.

I: You meet their eye, they suddenly make eye contact with you …

A: Yeah. Just to get a smile from one of them. I went over to [school name] the last workday you had, some time or another, it would have been the end of October. I went to see a friend. And it was conference day and she had a family outside. Well it happened to be…this family has kids in several different schools because they've got some with special needs and regular. With this little girl with special needs was with them in the wheelchair and I'd had her at [school name] and I'd had her at [school name.] And I squatted down and I was talking with her and I was saying "Bonnie, Bonnie. This is Mrs. A." And she just kind of looked up and [smiles broadly.] And that just felt so good. So the biggest success is within myself. That I loved them as individuals enough to really work hard and think it was worth it.

I: And to see back from them, the feedback back from them lets you know that what you did was successful with them.

A: Was worthwhile, was worth all the trouble.

I: Yes.

A: And angst….

I: So, the opposite side of that. What was the most frustrating aspect?

A: Probably lack of materials, lack of direction. I went to a principal somewhere along the line and said, "Now I've got this class with three" (you can hardly make a circle with three) special needs kids, two of them where in wheelchairs…….laid out the scenario. "What do you want me to do with them?" I was just tired of nobody giving me any help. "What can I do with them? What do you want me to do with them?" This is exactly what she said. "I'm sure they'd enjoy hearing some good music." Ohhh. That's all she could tell me. And I was just, like …

I: Would you enjoy just sitting there doing that?…

A: And this is the person who is evaluating me. You know, that doesn't have a clue what I am doing or should be doing in my classroom. Arg. So, lack of direction from administrators, lack of materials, just feeling very on your own. Like back to the first day with the hearing impaired class. I came down to…. [Name] was the principal, and I came down to the office after they left. And I said, "[Name], I am covered in perspiration from the tip of my head to the bottom of my toes, but we got through it."

A and I: (laughing together)

A: I literally was–I was drenched. What do you do with kids that can't hear you–and you don't know sign language? But there is no answer. They expect you to do it, but they don't know what "it" is.

I: Mm hmm. The mysterious "it."

A: Yeah.

I: And this is also, you've kind of implied but to put it in words–what would you find–or what would you have found most helpful in working with that population?

A: Direction and materials.

I: Yeah.

A and I: (laughing together)

A: There's never … you are never told what's expected of you with them.

I: Did you ever have the experience of being told what's expected from their teacher?

A: No. That first day with the hearing impaired class she showed me some activities they had done in the past. I really appreciated her coming in that day so much…. Some things they had done in the past, told me–just gave me a few ideas, what they could possible do, and that was probably the most input I've ever had from their teachers.

I: The very first …

A: Yeah. And, the teacher's never in the class. That's probably the only time I've ever had the teacher in the class. So it's what little bit you can get from the aides, which isn't usually much. And aides are a whole different thing too because …

I: Yeah, let's talk about aides for a little bit.

A: You have some that can be so helpful and so wonderful, and then you have some that literally look like they are sitting there twiddling their thumbs, and they're just putting in the time, waiting for you to finish up. And you've got the others that are up there helping and doing and… and I was never real sure how assertive I should be about "I need you over here," and "this child needs your help" and, you know. I think I got better at that as time went on. But that was a frustration that some were so helpful and some were really just worthless.

I: Do you think it would have been helpful if you would have been given some sort of planning time that you could have worked with that aides, that you could have sort of …

A: Gone into their classroom and worked with them.

I: Or, almost like an in-service training–"this is what I need you to do in my room."

A: Oh, I see. To train the aides.

I: Yeah.

A: (pause) I think you'd almost have to work with the group, maybe for at least six or eight lessons, you know–if it was a new group to you–to know what you needed that person to do. I don't think you could tell them right up front, other than I just need to generally to join in and help. But if there was a vehicle for you to be to express to the aide, "it would really help the class if I could count on this from you"–if there was some way to express without, you know, ticking somebody off or … it's just awkward.

I: It is, because they work with the classroom teacher all the time, they know each other so well, but then they just come in for such a short amount of time to your space. How do you build that rapport?

A: And how do you establish right up front "no, it's not all right for you to just sit over there in the corner while I teach these kids. I need you here."

I: And, "I need to learn from you how to work from this child, because you know that better than I do."

A: Mm hmm. And I think particularly at first. Now, like I said, I got better. I think at first I was very hesitant to be real assertive and say, "That's not doing anybody any good for you to sit back there in that corner."

I: Certainly not me–or that child.

A: Right. (Sigh.)

I: Well, this is very good. I certainly appreciate it.

E-mail follow-up to interview

I: Thanks again for meeting with me for my thesis. I really enjoyed hearing you talk about your experiences with special needs kids–it is so obvious when you talk about it that those kids were special to you. In going back over our interview, I do have a few follow-up questions.

It is obvious in reviewing your comments that finding resources was a challenge and that you created and wrote quite a few of your own resources. You mentioned creating movement routines–were those primarily to instrumental recordings?

A: This was quite a while ago. I used mostly Hap Palmer instrumental pieces, although one was to "Side by Side" by Joanie Bartles.

I: Classical, folk? Can you also describe other types of resources you created?

A: Other than the book and accompanying CD, I guess most of the things I created were manipulatives and/or visuals. I also adapted hand-held instruments to meet their needs as much as I could.

I: On the topic of goals, you stated that this was often a "discovering together" since there were no district or state level goals to guide you. Several follow-up questions relating to goals.

What did you use to determine what the children needed? Did you dialogue with the classroom teacher, look at IEP's, or refer to developmental charts or other information about a particular disability to help in developing goals?

A: A lot of this came from dialogue with the teachers/aides and from my own observations. As you get to know them after a few years, you just know that child and "where he/she IS" and what might be helpful in moving him/her forward. In all my years, I only asked for written information on children twice. (I hated to give the classroom

teacher anything extra to do.) These two were children with multiple, multiple problems and I felt I needed more info than what I was seeing and hearing. Seeing on paper what their teacher was working on gave me a lot of help in seeing how I could help in that whole developmental process.

I: Do you feel that the standards of learning for elementary level music in Virginia are relevant to this population? What about the RCPS elementary music curriculum?

A: Absolutely not. Neither VA nor RCPS has a document of which I am aware that addresses these students' needs.

I: Do you believe some type of standards could be made for this population?

A: I sincerely doubt it since each group and each child is so different. What might be reasonable goals for one class or child might be totally unreasonable for a different class or child. I DO think that a compilation of teaching strategies and ideas could be a huge help. This would just be like an encyclopedia of ideas you could turn to. It would need to be divided into "ability/needs" categories. You'd have a section just for hearing impaired (and probably divided into mild impairment and severe impairment). You'd have sections for ADHD, "trainable" (although that term isn't used anymore, I think), emotionally handicapped, autistic, etc.... This would be a HUGE undertaking, because even within these groups there are still so many variables. A child in a class that has cerebral palsy would have different needs than his classmate who did not have this condition. There are so many combinations... OK, she's in a particular class and here are the suggestions to try with that specific group, but what about the fact that she's non-verbal or non-ambulatory? Every little thing makes such a difference – even the home situation. Is the child being supported and encouraged at home, or stuck in a crib until the school shows up the next morning to pick him up for school?

I: In the past few years, a team from England led by Adam Ockleford has begun this type work in project called "Sounds of Intent." Did you ever come across this material?

A: No, I was never aware of this resource.

I: And finally, you talked about the feeling success and worth in your work with students with special needs. Can you describe measures that you relied on to identify success when working with these students?

A: Usually it came through my own observation of progress in class, but occasionally a teacher would share something that happened in her class that was a result of something I'd done. Several times I had parents mention something they had seen their child do, also as a result of my class.

Often, if I just could get a smile or a few minutes of participation, that was a triumph. One girl, in particular, screamed the entire music period. We set a goal of having her scream less each week. I can't say we reached that goal exactly as stated, but over a

period of about one and a half years, she finally stopped screaming. Our first break-through came when we discovered that she was mesmerized by the sound of the gong. That was HUGE! Sometimes, the teacher would come to my room to borrow the gong because the child was screaming so
much.

Then there was the boy who threw anything you put in his hands. You give him a cymbal or sticks, they're across the room ("duck!") in an instant. We were slowly able to increase the amount of time he would hold the item before throwing it.

One little girl was frightened of puppets. We were able to desensitize her and finally were able to put a puppet on her hand. I consider that a success.

Then there are those who were able to sing and/or clap rhythms. To hear that they were singing to themselves while swinging on the playground was great!

When you first get these kids, they don't know you, don't trust you, are even afraid of you. Building a relationship of trust is always first in my mind. THEN you can begin to build on their skills/abilities.

I know this is more than what you probably wanted to read, but the children are such gifts and it is a joy to help open them up to the world.

While I am thinking about it, I'm remembering a class I had at [school name] that were non-ambulatory and non-verbal. You got almost everything through their eyes. I started introducing them to classical music. Eventually, I could play a short selection and hold up two or three composers' names. The children would look at the name of the correct composer. That class did almost everything that way. I made computer-generated visuals representing each of their favorite activities and they would get to choose an activity by looking at it's visual. They loved "dancing" in their wheelchairs and games of all kinds. They even played "Rock, paper, scissors" by looking at the appropriate visual.

Good luck with this project. I'm sure you'll do well with it.

I: Again, thank you so much for your time. Your responses are much appreciated.

APPENDIX I:
Beth transcript

This interview took place February 1, 2011.

I: I'll start by telling you a little bit about why I have arrived at this point.

B: I can guess but…

I: Well, when I started teaching I knew that I was going to go to graduate school someday, but I wasn't sure at that point if I maybe wanted to go to seminary or music ed so I just waited. And then I had kids and I just waited and so. All that I time I'm thinking OK, when I get there, what's my study gonna be? And I'm Mennonite so I thought that I would explore how singers develop a singing community. Since Mennonite culture is known for singing, so how does that happen and how might public schools borrow from that…

B: Sure.

I: I thought that was for sure what I was going to do.

B: Yeah.

I: And then I got to grad school three summers ago and at that time I was really interested in drum circles. I thought that might be an interesting research topic – maybe easier – so maybe I'll go there. And then, I got a self-contained classroom of multiple disability kids.

B: Wow.

I: For the first time. I had had a class like that as a student teacher, but this was my nineteenth year of teaching and the first time I got that class.

B: And it's hard.

I: Hard. And I was looking around for "where are the other people doing this" and "what are they doing" and, you know, looking to see what is possible with the students. There's got to be stuff out there, and if not, there should be.

B: Yes. Exactly. And there are some that would benefit more by being self-contained. What I do – a lot – is, I go to their SPED teachers. And we have a lot of inclusion as well. They want to try everybody. But in addition to that I do some pull out when I have – supposedly – planning time.

I: Um-hm.

B: And I prefer to use that planning time to help my students be the best that they can be. And I have a class that are children that mainly have various degrees of autism. And we work really hard on trying to get them to be able to function in the regular classroom setting. We have one child, when I first got her, hates music, hates loud sounds. And that's a real problem when they come in to the mainstream classroom. Well, I have a little blanket over there and I say – her name is Amanda – and I say "Amanda, you know you don't have to stay in the circle. That's your blanket. You can go and you can be in your safe place until you're ready to come out. But when you come out you can't use words like 'I'm hungry,' 'I want to go home,' ' I don't like music' … things like that. You stay in your safe place until you can come back and participate. But we work on those skills when they're self-contained. And we play games. All sorts of games. I don't do any note reading or anything like that. Everything is game based. We just play and play and play because they don't know how to play.

I: With the self-contained groups that you are working with right now, is it exclusively autism, or are there other…

B: No. Because we are a regional SPED school, we have a lot of children who are… have various brain…. Or they have brain – really severe brain disorders. Some children speak with a communicator and are wheelchair bound and they are mentally OK, but they can't communicate. So I work with the teachers to try to have a little music thing put in the communicator when we're working. The two children that I'm working with mainly are 4th (upper elementary) graders. And they are included into the regular classroom. But I get with the teachers to try to help them so that when they come in they don't just sit there. And that's what happens when they're in the regular classroom. I want them to participate. And so they have their little music section. And if we're doing some note reading – it might take them a little longer. And if we're doing a smartboard activity – Tales on Music Street or something like that – they have to say what the note is and the pitch for it too. What I did is that I took the recorder and played the pitches and so we recorded it. It doesn't take a long section because there's not much memory on their communicators. So, just anything so they can function well.

I: Um-hm.

B: So, my younger students who – we have some younger students that have communicators too, and have some speech and processing issues. And they come in, self-contained, but they also come to the regular class. So they get a lot more music than, you know…

I: And why not?

B: …average kids do. So.

I: The various students that you've been describing – can you talk a little bit about your understanding of the purpose of music education for them.

B: Well, you know, the cliché, or the – what everybody … "Well, they can just understand – I mean – they can just experience. Baloney. That is a bunch of baloney. I've got some younger children that when they come in here, that I can put them on my lap, sing to them, and they immediately calm down. And I can start… you know, music for them is something that is here. [touches hands against chest, showing emotional connection.] What upsets me so is that we have speech pathologists, we have physical… you know, OT's, we have physical therapists, we have all kinds of therapists. But no music therapist. And I feel like, for me, that is something that I know enough to be [giggles] dangerous. And that frightens me as a music educator. And I really feel like that there needs to be more courses that are taught on the collegiate level that will help young teachers be able to teach children with multiple disabilities.

I: Especially focusing on the advantages through therapy?

B: Yes, yes.

I: So would you say, to reach non-music skills using musical benefits, communicating through music? Would that be kind of your take on what music can bring to those students?

B: Yes. Because I've had some children that are now being able to speak. And … I've got one child that is very musical. And she sings all the time – she sings on pitch – you just can't understand a word she says. But I can hear her singing, and I know exactly what she singing, and I know what song she's singing and so I'll sing with her. Come down the hall, she'll see me, she'll come in and … let's see, what is the song she's singing now? Oh we've been working on "Skip, skip, skip to the barbershop" and she comes in singing it. Or we'll do "Apple tree" and she'll sing it. And she'll even play it on the xylophones. I'll say "point to an A, point to … you know … she can play it and do all things. She just cannot speak. So, yeah. We wanna try to be able to get them to communicate. And they … and she's starting to be able to form more sounds. I don't know whether it's a physical thing with her tongue. It's almost like her tongue is paralyzed.

I: Well, it's an interesting thing that she is so melodic.

B: She, I think she's got perfect pitch. But she's a first grader (younger student) so I'm just not sure. But I think she's got perfect pitch.

I: Well, can you talk a little bit about how that philosophy – what music brings to students with disabilities – differs from what you bring to students without disabilities?

B: OK … Let me think about that one. I try to bring the same energy. I don't look at a child and say "well, that child has autism" or "that child has a learning disability" or "that child's not as smart as that." I look at a child as a child and I try to bring them to

whatever their potential – I try to raise the bar and I want them to exceed what I think they can do.

I: So if I can speak back.

B: Yeah.

I: In all of your classes, your goal is to bring the child to their potential.

B: Yes.

I: And, in both settings, musical potential as well as non-musical potential.

B: Yes.

I: [speaking what she is writing … musical and otherwise.

B: Yes. I really don't look at a child … because I think in the long run if you look at a child that has a physical impairment or a mental impairment that limits or sets a barrier or a limitation as to what you think they can do. But if you take away that, and just think of them as "Now, I've got to find a different way to route. To communicate musically and non-musically." It's just like somebody who has a brain injury – if they were in a car accident and they had a brain injury– you try to work around that to bring them back to where they were before they had that brain injury. Am I making sense?

I: Yes. I'm just thinking where I want to go next.

B: OK.

I: How would you say that you came to that philosophy?

B: Well, you would never know it – my son has a, he's hearing impaired, number one. You wouldn't know it, but he has …

I: I think he mentioned that, but you wouldn't know it.

B: No. And it's surprising that he's a music major because he has a 75% hearing loss …

I: That's significant.

B: … in his left ear. And we're lucky that it's on his left side because if it was on his right he'd probably have a severe learning disability as well. But, with that being said, he's also diagnosed with ADHD.

I: Which you might guess if you meet him.

B: Yes, a lot of energy, but he is – it's really interesting. I've seen him, observed him with kids and he's great with kids and he does a lot of creative things. But he thinks outside of the box. And so having a child with an "IEP" [chuckles] I had to be an advocate for him so that he would be treated fairly and normally because that's all I wanted for him. To be treated fairly. And so I had to come to different conclusions about the way I … if I wanted him to be treated fairly I had to change my thinking and say "well that child can never learn" and that's not true. I've got children that are supposedly severely brain damaged and anywhere else they go, they just sit there. They come in here and I start singing to them and they start making all these noises. They're non-musical, but this one child, I know that he has, maybe only half a brain, the back of his head, it's just not there. And he mainly just sits there. But when he comes in here, when he hears me sing, something stimulates his brains. Maybe we can communicate with him, maybe not. But whose to say what's inside of his head.

I: Or what can happen.

B: Yeah, what can come.

I: Well, you're preaching to the choir – I can tell you that. My children are both adopted from Russia. And we did not know when we adopted them (they're not biologically related) both birth mothers mis-used alcohol.

B: [Gasp] Oh, alcohol – fetal…

I: They are both in the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum. And that has very much colored my approach to education, so I completely understand.

B: Well, you just have to get around their way of learning and get a handle on how a child learns. I do a lot of reading, and my biggie right now is autism because we have, oh I would say [provides a figure] in this school. We only have [gives the total school population] some children in this school.

I: That's a large percentage. [Students with autism represent nearly 9% of this school's population.]

B: That's a large population in this school of children with some spectrum of autism.

I: Does your thinking [pause for school announcement over intercom] fit with the administration in your building, with the administration in the district? You've already said that you are the one going and saying "I would like to work with self-contained" so that already says something about the administrator's philosophy.

B: Well, they want us to fill up our time because, well, my principal said if you don't fill up your time with music activities, and this goes for the art and the PE – all the specials – he said, they're going to pull you and make you do something else. I want you to be doing what you need to be doing and that's teaching music. So I just go to the teachers

and said "What do you want me to work on with these students?" And we come up with a plan. If they want me to work on numbers, we do that, if they're wanting me to work on learning to track left to right, we do music activities that help students track from left to right. If they want me to work on colors, or whatever, you know, I'll find an activity that will enhance what they're doing.

I: So as you set goals, you're looking more for setting a goal for individuals rather than the whole group.

B: But I have to do sorta both because, you know, I have these in a group, and they're all varied abilities. So I have to do activities that will be fun, and that I can keep their attention for more than 20 seconds. Because I've got some severe kids that the minute they walk in here they go and start banging on the instruments and I want them to…. So what I do is I'll have something in the middle of my circle and guide them to that and let them experiment and experience those instruments. And then a lot of times I have inexpensive instruments that I let them take back and they can have that as a reward.

I: Do you think in terms of a progression of development or do you think in terms of look and see, let's work on this, out of a context?

B: No, I think it's got – its more to do with their development. You've got to work on their building blocks. You wouldn't build something – a brick, you wouldn't put bricks together with play dough. You know what I mean, you've got to set the foundation. It's got to be developmental.

I: So, do you have resources that you feel help you understand the developmental progression, or how do you determine what the progression is going to be?

B: I read a lot. I really like – here, I'm having a brain freeze.

I: That's understandable at this time of the day!

B: I really am very taken by, you know, the person that wrote "The Brain Dance" – I want to say Anne of Green Gables, but I know that's not who it is.

I: I'm just going to write down to look that up. [Anne Green Gilbert/ Creative Dance Center]

B: Because I feel like the, you know, the physical things that you do when you do the brain dance really helps a kid be focused when you do an activity where they need to focus. And I'm a good friend of John Fierabend, and I use a lot of his materials, and his wife Lilly. And they are at, I feel like, on children, preschool music. And what I do is I'll use some of the same philosophies that I do with my regular preschool children and gear, maybe a different activity with that approach.

I: So it's the developmental aspects of that preschool work that you borrow from.

B: That I borrow from and some of them are in like 3rd or 4th grade, but they don't have the experiences … there's all these missing pieces that they have. That, it's really sad because I think, now this is just a personal opinion, I think that for them to learn they need to erase their hard drives.

I: Now that's well put.

B: And go back and restructure their hard drives. And that can be done musically. But, no – they have to pass an SOL. They have to do all of these things. And what we're doing to these children who are SPED children – we are doing them just a horrible dis-service. I really, I feel like that they should not have to be accountable to any testing. If we are going to bring them to their full potential as students – now I'm getting on my soapbox, I'm sorry.

I: Soapboxes are fine, I think, in interviews.

B: I just think that, you know, if a child has a problem, you've got to go back to where that problem originated and try to erase, and re-route them so that they can learn and they can grow to their full potential.

I: So, picking up on that – SOL's – do you feel that the Virginia SOL's have any relevance in working with the special ed population? And particularly multiple disabilities.

B: [Sigh] Well, I [chuckle] probably shouldn't go … [chuckle.] Let me just say I think that we have to be, we have to have some kind of accountability because there are music teachers that do absolutely nothing in music class. And so I think for accountability the SOL's are fine. But my main goal in music is **music** education; music is for everyone. And my goal is to help my students become literate. And music literacy is so totally different from learning about music, and the aesthetics of music. That's all fine and good when you're sitting in a concert and, you know, the aesthetic value of music is great, but as a music educator, my goal is to be able to have my students have an understanding of how to read music, and to be able to read music at whatever level they can read. You know, I've got some children that, they're going great guns. And, like, I did an activity today with my students that I wouldn't let them see anything. It was all aural. And then I made them repeat. They had to do it by themselves. It was very interesting, the children who were able to repeat the chant that I taught them. And one child that did it correctly, or most correctly, was a child that had been taking violin since she was 5 years old. And I said, "Well, how'd you learn to play the violin?" "Well, I listened." And I said, "Yes, in music we all need to be able to listen." But children in that one class that I had this morning that I did the activity with – it was amazing what their feedback was. And these kids don't have any quote unquote disabilities.

I: Are you familiar at all with the work of Adam Ockelburg. He is from England.

B: That name is familiar.

I: I wasn't until I started doing background reading for this project. He and his team are developing early benchmarks – before the SOL goals kick in, what happens before that. Do you think that's realistic? Would that be something you would look at and say "this would be a fair way to be accountable for special ed kids" or do you think it's just not…

B: You know what, you have to weigh what is important and what is not important. I don't think that the SOL's are … I think you have to have goals, but I don't think you have to weigh them against SOL's or anything like that. You want to set goals. If they grow an inch in a year, then, yeah. They haven't regressed – we've progressed. I don't know. I look at the SOL's and I think oh, they're lofty goals. They're so not … and some of them aren't even attainable. I think that the SOL's really need to be re-visited and revamped because some of them are so not where students are. And if you want the SOL's to show their development … you know, who cares, whether they … I mean, why does a kindergartener need to know what the Star Spangled Banner is? I mean, for Pete's sake. I want them to know how to keep a steady beat and to be able to tell the difference between two paired eighth notes and a quarter note. I want them to be able to go "ta-ti ta, ta-ti ta." I want them to be able to see it, and I want them to be able to recreate it, and I want them to be able to write it. You know. That's what they need to know. They don't need to know…   and I want them to be able to be musical in whatever they do and be able to sing on pitch. I mean, I work on all of those things because I find that the kids that don't sing on pitch, that can't keep a steady beat are the ones that down the road have some learning issues. I don't know – do you find that?

I: That could be – I haven't thought about that, but now I will.

B: I mean, really. Take a look at the kids in your classrooms that are not singing on pitch, have trouble keeping a steady beat. You know I was working today on an activity where they had to skip, know the difference between what I call skipping beat and marching beat. And I've got some second and third graders that don't even know how to skip and yeah, yeah.

I: We've talked about how you've come to your understanding about why you work with these kids, and we talked about how you've come to understand what you're going to do. So can you talk a little bit about, now that you've decided what your goal is going to be, then what's your next step in planning?

B: What do I do in planning?

I: Mmm hmmm.

B: I try to find as many activities that I think will help them with their learning process. I have these videos that I look at – they're called the Bumble Bee series and they're supposed to work wonders with children with autism, but I don't use them in class because when I go to the teachers, they say that's all their parents do is sit them in front

of the TV because that keeps them contained. So I try to take some of these aspects of these videos and do activities that will help them become verbal. Because we've got a lot of these children that have been diagnosed quote unquote as being on the spectrum, some spectrum of autism, but they're so severe, they're not … there's something else. I wish I had them every day … but, like I said …

I: Why? Why do you wish you had them every day?

B: Why? Because if I had them every day, like for 20 minutes, I feel like, that the more they are exposed to music – I don't know how many times you see your children.

I: Once a week.

B: Well, my primary students I see twice a week for 30 minutes.

I: Oh, you are very lucky.

B: Yeah. We have them 30 minutes and I can get so much more accomplished then I can with once a week. But I've been there, where I saw them every 6 days, when, before we had our … I think the more frequent you are at doing music with the kids, the better they're going to become. I don't care whether they're severe and profound, the more that I would see them, the more you can get accomplished.

I: Again, I hear exactly what you are saying. Before moving here I taught in Illinois where I saw classes two times a week. I had no idea the difference that it was going to make to go back to once a week. I was absolutely astounded. You talked about the Bumblebee series that you pull the concepts from and then put them into the "real world." You also talked about Fer…. I can never say his name.

B: Fierabend, John Fierabend. I use him. I really like the Musikgarten stuff. In fact I was thinking about getting certified in that. And that uses the beat function…oh, who is it… you've got Kodaly, you've got Orff, you've got Dalcroze … oh what's his name?

I: It's not ringing any bells.

B: Oh, what's his name … one of the professors … what's his name …

I: Gordon?

B: Gordon! That's it. Thank you. Gordon. You know, I think there's some validity in what he does. In fact, one of my friends … who is, that does … she studied with John Feirabend and he does the beat and beat function in his conversational solfege. And it really does work and so instead of saying ti-ti ta, we have adopted here in Harrisonburg the ta-ti ta.

I: I use ta-ti.

B: Yeah. It's beat and beat function. So, I don't know. I just feel that it's something that makes a lot of sense to me, and it makes sense to my kids because when we go from duple to triple, you've got ta-tu-te, and then ta-ti and it's still beat, you still say, well, it's just written … and there's three sounds on a beat instead of two and they get it. And they don't even think about it. I can remember that I was so afraid of triple meter, and now we're working on a song that's polymetric.

I: I saw 5/4 up there.

B: Yeah, we're doing the song "Little Swallow" – we were working on that today. And I would have never in a million years, and we're doing it with fourth graders but now in my full circle of thinking, why not expose them to all of this. And they get it. They understand it.

I: Thinking about that goal, to say I want to work with these kids self-contained, and you have a clear idea of why – what kinds of things hinder you meeting your goals?

B: Teachers forgetting to bring them. [Chuckle] Meetings that I may be pulled out and I need to say well, I can't do it today. But I really try to keep, I really try to not miss them if I can at all see them. I think it's just a lack on the part of, not so much my principals now …

I: Would you say that's because of your efforts to educate them, or did you just inherit understanding principals?

B: Well, you know, I've talked to my principals about what I see as a vision for where I want my students to be, and I've had to sell it, but I also have a principal who I taught all of his kids, and his oldest daughter is a music major and I think I had an influence on her. And my assistant principal who is new to our building this year, her daughter's in kindergarten here at [my school.] And her daughter is coming home with …. And she told me that in preschool she hated music, and she's coming home and she's singing all these wonderful songs. And she said she's actually singing, and singing high and she wasn't doing that before. And I said that we talk about our singing voice and where it should be.

I: So your product is selling itself.

B: I hope so. You know, I hope so. You know one reason I can tell, you can tell – if you walk down the hall and you have a group of kids and they come up, and they just start hugging you, you can tell that you've got to be having an effect on them. You know, because they don't hug all the teachers.

I: Which is what's next on my list. How do you measure success, especially looking at the multiple disability kids?

B: I measure success, not by spit out facts. I measure success if they started out at the beginning of the year and they were droning and now they're singing on pitch. I measure success with my SPED kids, they can stay … if they started out 2 seconds, they're on to something else and their caregivers are having to restrain them, whether they can sit in a circle now, and they can play a game, too. I've got some preschool kids that, you know, I have them by themselves, but now we are starting to be able to mainstream with the other preschool classes because they don't sit in there and scream the whole time.

I: Because you had the chance to build their skills?

B: Yes.

I: Is there anything else that we haven't talked about or that you wanted a chance to say.

B: Oh, I don't know. I have a lot I can say. I'm very opinionated. I just think that there needs to be more awareness …

I: Awareness of what?

B: Awareness of all children, that all children can learn.

I: And, in … in any setting, or …?

B: And I think that we need to make opportunities for the children to be successful. That does not always mean children need to be in mainstreamed.

I: Least restrictive environment doesn't necessarily mean the general classroom in your book?

B: Yes. Why in the world would you put somebody who is severely brain damaged in a classroom with other kids who you have to roll around their wheelchair. And it's not fair to the other kids, when I can be doing things that …. The child is not aware in that setting. But when that child comes in and I am directly working with that child individually or with a couple of other kids, that child makes noises and things. I can't give the child, in the regular ed room, what they need musically – or I can't give them what they need period, whether it's musical or what it is. All I can do is, if we're playing a game, make sure they get a turn. But it's not them getting a turn, it's their caregiver, taking a turn for them.

I: Well, I very much appreciate the, first of all the chance to meet you and the chance to talk with you. If as I'm transcribing this I have further questions, do you mind if I contact you?

B: [Shakes head.] E-mail, or phone call.

I: And when things get done I'll give you the opportunity to look things over.

B: I would love to see what you come up with.

I: Mostly, this is going to be a phenomenology, so mostly I'm describing the experience of the people I've talked with. But then I hope to say, "This is how it should inform our current music education system. This is what people are saying works, and is what's beneficial."

B: Well, I hope that I've given you some information that you can use.

I: It is very beneficial and helpful.

APPENDIX J
Carla transcript

I: This interview is taking place on February 2, 2011. I'll start by describing a little bit about what I'm doing and why I'm doing it.

C: OK.

I: As you know I'm finishing up, finally, my master's degree. And I've been thinking ever since I began teaching – I knew I was going to be a master's student at some point and I knew there would be a thesis project so, what's it going to be? And I thought, until I got to grad school that it would be developing singing communities, drawing from my Mennonite background. And then I got there, and then I was really interested in drum circles and thought that maybe that will be my area of research. And then I got this class of special needs students, self-contained, and that experience was so rewarding and frustrating that it became immediately obvious that that was the area I wanted to do my research in. Especially looking at how do other people respond to this situation. So that's really where this research is based. It's not what's the best thing to do, none of that. It's what ARE we doing.

C: OK. I think it's a good choice.

I: So what I'd like to hear a little bit from you about first is describing your experience with that population – students with special needs, especially the more severe and profound, multiple disabilities.

C: OK. Should I mention schools?

I: You can do that.

C: [School name], I think was definitely the most, you know, that I'd had. I don't remember exactly how many students were in a class at one time, maybe seven or eight. Something like that. But I can recall having a blind student and a deaf student, autistic, cerebral palsy, nonverbal students, all in the same class. I mean, ones that can't even move.

I: So, non-ambulatory, I mean, they're not moving from space to space

C: That's correct …

I: But also you're talking about not moving hands?

C: Right. One child [describes a child who was severely brain damaged as well as having physical disabilities.] So, it was very frustrating, like you said. It was a real challenge.

I: About how many years did you work with that group?

C: Two? I think it was two.

I: So, when you looked at your schedule and you saw this class on your class load, talk a little bit about your understanding of why they were on your class load as a self-contained group.

C: Well, at first I wasn't really sure. I mean, we have labels for things and, coming into teaching I wasn't sure what exactly was what, you know, preschool handicapped, self-contained. And then I realized that the handicapped, profound handicapped – is that what they're still called?

I: I'm not even really sure …

C: I realized that whoa, this is a whole lot more than I've ever had to deal with before.

I: Mmmm-hmmmm.

C: So.

I: As you worked with them, did you come to understand or define in your mind a sense of purpose?

C: My goal after a while was to reach them at whatever level I could possibly do. It wasn't necessarily to reach everybody at the same time because that was impossible. I knew that right away. I also couldn't do it without the help of the aides in there for a lot of them, because they just couldn't move. So things like playing instruments, helping them hold them, that sort of thing – I needed to get to know the aides pretty well. And that was kind of difficult, especially because of the first year. Not because of them, but there were dynamics going on in the classroom that I didn't really understand. But eventually that got worked out. But anyway, once I got them, you know, helping and they were very excited to be doing that sort of thing, it got to be a whole lot easier and a whole lot more fun for the kids.

I: Mmmm-hmmm, that makes sense.

C: Yup.

I: Talk a little bit about how the goal you came to understand that you bring to that group differs from the goal that you bring to a regular ed class.

C: OK. Well, quite a bit different. And I think that's why I had a real hard time at first. Because I had a mindset of, you know, SOL's, they've got to learn this, they're this age, they need to do this. I've got all these resources, they have to be able to use them. And that, of course, does not work. You just can't do that. So, in my mind I kind of came up

with things that I thought this child could be able to do – let's work on getting that going. And this child over here, and maybe just taking blocks of those, maybe having listening for everyone – I mean not leaving anybody out for any extended amount of time. But, you know, working on this, everybody's listening, working on that, everybody's moving as much as they can – it might be in a wheelchair, you know, somebody moving them around but try to get everybody incorporated, but knowing I can't for everybody, all at the same time.

I: Let me put into words something that I think I hear you saying: that, for a regular ed class, you're looking at goals that are written, or developed, addressing the group as a whole, but for these classes, you're working on goals for the individuals.

C: I would say so, yes.

I: How did you come to understand that purpose?

C: Trial and error, and just thinking on my own. Because to be honest with you, nobody came to me and said 'we expect this from you, or "we expect them to be able to do this," or "this child is able to do this but not this." Didn't have any of that, it was pretty much left up to me to figure things out.

I: Mmm-hmm. And when you say you didn't have anybody coming to you, are there people that you would have expected to give you that kind of information?

C: It might have been nice to have something like IEPs or something. I don't recall ever getting anything like that. That doesn't necessarily happen now unless I ask for it for any students.

I: That's true.

C: I don't recall other than talking to the teacher and the aides, just finding out what the child can do. But that takes time, and that's during the class.

I: That's true, you're right.

C: So, yeah.

I: What about the mindset of administration. Did you have any feeling of expectation, that you're supposed to be doing anything, or that you're supposed to be doing something but it wasn't spelled out?

C: No, I didn't get a feeling like that – any, no. I mean, I'm not saying good or bad, I just don't recall any.

I: So you don't feel that there was any expectation communicated to you from the administration.

C: Yeah, that's correct.

I: What about feedback?

C: From the administration?

I: Yeah.

C: None that I recall, not about that. Other things, yes, but not about that.

I: What types of goals would you have set for the individuals in those classes?

C: Well, for the deaf child, I mainly wanted to have the child be able to feel a beat. You know lots of time they have some degree of hearing so they might be able to feel, or get up close enough to a speaker or something. Or hand motions to music. Just to be able to experience something like that.

I: So a – there's a word I'm looking for – a tactile response to music?

C: Yeah, right. Mmm-hmmm. For the blind child, of course, they're not able to see things so you'd have to have somebody hand them an instrument or what have you. But, you know, course they can sing, they can listen. It's a lot easier to teach a blind child, but you have a blind child with a deaf child and completely different way to approach things. It makes it hard.

I: Did you have in mind as you were planning goals and then developing what you were going to do to reach those goals, any sort of progression that "I'm going to start here and move to there?" Or where you thinking more "I'm going to address this" and then another time "I'm going to address this?"

C: To me it wasn't a progression. I really got to realize what the children could do, and got over my frustration … I mean I wasn't frustrated with the children, not at all. But I was frustrated that I didn't have the background and how to deal with these things.

I: Mmm-hmm. What kind of background do you feel would have helped?

C: I mean, just any special ed class would have helped. Of course it's been a while since I've been in college. They might have them now, but it would have been helpful to have had. Not only special ed, but also ED classes, as well, I mean, that would have helped as well. But I don't recall anything like that.

I: Do you feel that it would it would be appropriate to develop music based goals for these students? Or do you feel that it is more appropriate to focus on non-music goals that can be reached through music? Or … talk a little about those differences.

C: I see what you're saying. Well, for some children just the fact to get them in there and want to stay. For some of them, that was, you know, to not cry, for them to want to be there for at least part of the time. And I think it's easy to kind of skip over what they're able to do and think about I'm going to do this musical … I had to get rid of that idea. This is the child thinking now. If the child needs to run to the bathroom and can't do that, they need to be wheeled. You know, that sort of thing. Is that keeping the child from being able to participate because if they're sitting there and they're miserable and I don't know that – I mean, it's just basic needs, I think. And with so many in one class, I wasn't just dealing with one. There might be a need over here and a need over there. I mean half the time might have been spent on things that weren't musical, to be real honest with you.

I: So then, how did you go about planning what you were going to do?

C: Trial and error. It was just trial and error. I would take things that I would have for like maybe a Pre-K, or preschool class and see what I could adapt. But then I would realize that for some of the students that were actually older, they might be able to do some of the other things, but adapt them. Basically, I just had to get over the frustration and the feeling that I was not doing them any good. I went through that for quite a while. And it was upsetting to me because I feel like I was letting them down, to be honest with you. Realizing that I'm reaching this person at least a little bit …

I: How did you realize that?

C: Ummm. Feedback, some from the aides. You know a child might not do anything for me in the classroom, they'd say "they were humming that tune later on. It wasn't that they'd gotten it right when I wanted them – so that I could see what they are doing, but later on, it had taken some time for them to process. But feedback from aides. A child smiling. That's the best one – or, don't totally succeed. [break for a phone call.]

I: So, feedback from aides let you know that you were on the right track, or making some progress. …

C: Also talking to the teacher some, that would help, that would help. But most of the time there was an aide for each student.

I: So, trial and error. Anything else you can think of that you used when you when you were planning?

C: I would talk to other teachers and get ideas. I would look in books to get ideas – not that I had any textbooks or anything, but I did find some. I can't recall off hand what I had, but I remember looking at, you know, some literature to get ideas what to do, but again a lot of trial and error, little bit of this, a little bit of that.

I: Well, and something else you said that I want to come back to because it's an interesting comment is that you mentioned that it was your attitude – that when you made a difference …

C: Yes.

I: …in your attitude, the experience with the students changed.

C: Right. And, in my defense, I wouldn't say I had a bad attitude. Not at all. I would say I was frustrated. I wanted to do a good job with them, I think anybody would. And the children are just – you just want to hug them. [Chuckles.] You know, I don't know how anybody could not want to reach them. It was just feeling inadequate. I felt ill-prepared. You know, after succeeding with so many other things, to finally, you know, come to something that I can't.

I: So, a sense of frustration would best describe your attitude.

C: Yes, definitely. Definitely.

I: So, if you started with a frustrated attitude, what kinds of words would you use to describe that attitude that you changed to?

C: That I changed to?

I: Or the new attitude?

C: Enlightenment? [Laughter]

I: Wow!

C: Realization …

I: About what? Enlightened about what?

C: That I can't do everything all at one time, that it was too much. That I need to focus on … smaller things – more basic things. Not expect what I would of a regular class. And just to basically see what they can do. That was my main goal – to have them enjoy what they were doing. And if I felt like the majority of them were getting enjoyment from what we were doing, that made me happy. I really went from being extremely frustrated to absolutely loving that class within one year – but it did take awhile.

I: As you were planning what you were going to do can you think of things that hindered you being able to be successful?

C: So many disabilities.

I: The grouping.

C: Yes. [Chuckles.] And, so many children in there.

I: When you talk so much about how important it is to get to know each child, and then you talked about the large class sizes, absolutely it seems like they would fit together.

C: It takes a while, yeah.

I: So, the number of disabilities and the class size. What about help? What kinds of things helped?

C: What helped … ummm, getting the aides on my side, definitely. But, like I said there was some dynamic going on, I'm not quite sure what it was, and it did take quite a while. At first I thought, to be honest with you, I thought they were upset with me. And that wasn't the case. They would come from something, they were upset. And finally I addressed it and I said, "WHAT is going on?" And then they told me, and then it was fine. When they were sitting there and not responding and the kids were not responding, that made it doubly frustrating.

I: Right.

C: Of course, that was just my situation, that might not have happened anywhere else .…

I: Although I think it is important to realize that when you're working with this population you are working with aides …

C: Right.

I: …so taking into account how that dynamic plays in is a factor …

C: Mmm-hmm.

I: … in what you do and how you do it.

C: I mean, probably about half way through they were just jumping in and doing everything with. And just having them was amazing. It was like having a whole bunch of teachers there.

I: Was there generally one adult per one child?

C: Mmm hmm. I'm not sure that there might have been two to one, at some point, for some of 'em.

I: Mmm hmmm. Did you come across any materials from Adam Ockelburg?

C: That name doesn't ring a bell.

I: It's not something I knew about either until I started researching for this. It's a, I guess mainly a researcher, but he's from England, and his team is working on spelling out what would be appropriate for musical development for children whose, the point where they are at is before where our curriculum guides usually start – they are "pre-curricular" level. Would you have found something like that to be helpful? Or would that have been something that was more …

C: I think so, I mean it would have at least been a place to start. Rather than… yeah, it would have given me a start. It would have been helpful too, I think, to have some basics, you know, what things can you do with a blind child, what can you do with an autistic child, what can you do with a deaf child, you know, what can you do with a child who has cerebral palsy? …with a non-verbal child? What do you do with a child who can't move?

I: So resources about basic strategies regarding specific disabilities.

C: Right, and then it would be helpful to find out how other people had handled a multi-disabilities class. It would have been helpful if I'd have read their frustrations, or what they I had to conquer, I would have felt better about myself in that situation.

I: So some sort of idea and experience sharing would have been a helpful thing.

C: Absolutely. Because I didn't find that … I don't think there's another school in the county that has that many disabilities in one school.

I: I haven't come across it.

C: And I've been in many of the schools.

I: You talked a little about some ways you've measured success …

C: Smiles.

I: And feedback from aides. Is there anything that we've missed?

C: Just a feeling of happiness on my part.

I: Umm-hmm. What about – do you recall seeing growth in the students?

C: Ummmm?

I: Do you feel – no, answer that, and then I have a follow up question.

C: OK. Growth as far as they were able to do this therefore they moved on to this, therefore, I would say, no, as I recall. I would say no. They might have been able to do

this, and then they were able …. There were too many in that classroom. There might have been some, there were too many in the classroom …

I: That's totally appropriate.

C: OK. [Laughs.]

I: Do you think that would be a realistic thing to look for?

C: Ideally, yes. Yes. But I think it depends upon the varied handicaps and the number of kids that are in there. Because you can't do so much focusing, you only have them a certain amount of time a week. It's not like you have lots of time and you can see these people separately, you see them all together and it's such a short amount of time.

I: So do you think that it's appropriate to have self-contained multiple disabilities music instruction?

C: Yes.

I: Why?

C: Just because music is so important. I mean, without learning to read music, the importance of being able to enjoy it no matter how you can. That's my number one goal, to have the children appreciate it and get something from it. Whether it's specific things or just enjoying. You know, I don't know about the deaf child being able to do anything specific, but if they can feel the beat and they enjoy it, that's worth it. In my mind, that's worth it. It might not be worth it to everybody, but it certainly is to me.

I: Obviously you know about no child left behind, and least restrictive environment, and all that … and the prevalence of inclusion. You have experienced self-contained and inclusion. What would the value be that you see in having the self-contained experience against an inclusion experience?

C: Oh boy. I do have some inclusion, I mean now. I have a deaf child in my class. I have two. But they have interpreters. And there's a microphone that picks up something.

I: So do you feel like you would have something to offer them if they would come to you independent of regular needs kids … or is it appropriate?

C: I feel like I'm skipping over things that they could be doing. Do I do things with rhythms… I've got to do musicals and I've got to do programs, I've got to do this I've got to do that and I really do not have the time in a regular classroom to deal a whole lot with that. I mean, I wear the microphone, I give the stuff to the interpreter so that …, I do that sort of thing. But then I've got the other kids and it's very hard in thirty or thirty-five minutes.

I: What about some of the more profound disabilities?

C: I really don't have too many of those currently. I have ED (emotionally disabled) students right now, I don't know if that's what we're talking about.

I: We can sort that out later.

C: I find that a lot more difficult to deal with than the physical handicapped.

I: Because …

C: Just because, just getting them to hone in on what we're doing. You know, if a child is trying, you know I'm all for helping and doing whatever I can, but if a child is being disruptive and getting everyone off task, then I have a real hard time with dealing with that.

I: So the impact on the rest of the class …

C: Right. That's very difficult. That's very difficult. Now we have the ED kids at my one school, and some of them do come in with an aide which helps, some, but it takes away from what they are doing. But then again, if I had a class of ED kids, it would very hard to meet the needs of those kids in that because they are very varied.

I: So class size would again be a factor?

C: Absolutely, absolutely.

I: Well, is there anything else, specifically with multiple disabilities and your experience with that that I haven't asked about or that we haven't touched on?

C: I really would like to see our school system to address that. I feel that it's been put out there, here they are, and we're supposed to know what to do. And I think that any teacher who's worth anything should be concerned – how do you reach children that you haven't been taught how to reach them? It is a concern. I think it ought to be addressed in the colleges, but certainly also at the county level. Especially at the schools that do have these classes. It could be an in-service.

I: That was my next question. How would you like to see it addressed?

C: An in-service, or take time during the work days. If you have disability children, please come and we will have this workshop, that would be wonderful.

I: Resources, specific types of resources?

C: Yes.

I: That would be helpful?

C: Yes. If you have this, we have these that you could check out from us, or here, these might help you. It would be helpful to have IEP's on the students. Course when you have like 600 students total its hard to zero in. It would be helpful to know what their abilities are. Just things like, you know, do they have control over their bodily functions, do they have control because sometimes something will happen in the classroom and they have to leave and I don't know what's going on ahead of time. I had to find that out the hard way and, you know …

I: Which can be a little scary.

C: And so it would be helpful to be aware ahead of time, because if you have some knowledge you have some basis for being able to …

I: We'll just call them "student issues."

C: [Chuckles.]

I: Well, again, I very much appreciate all this information.

C: Oh, you are so welcome.

I: It's very helpful. If I have any questions as I'm transcribing this, or other questions arise, or I just want to check on something, is it OK if I contact you?

C: Oh, absolutely.

APPENDIX K:
Clemens reflection

Elementary students with multiple disabilities present a unique situation for music educators.

Most often, my experience has been to provide instruction to this population through inclusion in regular education general music classes. Again, in most of those experiences, the students arrived with an aide, but with no background information provided to me regarding developmental level and ability, educational goals (musical or otherwise), or direction regarding expected outcomes or directions.

In the school year 2009-2010, I was assigned a thirty minute class of self-contained students whose disabilities were multiple and severe. The class included a child who was at the beginning of stages of independent mobility, was basically nonverbal (though early language development was beginning to emerge), and was severely delayed mentally; a student who breathed with the assistance of a ventilator, was severely mentally retarded, whose limited communication came through eye contact and button communicators, and was completely physically incapacitated; a student who was wheelchair bound, non-verbal, had limited motor skill in her hands and low cognitive function; a hearing-impaired, physically disabled, wheel-chair bound, non-verbal student; and a student with developmental delays so profound she functioned at the level of a 9 – 12 month old, though her physical age was 5.

My only previous self-contained special ed experience had come 18 years earlier in my student teacher, and that group of students was nowhere near as profoundly disabled. Though the classroom teacher had met with me to give me a small preview of her goals for each child as well as a small description of their likes and abilities, I was lost.

I believe that music education facilitates the development of musical ability – through the making of and learning about – and is a viable form of education for its own sake because of its role in our culture as well as in our spirit.
I believe in the principles of multiple intelligences, recognizing that some children are uniquely wired to learn through musical avenues. Therefore, I believe that music is a means of learning as well as an end, suited to bring facilitate achieving non-musical goals.

I believe these principals hold true for all students regardless of age, economic and cultural background, and ability level.

I believe that music is important in the education of students with the types of disabilities I was being asked to teach. I didn't know why. I didn't know to what purpose. And I didn't know how to start.

I have the suspicion that the self-contained instruction will facilitate richer musical rewards than my experiences with inclusion. It seems that the ability to interact more personally and learn to know the students better will allow me to develop activities that are most appropriate for their developmental level.

Literature review has supported my belief in music for everyone, and especially for students with disabilities. My belief in using music to support non-musical outcomes is very present in literature, both those with music therapy backgrounds and without.

I have become very taken with the idea that it is important not to overlook the musical potential of students with severe and profound disabilities – especially the work of Adam Ockelburg's team and the "Sounds of Intent" project.

I have become an increasingly strong advocate of self-contained music instruction. (Would you put someone who is just learning addition in a geometry class?) The growth I have seen in my little group convinces me that this has to continue. A child who did not interact with me at all reaches the point of accurately strumming or drumming the rhythm of a familiar tune. A child who did not respond to a greeting song offers her hands in anticipation of clapping together at the appropriate spots. A child who did not indicate a response to music now makes eye contact when a familiar song is begun. A child who was non-compliant now shakes with excitement hearing the opening notes of an often-repeated song.

I have also been very surprised at the lack of information about teaching in a self-contained setting, or multiple disabilities in general. There is a wealth of information about successful techniques and strategies for inclusion, less about the music education of inclusion students in elementary general music (focusing usually on social and communication goals).

I have noticed that I'm better able to draw my students into classroom activities when they come with the regular ed class since I've begun to also work with them self-contained. I know more about their abilities, they trust me more, the aides are more familiar with the musical strengths of the child as well as the way I work and can support the inclusion setting better because of their practice in the self-contained setting.

I'm still feeling like a pioneer. Who else is doing this kind of stuff? What are they doing? Why are they doing what they are doing?

I'm also aware of the amount of time it takes to do what I think could be done with my SPED kids. Given this wonderful opportunity, I want to capitalize, but since I feel like I'm forging the path, the work is labor-intensive and I don't usually have enough time to make it work as I think it could go. Deciding what the developmental stage is and how to provide the needed experience to practice and grow, creating visuals and adapted resources, finding song materials, thinking of what comes next….

Clemens self-interview
2/6/10

Introduce self and project

•Describe your experience working with students with multiple disabilities
-focus on self-contain settings
-types of disabilities worked with:

I had limited experience with a range of mild disability students in my student teaching. These students' disabilities were primarily intellectual impairment. I also had experience with various disabilities through inclusion, ranging from BD, to autism spectrum, to those in wheelchairs, with hearing impairment, and severe and profound multiple disability. In 2009, I had my first experience with self-contained multiple disability groupings where the disabilities included physical impairments, intellectual impairments, and communication impairments.

•Describe your understanding of the purpose of music education for these students you've been describing.

This has been an evolving process for me. Currently, I believe that I should provide instruction that addresses the students' growth musical and otherwise. Through music I can help them develop skills in communication, especially though vocal sound production but also through practice with the communication tools they have available. I can support classroom and IEP goals such as number or letter mastery or pattern awareness. I can also facilitate musical growth, looking to provide experiences in music that fit their current stage of musical development.

•In what ways does this differ from your approach towards regular music education classes?

The basic approach is the same, the level of individualization is far different. Ideally, I guess I'd like to do that with all of my regular ed students, but class size and time restrictions get in the way of that.

•How did you come to understand the purpose of your work with these students?

Two things come to mind. First is my experience as a parent of special needs children. My children's FAS disabilities make me aware of the different routes that need to be taken to access their potential. Also, I've realized that opportunities for special needs children only happens when people make it happen.

Second had been my experience with my self-contained class and the background reading I've done for me thesis.

•What types of goals do you set for these individuals?
-goals for group? For individuals?
-progression of development?
-resources drawn on to develop goals?
-attitude towards VA music SOL's /MENC goals for this population?

I totally didn't understand goal setting for these students my first half year. After reading "Music For Everyone" I developed individualized goals for each student in my class. They included things like "makes eye contact with teacher when sung directly to", and "holds and uses instruments such as rattles, bells, and drums for increasing longer period, working toward the duration of an entire song", and "demonstrates ability to echo melodic or rhythmic phrases."

The "Sounds of Intent" framework has helped me begin to develop a framework for developmental progressive goals in musical development since the VA and district SOL's are nowhere near the development abilities of my students.

•How do you plan instruction for a self-contained multiple needs class?

I look at what we did the previous week and how each student responded. I consider what aspect of their goals I'd like to focus on in the next lesson. Then I look for materials to support those selected goals. I've developed a general repeating structure for our time together, beginning with a greeting song, incorporating the name of each student, doing another group song that incorporates a goal such as instrument use, vocal use, or social interaction. There may then follow an additional group activity, often involving movement. There is usually instrument/sound exploration time during which student and aide free play with the piano, guitar, xylophone, wind chimes, drum, autoharp.... During this time I interact with each student, looking to push them along their own developmental continuum. We then re-gather for a final group song or activity if time, and a closing song (the same each week) in which each student strums the guitar. So I look for resources that support that framework.

•Where do you find resources to support your planning?

Yes, the hard part. I draw heavily on folk song materials. "Music for Everyone." Some children's recordings like Mike Whitla, Bob McGrath and Raffi. Beeper Coffman's book.

•What helps or hinders achieving the purpose you strive to meet?

Time. Lack of preparation time. Student attendance is spotty. Aides that change from week to week. Those things hinder.

Building my understanding of my purpose. Building my stock of resources. Increasing comfort and familiarity with the aides are all helpful.

•How do you measure success?

Noticing when a student couldn't or wouldn't and now they can. Talking with the classroom teacher and aides about what they see.
Student feedback like smiles and sounds and physical response like flapping or bouncing.

•Is there anything else you'd like to add that we haven't touched on?

I love, love, love working with these students. I wish they could come more often because the small steps I see could become so much greater through increased experience and practice.

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