1-1-2017

Good Teaching on Steroids: Assessments of Music Teaching and Learning with Students on the Autism Spectrum

Rhoda Bernard
Berklee College, rbernard@berklee.edu

Alice Hammel
James Madison University

Good Teaching on Steroids: Assessments of Music Teaching and Learning with Students on the Autism Spectrum

Rhoda Bernard, Berklee College of Music, USA
Alice Hammel, James Madison University, USA

Abstract

As the population of school-aged children on the autism spectrum continues to grow, music teachers require new tools to assess the music learning, knowledge, and skills of children with autism. Similarly, music teacher educators and supervisors require new forms of assessment in order to assess music teaching with students with autism. This presentation will feature two layers of assessments: A. Assessments of student work/performances by children on the autism spectrum, to be used by music educators, and B. Assessments of pre-service and in-service music educators, to be used by music teacher educators and supervisors. Effective assessment of the music learning of students with autism calls on the practices, strategies, and approaches of effective assessment. By magnifying, deepening, broadening, and further personalizing them, music educators can gain a deeper understanding of what their students with autism know and can do in the music classroom and ensemble.

Introduction

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) affects a significant portion of the world's population – nearly one percent, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) (2014). In the U.S., more than 3.5 million people are considered to be on the autism spectrum (Buescher et al., 2014). In 2014, the CDC estimated the prevalence of autism in the U.S. at 1 in every 68 births (CDC, 2014). Furthermore, the population of individuals with autism around the world continues to grow. According to the CDC, "autism is the fastest growing developmental disability" (2008). Between 2000 and 2010, the number of individuals with autism increased by 119.4 percent, from 1 in 150 births in 2000 to 1 in 68 births in 2010 (CDC, 2014).

Autism is even more prevalent in the population of students in U.S. public schools. In 2013, it was estimated that 1 in every 50 children of school age has autism (CDC, 2013). Some public school officials describe the increase in the number of students with autism spectrum disorder as an explosion (Baldridge, 2014). For example, in Lancaster, Pennsylvania administrators, teachers, special educators, and parents are struggling to provide the services

that children with autism require, given the limitations of school budgets and other resources (Baldridge, 2014). Other school districts across the U.S. face similar challenges (Smith, 2008).

With the prevalence of autism in the population of U.S. public school students being so high, most, if not all music educators find themselves working with at least one student with autism (Hammel & Hourigan, 2013, p. xv). This music teaching in learning may take place in sub-separate settings, where students with autism are grouped together, sometimes alongside students with other special needs, or in inclusion settings, where students with autism come to music class with their typical peers.

Unfortunately, researchers have confirmed what practitioners report: that music educators receive insufficient training and support to teach music effectively to students with special needs, including students on the autism spectrum (Hammel, 2001; Hourigan, 2009; Morrier, Hess, & Heflin, 2011; VanWeelden & Meehan, 2015; VanWeelden & Whipple, 2014; Whipple & VanWeelden, 2012). As more children on the autism spectrum become public school music students, music teachers require new tools, strategies, and approaches to reach all of their students effectively. They need new forms of assessment in order to assess the music learning, knowledge, and skills of children with autism. At the same time, music teacher educators and supervisors require new tools, structures, and frameworks to prepare and support pre-service and in-service music educators as they work with students with autism. They also need new forms of assessment in order to assess music teaching with this growing population.

As music educators and music teacher educators with extensive experience and expertise in the area of teaching music to students on the autism spectrum, we present two layers of assessments:

A. Assessments of student work/performances by children on the autism spectrum, to be used by music educators, and
B. Assessments of pre-service and in-service music educators, to be used by music teacher educators and supervisors.

A powerful framework for teaching and learning with individuals on the autism spectrum comes from Lynn Brennan, an independent behavioral consultant with more than 30 years of experience teaching people of all ages with autism. She notes that teaching someone on the autism spectrum effectively is "good teaching on steroids" (Brennan, 2010). The pedagogical practices, strategies, and approaches of effective teaching that music educators know well and use every day are at the root of teaching students with autism. The difference is that they are magnified, deepened, and broadened when working with this population.

The same is true when it comes to assessment. Effective assessment of the music learning of students with autism calls on the practices, strategies, and approaches of effective assessment. By magnifying, deepening, broadening, and further personalizing them, music educators can gain a

deeper understanding of what their students with autism know and can do in the music classroom and ensemble.

In this paper, two experienced music educators will describe and examine the ways that music teachers, music teacher educators, and supervisors can use assessments in meaningful and effective ways with students on the autism spectrum.

Vignettes of Music Teaching and Learning

What follows are vignettes of effective music teaching and learning that incorporate aspects of "good teaching on steroids." We have included examples of rubrics or checklists that can be used to assess a student according to their current level of functioning within a sequenced set of skills. We have also shared rubrics that can be used to assess educators in their work teaching individuals on the autism spectrum.

In the first vignette, the reader will notice some of the strategies and approaches that Stephen, the teacher, employs to reach and involve all students, including those with autism. For example, Stephen gives personalized class agendas to students who need them. He provides students with multiple ways to represent what they know (in this case sol and mi). He presents material in multiple modalities (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic). He employs extended wait time to encourage all students to participate.

Vignette One: Melody Activity

Stephen plays the trombone and teaches elementary general music. His classes meet once per week for 45 minutes.

The first activity in today's class session reviews sol and mi, through singing and the use of hand signs. The students will repeat sol-mi patterns and will create their own sol-mi patterns in simple improvisations.

Stephen has gathered all of the materials he will need for today's class and placed them at the front of the room. The agenda is posted on the whiteboard, and some students have individualized laminated agendas on their desks.

The students enter the classroom and take their seats. Stephen takes attendance by singing each student's name on a sol-mi pattern. The student then sings back, "I'm here" on sol-mi. Stephen takes additional time with students who need longer to respond. He coaches students on sitting up straight and taking a breath before they sing. He encourages students to use their head voices by asking the class to echo him with sirens and other simple vocal warm ups. By the end of the attendance activity, the students have sung their best sol-mi solos of "I'm here" and have warmed up their voices. He uses visual aids to assist the students when necessary – there are posters in front of the classroom with the solfege syllables and the various pitches, as well as a pitch ladder that represents the major scale.

Stephen sings very simple sol-mi patterns to the students, and the class sings them back. He uses hand signs to demonstrate the pitches, and the students use hand signs when they sing. Students who have difficulty producing the Curwen hand signs use alternative representations. Some of them hold up laminated cards for sol and mi,

while others use finger signs that they have learned instead of the hand signs. Some students put their hands on their shoulders for sol and their hands on their waists for mi.

Stephen asks for student volunteers to lead the activity, and three students take turns as leader, singing sol-mi patterns that the class repeats, using hand signs or adapted movements to indicate the pitches.

Stephen then sings sol-mi patterns to individual students, who sing those patterns back. He waits as long as necessary for each student to respond. He uses hand signs and other visual and movement aids to assist students when necessary. He makes notations on a chart about each student's participation in this activity, noting the level of difficulty of the patterns and the accuracy of each student's responses. Hand signs are not used during this activity. The students are expected to understand sol and mi from hearing and audiating the pitches.

Stephen asks the students to sit in a circle. For the next activity, the students will take turns improvising simple patterns using sol and mi, and the whole class will echo those patterns. Stephen starts off with a short improvisation, which the class repeats. Then each student around the circle gets a turn to create a short improvisation for the class to sing back. Each student is given as much time as he or she needs to come up with an improvisation. Stephen makes notations about each student's contributions and participation in his chart. He encourages the students by giving positive and constructive feedback about the patterns that they create.

Stephen explains that they will now learn to play sol and mi on the recorder, and he takes out his recorder to demonstrate as he begins the next activity.

In the next vignette, teacher Lauren uses drum circle class to teach more than just music – she also addresses communication, social, and cognitive skills including eye contact, following cues, echoing/mirroring, and focusing attention.

Vignette Two: Rhythm Activity

Lauren is a percussionist and music educator. She teaches a weekly drum circle/percussion class to a group of ten high school students with autism. The class is an opportunity for the students to develop their musical skills and their communication skills.

The first activity in today's class session addresses ensemble playing of basic rhythms, reading rhythm notation, and speaking rhythm syllables. It also encourages students to make eye contact with each other and with the leader, as well as to follow cues and to pay attention to how well the ensemble is playing together.

Before class, Lauren has arranged the chairs in a circle in the center of the room. She has prepared written materials on the whiteboard and on easel sheets. She has placed a large box of hand percussion instruments in the front of the room.

When the students enter, Lauren greets them and asks them to sit in the circle. The agenda of the day's activities is posted on the whiteboard. Lauren goes over the agenda with the students and briefly explains each activity that will take place today.

Lauren begins class by handing each student a percussion instrument and asks the student to tell the class the name of the instrument and to demonstrate how

the instrument is played. She reminds the other students in the class to look at and pay close attention to each other as they speak about the instruments. She encourages the students who are speaking to face their classmates, to speak slowly, loudly, and clearly, and to make eye contact with everyone around the circle. Laura makes notations on a checklist about the students after they speak.

Next, Lauren demonstrates playing a short, four-beat rhythm on a hand drum. The students repeat the rhythm that they just heard by playing it on their instruments. Laura reminds the students to watch her hands when she is playing and to make eye contact with her so that they can follow her cues. As the students get better at looking in the right place, their playing becomes stronger – steadier, more together, and more accurate. Laura asks the students to listen to each other as they play so that they can play together more effectively.

Lauren repeats this activity with several other four-beat rhythms. She then shows the students the music notation for these rhythms, which she has written on an easel sheet before class. First with Lauren, and then on their own, the students speak the rhythms using du and du-de. On Lauren's cue, the students alternate between speaking and playing the various four-beat rhythms.

The students swap instruments with each other for the next portion of the activity. Lauren asks the students to pass their instruments to the right around the circle. She praises the students who look at each other as they hand each other the instruments.

Lauren then asks for student volunteers to lead the class in playing and speaking these rhythms. Three students take turns as the leader, cueing their peers using eye contact and simple gestures. Lauren reminds the class to watch the leaders and follow their cues.

Bringing the activity to a close, Laura asks the students to reflect on what they just did. What were they working on? How did they do? How can they do it better? What do they need to practice, and how? What do they think would be the next steps to take this activity further in their next class? Laura guides the students and helps them to understand both the musical and the non-musical aspects of the activity and their learning. She asks probing questions to encourage the students to elaborate on their thoughts and ideas.

She makes notations in her chart about each student's participation in this activity before she collects the instruments and moves to the next activity.

Various components of the lesson in the vignette below have been modified and adapted for all learners. For example, laminated color cut-outs of shapes have been provided to individual students who need manipulatives to help them with the activity about patterns of shapes. In addition, the movement portion of the activity includes opportunities for the students to adapt their movements for students who have any difficulties moving their bodies. Over the course of the lesson, the teacher employs visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities in the teaching of AABA form.

Vignette Three: Form Activity

Susan is a guitarist and music educator. She teaches several weekly classes of students with autism in a public elementary school. The classes are general music classes that involve a wide range of musical activities and concepts. The first activity in today's class session addresses form using icons and movements.

Before class, Susan has gathered all the materials that she will need and has placed them in the front of the room. The agenda for the class is posted on the whiteboard, and several student desks have laminated individualized agendas waiting for the students. On some desks are envelopes that contain laminated color cut-outs of shapes. Susan greets the students and asks them to sit in their regular seats at their desks. She goes over the agenda with the students and briefly explains each activity. She goes around to the students with individualized agendas and makes sure that they are pointing to the activities on their laminated lists.

Susan asks the students to look at the whiteboard, where she has placed large magnetized color cut-outs of four shapes: A blue circle, a blue circle, a red square, and a blue circle. She asks the class to explain the pattern of the shapes that they see. A few students have shape cut-outs of their own on their desks, and Susan asks them to arrange their cut-outs in the same exact pattern. She goes around the room to check their work.

Next, a volunteer student comes to the board and is asked to create the same sort of pattern with two other shapes: a yellow triangle and a green diamond. The student puts the shapes in the pattern of yellow triangle, yellow triangle, green diamond, yellow triangle. The students with shapes at their desks are asked to do the same, and Susan checks their work. Susan explains that they have been creating AABA patterns with the shapes. She then hands out shape cut-outs to all the students and asks them to create an AABA pattern at their desks. She asks a couple of students to share their patterns with the class, and she goes around to check the students' work.

The students are asked to stand in a circle for the next portion of the activity. Susan explains that they can create AABA patterns with a few different things, not just with shapes. She asks the students to come up with two non-locomotor movements that they can use for an AABA pattern. Susan gives the students plenty of time to come up with their answers, and several of them share their movement patterns, which the whole class repeats after them. For students who have difficulty moving their bodies in any way, Susan and the other students help to adapt the movements so that all students can participate. Some students perform their movements sitting down in chairs or just by using their hands and arms.

Susan makes notations in her chart about each student's participation in this activity before she asks the students to take their seat so that they can listen to a piece of music that is organized in an AABA pattern.

Some students with ASD are greatly affected by their disabilities and have difficulty using any form of communication in school. For many music educators, a way forward or a set of concrete competencies that wind the process back far enough to reach the current functioning level of the student. Here is the story of Anika.

Vignette Four: Rhythm for Anika

Anika is 14 years old. She uses a wheelchair with a puff tube to help her navigate her surroundings. She does not use verbal communication and does not often make eye contact. Anika is in an adaptive music class at her high school. Her music teacher, Robin, has been trying various genres of music to encourage Anika to demonstrate a preference, or even indicate the awareness that music is present. One day, Robin plays some steel drum calypso style music using a recording. Anika's eyes brightened, and she turned toward Robin and the recording. Robin was so excited! She tried the same music style during the next class and used Boardmaker choice cards that showed 'more' and 'stop' to help Anika express her choice. Anika showed the more card repeatedly until she finally looked at Robin and pointed to the 'stop' card. Robin knew she was on the way to great progress with Anika.

Anika needed a chart to show incremental and sequential progress toward goals (see Figure 1). The list is not only helpful for Anika, it also helps Robin keep track of where Anika is in the sequence. They also show the next steps for Robin. The timetable can be a few weeks or years, depending on the rate of progress they are able to make.

Is Music Happening?	
	Change in eyes
	Look in the direction of the music?
	Express using eyes or choice cards a preference?
Response to Music	
	Movement of any type
	Eyes
	Hands
	Legs
	Feet
	Arhythmic or rhythmic movement
	Gross motor
	Fine motor
	Movement in time
	With macrobeat
	With microbeat
Same and different	
	An ability to indicate when music is same
	An ability to indicate when music is different
	An ability to move to patterns that are the same
	An ability to move to patterns that are different
	An ability to echo or respond to same or different patterns

Figure 1. Rhythm Checklist

Some students with ASD can achieve far beyond what their peers achieve. Their competency attainment may look very different and sometimes behaviors complicate the learning and assessment process. Tawnell is one of those students and his melodic attainment is quite advanced. His teacher utilized a melodic checklist (see Figure 2) to help organize her thoughts so that she could continue to support and challenge Tawnell in music.

Vignette Five: Melody for Tawnell

Tawnell is 12 years old and in fifth grade general music class. He has great difficulty with attention and is constantly 'on the go' in music class. His music teacher, Cindy, has learned that Tawnell is still able to learn with the class while he is walking around the perimeter of the classroom. The other students are aware that this is the way Tawnell learns best and his walking is not a distraction for them. Cindy is presenting fa and ti to the class and is getting ready to complete the major scale. As the class sings Sweetly the Swan Sings, Tawnell continues pacing. Once Cindy has unveiled the two new solfege syllables, the class begins singing the song in solfege. Cindy hears something different from the back of the room and realizes Tawnell has begun singing the chord roots to Sweetly the Swan Sings. When the song ends, she asks Tawnell why he was doing that. Tawnell replies, "oh, because that is what you always do. The next step is to sing the chord roots while we sing the song, yes?" Tawnell has indeed been paying attention and is demonstrating his mastery of concepts several steps ahead in the sequence. Robin notes that she will need to start creating objectives that have been wound forward for Tawnell and begins charting her checklist to stay ahead of him!

Fa – presentation	
Verbal Association	
Familiar patterns	
Isolation	
Unfamiliar patterns	
Ascending	
Descending	
sfmrd	
drmfs	
mfs	
rfl	
lfr	
df	
Ti (high) – presentation	
Verbal Association	
Familiar patterns	
Isolation	
Unfamiliar patterns	

Figure 2. Melody Checklist

Ascending	
Descending	
d'td'	
sltd'	
d'tls	
tr'd'	
r'td'	
str'	
r'ts	
Improvisation	
Adding fa	
Adding ti	
Composition	
Adding fa	
Adding ti	
Major – Chords	
Intervals	
Triads	
Tonic	
Dominant	
Tonic/Dominant	
Subdominant	
Tonic/Dominant/Subdominant	
Supertonic	
Submediant	
Mediant	
Leading tone	

Figure 2. Melody Checklist, continued

Some students need to demonstrate competency in an alternate way. They understand concepts, however, cannot be assessed in the way other students in the class are assessed. This causes teachers to think differently about multi-modal means of expression and portfolio type assessments (see Figure 3) . In the next vignette, Charles had the opportunity to demonstrate his understanding in an alternative way.

Vignette Six: Form for Charles

Charles is 7 years old and in the first grade. He has difficulty when asked to be a part of a large group and has been slowly working toward being in the music room for the entire class time. His teacher, Devin, has organized his class to create the most comfortable and productive music time possible for Charles. When Charles is in class, he is often over stimulated by the sounds and movement of all the children. The class has been working on form (AB and ABA) through creative movement, dance, and

singing. Devin wants to be able to assess Charles fairly and knows that it is very difficult for Charles to show what he knows when everyone is moving or singing. It is also difficult for Charles to participate when the music is playing because it is louder than he can manage. Devin spends a considerable amount of time problem solving and asking his colleagues for ideas to help Charles demonstrate his understanding. Collaboratively, they create an option. Devin recorded the class as they danced, moved, and sang to AB and ABA music. Charles watched the video with Devin. Charles was able to adjust the volume, stop the video when it became too much, and move with the video when he felt he could. Devin was easily able to see that Charles had absolutely mastered he concepts. Charles had also drawn photos representing the creative movement, folk dance, and song form to show Devin. It was a proud moment for both teacher and student!

Same	
Movement	
Gross motor	
Fine motor	
Eye movements	
Movements of parts of the body	
Feet	
Legs	
Toes	
Middles	
Arms	
Hands	
Fingers	
Head	
Shoulders	
Verbal response	
Chanting	
Singing	
Stating	
Visual response	
Choice cards	
Pictures	
Different	
Movement	
Gross motor	
Fine motor	
Eye movements	
Movements of parts of the body	
Feet	
Legs	
Toes	

Figure 3. Form Checklist

Middles	
Arms	
Hands	
Fingers	
Head	
Shoulders	
Verbal response	
Chanting	
Singing	
Stating	
Visual response	
Choice cards	
Pictures	
Patterns	
AB	
ABA	
ABAB	
Repeat signs	
Rondo	
D.C. al fine	
D.C. al segno	
First and second ending	
Coda	

Figure 3. Form Checklist, continued

Assessment of Pre-Service and In-Service Teachers: What Does "Good Teaching on Steroids" Look Like?

What does Lynn Brennan's "good teaching on steroids" look like in actual classroom practice? How can music teacher educators and supervisors know it when they see it? How can they train and support pre-service and in-service teachers in their work with students with autism?

Effective assessments of pre-service and in-service music educators must evaluate their pedagogical skills and approaches when teaching music to students with autism in integrated and sub-separate settings. Tools for the assessment of pre-service and in-service music teachers should provide music teacher educators, music teacher supervisors, and other school administrators with valuable information that can help them to better support their teachers as they continue to develop their ability to reach all students in their music classrooms and ensembles. Furthermore, we believe strongly that these teacher assessments are most useful when they are aligned with other mandated pre-service and in-service teacher evaluation instruments. In this way, teachers' skills and approaches in working effectively with students with autism are integrated into the field's conception of effective teaching of all students, regardless of the specific population or setting. Seen through the

"good teaching on steroids" framework, the various components of teaching students with autism effectively are already part and parcel of the components of teaching all students effectively – the difference is the "on steroids" part of the framework.

As we assess pre-service and in-service music educators in terms of their effectiveness working with students with autism, music teacher educators and administrators attend to the ways that various aspects of their teaching are deepened, intensified, and magnified. How do the modifications that music teachers make to their pedagogy, curriculum, routines, assignments, and approaches make it possible for students with autism to participate in music class and ensemble, to learn effectively, and to succeed? How do music educators attend to all students as they personalize and individualize their teaching for some students? How do music educators bring established practices in special education, such as principles of universal design for learning and differentiated instruction to bear in their work? How do music educators employ special education strategies, like task analysis and discrete trial teaching, in their classrooms and ensembles? How do music educators gain access to and make use of information and expertise from IEPs and from their special education colleagues? These are just some of the questions that drive the assessment of music educators' teaching of students with autism.

A Rubric for Assessing In-Service and Pre-Service Music Educators

As an example of one way that State-mandated teacher assessments can be modified to address the evaluation of teachers' skills and dispositions when working with students with autism, we present two rubrics. The first, as shown in Figure 4, is the State-mandated pre-service and in-service teacher assessment rubric from a state in the Northeastern U.S.

Figure 5 shows the second rubric, which is that same assessment tool, with adaptations, modifications, and additions that address the assessment of pre-service and in-service educators regarding their teaching of students with autism. Note that these are assessments for teachers in all subject areas, without singling out music. Since U.S. music educators are evaluated with the same tools that supervisors employ to evaluate teachers in all subjects, we present a rubric that can be used for the evaluation of any teacher, in any context, as a way of incorporating our assessment into standard practice.[1]

As they support pre-service and in-service music educators in their teaching of students with autism, music teacher educators and supervisors can use the rubric and these vignettes as ways to guide music educators and

[1] Many music teacher educators and music educators would argue that a one-size-fits-all form of educator assessment may have limitations in terms of its utility to address some specific aspects of music education. Rather than enter that debate here, we propose a rubric that is sufficiently open-ended and flexible to assess all forms of teaching if it is employed by an informed and highly skilled evaluator. Since current practice is to use the same rubric for all teachers, the rubric presented here is practical and consistent with teacher assessment procedures in the U.S.

help them to better understand some of the ways that "good teaching on steroids" might unfold in their classrooms and in their teaching. Other tools, such as modeling, observations of teaching, and video recordings of their own teaching, can also be employed. Additionally, music teacher educators and supervisors should engage special education staff in conversations with music teachers, so that they can discuss specific students and share strategies that have been effective with those students in other settings. Furthermore, pre-service and in-service music educators should have opportunities to learn about established strategies and practices in special education, such as Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction, as well as task analysis and discrete trial teaching, so that they can bring them to bear in their own teaching.

Figure 4. State-Mandated Pre-Service and In-Service Teacher Assessment Rubric from a State in the Northeastern U.S.
Rubric to Assess Music Teaching
(adapted from the Candidate Assessment of Performance Form and Rubric)

Teacher:_____
Grade/class: _____

Well-Structured Lessons				
	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Exemplary
Well-Structured Lessons	Develops lessons with inappropriate student engagement strategies, pacing, sequence, activities, materials, resources, and/or grouping for the intended outcome or for the students in the class.	Develops lessons with only some elements of appropriate student engagement strategies, pacing, sequence, activities, materials, resources, and grouping.	Develops well-structured lessons with challenging, measurable objectives and appropriate student engagement strategies, pacing, sequence, activities, materials, resources, technologies, and grouping.	Develops well-structured and highly engaging lessons with challenging, measurable objectives and appropriate student engagement strategies, pacing, sequence, activities, materials, resources, technologies, and grouping to attend to every student's needs. Is able to model this element.

Figure 4. State-Mandated Pre-Service and In-Service Teacher Assessment Rubric from a State in the Northeastern U.S., continued

Adjustment to Practice				
	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Exemplary
Adjustment to Practice	Makes few adjustments to practice based on formal and informal assessments.	May organize and analyze some assessment results but only occasionally adjusts practice or modifies future instruction based on the findings.	Organizes and analyzes results from a variety of assessments to determine progress toward intended outcomes and uses these findings to adjust practice and identify and/or implement appropriate differentiated interventions and enhancements for students.	Organizes and analyzes results from a comprehensive system of assessments to determine progress toward intended outcomes and frequently uses these findings to adjust practice and identify and/or implement appropriate differentiated interventions and enhancements for individuals and groups of students and appropriate modifications of lessons and units. Is able to model this element.

Figure 4. State-Mandated Pre-Service and In-Service Teacher Assessment Rubric from a State in the Northeastern U.S., continued

Meeting Diverse Needs				
eeting Diverse Needs	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Exemplary
	Uses limited and/or inappropriate practices to accommodate differences.	May use some appropriate practices to accommodate differences, but fails to address an adequate range of differences.	Uses appropriate practices, including tiered instruction and scaffolds, to accommodate differences in learning styles, needs, interests, and levels of readiness, including those of students with disabilities and English learners.	Uses a varied repertoire of practices to create structured opportunities for each student to meet or exceed state standards/local curriculum and behavioral expectations. Is able to model this element.
Safe Learning Environment				
Safe Learning Environment	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Exemplary
	Maintains a physical environment that is unsafe or does not support student learning. Uses inappropriate or ineffective rituals, routines, and/or responses to reinforce positive behavior or respond to behaviors that interfere with students' learning.	May create and maintain a safe physical environment but inconsistently maintains rituals, routines, and responses needed to prevent and/or stop behaviors that interfere with all students' learning.	Uses rituals, routines, and appropriate responses that create and maintain a safe physical and intellectual environment where students take academic risks and most behaviors that interfere with learning are prevented.	Uses rituals, routines, and proactive responses that create and maintain a safe physical and intellectual environment where students take academic risks and play an active role—individually and collectively—in preventing behaviors that interfere with learning. Is able to model this element.

Figure 4. State-Mandated Pre-Service and In-Service Teacher Assessment Rubric from a State in the Northeastern U.S., continued

High Expectations				
High Expectations	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Exemplary
	Gives up on some students or communicates that some cannot master challenging material.	May tell students that the subject or assignment is challenging and that they need to work hard but does little to counteract student misconceptions about innate ability.	Effectively models and reinforces ways that students can master challenging material through effective effort, rather than having to depend on innate ability.	Effectively models and reinforces ways that students can consistently master challenging material through effective effort. Successfully challenges students' misconceptions about innate ability. Is able to model this element.
Reflective Practice				
Reflective Practice	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Exemplary
	Demonstrates limited reflection on practice and/or use of insights gained to improve practice.	May reflect on the effectiveness of lessons/ units and interactions with students but not with colleagues and/or rarely uses insights to improve practice.	Regularly reflects on the effectiveness of lessons, units, and interactions with students, both individually and with colleagues, and uses insights gained to improve practice and student learning.	Regularly reflects on the effectiveness of lessons, units, and interactions with students, both individually and with colleagues; and uses and shares with colleagues, insights gained to improve practice and student learning. Is able to model this element.

Figure 5. Adapted State-Mandated Pre-Service and In-Service Teacher Assessment Rubric from a State in the Northeastern U.S.

Rubric to Assess Music Teaching with Students with Autism
(adapted from the Candidate Assessment of Performance Form and Rubric)

Teacher:_____
Grade/class: _____

Adjustment to Practice				
	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Exemplary
Adjustment to Practice	Makes few adjustments to practice based on formal and informal assessments. Makes few adjustments to practice based on formal and informal assessments of students with autism.	May organize and analyze some assessment results but only occasionally adjusts practice or modifies future instruction based on the findings. Makes occasional adjustments to practice based on formal and informal assessments of students with autism.	Organizes and analyzes results from a variety of assessments to determine progress toward intended outcomes and uses these findings to adjust practice and identify and/or implement appropriate differentiated interventions and enhancements for students, including students with autism.	Organizes and analyzes results from a comprehensive system of assessments to determine progress toward intended outcomes and frequently uses these findings to adjust practice and identify and/or implement appropriate differentiated interventions and enhancements for individuals and groups of students and appropriate modifications of lessons and units. Is able to model this element. Uses IEP data and other information to set individual goals for students with autism and uses a comprehensive system of assessments to determine progress towards these goals and to guide adjustments in practice.

Figure 5. Adapted State-Mandated Pre-Service and In-Service Teacher Assessment Rubric from a State in the Northeastern U.S., continued

High Expectations				
	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Exemplary
High Expectations	Gives up on some students or communicates that some cannot master challenging material. Does not include students with autism in learning activities or communicates that students with autism cannot do or learn what the other students can. Approaches students with autism in terms of what they cannot do.	May tell students that the subject or assignment is challenging and that they need to work hard but does little to counteract student misconceptions about innate ability. May include students with autism in learning activities at times but communicates that students with autism cannot do or learn what the other students can. Approaches students with autism in terms of what they cannot do.	Effectively models and reinforces ways that all students, including students with autism, can master challenging material through effective effort, rather than having to depend on innate ability. Approaches students with autism in terms of what they can do and learn.	Effectively models and reinforces ways that all students, including students with autism, can consistently master challenging material through effective effort. Successfully challenges students' misconceptions about innate ability. Successfully challenges misconceptions about innate ability and potential for learning in students with autism. Is able to model this element.

Figure 5. Adapted State-Mandated Pre-Service and In-Service Teacher Assessment Rubric from a State in the Northeastern U.S., continued

Safe Learning Environment				
	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Exemplary
Safe Learning Environment	Maintains a physical environment that is unsafe or does not support student learning. Uses inappropriate or ineffective rituals, routines, and/or responses to reinforce positive behavior or respond to behaviors that interfere with students' learning. Does not provide an appropriate learning environment for students with autism.	May create and maintain a safe physical environment but inconsistently maintains rituals, routines, and responses needed to prevent and/or stop behaviors that interfere with all students' learning. May provide some features of an appropriate learning environment for students with autism.	Uses rituals, routines, and appropriate responses that create and maintain a safe physical and intellectual environment where students take academic risks and most behaviors that interfere with learning are prevented. Attends to the needs of students with autism and creates a safe physical, emotional, sensory, and intellectual environment for these students.	Uses rituals, routines, and proactive responses that create and maintain a safe physical and intellectual environment where students take academic risks and play an active role—individually and collectively—in preventing behaviors that interfere with learning. Attends to the individual needs of students with autism and creates a safe physical, emotional, sensory, and intellectual environment for these students. Effectively addresses the needs of all students within the same classroom environment. Is able to model this element.

Figure 5. Adapted State-Mandated Pre-Service and In-Service Teacher Assessment Rubric from a State in the Northeastern U.S., continued

Well-Structured Lessons				
	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Exemplary
Well-Structured Lessons	Develops lessons with inappropriate student engagement strategies, pacing, sequence, activities, materials, resources, and/or grouping for the intended outcome or for the students in the class. Attempts to use schedules and lists with students to communicate class structure. Pacing is not appropriate for students with autism. Materials and activities are not developmentally appropriate or engaging for students with autism.	Develops lessons with only some elements of appropriate student engagement strategies, pacing, sequence, activities, materials, resources, and grouping. Uses schedules and lists with students to communicate class structure some of the time. Incorporates some routines into class activities. Consistently follows class schedule whenever possible. Pacing is sometimes appropriate for students with autism. Materials and activities are sometimes developmentally appropriate or engaging for students with autism.	Develops well-structured lessons with challenging, measurable objectives and appropriate student engagement strategies, pacing, sequence, activities, materials, resources, technologies, and grouping. Uses schedules and lists with students to communicate class structure. Incorporates routines into class activities. Consistently follows class schedule. Any deviations from schedule are prepared in advance. Pacing is usually appropriate for students with autism. Materials and activities are usually developmentally appropriate and engaging for students with autism.	Develops well-structured and highly engaging lessons with challenging, measurable objectives and appropriate student engagement strategies, pacing, sequence, activities, materials, resources, technologies, and grouping to attend to every student's needs. Is able to model this element. Uses schedules and lists with students to communicate class structure. Consistently follows class schedule. Any deviations from schedule and/or routine are prepared in advance and practiced by the students. Pacing is adjusted to meet needs of individual students with autism. Materials and activities are individually tailored so that they are developmentally appropriate and engaging for students with autism.

Figure 5. Adapted State-Mandated Pre-Service and In-Service Teacher Assessment Rubric from a State in the Northeastern U.S., continued

Reflective Practice				
	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Exemplary
Reflective Practice	Demonstrates limited reflection on practice and/or use of insights gained to improve practice. **Demonstrates limited reflection on teaching students with autism.**	May reflect on the effectiveness of lessons/ units and interactions with students**, including students with autism,** but not with colleagues and/or rarely uses insights to improve practice.	Regularly reflects on the effectiveness of lessons, units, and interactions with students **(including students with autism)**, both individually and with colleagues, and uses insights gained to improve practice and student learning.	Regularly reflects on the effectiveness of lessons, units, and interactions with students, both individually and with colleagues; and uses and shares with colleagues, insights gained to improve practice and student learning. **Collaborates with special educators, aides, and classroom teachers to improve practice and student learning with students with autism. Collaborates with parents as a partner in their children's learning.** Is able to model this element.

Figure 5. Adapted State-Mandated Pre-Service and In-Service Teacher Assessment Rubric from a State in the Northeastern U.S., continued

Meeting Diverse Needs				
	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Exemplary
Meeting Diverse Needs	Uses limited and/or inappropriate practices to accommodate differences. Does not individualize instruction for any students, including those with autism.	May use some appropriate practices to accommodate differences, but fails to address an adequate range of differences. Attempts to individualize instruction for students with autism, but fails to do so effectively.	Uses appropriate practices, including tiered instruction and scaffolds, to accommodate differences in learning styles, needs, interests, and levels of readiness, including those of students with disabilities (including students with autism) and English learners.	Uses a varied repertoire of practices to create structured opportunities for each student to meet or exceed state standards/local curriculum and behavioral expectations. Uses data from IEPs and other sources to develop structured opportunities and teaching practices for students with autism. Is able to model this element.

References

Baldridge, S. (2014). *Rising autism numbers a challenge for public schools.* Retrieved August 29, 2016 from http://lancasteronline.com/news/rising-autism-numbers-a-challenge-for-public-schools/article_88b0c58a-c729-11e3-939e-001a4bcf6878.html.

Brennan, L. (2010). *Introduction to behavioral teaching methods for children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD).* Presentation at Boston Conservatory workshop, September 2010.

Centers for Disease Control (2014). *About autism: Facts and statistics.* Retrieved August 29, 2016 from http://www.autism-society.org/what-is/facts-and-statistics/.

Centers for Disease Control (2013). *National health statistics reports.* Retrieved August 29, 2016 from http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr065.pdf.

Hammel, A. M. (2001). Special learners in elementary music classrooms: A study of essential teacher competencies. *Update, Fall/Winter 2001,* 9-13.

Hourigan, R. M. (2009). Preservice music teachers' perceptions of fieldwork experiences in a special needs classroom. *Journal of Research in Music Education 57*(2), 152-168. doi: 10.1177/0022429409335880

Morrier, M., Hess, K.L., & Heflin, L.J. (2011). Teacher training for implementation of teaching strategies for students with autism spectrum disorders. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 34*(2), 119-132. doi: 10.1177/0888406410376660

Smith, F. (2008). *Educators deal with the growing population of autism.* Retrieved August 29, 2016 from http://www.edutopia.org/autism-school-special-needs.

VanWeelden, K. & Meehan, L. (2015). Teaching children with disabilities: Preparation through state music educator association conferences. *Update,* 1-8.

VanWeelden, K. & Whipple, J. (2014). Music educators' perceptions of preparation and supports available for inclusion. *Journal of Music Teacher Education, 23*(2), 33-51. doi: 10.1177/1057083713484585

Whipple, J. & VanWeelden, K. (2012). Educational supports for students with special needs: Preservice music educators' perceptions. *Update,* 30 (2), 32-45.