

What are we teaching teachers?

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SCRIPT

[SLIDE 1]

Greetings from Seattle Washington!

My name is Christopher Hanson. I am thrilled to connect with you for this ABLE Assembly session entitled: “What Are We Teaching Teachers? A call to reimagine inclusivity in art education.”

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This session is autoethnographic, and represents my experiences preparing and teaching “the course,” as it is often known in teacher preparation programs, which illuminates the theories and practices of inclusive teaching and learning, particularly within public school systems.

Specifically, in this session I will briefly present my professional context for teaching, the resources I use to establish a philosophical foundation for inclusive education in and through the arts, as well as resources that help develop understanding of what we do and how we do it, and lastly, I provide a proposed structure for the course, as detailed in my current course syllabus.

It is important to note that the expressed goal of this session is to encourage critical conversation about teacher education programs in the arts and incite change in curriculum to adequately prepare future educators to support *all* students in their learning. This is accomplished through the sharing of resources and the offering of *an example* not *the example* of how a course on making music with diverse learners could be structured. In other words, this session should start conversations as opposed to represent an authoritative perspective of inclusive education in

the arts for future educators. With that being said, let me share, briefly, my professional context for teaching.

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I currently serve as the director of music education and orchestral activities at Seattle Pacific University. I am in my third year at SPU as an assistant professor of music. Before transitioning to teacher education at the university level I taught public school for eight years in central Texas where I also worked in community music programs for over 14 years. I entered the public school classroom through a “non-traditional” certification, and strive to educate teachers through critical reflection of my lived experiences, focusing on practice through an exploration of theory. SPU is a relatively small school with less than 2,500 students, and around 80 music majors. SPU is a private Christian liberal arts school located in Seattle, Washington. We are on a quarter system, which breaks the academic year into three 10 week instructional periods, and we are currently the only university in the state of Washington with a music therapy program. Lastly, we just launched a brand new music education curriculum which has afforded us the opportunity to respond to perceived needs of both music and education in the 21st century.

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With that context in mind, let me provide the philosophical foundations I offer at the beginning of the course.

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One of the first things we do in the course is develop a list of strategies or philosophies we think would best serve students with special needs. What we realize after generating this list is that ALL students deserve differentiated support in their learning. I review the ten things Notbohm articulates students with autism want us to know:

1. Learning is circular. We are all both teachers and students.
2. We are a team. Success depends on all of us working together.
3. I think differently. Teach me in a way that is meaningful to me.
4. Behavior is communication: yours, mine, and ours.
5. Glitched, garbled and bewildered. If we can't communicate effectively, learning can't happen.
6. Teach the whole me. I'm much more than a set of "broken" or "missing" parts.
7. Be curious...be very curious.
8. Can I trust you?
9. Believe.
10. Teach me "how to fish". See me as a capable adult and hold that vision.

Again, the point is made that all students deserve the intentionality and care articulated in this list. Not as a way of homogenizing our students, but in the goal to establish an equitable learning environment for our students.

[SLIDE 6]

The first chapter of "Teaching Music to Students with Special Needs" is an excellent way to begin thinking critically about our current systems of education through the seminal work of John Dewey.

The book states "[All students] have a place in our schools and they all deserve an education that includes music" in spite of unequal opportunities that currently plague educational systems. John Dewey regarded public education as a crucial pillar to upholding a democracy. He is quoted as saying:

“In order to have a large numbers of values in common, all members of the group must have equable opportunity to receive and take from others. There must be a large variety of shared undertakings and experiences. Otherwise the influences which educate some into masters, educate others into slaves.”

The school experience for some students is vastly different from those of others, and in some situations, students have more opportunities than others.

Educators are now challenged to expect achievement from all students, regardless of their background or relative strength and areas of challenge.

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From this philosophical foundation we can begin to establish “what we do” as a response to such convictions.

[SLIDE 8]

Chapter 1 from “Music in Special Education” offers a current profile of music education for students with special needs with implications for music professionals. The chapter covers the laws, policies, and rules that ensure that all children are educated regardless of their abilities or disabilities, the identification of students that receive special education services, and a discussion of how the role of the music professional changes when working with students who have special needs.

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The first chapter of “An Attitude and Approach for Teaching Music to Special Learners” entitled “The Basics,” does an extraordinary job of synthesizing the growing list of terms, acronyms, abbreviations, and jargon, which I refer to as alphabet soup, that we must be aware of to best serve our students such as FBA, ICT, IDEA, IEP, LRE, and RtI just to name a few.

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Of course from here, we need to figure out how we are going to work within these systems to best support our students

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The 4th chapter of “Special Needs, Community Music, and Adult Learning” offers a “fresh look at music therapy and special education” which suggests that “prescriptive, traditional models of music therapy are being replaced by active, reflexive approaches that focus on individual’s desires both within and beyond the therapy room.” This is directly transferable to collaborative pedagogical models and activities inherent to the music classroom which promote a sense of agency, supported by the work of Albert Bandura.

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These concepts are further developed in Chapter 6 of Music and Special Education which suggests the collaborative possibilities of music educators and music therapists.

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I would like to finish by offering an example course structure, which reflects what I am currently utilizing within my program now.

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The course I currently teach serves music education, music therapy, and special education majors at the university. All music education majors are required to take this course in their first year of study, to ensure that DEIA is paramount in their thinking and practice of teaching and learning. The course description reads as follows: Designed to explore and promote inclusive instruction in music for diverse learners, this course identifies the needs and explores the

accommodations available to support the engagement and learning of all students in a music classroom.

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Although I have used different books as our primary resource over the past three years, I personally recommend “Teaching Music to Students with Special Needs” by Alice Hammel and Ryan Hourigan. Additionally, all students registered for the course are expected to attend the ABLE Assembly. It was to our benefit that the assembly is offered in April, which is the start of our spring quarter. Hopefully other schools could plan accordingly and offer the course in the spring to benefit from this amazing conference.

I have an extensive list of recommended resources that I pull on throughout the year, including but limited to: Special Needs, Community Music, and Adult Learning from the Oxford Handbook of Music Education, Music in Special Education by Adamek and Darrow, who are both certified music therapists, Winding it Back: Teaching to individual differences in music classroom and ensemble settings, by Hammel, Hickox, and Hourigan, Ten Things Your Student with Autism Wishes You Knew, by Notnohm, Valuing Music Education: A Charles Fowler Reader, and An Attitude and Approach for Teaching Music to Special Learners by Sobol. Again, this is a small sample of the books I utilize in the course as secondary sources. There is an incredible, and thankfully growing, number of resources that can and should be explored within the topic of inclusive education in and through the arts.

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The primary course objectives and learning outcomes are what I am most excited to share. They all focus on cognitive verbs that promote examination and exploration of the content,

strategies, and practices of inclusive pedagogy. Additionally, they are aligned with national standards for both teachers and therapists. They are listed as follows:

Examine various theories underlying the use of music as a learning tool for children and adolescents with developmental and other disabilities.

Examine the functions of music and effects of musical experiences in special education settings.

Establish familiarity with current literature and research resources in music, education, and music therapy for children and adolescents with disabilities.

Develop competence in locating and effectively using research literature to serve target populations.

Survey the basic characteristics of children and adolescents with disabilities currently served by special education programs in public schools and protected under IDEA and similar laws and regulations.

Define current populations of children and adolescents with disabilities as observed in educational settings.

Discuss current legislation and research regarding children and adolescents with disabilities and music, education, and music therapy services.

Establish contact with a professional in the field and develop a resource list germane to particular career aspirations.

Develop a philosophy of music based on personal and professional experiences which reflects future aspirations in the field.

Research, organize, write, and present a professional statement of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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The following assessments are purely suggestions, but provide important opportunities for differentiation, particularly if the class serves multiple disciplines.

I have divided assignments into formative and summative assessments. Students respond in writing to weekly reading assignments from the resources listed previously which counts for a quarter of their grade in the course. Students also write a reflection of their experience after attending the ABLE Assembly. These assessments help to form their knowledge of inclusive teaching and learning. The summative assignments allow students to leave the course with a resource list, a collaborative understanding of DEIA, and a differentiated “final project” that is tailored to the students professional aspirations. For example, music education majors can write lessons within that support students with IEPs and/or 504 plans, music therapy students may perform an assessment for accommodations, etc.

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So what are you leaving with today?

I have sought to provide you resources, a suggested course sequence including assessments, a sample syllabus (on the quarter system), a philosophical and moral foundation for advocacy of inclusive teaching in the arts, and as the great Maxine Greene would suggest, confidence to change the world: “The arts, it has been said, cannot change the world, but they can change human beings, who can change the world.”

[SLIDE 19]

Thank you for your time, and please feel free to contact me with questions and comments at ctfhanon@spu.edu.