RE-FRAMING GUITAR EDUCATION FOR THE INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

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Boston University Conversation on Music 2018
Today:
- Benefits of guitar class for our students
- Considerations in a music classroom for students with special needs
  - Adapting notation
  - Adapting the instrument
- Assessing Students
Getting To Know You
What are the advantages of a guitar class to our students?
- Often an elective class, requiring no previous training
- Can offer opportunities for social interaction
- There is always more than one approach to playing something on the guitar.
- There are many online resources for students
- It can be found in almost any genre
- It’s a skill that can be used casually with friends or professionally in practice (open mics, talent shows, jams, etc).
Universal Design for Learning

Affective networks: THE WHY OF LEARNING

How learners get engaged and stay motivated. How they are challenged, excited, or interested. These are affective dimensions.

→ Stimulate interest and motivation for learning

Recognition networks: THE WHAT OF LEARNING

How we gather facts and categorize what we see, hear, and read. Identifying letters, words, or an author’s style are recognition tasks.

→ Present information and content in different ways

Strategic networks: THE HOW OF LEARNING

Planning and performing tasks. How we organize and express our ideas. Writing an essay or solving a math problem are strategic tasks.

→ Differentiate the ways that students can express what they know

Engagement
Representation
Action and Expression
Types of Disabilities

http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/definitions.htm

- Autism
- Emotional Impairment
- Communication Impairment
- Developmental Delay
- Intellectual Impairment
- Neurological Impairment
- Sensory Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Physical Impairment
- Health Impairment

What types of accommodations might we have to make for our students?
In Application to Guitar
Methods book are great, but I have yet to find one that addresses everyone’s needs and interests!
Organizing the classroom

- Follow the same structure in every class
- Keep materials in the same places, clearly labeled
- Keep our means of communication consistent
- **Structure our class so that one on one time with students is available if extra help is needed**
- Have supports in place for students that need it that are consistent
- Structure class so that adaptations are a part of the culture
- **Consider seating**
THE NUMBERS ALL GO TO 11.
Engagement: What does a good guitarist look like?
Engagement: What does the student like to listen to?

- Eminem
- The Dropkick Murphys
- David Bowie
- Calvin Harris
- Santana
- Rihanna
- Dr. Dre
- Walk the Moon
Objective: Every student will be able to play a melody using 3 strings on the guitar, as well as accompany another guitarist with 3 chords (C, G, and D).

***What is your goal/schedule/materials?
Options, options, options

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

Spiderman

When the Saints
Let’s start with melody/lead guitar

- Not everyone’s handout will look the same
- Not everyone’s guitar will look the same
- Give opportunities for students to explore reading and writing in their chosen notation form(s)
How might this handout be inaccessible?

- Lots on the page (anxiety, processing)
- There’s no foreground/background (sensory)
- There’s a lot of decoding and working memory needed
DECLUTTER!

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star
Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star
Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

G D C D C G D G
G C G D G C G D
G D C D C G D G
Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

Help with working memory or decoding

G G D D E E D C C B B B A A G

D D C C B B A D D C C B B A

G G D D E E D C C B B B A A G
Or, take it in another direction. This was a student driven change that I noticed in my classroom. Numeric representation might be more effective for some
OR...

TWINKLE, TWINKLE, LITTLE STAR

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Adapting the instrument

- Not everyone’s instrument needs to look the same
- Not everyone’s instrument needs to be played the same way
- Not everyone’s instrument needs to be held the same way
Adapting the guitar or use of the guitar

- Taking strings off
- A smaller instrument
- A guitar strap
- Holding the instrument differently
- An app!
- Picks
- Using a capo/Chord Buddy or EZ chord
- Using gloves
- Using open strings
- Using color coded strings
- Color coding frets (vinyl is amazing!)
Everyone loves the little guitar!

- Different strings
- Smaller body
- Color coded
- Gives a background against strings or lines
- Is very literal for students with ASD, SLD, etc
- Colors can be arbitrary
When the Saints Go Marching In
A note on Tab

- Very dependent on auditory skills
- Specifically, very dependent on auditory skills for hearing rhythm patterns
- Can have rhythms written out, but can be more confusing for some
- However, very accessible for many and often what students find online
Colored Bars Represent specific piano keys. Duration of notes is shown with length of bars.
Guitar Hero
- Literal from notation to guitar
- Colors stand out against black and white paper/lines/text
- Symbols indicate length of music for students who might struggle with decoding and/or rote learning for rhythm
- Can be faded
Chords

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

G D C D C G D G

G C G D G C G D

G D C D C G D G
Traditional Chord Chart

x = don’t play

* = finger placement

**Simplified Chords**

**C**

**G**

**Em**

**D**

**Open Chords**

**C**

**G**

**Em**

**D**

**D7**

**Am**

**F**

**E**
\textbf{Simplified Chords}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{C} \hfill \textbf{G} \hfill \textbf{Em} \hfill \textbf{D}
  \end{itemize}

\textbf{Open Chords}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{C} \hfill \textbf{G} \hfill \textbf{Em} \hfill \textbf{D}
  \item \textbf{D7} \hfill \textbf{Am} \hfill \textbf{F} \hfill \textbf{E}
  \end{itemize}

\textit{x} = \text{don't play}

\textit{●} = \text{finger placement}
CHORDS in TAB

Simplified Chords

C     G     Em     D
0 3 0
1 0 0
0 0 0
0 0 2

Open Chords

C     G     Em     D     D7
0 3 0 2 2
1 0 2 2 1
0 2 3 0 0
0 0 0 0

Am     F     E     A     Dm
0 1 0 0 1
1 2 0 2 3
2 3 2 2 2
2 0 0 0
0 0 0
Action and expression: how does the student demonstrate what they know?

1. At their seat in class
2. In a separate setting (open to all)
3. Recording
4. Mimicking
5. Writing
What would you change this handout to make it more accessible for a student who has a memory deficit?
What would you change to this handout to make it more accessible for a student who has a vision impairment and struggles to distinguish foreground from background?
Things to Remember

- What are the student’s goals with the guitar? (professional, casual). This will impact whether or not fading is needed, staff notation is needed.
- Always provide options. Assuming that a student with a disability will not be able to do full chords, for example, will limit the student.
- Engage the student in what type of music they like.
- Method books are great, but...
- Have a guitarsenal of ideas ready to go!
I hate, hate, hate being left out.
sarahfard.wixsite.com/theevolvingguitarist
Berklee Institute for Arts Education and Special Needs

- Professional Development
- Graduate Classes
- Lesson for music students with special needs
THANKS!

Any questions?

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