

## **Instrumental Opportunities: Providing Music for All**

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Due to the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), students with special needs “must have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum, including music education programs” (Hammel & Hourigan, 2011a, p. 174). Resources to help music teachers provide quality instruction in inclusive settings are available (e.g., Hammel & Hourigan, 2011b; Adamek & Darrow, 2005). Yet, providing adaptations for students with physical disabilities may still be challenging for teachers in instrumental settings due to standard instrument design, as well as the availability and cost of adapted instruments (Nabb & Balcetis, 2010).

The purpose of this case study was to capture the stories of students (“Chrispy” and “FN2087”) who perform in instrumental music with modified instruments, and their teacher (“Rob”) who enabled those students’ participation. The following questions guided this study: 1) How did the teacher make instrumental music accessible? 2) How did accommodations and modifications influence the students’ instrumental and/or musical trajectories? 3) What drove the teacher to make such access possible?

Data collection is in progress, but at this time consists of two interviews with the instrumental music teacher, and one interview with each student, and publicly available artifacts. Some initial themes are identifiable from the data thus far:

**LISTENING:** Both student participants indicated an important component to the success of the adaptations was the teacher listening to them regarding what they can and desire to do.

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**“CAN DO”:** All three participants shared that a focus on what students can do helps to find the solution. Neither of the student participants find their lives to be challenging; they just need to figure things out. *“Nothing is impossible except skiing through a revolving door.” - Chrispy, Interview #1*

**PART OF THE JOB:** The teacher participant does not believe his adaptations are special; they are what it means to be a teacher. *“My student body is made whole, it’s complete, when I include [everyone].” - Rob, Interview #2*

**COMMUNITY:** The teacher found expertise and supports within the community to help discover possible solutions; working *with* the family and experts created the appropriate adaptation.

It is the hope of the researchers, and the participants as voiced thus far, to help instrumental music teachers enable all students with a desire to participate in instrumental music have access and opportunities to do so.

**Connections for practice:**

- Instrumental teachers and students benefit from collaboration. The parents, child, teacher, and talented individuals in the community can work together to create opportunities for children to play instruments.
- The first solution is often not the right solution; persistence by the child and teacher can yield unexpected, but more appropriate, results.

**References**

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