The Benefits of Music Education in the Mild to Moderate Special Education Classroom, Grades 3-5

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Dominican University of California

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The Benefits of Music Education in the Mild to Moderate Special Education Classroom, Grades 3-5

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SCHOLARLY & CREATIVE WORKS CONFERENCE
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A local arts organization in need of a new assessment tool to measure the impact of music on students...

- Linked to IEP goals
- Tracked through their educational careers
- On a per student basis
Research Question

Does music education impact 3rd – 5th grade students with mild to moderate disabilities in developing their academic, social and/or behavioral goals as identified in their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)?
Literature Review

- Research shows that there are benefits to including the arts in general education
  - *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning,* Edited by Edward B. Fiske
  - *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development,* Edited by Richard J. Deasy

- Literature on the benefits of including the arts in special education is limited
Study

- Qualitative case study
  - 9 week music program in a 3rd-5th grade SDC
  - Document review of IEPs
  - Teacher, parent, music teacher interviews
  - Music class observations
  - 3 participants
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carmen*</td>
<td>Luis*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 year old female</td>
<td>8 year old male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability: ID</td>
<td>Disability: ID, SLD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal: To verbalize her wants and needs</td>
<td>Goal: Follow teacher directions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*To protect confidentiality, students were assigned a pseudonym.*
Music program offered social and behavioral benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carmen</th>
<th>Luis</th>
<th>John</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IEP goal stayed at baseline</td>
<td>IEP goal met</td>
<td>IEP goal met</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There continues to be a need for research on this topic
“The arts provide all sorts of wondrous opportunities for all children. However, for exceptional students [students with disabilities], the arts are often a savior, a respite, and a solace that give these children a chance to express themselves and feel good about themselves.”

--Sally Smith, founder of the Lab School for Children with Disabilities