

The Inclusive Studio: Tools for the Diverse Learner

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The following are notes by Kathy Blocki:

1) Become a “student of your student”

There are many labels for people with disabilities, and while they may be a helpful starting point to understand the best strategies for teaching a student, we must become of student of our student. No two disabilities are exactly the same.

2) The IEP

If a child has a learning disability he/she will often have an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) from their school that has been developed by a team of therapists, teachers, and the parents. This plan includes not only a description of developmental difficulties, but also strategies to make learning effective. Parents may be willing to share at least parts of this document with you. A good IEP will state what special adaptations should be used and special recommendations that would be helpful.

3) ADD and ADHD

Students diagnosed with ADHD are classified according to three areas: Inattention, Hyperactivity and Impulsivity. The combination or weight of each area varies greatly with each child.

4) Autism Spectrum Disorder

Common Difficulties in Autistic Students

- Lack of eye contact and gaze avoidance (sensory overload)
- Repetitive movements or “stims”
- Stiff conversational style (may be another manifestation of inability to pick up and model social and speech cues)
- Unaware of unwritten rules of social conduct

- Motor clumsiness (gross and fine motor, tics and involuntary movement, odd postures)
- Rigid enforcement of class rules
- General anxiety (easily upset and confused by things that are apparent to others) – constant “low-level” background stress during waking hours
- High sensitivity to noise and sound – will cry, scream, run, completely shut down, or go to sleep (things that may not bother or even be noticed by others).
- Problems with ability to control inhibitions and to apply a behavior from one situation to another.
- Great difficulty with changes in routine

Adapted from Tony Attwood - 1998 (Taken from – Inclusive programming for elementary students with autism – by Sheila Wagner)

A Father’s Advice for Nurturing Flute Students with Autism by Matthew Taylor of Australia (used by permission)

- a) Keep a strict routine in your lesson. I found that a lot of autistic kids thrive on routine.
- b) If the student is anxious don't try to teach any new concepts.
- c) Since parents can play a pivotal role in the progress of the student. Give the parents a detailed copy of your lesson plan order so the student can practice in this order at home.
- d) Introduce new concepts slowly but always in relation to previously known concepts if possible.
- e) Always make out your having fun and enjoying the lesson even if you’re bored stiff. This will keep the child calmer and improve their retention and progress.
- f) Many autistic children find loud high pitched noises very hard to deal with. The

child will gradually get used to the sound of the flute so slowly introduce upper register and volume of playing.

g) Give lots of rewards and praise like every kid but it doesn't hurt to pile it on a lot more.

5) Four Modalities

According to Dr. Alice M Hammel there are four modalities that should guide each teacher when teaching music reading to other-abled students.

This article by Dr. Hammel can be accessed at:

http://www.people.vcu.edu/~bhammel/special/resources/articles/big_four.htm

6) *An Insider's View* by Temple Grandin, Ph.D.

Dr. Grandin's article describing her personal experiences with autism is quite insightful. http://www.autism.com/ind_inside_view.asp