



Teaching Exceptional Students



Best Practice Guide

Best Practice Guide: Teaching Exceptional Students

Introduction

School districts are held to a high standard of responsibility when it comes to equipping their teachers to effectively reach every student in their classroom. They are encouraged to support exceptional student education programs for students who have disabilities and students who are gifted.

There are many different learning exceptionalities under the broad banner of Exceptional Student Education (ESE). Quaver resources are some of the most adaptable and pliable resources across any educational program. Below is a list of simple suggestions outlining differentiation strategies relating to our resources.

Quaver Contributions to ESE Programming

Quaver Lyrics Activities

The majority of the over 1,000 songs in the curriculum include interactive Lyrics Activities to help teachers teach and rehearse songs with students. These Activities include:

- **A highlighting lyrics feature** which lights up the words to the beat of the music
- **Graphics** that help the teacher represent the words on the screen and give learners visual clues
- **Example voices** that allow students to hear correct pronunciation from children of their age and vocal timbre



Full Score Activities

- **Many songs include an interactive Full Score** that allows the teacher to select the vocal and instrument parts most appropriate to his/her group's ability
- **Many also include a tempo reduction feature** that allows the song to be sung, and instrument parts to be learned, at a slower tempo

Levelled Activities

There are multiple levelled activities presented with screens at the front of the class or accessible via QR code with mobile devices, giving the teacher opportunity to differentiate within a classroom setting.

Draw Tool

Each screen of the 4,000 plus in the curriculum includes access to a Draw Tool that can be used to focus the attention of students on one area of the screen, enabling greater focus. Draw Tool annotations can also be saved and revisited at a later date, allowing for continued customization for differentiated teaching.

Quaver Creatives

Composition creatives at QuaverMusic.com are often used in the curriculum as music creation tools for group work or individuals. These creatives:

- **Allow for a broad level of differentiation when creating music:**
 - » *Students with disabilities can be assigned only a single track, measure or line of rhythm, allowing a more manageable path to success*
 - » *Gifted and talented students that work at a faster pace can be asked to create more measures, lines and rhythms*
- **Can be used at home** allowing for personalized learning and giving students the opportunity to spend more time creating and using the Quaver resources (there is a specific benefit here for students experiencing hearing loss)

Group Projects

The curriculum includes a number of adaptable group work projects complete with project books, rubrics and project goals. Each of these projects can be adapted to suit students across the ESE spectrum:

- **2nd Grade Composition project** (3 weeks)
- **4th Grade Rap project** (6 weeks)
- **5th Grade Commercial Jingle project** (6 weeks)
- **Ukulele Special project** (10 weeks)

Mobile Interactivities

Quaver Mobile Interactives allow for activities to be in the hands of individual students—allowing for differentiation. Teachers can rework the educational scaffolding for the activity as they engage with individual students by:

- **Increasing or decreasing the amount of measures or lines** needing to be completed by a student
- **Reducing and increasing the number of icons/note choices** a student can use to create a rhythm pattern or melody
- **Allowing students to listen to music within the activity** with headphones, increasing focus and volume, and decreasing distractions
- **Allowing students to view the activity close up** rather than from a distance (as would happen in a group)

In addition to this functionality, Quaver's Curriculum can be used hand-in-hand with these suggested best practices to help teachers meet their ESE program goals for students.



Best Practices for ESE in the General Music Classroom:

Autism Spectrum Disorder

- Give additional time to complete assignments, tasks, and tests
- Shorten some assignments
- Deliver slower paced instruction
- Tell the student beforehand about activities for the class and any transitions
- A seating chart may encourage social interactions in the classroom
- Visual schedules are helpful for setting expectations

Deaf or Hard of Hearing (DHH)

- Used Closed Captioning options on video instructional materials*
- Allow time for group discussions
- Avoid extensive note taking which requires listening, looking, and writing all at once
- Place the student close to the teacher and always look at the student when speaking to him/her

Developmentally Delayed (DD)

- Offer additional time for students to complete assignments and tasks
- Teach at a slower instructional pace
- Allow or encourage students to use a tape recorder

Emotional/Behavioral Disability (E/BD)

- A seating chart may encourage social interactions
- Provide clear rules and expectations
- Be consistent with consequences and rewards
- Provide “down time” or a time to “cool off” during activities that might be stress-inducing

Intellectual Disability (inD)

- Offer a quiet work space when completing assignments or journal entries
- Use functional activities to teach concepts instead of lecture format*
- Practice repetition of previously taught concepts (use of remediation portion of lesson)
- Incorporate hands on learning*
- Use schedule and routine to create a structure environment

Visual Impairment (VI): *Blind and Partially Sighted*

- Use large-sized print
- Administer assessments orally
- Use manipulatives for problem solving*
- Offer students extended time

Other Physical Disability

- Some assignments may need to be modified (for example, when a child with cerebral palsy plays an instrument, the correct hand position may not be possible for the student and alternatives should be provided)
- Utilize a peer buddy to assist with difficult tasks
- Create a safe environment with no tripping hazards or places that are inaccessible for wheelchairs

Speech Impairment (SI)

- Provide students with information prior to classroom discussions (flipping instruction)*
- Avoid interrupting the student when speaking*
- Provide the Speech/Language Pathologist with a vocabulary list
- Give simple one step directions
- Provide a written copy of class notes
- Assign study partners
- Give assignments both orally and written*



Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)

- Seat student near the teacher with minimal distractions
- Offer extended time for assignments
- Break large assignments into smaller pieces*
- Allow student to stand while working if necessary
- Provide time for movement during instruction*
- Allow the student to have an object with which to “fidget”

A Note About Universal Design for Learning:

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an approach to educating ALL students in a way that removes barriers while increasing methods of representation, promoting student engagement, and expanding student expression. The use of instructional activities that incorporate multiple learning styles supports a UDL classroom environment. Additionally, there are many accommodations generally used for exceptional student education that, when incorporated for ALL students in a classroom, help promote engagement and expression as well as remove any barriers to authentic learning. Activities indicated with a * can be utilized to foster a classroom environment congruent with Universal Design of Learning principles.

References

- Darrow, A-A. (2014) “Differentiated Instruction for Students With Disabilities: Using DI in the Music Classroom.” *General Music Today*. 2015;28(2):29-32.
- Darrow A-A. (2007) “Adaptations in the Classroom: Accommodations and Modifications: Part 1.” *General Music Today*. 2007;20(3):32-34.
- Darrow A-A. (2008) “Adaptations in the Classroom: Accommodations and Modifications, Part 2.” *General Music Today*. 2008;21(3):32-34.
- Debrot, R. A. (2012, September) “Strategies for Students with Special Needs.” *NAfME*.



Seriously Fun Education!