

Fulton County Schools Music Therapy Department
Middle/High School Activity Planning Tips & Suggestions

Dos and Don'ts Quick Reference:

- Do use age-appropriate music.
- Do use THEIR music – when appropriate and IF school appropriate.
- Do create activities that focus on relevant skills and goals they need to be working on.
- Do think about HOW to use the AAC devices for nonverbal students ahead of time. Create pictures & visuals for these devices.
- Don't bring in the same sessions as for your kindergarten class.

Planning

- **Do:** Utilize long range planning- think about expanding activities and themes over a period of a month to two months.
- **Don't:** Avoid planning activities that are isolated and unrelated to the activities the following weeks.

Themes

- **Do:** Develop themed units that are based on functional skills:
 - money and purchasing items in a store
 - sign and logo identification
 - training for specific social situations
 - chores
 - high school level academics (reading, writing and math)
- **Do:** Develop themed units that include music appreciation concepts:
 - genres
 - instrument identification
 - basic music concepts
 - music history
- **Don't:** Avoid themes that address very basic “elementary themes” such as color identification, number identification and object identification. Think about how to incorporate these concepts into functional themes. For example, color identification in sorting clothes, counting money for a purchase, identifying objects in a grocery store.

Effective Interventions

- **Do:** Planning and developing interventions is directly related to the population you are working with and the abilities that they have. The level of difficulty and amount of structure required will change for each of the following interventions depending on the group you are working with. It will also change for certain individuals in the group when you have a mixed model
- **Don't:** When selecting interventions for a diverse group, avoid interventions that are not able to be adapted for higher and lower ability levels.

Engaging Lower Functioning Students in Music Therapy Interventions

- **Do:** The following techniques can be utilized when attempting to actively engage lower functioning students.
 - let them ask questions of other students in the group utilizing picture symbols or AAC
 - Let them determine the movements for a dance by rolling the dice or utilizing the *All-Turn-It* spinner
 - let them control the music for a freeze dance or instrument play through the use of a powerlink
 - involve them in instrument play through the use of adapted instruments or switch activated instruments
 - let them announce the activities according to a schedule using AAC or picture symbols
- **Don't:** When working with a mixed model group, it's impossible to meet all the needs of every student all the time. However, avoid using activities in which the lower functioning students are unable to participate without maximum assistance activity after activity. Mix it up a little bit, throw in an activity in which they can be actively engaged on their own following an activity in which they are less able to participate in their own.

Tips and Suggestions

- Stop and think about how you typically plan an activity....do you select music first or have the activity in mind and try to make it musical? Be careful when designing an activity! You want to make sure you are focusing on the goal/objective that a particular class or individual needs to work on. It is very easy to assign an objective or a goal to an activity **after** you have already put it together.
- Considerations when planning a session: (source-Music Therapy Groupwork with Special Needs Children – Goodman)
 - The space being used
 - Physical arrangement of the group
 - Music therapy activity levels that are consistent with the various functioning levels of the clients in the group
 - Music therapy strategies related to the diagnoses and primary strengths and weaknesses of the group {Exceptionality Notebook and IEP Reviews are important}
 - Music therapy strategies linked to goals and objectives for all group members
 - Incorporation of support and professional staff for interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary work
 - Music therapy strategies designed to invite and promote group success
 - Music therapy session format that makes sense given the purpose, preferences, and functioning of the group
 - Flexibility and Adaptability {including MTs thoughts, plans, and within activities}
 - Therapist knowledge base and philosophy

- Create a “Requested Artists List” that you can refer to when selecting music. Ask your clients who they listen to and favorite songs. This can be incorporated into sessions through a variety of activities, but is really helpful if you need a song to motivate or one to peak their interest. Make sure the content is also appropriate, not just the lyrics!
- Keep it age appropriate!!!
 - There are ways to address lower level academic skills in an age appropriate way, (i.e. sorting laundry into color, whites, darks, etc. to address colors and sorting skills).
 - When considering age appropriate music, remember you can change the mode and the way in which you present the song.
 - Look to use equipment and manipulatives that are age appropriate. In lower levels, items like the parachute and puppets may be good, but how would that play out in a high school setting?
- Think about using more technology, including:
 - Ipad
 - Computer presentations through PowerPoint
 - Internet sites that offer music education materials
 - DVDs like STOMP, Blue Man Group, and documentaries or concerts like Justin Bieber- Never Say Never, This is It-Michael Jackson
 - View Musicals and awards shows
- Create a notebook of resources, materials, activity ideas, and contacts that you can always refer back to!!! This may include:
 - People willing to come and do a presentation for your classes
 - Websites you found helpful
 - Names of music stores in your area
 - A list of songs you have heard, like, and may want to use later

Categories of Activities- source Music Therapy Groupwork with Special Needs Children - Goodman

1. Movement
 - a. Sensory Stimulation
 - b. Relaxation
 - c. Movement based on precomposed choreography
 - d. Movement, creative/improvisational
2. Instrumental
 - a. Sensory stimulation
 - b. Instrumental work based on orchestrated arrangements
 - c. Instrumental Ensemble, precomposed music
 - d. Instrumental Ensemble, creative/improvisational
 - e. Composition

3. Vocal
 - a. Sensory stimulation-beginning vocalization
 - b. Vocal work
 - c. Vocal Ensemble, precomposed music
 - d. Vocal Ensemble creative/improvisational
 - e. Songwriting
4. Listening
 - a. Auditory discrimination activities
 - b. Guided music listening
 - c. Music Appreciation/education activities
5. Musical Drama
 - a. Simple drama, activity songs
 - b. Drama, creative/improvisational
 - c. Musical playwriting

Weekly Activities Suggestions

1. Style (Genre) Discussion/Music History
2. Listening/Aesthetics
3. Academic
4. Rhythmic Exploration
5. Pitch Exploration
6. Quiet Time/Relaxation
7. Song of the Month
8. Music Concept
9. Social/Community Concept
10. Movement
11. Greeting/Name Game
12. Closing

Monthly Activities Suggestions

1. Sound Experiment
2. Music Paragraph
3. Music Game
4. Lyric Analysis
5. Old School/New School Remix
6. On Campus Field Trip
7. Star performer
8. Sensory
9. Recording (Video or Audio)