
Book review

Psychology of Music
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ADAM OCKELFORD, *Music for Children and Young People with Complex Needs*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. xiv + 299 pp. ISBN 9780193223011

One of the most common complaints made by teachers of many mainstreamed or inclusive classrooms is the wide range of abilities among their students. A significant factor leading to classroom heterogeneity is the diversity and severity of disabilities represented in the classroom. As a result of varied abilities in the classroom, teachers are faced with the challenge of providing instruction that is sufficiently broad to address the needs of all students. Teachers not prepared to meet this challenge, wittingly or unwittingly, often exclude some students from instruction. The excluded students are frequently those who do not learn vicariously, and consequently are dependent upon direct instruction. Other students with special needs require adapted instruction, a type of instruction that many music educators feel unprepared to deliver. *Music for Children and Young People with Complex Needs* is a good start toward providing the information, contemporary thinking and practices such music educators need. The author identifies key issues, introduces recent and ongoing research, and provides practical advice for teachers, therapists and community musicians. The text is heavy on the theoretical side, and therefore not a quick read or for teachers who want music activities to use in the classroom tomorrow. Ockelford is a graduate of the Royal Academy of Music and a professor of music at Roehampton University in the UK. His background in working with students who have special needs comes primarily from his work experience at the Linden Lodge School in Wimbledon.

Music for Children and Young People with Complex Needs is divided into four parts. Part I addresses contemporary issues such as the inconsistent provision of music instruction for students with complex needs, the distinction between 'therapy' and 'education' for such students, and the lack of a systematic or evidence-based special music curriculum. Part II presents the psycho-musicological theory that is the basis of solutions and discussions that follow in Parts III and IV. Embedded in this theory is the importance of repetition and variation, and pattern recognition to musical understanding. Part III offers a model of musical development for students with complex needs, and explains how this model can serve as a basis for curricular planning, delivery and assessment. Part IV is directed toward students with complex needs but who also exhibit extraordinary musical talents. Included in this last section are accounts of successful pedagogical strategies. The text also includes numerous figures, tables, musical examples and a list of abbreviations that is helpful for readers not familiar with the British educational system and its terms or acronyms.

Ockelford makes a clear distinction between education *in* and *through* music, and outlines the need for both in the education of students with disabilities. His rationale for clarifying this distinction is also applicable to educational systems in the USA. From the text, it is obvious that issues related to providing music therapy and music education for students with special needs are as complex and common in Britain as they are in the USA. These countries share a long history of music instruction for students who have sensory or cognitive disabilities, yet a suitable music curriculum for such students remains a dilemma. This text is an honest effort to provide such a curriculum. The author has provided a strong foundation for his curriculum that is based primarily in the psychology of music literature. Teachers or parents without a background in the psychology of music, or the patience to carefully and fully explore the numerous figures and tables may not find the text as useful as they had anticipated. However, such teachers and parents will find Chapters 6 ('Music Moves') and 7 ('About Music') in Part III, and all of Part IV to be both accessible and useful. Two of the strongest sections in the text, both in Chapter 6, have to do with music and communication, and music and speech. Communication needs are prevalent among many, if not most, students with complex needs. Without communication skills, these students are hindered in socialization in all areas of academic learning. Also helpful to teachers may be the assessments discussed in Chapter 9, 'Influential Measures', and the case studies reported in Chapter 10, 'Fragments of Genius'. The assessments and strategies discussed in these two chapters should provide teachers with ideas that can be generalized to other areas of music instruction.

Some of the instructional approaches presented in the text can be adapted for all students, thus highlighting the major strength of the text. Universal Design is a relatively new paradigm that emerged from efforts to make all areas of life (e.g., buildings, products, environments), including school curricula, accessible to all people – not just those with disabilities. Perhaps a better name for this text would be, *Music for Children and Young People with and without Complex Needs*. This text, as is, is recommended to anyone engaged in music education. It is my hope, as the author has proposed in his conclusion, that what will follow will be increasingly more practical coherence to the theoretical foundation he has laid in *Music for Children and Young People with Complex Needs*.

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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
MUSIC TECHNOLOGY:
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*The interface between
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11th & 12th June 2010**

This conference offers an opportunity to share knowledge and information about technology relating to musical expression and experiences. Presentations will address the use of technology to meet special needs and measure responses to music. Professionals involved in using, designing and researching music technology for use in clinical, educational, and community settings will give presentations covering topics in the following three themes:

Clinical Practice: Work involving electronic music technologies in practice with people with special needs e.g. music therapists; music teachers working in special education; community musicians; computer music scientists,

Engineering & Design: Work involving electronic music technologies in practice with people with special needs e.g. music therapists; music teachers working in special education; community musicians; computer music scientists

Measurement & Evaluation: Those involved in developing/ using technology for measuring musical responses e.g. brain imaging/PET/ EEG; clinical evaluation systems

Cost per delegate after April 1st: £250 / Student £200
Early bird rate before April 1st: £200 / Student £140
All fees plus VAT. Student places limited.

To register or for any other enquiries please contact:
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