



# Coastline Newsletter

## Students Benefit from Successful Teacher Collaboration

There is an old saying that two heads are better than one. Well, when three determined teachers put their heads together, the outcome is definitely good for students. Student success has been the result of the collaboration of three Edgewater Public Elementary teachers: Sharon Perakis, Teresa Ogle, and Madelyn Miller. Sharon approached their principal, Lynda Moore, with the request to co-teach. Mrs. Moore gave them her approval and worked tirelessly with the teachers to make it a reality. All students with disabilities in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade were assigned to the co-teach team. Other students assigned to the team included low performing and high performing students and were carefully selected, utilizing testing data and teacher recommendation. Sharon, Teresa, and Madelyn were adamant that the students on the team were comprised of a diverse group of learners including enrichment students. Sharon stated, "We believed that we could really enrich these students if there were three of us, and in turn this group would provide a "model" for our at-risk students of what it "looked like" to be a successful student.

This dynamic co-teach team reports that it is true that co-teaching can be compared to marriage. Teachers have to have the same academic and behavioral expectations. In order to work successfully you have to be able to be flexible, honest, and hardworking. Co-teachers need the same philosophies to have a classroom climate that is mutually comfortable. Sharon commented, "I can honestly say that I learned more in this year of teaching than in all of my years combined. There isn't a day that passes that I don't learn from my co-workers and students. We support and critique one another to help us be the best we can be for our students." Teresa added, "We all believe that it is critical to involve our students and families in the learning process. We set the bar high and have found that the students meet our high expectations."

Ninety six percent (96%) of ALL their students achieved a 3 or higher on the Reading and Math portion of the FCAT. That is amazing results! Three of the enrichment students received a perfect 5 in Reading and/or Math. The remainder of enrichment students scored 4's and 5's. This was evidence that the enrichment students were truly enriched. Many students had 500 points and above on Reading Counts. The team's highest scoring student had over 700 points and received a perfect 5 on the FCAT.

Madelyn reported that much of the success of the students was due to several factors. "I truly believe it was possible because there were three teachers. If one of us didn't pick up on something, another did. We each had special areas that we loved to teach! We enjoyed it and the students knew it. Most importantly, the students knew that all three teachers respected one another and each of them. We were invested in each of them. We got to know them and their families. We believed in them and we utilized one another in breaking through many barriers students had holding them back. We conveyed each and every day how important they were and how they could achieve great things. They did."



Sharon Perakis, Teresa Ogle, Madelyn Miller

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## Hesitations and Realizations: A Journey of Inclusion by Ed Anderson

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*Inclusion.* It is a word that some of us in Music Education feel very uneasy about, especially when it comes to the quality of our performing ensembles such as concert bands, choruses and smaller instrumental groups. I have to admit, I was one of these people. How do we teach music, with little or no training, to students with significant intellectual disabilities? What do we do when we are asked to take on the task of including students with intellectual disabilities into these performing ensembles and still maintain the quality and performance expectations that have allowed these groups their past successes? How do we overcome the hesitations that we feel? This is the story of my own experience of teaching Exceptional Education Music. This is the travelogue of the journey I have taken that has helped me to understand why we must make the effort to give students with disabilities a chance to discover the joy of music that we ourselves have come to know.

Near the end of the 2002-2003 fall semester, I was asked to teach, for the spring semester, a music class comprised of students with significant intellectual disabilities, most of them also having mild to severe autism. Having had no experience working with students with these kinds of disabilities, I was very hesitant to teach this class and constantly worried about how the class would be implemented. My main experience, up to that point, had been teaching Middle School Band, Orchestra, and Steel Drums. While I had some experience with students with physical disabilities, I had no experience with students with disabilities to this degree. Luckily, there was a special session that year at the Florida Music Educators' Association Annual Conference that specifically targeted the teaching of Exceptional Education students in music programs. After attending this session and returning armed with everything from Boom Whackers to Rhythm Sticks, I began my journey into the world of inclusion.

I have to be honest; it did not go very well at first. I saw things that I had never seen before! One of the students would have emotional outbursts at a moment's notice; another would get up and try to run out of the classroom with absolutely no warning; another student would get very upset if one of his classmates simply looked at him. What had I gotten myself into?

My first attempts to do musical activities with them ended up in a disaster! It sounded like mass chaos! I spent the first month of class after school shaking my head, asking myself the same question: What am I doing wrong? A bright spot, though, was that every day the students with disabilities would come to class with big smiles on their faces and wanting to learn music. I told myself if they could come in with that much enthusiasm and excitement, then I could find a way to teach them music.

One day, one of the Exceptional Education paraprofessionals assigned to the students had told me that one of students had to leave class to wash his hands and mentioned that a lot of the students in the class did not like to wash their hands. On a whim, I began teaching them a song about hand washing that I had learned in elementary school. The song had hand motions that went along with it. The students learned the whole song in twenty minutes and we spent the rest of the class singing this song, laughing, and having such a good time! At last! A connection had been made! I realized what could be done to help these students learn music!

We began learning some of the traditional songs from the "islands:" *Marianne, Island in the Sun, Jamaica Farewell, and St. Thomas*. We would make up hand motions for each of the verses for the songs. To add to these motions, each student was given a colored bandana to use with the hand motions. Soon, we were singing and waving our bandanas together and having a great time doing it!

About halfway through the semester, I brought my steel drums into class to play along with the students while they were singing. During class, one of the students with mild autism began tapping some of the notes and a huge grin spread across his face! He asked if he could play along with the class too. Again, I was hesitant. My earlier attempts with instruments had not gone so well. But, what about a *steel drum*? I had not even considered that. Could it be done?



I had a few students in the class whose autism was less severe than the others and who had reasonable motor skills. The problem that we needed to overcome was how to get them to remember the notes. Recalling the success with the colored handkerchiefs in class, I placed colored stickers on several of the steel drums at the school: Blue was the color for C, Red the color for G, and Yellow the color for B. Since our arrangement of *Marianne* had only two chords, I and V, I would have the students play in quarter notes the corresponding colors that matched the chord: Blue and Red for the I chord and Red and Yellow for the V Chord. I would signal them when to change between the chords. After about 4 days, the students with disabilities were playing the steel drums along with the other students singing. Adding more colors to some of the other notes, we were able to eventually play I, IV, V chord progressions and even a couple of melodic lines along with the singing students.

I had realized what a joy teaching these students had become for me! I looked forward to their eagerness and energy every day. Our first performance was at the Brevard Zoo for the vsaArts (Very Special Arts) Festival. The students had made their own shirts and had come up with a name for them: *The Safari Kids!* Our performance was a great success! The students enjoyed themselves and performed very well. We next performed at the Steel Band Spring Concert. One of the students with severe autism, who had barely spoken a word all semester, gave a big “thumbs up” to his father in the audience. Mission accomplished!

We repeated the class the following spring semester with the students who had more severe autism and mild intellectual disabilities. This time we had a young lady who was hearing impaired. With the help of her interpreter, we substituted sign language for the hand gestures. Using backing tracks that I made through *FINALE*, we again sang some of the traditional “island tunes” and placed a bass speaker behind the hearing impaired student so she could “feel” the beat. Through the generosity of Lisa Ebener, the elementary music teacher at the Florida State University School in Tallahassee, FL, we acquired an older set of steel drums that her school no longer used. With the help of Tom Reynolds and Tropical Hammer Steel Drum Crafters, we were able to adapt them to be used specifically for the students with mild intellectual disabilities.

Using the same colored sticker method, a few of the students learned simplified note patterns and performed on the steel drums with the backing tracks while the other students sang and did sign language. Once again, big smiles were on the students’ faces! The students had learned how to make music! What I did not know at that time was that my journey into the inclusion world had only just begun.

At the beginning of the 2007-08 school year, it was decided that the Exceptional Education music class and the steel drum ensemble would be combined into one class. I will be honest; at first, I was totally against this! Space Coast Steel, the steel drum ensemble, had been a group whose members were selected solely through an audition process. Every year the ensemble would perform at least 12 shows at Disney World for the Christmas Atmosphere Program as well as play for the Disney World Marathon. Space Coast Steel had appeared twice at the Florida Music Educators’ Annual Conference. It was one of the most active performing ensembles at our school. Also, the music literature performed by the group was the same as performed by most college steel bands. We were way beyond simple island songs!

Another problem that presented itself was the reaction of some of the nondisabled students and their parents. Several of them stated that having the students with disabilities in an ensemble like this was unheard of and impossible! It was believed by some parents and students that the performing level of the group would have to drop to accommodate the students with disabilities. The final problem we had was that the Exceptional Education Steel Drums were at least 18 years old and were inferior in sound quality to the regular steel drums used by Space Coast Steel. But, the decision had been made. I knew that many challenges awaited us in making this a class that would benefit everyone.

At first, the students with disabilities were given shakers and some *Remo* Timabanos to play in the percussion section of the steel band, called the “Engine Room.” By placing them next to the drum set player, they could better feel the “pulse” of the beat from the bass and snare drum. Several of the students with



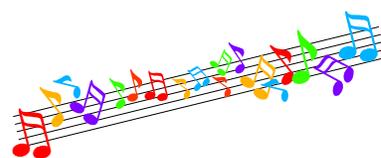
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disabilities would begin to rock back and forth with the beat or move around as if dancing to the beat. One of the exceptional education teachers explained to me that this was called “stimming” which is a series of repetitive actions or movements that people with autism do for sensory stimulation. The exceptional education students began moving their percussion instruments during this stimming and as a result, they were able to keep a reasonable time with the beat. For those students with disabilities who had a harder time with the tempo, they were given egg shakers so that they could play along with the band, but the rhythm of the shakers would not interfere with the overall pulse of the engine room. Although this approach seemed to be working well, I could not shake the feeling that more could be done.

A few weeks into the second grading period, I suddenly remembered about a new type of steel drum that had recently been created. Ron Kerns, the president of Panyard Inc., had been developing a beginner steel drum that had the eight notes of a G major scale and a sound quality that could match the professional-grade instrument. Panyard had named their creation the *Jumbie Jam Steel Drum*. This instrument is much easier to learn versus a full size Steel Drum. I realized that it might be possible to adapt this instrument to use with some of our students with mild autism. I contacted Mr. Kerns and asked what he thought about the idea of using this instrument for Exceptional Education students to learn music. Mr. Kerns was immediately enthusiastic about the idea! Through the hard work of a steel band parent, we received donations from a few local businesses to purchase several of these Jumbie Steel Drums. The students with moderate intellectual disabilities would play repetitive note patterns on the Jumbie Steel Drum that would fit in with the chords some of the easier socas or calypsos that Space Coast Steel would perform. What was one of the best things to experience was when the nondisabled members of Space Coast Steel would begin to help teach the students with disabilities their parts. Soon, the students with disabilities were performing right along side the regular members of Space Coast Steel. The highlight of our year was when several of the Jumbie Steel Drum Players, called the “Jumbie Jammers,” performed at the 2008 Florida Music Educators’ Annual Conference with Space Coast Steel.

This journey of inclusion has been an eye opening experience. To watch the musical growth of these remarkable young people has been one of the greatest pleasures of my teaching career. I know that the journey is not over yet and I am excited to see where it will take my students and I next. I would encourage any Music Educator who will be including exceptional education students in their class to ignore the hesitations he or she may feel. With a little effort and some creativity, you will soon realize that your music program or ensemble can be adapted and become successful for all students involved. Believe me, it is worth it!

*Thank you to Mr. Anderson for writing this article for our newsletter!*



Musicians in Mr. Anderson’s  
*Inclusive Steel Drum Band*  
practice their music!





## UCP: United Cerebral Palsy “Life without limits for people with disabilities”

United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) of East Central Florida, serving both Volusia and Flagler Counties, has provided services to local youth and adults with disabilities since 1969. On November 19<sup>th</sup>, ESE teachers from Volusia high schools had an opportunity to tour the UCP facility on Jimmy Ann Drive in Daytona Beach. They got a firsthand look at the services provided to the community by the work the UCP participants perform daily. The tour, led by Lynn Kaiser Conrad, UCP Development Director, walked teachers through the various adult training and production program areas at UCP. A few of the products created and/or assembled by the UCP participants are landscape stakes, picture frames and shipping boxes. In addition, UCP participants have an opportunity to work in the kitchen or in the ceramics shop. The annually crafted UCP Christmas ornament is a local “must have” for many Daytona Beach Christmas trees and beautiful holiday poinsettias sold at UCP decorate many area homes. A branch of Daytona State College, located right at UCP, has a variety of adult day training programs available to participants.

The UCP Staff strives to help their participants in three primary areas: building pride, empowering individuals, and assisting with independence. A participant who works in the ceramic shop shared this perspective of her job at UCP with those of us touring the facility. “I want my job. I like what I do. I don’t want to twiddle my thumbs. I keep trying.”

For more information go to the UCP website at: [www.ucpecf.org](http://www.ucpecf.org) or contact Linda Davidson at FDLRS, Volusia, (386) 258-4684.



Lynn Kaiser-Conrad, Development Director at UCP, shares information with Volusia teachers.



ESE teachers from Seabreeze and Atlantic High Schools enjoyed the tour of UCP.

### NOAA Launches Grade-School Chart Initiative

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) recently launched *Nautical Charts: Mystery in a Bottle*, a new online nautical feature designed to help third-to-fifth-grade students “know where we are, know where we want to go, and know how to get there.” Budding sailors can unravel a real mystery related to the Civil War-era *USS Monitor*, which sank in a gale in 1862, as they learn about nautical charts with NOAA’s Cobalt and Safety Seagull. Students can also explore movie clips from the raising of the *Monitor*, listen to seagoing sounds, and learn nautical terms.

[www.oceanservice.noaa.gov/education/welcome.html](http://www.oceanservice.noaa.gov/education/welcome.html)

Source: Lisa Hall, *Sail Magazine* September 2008



**Holiday Gift Ideas for Preschoolers**

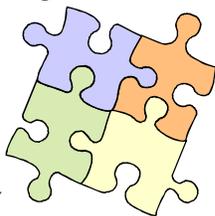
Selecting gifts for preschoolers can be daunting because of the numerous choices available. When selecting a gift for a preschool child, remember child’s play is the way children learn and develop. Toys should be fun but they should also develop skills and promote a love of learning. The following suggestions are compiled from various sources and are based on the age and the developmental needs of preschoolers.

**Infants**

- Safe toys for teething
- Toys to grasp and squeeze
- Toys for the bath
- Nesting and stacking cups
- Plastic bowls
- Unbreakable mirror
- Floor toys than encourage crawling

**One-Year-Olds**

- Pull and push toys
- Small, lightweight blocks
- Soft, safe ball
- Sand and water toys
- Pop beads
- Toy drum or safe pounding toy
- First shape-sorter
- First puzzle
- Toys to push on the floor when crawling
- Imitation toys like telephones or housekeeping toys



**Two-Year-Olds**

- Large beads to string
- Fingerpaint
- Rhythm instruments
- Riding toys
- Toys to teach dressing skills
- Chalkboard and chalk
- Basic train
- Simple object puzzles
- Small table and chair set



**Three-Year-Olds**

- Large blocks, construction toys
- Puppets
- Board games/games that involve problem-solving
- Toys that teach colors, sizes, shapes, math concepts
- Three-dimensional puzzles and games
- See-saw
- Tricycle

Web Sites

**Let’s Explore – Holiday Gift Guide**

<http://lets-explore.typepad.com/weblog/2008/10/lets-explore—holiday-gift-guide.html>

**Holiday Gift Guide for Preschool Kids 2008**

[www.edutainingkids.com/articles/childrensgiftguidepreschooler.html](http://www.edutainingkids.com/articles/childrensgiftguidepreschooler.html)

**Best Holiday Toys for Preschoolers Preschool Gift Guide**

<http://preschoolers.about.com/od/activitiesfun/ig/Top-Preschool-Toy>

**Practical Christmas Gift Ideas for Preschoolers-Holiday Gift Guide**

[http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/72281/practical\\_christmas\\_gift\\_ideas\\_for.html](http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/72281/practical_christmas_gift_ideas_for.html)

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\*This publication can be made available to persons with disabilities in a variety of formats, including large print, cassette tape, and braille. Telephone or written requests should be made at least two weeks prior to the time you need the material and should include your name, address and phone number. In **Brevard County** requests should be made to Kim Riddle, ESE Lead Teacher, 2700 Judge Fran Jamieson Way, Viera, FL 32940-6601, (321) 633-1000, ext. 535 and in **Volusia County** to FDLRS, Campbell Middle School, 625 S. Keech Street, Daytona Beach, FL 32114, (386) 258-4684.\* You can access the *Coastline* newsletter by visiting the FDLRS/East website at <http://fdlrs.brevard.k12.fl.us/east/> OR [http://www.volusia.k12.fl.us/ese/fdlrs\\_east](http://www.volusia.k12.fl.us/ese/fdlrs_east)

**Four-Year-Olds**

- Playthings with reading, writing, or number concepts
- Art supplies
- Construction toys
- Games w/color, shape, size, matching
- Board games
- Scrapbook to make and keep
- More “complex” sand and water toys

**Five-Year-Olds**

- Sport toys (softball and bat, soccer ball, roller skates)
- Play settings w/miniature characters & objects
- Clay
- Woodworking materials
- Writing paper and markers
- Toys to start special collections
- Puppet theater
- Gardening toys
- Jump rope
- First jigsaw puzzle

**All Ages**

- Pretend/dress-up play clothes and objects
- Arts and crafts
- Books
- Science and nature toys
- Outdoor toys
- Puzzles, games, and construction toys

**Source:**

Diamond, Marian and Janet Hopson. *Magic Trees of the Mind: How to Nurture Your Child’s Intelligence, Creativity, and Healthy Emotions from Birth Through Adolescence.* Plume Printing, New York, 1999



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