

## There is something to do physically, which increases engagement of the students

THERE IS SOMETHING TO DO in the lesson. These words suggest so many things. By having lessons that increase student involvement you are establishing high expectations for the students. If you say, "YOU can be involved" and "YOU are a part of this process," it is interpreted as, "I believe in YOU." Of course all active movement in a class setting needs to be defined and structured. If there is "something to do" that is clearly defined, then even those that have difficulty acquiring the information can be actively engaged. Active engagement provides physical practice of skills and often is the most significant avenue for students that struggle to recall information. Motor memory is highly connected to the retrieval of information... think Touch Typing!

- What ways are your students involved in the teaching moments in your class?

### COMMENTS from the GROUP?

## Notice the alternate ways to express information

This classroom employs a large variety of ways for the students to access information, interact with information, and express themselves. They have the 3 principles of UDL well evidenced. They use the Smart Board, verbal response, matching, pointing, gestures, music, communication devices, symbols, etc. The room is rich with representation and expression. The music provides the target vocabulary and the practice to learn and comprehend meanings. The interactions with content increase the understanding of concepts, and use of specific vocabulary in real-time allows the class to demonstrate comprehension of these concepts.

- How do you represent information in multiple ways for your students?
- How do you provide alternate ways for them to interact with the content and materials?
- How do you teach them to express themselves using alternative means?

### COMMENTS from the GROUP?

## Connections to the Frameworks for Teaching (FtT)

### Component 1a: DEMONSTRATING KNOWLEDGE OF CONTENT AND PEDAGOGY

Teachers don't teach content in abstract; they teach it to students. Therefore in order to ensure student learning, teachers must not only know their content and its related pedagogy, but they must also know the students they wish to teach that content to. In ensuring student learning, teachers must appreciate what recent research in cognitive psychology has confirmed: that students learn through active intellectual engagement with content.

While there are patterns in cognitive, social and emotional developmental stages typical of different age groups, students learn in unique ways and may come with gaps or misconceptions that the teacher needs to uncover in order to plan appropriate learning activities. In addition, students have lives beyond school, lives that include athletic and musical pursuits, activities in their neighborhoods, family and cultural traditions. Students whose first language is not English, as well as other students with special needs, must be considered when planning lessons as well as identifying resources that will ensure their understanding.

*This teacher understands the needs for the students to develop communication skills for basic social interactions. This ability assists them with integrating into the classroom setting. The teacher has considered the research related to music for enhancing cognitive and emotional development, as well as considered the principles of UDL - Representation, Engagement and Expression.*

### Component 2a: CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT OF RESPECT AND RAPPORT

An essential skill of teaching is that of managing relationships with students and ensuring that those among students are positive and supportive. Teachers create an environment of respect and rapport in their classroom by the ways they interact with students and by the interaction they cultivate among students. An important aspect of respect and rapport relates to how the teacher responds to students and how the students are permitted to treat one another. Patterns of interactions are critical to the overall tone of the class. In a respectful environment, all students feel valued and safe.

*This teacher places importance on giving the student the tools, words and gestures they need to be able to interact with each other and with the teaching staff. The music adds a friendly safe vibe to the environment. The repetition enables practice within this safe and fun place.*

### Component 3a: COMMUNICATING WITH STUDENTS

Teachers communicate with students for several independent but related purposes. First they convey that teaching and learning are purposeful activities; they make that purpose clear to the students. They also provide clear directions for classroom activities, so the students know what it is they are to do. When they present concepts and information, those presentations are made with accuracy, clarity and imagination. When appropriate to the lesson, skilled teachers embellish their explanations with analogies or metaphors, linking them to students' interest and prior knowledge. Teachers occasionally withhold information from students (for example, in an inquiry science lesson) to encourage them to think on their own, but what information they do convey is accurate and reflects deep understanding. And the teacher's use of language is vivid, rich, and error-free, affording the opportunity for students to hear language well used and to extend their own vocabularies. Teacher presents complex concepts in ways that provide scaffolding and access to students.

*This teacher adds imagination, images, interactive activities, a repertoire of gestures and actions to the existing songs. The use of the learned social language is practiced in settings outside the classroom, giving the learned skill a great sense of purpose. The activities are structured so less and less teacher support and prompting is required for students to participate. Pulling back the prompts takes the learning to another level, and the skills become part of the students' repertoire to participate and*

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## Pocket PD No. 6

# WHAT'S YOUR HOOK?

## Are your students involved in the learning process?

Universal Design for Learning focuses on the varied ways information should be presented so interpretation by all kinds of learners is possible. In addition, UDL emphasizes the alternate ways one might engage and explore information as well as re-tell and explain what they have learned. Music is an excellent example of an alternative way to engage with information. You will watch 2 videos that will illustrate the power of music in combination with other instructional supports. Music is an option for representing, engaging and expressing information.



Music is a well-known hook for learning information. Ask anyone in advertising! It is especially great for learning words and phrases, as well as for language expansion. The saliency music etches the words into memory. Songs are often used in the facilitation of second language acquisition. Response to music and song play is evidenced developmentally in children as a positive method to ensure engagement. There is a passive learning experience that happens when things are set to music. The brain absorbs them through patterning the tune. It is shocking the amount of lyrics or words to a TV commercial that you actually remember without ever trying to learn them.

While this method of remembering helps everyone it is particularly successful with students on the Autism spectrum. The concepts for social language and the appropriate language behaviors that are challenging for them to learn and apply can be approached through music. We can use a SINGING BEHAVIOR to foster strong LANGUAGE BEHAVIORS.

The Tech Team from D75 worked with the "JEREMY PLAYS GUITAR" team to use their music program to support our students in the learning of appropriate and effective social language. To make the information more accessible for children, we adjusted the complexity of the information as well as reduced the rate of the songs. We capitalized on repetition to enhance easy retrieval. We created engaging activities to support and reinforce the target language and created a parent piece to provide a way for the students to practice and generalize these important language skills into more than one setting.

There are two ways to approach using music to teach concepts. The first would be to begin with a passive approach by engaging in just the song play. You can start with just listening to the songs while getting ready for morning meeting. Then add watching the songs on the smart board so there is a visual association that is developed. THEN when the songs and the words are familiar, you can target specific words and phrases you want to target, engage in the related activities, and look to elicit practice using these words in real time throughout the day.

OR you can start by introducing the concepts, teach each one, follow them with activities to practice the concept and use the music and the reinforcement. Either method works. Your teaching style will dictate what feels right for you.

The take away from this PD will be to see and feel the power of music to learn new information. Think about ways you can use music to enhance your instruction and provide practice of target skills and information.

Think about ways you can use music to enhance your instruction and provide practice of target skills and information. In addition if the "Use Your Words" program is right for your students you can download the songs and some activities from the D75 website ([http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/District75/Departments/Techology/AssistiveAdaptive/at\\_forms.htm](http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/District75/Departments/Techology/AssistiveAdaptive/at_forms.htm) – bottom of the page) or purchase the program through Rock-U-cation. (<http://jeremyplaysguitar.com/classes>) Note: Regardless of how you acquire this program Jeremy will come to your site and perform for your kids free of charge upon request.

Listed here are **Target Points** to watch for during the video. Please take a minute to read through the list first, and then mark the items and take notes as you see them occur in the video.

**Write notes on a separate sheet.**

*The Target Points in blue text will be explored in detail.*

### TARGET POINTS to watch for...

- Notice your physical response to the songs
- There is a high level of Engagement
- There is something to do physically which increases engagement of the students
- Notice the alternate ways to express information

### NOW LET'S WATCH the VIDEOS!



### Lyrical Language with Jeremy Plays Guitar: USE YOUR WORDS and SAY HELLO

Vimeo 1: <http://vimeo.com/24623989>

Vimeo 2: <http://vimeo.com/24623738>

## TEACHING POINTS!

### Notice your physical response to the songs

Listening to constructive music like "Jeremy Plays Guitar" often elicits a positive physical response. There is significant research that music plays a major role in the ability to manage pain, reduce anxiety, improve healing and recovery, reduce aggressive behaviors, etc. That said, it makes perfect sense to utilize music in the instructional setting. Music will increase the positive outlook on tasks at hand, it will improve the overall spirit of the classroom environment, it will nurture the emotional well-being of the students, it can build community, and it can be a hook to learning target information.

- How can you incorporate the use of music into the school day that would have a positive effect on learning outcomes?

**COMMENTS from the GROUP?**

### There is a high level of Engagement

When you watch this video you can see the high level of engagement of the students. The music helps the students that struggle physically and assists to move their bodies more fluidly. In addition, the music unifies the group and provides them the gestures and the words to improve how they communicate important social messages. Engagement is the name of the game in teaching!

The students we teach are born into a highly interactive world. Everything they do for fun has an immediate response and is highly interactive. They are successful learners when they interact with the instructional materials. If a teacher is instructing the group and they are not provided with tangible ways to be involved in the lesson, then the lesson will not stick with them. All teachers should ask themselves: Are my students engaged in this lesson, and are they able to interact with the materials?

- What can I do to create more opportunities for the students in my class to become actively engaged in learning?

**COMMENTS from the GROUP?**