



**YOUTH
MUSIC**



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Future Sounds - Case Study – Student M @ Rosewood

Through our project, Future Sounds, we have worked in partnership with Rosewood Free School in Southampton. One of our outcomes is to improve improvisation and songwriting skills of children and young people in challenging circumstances.

In working with young people with Profound Multiple Learning Difficulties we have seen our participants' musical skills and self-expression flourish as through our delivery we found appropriate outlets, resources and forms of interaction.

A way that we have evidenced this has been through the creation of individualised musical profiles (which have been compiled through analysing reflective notes after sessions and recording of the session footage) seeing young people demonstrate that they could engage with a wide range of instruments. We have further evidenced this through the creation of musical passports for our participants, an example of which follows:

Musical Passport - Student M, from Caterpillars, Rosewood School

Overall notes: Student M has considerable mobility and developed sensory-motor skills. That means that, unlike most of his classmates, he can move around during group sessions. Student M can move away from the main group but will nonetheless remain engaged. When focused, his interactions tend to quickly become 1:1, even in group activities.

Sensory motor engagement: Student M can hold objects for short periods of time, flick small instruments with his fingers, and bang large surfaces with his fist. These are some examples of instruments that he has played:

- Flicking: large shell-made jingles, wind chimes, small bell set
- Holding: ocean drum (with both hands, or one hand in two-part playing), beater, rainstick (with support, as Student M has less control over how he drops or puts down objects)
- Banging/hitting: large drums, cymbals

Student M can do these activities on his own within a group, but will remain more engaged if they are part of an interactive routine. For example, a facilitator can hold and slightly move a drum as he sings a song, which acknowledges when the drum is hit.

Sensory/interactive:

Moving to music: Student M has a surprisingly accurate affective perception of music, which he mostly expresses through his body movement and vocalisations. That is, he can use his body to express moods and situations. With upbeat music, he will playfully move his head from side to side, move his upper body up and down, or, when his arms are supported, he can jump. It is important to bear in mind that Student M can be fully engaged in a music session in this way, and I would suggest that body-expression/dancing, might be one of his preferred forms of engagement.

Vocalisations: Student M is very vocal, and he shows obvious signs of having participated in intensive interaction interventions. His vocalisations, as well as articulating expressions of excitement or discomfort, are key ways in which he initiates, leads, or maintains interactions. You can engage with this either through free vocalisations using a grounding instrument, or singing songs in a flexible way, changing your tune or voice tone alongside his vocalisations. You can also use an

overtone flute to imitate the general gesturality of his vocals. (NOTE: class teacher Jenny, as well as staff members from other settings, have received core training on how to use overtone flutes in vocal interaction-based activities)

Notes on Interaction and Group logistics:

- Student M loves interaction and sharing activities. If an activity includes a clear lead, that is, if it involves an adult encouraging or supporting children, he will seek to position his activity as a means for interaction with that adult, keeping moments of self-occupying group participation quite short. It is important therefore that in the preparation of group sessions there is a plan in place for Student M to have moments of 1:1 interaction with the session leader, but also to direct his attention to another member of staff, so that the session leader can have a peripheral view of the full class and support other children when necessary.
- Student M can certainly remain self-occupied with an instrument, particularly drums. As soon as he identifies an interactive intent, or he decides to initiate an interaction, he is likely to move very close to the person he is interacting with.
- Other times, Student M can move away from the main session area. This means that he has lost interest in being in that space, not necessarily that he has lost interest in music. Sometimes he re-engages spontaneously, or can be re-engaged through brief 1:1 interactions.
- If he is using his wheelchair, Student M will eventually want to come out, and can become frustrated when he is not able to (when, for instance, the sessions is in a different room and about to finish). However, staff members have a number of songs and play routines that can successfully help him control his mood, or deal with transitions when change is not happening exactly when he wants it.
- 1:1 sessions can be used to introduce Student M to new instruments, explore new activities, or engage in more in-depth vocal, movement-based, or combined, interactive play. It is, however, my recommendation that Student M mainly takes part in group sessions, as it is important for him to share his experience with other children, and handle fluid transitions between 1:1, group play, and self-occupying.

NOTE: Future Sounds is a 3 year programme supported by Youth Music to deliver music making activities for children and young people in SEN/D settings and young people at risk of offending.

Outcomes for Future Sounds:

1. *To increase the skills and awareness of music leaders, teachers and associated staff to support SEN/D young people to access music-making.*
2. *To improve the sense of wellbeing and resilience of children and young people who are engaged in the Youth Crime Prevention Scheme in Hampshire.*
3. *To improve improvisation and songwriting skills of children and young people in challenging circumstances.*
4. *To increase the number and effectiveness of partnerships that support and encourage wider engagement in music for children and young people in challenging circumstances.*
5. *To increase knowledge and skills to develop robust evidence that documents the benefits of music interventions with children and young people in challenging circumstances.*