

Introduction: Foundations for Understanding Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

This initial chapter lays essential groundwork for instrumental teachers' understanding of the subsequent ones. In this chapter, the terms 'disability' and 'Specific Learning Difficulty' are first defined and contrasted, as there is clarification of what is meant by Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Then, the causes and categories of disabilities are discussed. Contextualising statistics on SEND are consequently provided, and there is discussion of where music participants are to be found, including within educational settings. The notion of an additional need is then introduced. The chapter subsequently turns to the medical and social models of disability to explain how our thinking on education, music education and music in society has changed towards a more socially just, inclusive view. This is particularly germane given most instrumental teachers will champion the wide-ranging benefits of music and notion of music for all. Building on this, attention is turned to apt terminology to describe people with disabilities. Pondering terms is significant for the instrumental teacher both to communicate with learners and their caregivers without causing offence, and to understand their lives and the issues within them. Throughout this book, all instances of 'parent' should be read as 'parent or guardian', reflecting the range of caregivers involved in supporting a learner. Unsurprisingly, teaching learners with SEND presents challenges too, but also some very exciting prospects, not least for the instrumental teacher's development. The chapter culminates by considering this. Threaded into the overall discussion are some general considerations for the instrumental teacher in shaping his or her future practices and thinking. As with the other chapters, several reflective questions are presented at its end to encourage the reader's contemplation. Further reading is also suggested for those who wish to pursue topics in greater depth.

who is congenitally blind and learned to read music braille as a child (see Chapter 4) and, on the other, a stave notation reader who loses his or her sight in midlife. Learning music braille is neither quick nor easy. Aside from the potential for a disability to be congenital and lifelong, or to occur at a later point, it can also be *episodic*, as in some mental health conditions. A person may find him- or herself swinging between good and poor mental wellbeing dependent on medical interventions and pressures in life. This might affect the regularity of his or her instrumental lessons, changing their aims, or even envisioning them as respite and a helpful way to reduce pressures.

Table 1 provides a review of the disability causes and categories.

Table 1. Causes and categories of disabilities

<i>Causes</i>	<i>Discrete or interacting?</i>
Genetic	Genes and hereditary characteristics
Environmental	Injury, disease, infection
Ageing	Ageing, deterioration of the body
<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Mysterious causes</i>
<i>Categories</i>	<i>Episodic or lifelong? Congenital or appearing later in life? Obvious, hidden or undiagnosed?</i>
Sensory	About the senses of hearing, vision or touch
Physical	About the use of a body part, including the musculoskeletal and respiratory systems (or the absence or incomplete development of a body part)
Neurological	About the nervous system (brain, spinal cord and nerves) with potential effects, including on bodily movement or muscular weakness, issues with sensitivity or numbness, or on speech and breathing

Figure 2. Sheila Oglethorpe's (2002) aid to navigating systems applied to Johann Sebastian Bach, Prelude in C major, BWV 846

The image shows a musical score for Johann Sebastian Bach's Prelude in C major, BWV 846. The score is written for piano and consists of two systems. The first system is divided into two measures. The second system is divided into two measures, with a '3' above the first measure. Annotations include 'highlighter colour 1' and 'colour 2' above the first system, and 'colour 3' above the second system. The annotations indicate specific areas of the score that are highlighted in grey in the original image.

Some considerations for the instrumental teacher (interim summary):

- *Appreciate* the complexity of neurodiversity with dyslexia representing a vast catalogue of widely varying conditions, possible comorbidities and experiences. Thus, the effectiveness of any strategy rests on the individual learner's needs. It is important to innovate, try ideas, discuss their usefulness with learners and constantly monitor.
- *Seek* to understand the learner's score-reading strategies with 'how', 'what' and 'why' reflective questioning. This assumes they are verbal, without comorbid ASD or intellectual disabilities significantly impacting communication. Never take for granted that learners have understood ideas and concepts, or that their strategy matches yours.
- *Enlarge* scores, but only if it is agreed this is helpful.
- *Model* and involve the learner in aural learning. Trial addressing the material in this way first with beginners, then address the note names, that is, if music reading is a viable or important enterprise.