Exceptional children belong in music classrooms. Music ensemble directors need to overcome complex challenges to meet the goal of inclusion, because ensembles often contain a mixture of ages, grades, social and intellectual development stages, musical skills, and a wide variety of diverse learning needs. This study focuses on how a choral ensemble director may create an inclusive environment for students on the Autism Spectrum.

This study reviewed current research on creating inclusive rehearsal environments. Analysis revealed varied methods for differentiation including modified/adapted scores that make use of color-coding, personalized parts, and symbolic notation; choral ensemble formats, such as self-contained choirs, partner choirs, and mainstream choirs; and student-centered instruction using project-based learning. In conclusion, modifications and adaptations can be made to the components of instruction (content, process, product, affect, and environment) in order to differentiate instruction to best meet individual student’s readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Individualized instruction can be crucial for the success of a student on the spectrum participating in a choral ensemble.

**DESCRIPTION OF INSTRUCTION**

**Techniques for Inclusion**
- Differentiation - Modifications and adaptations made to individualize education
- Modification - Alteration to the learning expectation
- Adaptation - Alterations to the learning process

**Manipulatable Components of Instruction**
- Content - What the student is expected to be able to know, understand, or do
- Process - How the content is taught
  - Sight-reading the rhythm, tapping the rhythm, or learning aurally by rote
  - Individually, small groups, or large group
- Product - Assessment used to measure learning
  - Written exam
  - Video submission
  - Oral response
- Affect - Student’s attitude and emotions towards learning
  - Positivity from the teacher
  - Placed among helpful students
- Environment - Where the learning happens
  - Minimizing distracting stimuli (eg. noisy fan, blinking light, etc.)
  - Placing a student next to a teacher or model student

**Student Factors**
- Readiness - Preparation level for new content
- Interests - Subjects of passion
- Learning Profile - The ways the student learns best

**PRACTICAL DIFFERENTIATION**

**Types of Ensembles**
- Self-contained choir - An exclusive ensemble for students with special needs
- Partner choirs - An ensemble in which students with special needs are partnered with neurotypical "buddies"
- Mainstream choir - Students with special needs participate in the "standard" school choir among neurotypical students
- Auditioned choir - A choir exclusive to those selected; likely a more musically elite mainstream choir

**Modified/Adapted Scores**
- Personalized part
- Transcribed copy of the music into a score with less extraneous information
- Use of color coding for pitches, rhythms, types of information, etc.

**Inclusion**
- Recent legislative push for inclusion in the Least
- Restrictive Environment appropriate for the individual
- Utilization of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)
- Current research focuses on inclusion in music primarily at the elementary school level

**REFERENCES**


Tomlinson, Carol A. (2014) *The differentiated classroom: responding to the needs of all learners* (2nd ed.). Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.