

Teaching music to typical children and children with disabilities

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is mainly to present simple and practical suggestions and advice, so that the choir at the Extended All-Day School can become a source of joy, creativity, and hope for the music teacher and the young student-choristers, for both regular students and students with disabilities. Therefore, it will mention, on the one hand, some points the music teacher should pay attention to in their teaching so that the student choir can produce a high-quality musical performance, and on the other hand, it will mention which points the teacher should consider from the perspective of their students. Regarding the first aspect, for example, the teacher can focus on the type of songs they will teach the students. Certainly, these should be children's songs with suitable, moral lyrics. From the students' perspective, the choir teacher should, for instance, keep in mind that in the younger grades of elementary school, the lungs are still forming, so let him not burden these choristers with unnecessary-disproportionate vocal weights. Some suggestions will also be mentioned, how the music teacher will handle students with disabilities. What he should know, how he should talk to them. Certainly, one of the first things she needs to know about disability is her two models: According to the social model of disability, "disability" is constructed within the bosom of society. The social model of disability contrasts with the so-called medical model of disability. According to the medical model of disability, a "disability" is a health condition that is examined by medical personnel. People with disabilities are thought to be different compared to what is called "normal" or are abnormal. "Disability" is considered a problem of the individual. From the point of view of the medical model, a person with a disability needs to be "corrected" or cured.

Keywords: Choir, Music, Voice, Teaching, Disability.

1. Introduction

In the main part, in the first subsection, there will be a discussion about the type and repertoire of songs that the music teacher will teach the students in their children's choir. The preparation -both "external" and "internal"- and other dimensions of song analysis that the teacher needs to pay attention to (arrangements, emotions, cross-curricular aspects) will be explained. To reinforce these theories, sample songs will be presented as tools. Additionally, there will be reflections on renewing the choir's repertoire.

In the second subsection, topics related to the conductor's training and the choir's structure and coordination will be discussed, i.e., how the choir will be set up and where the students will be able to stand. It is also worth discussing ideas regarding the external appearance of a children's or school choir, such as the students' attire, the conductor's outfit, or other details like folders for the songs.

In the third subsection, some suggestions will be made regarding learning musical instruments. An attempt will also be made to draw a connection between this learning of instruments and orchestra and choir. That is, from the vocal ensembles of the first part, we will move, in the second part, mainly to instrumental ensembles. While in the first and second subsections the dominant instrument will be the human voice, in the third subsection the means of producing musical sound will be any musical instrument.

In the fourth subsection, there will be a mention of teaching music to children with disabilities.



In conclusion, to wrap things up, a connection will be made between all these subsections.

2. Main part

2.1. Implementation details of the teaching proposal

The teaching proposal is aimed at student-choir members, boys and girls, aged six to twelve. Their number varies depending on how many students stay in the Extended Day Program, from 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. The teaching proposal covers an entire year because if the teacher-conductor is a substitute, they may be working at another school the following year.

2.2. Goals and objectives

The goals and objectives of this teaching proposal for school choirs in the extended all-day school program are:

From the conductor's perspective:

- To be able to manage the choirs of the Extended All-Day Program quickly and efficiently.
- To become aware of the aspects that can enhance a school choir and to recognize what can undermine it, so they can avoid those points.

From the choir members' perspective:

- To feel immense joy and creativity through their participation in school choirs.
- Also, to help students develop social skills and teamwork.

2.3. Methodology

The methodology that will be followed is the analysis of musical works -with three case studies- the reflections, the conductor's training and the setup of the choir, the learning of musical instruments, and the accompaniment of the choir.

- Educational or other related material (format, content, teaching use)
- The theory of conducting children's choirs will be used, along with song lyrics and history, the song sheet music, and audiovisual material (that is, videos and photos of a school choir).

2.4. Teaching Steps/Presentation of activities

The sequence of teaching steps is:

- Subunit 1 (1st case study, 2nd case study, 3rd case study).
- Considerations of the 1st subunit.
- Subunit 2.
- Subunit 3.
- Subunit 4.
- Evaluation-conclusions.

2.5. Subsection 1st

In this subsection, we will focus on the analysis of musical works. We will start with a subcategory of musical analysis, the "internal preparation". By the term "internal preparation" of the songs that are to be given to the children's-school choir of the Extended, All-Day program, we mean that the music teacher must have read the lyrics of the songs very carefully in advance and extracted their moral and educational messages. It is extremely important that songs with quality lyrics are given to the school choir. We all want school choirs to be models



of virtues, moral values, and culture. We all want school choirs to be carriers of hope and optimism.

By the term “internal preparation” of the songs, we also mean that for some songs their history is not known, that is, their origin, the reason they were written, the inspiration behind the lyricist or composer's work, the causes or motives that were written or the background behind the composer-lyricist collaboration.

So, in such cases, in the absence of historical context, the teacher will rely solely on the lyrics. They will work only with “internal preparation”. Like in the following case, in the song, “the bicycle”:

2.5.1. Case Study 1: Song by Kostas Makedonas, 1996

*“I take a bicycle and set off for the impossible
I had my dream, my bicycle
And everything felt right
I turned sixteen and everything was okay
I had a life ahead of me
My bicycle was always mine
And it took me very far
Into the Sahara like the deepest longing
It led me beyond joy
And now in the race again from the start
Pedal hard so the others catch up too
Let's go for proper cycling...”*

We can see from the lyrics that this song does not contain immorality, but purity. Therefore, it is a suitable song to be given to a children's-school choir (<https://youtu.be/U6WCqwS8Y24?is=tOQZBoV7re6Emoqp>).

For example, this song, “The Bicycle”, was chosen by the Children's Music Workshop of Gytheio, with conductor Chrysa Mandrou, at the 5th Pan-Peloponnesian Festival of student-children's choirs.

Specifically, we observe in the lyrics the different phases of the cyclist-protagonist. The story develops from childhood to adulthood. This song is an opportunity to boost the self-esteem of choirs who are not good at general education subjects, are delinquent, or have learning difficulties. It is a valuable opportunity, because on one hand all these sensitive categories of students mentioned will sing, possibly beautifully -also the choir and the song are arts that deeply touch the soul- on the other hand, all these categories of students engage with cycling, with particular skill, so this is the chance to start a discussion of understanding between student and teacher.

2.5.2. 2nd case study: Drapetsona

In the second case study, we will focus on another subcategory of music analysis, the “external preparation”. By “external preparation”, we mean that in addition to “internal preparation”, the teacher can also rely on the context of the song, that is, its history.

In contrast, with “the bicycle”, for example in the song “Drapetsona”, <https://youtu.be/t4mKG9GtDcsis=paDtZU0e3DFHcv1B> -which, although it is suggested to be taught in secondary school or even later, this exercise of musical education should start from primary school, which is why we present it in this study, along with other teaching proposals



for primary school- we know its history. Theodorakis himself has narrated how the song was written:

“Tasos Leivaditis, I remember -recounts Mikis Theodorakis- had come to my house in Nea Smyrni and had listened to part of a piano concerto that I had started writing.

He liked it a lot, he added lyrics to the music, and that’s how we wrote ‘My Mother and Panagia’.

To release it on a record, however, we had to write another song, to ‘pair it’, because at that time records were small, with each having two songs. My brother suggested that I write a song about the events. At that time, the government wanted to force refugees out of their shanties in Drapetsona, without giving them compensation. For them, it was a fight for survival, a life-or-death struggle, as bulldozers came and tore their houses down”.

The teacher could find many opportunities, after this short autobiography of Mikis Theodorakis, to make music teaching more interesting and richer in the Extended Full-Day program, while also teaching music history to his students.

2.5.3. 3rd case study: The Little Lemon (image 1). Other dimensions of analysis (adaptations, senses, cross-curricular links)

Other dimensions of analyzing and working with songs include adaptations, cultivating the senses, and cross-curricular connections. It is very important for the music teacher to try song adaptations whenever and wherever needed. For example, the song “The Little Lemon”. From all these lyrics that were included in the original version of the song -which maybe were more suitable for adults- some were selected to create a very pleasant, charming song. The lyrics included in the adapted song are: “Le mo re le mo na ki mi ro tha to, le mo na ki mi ro tha to ki ap to pe ri vo li a fra to”. It is one of the songs that Meligopoulou (2025) used to teach prospective conductors of children’s and school choirs in the training program: “Conducting Vocal and Instrumental Ensembles in Formal and Non-Formal Education. Laboratory Applications-Practical Training-Artistic Observation”.

By adapting the song “Lemon Little”, students are given the chance to develop their senses if “Lemon Little” is used cross-curricularly. That is, during the teaching of the song, the knowledge from the Environmental Studies lesson (ecology, plants) can also be used. The music teacher, along with their students, could visit lemon trees and pick lemons. They can smell them or send them to be used for other purposes, in food or as antiseptics.

Another example of a song that has nature as its theme, and could also be used in an interdisciplinary way, is “Myrtia, lyrics: Nikos Gatsos, music: Mikis Theodorakis”. Or the song “I planted a lemon tree, lyrics-music: Takis Panagopoulos”. The song “I planted a lemon tree” is suitable for two more reasons. On one hand, to teach students the tsamiko rhythm, and on the other hand, to teach the song in an interdisciplinary way with Religion or Language or History, using the line “our wedding wreath” as an opportunity, or a comparison could be made with.



for a bad-singing student to stand next to a good singer. Indirectly, it leads to the conclusion that it's not good to exclude some students from the school choir. Also, the progress of the choir members will be boosted by their participation in many student-school festivals, like, for example, the Pan-Peloponnesian Festival.

In order to succeed and coordinate all the above, it's good for the conductor to undergo training. For example, in the two-day seminars organized by the University of the Aegean, on the topic: "Conducting Vocal and Instrumental Ensembles in School Education". There, the conductor will be trained in leading the choir and orchestra for the school environment. Additionally, they might even hear things they had never imagined! Like the conductor's attire. In other words, the conductor shouldn't dress excessively for the concert, so that all the attention isn't drawn, for example, to their watch, hair, or shoes.

2.7. Subsection 3rd

As mentioned in the summary, to the structure of the previous, "old" full-day program -with lunch, play and study- various new and worthwhile activities were added, including choir and learning musical instruments! Usually, schools have some wooden musical instruments, percussion or wind instruments, tambourines or maracas or membrane phones or flutes or metallophones, so a cute orchestra can be created, which can play simple rhythms or musical patterns or improvisations. In case a school does not have them, a full-day school can create its own musical instruments! With simple materials, as many children in Africa are used to. For example, a maraca can be created by filling an empty water bottle with pebbles!

In this way, by creating a school orchestra, the school choir will be upgraded, because it will have a musical companion, at festivals, its orchestra.

For a conductor to be able to form an orchestra where students will play music and everyone, the conductor and the students, will sing at the same time, the conductor himself must have been taught something like this. For example, such an opportunity was offered by the Erasmus+ program, BIP Driving Change: Empowering Urban Communities through Physical-Based Outdoor Activities, Next-Gen Active Tourism and Entrepreneurship, in the section: percussion workshop: rhythm, coordination and social cohesion.

2.8. Subsection 4th

2.8.1. The two models of disability management

In any case, the first things that the music teacher should know about disability are, on the one hand, the theoretical and historical context of disability and, on the other hand, the two models of its management.

- The theoretical and historical framework of disability.
- The relationship between society and disability.

2.8.2. Historical background (society and disability)

Spyros Stavrianopoulos (Tsounakos, 2004) observes that: "For long periods, the image of people with disabilities in society was equated with a negative and demeaning perception, wherein disability was viewed as the individual's sole defining characteristic". His other personal elements, such as personality, spirituality, emotionality, and the capacity for all kinds of creations, are underestimated and often ignored. But in this way, the image of a person physically and socially incapable, without characteristics and identity, is imprinted. This image has haunted people with disabilities since ancient times and deeply threatens social cohesion.

It is painful, however, that sometimes this image is reproduced by the individuals who direct or regulate our social perception and course. For example, almost all of us have seen in



theatrical scenes, for the sake of easy laughter, the disabled appear as ridiculous figures, thus maintaining a distorting image.

Furthermore, perhaps few people know that Pierre De Coubertin, in the treaty to revive the Olympic Games, banned the participation of “women and the weak”, that is, people with disabilities.

2.8.3. Recent years (society and disability)

Chiotis (2017) explains to us, in his article, what is happening in Greek society with people with disabilities. He also points out what the goal of society should be:

“Disability is defined as the imperfection of a person, whether physical or mental.

Disability can be permanent or temporary. Permanent disability is that which cannot be fully cured. In temporary disability, the person can, through various therapeutic means, through prenatal checks, strict adherence to the Code of Obstetrics and Gynecology and occupational safety regulations, etc.

‘A social reflex should be the information and education of society, but also of disabled people, with the aim of a good coexistence’”.

Disability can be congenital, but also acquired, e.g. following an accident, stroke, malignancy.

“We are all potential candidates for permanent or temporary disability”.

Motor disability can originate from the musculoskeletal system, from the peripheral or central nervous system. It can also be combined with another disability such as blindness or mental retardation.

In terms of physiology and anatomy, physical disability presents the same characteristics worldwide. However, the way a physical disability manifests is shaped by the culture of the society in which the disabled person lives.

The quality of daily life for a person with a physical disability in Greece is clearly inferior to that of the same individual living in Scandinavia.

“The person with a mobility disability requires the support of society because he wants to be treated as an equal”.

The difference focuses on the ability of society to adapt to the special needs of the person with a mobility disability and to provide him with the fulfillment of his handicap.

2.8.4. Social Environment

“Social disadvantage is the expression of the disadvantages of a person with a disability where they are shaped by social behavior”.

Most of the limitations imposed on people with disabilities are not a natural or inevitable consequence of their disability but are the result of a social environment that fails to listen to the needs of specific individuals.

The problems identified in Greek society regarding the integration of individuals with mobility impairments include a lack of access to the welfare state, healthcare, psychological support, and education. Furthermore, the inability to access the labor market leads to financial difficulties that negatively impact one’s social standing.

“The solution to the problem of social disadvantage of the disabled person is the adaptation of society to the particularities of the disabled person”.

It is necessary to register people with mobility disabilities, by regions, districts and throughout the country, with qualitative and topographical characteristics. Then, the registration of their needs, and considering the financial capacity of the welfare state, to submit a plan for the relief and promotion of social disadvantage.



The role of social groups (NGOs, associations and unions) is important, which with their flexible presence can cover individual weaknesses of the welfare state.

“For bureaucrats, the alibi for the inadequacy of the welfare state is the cost. It is the lack of culture and indifference to fellow human beings”.

2.8.5. The two models of disability management

“Today it is commonly accepted that society itself contributes to the development of disability and the creation of people with disabilities” (Konsolas et al., 2009: 305-306). Vygotsky had already argued that, despite the organic origin of disabilities, disability and the profile of the special individual are shaped by the consequences of these disabilities within a given social context (Kozulin, 1990).

The social model of disability is directly related to all the above. Eleni Tombea -drawing her information from the online source, <https://pwd.org.au/resources/disability-info-> in her article below, also explains to us very clearly what the social model of disability is. She also explains to us how it differs from the medical model of disability:

“According to the social model of disability (figure 2), ‘disability’ is constructed within society. The social model of disability contrasts with the so-called medical model of disability. According to the medical model of disability, ‘disability’ is a health condition that is examined by medical personnel. People with disabilities are believed to be different from what is called ‘normal’ or abnormal. ‘Disability’ is considered a problem of the individual. From the perspective of the medical model, a person with a disability needs to be ‘fixed’ or cured”.

2.9. The role of the media in shaping the social model of disability management

2.9.1. The relationship of the media with society

This subsection will study the impact that the media have on the social identity of their recipients.

“Any discussion of the media must be aware that, before anything else, the media are tools for the spread and deeper penetration of the values of the socio-economic system they represent into people’s daily lives. Since the media exist within the context of a consumer society, the greatest effect resulting from their rapid spread is the rapid spread of the culture and values of the consumer society, exactly as Baudrillard describes it” (Ntavou, 2005: 13).

Antonopoulou (2008: 36-37) explains precisely the effect of each media, separately, namely television, the press (newspapers, magazines), and radio.

“Television is the medium that makes the most of its emotional potential (appeal to emotions, feelings) through the use of image, sound and movement and at the same time displays a high speed of message diffusion, that is, it has the ability to quickly send the message to a wide audience. The disadvantage of television is that, in relation to other media (newspapers, radio), it displays a lower reliability index, although it continues to record high satisfaction rates on the part of the television audience. On the contrary, the press has the advantage of being chosen by the public that reads newspapers or magazines, element that reflects the perception of the specific audience for the credibility of the message. Printed media are mainly addressed to the logical processes of the reader, that is, to the ability to process and analyze the message. Radio, moreover, despite showing a high speed of diffusion, lacks the ability to use image and movement and, therefore, is called upon to use other types of communication systems and techniques in order to attract attention to its message and stimulate the emotional perception of the listener (e.g., good sound design, musical score, sound effects, humor, etc.). However, it is considered a reliable media outlet and offers very high satisfaction rates to its audience.



Another factor influencing public attitudes toward the media is the location where the medium is consumed relative to the audience. The concept of ‘spatial positioning’ emphasizes the place where the recipient typically receives the message. Radio is primarily listened to at home, although in recent years there has been a significant rise in the number of people listening to it in their cars. The same applies to newspapers, which are increasingly read outside the home- such as at the workplace, during breaks, or while commuting. Finally, television reaches the consumer of the message when they are relaxing at home or elsewhere, thereby making the reception of the message’s emotional element more effective. Thus, regarding the parameter of placement, television holds an advantage over other media. Finally, television reaches the consumer of the message when they are relaxing at home or elsewhere, thereby making the reception of the message’s emotional element more effective. Thus, regarding the parameter of placement, television holds an advantage over other media”.

Lawrence (2003: 358) explains this dominance of television: *“In our era, with 24-hour national and local sports channels, a fan -instead of attending just one or two sporting events a week- can watch dozens of events over the course of a weekend or even during the week. Furthermore, with the growth of multi-channel satellite television, that fan can choose from numerous live sporting events, regardless of when the matches take place”.*

2.9.2. Year 2003: European Conference on “Media and Disability”

On June 13-14, 2003, a European conference titled “Media and Disability” was held (2011, Disabled.gr). This conference took place within the framework of the European Year of People with Disabilities and the Greek Presidency of the European Union. It was organized by the Ministry of Health and Welfare, the European Commission, the European Disability Forum, and the National Confederation of Disabled People. Approximately 300 delegates participated, representing both organizations of people with disabilities and media professionals from the radio and television sectors.

The conference participants set specific goals and stated that they would:

- Promote changes in the media to improve the image and foster the social inclusion of people with disabilities.
- Strengthen the presence of people with disabilities across all sectors.
- Increase the visibility of disability-related issues concerning people with disabilities and their families.
- Promote a positive image of people with disabilities -one did not base on charity or a medical approach- and avoid negative stereotypes.
- Encourage close cooperation between organizations representing people with disabilities and the media.
- They will increase the number of people with disabilities employed in the media, particularly as professionals.
- They will ensure accessibility to media services for people with disabilities. They will ensure accessibility to the physical environment.

2.9.3. The Year 2006: The Journalism Guide

The aforementioned 2003 conference, along with the “International Two-Day Seminar on Persons with Disabilities and the Media” held in June 2006, played a decisive role in the creation of a journalism guide defining the relationship between the media and the social model of disability. This initiative arose from a pressing need -among other factors- to compile a language guide that would bring together key concepts and specialized terminology regarding persons with disabilities. The project was realized with the contribution of journalist



Antonis Skordilis, who has long been engaged in covering and documenting specialized issues related to disability.

The General Secretariat for Communication and Information undertook the organization of this initiative, laying the groundwork for a dialogue on how people with disabilities -and disability issues in general- are portrayed by the mass media.

2.10. The social model of disability management regarding intellectual disabilities

Savvidou's report (2014: 2) states that: *"People with intellectual disabilities constitute a particularly heterogeneous population group, exhibiting significant variations regarding - among other factors- the degree and nature of their specific needs and abilities. By definition, individuals with intellectual disabilities are those whose capacity to perceive, evaluate, and communicate information, as well as their ability to adapt to events and situations, is -or is perceived to be- impaired relative to that of other individuals".*

This definition is accepted within the framework of the "social" model of disability-an approach that views "disability" as a term reflecting not only the functional and personal characteristics of the individual concerned but also society's obligation to address the needs of its members. People with intellectual disabilities constitute one of the most vulnerable and socially excluded population groups; their quality of life is decisively determined by the social support and protection framework they receive.

It is emphasized that individuals with "mental impairments" fall within the protective framework of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. According to Article 1 of the Convention, "...People with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others".

The medical model of disability focuses on what a person cannot do and what they cannot be.

The social model views "disability" as the result of the interaction between people living with disabilities and an environment characterized by physical, behavioral, communicative, and social barriers. Consequently, it asserts that the physical, behavioral, communicative, and social environment must change to enable people living with disabilities to participate in society on an equal basis with others.

The definition of the social model is best summarized in the definition by Disabled People's International (a network of national organizations or assemblies of people with disabilities): "The loss or limitation of opportunities to participate in normal community life on an equal basis with others, due to physical or social barriers".

The social model approach does not deny the reality of disability, nor its impact on the individual. However, it challenges the physical, behavioral, communicational, and social environment to accept disability as an expected part of human diversity.

The social model aims to change society to accept people living with disabilities and does not aim to change individuals with disabilities to be accepted by society. It supports the view that people with disabilities have the right to fully participate as citizens on an equal basis with others.

The social model of disability is now the internationally recognized way of approaching and dealing with "disability". The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) marks the official paradigm shift in attitudes towards people with disabilities and in approaches regarding disability rights claims.



People with disabilities are not “objects” of charity, healthcare, or social protection, but “subjects” with rights, capable of claiming those rights, able to make decisions about their own lives based on their free and informed consent, and to be active members of society.

Therefore, in this context:

- Impairment is a medical condition that leads to disability, whereas disability is the result of the interaction between people living with impairments and barriers in the physical, behavioral, communicative, and social environments.
- The points Eleni Tombea explained to us regarding the social model of disability can be summarized in Figure 2.

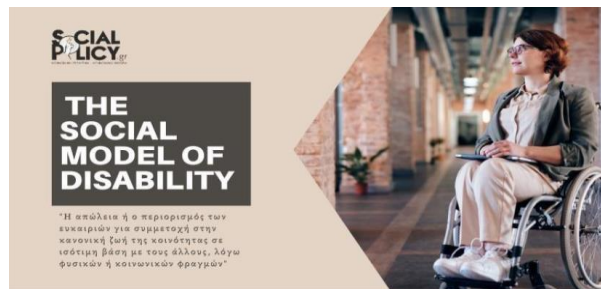


Figure 2. The distinct approach to disability according to the social model

In his article titled “Injury, Functional Impairment, Disability, and Their Impact on Quality of Life: Key Parameters”, orthopedic surgeon Konstantinos D. Theologou (2015) also seeks to explain the difference between the two models of perceiving disability -the medical model and the social model” by presenting an illustration (Figure 3) that clearly delineates these differences.

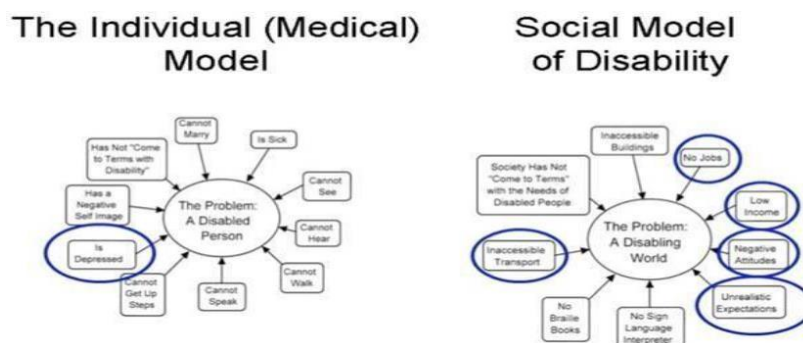


Figure 3. Differences between the two models of disability perception

In the figure above, we observe that the creator has highlighted or circled specific aspects of both the medical and social models. Regarding the medical model, the focus is on the depression experienced by the disabled individual. Regarding the social model, the following points are emphasized: “inaccessible transport, low income, negative attitudes, lack of employment, and unrealistic expectations”. All the situations represent social problems that the welfare state, the government, or local municipalities must help resolve, ensuring that individuals with disabilities do not feel excluded.

2.11. Specialized disability-related terminology

The second thing a music educator needs to know regarding disability concerns the specialized vocabulary and expressions to use when speaking with children with disabilities:



The educator should therefore bear in mind that the European Conference on “Media and Disability” (held in 2003) and the “International Conference on Persons with Disabilities and the Media” (June 2006) contributed decisively to the creation of a journalistic guide that defines the relationship between the media and the social model of disability. Given that, among other things, an urgent need arose to compile a language guide bringing together key concepts and specialized terminology regarding persons with disabilities. This initiative was realized with the contribution of journalist Antonis Skordilis, who has long been engaged in covering and documenting specialized issues related to disability. The General Secretariat for Communication and Information undertook the organization of this initiative, laying the groundwork for a dialogue on how people with disabilities -and disability issues in general- are portrayed by the mass media.

Additionally, educators may wish to keep in mind the quick-reference guidelines condensed and simplified by Paralympian Sakis Kostaris, Public Relations Officer for the Hellenic Paralympic Committee:

When conversing with, interviewing, or interacting with a person with a disability, it is useful to know that:

- You should mention the person first and the disability second (e.g., “Mr. X, who has quadriplegia”, rather than “the quadriplegic Mr. X”).
- Act naturally; Do not “monitor” your every word or movement for fear of making a mistake. Do not feel awkward about using expressions such as “we’ll see” when speaking to a visually impaired person, or “it’s a five-minute walk away” when speaking to a wheelchair user.
- Under no circumstances should you use emotionally charged language, such as “tragic”, “victim”, or “confined to a wheelchair”. Completely avoid superlatives or grand labels like “heroes of life”, people with extraordinary abilities”, and the like.
- Do not rush to assist a person with a disability without first asking if your help is needed. It is perfectly acceptable to help, and if it is required, you will be given instructions.
- Address the person with a disability directly when speaking to them, rather than, for example, their companion or interpreter.
- Speak in a normal tone of voice; Avoid using simplified or condescending language, as if you were speaking to a child.
- Do not show signs of nervousness or impatience. Be patient when people with disabilities need a little more time to act independently.

2.11.1. Types of disability

A third aspect regarding disability that a music educator should be familiar with is its various forms. A concise guide to disability -from which the educator can gather information- consists of the 10 eligible athlete categories for participation in Paralympic sports, classified according to the type of disability.

The Paralympic Committee recognizes the following 10 eligible categories of athletes with disabilities for participation in Paralympic sports (Mouzopoulos, 2025).

- Reduced muscle strength.
- Spinal cord injuries (complete or incomplete; Tetraplegia or paraplegia). Hemiplegia is defined as paralysis of one side of the body. Paraplegia is defined as paralysis of the trunk and lower limbs. Tetraplegia is defined as paralysis of the upper limbs, trunk, and lower limbs.
- Muscular dystrophy.
- Poliomyelitis (2 subcategories).



1. Non-paralytic aseptic meningitis.
2. Paralytic form of the disease.
 - And spina bifida (3 subcategories).
1. Latent form.
2. Meningocele.
3. Myelomeningocele.
 - Limitation of joint range of motion (3 subcategories).
 - Arthrogryposis (2 types). Over 400 types of the disease have been described. The two most common are listed below.
1. Type I. Patients present with hip contractures and dislocation, flat feet, knee extension, and contractures of the elbows, wrists, and fingers.
2. Type II. Presents with internal rotation of the shoulders, elbow extension, forearm pronation, wrist contractures and ulnar deviation, knee contractures, hip abduction and external rotation, and platipodia.
- Post-traumatic stiffness or stiffness following prolonged joint immobilization.
1. Limb deficiency (absence).
2. Leg length discrepancy.
3. Short stature.
4. Muscle hypertonia.
5. Ataxia.
6. Athetosis.
7. Visual impairment.
8. Cognitive (mental) function disorders.

2.11.2. Music-based movement therapy

Should the conductor decide to incorporate movements during the songs -such as sign language gestures (which are currently in vogue), clapping, other hand movements, or rhythmic foot-stomping- they should bear in mind how Saitakis (2006: 90) describes the role of sports in assisting individuals with disabilities: *“Physical activity also finds application in professional settings, as well as in the therapy and rehabilitation of individuals with motor impairments—for instance, in movement therapy, functional rehabilitation, the rehabilitation of speech and language disorders, writing, occupational therapy, etc.”.*

Therefore, Saitakis (2006: 110) concludes: *“We must emphasize that exercise is a right for everyone. For this reason, the exclusion of physically and intellectually impaired individuals from physical activities is to be condemned, given that these individuals require greater assistance”.*

Saitakis (2006: 210) adds: *“Certain simple athletic activities are particularly beneficial for children who exhibit physical weakness. However, coaches working with this group of children must exercise special care and attention, as these children often struggle with self-confidence issues and a poor self-image”.*

3. Evaluation and conclusions

The results of this study highlight the need for the conductor-educator to pay attention to various aspects during instruction -depending on the infrastructure and resources available at each school- within the framework of the new, expanded all-day school model examined in this research. It is essential to focus on students with disabilities, keeping in mind the two models of disability management, the appropriate language to use, the value of kinetic therapy, and the different types of disabilities.



The educator must attend to various aspects to ensure that the small-scale choir they have formed (Figure 4) produces a melodious, musical result while also leaving a dignified and modest impression. As conductor Mandrou (2025) observes, the educator should ensure that “the choir does not display arrogance” and that “the conductor also utilizes set poetry”.



Figure 4. A choir of young students can easily move the audience

For the choir’s overall final result, while the voices are naturally assessed and evaluated, other elements -such as orderliness, attire, smiling, and synchronization- are also taken into account. It is worth noting that few people consider what preceded the choir’s final concert: for instance, the number of grueling rehearsals held with the conductor and the choir -often under adverse conditions in the extended all-day school facilities- or the amount of “solitary” work the conductor had to put in at home.

Given all these variables, then, if a school-based all-day choir is ready for concerts, the discussion can turn to opening that choir up to the wider community-much in the same way that certain Music Schools do by performing charity concerts on a pro bono basis.

The educator must always remain hopeful, even when lacking the necessary material or financial resources. Always hopeful, even when the choir sings at the top of its lungs-a behavior which, as musicologists observe, often signals an attempt to mask certain weaknesses. The educator must always remain hopeful, for a choir is a living vocal ensemble that can be sculpted, cultivated, and molded to achieve greatness and deeply move the soul! A choir is a vital cell of culture!

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