

## **Abstract**

Researchers have examined music educators perceptions of preparedness to teach music to students with disabilities (Davila, 2013; Gfeller, Darrow, & Hedden, 1990; Grimsby, 2019; Hammel, 2001a/b; Kahn & Lewis, 2014; Ruppard, Neeper, & Dalsen, 2016; Salvador, 2010; VanWeelden & Meehan, 2016; VanWeelden & Whipple, 2014a). Researchers also have examined paraprofessionals and their roles in music settings (Causton-Theoharis & Burdick, 2008; Grimsby, 2018, 2019; Giangreco & Doyle, 2002; Giangreco, Doyle, & Suter, 2012; VanWeelden & Heath-Reynolds, 2018; Webster, et al., 2016). Findings suggest that music educators and special education professionals, such as paraprofessionals, desire collaborative planning time to communicate student learning objectives and instructional strategies. Music educators also seek professional development centered on teaching music to students with disabilities and how to work with their special education colleagues (Gfeller, Darrow, & Hedden, 1990; Grimsby, 2019; VanWeelden & Whipple, 2014a). Research on paraprofessionals in general and music education settings suggest that many paraprofessionals lack the knowledge needed to perform job responsibilities and would benefit from collaborative planning time and professional development (Causton-Theoharis & Burdick, 2008; Grimsby, 2018, 2019; Marks, Schraeder, & Levine, 1999; VanWeelden & Heath-Reynolds, 2018; Webster et al, 2010).

While two studies have examined the collaborative and instructional needs of music educators and paraprofessionals (Grimsby, 2018; VanWeelden & Heath-Reynolds, 2018) no studies examined the use of a collaborative knowledge building community (CKBC) (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2014; Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018) to address the professional development, instructional, and collaborative needs of music educators and paraprofessionals. Therefore, the purpose of this in progress study is to examine the instructional

processes, perceptions, and practices of music educators and paraprofessionals in regard to teaching music to students with disabilities. The “grand tour” question of this study is: How does a collaborative knowledge building community offer meaningful collaboration and instructional support for music educators and paraprofessionals?

The design of this study is an instrumental case study (Merriam, 1988, 1998; Stake, 1995, 2005). The case is a group of music educators and paraprofessionals in a CKBC lasting approximately five months. The issue that I am examining is the professional development and collaborative needs of music educators and paraprofessionals. I am currently collecting the following data: video recordings of all CKBC meetings, audio recordings of semi-structured interviews, participant journals, a researcher journal, in-school observations, video protocol analysis, field notes, and email. Initial interviews are completed and all CKBC are scheduled.

With the intent of developing an effective collaborative knowledge building community (CKBC) that addresses the professional development, instructional, and collaborative needs of music educators and paraprofessionals, it is my hope to initiate, develop, and sustain collaborative relationships between participants in this study. I also hope that instructional strategies and collaborative practices will emerge from this group of educators providing rich data that will influence the preparation of preservice music educators as well as impact the collaborative relationships of in-service music educators and the paraprofessionals with whom they work.

## Online Platform: Discord

Discord is a VoIP (voice over IP) application that allows individuals to communicate via texts, images, chat, and video for free. This platform was originally designed for the video gaming community but has quickly gained popularity among young adults and educators as a platform for discussion and information sharing. More information may be found at <https://discordapp.com/>.

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