

# Charlie on the MTA: Navigating Professional Development Resources for Music Educators in Teaching Students with Disabilities

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**Abstract.** *The learning profiles of public school students are becoming increasingly diverse, and today's educators require more teaching strategies than ever before. Many music educators teach every child in the school building, often in integrated classrooms. However, because they receive very little training or support for teaching with students with disabilities, music educators may find themselves struggling to reach every student.*

*Did he ever return, No he never returned, And his fate is still unlearn'd,  
He may ride forever, 'neath the streets of Boston, He's the man who never returned.*

—lyrics to “MTA,” by Jacqueline Steiner and Bess Lomax Hawes (1949)

## Introduction

One of the great things about living in Boston is that it is possible to do so without a car. Our subway system, now known as the MBTA (previously known as the MTA), reaches all parts of the Boston metropolitan area, making it easy to live and commute in this city without the expense of owning (and parking and maintaining) an automobile.

Perhaps because the subway system is so far reaching, many Boston residents who make their way every day on the subway often lament that they have a spotty understanding of their city's geography. This is also the case for individuals who live in other major metropolitan areas with highly developed public transportation systems.

They know the areas surrounding the subway stops that they frequent, but they are not familiar with how those areas are connected. They could take the subway from place to place, but they could not walk the same terrain above ground. They would have a difficult time finding parts of the city on a map, and they probably could not draw a map of more than a few blocks around a subway stop. Put another way, these city dwellers understand certain areas of their home city, but they cannot make connections or put that understanding into a larger context.

The way that these residents understand the geography of their city is an apt metaphor to describe the experience of navigating the landscape of professional development

resources available to music educators in teaching students with disabilities. There are resources and opportunities available; however, they tend to cluster around certain areas of music education and ignore others. There is very little to no coordination among the opportunities and resources. Furthermore, they are extremely difficult to find.

This article begins with the refrain from “Charlie on the MTA,” a song which protested the fare structure of the Boston subway that, at the time, required exit payments from passengers. Unable to make the exit payment, Charlie finds himself stuck on the subway, never to return home. Just as Charlie doesn’t have the resources to navigate the MTA and get himself home, most music educators do not have the resources to navigate the atomized, disconnected, and uncoordinated landscape of available professional development opportunities in teaching students with disabilities. Like Charlie, music educators often find themselves stuck where they are, unable to make progress towards their goals. They need an overview and information to help them find a path to resources that they can use in solving instructional problems.

### **Available Genres of Professional Development**

The present investigation and review of the opportunities for music educators to gain professional development in teaching music to students with disabilities focus on the following genres:

- Required courses in undergraduate and graduate music teacher education programs
- Graduate courses available to non-matriculating students
- Workshops at national (National Association for Music Education - NAFME) and state Music Educators Association (MEA) in-service conferences
- Workshops sponsored by state VSA chapters and other state arts organizations
- Books
- Journal articles
- Webinars
- National/international conferences

All of the genres of professional development on the above list exist and are offered and thus are included in the resource review for this article. In practice, however, music educators tend to receive their professional development primarily through four means: (a) coursework that they take in their teacher education programs; (b) graduate courses available to non-matriculating students; (c) workshops offered at state MEA conferences, by state VSA chapters, and by state arts organizations; and (d) in-service professional development workshops provided by their school district arts or music departments (Hammel, 2001; VanWeelden & Meehan, 2015; VanWeelden & Whipple, 2014). Because the last of these is provided internally within a school or district, it is not

possible to find information online about these opportunities, nor is it possible to determine their frequency or nature.

### **Resource Review: A Subway Rider's City Landscape**

Navigating the landscape of professional development resources and opportunities for music educators in the area of teaching music to students with disabilities shares three types of similarities with the challenges that our non-car-owning urban resident faces when navigating the city: there are isolated pockets that lack connection or coordination, there is no overarching scheme, and it is extremely difficult to find one's way.

### **Isolated Pockets that Lack Connection or Coordination: Structure**

Just as the very structure of the subway system, with its different lines and stops, creates a disconnect between geographical locations in a city, the structure of the university setting separates the fields of music education and special education (Bernard, 2016, Burton, 2011; College Music Society, 2014). In the U.S., special education programs tend to be housed in the School of Education. Music education programs are interdisciplinary in nature. In the U.S., they may be housed in the School of Music, but they are likely to incorporate classes from the School of Education or from the Liberal Arts Department (Bernard, 2016; Burton, 2011; College Music Society, 2014; Freeman, 2014; Palmer and de Quadros, 2012). Specifically, courses having to do with teaching students with disabilities are usually housed in the School of Education

and in the Department of Special Education. This means that the courses that pre-service music educators take about working with students with disabilities consist of general information and legal terms— knowledge that is important, but knowledge that is not directly related to *music* teaching and learning or to the *music* classroom and rehearsal room (Bernard, 2016; Hourigan, 2009; Morrier, Hess, & Heflin, 2011; VanWeelden & Whipple, 2014; Whipple & VanWeelden, 2012). Furthermore, these courses tend to be conceptual and historical in nature. Taking the courses, therefore, does not provide pre-service music educators with any training in, or experience with teaching strategies, pedagogical approaches, or assessment frameworks for working with students with disabilities. As a result, graduates of music teacher education programs in the U.S. come to their first positions in the public schools without the skills, understanding, approaches, or knowledge necessary to effectively reach all of their students (Bernard, 2016; Hourigan, 2009; Morrier, Hess, & Heflin, 2011; VanWeelden & Whipple, 2014; Whipple & VanWeelden, 2012).

In addition, the lists of required courses for music teacher education programs differ from one another. Some pre-service music education programs require that students take a course in teaching students with disabilities or in special education; however, it is not required in every music teacher education program in the U.S. In fact, a large number of leading American collegiate programs in music teacher education do not include a course in teaching students with

disabilities or in special education (Bernard, 2016; Bernard & Hammel, 2018; Hourigan, 2009; Morrier, Hess, & Heflin, 2011; VanWeelden & Whipple, 2014; Whipple & VanWeelden, 2012). That means that it is possible for an individual to earn a degree in music education and receive teacher licensure without learning anything at all about teaching music to students with disabilities. It is little wonder that music educators across the country are clamoring for professional development in effective teaching strategies for working with students with disabilities—they are not set up for success in this area by their university music teacher preparation programs.

Some creative music educators have addressed these gaps in their training in innovative ways, including seeking out special educators and related service providers in their schools for observations and consultations, developing their own manipulatives to assist students who need additional representations and tools, or taking special education courses at local colleges. Still others have honed their pedagogical skills by striving to know their students with disabilities and the ways that they learn best, figuring out where the challenges lie for particular learners, and devising out-of-the-box approaches to reach their students. These unusual approaches might include adapting instruments, such as using hole punch reinforcers around the holes of the recorder or attaching felt to mallet grips to provide tactile support; creating activity boards with icons, such as those in the Boardmaker® software

application, to help students communicate and express preferences; and incorporating technology to engage students in music making, such as using GarageBand® and other iPad® applications that enable the creation and manipulation of sound with just one finger on a screen. The ingenuity of these creative music educators should be applauded, and the approaches that they have developed and the strategies that they have learned from other professionals in their schools should be shared widely.

Outside of higher education, the structure of the professional fields of music education and special education perpetuates the separation between them. Because today's scholars in special education and music education earned their degrees and teach in university programs in their respective fields, the professional landscape mirrors the geography of the higher education setting. Music educators and special educators each have their own journals, their own books, their own professional organizations, and their own conferences. The intersection between music education and special education is a relatively recent interdisciplinary connection between the two existing fields, based on the needs of practitioners and researchers who have come to understand, appreciate, investigate, and learn from the fact that music educators (as is the case with educators in all of the arts) are required to reach an increasingly diverse group of learners with an increasingly wide range of needs, challenges, and abilities (John F. Kennedy Center for

Performing Arts Office of VSA and Accessibility, 2017).

**Isolated Pockets that Lack Connection or Coordination: Content**

Just like the subway rider is likely to be familiar with only a limited part of a particular section of her city--the portion that surrounds a few subway stations--a comprehensive analysis of published materials (books, articles, and web-based publications), conference proceedings, online workshop listings, webinar topics, and websites that was undertaken for this paper revealed that when professional development resources and materials are available for music educators in teaching students with disabilities, their content tends to be quite limited in three main ways.

**Focus on elementary general music education.** The first limitation has to do with the music teaching and learning setting for which the professional development is provided. Specifically, the author and her research team have found that the overwhelming majority of the professional development opportunities for music educators in this field focus on the elementary general music setting. Whatever the genre of the professional development opportunity—whether it be books, articles, sessions at conferences, or workshops—the context at hand tends to be the elementary general music classroom. Very, very few (if any) opportunities exist that relate to music teaching and learning in the middle or high school classroom, or in the choral or instrumental rehearsal setting.

**Limited diagnoses or disabilities.** The second limitation has to do with the specific diagnoses or disabilities that the author and her research team have found to be represented in the professional development offerings. When a diagnosis or disability is listed or named, autism spectrum disorders is, by far, most highly represented. Relatively little attention is given to other diagnoses or disabilities—they tend to be clustered all together under a heading like *students with disabilities* or *students with special needs*. A music educator might be able to read a book or attend a workshop about teaching students with autism, but not find any books or workshops dedicated to other specific disabilities. If a music educator had particular challenges in her classroom regarding reaching students with, for example, ADHD, it is highly unlikely that she would find a music-centered professional development opportunity to assist her with that specific student profile. She might locate a resource about “students with disabilities,” but it may or may not include useful strategies for teaching music to students with ADHD.

**Little at the collegiate level.** The final limitation that was found by the author and her research team has to do with the academic level of the teaching and learning setting. At this time, only one professional development resource exists to help music educators at the collegiate level to reach their students with disabilities, *Teaching the Post-Secondary Music Student with Disabilities*, by Kimberly McCord (2017). Before 2017, we have found no materials of any kind available about teaching music at

the collegiate level to students with disabilities. Further, our comprehensive review of the session listings of the academic conferences frequented by collegiate music educators has revealed that these professional convenings may feature academic presentations about disability studies and music, but there is a distinct lack of support for college music educators in terms of their pedagogical practices for teaching students with disabilities. This translates into teaching and learning situations that leave faculty and students frustrated because faculty do not have the necessary support to be successful in training teachers.

**Lost in the Tunnels: No Overarching Scheme, System, or Source of Information**

Without a thorough map of the subway system, a rider would be lost underground, stuck in the tunnels or on the train, much like Charlie in the iconic song. While excellent and helpful subway maps have been drawn and used in various forms in our cities for decades, there is no map available of the terrain of the professional development resources and opportunities to support music educators in their teaching of students with disabilities. If a rider's knowledge of the geography of her home city as a whole is spotty and focused around subway stops, at least there is a map of the subway system to guide her. Given the fragmented nature of the structure of the field and the content of the available resources and opportunities, a music educator who seeks to grow in her teaching

with students with disabilities is lost and fumbling without a map.

Several organizations and some individuals have published online lists of books, articles, and professional organizations in the field of music education and special needs. A very comprehensive online list can be found on the website for the Children with Exceptionalities Special Research Interest Group (SRIG) of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME). The website includes a Resources tab, with sections for Adaptive Musical Instruments; Assistive Devices and Services; Awesome Apps; Books, Dissertations, and Journal Articles; Films and Music; Groups and Programs; Laws, Legal Documents, Guidelines, and Terms; Professional Associations; and an e-publication about research in the field (<https://sites.google.com/site/exceptionalitiesrig/>).

While the materials listed on this website are impressive, the site is not without its issues and omissions. For example, the website does not contain a comprehensive listing of professional development opportunities, such as workshops, conferences, and webinars. The *Upcoming Events* section of the website lists only two conferences: the NAfME national conference (a large biannual conference in which a couple of sessions might pertain to teaching students with disabilities) and the International Society for Music Education (ISME) Special Education and Music Education Commission conference (a biannual conference whose primary audience is researchers, rather than

practitioners). Put differently, materials to support music educators can be found on this website, but educational opportunities cannot. Furthermore, and perhaps most troubling, this website is very difficult to find. To reach the site, one must search the nafme.org website for the SRIG. In order to do so, a music educator must understand what SRIGs are, know that there is a SRIG on this subject, and be familiar with the term *Children with Exceptionalities*, a phrase that is not universally used in music education. With these hurdles, it is likely that the website's strong collection of materials to support music educators in their work with students with disabilities is underutilized.

The Arts for All Abilities Consortium, a New York-based organization, is to be applauded for the range of resources that they offer online to support arts educators in their work with students with disabilities. The Consortium's website includes a wide-ranging resource section (Arts for All Abilities Consortium, n.d.). Here educators can find information on various disabilities and diagnoses, definitions of important terms, materials about related service providers, links to the websites of advocacy groups, links to articles that provide general classroom resources, links to arts-specific organizations that support arts education for students with disabilities, links to some articles in the field, and links to various resources for families.

Some higher educators have provided some helpful online resources, as well. While it does not contain information related to teaching strategies or curriculum

development, a useful guide to various disabilities and diagnoses can be found as part of the website of the Center for Music Learning at the University of Texas (<https://cml.music.utexas.edu/online-resources/disabilities-information/introduction/>). Dr. Alice Hammel, a widely published author and in-demand workshop facilitator in the field, generously shares materials for music educators on her personal website (Hammel, n.d.), including links to online resources about specific disabilities and diagnoses that include guides for parents, information about legal issues and advocacy, and organizations. While these resources are certainly useful for music educators in learning about and support students with disabilities, they are not pedagogical materials that music educators can use in their classrooms, such as unit plans, activities, curriculum documents, or lesson plans.

Websites of other organizations, such as DARTS (Division of Visual and Performing the Arts Education of the Council for Exceptional Children and SNAE (Special Needs Art Education, of the National Art Education Association provide extensive listings of professional development resources in visual arts education. (See respective website links: <http://community.cec.sped.org/darts/home> <https://specialneedsart.weebly.com/>) However, a comprehensive review of these sites by the author and her research team found that their listings for music education are disappointingly incomplete. A number of key publications, professional associations, and arts education organizations having to

do with music education for students with disabilities are absent from these websites. This is not surprising, since both of these organizations originated through the leadership of visual artists, and because the field of visual arts has a longer history in its intersection with the field of special education.

Similarly, while The John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts Office of VSA and Accessibility offers a robust array of materials and resources that they have created for arts educators, administrators, parents, and advocates ([www.kennedy-center.org/education/vsa/](http://www.kennedy-center.org/education/vsa/)), music education is not as well represented on this website as other art forms. For example, none of the lesson plans or curriculum materials on the website are for music education settings. However, many of the other materials on the site do relate to music education, such as the links to VSA webinars, articles and publications, and videos.

Overall, websites that provide resources for music educators in their work with students with disabilities tend to include information about disabilities and diagnoses, as well as links to publications and professional organizations. Some sites also provide definitions of key terms and materials for families. Missing from these sites are curriculum materials and lesson plans for music educators, as well as current and comprehensive information about professional development opportunities (workshops, courses, etc.) for music educators.

### **Finding One's Way**

How does a rider determine her path through the subway system? Today, the Internet makes that task pretty simple. Route maps of and schedules for all subways, buses, and commuter rail trains, as well as a trip planner that allows riders to input their origin and their destination to find possible routes, can be found on urban transit systems' websites. By contrast, unfortunately, even today, when a music educator seeks professional development opportunities and resources in teaching students with disabilities, the Internet makes the task pretty challenging. A comprehensive analysis of web-based professional development resources and information has revealed that there is no single online source to consult for this information, so it is necessary to search for it.

A single online hub for these resources may simply not be feasible. It is often the case that the organizations and individuals that provide professional development in various forms may not have sufficient infrastructure to create and maintain a single hub, especially in the current climate where information and materials can be published and released quickly in a wide range of formats. Rather than strive towards creating a single source, the field should give serious consideration to fostering networks and communities of practice, each with members who provide the resources that they can. Making those networks easy to find and join, and supporting collaboration within and among the networks could be a very effective way to increase the availability of



and access to these important professional development resources for music educators. Furthermore, nurturing networks and communities of practice in the field could move the field of music education for students with disabilities forward through the sharing of best practices, as well as joint projects and initiatives.

As things stand today, once one begins searching online for professional development resources, information, and opportunities, even greater challenges begin. The author and her research team has learned that the diverse and shifting language used to describe educator professional development, the field of special education, and specific disabilities and diagnoses makes for a murky stew of search terms.

### **Lost in the Tunnels: The Complexity of Language**

The author and her research team has found that searching online for professional development opportunities for music educators to support them in their teaching of students with disabilities is not straightforward at all, because of the multi-layered complexity of the terminologies that are employed. For example, professional development might be described with acronyms like *PDPs* (Professional Development Points) and *CEUs* (Continuing Education Units), and/or in phrases such as *teacher education*, *teacher training*, *professional education*, *continuing education* or *professional development*, to name just a few examples. For another layer, the standard vocabulary in the field of special

education continues to shift and change. The field may be described in a wide range of terms, including but not limited to *special needs*, *special education*, *exceptionalities*, *learning challenges*, and *disabilities*. A third layer has to do with the ways that specific populations and their diagnoses are described. They might be referred to with several terms, such as *intellectual*; *developmental*; *cognitive and developmental*; and *cognitive, behavioral, physical, invisible*, and so on. Still more complex is the language used to describe individuals, which could employ person-first language (*student with a disability*) or identity-first language (*disabled student*). These layers of linguistic complexity mean that, in order to find her way on the Internet for professional development opportunities and resources, a music educator must be well versed in a wide range of terminology and employ numerous search terms.

Two other significant issues with online listings and resources must be mentioned, as well. First, many websites and online resources are not kept up to date. The interdisciplinary intersection between music education and special education is a relatively young, growing field, with new publications and resources being created around the world. Online listings must be updated regularly in order to remain current and relevant for music educators.

Second, as was mentioned earlier, some professional development opportunities are not listed online at all, because they take place internally in schools, districts, or other music education organizations, such as

community music schools. These internal workshops or mini-courses might be valuable models for other institutions. Unfortunately, because one cannot learn about them through a public resource, others outside of the organizations who sponsor the workshops and mini-courses are not aware of these professional development offerings. This leads to two disappointing consequences. First, organizations who wish to offer to their staff internal professional development related to music education and students with disabilities are likely to encounter challenges securing presenters and partners to offer the workshops or mini-courses. Second, there is a lack of available models for institutions to follow as they envision offering this sort of professional development, therefore requiring them to engage their own resources to create their own models. Sharing information about internal professional development offerings would make it possible for best practices in this work to be disseminated among organizations and throughout the field.

### **Opportunities for the Field**

This comprehensive review of the professional development resources available to music educators to support their teaching of students with disabilities that the author and her research team has undertaken provides many opportunities for our nascent field. These opportunities will be addressed below. The author also offers a commitment on behalf of the organization that she leads to work to move the field forward.

### **Connecting and Coordinating Isolated Pockets**

The intersection between the fields of music education and special education provides their leaders with the opportunity to create relationships and explore possible areas of collaboration. In higher education, Berklee College of Music and Wichita State University lead the way, as both institutions offer graduate music education degrees that specialize in teaching students with disabilities. In the higher education context, they can convene scholars, researchers, and academic program leaders in music education and special education with the hope of increasing communication and collaboration, promoting and supporting joint projects, and sharing programs and best practices. They can support music educators in public school and community settings by providing consultations, workshops, and mini-courses for individual teachers, schools, and school districts.

In order to address the overrepresentation of elementary general music settings, and the underrepresentation of instrumental, choral, middle school, high school, and collegiate contexts in the professional development literature and workshop/course offerings, the field must involve a wider range of professionals in the creation, publication, and presentation of professional development resources and opportunities in music education. The field should engage publishers (such as Oxford University Press, which has published several leading books in this field, including Blair & McCord, 2015; Hammel & Hourigan, 2017a;

Hammel & Hourigan, 2017b; Hammel & Hourigan, 2013; Hammel, Hickox, & Hourigan 2016; McCord, 2017; and Scott, 2017) to broaden the scope of their solicitations and offerings. Music educators from other contexts who have developed strategies and materials must be encouraged to share their work in a variety of formats and forums. According to the review of their program listings and proceedings that was conducted for this article, conferences for collegiate music educators (like the College Music Society) tend to focus on research. Such conferences need to expand their offerings to include practice-based workshops. Other, non-music-based collegiate conferences, like The Teaching Professor Conference, should provide opportunities for sessions about collegiate music education pedagogy for students with disabilities.

It is much easier for professionals to stay within their field-based silos—to go to their usual conferences, to publish in their usual venues. Music educators and special educators at all levels must be challenged to extend beyond their comfort zones and propose interdisciplinary presentations, workshops, and publications that can reach far beyond the boundaries of a single field. At the same time, the interdisciplinary conferences that already do exist in support of this field—the VSA Intersections Conference, the Disability Studies and Art Education Conference, and the ABLE Assembly: Arts Better the Lives of Everyone Conference—must expand their marketing and outreach efforts in order to solicit a

wider range of proposals and engage a truly interdisciplinary audience.

Similarly, the over-representation of autism and the relative under-representation of other disabilities and diagnoses that exists in publications, as well as in professional development opportunities, must be addressed. For example, there are some outstanding experts in the area of music education and dyslexia who work in research institutions and/or teach in specialized schools for individuals with language processing challenges. They may be asked to give a small-scale presentation for music educators every so often, but they have not yet published materials or participated in large conferences. These and other similar experts in diagnoses other than autism should be encouraged to share the strategies they have developed and the knowledge they have gained through their work. Additionally, publishers must provide opportunities for the work of these individuals and organizations to be disseminated widely.

### **Staying on Course in the Tunnels – Promising Developments**

The lack of a comprehensive map of the professional development terrain has been a longstanding issue in the field of music education for students with disabilities. When it comes to addressing this particular need in the field, there have been some very promising developments at the organization that the author leads in Boston.

At the Berklee Institute for Arts Education and Special Needs, the author, along with

her partner in this endeavor, United Sound, has developed a comprehensive online clearinghouse of professional development resources. The ABLÉ Music Resource Center (Arts Better the Lives of Everyone) (<https://guides.library.berklee.edu/ABLE>) opened to all in November 2018. It includes links to a wide range of professional development resources for music educators, from publications, to videos, to audio materials, to lesson plans, to webinars, to websites of professional organizations. The first public edition of the ABLÉ Music Resource Center is fully searchable by type of resource, as well as by keyword. Later editions will incorporate other search terms into menus, so that educators can filter results by the grade level, teaching setting, and diagnosis, for a few examples. Furthermore, plans are underway to form an editorial board for the ABLÉ Music Resource Center, to facilitate and review submissions and solicitations of materials from educators and scholars around the world. Staff resources have been allocated so that the ABLÉ Music Resource Center will be regularly updated to ensure its ongoing usefulness and relevance for music educators.

In the hopes of addressing the challenges educators face in searching for professional development workshops and events, the Berklee Institute for Arts Education and Special Needs has developed an online calendar of professional development opportunities for arts educators (Berklee Institute for Arts Education and Special Needs, n.d.). The calendar features professional development events that are

offered by the Berklee Institute for Arts Education and Special Needs, as well as by other organizations, who can submit information about the opportunities that they plan to sponsor. Similar to the ABLÉ Music Resource Center, there are dedicated staff resources allocated to the Professional Development Calendar so that it is maintained on a regular basis.

Throughout the development of the ABLÉ Music Resource Center and the Professional Development Calendar, music educators have been engaged as user experts. Dozens of music teachers have reviewed prototypes of the resource center and the calendar, and they have offered feedback and suggestions. In addition, United Sound has engaged instrumental ensemble directors in conversations that have provided valuable input into the look and feel of the ABLÉ Music Resource Center.

In the development and sharing of these new resources, careful attention has been paid to the layers of linguistic complexity described in this article. Staff from the library and communications offices at Berklee have been engaged to assist with the metadata and the information structure to make it possible for users to find our resources easily on the Internet, whatever term(s) they employ for their search. The Berklee Institute for Arts Education and Special Needs continues to announce the ABLÉ Music Resource Center and the Professional Development Calendar widely in print and online forums that reach an international audience of music educators.

This is a significant opportunity for the Berklee Institute for Arts Education and Special Needs to make a meaningful contribution to moving the field of music education for students with disabilities forward through creating and sharing the much-needed map of the professional development landscape. Many areas of opportunity remain for other institutions to develop additional tools and resources for music educators, as well as for various organizations and individuals to collaborate and create networks to better serve the professional development of the field.

### **Conclusion: Above Ground**

Above the tunnels of the subway, navigating the streets of a city can feel like winding through a maze. Subway riding urbanites often note that it was not until they lived in their city for several years that they were able to fill in the gaps in their geographical understanding. Like a young city dweller who travels by subway, the field of music education for individuals with disabilities has not yet lived long enough for the gaps in its

geography to be filled in by educators, scholars, publishers, administrators, programs, and organizations. While there are some promising practices underway at this writing, there remains a great amount of work to be done to support music educators who seek professional development in teaching students with disabilities. In this article, the author has set out some challenges and made some commitments, hoping to bring about meaningful action that can move the field forward to better train and support music educators in their work with students with disabilities. Perhaps this article can catalyze further efforts and initiatives, so that the terrain of professional development for music educators in working with students with disabilities becomes an easier and more satisfying journey to navigate.

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