Musical Effects on Children with Special Needs

By

Ofosu Osborne Ofori
Department of Early Childhood Care and Education
College of Education Agbor
Akakemm@gmail.com
08036500043

Abstract

Music, as in the case of every child, is an essential element which makes life liven up and enhances its quality for the children with special needs as well. Music, besides being entertaining, provides educators as well as therapists with a lot of opportunities for using it with the purpose of education and therapy on various aspects. Researches related to the functions of music show that using music in the educational programmes of the children with special needs yields effective and useful results just like in the case of a child without disabilities. Music can be used in divers' ways with children with impairment. In either ways, music education" in which the musical knowledge and skills are in the centre and the development of these skills through voice and instrument training is the aim and in "education through music" where the music is used as embedded teaching to support the other developments of kids the existence of music in the educational programme of the children with special needs increases the effectiveness of the education and facilitates conducting more enjoyable and highly motivating activities, such as "Music therapy", which indicates the use of music for therapeutic purpose is also important as a complementary element in training activities. Whether with the aim of education or therapy, the use of music both in a child and children education creates an important, inclusive, integrative and stabilizing atmosphere. Conducting music activities using multi-sensational music education approaches which offer opportunities for creativity and improvisation is a factor that improves efficiency. In this study, by mentioning various uses of music in the field of special education, some examples of application in the field of special education in Ika northeast are cited

Keywords: Music, Special Needs, Educator, Children, Development

Introduction

We live in an environment that every day the number of persons are increasing rapidly, and also the number of children with special needs is increasing. (Batu & Kırcaali-İftar, 2005). By this increase, the issue of "education and treatment rights" of children with special needs who share equal place with those without disabilities are a part of the society like normally developing children comes to the mind. Within these rights, different education and treatment possibilities which could be offered to children become an issue and trying as many different methods as

possible to increase the number of ways to reach them comes into prominence. With this aspect, different possibilities of using music can be utilized to enhance the ways to reach children with special needs in their education and treatment and social life.

Children with special needs and special education

Children exhibit a variety of characteristics, interests, needs and qualifications. Just as the differences of a child can be physical, these differences sometimes may be about learning features (Akçamete, 2009; Heward, 2006).

While these features focus on "similarities" in normally developing children, "differences" play a more dominant role in a child with special needs. At this point, children with special needs are defined as children who show a meaningful difference from their peers at every expected level in terms of childhood features and educational competencies (MEB2, 2006).

Considering their common features and education requirements, children with special needs are divided into separate categories (Enç, Çağlar, & Özsoy, 1981; Haring, 1986; Özsoy, 2002).

Children with special needs are characterized in the following ways, orthopaedic disability, emotional cohesion difficulties, visual impairment, deficiency caused by deterioration of the nervous system, speech and language difficulties, social cohesion disabilities mental deficiency, specific learning disabilities, hearing impairment, more than one area deficiencies, chronic disease, autism, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder and gifted and talented (MEB, 2006; Cavkaytar, 2008).

It is understood from the classification that the features of children with special needs are at variance from child to child based on their rate of development. These varieties also differentiate the features of education children with special needs will receive. “Special Education” which may be covered under many different definitions in scientific literature (Ataman, 2003; Culatta & Tompkins, 1999; Özsoy, 2002) is spelt, as an education which is conducted by the specially trained individuals to meet the educational needs of children with special needs, through specially developed educational programs and methods, in an appropriate environment for their disabilities and features (MEB, 1997).

Within the limit of the above definition of special education; there are special education programs which are prepared to help them to be able to use their maximum capacity according to different features and qualities, to integrate them within the society to grow up and become self-reliant individuals, in other them to be independent and productive individuals later in life (Aral & Gürsoy, 2007).

Additionally, in special education programmes, taking individual features of children with special needs into consideration, special adaptations, special materials and special teaching methods and approaches should be preferred. Special education services for children with special needs are carried out in different educational institutions and in different ways such as separate education and joint education. In our society today, special education services are given in separate boarding and day special education schools, in special education classes in mainstream schools and in general education classes as inclusion education (Kargın, 2009). There are also special education and rehabilitation centers which provide individual and group education services. That is to say, no matter which disabilities they have and how old they are, with special needs, many different educational and therapeutic processes are benefited from (Salend, 2001). In this sense music and use of music can be seen as an effective way in education and treatment of children with special needs.

Music and Special Education

Music is an art of melodious sound and rhythm which serves to explain human emotions and thoughts (Uçan, 1996). The effect of music on children is an undeniable fact. It is argued that the babies begin to hear when they are in the mother's womb and the relationship between humans and music starts in pre-natal period (Uçan, 1996). In as much as very child can comprehend two elements of music -sound and rhythm-, they can produce sounds in measured tones in harmony with their mother's lullabies and they can move their body parts in accordance with the rhythm of a music piece (Akkaş, 1993).

Music has such different functions in the life of the child, social, cultural, economic and educational. While among childhood functions of music, in order to be a balanced and contented, healthy and successful, sensitive and happy individual later in life, musical stimulation and reactions which create a positive impression on cognitive, sensory and psychomotor structures are involved, when social functions of music are considered, providing the interactions among individuals and the exchange of emotions, ideas and impressions through music is mentioned. When cultural functions of music are taken into consideration, it is seen that music influences the other elements of culture and is affected by them and that it can unite different cultures. As for educational functions of music, they cover musical learning and teaching activities, planning, arranging and organising these activities and the structures and processes related to all these. In this sense, music exists as a dimension of education, as a means of education, as an education method and it is also an education area on its own (Uçan, 1996).

Along side the use of music as an education field for children with special needs (music education) and as a means of education (education through music), the other dimension of music, that is, the therapeutic aspects of music is an indisputable fact. The various uses of music are inseparable, however, in lessons/sessions it can be switched from one to

another. From this perspective, the differences in the use of music in special education appear not as "separation from each other", but as"complement to each other

Music as a Field Of Education

When music is considered as an educational field in special education, under the title of "music education" enhancing musical knowledge and skills of individuals is aimed. In order to achieve these goals, for individuals with special needs the following studies are carried out: ear-training studies such as listening and perceiving differences in sounds, rhythm studies such as repeating different rhythm patterns, singing studies such as proper use of breath and voice, creative movement and dance studies such as moving in harmony with the music or according to the music, etc., musical story studies such as voicing a story with music Dikici Sığırtmaç, (2005), and at higher levels literacy of music (such as writing and reading notes, making bona), musical play studies (such as holding and playing his/her instrument properly, etc.) and musical creativity and improvisation studies (such as producing a music piece with his/her instrument or voice). Through these studies, an increase in musical knowledge and skills of individuals, using his/her voice and instrument properly and expressing him/herself with his/her voice and instrument are expected to be observed of psycho-motor domain in which physical skills are encoded. Apart from these three domains, individuals with special needs also require to be supported in many other developmental domains such as social and emotional development, language development, daily living and self-care skills, social life and communication skills, independent life skills, learning different concepts and skills, skills of preparing to learn and academic skills (Güneş, 2005). In the studies carried out, individuals with special needs may obtain a great deal of acquisition during Play activities, establishing eye contact, being capable of eye-hand coordination, using both hand together and one by one in order , using small muscle groups in a controlled and proper manner, playing an instrument individually and in a group, during Movement and Dance activities, using small and large muscle groups in a controlled and proper manner, identifying parts of his body and moving them in coordination, increasing the awareness of time and space perception during Singing Songs activities, through songs, developing skills and grasping concepts of garments, seasons, animals, traffic, daily life, as an individual using his voice appropriately, singing in the group, identifying himself and the others in the songs in which their names are mentioned, improving his skills of language use, acquiring concepts such as colours, numbers, direction and orientation, opposition and new terms on the matters facing us in our daily lives like clothes, food, traffic, seasons (Kınalı, 2003)3.

This achievement list can be enlarged based on age, type of disability, qualifications and needs of individual with special needs.

Music Therapy

It is known that music has the power to affect human brain, body, his energy level, mood and ideas. Music can excite or soothe, stimulate or relax, direct or set free (Harwey, 2004). Music therapy, which serves humans in this way is defined as a systematic intervention process conducted by the therapists with diplomas who completed the confirmed music therapy programme with an aim of regaining and maintaining the health of the patience, achieving individualized goals with musical experiences and an approach to heal (AMTA, 2012; Bruscia, 1998; Hanser, 1999) In addition to children, adolescents, adults and the elderly, an individual at any age, suffering from Alzheimer's disease, brain damage, acute or chronic pain, developmental deficit, behavioural deficit, emotional disorder, physical disability, learning disability, multiple disabilities, speech disorder, autistic traits, visual impairment, neurological disorder, hearing impairment, drug addiction, sexualharassment and also mothers in labour can benefit from music therapy (AMTA, 2012; Ak, 2006).

Taking note of the number of children, music therapy is classified as individual child music therapy and group music therapy and considering how the music is used in terms of the nature of the study, it is sorted as active productive and passive (receptive) (Strobel & Huppman, 1997). In individual music therapy, patient and music therapist execute the session one to one. In active/individual music therapy session, the patient focuses on being in interaction with the music which the music therapist makes for him/her and with him/her and the improvising collective production and creativity as a consequence of this interaction. In passive/individual therapy session, the therapist makes modal music for the receptive patient and via the cited music, the therapist aims to make changes in psychology of patient. Active/group music therapy session focuses on the interaction and cooperation during music production just like active individual music therapy session. However, this time the interaction is not confined to the interaction between the patient and therapist, interaction between patients also goes into the relationship opportunities, too. In passive/group music therapy session, one or a group of musicians aim to heal a group of receptive patient changing their moods by means of making music with different modes just like in the passive individual music therapy session. It doesn't seem easy to decide how the applications could be named ("music therapy", "education through music" or "music education"). Because "active music therapy" and "education through music" have so many parallels and both processes seem very close to each other.

At this point, although the features that separate these two notions – music therapy and music education- are not yet clear-cut, it useful to see that these two branches are not separated, but complementary to each other (Adamek & Darrow, 2007; Schumacher, 2003). When examined, it can be seen that there are not big differences in the implementations of these two, except for the presence of "patient and therapist" in one and "student with special needs and special education-music teacher" in the other.

Whether it is used for educational purposes or for therapeutic purposes, the use of music for children with special needs yields positive results. These practices could produce effective outcomes if they are conducted with a music and movement educational approach in which every child expresses himself within his capabilities and needs and which is suitable to make necessary arrangements and reductions which involves distinct disciplines within, appropriate for the education approaches of the child with special needs and planned in a manner that they integrate these approaches (Eren, 2012).

Music teachers who graduate from Music Education Departments of Educational Faculties of Universities work with individuals with special needs whom they encounter at the schools they are assigned to.

However, until 2006 any lesson about special education did not take place in undergraduate programme of music education department. Despite a lesson named "special education" was put into the programme in 2006, it is thought that this development in theory has not made any difference in practice when compared to the past. Music teachers who are qualified about music education can use music as an educational field or an education means for individuals with special needs as well as for normally developing students. Nevertheless they have inadequacies about making special arrangements, plans and practises for children with special needs. Moreover, related to use of music as therapy, since there is lack of formal and authoritative institutions to provide this education, this field is absolutely vacant. However, some teachers who have had education in both fields (majoring in music and minoring in special education or vice versa) conduct more comprehensive music activities with individuals with special needs, taking their needs and competencies into account.

It is also possible to encounter receptive children or group music therapy applications (Uçaner & Öztürk, 2009; Ak, 2006).

References

Adamek, M.S., & Darrow, A.A. (2007). Music in special education. (2nd ed.). USA: Amerikan Music Therapy Association Inc.

Ak, A.Ş. (2006). Müzikle Tedavi, Tarihi Gelişimi ve Uygulamaları [Music therapy, the historical development and practices]. İstanbul: Ötüken Yayınları.

Akçamete, G. (2009). Özel gereksinimi olan çocuklar [Children with special needs]. In A.G. Akçamete (Ed.), Özel Eğitim (pp. 31-74). Ankara: Kök
Yayıncılık.

Akkaş, S. (1993). Okulöncesi Eğitimde Müzik [Music in Preschool Education]. Ankara: Gazi Büro ve Kitabevi Tic.Ltd.Şti.

Amerikan Music Therapy Association (1998). AMTA Member Sourcebook. Silver Spring, Retriewed from official internet site of AMTA:

http://www.musictherapy.org/.
Aral, N., & Gürsoy, F. (2007). Özel Eğitim Gerektiren Çocuklar ve Özel Eğitime Giriş Children with Special Needs and Introduction to Special Education. İstanbul: Morpa Yayınları.
Ataman, A. (2003). Özel gereksinimli çocuklar ve özel eğitim [Children with special needs and Special education]. In A. Ataman (Ed.), Özel Gereksinimli
Çocuklar ve Özel Eğitime Giriş (pp. 9-31). Ankara: Gündüz Eğitim ve Yayıncılık.
Bilgehan Eren (2013) Use of Music in Special Education and Application Examples from Turkey. www.sciencedirect.com
Bruscia, K.E. (1998). Defining music therapy. Gilsum, NH: Barcelona.
Cavkaytar, A. (2008). Özel Eğitime Gereksinimi Olan Öğrenciler ve Özel Eğitim [Students with special education needs and special education]. In İ.H. Diken (Ed.), Özel Eğitime Gereksinimi Olan Öğrenciler ve Özel Eğitim (pp. 1-28). Ankara: Apegem Akademi Yayınları.
Culatta, R.A., & Tompkins, J.R. (1999). Fundamentals of special education. New Jersey: Prente-Hall.Inc.
Dikici Sığırtmaç, A. (2005). Okulöncesi Dönemde Müzik Eğitim [Music in preschool education]. İstanbul: Kare Yayınları.
Enç, M., Çağlar, D., & Özsoy, Y. (1981). Özel Eğitime Giriş [Introduction to Special Education]. Ankara: Sevinç Matbaası.
Eren, B. (2012). Orff Yaklaşımına Göre Hazırlanan Müzik Etkinlikleri İçinde İpucunun Giderek Azaltılması Yöntemi ile Yapılan Gömülü Öğretimin Otistik
Çocuklara Kavram Öğretmedeki Etkililiği [The effect of embedded teaching through the most-to-least prompting procedure in concept teaching to the
autistic children in orff-based music activities] (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Marmara University, İstanbul.
Hanser, S.B. (1999). The new music therapist's handbook. Boston: Berklee Press.
Haring, N.G. (1986). Introduction exceptional children and youth. Columbus: Bell&Howell Company.
Harwey, A. (2004). Soothing sounds: How to use music with special learners. In Spotlight on making music with special learners (p. 30). USA: Rowman &
Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
Heward, W.L. (2006). Exceptional children. An introduction to special education. (8. Edition), Merrill Prentice Hall.
Kargın, T. (2009). Özel gereksinimi olan öğrencilerin yerleştirilmesi ve BEP [Placement of students with special needs and IEP], In A.G. Akçamete (Ed.),
Özel Eğitim (pp. 77-109). Ankara: Kök Yayıncılık.
Kınalı, G. (2003). Zihin engellilerde beden-resim-müzik eğitimi [Physical-Art-Music Education with Metally Handicapped]. In A.Kulaksızoğlu (Ed.), Farklı
Gelişen Çocuklar (pp. 244-271). İstanbul: Epsilon Yayıncılık.
Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Mevzuat. 573 Sayılı Özel Eğitim Hakkında Kanun Hükmünde Kararname [Decree Law on Special Education No.573] (1997).

Retriewed from official internet site of MEB: http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/html/104.html.
Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Özel Eğitim Hizmetleri Tanıtım El Kitabı [National Education Ministry Special Education Services Introductry Hand Book]. (2006).
Ankara: MEB Yayınları.
Özsoy, Y. (2002). Özel eğitime muhtaç çocuklar ve özel eğitim [Children with special education needs and special education]. Özel Eğitime Muhtaç Çocuklar
ve Özel Eğitime Giriş, 12.
Salend, J.S. (2001). Creating inclusive calssrooms. Effective and reflective practices (4th Ed.). New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
Schumacher, K. (2003). Müziği araç olarak kullanan sosyal pedagoji ve entegresyon pedagojisi ile müzik terapisi açısından Orff Schulwerk'in anlamı [The meaining of Orff-Schulwerk for social pedagogy which uses music as a tool, integration pedadogy and music therapy]. Orff Info 4, 4-6.
Strobel, W., & Huppman, G. (1997). Musiktherapie Grundlagen Formen Möglichkeiten [Music therapybasics forms and options]. Auflage. Göttüngen: Hogrefe Verlag.
Uçan, A. (1996). İnsan ve Müzik, İnsan ve Sanat Eğitimi [Human and music, human and art education]. Ankara: Müzik Ansiklopedisi Yayınları, Alf Matbaası.
Uçaner, B., & Öztürk, B. (2009). Türkiye'de ve Dünyada Müzikle Tedavi Uygulamaları [Implementations of music therapy in Turkey and in the world]: 1-3
Mayıs 2009 Uluslar arası Eğitim Araştırmaları Kongresi. Çanakkale: Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi.