



Music Ed Insights



Three Insights to take with you from... **Serving Students with Special Needs** with Alice Hammell

The words we use:

- Default to “person-first” terminology, such as “person on the spectrum” versus “autistic kid” or “the autistic.”
- Know that some people with special needs prefer “identity-first” terminology - listen for it when they introduce themselves, then honor it if it’s their preference.
- Consider the way you label rooms. Stay away from “severe room,” “moderate room,” etc. - Instead, use “Mr. Feirer’s room” or “Dr. Shanley’s room.”

Other items to remember to keep things focused and simple:

- “Least restrictive environment” means “where the student learns the best.”
- When you’re stuck, ask the student. “How can I teach you better?” “What do you need right now to learn better?”
- When you lack information, talk to previous teachers.
- Rewrite parts for students; this is legal acceptable use, and can be included in IEP.

Philosophical underpinnings:

- Every student needs to be BOTH challenged AND supported.
- Make it a philosophy to proactively recruit students with special needs.
- Remember that there are benefits to students without unique challenges to learn alongside students who do have special needs.

Find more Music Ed Insights on our website at www.musicedinsights.com
or join us on your favorite podcast app.