MUSC230: Music for Exceptional Children
Webinar #1 - Becca Lipsky

The World Returns to Somewhat Normal: Now I Have All These New Tools

[The World Returns to Somewhat Normal:Now I Have All These New Tools - YouTube](#)

Jennifer Courduff, Ph.D; and Sarah Orton M. Ed.

SUMMARY:

Jennifer Courduff, an education professor at Azusa Pacific University, and Sarah Orton, a professional development consultant and previous educator come together in this webinar to discuss how to use technology to make the classroom more accessible. Coming out of COVID-19, educators and students alike learned a lot about the classroom's compatibility with online learning. Their webinar seeks to use the skills learned during the global pandemic to create a "toolbox" of strategies to use to maintain order and productivity in every classroom.

As a graduate professor of education, Dr. Courduff encourages her students to create a "matrix" of online resources that can be organized by subject, goals, age group, or in any other way that makes sense for your situation. Your "matrix" should be a compilation of links and other online resources, in addition to brief descriptions of how they can be used to improve students' learning. Visualizing information, student-led classrooms, implementing technology, and inquiry-based instruction are suggested as effective teaching strategies to focus on in the classroom, post-pandemic. Much of the information focuses on a student-centered curriculum (see [SDAIE checklists](#)), and encourages educators to use laptops, iPads, and SmartBoards among other technologies to provide students with a wider variety of learning experiences. Consider what hardware/software your school has access to, and what resources your students need to be successful. Educators are encouraged to compare strategies; your matrix should be ever-evolving! If you come across a new technology that will help future planning, add the hyperlink to your list in whichever column it fits best. There are countless social media groups dedicated to providing fellow educators with online resources and teaching strategies for you to frequent and learn from (check out [Social-Emotional Learning in Education on Facebook](#))! These are places to ask questions, get advice, and give/receive encouragement from educators across the nation who are in the same boat as you are. Specifically, there are countless social media groups for parents/caregivers of students with disabilities where they can connect with and provide free support/resources for one another. Approach with caution, but these resources may really assist the parent/caregiver of a student with a disability.

A good way to analyze what your classroom needs is to explore what happens in "the moment of chaos". The goal here is to investigate what your students have access to/are lacking in moments of disarray, then to reference your matrix to find a strategy to redirect them. Having this technological "toolbelt" can be useful for yourself, but also to support parents, caregivers, and even colleagues in transitioning back to an in-person classroom. Furthermore, these technologies can be incredibly useful for families of students with disabilities. They can provide opportunities for students to grow their skills beyond the classroom, or even support caregivers with free access to additional, online support for their child. Consider searching "learning needs" in the Chrome Store to access a list of extensions to improve accessibility to online resources. AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) devices were also discussed as being useful forms of technology for helping

students to express themselves and their emotions. Pinterest also provides a variety of educational and transitional lesson planning tools to ensure students with disabilities can be exposed to a multitude of experiences.

<u>APPLICATION:</u>
1. The Importance of Using Social Media as an Educator

An extremely important part of being an educator involves staying in touch with changing legislation and movements in the education community. This webinar provided me with dozens of social media tools to connect with other music educators around the country, who are attempting to make the classroom more accessible for all. I'll be subscribing to these groups, asking and answering questions when I can to keep up with the advancements in technology and teaching strategies. I would take special note of training/career advancement opportunities and ways to implement new activities into my curriculum to keep my instruction inclusive and evolving. I'd be sure to seek out music specific groups and incorporate ideas of visual, aural, and kinesthetic activities into my music instruction.

2. Compiling a List of Technologies that assist Accessibility in the Classroom

For this application, I imagine myself as a general music education teacher to students of varying financial backgrounds and ableness. In my planning, I would make an effort to obtain class lists and coordinate with special education and other cooperating teachers to understand any legal modifications/accommodations needed to classroom activities. From this information, I would review my list of online resources and evaluate which I could use in my classroom this year. I would have organized the list by ability and by subject to make the process of finding resources easier. In my planning, I'd be sure to include as many technological resources that make the learning experience more varied and accessible to both students with disabilities and students who are able-bodied. Additionally, if parents were to express the need for additional support, I would have multiple online learning links on hand to provide to them.

3. A Student Centered Classroom

Creating a student centered classroom starts with building the curriculum. I will plan activities in the rehearsal that challenge students to problem solve and explore concepts through visual, aural, and kinesthetic experiences. By asking guided questions and prompting students to construct the concepts on their own, my hope is that they will retain more and receive a deeper understanding of the material. Though, some may argue it is more important to pay attention to my reactions in the classroom setting. I would try my best to refine my language so every aspect of my instruction is student centered. Specifically, I would work to use person-first language and provide students with feedback that redirects them to find the answer themselves. Furthermore, having a student centered classroom with technology would be assisted if I had access to laptops, iPads, and other digital devices for every student to compose, draw, and create with. I'd be sure to reach out to administrators to see what hardware and software are available for free under a schoolwide account. If students are going to be using technology on their own in the classroom, I'd be sure to set and enforce a series of rules to make sure they are safely using the internet.