

Student Instruments

The following instruments are played by students in the songs and instrumental arrangements that follow. These are available at The Music Man Project's online shop (www.themusicmanproject.com). It is recommended that each student has access to a complete set of instruments.

African drums
Glockenspiels
Tambourines
Triangles
Woodblocks
Ukuleles
Hand bells

Supplementary Activities

Although the songs and arrangements are fundamental to every Music Man Project teaching session, the following supplementary activities are recommended as warm-up exercises, to provide downtime and enable each learner to receive individual teacher attention. Many people with learning disabilities require repetition, routine and a safe learning environment with clear and consistent leadership. A balance between song and instrumental rehearsal with the following contrasting activities can become an essential method of extending concentration and inserting basic musical skills. A familiar session structure is very comforting but within this a teacher can still have high expectations and challenge the students.

African drumming warm-up

The drumming warm-up is an excellent example because a drum is one of the most accessible instruments to play and everyone can take part in a group performance. It immediately establishes pulse as a basic feature of the teaching to come and introduces repetition, call and response, improvisation, following a leader and listening to the ensemble as key practical concepts.

Drum kit performance

Students with learning disabilities love to play the drum kit! It is a highly stimulating activity and basic beats can be achieved in a relatively short time. The patterns can be taught with specific explanations tailored to the way each student learns. It is recommended that full-scale shiny new drum kits are used to inspire the students!

Drawing to music

In perfect contrast to all the excitement and intensity of the songbook, learners with special needs enjoy a moment of calm and reflection where they can listen quietly to some live or recorded music and simply draw. They are to be encouraged to use art to interpret the music or write a poem or description of it. Some will just close their eyes and listen. Whatever the response, the process is highly productive and allows the preceding learning to sink in.

Karaoke sing-a-long to favourite tracks

At the end of each session of music-making, students are encouraged to dance and sing along to their favourite music. This may be the latest pop song, party dance or whatever the student enjoys listening to. Learners with special needs love a microphone and love to dance!