

Music for Nonspeaking and Minimally Verbal Students:

Lessons for Soma®RPM and Other Choice Based Systems

By Lenae Crandall

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INTRODUCTION

It has been recognized that individuals with autism and other development or sensory processing disorders frequently have absolute pitch (AP) or perfect pitch. Some studies show that an extremely high percentages of this population (non-verbal/autism) have AP.¹ Others show that AP is found in certain personality traits such as being detailed oriented, often associated with autism, and not the autism itself that encourages this ability with AP.^{2, 3} Regardless, developing musical skills and learning about music can be a rich and rewarding experience for any individual.

This book contains music lessons plans written for nonspeaking and minimally verbal students learning through Soma®RPM or other systems of learning using options, spelling or typing for the student to communicate responses. These lesson plans cover very basic music understanding and theory, lessons helping a student learn to compose music at a basic level (most students I've worked with love this), and lessons about instruments, people, and the history of music.

Lessons on theory or basic composition were written with supports for a teacher who has very little musical background. There are video models and explanations, graphics/pictures to educate the teacher before he or she teaches or has the student do very basic music compositions.

A number of the instruments were intentionally included because many of the students in this population could learn how to play them, even if having somewhat poor motor skills, particularly if they can navigate an A-Z letter board and spell with intention. Some of the instruments that fit this are: idiophones, lap harp, Djembe, other drums, piano, kalimba, etc. If the student can blow with some intention, then there is the native American flute, ocarina, etc. Others are included because of their common use, a historical back ground on them could be enriching for the student, and help the student connect with the world.

My hope is that students and teachers enjoy learning together and that students come to appreciate and understand music better with basic music theory, stories, and knowledge behind it; trigger interest in developing a new skill or hobby in playing a

musical instrument; develop interest and skills in composing music; and for some, lay a foundation for a career in music composition.

Lessons are written in larger print than my previous lesson plan books to make them more user friendly. In other words, if you have used my previous published lessons, these lessons will look longer than those lessons.

Please enjoy these lessons!

Sincerely,

Lenae Crandall

Soma®RPM Provider and Certified Special Education Teacher

Introduction References:

1. Henny Kupferstein & Bong J. Walsh (2016) Non-Verbal Paradigm for Assessing Individuals for Absolute Pitch, *World Futures*, 72:7-8, 390-405, DOI: 10.1080/02604027.2014.989780
2. Dohn, A., Garza-Villarreal, E.A., Heaton, P., Vuust, P., (2012). Do Musicians with Perfect Pitch Have More Autism Traits than Musicians without Perfect Pitch? An Empirical Study, *Pols One*, 7(5) DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0037961>
3. Wenhart, T., Hwang, Y. & Altenmüller, E. Enhanced auditory disembedding in an interleaved melody recognition test is associated with absolute pitch ability. *Sci Rep* 9, 7838 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-019-44297-x>

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Thanks to Selena Pistoressi for reviewing lessons on theory and composition to check for accuracy in music terminology and guidance on teaching some of the concepts. Her music background, knowledge, passion and talent for teaching students with disabilities how to play the piano and music lessons was very useful. Any mistakes and ultimate choice for content, however, are my own.

Thanks to Soma Mukhopadhyay for letting me learn from her! It has been a great journey. Not only have I learned about improving my teaching skills, but I have also learned more about myself.

Thanks to nameless others who have edited or given me feedback to make these books better.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

HOW A LESSON LOOKS

LESSON 25: THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

MAIN COGNITIVE OBJECTIVE(S): Students will acquire knowledge and gain understanding of the story 'The Pied Piper of Hamelin.'

MATERIALS: picture of Hamelin, Germany, picture of a rat, picture of the Pied Piper of Hamelin leading the rats out of town, picture of the Pied Piper of Hamelin leading the children out of town

**Students who are able to generate open ended responses by pointing to letters to spell, typing, signing, or speaking, do NOT need to use the options provided.*

TEACH: Today we are going to hear a story that is based on a real place and some folklore.

SPELL: Let's spell FOLKLORE to warm up.

ASK: And is the place this story takes place real? (YES. or NO)?

"They even have pied pipers there for tourist."

TEACH: In the 1284 CE, the story goes, the town of Hamelin, Germany had an infestation of rats! (*show picture of Hamelin, Germany and have student point to it*)

ASK: Now, what was the real town called? (ALPS or HAMELIN.) Germany?

"You can go and visit there."

EXPAND: And the 1284, would you call that the (MIDDLE AGES. or PRESENT TIMES)?

"It was the Middle Ages or Medieval times."

EXTENSION ACTIVITY: Continue the story from the Pied Piper leading the children out of town. Decide what will happen. Write at least 3 more sentences.

(Ask questions and give options to students who need that support to continue the story)

HOW TO READ THE LESSONS

Instructions on how to read it are in *this* font.

<p>LESSON 25: THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN</p>	<p><i>This is the title of the lesson. It has the lesson number, and the subject of the lesson.</i></p>
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;"> <p>MAIN COGNITIVE OBJECTIVE(S): Students will acquire knowledge and gain understanding of the story ‘The Pied Piper of Hamelin.’</p> <p>MATERIALS: picture of Hamelin, Germany, picture of a rat, picture of the Pied Piper of Hamelin leading the rats out of town, picture of the Pied Piper of Hamelin leading the children out of town</p> <p><i>*Students who are able to generate open ended responses by pointing to letters to spell, typing, signing, or speaking, do NOT need to use the options provided.</i></p> </div>	<p><i>This is at the top of every lesson. It states the main cognitive objective. Additionally, it lists the materials needed in addition to the student’s normal tools they use to communicate responses. For students using RPM, you will need paper, stencils or letterboards, tape, etc. There are a series of *. They remind to read and adapt the lesson according to the student’s ability</i></p>
<p>TEACH: Today we are going to hear a story that is based on a real place and some <u>folklore</u>.</p> <p>SPELL: Let’s spell FOLKLORE to warm up.</p> <p>ASK: And is the place this story takes place real? (YES. or NO)?</p> <p><i>“They even have pied pipers there for tourist.”</i></p> <hr/> <p>TEACH: In the 1284 CE, the story goes, the town of <u>Hamelin</u>, Germany had an infestation of rats! (<i>show picture of Hamelin, Germany and have student point to it</i>)</p>	<p><i>This is the teaching portion. “TEACH” is what you teach. The <u>underlined</u> words are keywords you should verbally spell out loud as you write them down on a sheet of paper for keywords (and drawings) as you teach the lesson. The words written in () and italics are <u>not</u> to be said. They give you other sensory activities to do or other insights.</i></p> <p><i>‘ASK’ are questions you ask directly after you teach. The words in () that are CAPITALIZED are the two choices you should write down from left to right for the student to choose from IF the student needs to use the options. The answer with a PERIOD. is the correct</i></p>

ASK: Now, what was the real town called?
(ALPS or HAMELIN.) Germany?

“You can go and visit there.”

EXPAND: And the 1284, would you call that
the (MIDDLE AGES. or PRESENT TIMES)?

“It was the Middle Ages or Medieval times.”

answer. These questions help you see if the student is listening, but additionally and maybe more importantly, it helps you see if you are individualizing and accommodating correctly for the student to choose accurately. (positioning of the options centered with the choosing hand, pace of instruction, etc.)

‘EXPAND’ questions are thinking questions. If there is no (.) after the question, then it is an opinion question that allows the student to choose either option.

Gray words in italics and “” can be quoted and remind the teacher the lesson should be like a conversation and not a list of questions. Sometimes it just says “comment on the student’s response.” In that case there are no “” and you will come up with your own thought.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY: Continue the story from the Pied Piper leading the children out of town. Decide what will happen. Write at least 3 more sentences. (Ask questions and give options to students who need that support to continue the story)

This activity allows for more student expression and thought to come out about the lesson. It includes creative writing task, reviews and other activities.