Kate Branch, Lawrence Lee, Paulina Paras, Maximilian Westerkam

**BACKGROUND**

**AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER:** Range of symptoms characterized by repetitive behaviors and challenges with social skills and speech

**MUSIC THERAPY:** Yields improvements in language and social abilities in children with autism

**TEACHER EDUCATION:** Lack of standard education requirements for teachers in special education nationwide

**VOICES TOGETHER (VT):** Music therapy program based in central NC. Combines educational techniques and music to empower people with mental disabilities

**TEACHER TOOLBOX (VT³):** Program training teachers in both the theory behind the VT intervention and the music tools necessary to incorporate VT into their classrooms

**RESEARCH QUESTION**

Is implementing Voices Together music therapy through the Teacher Toolbox an effective intervention in elementary schools?

**SUBJECTS:** 9 Special Education elementary classrooms in Alamance County Schools

- **Control:** VT Program n = 4 weekly music therapy sessions with a professional Voices Together music therapist
- **Experimental:** VT³ n = 5 teachers underwent Teacher Toolbox training to learn how to implement music therapy methods into their classrooms daily

**TEACHER MEASURES:**

- **Teacher experience prior and throughout Toolbox training**
- **Teacher practices survey:** background demographics and prior knowledge on teacher practices

**Mid-Program Interviews:** in-person interview regarding VT³ training and student improvements

**Post-Training Survey:** effectiveness of training on knowledge of teaching strategies

**STUDENT MEASURES:** track improvements in language and social abilities throughout program

**PDDBI:** behavioral inventory tool completed by the teacher for each student

**Probes:** behavioral activity that measures social and language ability

**RESULTS**

Mid-Program Interviews showed that 100% of the teachers...

- Implemented VT³ into their classrooms on a daily basis
- Reported positive experiences with learning and implementing non-directive approaches
- Observed improved social behavior in students

**Post-Training Surveys** showed great improvement in the teachers’ knowledge of Teacher Toolbox strategies

**CONCLUSION / NEXT STEPS**

Preliminary data shows positive reactions to VT³ training

**FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

Analyze baseline data, post PDDBI, and student probe data for students in VT³ classrooms to quantify program efficacy

Adapt VT³ program accordingly

**IMPLICATIONS**

Provide special education teachers with a cost-effective and relatively simple way to improve student outcomes without the need of a music therapist

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**REFERENCES**
