

## Asperger Syndrome within Music Education in Puerto Rico

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### Abstract

There has been a significant rise in the number of Asperger Syndrome cases reported in Puerto Rico in the last decades. Lacking exact figures being calculated by any governmental department in Puerto Rico, as they follow US statistics, the Department of Education shows a dramatic increase of students registered under the Autism spectrum-a growth of 159% between the years of 2002 and 2003 alone- (Irizarry, 2009, p. 2). This increase impacts the music education classroom and the way teachers must accommodate an inclusive group of students. This presentation shares information at the local level (Puerto Rico) as an example of the global needs that the music educators are experiencing. Furthermore, this presentation is based on a study of the perception music teachers have of the behavior and motivation of a student with Asperger Syndrome after eight weeks of individual weekly-one hour per week-guitar lessons. Using a qualitative, case study approach, three interviews were conducted (two of the teacher pre- and post- treatment, and one of the parents), and eight observations annotated and videotaped for later review. Themes were developed, analyzed, and suggestions for futures educators and the music education system were developed as a starting place within a community lacking sources, materials, and reach. These findings, as well as, data and background on the education system for special education students in Puerto Rico will be discussed.