Strengths and Deficits of Special Music Teacher Training in America

Fulbright fellow & Music Education (Instrumental) BME Nancy O’Neill
(Illinois State University, USA)

The presentation included observations from my music education teacher training period in the United States, and their application to the future needs and challenges of music teacher training concerning students with exceptionalities. I began by outlining the general program requirements of my teaching degree program at Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois, and discussed the options available for music education students to gain experience working in self-contained music classrooms in public schools. My own student teaching placement at a school with self-contained music classes was provided as a case study as I showed video of my first teaching lesson to a classroom of seven students ages eight through eleven with profound physical, cognitive, and behavioral exceptionalities. Specific challenges I faced as a new teacher in this classroom were discussed, as well as their relation to the current strengths and deficits in university curricula to train music educators to work with students with exceptionalities in the United States from the perspective of a recent graduate of a music education program.