

# Don't Judge A Book By Its Cover

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We have all heard the cliché, “don’t judge a book by its cover.” This is especially true in my classroom. The students with whom I work with have severe disabilities and are therefore often seriously underestimated. The statement, “All students can learn,” is one that we hear more and more in the field of education but the question is: do we believe it to be true? As educators I sure hope that we ALL believe in this statement. I am a firm believer in this theory because I see it to be true every day. I think making this statement a reality is to believe it yourself as well as enforce that mentality within your classroom.

One of my students has a great love for music. She participates in band and chorus with her regular education peers. During her time in these classes she listens to the music and often vocalizes while singing is occurring. She shows a preference for fast, upbeat music and will often kick her leg and smile to show that. She has participated in the spring concert last year and the winter concert this year. She needs the support of a peer to fully participate, but enjoys every minute that she is included. She has played wind chimes, tapped a bamboo stick, and introduced songs during the concerts using a voice output device. When the audience claps at the end of the song you can see how proud she is that she was able to play for them, even if it is with assistance. Without the cooperation of the music teachers this would not be possible for her. Music is a universal language, and one that she speaks very well.

To help your students be their strongest

and most enriched selves, I believe it is important to know them in all ways, including likes/dislikes, home life, personality, and academic strengths and weaknesses.

In my classroom, I have many positive support programs in place to help my students feel and be suc-

cessful. I have found that focusing on what my students do well keeps them more on track with their behavior and learning. I feel that if you don’t truly believe all students can learn and put this to practice, you are doing your students a disservice.



*Alysha is in her second year of teaching Multiple Disabilities Support at NPHS. She is currently pursuing her Masters Degree at West Chester University and is engaged to be married this summer. Fun Fact: Alysha owns an eight-year-old African Grey parrot named Gracie who will be nine years old in May.*