

# Use of Group Sound Design as a Tool of Social Empowerment for Disabled Children in COVID-19 Japan

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## **Abstract**

Group creation of music involves the processes of collective creativity and management of it, which in turn lead to practice of social skills. This is especially important for people with special needs in Japan due to the tendency of the Japanese society becoming protective of disabled people from COVID-19, hence making them socially isolated. This research paper explores how the process of creating music in groups generates novel social skills and what are the implications of them.

We conducted an experiment in form of a class of music design at a Junior High School for Special Needs aimed at students of the school. We had 8 participants - all with visual impairments and 6 with mental disabilities. The class consisted of practical music training; dividing in groups to make and record music; the presentation of music and reception of feedback. The audio of the process was recorded in order to describe the findings.

Our findings contained participants quickly acquiring and using skills such giving compliments based on comparison, being able to accept musical mistakes and use the same mentality for non-musical mishaps. The combination of participants with mental disability and without showed overall high level of emotional intelligence with aspects not typically present in Japanese culture such as describing failure and asking for assistance.

Group musicianship allows disabled people to be able to explore and communicate with situations and people unknown to them. These skills easily travel to social situations as group musicianship is really more of a language than just a tool.

**Keywords:** music, art, education, disability, Japan