



My moments...

Music teacher and therapist **Simon Roberts** runs through some highlights of his career so far

THE MOMENT I...

... first felt 'in charge' in a classroom

Actually, I'm not sure I have ever really felt 'in charge' of a classroom, as the pupils guide the learning and therefore lessons become an opportunity for everyone involved to learn. Be it within a group or working one-to-one, the ownership of – or rather, the combined respect for – learning should be a shared experience that works in harmony, not hierarchical.

... first knew I'd reached a previously unreachable pupil

When music connects with individuals it can seem to peer deep into areas that were previously deemed unreachable. Music therapy can appear to hold that 'unreachable part' and allow a growing level of self-awareness and development.

...first got positive feedback from students

When a pupil or group of pupils chooses to perform in a way that challenges them and that encourages their expressive skills, the obvious sense of achievement and glory is positive feedback enough. When they come back and try again to relive the excitement, you know they are proud of themselves and want others to see it.

... learned to lose my dignity

An educated person once said to me that 'if you and your staff are willing to do 'it' then the pupils might just give 'it' a

FACT FILE

NAME: SIMON ROBERTS
AGE: 36
JOB TITLE: MUSIC TEACHER AND MUSIC THERAPIST
SCHOOL: SELWORTHY COMMUNITY SPECIAL SCHOOL

THE BEST BIT:

I WORK IN AN EXTREMELY SUPPORTIVE AND CARING ENVIRONMENT.

THE WORST BIT:

THERE ISN'T ONE!

SIMON ROBERTS

WAS NAMED UK SPECIAL NEEDS TEACHER OF THE YEAR AT THE 2011 TEACHING AWARDS. FIND OUT MORE AT TEACHINGAWARDS.COM

go'. This is a statement that has caused my wearing of ill-fitting tutus; ridiculous attempts at various dances, including ballet; and acting (a fool mostly) and re-enacting stories the BBC editors would be proud of. I still stick to that statement and whilst a teacher and therapist I will always try to live up to it. I am consistently encouraged to enjoy being creative and try new ideas whether they work first time or not. This allows for the variety and the spice of life, even at work.

... will always remember

A moment and person that has stuck in my mind is a young lady I was working with as a music therapist several years ago. She was non-verbal, with autism, and had significant difficulties in maintaining relationships. Using music was easier for her to manage and understand. With the connecting and supportive points of the music, the therapist, and her all working together, she was able to trust and explore a new and exciting relationship that was also safe. Her interest and understanding in this musical relationship and subsequently in other relationships was powerful and readily blossomed. She was able to utilise music from therapy into all areas of her life and it allowed her to progress emotionally and developmentally at her pace. She used music as a tool that gave her a voice and confidence. The challenging and new moments we shared were difficult to begin with, however her pleasure in connecting with someone was quick to develop and the journey we shared in this discovery was more than memorable; it was unforgettable. Her mother stated that 'music had given her her daughter back'.