

**THE
KENNEDY
CENTER**



VSA Webinar Series

**ARTS AS INCLUSION: HOLDING OURSELVES ACCOUNTABLE
IN REACHING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

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TODAY'S WEBINAR

As schools work to educate students with disabilities in the least restrictive environments, oftentimes the first place a student learns alongside his peers is the arts classroom. Indeed it is the assumptions on which arts learning is based—every student has something to express, there is no “wrong answer,” everyone can participate—that make the arts classroom an inviting place for all students.

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SPECIAL EDUCATION CONTEXT

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA, 2004) ensures access to a quality education for students with disabilities.

- Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Free Appropriate Public Education
- Least Restrictive Environment
- Appropriate Evaluation
- Parent and Teacher Participation
- Procedural Safeguards

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LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

"...to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities including children in public or private institutions or care facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled; and special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily." (IDEA, 2004)

LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

As of 2012, nearly 95% of students with disabilities are educated in “regular school,” and 61.2% of students with disabilities spent more than 80% of their school time in classes with their typically developing peers. (NCES, 2016)

Nearly 14% spent less than 40% of the school day alongside peers without disabilities. (NCES, 2016)

For students with multiple disabilities, intellectual disabilities, and autism, between 1/3 and 1/2 of students spent less than 40% in inclusion settings (46.4%, 49.1%, and 33.3%, respectively). (NCES, 2016)

Art classes were among the first settings for students with disabilities to be included in schools, starting with mainstreaming in the 1970's (Causton-Theoharis & Burdik, 2008, Guay, 1995).

ARTS AS INCLUSION

Some common misconceptions about why students with disabilities are included in the arts classroom:

- It's "easier" than teaching math.
- There's no "wrong answer" in art—so everyone can succeed!
- It's a "fun" subject, so expectations of students are lower.
- Students with disabilities can socialize with their peers!
- The arts are "inherently differentiated," so everyone can access the curriculum.

ARTS AS INCLUSION

Research does support the benefits of arts education for students with disabilities:

Drama activities and teaching strategies have been linked to gains in theory of mind, emotion recognition, and social skills in students with **ASD** (Corbett, et al, 2011, Corbett, et al, 2014, Guli, Wilkinson, & Semrud-Clikeman, 2008, Guli, et al 2013, Lerner & Levine, 2007, Lerner & Mikami, 2012, Lerner, Mikami & Levine, 2011)

Drama-based pedagogies linked to improvements in language and **literacy** (Anderson, 2012, Anderson & Berry, 2015).

Improvements in communication, social skills, and academics (Kissinger and Ponder 2009; Mason, Steedly, and Thormann, 2008)

Increased positive behaviors, academic skills such as sequencing and understanding of concrete v. abstract concepts through visual arts (Malley, Dattilo, and Gast, 2002)

ARTS AS INCLUSION

How do we maximize what we know about arts education for students with disabilities to challenge (and substantiate!) our assumptions about its inherent benefits, thereby allowing us to better reach and engage our students?

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Differentiated Instruction is:

- Proactive: a design choice to support variance in student learning
- Flexible and Responsive – multiple approaches that respond to formative assessment
- Respectful – provides students with optimal challenge in a high-quality curriculum

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Differentiating Instruction through:

- Content – what we teach

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

A Lesson on Symbolism: Community Quilts

- Understand symbolism in art
- Anchor works: adinkra cloth, historic story quilts
- Project: creating a community quilt

National Core Arts Standards:

- Creating: Conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work
- Connecting: Relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context
- Responding: Understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Differentiating Instruction through:

- Content – what we teach
- Process – how we teach

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Building a shared definition of symbols:

- Group conversation with prompting and examples
- Research into symbol origin
- Identification of instances in which symbols are used

Introducing anchor art works:

- Video of artists creating quilts or cloths, with graphic organizers for note taking
- Projected images with accompanying printouts
- Opportunities to meet with artists, see and touch examples

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Differentiating Instruction through:

- Content – what we teach
- Process – how we teach
- Product – how students demonstrate their understanding

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

The Final Product: A Community Quilt

- Multiple ways to demonstrate understanding, tied to core content
- Consider different media: Collage, painting, needlework

Remember: the important thing is that the product is tied to the learning goal!

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Differentiating Instruction for:

- Interest – students' preferences or passions

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- Readiness – students' background knowledge and foundational skills

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Differentiating Instruction for:

- Interest – students' preferences or passions
- Readiness – students' background knowledge and foundational skills
- Learning Profile – students' learning style, cognitive needs/strengths

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

How do we get this information about our students?

- IEPs and Collaboration: Art Educators should be included in the IEP meetings. Responsibility to advocate for necessary supports to meaningfully engage in arts learning (Keifer Boyd & Kraft, 2003)
- Formative Assessment: “Ongoing exchange” (Tomlinson, 2014) between teacher and students to improve learning
 - Differentiating for interest, readiness, learning profile → formative assessment → Differentiating through content, process, product → formative assessment → Differentiating for...

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

A proactive approach to instruction that accounts for learner variability and is marked by flexibility, responsiveness, and respect.

- Meeting the student where he or she is

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A proactive approach to instruction that accounts for learner variability and is marked by flexibility, responsiveness, and respect.

- Meeting the student where he or she is
- Multiple entry points for engaging with the content of information
- Creating opportunities for interaction and engagement

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Three “tiers” of supports in a differentiated classroom:

Differentiated instruction – planning and implementing with differentiation in mind

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Adapting activities – meeting the particular needs of the students within the activity

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Differentiated instruction – planning and implementing with differentiation in mind

Adapting activities – meeting the particular needs of the students within the activity

Modifying activities – changing the activity to meet the needs of the student

DIFFERENTIATED ARTS LEARNING

Differentiated instruction – community quilt lesson that accounted for student variance through proactive design and responsive instruction

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Adapting activities – supporting particular student needs in the quilting activity (e.g. providing an adaptive grip or finger paints so a student can participate in the painting process)

DIFFERENTIATED ARTS LEARNING

Differentiated instruction – community quilt lesson that accounted for student variance through proactive design and responsive instruction

Adapting activities – supporting particular student needs in the quilting activity (e.g. providing an adaptive grip or finger paints so a student can participate in the painting process)

Modifying activities – adjusting the activity (creating a painting) for a student by allowing for the creation of a collage

ARE WE READY?

Recent research (Cramer, Coleman, Park, Bell, & Coles, 2015) indicates that the majority of arts educators do not feel prepared to teach students with disabilities:

Of surveyed teachers, only 21.8% felt their university coursework had prepared them to teach students with disabilities, compared to 63.2% who did not.

26% felt prepared to promote enriching experiences in their classrooms, compared to 93.5% when asked about students without disabilities.

NEXT STEPS

Design for variation—Identify your core content and think of multiple ways to communicate it to students, and for them to communicate it back to you.

Assess, Assess, Assess—Build in frequent opportunities for formative assessment, and allow your findings to influence your decisions in the classroom.

Respectful Tasks—Provide students with the “optimal level” of challenge.

Be an advocate—Being an early/often site for inclusion offers a unique vantage point! When you see students’ success, share it.

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QUESTIONS?