

# VISUAL ARTS AND THE INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

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## Why is Inclusion Important in the Arts?

Every student has their own unique set of talents, challenges, interests, backgrounds, and cultures. As a teacher of any subject, it is our responsibility to encourage respect and appreciation for diversity in our classrooms. This includes providing accessible and adaptive learning spaces, lessons, and materials to meet the needs of our unique learners. Whether our student population reflects a diverse group or not, we should celebrate diversity and actively include it in our classroom environments and curriculum.

## General Modifications & Strategies

- ✍ Independent work given in segments
- ✍ Extra time to complete work
- ✍ Visual presentation of information
- ✍ Fine-motor muscle stretches
- ✍ Standing tables or workspaces
- ✍ Small group and cooperative learning
- ✍ Think time for answering questions
- ✍ Open-ended questions
- ✍ Keep instructions simple (max. 3 steps)
- ✍ Give a clear sequence of events
- ✍ Allow more hands-on time over talking
- ✍ Allow for breaks (use a timer)

## The Inclusive Art Room...

### HAS VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF DIVERSITY

(i.e., posters, books and art examples from diverse artists, cultures, etc.)

### IS A PHYSICALLY ACCESSIBLE SPACE

(i.e., floors are open and clear of obstacles, varied height work spaces, materials within reach of all students)

### ENCOURAGES INCLUSIVITY, RESPECT, AND A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

(i.e., motivational posters, sensory spaces, calming atmosphere/music, pre-established "no judgement" zone)

## Student Groups to Consider:

English Language Learners (ELL's)

LGBTQIA+

Students of Color

Students with Physical Needs

Students with Cognitive Needs

Students of Low Socio-Economic Needs

## Inclusive Visual Art Materials

- ✍ Moldable materials ( good for fine motor skills - e.g., clay, play dough)
- ✍ Various textured materials (good for students with visual impairments or sensory needs - e.g., smooth and rough paper, finger paint, mosaic)
- ✍ Lots of big paper (for big movements of arms and hands)
- ✍ Building objects (helps students feel a sense of accomplishment - e.g., bits of wood, cardboard)

## Drawing & Painting in Time to Music

Students with Down Syndrome or Autism often respond well to music.

Using music or sounds as inspiration for art projects can also provide a great medium for visually impaired students!

**Have the Tough Discussions** Encourage conversations that values and respects different perspectives and conflicting viewpoints. The biggest impact can be made when students have their own dialogue, in which their voice is valued and respected.

**"Inclusion is not a political weapon; you are simply trying to show respect and value to everyone, in and outside your art room."** (Jordan DeWilde - [Inclusivity for All Learners in the Art Room](#))

## Inclusive Visual Art Lessons

- ✍ Simple, realistic drawing: how to draw a face, drawing the other half of a mirror image, basic 1-point perspective, basic landscape and aerial perspective
- ✍ Papier Mache or Clay sculpting - hands-on, tactile, sensory
- ✍ Cartooning or character drawing
- ✍ Stenciled designs - especially good for students with poor motor skills
- ✍ Painting: color mixing designs can be a good warm up for painting projects
- ✍ Further Activities and Lessons found [HERE](#) and [HERE!](#)