Inclusion in Visual Arts Education

The National Core Arts Standards for Visual Art and their accompanying Model Cornerstone Assessment (MCA) allow the structured flexibility for meeting the needs of a diverse student audience. This agile approach to the MCA is necessary for including those experiencing a range of (dis)abilities, from gifted-and-talented to moderate and severe disabilities, within the visual art classroom. Regardless of (dis)ability, most students will be able to achieve the goals set forth in the National Core Arts Standards for Visual Art, as long as art educators are working collaboratively with them, their special educators, their parents, and paraeducators toward implementing inclusion strategies to meet special educational needs. The Guiding Principles included on this website for arts teachers for teaching and assessing students experiencing disabilities include:

- Maintain high expectations
- Promote communicative competence
- Use the principles of Universal Design for Learning
- Know how to select and use appropriate accommodations for individual learners
- Make use of evidence-based practices
- Target instruction and use formative indicators of student performance.

Explanations for each guideline will be provided.

It is important that the inclusive art educator (a) knows and understands the student's individualized education program (IEP) and (b) works alongside the special educator in devising inclusion and assessment strategies toward educating students in the least restrictive environment. The principles for Universal Design in Learning (UDL) are helpful to art teachers in envisioning educational strategies and assessments that include all learners. UDL principles include:

- Representing information in multiple formats and media
- Providing multiple pathways for students’ actions and expressions
- Providing multiple ways to engage students' interests and motivation

Art teachers who are respectful of differences and who seek to provide a fully inclusive educational community may choose to view their classrooms as sites of participatory action research. In this way, they continually document, evaluate, and interpret their teaching approaches, and student learning, reflecting upon ways to modify educational practices toward the inclusion of all. Included in the Model Cornerstone Assessments are some inclusion and assessment strategies that are in keeping with principles for UDL.

Visual Arts Resources for Inclusion


Disability and Community.


**Credits**

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