

Composition of Community:
Tools and Strategies for Inclusive Education Settings.

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Key themes: Arts Integration, Inclusion, Collaboration, Creativity, Community

Session Goals:

- Participants will be able to implement arts in education strategies that support all learners.
- Participants will understand the power of composition through the arts.
- Participants will leave with the tools to facilitate open ended arts explorations.

Focus Strategies:

- Step-by-step instruction
- Use of visual supports
- Open-ended art making
- Choice making
- Generalization across artforms

Let's explore these focus strategies. We chose these strategies because they support students in gaining confidence and independence. They help students of all ages and abilities discover their passions and interests, celebrate different perspectives and different ways of thinking and engaging.

Step-by-step instruction or task analysis:

This involves breaking down an activity into smaller, accomplishable steps. Step-by-step instructions can be paired with visuals to support all learners. Providing students with step-by-step instructions allows them to move at their own pace.

Visual supports:

Using images in combination with text provides context. Visuals support all learners, including those who may struggle to interpret text, and can help to reinforce concepts and vocabulary.

Open-ended art making:

When facilitating artmaking activities for students, we feel it's vital to allow for exploration. Give students opportunities to find their creative voices. In open-ended art making activities, there's not one "right way" to do the activity. Students have opportunities to engage in creative problem solving. Coloring outside the lines is encouraged! Open-ended art making activities allow for multiple entry points. The outcome or creation will look different for each individual or group. Process and discovery are valued. Note - **open ended does not mean unguided**. We can teach specific skills and key ideas through well planned open-ended art making activities while providing the freedom for students to follow their own interests. When you watch our presentation, take note of moments when we provide specific materials and steps but allow the process to develop based on student choice and interest.

Choice making:

Everyone benefits from the opportunity to make choices. Choice making allows for agency and connects to Universal Design for Learning. We can provide students with choices of materials, choices in how they will engage, and choices in how they demonstrate knowledge.

Skill generalization:

A skill learned in one context is transferred to another context. For example, in this workshop, pattern and repetition are explored in both visual artmaking and dance composition. This also can apply to skills learned in art making that apply to curricular goals. Opportunities to transfer social emotional skills and academic concepts learned in creating works of art are rich and varied.

Defining Collaboration:

Collaboration is: The act of working together to produce or create something.

In the context of this workshop, we define collaboration as guided, open-ended artmaking that includes peer to peer dialogue, creation, and reflection.

Why Collaboration?

Collaboration builds community. When we come together to create something, we bring our own individual strengths and perspectives and build something we would not have been able to accomplish as individuals.

Some building blocks for successful collaboration include defining clear roles and responsibilities, providing opportunities for choice making and self-directed exploration, multiple ways into the project, peer to peer engagement, and opportunities for reflection and self-assessment.

Defining composition: Composition is often viewed as an arrangement of elements to create or build an artistic form. Or a product of combining multiple elements or ingredients. Elements of composition we focus on in our presentation are shape, structure, repetition, and arrangement.

We can understand both composition and collaboration a little better through artmaking. In our workshop we chose to demonstrate a collaborative composition process through focusing on a common theme - in this case, shapes that repeat.

We broke down the creative process into a series of small, accomplishable steps, in both visual art and movement. The two art forms came together to elevate learning in each artform and provide multiple ways into the work. We used repetition in both artforms to teach the concepts we highlighted and explicitly integrated the strategies outlined in the beginning of this document throughout the lesson. Vocabulary (ie:

pattern, tableau) was introduced to students by name after they had experienced what it was. In the case of pattern, students created patterns before the reveal - “you have created a pattern. What is a pattern?”

Throughout both the visual arts activities and movement activities, students had opportunities to work on their own, work in a small group, and collaborate with the whole class. In this context, every student brought their knowledge, perspectives, and expertise to small and large group work. The artmaking process highlighted and honored individual contributions and choices.

In this workshop we collaborated together to create a community collaboration. Observation, assessment, and self-reflection were built into the lesson format.

There are many ways we can build on the artmaking activities we shared in this workshop. We could integrate different artforms. We could integrate different subjects, vocabulary, curricular goals, and key ideas. We could create a dance or music composition based on the final community visual arts composition.

In this workshop we demonstrated the following activities:

Using shapes to create designs, and make our own patterns

Small group collaboration

Using tableau to embody a concept or visual design

Following a series of steps to create a dance composition

Full group collaboration - creating a class visual art piece by bringing individual and small group pieces together.

Creating collaborative choreography as a full group, again bringing individual and small group pieces together.

Reflection and assessment in each step of the process.

As you watch the workshop presentation - consider where and how you observed our

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focus strategies in action throughout the presentation and how the strategies and activities you observed will impact or translate into your own practice.

After you view the workshop session, please take a moment to visit the reflection JamBoard linked below. Share how you will use the strategies and activities we explored today in your own practice. Read what others have posted. Use sticky notes or text to build on what others shared. Link to JamBoard here:

<https://jamboard.google.com/d/126vphd8hwmGDAY0k3NzYCHCjn8CN7Zmgn9w6wJGottlA/edit?usp=sharing>

Some adaptations to support all learners:

Students who have visual impairments can use textured materials, shapes, or found objects.

Visual descriptions were incorporated throughout artmaking activities to support students who have visual impairments.

Choices and adaptations in materials can include using large paint brushes and large sheets of paper. You can use found materials, create designs with stamps, and use sensory objects such as sand or beads. We can also use dance spots or tape to help support spatial awareness.

In conclusion, integrating the arts into inclusive and special education settings can support all learners. When arts activities are open ended, we create opportunities for each student to be the “expert,” build community, and provide opportunities for choice making and problem solving.