

Making Arts Programming Accessible

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Hello everyone and thank you for joining me for this unique presentation on *Making Arts Programming Accessible* as part of the 2022 ABLA Assembly!

My name is Kaileigh Anne Tayek, I am the Director of Central Florida Community Arts' School of Art & Health. I have been working in the field of arts and public health for the past seven years and am excited to share with you today some of the exciting methods that I use to make arts programming accessible to my community.

I am a white Irish-American with long brown hair wearing a teal blue and hot pink accented dress. I am presenting to you from a Black Box theater space in front of a green screen so my presentation slides can be viewed while I am speaking to you.

A little about me, I have Bachelors of Music from Bowling Green State University. I have been teaching for the past 13 years working with students of all ages and abilities. I am best known as a multi-disciplinary arts curriculum writer, winning the Hamilton Arts & Innovation Award in 2020. One of my greatest passions is speaking on the topic of Arts Accessibility encouraging others (like yourselves) to create artistic programs for their home communities.

Today's session will be a quick breakdown of the following big topics with examples of how I utilize them in programming and tips for how you can replicate them with your communities or groups.

We will start by defining the purpose of community arts programming. Then discuss two models of partnership with a focus on the Social Determinants of Health.

The program will end with a brief module on developing and modifying creative programming with an opportunity for you to take part in a creative activity as a student.

Now, Without further adieu let's get started!

I work for Central Florida Community Arts, CFCArts for short. We are Central Florida's largest arts non-profit. Our mission is to serve and build community through the arts. We are an artistic home for a four-county community and pride ourselves on making the arts affordable and accessible to ALL.

CFCArts offers artistic programming to students of all ages and abilities. We are best known for our 300 member community choir, 180 member symphony orchestra, our Children & Youth Arts

Programs which serve over 2000 children annually, and our School of Arts & Health which serves over 12,000 members annually.

The models and programs that I will share today all fall under my leadership as the Director of the School of Arts & Health.

My goal is to create inclusive arts programming that serves all levels and abilities of our community. Everyone is capable of artistic expression. As educators, our goal is to be mindful of the entry point and scaffolding needed to make each person feel safe and prepared to participate.

When developing curriculum we are mindful of the needs and limitations of each group. When a demographic requires specific support in developing or maintaining neurologic goals through the arts, then we engage our Music Therapy team.

In addition to our programs that support general wellbeing and healthy living, we specifically serve a wide range of abilities with programming developed to support people with

- Alzheimer's Disease
- Autism
- ADHD
- Dementia
- Down Syndrome
- Cerebral Palsy
- Emotional & Behavioral Disorders
- Parkinson's Disease
- PTSD
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairments or low vision

While we recognize that this does not fully support every unique need and disability present in our community, we do our best to continue to grow our programs directed by community members, city officials, and service providers. I will address this more in-depth a little later in this presentation.

At CFCArts we utilize the five main arts disciplines: Music, Drama, Dance, Creative Writing, and Art. While each discipline can stand alone, we frequently use cross-disciplinary activities to encourage engagement through a variety of different strategies. Historically using activities that engage both hemispheres of the brain provides more opportunities for students to participate and feel successful.

An example of this would be this Music and Dance activity around the concept of form. As I am sure you know, musical form is the structure we use to describe changes in music. It's also referred to as the road map of a song. The most common form is ABAB or

verse-chorus-verse-chorus with the “C Section” representing the bridge of the song. (Or the section that doesn’t sound like the verse or chorus.)

In this activity the students choose a physical movement to represent each section of the song. Then when they listen to the song, they physically represent the form through those movements.

This lesson can be easily modified to support a variety of needs. For example, using a parachute and making the whole class work together, or providing students with scarves to make the activity more tactile.

Another example is using the arts to teach a core academic standard. Here is a sample of our Arts & Literacy programming where we use 6th-8th language arts standards to teach students to write creative short stories by describing their detailed drawings written by prompts.

The image on this slide is a student-created story and vivid artwork representing a tale of an erupting volcano and fleeing animals led by a brave human.

This program was created in partnership with the Central Florida Urban League, a local nonprofit made to support our students in low socio-economic communities across Central Florida.

Now, the Central Florida Urban League is a great example of the groups we connect with as part of our Arts & Health Collective.

The Collective is a group of service providers, art organizations, healthcare, and higher education institutions that convene to plan, implement, and evaluate multi-disciplinary arts programs designed to bring equity and arts accessibility to our regional communities.

We recognize that alone we cannot fully understand the unique needs of every demographic or more specifically recognize all the nuances of social challenges and inequities that affect these groups. Therefore, we partner with people who are personally impacted, have personally experienced, or have dedicated their careers to working closely with anyone who is affected by these challenges.

This is the main reason we created the Arts & Health Collective to make a network of industries that can share knowledge and resources to fully support marginalized populations.

I highly encourage you to follow this model. Creating a collective or connecting with an existing network is the most comprehensive way to address the full needs of a community. If you wish to get this started but are unsure how, please contact me directly via the details on the last slide of the presentation.

Our Arts & Health Collective works together to address what are known as the Social Determinants of Health. The Social Determinants of Health, are defined by the World Health Organization, as the conditions in the people's environments that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.

There are five main determinants:

1. **Economic Stability** - This focuses on employment status, income, debt, poverty, housing and/or food insecurities
2. **Education** - This addresses access to early childhood education, literacy and language resources, vocational training, and higher education.
3. **Health & Health Care** - This addresses access to health coverage, respectful healthcare options, pharmacy accessibility, and overall affordability
4. **Neighborhood & Built Environment** - This addresses transportation needs, recognizes challenges of specific populations related to geographic location or zip code in addition to the needs of a community for outdoor recreation (like safe parks and playgrounds)

And last,

5. **Social & Community Context** - This relates to the creation of social groups and support systems that provide community engagement and purpose. Additionally, this addresses social inequities such as discrimination in addition to the needs of marginalized populations like those who are incarcerated.

Here are a few examples of programs that we created addressing a specific social determinant.

Bach & Babies is a music program for infants and toddlers in daycare facilities in low-income neighborhoods. *Bach & Babies* uses the Bright Start curriculum to encourage the development of gross motor skills, pattern comprehension, emotional responses, and socialization for babies 6 weeks to 24 months. The program was created in partnership with the Early Learning Coalition of Orange County in order to address the Social Determinant of Education.

Another example is the **Arts & Literacy Summer Program** I mentioned earlier. This creative writing and arts program serves 6th-8th grade students in under-resourced communities with limited access to summer educational opportunities. The program was created in partnership with the Central Florida Urban League in order to address the Social Determinant of Neighborhood & Built Environment.

Lastly, **ReNew** is a unique program that uses the tools of drama to encourage incarcerated individuals to build on their critical thinking, social, emotional, and interpersonal communication skills through the use of acting exercises and theatrical scenes. The program is taught by a trained Drama Incarceration Specialist and was created in partnership with the John E. Polk Correctional Facility & the ReNew rehabilitation program to address the Social Determinant of Social & Community Context.

While the variety and impact of each of those unique programs may seem daunting, at the end of the day, making the arts accessible really just takes creativity, passion, and purpose. We use these determinants to gauge community needs across sectors then seek to partner with groups that support those populations.

We utilize the following 10 step partnership model to create meaningful relationships to best serve communities.

1. Find a partner or identify an unmet need within your community that you can address with your skill, service, or resource.
2. Research the population you wish to provide programming for.
3. Meet with the partner or the people and seek to build genuine trust and relationships. Remember, they don't need you! But, they may enjoy something you have to offer.
4. Select an Arts Discipline or choose a multidisciplinary approach to programming.
5. Develop the program keeping in mind the needs of the participants.
6. Create a schedule noting the best days and times for the participants. And hire a Teaching Artist, if you are not directly teaching.
7. Train the Teaching Artist and/or communicate your vision and needs to any support staff.
8. Register the participants & launch the program. Take into consideration any important contact information, medical emergency details, and photo release permission you would need to collect for the duration of the program. It is best to collect everything at the start of the program.
9. While the program is in full swing it is important to assess the effectiveness and modify the content when needed. While you may have a great plan in place, it's important not to get too focused on your vision of what it **should be**, and instead, focus on the students and what they **need it to be**.
10. Upon the completion of the class I encourage you to evaluate your participants with a brief survey. This data can be used to track research stats on this program and is very helpful when applying for grants.

Due to the nature of many of the demographics I am speaking about today, a majority of our programs are partially or fully grant-funded. This provides another level of accessibility to folks who would otherwise be unable to participate.

A great example of this process in action is our UpBeat! Program. **UpBeat!** Is a performance group for teen and young adult exceptional learners. It is open to actors with a variety of exceptionalities, including (but not limited to) autism, Down syndrome, and ADHD. The program was created in partnership with the Down Syndrome Association of Central Florida in order to address the Social Determinant of Social & Community Context.

UpBeat! produces multiple performances each year, including both in-person musicals and virtual short films with participants from all over the country.

In 2020 this program won the Arts and Innovation Award through the National Organization for Arts and Health (NOAH).

Defining the purpose and model of this program took extensive research and planning. In conclusion, we determined that each season would focus on the following Creative Goals:

- Creativity and self-expression
- Techniques of acting on stage and/or on camera
- Group cohesion (aka working together)
- And, Basic dance skills

Additionally, we created Individual Student Goals based on our interactions with those performers and/or guidance from their care partners. These goals include:

- Improved self-expression
- Improved auditory processing skills
- Improved verbal and nonverbal communication skills
- Increased confidence and independence
- And, Greater creativity and imagination

We adapt our instruction in order to create the best experience tailored to the individual performer. Our show scripts are customized with roles and lines created for each student. For example: If a student is working on language skills we will create 3-5 word sentences for their role throughout the show.

In addition to the material taught we vary our instruction providing opportunities for full group and small group rehearsal activities. Additionally, performers are given the opportunity to rehearse scenes one-on-one with the director to build confidence.

As for the use of technology, we utilize the Zoom application to host rehearsals and record our virtual short films. While the performers will rehearse weekly as a full group, they record their roles in one on one recording sessions with the director.

Using technology can be very challenging for both the performer and their care partner (many of which are older or retired parents.) We do our best to assist with technical support by providing how-to guides for each tech element and planning one on one tech support meetings for those who need further assistance.

The takeaway from creating a program like *UpBeat!* is that adapting the program model is just as important as adapting the content. While strategic planning and communication are required for any program, the one-on-one support time needed to create an impactful truly accessible experience for such a population will require extra staff time and budget.

So, I have talked a lot about purpose, models, programs, and activities. Now I would like to take a moment to put us all in the position of the student! We are ALL students, ALL lifelong learners of some craft or discipline.

Today, I would like to do a creative writing activity combining two styles of writing.

Ekphrastic Writing, or writing with an image as inspiration, and Sensory writing, describing something utilizing our senses.

On this slide, there is a photo of a spring meadow with a cherry blossom tree in the middle. The meadow is made up of vivid shades of greens and blues. In the foreground of the image is a thin, clear, stream and the cherry blossom tree's reflection can be seen in the water.

The process for writing is simple. First, I invite you to imagine that you are there within that scene I described. Connect with your senses, what do you see, hear, smell, feel, taste? As you reflect, write down words that come to your mind. You will use those words as a word bank and pull your favorites to create a free-form poem.

I will recite the description of the image again and then invite you to pause your video for a minute to create your word bank.

Here we go:

On this slide, there is a photo of a spring meadow with a cherry blossom tree in the middle. The meadow is made up of vivid shades of greens and blues. In the foreground of the image is a thin, clear, stream and the cherry blossom tree's reflection can be seen in the water.

I hope you enjoyed that moment to create your word bank, now for creating your poem!

Here is a sample of a word bank and poem created by 3rd - 5th-grade students with varying cognitive abilities. The highlighted phrases in the word bank on the left were the phrases chosen by the class to be incorporated into their poem.

Here is their poem to describe the spring, cherry blossom tree meadow.

Cool breeze,
Grass rough on my fingers,
The river is flowing,
The trees are blowing,
I hear the rustling leaves,
The park makes me feel *amazing*

Another group of 3rd-5th grade poets described the image like this:

Day Dream.
Wind blowing through the trees,
Peaceful reflection of pink,
Water is flowing,
Leaves are blowing,
Serenity and calm

I encourage you to pause your video and take a minute to select your favorite phrases from your word bank. Put them in an order that speaks to you, and recite aloud! Congrats you have made a poem!

What I enjoy about this activity is how accessible it can be in both level and ability. I have used this activity with Kindergartens and senior adults alike. By selecting the right image to connect with the group, the discussion and creativity is limitless.

Outside of age, this activity can easily be tailored to meet the need of classes with a variety of abilities. The activity can be done as individuals or as a group. The teacher can be very involved, pointing and describing image elements or let the class lead.

And while one may not think to use this activity for students with visual impairments and low vision, it is an excellent assignment for building creative thinking. Mainly through its use of engaging creative memory by the teacher verbally describing the image or through a simple modification by encouraging the student to act out being present within the imagined location to better connect with their senses.

By connecting to the source material through sight or imagination, we can tap into our creative minds and unlock some beautiful poetry.

What I hope you take away from this workshop is that making the arts accessible is not some lofty goal that one needs extensive funding and support to achieve.

In honesty, it is pretty simple.

Making the arts accessible takes creativity, purpose, and passion. If you have those things, which I suspect you do as you watched this whole presentation, then I encourage you to go out and make your mark.

Connect with your community, share your passion, and stay creative!

If you have any questions or would like to connect or learn more about the things I discussed don't hesitate to reach out to me via school@cfcarts.com.

Thank you so much for joining me today! I wish you the best in all your artistic endeavors.