

Adaptive ART

Engaging All Learners in Creating and Responding to Art

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SENSORY SUGGESTIONS

- Hyposensitive students need the senses stimulated to engage in learning.
- Hypersensitive students experience unpleasant reactions to the way things look, smell, feel, sound or taste.
- Use scented, textural, and sensory mediums and tools when available.
- Engage the senses: Use motion and your body to create. Use textured surfaces. Adapt lessons, ideas, materials, and techniques to make students feel comfortable in the art room.

LOW MUSCLE TONE SUGGESTIONS

- Students with weak muscles can fatigue easily, have delayed speech, difficulty sitting, and difficulty completing the task at hand.
- Create on vertical surfaces and floors, building trunk strength and stability.
- Adapt lessons to make the task easier. Use stickers and stamps to create patterns, create a thick line to cut on, and do some of the cutting if students fatigue easily.
- Keep it simple. Allow students to work larger as fine motor skills are affected as well. Use stencils and premade shapes to trace.

VISUAL SUGGESTIONS

- Vision deficits range from blindness to low vision and color vision deficiencies.
- Engage the senses. Describe steps, use texture, and use bright or neon colored mediums for students with low vision. Use large-print thick lines to cut on and raised lines of glue.
- For students with color deficiencies, choose reproductions carefully, label colors, and be cognizant of using contrast in signage.
- Have 3D examples for the students to touch and explore; this aids comprehension. Chunk information.

GROSS MOTOR SUGGESTIONS

- Gross motor deficits affect large muscles impacting activities such as sitting, reaching, and balance.
- Fine motor is impacted as well, for gross motor and fine motor are connected. Gross motor muscle exercises benefit fine motor skills.
- Paint on a vertical surface and cross the midline of the body to build trunk stability.
- Allow students to sit cross-legged on the floor and create there. Work large and get kinesthetic—involve the entire body as you create.

FINE MOTOR SUGGESTIONS

- Fine motor skills develop the muscles used for writing, drawing, dressing, and most art activities.
- Create lesson adaptations that use the pincer grasp and cupping of palm technique.
- Demonstrate and enforce correct scissor and pencil grasp. Use hole punchers and clay to build hand strength.
- Use tools and materials that use the gripping of small objects with fingertips, such as tiny pieces, buttons, etc.

COGNITIVE SUGGESTIONS

- Cognitive deficits can range from attention deficits to substantial developmental disabilities.
- Keep instruction simple. Chunk information and narrow choices to two or three.
- Create adaptations to simplify the process, making tasks achievable.

HEARING IMPAIRED SUGGESTIONS

- Students with hearing impairments may have a decrease in hearing loss to total loss of hearing.
- Teach in a step-by-step process and chunk information—this allows for visual and mental comprehension.
- Using visual clues, modeling, and written words with images will assist in comprehension. Visual diagrams on tables or projected on a white screen are great.
- When a paraprofessional is present, make sure they stand behind you and sign, so the student can see you demonstrating the technique as they see the person signing the words.

EMOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS

- Get to know your students' IEPs and 504s and plan behavioral modifications prior to outbreaks in class.
- Have strategies planned in advance, such as sending the student for a movement break as they deliver a few heavy books to a peer.
- Allow the use of music and headphones in class if noise is upsetting or a trigger. Play soothing music.
- Scent mediums with lavender to create a calming affect. Remove obstacles during artistic processes that may cause frustration.

BEHAVIORAL SUGGESTIONS

- Behavioral outbreaks often result from frustration or feeling overwhelmed.
- Encourage the use of a kneaded eraser to calm students and keep them relaxed.
- Adapt mediums or tools to help make the lesson objectives easier, reducing fear of failure.
- Place a sand timer on the table and tell the student they can have a break after the sand runs out. This will keep them focused and watching the sand flow is relaxing.

CREATE A COLLECTION OF TOOLS

- Collect adaptive brushes, scissors, and crayons from online catalogues for students with disabilities.
- When creating patterns independently is not possible, have students create patterns with stamps and ink pads, stickers, wallpaper, and textured rollers.
- Create free-time activities that develop fine motor skills. String beads, lacing cards, weaving, and creating with mosaic pieces all develop fine motor skills.
- Use tools and mediums that stimulate the senses such as rolling pins, burlap, corrugated cardboard, felt, shaving cream, etc.

IDEAS AND TECHNIQUES

- As you differentiate instruction to reach each and every learner, remember that all art projects need not look alike. Allow students to use the gifts they have.
- Take time when you get new students to work with them to see where they need adaptations. Discover their strengths.
- Don't look at the student for what they can't do, but what they can do, and create adaptations from there.
- Collaborate with teachers, paraprofessionals, and occupational and physical therapists for strategies.