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Fine Arts Students

A Quick Reference for Students with Special Needs

Center for Educator Development in Fine Arts (CEDFA)

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Center for Educator Development in Fine Arts

The Center for Educator Development in Fine Arts (CEDFA) is a virtual professional development center designed to promote implementation of the Fine Arts Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). CEDFA is a collaboration of the Texas Education Agency and Education Service Center, Region 20. For more information on CEDFA, please visit our website:

<http://finearts.esc20.net>

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Introduction

The need for all students to demonstrate the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) is a priority for the State of Texas. Texas students who learn the disciplines of art, dance, music, and theatre as they are defined by the Fine Arts TEKS not only have the potential to improve their quality of life, but also to improve their performance in other academic areas. **The Center for Educator Development in Fine Arts (CEDFA)** is dedicated to helping all students achieve high levels of success in the fine arts and other academic disciplines.

The purpose of this publication is to help fine arts teachers provide improved educational experiences for students with identified special needs. These students come to fine arts classes with Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) that sometimes contain terminology that is unfamiliar to fine arts teachers. This document can help fine arts teachers translate IEPs into classroom practices to ensure that students with special needs demonstrate the Fine Arts TEKS.

Not all strategies work for all students. Some of the strategies included in this pamphlet are more appropriate for younger children while others are more appropriate for older students and adolescents. The fine arts teacher who wants to be certain that all students demonstrate the TEKS collaborates with special education teachers and other service providers to learn what strategies have been successful with a student in the past. Because of the nature of the content they teach, fine arts teachers already use many of the strategies described in this booklet. Consistent with Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, the Fine Arts TEKS require students to perform, demonstrate, portray, improvise, create, direct, arrange, dramatize, sing, explore, design, and invent—skills that often allow students with special needs to be successful in fine arts classes.

However, the Fine Arts TEKS also require students to read, write, cooperate, define, analyze, identify, categorize, plan, and evaluate—skills that can be difficult for some students with special needs. Some of the strategies in this booklet are simply good teaching practices for all students. Others are highly specialized strategies that will help specific students learn.

IEPs often specify **accommodations**, changes made to instruction or testing procedures without changing the content, and **modifications**, changes in the content to be learned. While the student may be working on modified course content, the subject remains the same as the rest of the class. Sometimes the word **adaptation** is used interchangeably with modification. This booklet is designed to give teachers information and new ideas so that students with special needs will have the same opportunities as their peers to demonstrate the Fine Arts TEKS. Most sections are set up with a list of accommodations and modifications on the left side of the page. On the right side of the page is a scenario that demonstrates how some of the strategies may be implemented.

Give Directions in Multiple Modes

Oral

- Simplify complex directions
- Use fewer words to explain the directions

Visual

- Give the student a desk copy of the board work or transparency
- Have the student highlight the directions
- Provide short, written instructions
- Model processes for which you are giving verbal directions

Delivery Variation

- Have the student dictate directions to another student
- Record directions on audiotape
- Have the student repeat directions back to you

Scenario

Ms. Harris, a Dance, Level I teacher, realizes that the most critical components of good directions are analyzing the task at hand, its value to the learners, and the way students will learn the new task. Ms. Harris wants to teach her students a new modern dance sequence. She knows it has been a difficult sequence for students to learn in the past and that some of the students in the class will have trouble. She analyzes the sequence, describing each movement. She draws each movement and writes out a description.

Before she starts, she explains to the students the history of the sequence, who choreographed it, where it has been performed, and why she is teaching it to them. When she presents the sequence to the class, she describes and simultaneously models each step and its transition to the next step. After the initial description and modeling, students practice the step as she continues to model and describe. After a few practices, she continues to call out the description and walks among the students, asking questions to help students verbalize the directions and analyze their own performances. At the end of class, she gives them the handout with the steps to practice for homework.

Make In-class Activities Accessible to All Students

Brain-Compatible Strategies

- Involve students in goal setting and rubric development
- Debrief students after activities
- Ask more questions and provide fewer answers
- Balance routine and novelty
- Allow student choice
- Interject movement in seated activities
- Use multi-sensory approaches

Varied Activities

- Use non-competitive activities
- Design and build models
- Make a pictorial representation
- Encourage class participation
- Use role playing

Peer Tutoring/Cooperative Learning

- Have students check work together on teams
- Have students write practice test questions or study guides for another student to complete

Study Guides

- Provide a skeleton or partial outline for students to complete
- Highlight the most important terms or concepts
- Have students maintain assignment notebooks

Scenario

Martina, a fifth grade student, loves music, rhythm, and sounds. Though she is very bright, she has difficulty reading symbolic language—in print or in music. Martina grew very frustrated as her music teacher, Ms. Carter, was teaching students to read and write music notation. When she began introducing the class to notes on the staff, as an alternative strategy, Ms. Carter introduced Martina to the symbolic representation of sounds by using poker chips. Red poker chips represented loud sounds, and white poker chips represented soft sounds. When she saw two reds and a white (arranged from left to right), Martina knew that meant to play three beats on her drum (loud-loud-soft).

Next, she added a bead on top of some poker chips, distinguishing a half note from a whole note. Ms. Carter also paired Martina with students who were reading the music and playing the same parts as Martina. Soon Martina saw the similarities between her poker chip notes and the notes on the staff. She abandoned her poker chips, and Martina's teacher found that her ability to decode letters in the classroom had also improved.

Adapted from Smith, S. (2001). *The Power of the Arts*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company.

Make Texts Accessible to All Students

Key Words and Phrases

- Underline, circle, highlight, or put in bold print or a contrasting color keywords and main ideas
- Provide a skeleton outline or graphic organizer with key words and phrases provided
- Use color-coding to differentiate main ideas from facts and to mark definitions
- Provide highlighting tape

Tape Recording

- Allow students to bring a small tape recorder
- Tape directions, lectures, reading selections, and in-class discussions for the student to take home to write notes or to catalog for future reference

Note Taking

- Provide a photocopy of transparencies for students who cannot copy from the board or overhead
- Have a student who is a good note taker write notes on NCR paper and give a copy to the student with special needs

Assistive Technology

- Provide the student with compact disks that come with most recent textbooks

Supplementary Supports

- Transform printed words into graphic aids by creating:
 - Charts
 - Graphs
 - Graphic organizers
 - Mock-ups
 - Models
 - Maps
 - Illustrations
 - Real objects
 - Chapter outlines

Rewording Information/ Alternative Texts and Materials

- Paraphrase information found in sections of texts using simple sentences
- Minimize the amount of text on a page
- Use various size windows cut from cards to focus on specific sentences/words

Make Texts Accessible to All Students (cont'd.)

Scenario

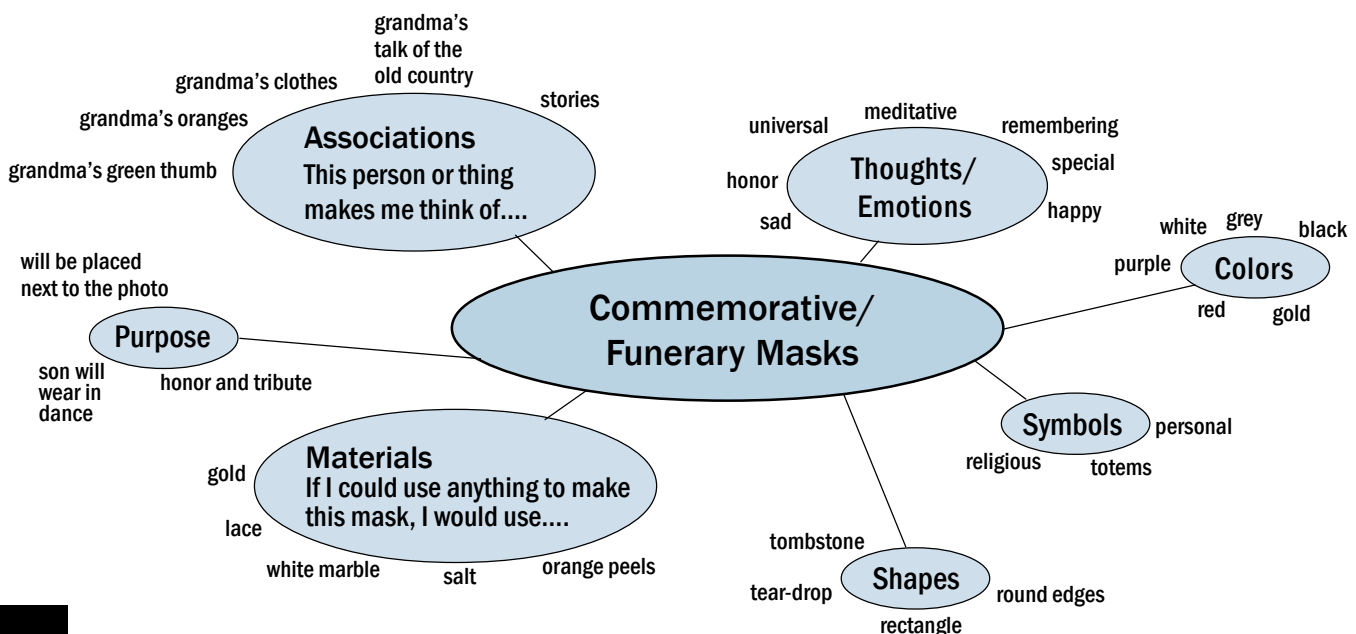
Ms. Thorne teaches Art, Grades Seven and Eight. Her students are starting a unit on masks that encompasses all four strands of the TEKS. Each student will create a papier-mâché mask that is consistent with historical or contemporary uses of masks. Ms. Thorne provides students with a handout on the purposes of masks. She knows that some of her students may have difficulty reading the written text and that others will not be motivated to read it.

To help all students with the text, she places a highlighter and a blank graphic organizer for each student on the students' worktables. After giving students an opportunity to skim and highlight the text, she facilitates a brainstorming activity on commemorative/ funerary purposes of masks, asking students questions such as, "What colors do you think of for a mask of this purpose? Why? What about in other cultures? Is a funeral always a sad time? How might their masks be different?" The graphic organizer shown below is the result of their brainstorming activity.

Directions:

Funerary = of or for or relating to a funeral

Commemorative = something that honors or preserves the memory of another



Make Assignment and Testing Modifications/Accommodations

Modified Format

- Change short answer questions into multiple-choice questions
- Change essay questions to listing, charts, or diagrams
- For fill-in-the-blank questions, place the blank at the end of the sentence
- Align the blanks so that students write all of their responses on the left side of the page
- Allow the student to write on the test and transfer to scannable sheets later
- Use more than one format of questioning, but only one format per page (e.g., multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, matching)
- Use capital letters for instructions and/or place a box around the instructions
- Type all tests
- Reduce the length of exams
- Provide open book exams

Oral Testing/Assignments

- Record the test on one tape recorder and allow students to record answers on another
- Read test to the student during testing or at a different time
- Let the student respond orally
- Allow for articulation problems in responses

Modified Grading

- Allow the student to answer as many questions as possible and grade only the number completed
- Grade long term projects in sections and combine the parts for an overall grade

Use of Rubrics

- Use rubrics to allow students to self-assess their progress and clearly identify what they need to do to progress in their learning

Extra Time

- Allow a longer wait time of 30-45 seconds after asking the student a question
- Do not expect an immediate response
- Have the student come in during tutorials or at campus-designated study times to finish or redo assignments
- Let the student know there is no time limit on finishing the test; make arrangements with the student to finish

Make Assignment and Testing Modifications/Accommodations (*cont'd.*)

Scenario

Mr. Johnson's Theatre Arts, Level I class has just finished studying *The Death of a Salesman*. The class has identified examples of theatrical conventions in live theatre, film, and television presentations of Arthur Miller's work; analyzed characters' physical, intellectual, emotional, and social dimensions; portrayed believable characters; and related historical and cultural influences on the play and the roles of live theatre, film, and television performances.

Mr. Johnson's test at the end of the unit has a performance component and a short written component. He will score the test based on a rubric that he and the students developed at the beginning of the unit. The rubric includes the Theatre TEKS that the unit addressed: theatrical conventions, characterization, and historical and cultural influences on the play. In preparing for the test, students self-assess their current understandings on the rubric, so they will know where their needs are in terms of test preparation. He is careful to align the test with the expectations defined in the rubric and the ways the unit has been taught.

After class, he consults the IEPs of students with special needs and finds that three of them in his class need extra time for written tests, and one student will need the test read to him. After consulting with the students' special education teacher, he makes the following plan. Two students will begin the test with the entire class and have an entire class period to finish. If they need additional time, they will complete the test the next day. The student who needs to test orally will take the test in another room with a paraprofessional reading the test to her and recording her responses.

Be Proactive About Behavior Management

Opportunity for Movement

- Give an active student an assignment that requires movement, e.g., errands, handing out materials, collecting materials
- Provide periodic opportunities for the entire class to move

Proximity Supervision

- Design the classroom so there are spaces where the student can work near the teacher or away from others
- Walk or stand near the student who needs a close teacher presence to maintain appropriate behavior

Minimal Auditory/Visual Stimuli

- Seat the student in a place that is most conducive to the student's specific learning style
- Reduce the number of words or material put on the wall or chalkboard
- Provide a study carrel for independent work

Positive Reinforcement

- Get student input to identify reinforcers; what is rewarding for one student may be punishing for another
- Note academic or behavioral performance on a chart or graph for a visual of success
- Give frequent feedback

Defined Limits

- Practice expected behaviors at the beginning of school
- Practice what the student should do when he or she is out of control
- Post and discuss rules to establish understanding; review periodically

Cooling Off

- Establish a positive place in the room where students can go to cope with problems
- Allow wait time for students to follow instructions or make a decision, especially after a problem has occurred

Scenario

Toni is a seventh grade student who often has loud outbursts when transitioning from one activity to another. Her band teacher, Ms. Giardino, has taught the class procedures for entering the room, getting prepared for playing (putting instruments together and getting out the music posted on the board), transitioning from one piece to another, and exiting the room. She has tried seating Toni at the end of the trumpet section and row so that she would be easily accessible to her, enabling her to quietly redirect Toni to what she should be doing. It seems like she is unable to make these transitions without disrupting.

Ms. Giardino meets with Toni's special education teacher, and they devise the following plan. Several times a week, at a time when no one is in the band room, the paraprofessional will practice with Toni entering the band room, assembling her trumpet, finding the correct piece of music, getting out her pencil, putting up the first piece of music and finding another one, putting away her instrument and materials, and leaving the classroom. Also, Ms. Giardino will give Toni a cue of snapping fingers when a transition is about to occur. Each time Toni makes a smooth transition, she will give her a smile and a "thumbs up," which is very reinforcing to her.

Provide for Students with Various Learning Styles

Auditory Learner

Characteristics

- Easily distracted
- Speaks in a rhythmic pattern
- Learns by listening
- Moves lips while reading
- Dialogues both internally and externally

Strategies

- Use a tape recorder and have student tape own important information
- Provide auditory clues
- Speak in varied voice tones
- Encourage verbalization of steps needed to complete tasks and assignments

Strategies (cont'd.)

- Test the way you teach
- After each section of instruction, review what was learned
- Use music, chants, and mnemonic devices
- Provide active learning opportunities for students to show what they know:
 - Role plays
 - Panel discussions
 - Newscasts
 - Debates
 - Peer teaching
 - Improvisations

Scenario

Mr. Thomas is an elementary school art teacher. He has found that one of his afternoon classes has a group of students who are very easily distracted. Mr. Thomas decided to try playing background music while students are working on their projects.

On the first day he planned to use the music, he showed students artworks that elicit various moods and emotions and discussed them. He then had the same discussion about several pieces of music. He told the class that he was going to start using music in the class and why. He gave the class criteria for music he would play (e.g., carefully selected, predictably repetitive, played in a major key, instrumental). When students asked if they could bring their own CDs to class, Mr. Thomas stated that they would have to meet the criteria and that he would have to preview them.

As students gathered their materials to work on their current project, Mr. Thomas started the music. He wrote the name of the CD on the board with the performer. Several students said that the music was too loud, so he turned down the volume. When some students still complained, he asked them to move further away from the speakers.

After several days of using the music, students notice that he has repeated some of the same CDs. Mr. Thomas then names a “DJ of the Day” who gets to select that day’s CD.

After several weeks, Mr. Thomas has noticed that the class has become more focused on their work, concentrating for increasingly longer periods of time and becoming more productive. The artworks that students in that class are producing are of better quality than those of other classes.¹

¹Adapted from: Jensen, E. (2001). *Arts with the Brain in Mind*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Provide for Students with Various Learning Styles

Visual Learner

Characteristics

- Organized, observant, appearance-oriented
- Memorizes by picture
- Would rather read than be read to
- Needs overall view and purpose
- Remembers what was seen

Strategies

- Repeat information so it can be seen in several different forms
- Use colored chalk, markers, and pencils
- Use pictures, transparencies, diagrams, charts, and posters
- Highlight important words or facts
- Use icons, such as a symbol by what is important on the chalkboard

Strategies (cont'd.)

- Use graphic aids, such as filmstrips, slides, videos, illustrations, photographs, PowerPoint presentations, and flip charts
- Use graphic organizers and outlines
- Stand still while presenting chunks of information
- Provide visual ways for students to show what they know:
 - Illustrations
 - Collage
 - Time line
 - Flow charts
 - Posters

Scenario

Mr. Hernandez teaches music to fourth grade students. He wants students to categorize a variety of musical sounds, including children's and adults' voices; woodwind, brass, string, percussion, keyboard, and electronic instruments; and instruments of various cultures. In the past, he has found that this was a very difficult skill for some of his visual learners to develop. To introduce the topic, he reserves the school's computer lab and plans to use two of CEDFA's "Connect the TEKS"² links to illustrate the visual side of sound.

First, he uses the website, "The Sundry: Harmonics Applet,"³ to illustrate the difference in sound waves between a clarinet and a trumpet. Then, he takes them to the website, "Duke Ellington: Celebrating 100 Years of the Man and His Music,"⁴ to illustrate how Ellington connected his musical compositions with his visual art, especially colors. As Mr. Hernandez introduces new musical sounds to his fourth grade students, he continues to give them opportunities to connect the musical sounds with sound waves, color, and art.

² http://finearts.esc20.net/resource_center.htm

³ <http://library.thinkquest.org/19537/cgi-bin/showharm.cgi>

⁴ <http://dellington.org/lessons/lesson01.html>

Provide for Students with Various Learning Styles

Tactile or Kinesthetic Learner

Characteristics

- Touches people and stands close
- Moves a lot
- Learns by doing
- Points when reading
- Responds physically
- Memorizes by moving and seeing

Strategies

- Use materials that can be touched, manipulated, and moved
- Use games that use the body and get students out of their seats
- Use game boards, puzzles, and card games
- Send students on scavenger hunts to find answers
- Allow movement
- Use electroboards
- Put tasks on cards
- Let students write on the chalkboard, sandpaper, and textured fabric

Strategies (cont'd.)

- Let them “fingerspell” on their arms or legs
- Use clay in activities
- Let them practice writing words or facts with string or cold spaghetti
- Use props and puppets
- Create simulations
- Provide parallel assistance
- Speak to each child individually
- Share personal experiences
- Provide alternative seating, such as beanbag pillows or rocking chairs
- Provide tactile or kinesthetic ways for students to show what they know:
 - Models
 - Games
 - Experiments
 - Sculptures
 - Acting
 - Pantomime

Scenario

Tomás, like many children with learning disabilities, has trouble operating in space. A second grade student, he confuses up and down and left and right. He is unable to walk backwards. He has trouble following spatial directions and cannot make his body parts work as a whole. Tomás' theatre teacher wants him to expand his spatial awareness through dramatic play, using expressive and rhythmic movement; demonstrate safe use of movement and voice; and employ music, creative movement, and visual components in dramatic play. His teacher begins each theatre lesson with Tomás standing in a clearly marked space against the wall, so he would always have a “home base.” His teacher also marked the space around his desk with masking tape on the floor.

In theatre class, Tomás learned to plan his movements when he had to move over and around all sorts of obstacles. When pretending to be a puppet, he practiced using his arms and legs as though they were pulled by imaginary strings and came to understand how the parts of his body worked together as a whole. As Tomás learned where his own body was in space, his use of space on paper improved in the classroom, and even his handwriting showed improvement. Soon classroom directions such as, “Put your name in the upper left-hand corner,” had meaning for Tomás.⁵

⁵Adapted from Smith, S. (2001). *The Power of the Arts*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company.

Use Assistive Technology

The following list, while not comprehensive, is provided to give fine arts teachers an idea of the range of technology used by students with special needs to succeed in their academic endeavors. Some of the technologies are highly specialized. If you have a student whose IEP specifies the use of any of these, you will want to confer with the special education teacher to determine how the technology should be used in fine arts classes.

Alternate Access

- Alternate keyboard
- Alternate mouse/joystick
- Head pointing/Optical head pointing
- Onscreen keyboard
- Switches

Auditory Aids

- Auditory trainer
- Closed caption TV
- FM system
- Note-taking devices
(e.g., i communicator, sign-tel)
- Soundfield systems
- Teletype devices (TDD)

Augmentive Communication

- Manual communication boards/books
- Voice output communication devices

Environmental Controls

- AbleLink TV/VCR remote control
- Power Link 2 control unit
- Signaling devices
(flashers, door knockers, fire alarms)
- Vibrating alarm clock

Language Aids

- Computer scanner
- Computer with talking word processing
- Electronic readers
- Language Master
- Spell checker
- Tape recorder

Personal Care

- Adapted eating/feeding devices
- Devices for self-help skills

Writing Aids

- Portable word processor
- Computer with word processing with word prediction
- Computer with speech recognition software
- Electronic notepads/dictionary
- Pencil grips
- Slant board

Mobility

- Gait trainers
- Walkers
- Wheelchairs
- Canes
- Seeing-eye dogs

Positioning

- Dynamic standers
- Prone and supine standers
- Standing frames

Recreation/Leisure

- Adapted sports equipment
- Computer art
- Computer games
- Synthesizer

Vision Aids

- Braille writers
- Braille-n-Speak
- Cassette tape recordings
- Large print
- Magnifier, CCTV
- Scanners

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