



**The International Organization
on Arts and Disability**

The Contours of Inclusion:

Inclusive Arts Teaching and Learning

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This publication is dedicated to the VSA home office staff who supported the development and dissemination of this inclusive arts teaching and learning curriculum design knowledge: James E. Modrick, Mary Liniger, Stephanie Litvak, Melissa Del Rios, Leah Barnum, Kimberly Willey, Jeffrey P. King, and Kirsten Kedzierski.



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PREFACE

BILL HENDERSON

Inclusion started in 1989 at the Patrick O’Hearn School in Boston, Massachusetts, because parents of students with significant disabilities advocated hard for it. They maintained that under both federal and state legislation, their children were entitled to participate in regular education classrooms with appropriate supports and services. City officials listened to these parents, and the School Department decreed that it should happen. We, the staff at the O’Hearn, were not initially sure how we were going to integrate students with such a wide range of abilities in the same classrooms. An assistant superintendent offered us a \$5,000 grant and suggested that we connect with Very Special Arts of Massachusetts, which subsequently became known as VSAM. O’Hearn staff met with VSAM representatives to plan a variety of part-time residencies with visiting artists, geared to facilitating integration and to forging a new inclusive identity for the school community.

These initial arts experiences were very successful. With the help of the visiting artists, children with and without disabilities participated together in exciting activities. The children collaborated in creating murals, pictures, songs, and skits that depicted and celebrated the school’s rich diversity, which now encompassed ability as well as ethnicity and languages. Every student was able to contribute to these arts projects, albeit sometimes at different skill levels and in different ways. It was wonderful to see how children interacted so naturally with their classmates, even those with significant needs. All children demonstrated genuine delight throughout the activities and felt very proud of their accomplishments. Staff and parent leaders were so impressed with these initial arts experiences that they requested that the arts be declared an integral component of the school’s inclusive mission. Using funds allocated from the general budget of the School Department, the O’Hearn then recruited and hired full-time arts teachers skilled at including students with and without disabilities. Small grants and monies from additional fundraising allowed us to continue to contract for part-time visiting artists for innovative programs and enrichment.

The enactment of federal legislation, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB), prompted schools serving students with disabilities to focus much more on achievement and not just on participation. Not only were children with disabilities supposed to be considered for inclusion in classes and activities with their nondisabled peers; now they were required to be accessing and demonstrating success in the general curriculum. All students with

disabilities had to take high-stakes exams that measured their progress according to rigorous standards. Their results on these assessments counted toward their individual promotion and graduation. Schools would also be evaluated and publicly ranked as to how well their students with disabilities as a group were performing.

Although the standardized-test performance of students with disabilities at the O'Hearn was generally higher than that of students with disabilities who attended more restrictive settings, it still lagged behind their nondisabled peers. We would have to focus more on achievement, and the arts would continue to be an important factor. Students enroll in special education because they have a physical or mental disability that affects their learning. Usually they need specialized instruction, supports, and a range of accommodations or modifications to perform at high levels and/or at their potential. Educators have been recently promoting Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as a way of benefiting all students while particularly enhancing the performance of students with disabilities. Digital text and assistive technologies, for example, have been cited as one UDL way of helping students with print disabilities access more information, engage more in classroom activities, and show greater understanding.

Once again, as we had utilized the arts to foster the participation and positive interactions of students with disabilities in activities with their nondisabled peers, we turned to the arts to assist with the tremendous challenge of improving academic performance. Arts teachers and visiting artists organized more of their lessons around topics addressed in the new standards. They also collaborated more and shared strategies with classroom teachers to figure out ways to incorporate arts experiences throughout the curriculum in all subject areas. The arts emerged as a tremendous UDL tool. Whether it was dramatizing a scene from a novel, singing the names of the states, dancing the functions of particular bones, or creating a model of an animal habitat, students were engaged more, and they showed greater understanding through the arts. Along with other specialized instruction and appropriate adaptations, the arts have helped students with a wide range of disabilities at the O'Hearn boost achievement to much higher levels.

It is critical that more educators become enlightened about the power of the arts. This publication, *Contours of Inclusion: Case Studies of Inclusive Arts Teaching and Learning*, provides specific examples of how the arts have promoted both the participation and performance of students with disabilities. Interestingly, these arts experiences that are so essential for students with disabilities have also enhanced teaching and learning for students without disabilities. The arts clearly elicit more creativity and energy for all. Educators and policy makers will appreciate the case studies, which provide real exemplars and should motivate and guide others to action. Let's go, arts!

Bill Henderson was the principal of the Patrick O'Hearn in the Boston Public Schools from 1989 to 2009. Upon his retirement, the school's name was changed to the William W. Henderson Inclusion School.

THE DESIGN AND EVALUATION OF INCLUSIVE ARTS TEACHING AND LEARNING

DON GLASS

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INTRODUCTION

America's classrooms are rapidly becoming more inclusive with increasing learning, cultural, and linguistic diversity. As teachers and school administrators take on the challenge of meeting this demand, knowledge and practices from special education are finding expanding application in general education classrooms. Because VSA sees the arts, imagination, and literacy as central to this shift, we are taking the lead in providing professional development that:

- Repositions the arts as a *learning strategy* that enhances and integrates well with major curricular and instructional frameworks (UbD, UDL, DI).
- Translates Universal Design for Learning (UDL) into practice using the arts for rich, engaging, and meaningful low/high-technology options for teaching and learning.

The case studies in this publication build on a foundational essay by Dennie Palmer Wolf (2008) and case example by Traci Molloy and Aamir Rodriguez (2008) from *The Contours of Inclusion: Frameworks and Tools for Evaluating Arts in Education*. Their essay and case example integrate knowledge from the field of special education with the key principles of standards and equity movement by including dimensions of the arts to expand our understanding of inclusive student-learning opportunities. The VSA evaluation team has generated additional case studies from our education and professional development programming to examine what inclusive arts teaching and learning looks like in practice. We are excited to contribute these rich educative case studies to a growing case literature that will include additional VSA examples in the forthcoming book *Universal Design for Learning and Technology in the Classroom* (2011) from Guilford Press. Each of these essays would qualify for what Lee Shulman (2007) describes as a *precedent* type of case study because they “capture and communicate concrete examples of practice.”

ARTS CONNECT ALL CASE STUDIES

The first two cases come from a program evaluation of two organizations that received Arts Connect All funding from the MetLife Foundation to explore making their arts education programs more inclusive. In the Arts Connect All cases, Giangreco's (2003) indicators of inclusion are used with the Universal Design for Learning (CAST 2009) and Differentiated Instruction (Tomlinson and McTighe, 2006) to identify and understand the inclusive practices that emerged from each site. Using these as analytical frameworks helped us to show the use of arts teaching and learning practices for a more general education audience. The case studies examine the process of designing more inclusive teaching and learning opportunities, as well as considering the role of theater and movement in fostering an engaging academic and social learning environment.

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE CASE STUDIES

The second set of case studies comes from the VSA Communities of Practice, where we have integrated program evaluation with practitioner inquiry to support the application of Universal Design for Learning. The purpose of the professional development and evaluation work at VSA is to provide curriculum design and evaluation theory with practical frameworks to inform the design of inclusive, standards-based, arts-integrated educational experiences. The big idea underpinning our professional development offerings is that quality, inclusive arts teaching and learning is enhanced by an ongoing cycle of collaborative and thoughtful curriculum design and evaluation. The cycle begins with high-quality content and curriculum that are universally designed for access and inclusion. The cycle then continues with ongoing assessment to inform student and teacher work. Our VSA Institute and online professional learning communities provide the conceptual framework, tools, and processes to support an ongoing reflective design and evaluation cycle focused on improving instruction and student performance.

The conceptual frameworks and tools are grounded in social-constructivist learning theories of Vygotsky and Bruner. Many of the processes and protocols come from reform-oriented professional development approaches: curriculum mapping (Hayes Jacobs, 2004), instructional coaching and professional learning communities (Annenberg Institute, 2004a, 2004b), and reviews of student work and teacher assignments (Blythe, Allen, and Powell, 1999; Mitchell 1996). These practices are aligned with aspects of the consensus view of effective professional development (Elmore, 2002; Smylie et al., 2001) and the National Staff Development Council's *Standards for Staff Development* (2001). The practices engage teachers in reflective practices related to their classroom instruction, which are connected to a larger school reform agenda. At the same time, the evaluative nature of these practices resonates strongly with collaborative and participatory approaches to evaluation (Patton, 1997; Fetterman, 2001).

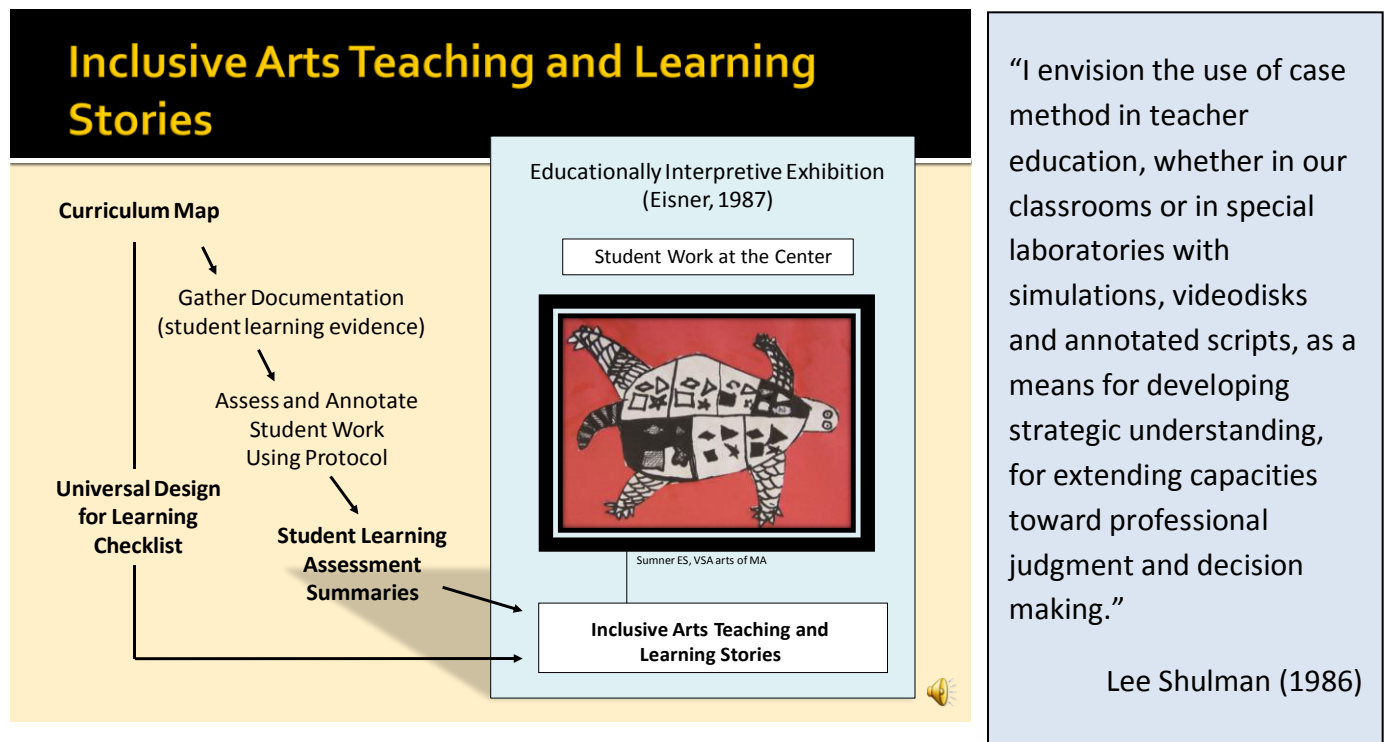
CURRICULUM DESIGN AND EVALUATION CYCLE

Steps	Conceptual Frameworks	Design/Evaluation Tools
Begin with High-Quality Curriculum Design: Design aligned, coherent curriculum around meaningful, worthwhile content and standards.	Module 1: Understanding by Design Understanding by Design (UbD) (Wiggins and McTighe, 1998; Tomlinson and McTighe, 2006)	UbD Template (Wiggins and McTighe 1998) and Curriculum Map (Hayes Jacobs 2004)
Design for Inclusion and Access: Design engaging, meaningful, flexible, and culturally responsive curriculum.	Module 2: Universal Design for Learning Universal Design for Learning (Rose and Meyer, 2008) Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (Stone Hanley and Noblit, 2009)	UDL Guidelines 2.0 (CAST, 2011)
Inform Student and Teacher Work Through Ongoing Assessment: Design valid assessment tools to inform student performance and differentiated instruction. Collect and document student learning evidence.	Module 3: Educative Assessment Educative Assessment (Wiggins 1998, Tomlinson and McTighe 2006)	Protocol for Generating Assessment Criteria (Blythe et al. 1999, Glass 2007)
Share Educationally Interpretive Exhibitions with Community: Share insights about student learning and useful inclusive instructional strategies.	Module 4: Educationally Interpretive Exhibitions and Educative Cases Educationally Interpretive Exhibitions (Eisner 1997), Case Studies (Shulman 2007)	Case Study Rubric (Darling-Hammond et. al. 2009)

In many ways, our professional development content provides a unifying structure to integrate various curricular and instructional frameworks promoted by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD): Understanding by Design (Wiggins and McTighe, 1998; Wiggins, 1998), Universal Design for Learning (Rose and Meyer, 2008), and Differentiated Instruction (Tomlinson and McTighe, 2006). The professional development also builds capacity to use the tools and processes of design and evaluation to inform their thinking and practice. A growth area is to integrate recent work in culturally responsive pedagogy (Stone Hanley and Noblit, 2009) in expanding our concepts of inclusion and engagement.

The design and delivery of our professional development applies these design frameworks by providing meaningful and practical content, multiple and flexible options and opportunities to learn, and a range of options to demonstrate and evaluate understanding, knowledge, and skills. The delivery format is a hybrid of face-to-face workshop sessions and distance learning using teleconferencing and collaborative online Web-based tools like Chicago Arts Partnership in Education's (CAPE) Action

Research Publishing System (ARPS). The assessment of the professional development is evidenced through the application of the course concepts and practices during the ongoing inquiry facilitated by coaches in our online learning communities, as well as through educationally interpretive exhibitions (Eisner, 1997), or case studies (Shulman, 2007) to demonstrate curricular skills and knowledge and their impact on students with disabilities. We are working in partnership with Lesley University to design similar coursework that would provide a graduate credit option for our professional development.



INCLUSIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING FRAMEWORKS

This section provides an operational definition of inclusion in terms of classroom population and shared learning opportunities, as well as reviewing two curricular and instructional frameworks that help define what good-quality inclusive instruction looks like in practice. These indicators and frameworks were used in the analysis of the Arts Connect All case studies and are now being used to guide curricular and instructional decision-making in the VSA Communities of Practice.

INCLUSION

The evaluation questions for these case studies are partially motivated by the lack of a consistent practical definition of “inclusion” within the policy and literature on educational and disability rights (Artiles et al., 2006; Cushing et al., 2009). VSA recognizes that this requires an understanding of practitioners’ context-based, operational definitions of inclusion. How inclusion is operationalized can be seen in the strategies that teaching artists have developed for the engagement of various students, use of space, design of arts curriculum and instruction, and use of interpretive services or adaptive devices.

In the Arts Connect All request for proposals, “inclusion” is generally defined as “having students with and without disabilities interacting in activities together to create awareness, understanding, and respect. To create inclusive learning environments, accessible education programs engage students with and without disabilities by incorporating multimodal approaches and accommodating a range of abilities, learning styles, and skills.” This decision to provide a broad definition was made in consideration of the variability of contexts, as well as the need to provide latitude for the process of designing, evaluating, and improving innovative inclusive programs.

The literature in educational inclusion does provide some guidelines to begin framing what good inclusion looks like in terms of the composition of the student population and the types of instructional opportunities that are made available. Michael F. Giangreco, professor of education at the University of Vermont and lead scholar in inclusive education, provides some indicators in his 2003 book chapter, “Moving Toward Inclusive Education.” Giangreco proposes that inclusive education meet the following indicators:

INDICATORS OF INCLUSION

- General education settings are assumed to be the first placement option for students with disabilities.
- The educational settings are demographically representative; i.e., roughly 10% of the general population has a “disability” – the same should be true for the inclusive educational setting.
- Students with disabilities are placed in the same age groupings as their non-disabled peers.
- Students with disabilities participate in shared educational activities with “non-disabled” peers, while pursuing appropriate, individualized educational goals.
- These shared educational activities take place in settings frequented by people without disabilities (i.e., the inclusion happens in a commonplace, not specialized environment).
- Learning outcomes reflect the comprehensive development of the student (i.e., includes social learning outcomes as well as academic outcomes).
- All of these features are ongoing in a program.

(Giangreco, 2003, pp. 78–79)

In other words, inclusion is a process of enhancing the participation of all students, regardless of disability labels, in the educational activities of a general group of their peers. The engagement of all the students should be similarly high. Likewise, the learning outcomes for each student should be shared, as well as the appropriate and optimal level for that individual. VSA does not consider these indicators to be a prescription of what inclusion needs to look like, but rather a guide that can challenge or extend our thinking and practice so that we can create the most inclusive and universally accessible educational opportunities as possible within a specific context.

Giangreco's seven indicators generally outline aspects of student population and opportunities to learn for inclusion. But are there any frameworks that can help guide inclusive curricular or instructional design and practice? VSA is currently exploring the Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction frameworks that have significant currency in the education field. Both frameworks have origins in working with students outside of general education, and both are also increasingly relevant to the general education classroom.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

Universal Design for Learning has its origins in architectural design and access. Although Universal Design is concerned with removing barriers to the access and use of architectural spaces and resources, UDL is a curriculum design framework for removing barriers to the access to curriculum and understanding of content. The UDL guidelines are a planning tool for designing multiple and flexible ways to represent curricular content, multiple and flexible ways to engage students with this content, and multiple and flexible ways for students to demonstrate what they understand, know, and are able to do (CAST 2009).

Universal Design for Learning Guidelines 1.0 (CAST 2009)	Neurological Networks (Rose and Meyer 2008)
Representation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide options for perception • Provide options for language and symbols • Provide options for comprehension 	Recognition Networks
Expression and Action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide options for physical action 	Strategic Networks

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide options for expressive skills and fluency • Provide options for executive functions 	
Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide options for recruiting interest • Provide options for sustaining effort and persistence • Provide options for self-regulation 	Affective Networks

Drawing from the work of Vygotsky and neuroscience, the features of UDL address multiple mental aspects of learning through multiple neurological networks (Coyne et al., 2008; Rose and Meyer, 2008). These networks align with the three principles of representation, expression, and engagement:

- Recognition networks: the pathways that absorb, order, and store information. Recognition networks are supported through flexible means of presenting instruction and content to students.
- Strategic networks: the pathways that transfer information into practical application. Strategic pathways are supported through flexibility in students' expression of comprehension and application of skills and knowledge.
- Affective networks: the pathways that maintain interest and focus. Affective pathways are supported through the use of teaching techniques that maintain student motivation to participate in lessons.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

UDL and Differentiated Instruction share many aspects in terms of supporting a wide variety of students to be engaged and successful (Hall, 2002). DI and UDL are similar in that both strategies aim to cultivate responsive teaching and learning environments that engage students in several manners and through several facets of learning (Tomlinson, et al., 2003; Tomlinson and McTighe, 2006). Where UDL is used for planning an accessible curriculum, DI is more focused on both planned and ongoing instructional strategies based on responses to ongoing student assessment.

Differentiated Instruction is not only a general strategy for good-quality responsive teaching, it is also an established instructional-design model. DI is about connecting students with meaningful content by providing engaging instructional options that support students with various levels of readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Teachers get to know their students better by collecting information about student interests, readiness, and learning styles through pre-assessment activities, ongoing

classroom observation, and assessment of student work. Instructional decisions are informed by an ongoing assessment process of student performance using clearly articulated learning outcomes and transparent assessment criteria.

Some examples of instructional strategies advocated for DI include:

- Varied instructional and resource materials
- Temporary scaffolding
- Guidance to independent practice
- Flexible grouping strategies
- Ongoing diagnostic and formative assessment

THE PROCESS OF INCLUSION

Although inclusion in education is not always firmly defined, it is a worthy goal. This is true in light of the increasing diversity of student populations—diversity not only in the number of students with disabilities integrated into general education settings, but in the linguistic, cultural, and other features of students’ backgrounds as well. The inclusion of a range of students can provide benefits to all the students involved. By providing a broader range of access to learning opportunities, students who were formerly excluded may join their peers. Those who had not been excluded may find those new learning opportunities beneficial as well. In both circumstances, the students may gain exposure to one another, thus increasing their repertoires for social interaction and opportunities for successful co-learning.

Moving toward inclusion is a process that is ongoing and dynamic (Giangreco, 2003; Rose and Meyer, 2008). Giangreco explains this process by giving an example of what we have learned about supporting students in self-contained special education settings. This specific knowledge may then have increased relevancy in settings that are more diverse, inclusive, and universally accessible. Giangreco suggests that we need only to look back in the history of education for students with Down syndrome. Twenty years ago, students with Down syndrome were rarely part of general education programs, but they have since become more regular members of general education classrooms. This is due not to changes in the condition of Down syndrome but to changes in the attitudes of educational communities toward these students, and an increased interest in curricular and instructional practices that provide options for everyone to learn together. Though not all students with Down syndrome participate with their peers 100 percent of the time in general education, their participation has increased substantially.

Inclusion can appear very differently, at different levels and through different means, depending on the context and circumstances. An aim of the Arts Connect All program is to support arts organizations in their own process of designing inclusive programming. Likewise, in the VSA Communities of Practice,

actual students with whom they are working. The inclusive practices that emerge out of a specific context, working with specific students, may find more universal application in the next program cycle of curriculum design. For example, if an audio recorder is provided to one student who is an English language learner to support her in generating a narrative, then perhaps this same option can be provided to other students to support their own generative writing process. The purpose of the following case studies is to share inclusive practices that may have wider application, particularly ones that demonstrate the role of the arts in providing a meaningful, engaging option for students.

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ARTS CONNECT ALL

Access to the arts is achieved when all people have equal opportunity to attend, participate in, and learn through arts experiences. VSA and the MetLife Foundation have designed the Arts Connect All funding opportunity to encourage arts organizations to create or enhance multiple session, inclusive education programs by strengthening partnerships with local public schools. The goals of Arts Connect All are to:

- Enable more students with disabilities to experience social, cognitive, and cultural development through arts learning alongside their peers without disabilities;
- Create educational access and inclusion in the arts for students with disabilities; and
- Document the contributions that arts organizations make to inclusive education in public schools.

THE PROCESS OF INCLUSION:

CASE STUDIES OF INCLUSIVE ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

LEAH J. BARNUM WITH DON GLASS

CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY

In 2008–2009, VSA undertook a systematic look at Arts Connect All programs that self-reported improvements in the quality of their arts-learning opportunities and in their capacity to provide arts education to students with disabilities in inclusive settings. Of these programs, VSA arts selected sites that had been awarded the maximum of three Arts Connect All grants, and featured unique program strategies for inclusion. For this paper, we are featuring two of the case study sites that are most illustrative of the aspects of Universal Design for Learning: Deaf West Theatre in North Hollywood, California (combining students who are deaf with students who are hearing for theater learning), and Luna Kids Dance in Berkeley, California (creative dance learning).

The guiding evaluation questions explored through the Arts Connect All case studies were:

- What does inclusive arts education look like in practice?
- How do these practices relate to Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction?
- How do the arts play a role in fostering inclusive learning opportunities?

A collaborative evaluation approach was used with each site to better articulate their learning outcomes and inclusive practices. The case studies are based on the analysis of descriptive quantitative and qualitative information from the Arts Connect All program. Data were gathered through several sources: a review of internal and external documents from the programs, interviews with relevant personnel, participant observations of program activities, and reflective field notes. Data from the review of documents provided background information on the issues in which the case studies were situated. Data from the interviews provided background information on the programs and an insight into each organization's operational definition of inclusion. Data from the observations provided first-hand evidence to verify, clarify, and deepen interpretations of the information conveyed in the documents and interviews.

Once gathered, these data were pattern-coded for themes around inclusion and inclusive instructional practices. These were compared for similarities and differences to ascertain general descriptions of the programs and the process of inclusion in the programs. The data were also analyzed for specific factors that support or bar inclusion of any students. The case studies feature each organization’s program design and inclusive strategies, as well as an analysis of inclusion and inclusive practices.

CASE STUDY 1: DEAF WEST THEATRE

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

Deaf West Theatre was founded in North Hollywood, California, by Ed Waterstreet in 1990. It began as an effort to bring American Sign Language (ASL) theater programming to the large deaf community of metropolitan Los Angeles, using an innovative format based in ASL. Today, the theater continues this innovation as it stages productions of classic and original plays and musicals featuring deaf and hearing actors who blend English and ASL to create performances accessible to both deaf and hearing audiences of all ages.

PROGRAM DESIGN

Deaf West Theatre’s in-school programs aim to teach important lessons in a more accessible manner. Deaf West Theatre programming was structured with several inclusive goals in mind:

- To reduce the communicative and cultural barriers between deaf and hearing students.
- To give hearing and deaf students opportunities to share theatrical experiences with one another and their families.
- To develop the self-esteem of deaf students.

Deaf West Theatre used the following program activities to meet these aims:

- Dramatic Gestures—in-school performing arts workshops provided by a deaf teaching artist fluent in ASL
- In-school performances using the *Discovery Guide* education resource.

Arts Connect All funding for 2007 was used to relaunch Deaf West Theatre’s in-school theater workshop series *Dramatic Gestures* for elementary school students. The workshops were designed for both deaf and hearing students and are usually taught by a team of two teaching artists, one deaf and one hearing. Dramatic Gestures, because it is guided by both a deaf and a hearing teaching artist and the content is designed for students of varying abilities and knowledge of theater, is meant to be accessible to elementary-level learners from mixed or deaf-only learning environments. The Dramatic Gestures program is a three-session series with each session ranging from 45 to 90 minutes. These workshops each address a separate element of theater and deaf culture. The workshops are intended

to teach students the essentials of movement, pantomime, character, and ensemble, as well as provide the psychosocial benefits of performing arts and inclusive educational opportunities.

Deaf West Theatre’s Dramatic Gestures program addressed the following specific learning goals, which are aligned with California State English Language Arts (SELA) and Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) standards:

Standards	Instructional Activities
VAPA Standard 3.1 Role and Cultural Significance of Theater	Session 1: Ensemble —Students learn to watch and respond to one another as a means of producing theatrical work. Students explore American Sign Language and deaf culture, and its role in American theater.
VAPA Standard 1.1 Development of the Vocabulary of Theater VAPA Standard 1.2 Comprehension and Analysis of the Elements of Theater	Session 2: Gesture —Students build understanding of theater etiquette and vocabulary, such as character, setting, plot, and theme, through interactive theater exercises. Students learn to use gesture to act out a concept or story.
SELA Standard, Reading 3.0 Literary Response and Analysis VAPA Standard 4.2 Critical Assessment of Theater VAPA Standard 4.3 Derivation of Meaning from Works of Theater	Session 3: Character Development —Students explore how actors and playwrights communicate meaning. Student learning is evaluated through written reviews. Students learn to use body and facial gestures to express emotion and learn the concept of “character,” character motivation, and staying in character.

Schools that provided these workshops also hosted a production of the in-school performance. Deaf West Theatre was able to support a touring production of in-school performances for eight Los Angeles–area elementary schools. This production used the blended voiced and signed style typical of Deaf West Theatre to tell stories to pre-Kindergarten and elementary school learners. Classroom

teachers at schools hosting these performances were given a Discovery Guide that they could use to prepare their students for the performances and to review the content of the performances afterward. The in-school performances were intended to teach students stories on acceptance, cooperation, and diversity. The performances were also meant to provide multimodal access to language arts and performing arts viewing and learning. In addition, the performances exposed students to American Sign Language (ASL) and deaf culture.

During the workshops the teaching artist led students in activities, mostly based around expression and movement, where he would describe and then model the activities. Activities involved students watching and responding to one another (ensemble skills), gesturing to show different emotions or other character qualities (character development, expression skills), and pantomiming activities to tell a story (narrative, expression skills). Although these very specific learning goals and skill-building activities aligned with their selected arts standards, the emphasis of instruction was on general English comprehension and language arts learning, social development, communication, disability awareness, and the affective engagement as opposed to performance skills.

INCLUDING STUDENTS WHO ARE DEAF

Although a goal of inclusion is to be as universal as possible in terms of providing multiple and flexible options, knowledge of specific issues around the disabilities of students is critical. The arts organization featured in this case study explored ways to include hearing and deaf students in theater education experiences. Students who are deaf face specific, often acute, challenges in educational settings, especially when it comes to particular scenarios (i.e., bilingual and mainstreamed environments) and subjects (i.e., English literacy, language arts). According to SRI (Blackorby and Knokey, 2006) only 12 percent of high school students with hearing disabilities read at grade level. Consequently, reading and writing in English at the grade level of student peers may be a challenge.

These challenges for deaf students result from their unique communication abilities, which may manifest in communication practices (such as sign languages or more basic sign systems) that are not shared by those people who socialize with and inform the students (i.e., hearing parents, siblings, other adults, and peers). In fact, roughly 97 percent of students who are deaf come from hearing households where sign language is the second language for the hearing family members. Thus, many deaf students grow up in an environment where they are not always exposed to people who can model a fluent language system that is accessible to them. Barriers such as these can limit the type, quality, and consistency of other knowledge that is typically conveyed to children through spoken and written language. This initial communication barrier has cognitive and behavioral repercussions for deaf people if it is not addressed early in the individual's development (Bollag 2006).

Overcoming these communication barriers and their related literacy and social issues then becomes a central consideration for designing curriculum and instruction. The program in this case study asserts

that the benefits of the inclusion of students who are deaf in theater education extend beyond simply learning acting skills. Indeed, the work of this program seeks to remove the barriers between hearing and deaf students in several areas: communication, socialization, and participation in the arts. Theater incorporates multiple avenues of expression and communication, including verbal and physical expression that is language based and extra-linguistic. Theater, because it requires the input of multiple individuals, also gives students—who may not know much about one another—opportunities to work collaboratively on a project that fosters socialization. Finally, because theater is a creative discipline, it has the potential for more flexible opportunities for participation in the arts.

INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

- Multimodal presentation of information—bilingual, visual/auditory.
- Multimodal means of communicating understand of concepts—through gesture or signed/spoken language.
- Hearing and deaf adults modeling inclusion—integrated cast demonstrated hearing and deaf people working together.

Deaf West Theatre educational programming was well imagined and addressed several points of access for deaf and hearing students by providing exposure to the performing arts (i.e., in-school performances, in-class workshops). The intention of Deaf West Theatre providers was to create a program that would give deaf students access to theater learning and to provide a shared activity through which hearing and deaf students can learn and socialize together.

Deaf West Theatre attempted to meet these goals through combining hearing and deaf students in the same learning environment and presenting educational materials in both English and ASL in as simultaneous a manner as possible. This model of inclusion presents deafness as a condition resulting in communication differences, not disabilities that can be overcome through bilingual pedagogy. The mechanisms for inclusion in this case are delivery of bilingual content and student engagement with both hearing and deaf role models.

MULTIPLE OPTIONS FOR COMMUNICATION AND COMPREHENSION

The primary means for providing access to the arts and academic content was with a multimodal instructional approach. Through the use of bilingual ASL/English theater, information was presented in visual and auditory languages and was acted out by performers. Consequently, there was language-based auditory/visual support and representative visual support for the concepts being conveyed. Some students participated in exercises at the end of the shows or during the workshops that may have provided access to kinesthetic learning opportunities.

Many deaf students who are English-language learners do not use the same narrative formats as their English-speaking peers. Learning about narratives and narrative format in English may be challenging for them. To overcome this, narratives were presented in a multimodal and fully bilingual format, as opposed to a translated format. The following strategies explain how multimodal instructional strategies may support communication and comprehension of content:

- **Exposure to performing arts skills and concepts:** Students in the workshops were presented with lessons on movement, observation, character, and ensemble. This was valuable because many students, especially deaf students, do not have access to theater arts learning, particularly in ASL.
- **Embodiment of concepts for language arts skills:** Students in the workshops can act out the concepts under discussion as another means of accessing those concepts and demonstrating their understanding of them.
- **Story comprehension:** Students viewed performances in multimodal, bilingual formats to reinforce comprehension and audience engagement.
- **Bilingual format:** Performances were presented simultaneously in ASL and English in a manner that did not subvert either language to the translation from the other.

FOSTERING SOCIALIZATION AND INCLUSION

Classes participating in the Dramatic Gestures workshops were sometimes deaf students only, while others combined deaf and hearing classes. Teachers and Deaf West Theatre staff noted benefits to students with respect to socialization and inclusion of one another across deaf and hearing groups. These benefits applied to hearing and deaf students, though many of the issues about socialization were noted by interviewees to be particularly important for deaf students. The benefits were coded into the following categories:

- **Shared theatrical experience:** Classmates or parents and siblings (both hearing and deaf) of deaf children were able to attend a theater event that would be accessible to all members of the school or family. This opportunity is rare.
- **Students learn to relate what they learned extralinguistically:** The experience of viewing theater was exciting to students who were eager to relate the experience to their friends and family. In some cases, students were reported using theatrical skills (pantomime) to relate the stories or experience. Learning to relate stories in a creative, nonlinguistic manner can aid in overcoming language barriers.
- **Deaf role models:** Many of the students do not frequently come into contact with deaf adults. Interviewees noted that it is valuable for students, especially deaf students, to meet successful deaf adults.

- **Deaf awareness/Hearing awareness:** Students gain exposure to deaf people and hearing people and share an experience together, as a workshop participant or audience member.
- **Exposure to new career avenues:** The exposure to theater may inspire some students to be involved in performing arts.

UNDERSTANDING INCLUSION AT DEAF WEST THEATRE

According to Giangreco (2003), Rose and Meyer (2002), and Tomlinson et. al. (2003), inclusion is a process of enhancing the participation of all students, regardless of disability labels, in the educational activities of a general group of their peers. The engagement of all the students should be similarly high, and the learning outcomes for each student should be appropriate and at the optimal level for that individual. Features of inclusion at Deaf West Theatre align with other aspects of the definition of inclusion and frameworks of Giangreco, UDL, and DI as well. Similar to the indicators provided by Giangreco, inclusion at Deaf West Theatre has students integrated into the same activities at certain times. When they were integrated, those involved were sometimes of the same age cohort. Additionally, the students were all expected to gain skills (i.e., academic/artistic and personal/psycho-social) through the program, with expectations tempered to each student's own interests and abilities. Inclusion at Deaf West Theatre varied from Giangreco's indicators in that the hearing and deaf students were not always in the same settings together. Furthermore, the students involved in the programming were not representative, since there were far more students with disabilities involved in the program than in the general population (75% versus 10%).

Inclusion at Deaf West Theatre fits with the framework of UDL through the use of exercises and curriculum that were made accessible to more students through multimodal representation of content. This is achieved via linguistic description and physical modeling of activities by the instructor and instruction (or performances) being given in oral English and ASL. In the case of the workshops, there was a range of options for engagement. Students could volunteer their participation at times. Finally, instruction included activities that engaged students in multisensory ways of expressing and acting upon what they know (i.e., kinesthetically, aurally, and visually).

The opportunities for inclusion of students with communication and language differences were enhanced by the content of the programming. Performing arts incorporate many faculties (i.e., physicality, verbalization) and can incorporate language-based communication or extralinguistic communication. Success in the arts can be judged by many criteria, in a subjective manner or objectively determined by classroom cohorts or larger-scale standards. This elasticity of what constitutes participation and success makes performing arts a discipline that affords many occasions for inclusion. In the case of Deaf West Theatre, performing arts also provided a unique medium through which students could learn stories through multiple media (i.e., visual, auditory/linguistic and visual/linguistic) and languages (i.e., ASL and English).

CASE STUDY 2: LUNA KIDS DANCE

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

Luna Kids Dance has brought creative dance education to tens of thousands of San Francisco Bay–area students since 1992. Through its comprehensive programming, Luna Kids Dance provides educational opportunities for students in school and after school, professional development for classroom teachers and teaching artists, and community-based dance education for families. In its work, Luna Kids Dance has been dedicated to facilitating programs for underserved students, including students with disabilities. In fact, “since its inception, Luna Kids Dance has been committed to offering inclusive dance education programs and services with the singular mission of bringing all children to dance and dance to all children.”

PROGRAM DESIGN

In 2004, Luna Kids Dance joined with Tilden Elementary School, a local school serving students with and without disabilities, through the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) Arts Anchor School Initiative Grant. Tilden Elementary School had opened that same year and applied for the grant with the intention of working with Luna Kids Dance to create a classroom teacher–led arts-integrated curriculum using dance. This required that the Luna Kids Dance staff provide lessons to students and professional development opportunities for the teachers. School year 2009–2010 will be the fifth year that Luna Kids Dance and Tilden Elementary School are partnering together.

Luna Kids Dance is an arts organization that grounds its educational programming in creative dance, a framework that promotes the uniqueness and creativity of individual dancers. This framework results in flexible, multimodal, responsive, and reflective pedagogy, and is thus ideal for creating programming in mixed-ability classrooms. Creative dance, as envisioned by Luna Kids Dance staff, draws largely on the works of dance teaching artists Rudolf Laban (1879–1958), Irmgard Bartenieff (1890–1981), and Anne Green Gilbert. The central concept behind all three of these authors is that dance should reflect and incorporate the developmental stages that one goes through to understand one’s body in how it moves and operates internally and in external space. Exercises often begin with breathing, seen as the fundamental physical activity and the first way that a person discovers her/his body. These approaches are also constructivist in the sense that the aesthetics and the value of the dance/work are established by the person performing it and that person’s community, and they can be negotiated. Through this attitude, the teacher or student may establish an array of criteria and make that criteria flexible based on the objectives of the dance lesson at any given point.

All of the Luna Kids Dance classes are combined classes of students with various disabilities and abilities. The class size tends to number fewer than ten students in grades pre K–2 and two to four adults, including the teaching artist. Each session is 50 minutes long and follows a certain format. First, the teaching artist reviews the schedule for the class for the day. As it is reviewed, the teaching artist indicates the schedule on a piece of paper with illustrations and reads it aloud. This schedule follows a basic format of (1) Brain Dance, (2) Lesson—Exploring Qualities, (3) Dance Performance, and (4) Reflection.

The Brain Dance is based on the work of Green Gilbert and involves the class following a series of prompts (verbal and modeled as need be) that review the different motions a body can make, the different planes the body can operate in, and the different parts of the body. The Brain Dance is performed twice, to allow students an opportunity to practice the dance. The notion behind this exercise is that it reacquaints the dancers with the body and connects to and stimulates brain function.

Once the students are warmed up, the teaching artist introduces the lesson for the day. The teaching artist will use different media to explain the qualities, including illustrations, photos, video, three-dimensional objects, and modeling. Generally, his classes involve qualities that are often illustrated with their opposites, such as fast and slow, straight and rounded/squiggly. The students also study forms of movement such as slithering, popping, gliding, and rolling. One teaching artist explained that he preferred using video to illustrate time-based concepts, since the video can be put on slow-motion or fast-forward (slow/fast) and rewind or played (backward/forward). He also used scarves to demonstrate many concepts such as high and low. He used cooked spaghetti to illustrate rounded or squiggly. Once the lesson has been presented, the students work on dance exercises that illustrate the concepts. This reinforces the learning by prompting students to embody the concepts and kinetically express them. All exercises are performed twice to allow students a second attempt at them.

After the lesson, the students perform a dance using the concepts learned. Often the class will dance together or one half will dance for the other. Following the dance, the students will be asked by the teaching artist to identify the elements of their classmates' or their own dances as they pertain to the lesson. The students may draw, speak, or indicate those elements through gestures. Students may also be photographed and reflect on these photos to inform their technique and to use as inspiration for future dances. By having students create, perform, and reflect upon dances, these lessons address the major indicators for the National Dance Education Organization standards and California State Standards.

INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

It is important to note that throughout the lessons and lesson planning, the teaching artist is creating opportunities for inclusion. In his instruction, the teaching artist helps to support inclusion using many different media to illustrate concepts and to guide the class. This not only allows students multiple ways of understanding the concept, but also multiple ways of appreciating and engaging with the concept.

Another instructional technique employed by the teaching artist is the use of observational language to indicate in an unbiased manner what a student is doing. For example, he might, “I see Kiki doing a high-level head dance,” instead of saying, “I see Kiki bouncing her head like a ball.” This language also supports a constructivist classroom in creating a value-free assessment of classroom activities; thus students are not bound to a narrow standard. Related to this is the teaching artist’s assessment of students. He bases his assessments of students not simply on whether the student is doing the exercise indicated in a precise manner; instead he bases the student’s success on the student’s intention. If the instruction is to wiggle one’s legs, the students may move their legs or look at their legs to indicate intention to wiggle them. A student’s intention and success at manifesting intention is judged by the teaching artist based partially on baseline assessments performed of students in the early parts of the school year and also on what the teaching artist judges to be that student’s capacity at that moment. If a student makes a movement consistently different from the classmates’ but still addresses the core concepts (by approximating the direction and quality of the motion and the body parts used), that is fine because that is clearly that student’s rendition of that motion. Once it is shown that the entire class has a sense of a dance routine and how it is performed and can perform it in multiple ways (e.g., perform a squiggly dance both slow and fast and high and low) independent of the teaching artist’s modeling, the teaching artist moves to the next concepts.

This study was not intended to measure the outcome for specific students in the Luna Kids Dance–Tilden Elementary School programs. However, the impact that the work of Luna Kids Dance has had on students was noted by Luna Kids Dance staff, OUSD administration, and Tilden Elementary School staff. Specifically, teachers from several classrooms approached the teaching artist to tell him that their students were talking about dance class outside of dance and practicing dance exercises at recess. Other students were making comparisons between concepts learned in their regular classrooms and the concepts illustrated in their dance classrooms, demonstrating a generalization of knowledge. Anecdotally, the teaching artist himself saw a student who had not spoken at all year begin asking for the “purple” scarf to use in dance class. The teachers, when interviewed, spoke of how dance taught important concepts to their students, including how to move safely in space and to respect others’ space, as well as prepositions and qualities that are difficult to teach to many students in a language-based classroom. They also consider the classes to be very engaging for students and have a positive impact on their behavior in school.

UNDERSTANDING INCLUSION AT LUNA KIDS

The work that Luna Kids Dance does through creative dance demonstrates strategies for inclusion of students with a variety of strengths and learning styles. These strategies resemble other inclusive practices, particularly Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction. With respect to UDL, teaching artists create multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement. Teaching artists reach students through representation of course content in multiple formats: visual (photos, drawings, video, 3-D), kinetic (bodies in motion), and aural/language-based (participants observing and verbalizing about one another), allowing for different options for perception. Furthermore, images, modeling, and kinetic embodiment are used to illustrate concepts, thus representing concepts beyond language and providing options for language and symbols. Finally, as concepts are presented to students, the critical features of these concepts are the focus of the lessons. Students are assigned exercises that target those concepts, and not the peripheral elements of the concept. For example, the students will reflect on photographs of themselves dancing and then be asked to describe the elements of those images that demonstrate the concepts in the lessons.

With respect to expression and action, because the teaching artist allows students to participate through intention without emphasizing perfection of a prescribed movement, students may move as they care to perform the dance exercises, thus having options for physical action as they practice movements and concepts. Similarly, this flexibility allows for options in expressive skills and fluency. Fluency, in this case, is expressed in students' demonstrating a dance exercise or concept, without invasive prompting, in multiple contexts (e.g., students move squiggly while doing a classroom exercise and when directed while doing freeze dance games). Finally, students are provided options for executive function by reflecting on photos of the dances to gain ideas for revisions that they can make in their lesson, where they have multiple opportunities to attempt exercises. Students are also shown movies and photos of other people dancing that give visual input on how to move.

For engagement, Luna Kids Dance teaching artists provide options for recruiting interest through scaffolding parts of a lesson on top of each other, so that as information becomes more complex, students have a stronger base from which to explore it. For example, the teaching artist would not have students do the Dinosaur Dance (a dance that students really enjoy and involves moving like a dinosaur) before having them master other concepts, such as high/low, big/small. This way, when the teaching artist asks the kids to show him a "small" Dinosaur Dance, the students are not distracted by the Dinosaur Dance, but instead use the Dinosaur Dance to explore and demonstrate the concept they have mastered. Repetitive class structure and content allows students to engage with the materials multiple times and thus work toward mastery as they reflect and receive feedback from peers and the teaching artist. This provides options for sustaining effort and persistence. The work provides options for self-regulation as well through the reflective process, which allows students to think about the work that they are doing and the lessons learned.

The work of Luna Kids Dance also bears resemblance to DI by providing temporary scaffolding, guided practice to independent practice, and diagnostic, ongoing assessment. The teaching artist offers temporary scaffolding to students by presenting them with multimodal prompts as they learn new concepts, which are then phased out. Similarly, students' practice moves from guided to independent in two respects. The first, immediate evidence of this is in giving students an opportunity to do every exercise twice, which allows them to practice and respond to the exercises. Second, and on a long-term basis, the students' practice is progressively less supported by the teaching artist as they become independent in following the class exercises in creating their own dances. Finally, the teaching artist assesses students on an ongoing basis, reflecting on each class session and the progress of each student relative to a baseline the teaching artist has established. This baseline class session is usually captured on video and can be used to show students and teachers what they have done and how they have changed over the lessons.

In sum, inclusion in Luna Kids Dance programming is achieved through creative dance pedagogy, a framework that shares much with UDL and DI in its design and instruction.

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VSA COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

<http://www.vsarts.org/communities>

The VSA Communities of Practice program provides ongoing professional development opportunities for teaching artists who work with students with disabilities. The core purpose of this VSA program is to cultivate meaningful professional discussion about student learning, universally designed curriculum, differentiated instruction, and assessment. This discussion is grounded in reviews of curriculum documents and student-learning evidence in relation to content standards.

In the Communities of Practice, participants generate, evaluate, and share valuable curriculum knowledge with their colleagues. Expert instructional coaches and participants exchange feedback on their curriculum, assessment tools, and student work samples using a range of online and teleconferencing tools. The Communities of Practice is meant to be an enhancement of existing professional development for teaching artists in the VSA program and domestic affiliate networks.

The following two cases were generated out of work shared by the VSA of Massachusetts Communities of Practice team coached by Stephen Yaffe. The case narratives were written collaboratively by teams consisting of teaching artists and their affiliate education managers. One of the authors, Richard Jenkins, has the distinction of being a VSA Teaching Artist Fellow.

SIXTH-GRADERS BRING ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS TO LIFE THROUGH DRAMA

DEBORAH KRONENBERG WITH KATI BLAIR

INTRODUCTION

Theater is uniquely suited to draw in and show off the capacity of students from various backgrounds and abilities. Although I have experienced this for myself, I had never before focused a great deal of attention on creating an inclusive curriculum through theater. In the fall of 2009, I began an 11-week theater residency at the Harbor Pilot Middle School in Boston, Massachusetts, that pushed me to translate what I knew could be into reality. And although I believed the nature of my art form would work well to create inclusive learning, what would it look like?

The Harbor School is an inclusive, experiential-learning school where energetic teachers are full of ideas and action to create a learning environment that is accessible and challenging to all students. Each core academic class of 20–25 students benefits from the collaboration of one content teacher and one special education teacher. Teacher teams bring in popular music to connect lessons to students' lives, set up caves to explore, and lead field trips to museums and libraries. The walls of their classrooms are hung with life-size drawings of early humans, colorful charts and graphs, and photos of each student. As I learned more about the school, I wondered: how would drama help further activate student learning?

Much of middle-school learning happens as the students sit at assigned tables through reading and writing text. For many of our students, the standard use of text is a barrier to learning. Some have physical trouble manipulating a writing instrument, and others are at a third-grade reading level. For others, focusing on a book alone or in groups was challenging despite their strong analytic skills. In most of the humanities classes, the teachers struggled with focus and quiet learning. While drama classes do not demand silence or staying seated for long periods, theater requires students to use their bodies and voices in new, performative ways that challenge many students. The interpersonal issues that are common in most middle schools seemed heightened in these classes, perhaps due to the wide spectrum of student needs. The introduction of drama highlighted barriers in terms of working in small

groups and using their voices and bodies to perform in front of their peers. I opted to use drama strategies and small sharings to facilitate learning rather than creating a large-scale theater production. I thought this would give more students more opportunities to create and perform rather than casting each student in a set, scripted role. The classroom teachers and I designed the unit as an investigation of how early humans and early civilizations survived and thrived. Our plan was to use drama to explore parallels between early human history and our students' current world, bringing focus to themes of adaptation and community.

In the humanities classes, I collaborated with two sets of teachers, inclusion specialists, and paraprofessionals. Through the theme of ancient civilization, beginning with early humans and progressing through to Mesopotamia, we wanted students to be able to analyze and interpret text and use historical evidence to understand past events, peoples, and issues. Text can refer to any written, oral, or performed piece, fiction or nonfiction. I wanted to introduce drama techniques that would illustrate how the process one uses to sequence, comprehend, and interpret text is identical whether the text is written, performed, heard, seen, or embodied. We started the unit by exploring how early humans survived in their often challenging environments and why they adapted and evolved. We went into role as paleoanthropologists to debate a modern-day dilemma with early human artifacts. We then used the legend of Gilgamesh to investigate heroes in ancient and modern times.

We embarked on our residency with a map to guide us and a firm belief that drama would enrich the humanities curriculum. We had to rechart our path a few times and reimagine a culmination that would reach our goals and appropriately challenge our students' capabilities. The following is our final curriculum map and the story of how we arrived at our destination.

INCLUSIVE ARTS TEACHING AND LEARNING NARRATIVE

Our main objective was to improve students' analytic process and interpretation of text in their study of ancient civilizations. Drama allows texts to come to life and for students to show what they understand and envision without being confined by written text or linguistic communication. Additionally, drama builds collaboration skills and can increase learner engagement. In the beginning of this unit, I used drama as a tool for students to present what they know about early humans physically, which served us on two levels: first, bringing early humans' world alive allowed students to explore and understand that world from within; second, it provided an alternative route into class learning by allowing students to discuss the story and characters they saw unfolding before them. In the middle of the residency, students identified and acted out key moments in an adapted text of *The Epic of Gilgamesh* and speculated about what the hero's journey meant to ancient audiences. From there the students created their own legends, which challenged the class to investigate both the ancient text of Gilgamesh and their original texts. Finally, the class presented and discussed these works, synthesizing the facts of human history with their own personal journeys.

CURRICULUM MAP OF OUTCOMES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Enduring Understandings (big ideas or concepts):

Students will analyze (for details and main ideas) text, sequence text, and interpret text.

Students will analyze historical people, events, issues, and ideas using historical evidence and considering context.

Massachusetts State Standards	Instructional Activities
<p>Theater 1.6 Demonstrate the ability to work effectively alone and cooperatively with a partner or ensemble.</p> <p>Theater 1.7 Create and sustain a believable character throughout scripted or improvised scene.</p>	<p>Lessons 1–3: Concepts of Adaptation and Getting to Know Early Humans</p> <p>Heads & Tails Tag: Everyone in the circle chooses to put their hands on their heads or hold them as a tail. The object: tag anyone with the opposite position to switch them to yours. The game ends when all are on the same team. Most often “Tails” wins, illustrating survival of the fittest.</p> <p>Bean Bag Handle: Teams strategize about how to pass a bean bag around the whole group most efficiently. Highlights adaptation concepts.</p> <p>Students-in-Role: Whole group acts as anthropologists, newscasters, and witnesses.</p> <p>Group Sculptures: Students use their body to create shapes to represent different objects or beings and stay still like a statue, as individuals and then in small groups.</p>
<p>English Language Arts 8.21 Recognize organizational structures (chronological order, logical order, cause and effect, classification schemes).</p>	<p>Lessons 4–5: The Hero Gilgamesh and His World</p> <p>Adjusting Sculptures: Practice changing sculptures according to details chosen. Bean Bag Pass: Each person in the room holds and then gives a descriptor for a bean bag.</p> <p>Scene Painting: Teams create detailed sculptures (using bodies, voice, sentence strips, and structured movement) for beginning, middle, and end.</p>
<p>English Language Arts 8.21 Recognize organizational structures. 13.17 Identify and analyze main ideas, supporting ideas, and supporting details.</p> <p>Theater 1.6 Demonstrate the ability to work effectively alone and cooperatively with a partner or in an ensemble. 1.7 Create and sustain a believable character throughout a scripted or improvised scene. 1.12 Describe and analyze, in written and oral form, characters’ wants, needs, objectives, and personality characteristics.</p>	<p>Lessons 6-9: Creating Our Own Hero and Legend</p> <p>Group Storytelling: Everyone in group speaks one word or one sentence at a time, building an original group text.</p> <p>Role on the Wall: Used to visually show the building of the class hero with all the pieces from each student pair.</p> <p>Acting: Using sculpture, scene painting, and action to perform original segment of class legend. Rehearsed and performed for whole class.</p> <p>Reflection (throughout all lessons): Always ask audience of students what they see, what they noticed, what surprised them, and why.</p>

The unit began with embodying what the students were learning, understanding, and questioning about early humans. I taught the students how to freeze their bodies, which meant keeping as still as each individual could. They practiced creating sculptures with their bodies, as if their bodies were becoming a clay piece of art, to represent fire, wild animals, fear, and discovery. The content of the sculptures was directly from the textbook's description of early humans. By physically expressing those ideas, students connected to the emotion and importance of the information.

"The interviews and newscasting activities also worked well for most of the students. Even those that didn't participate were still attentive to those speaking and learned something from them."

—Humanities Teacher

Next, the students brought to life the world of Homo erectus and the Neanderthals, building their drama skills as we deepened our understanding of adaptation and survival. Although the students had been reading about this era in their textbooks, the teachers reported a disinterest. Yet almost all of the students, when called up in groups, had ideas of how they wanted to show early humans. Whereas before they created frozen images, now they took on the characters of early humans, enacting pivotal moments of early human life with detail-oriented actions. The performers used their learned skills of physical portrayal and ensemble work to show nonverbal communication between hunters, creative cave painters, and mournful communities. When I asked the audience what they saw, the students were eager to show they knew exactly what adaptation the actors portrayed. Through this discussion of what they saw, how they came to understand it, and what surprised them, students highlighted what they retained from their text study. Additionally, through this physical group work, the students gave all the classmates access to the wealth of information in the text (explicit and implicit) and all learners were on equal footing to interpret the ideas and connect this history to their own experience.

Their course of study into literature and legends in early civilizations prompted me to bring in parts of *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, one of the earliest known literary works. The class broke down a simplified version of Gilgamesh into plot points and created mini-scenes (scene painting) to show the richness of each moment. Being able to show their ideas physically is important for students to express understanding and communicate nuanced ideas that could get lost in the translation from feeling it to speaking it and then writing about it. Yet to more fully interpret text, students need to go beyond the facts. They need to be able to take a text and imagine the world around it.

"Students (were) engaged when moving and able to contribute details about the beginning of the story."

—Humanities Teacher

ANNOTATED UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING CHECKLIST

Use of multiple means of REPRESENTATION	Use of multiple means of EXPRESSION	Use of multiple means of ENGAGEMENT
<p>2. Provide options for language and symbols</p> <p>2.2 Options that clarify syntax and structure: Critical features in Gilgamesh were highlighted through student created mini-scenes.</p> <p>2.5 Options that illustrate key concepts nonlinguistically: Students illustrated key concepts in text with body sculptures.</p> <p>3. Provide options for comprehension</p> <p>3.1 Options that provide or activate background knowledge: Students act out what they remember from text as a starting point and have whole class discussions debating the details from the text.</p> <p>3.2 Options that highlight critical features, big ideas, and relationships: Using the concepts and vocabulary from texts as the impetus for body sculpting work, critical features of the units were outlined with drama techniques.</p>	<p>4. Provide options for physical action</p> <p>4.2 Option in the means of navigation: Students describe early humans with body sculptures of details found from text. Students become storytellers using movement and narration in mini-scenes of their hero's journey and legend.</p> <p>6. Provide options for executive functions</p> <p>6.2 Options that support planning and strategy development: Groups devised strategies to show the hero's journey to an audience of peers.</p>	<p>7. Provide options for recruiting interest</p> <p>7.1 Options that increase individual choices and autonomy: Individual choice in what students depict from text increases their engagement.</p> <p>7.2 Options that enhance relevance, value, and authenticity: Student created the legends based on their own interpretations creates authentic experience and increased relevance.</p> <p>8. Provide options for sustaining effort and persistence</p> <p>8.3 Options that foster collaboration and communication: Collaboration and communication fostered in small groups working together to build the "lessons" of Gilgamesh.</p> <p>8.4 Options that increase mastery-oriented feedback: Students act as audience members providing critical feedback to peers.</p>

What can Wish Girl teach others?



She can show people how to have world peace.

If she's strong, other people can be strong too.

Making better decisions, like standing up to others.

You can change and become better.

Lessons

Students interpret what a hero story is based on the legend of Gilgamesh. They are asked, "Based on what we know about our hero, what would our hero teach others and why?"

History Standard:
Identify or describe historical people, their ideas, decisions, purpose, beliefs, opinions, motives, perspective, or point of view.

The students' physical drama skills were strong by this point, but I wanted to move them toward storytelling. In order to do so, students needed to develop their verbal skills and continue to support their individual ideas. To create a safe space for individual ideas to be shared and reduce threats, we played a word game that both built their base of descriptive words and showcased how each individual interprets the same object uniquely. I passed a red beanbag around the circle. As each student held the beanbag, tossed it in the air, shook it, or watched it drop on the floor in their moment of controlling it, they chose an adjective for the bag. The exercise illuminated how students usually encounter history text—they more or less understand the facts but have little engagement in the information. Though the beanbag seemed ordinary at the start, and the students were anxious about each coming up with their own adjective, by the end of the exercise, the class was seeing an "imported, soft, fire-red, angry" beanbag. From here on out, the curriculum prized individual visualization and choice making. Students began to use the skills of individual interpretation and trust in one's own voice to imagine different components of Gilgamesh's world.

In small groups, students pinpointed the beginning, middle, and end to the story and brought it to life with sculpture, acting, and description (both orally and written on long pieces of poster board, which they attached to their physical sculptures). In one group, students worked on the middle portion, where Gilgamesh comes to the cedar forest that terrified the townspeople. One student declared

himself a twisted, decaying tree. This prompted another student to create a wise old owl that flew into the scene and landed on the branch of the tree. When Gilgamesh arrived at the forest and slept at the edge, these students imagined he would need to build a tent. So they showed him arriving, carrying his backpack (another student), tossing it down, and using his strength to chop down the old tree (which creaked and moaned as it fell). Their final image was of a proud Gilgamesh, crawling into his tent near the fallen tree and the surprised owl.

Mini-Scenes

In small groups, students created scenes that depicted the class hero's struggles and victories. Each mini-scene showed the beginning, middle, and end of the hero's journey, and students were expected to illustrate the hero's lesson using narration, acting, and movement.

Theatre and English Standards:

Recognize organizational structures (chronological order, logical order, cause and effect, classification schemes).

Demonstrate the ability to work effectively alone and cooperatively with a partner or in an ensemble.

Create and sustain a believable character throughout a scripted or improvised scene.



The above photos depict the line from the script: "Wish Girl had strength growing inside of her." At the climax of the story, Wish Girl transforms from a timid, vulnerable girl into a strong, confident hero through movement work. Scared Wish Girl tumbles out of the way as Brave Wish Girl rises up to fight her enemies.


When they shared this mini-scene with the rest of the class they created a new vision for the main character, bringing to life his emotional qualities they surmised from the story and sharing images the text conjured up for these students. These performers had analyzed the text for meaning, translating very basic language ("arrived at the mountain") into what it really means for this character to arrive after a long journey before this demon-guarded forest. They engaged with the text, mining for clues as to how to present the moment, and filling in appropriate details as active readers should. The whole class benefited from creating these scenes, deeply exploring moments from the story, and seeing other

parts of the story enacted and interpreted. There was not a wrong interpretation, because each student pulled from the text to craft his or her ideas.

Now that they had multiple ways to express themselves and practice voicing their own ideas, classes created a simple original text to exercise their analytic and interpretive skills. We examined the character of Gilgamesh from what we read and what we had seen from each other. The students pointed out his flaws, his human qualities, his strengths, and his motivation. After focusing on Gilgamesh, the students created their own class hero on which they would base their original legends. After choosing our hero's context, positive and negative traits, and ultimate desire, the analysis began. For instance, one class created Mamatana, a hero from San Juan, Puerto Rico who wanted adventure. She was young, super strong, always helped people, but struggled with anger management issues. Another class created Humbalissa (the namesake of the demon Humbaba from Gilgamesh), a very strong, super mimic who wants a safe community, but is sometimes selfish and kills people when she is mad. Based on what we know about our hero, what would our hero teach others and why?

Over the course of two classes, each small group of students determined the lesson audiences should learn from the hero and how to show that lesson. The students knew how to present their ideas physically and with description to each other, but now they relied on a new set of skills—building a story as group. They wrote the story, by speaking in turn, with a teacher transcribing the beginning, middle, and end into a graphic organizer. Then, they were up on their feet rehearsing the moments of the story. How could they show the evil crystal poisoning the hero? How would they show how her deceased mother impacted her journey? Is it more effective to see the hero succeed or fail? What causes a character to change? They were faced with complex questions of clarity, interpretation, and weighing moments of importance. What does an audience need to understand the hero's choices? Each small group used sculpture, movement, acting, and storytelling to portray their uniquely conceptualized adventure for the class hero. In the end, each class saw their own hero in three separate mini-scenes; the class heroes' legend was comprised of three separate journeys with three separate lessons.

The conversation that followed each performance was rich with questions, interpretation, and analysis. One student who struggled with standard, written text excelled as an observant audience member. A shy student, for whom text is a barrier, played a confident, emboldened hero on stage and was eager to explain the climax of the hero's journey that transformed the character from a girl to a strong woman. Another student, who is diagnosed with ADHD, was integral in the creation of the story and was a focused team member when putting it up on stage. Many students brought in personal connections, like a modern-day journey for their hero in which he goes through rehabilitation and is inspired to stop alcohol abuse, or a hero overcoming anger management issues. The students' engagement grew during the creation and presentation of their hero and his or her journey, and while interpreting and analyzing the work of their peers.



Analysis

The student audience was eager to share what they liked about the the piece and to discuss interesting moments and main ideas.

English Standard
Identify and analyze main ideas, supporting ideas, and supporting details.

Face your fears.

They showed her getting stronger by switching who played Wish Girl.

Everyone was doing their best.

She was scared at first, but her mother gave her courage and hope that she could defeat her enemies

That they put comedy into it.

REFLECTION

As I watched the complex, artistic mini-scenes during the final class and listened to the students talk about their experience, how they enjoyed creating and working with their peers, I reflected on the first moments of our residency, which felt like absolute chaos. We started with rowdy, disconnected classes and ended with focused ensemble performers. Drama, and the structures and techniques inherent to the creative process, facilitated a transformation and provided a new route to inclusive learning for this 6th grade. How did it happen?

In contrast to the typical academic class, drama lessons involve embodying academic concepts with ample opportunity for students to use their voices. Drama infused what the teachers were already doing with a more physical, active approach to text. Once the students became accustomed to the freedoms and responsibilities of theater class, reaching our academic goals seemed possible. Through the physical sculptures and acting work they began to express facts, then ideas surrounding those facts, and then questions that arose from those ideas. In one particular class, a group enacting Neanderthal life showed a man dying, being buried, and mourned by his community. Engagement was high for the actors as well as the audience. Hands shot up to answer basic questions about what they saw and deeper questions about what it meant. As teachers, we could constantly assess learning and use the student work to deepen the dialogue about ancient civilizations. In this case, the group sculpture fueled conversation about why early humans adapted in that way. Additionally, these drama activities illuminated students' experiences either by how they depicted grief, joy, or community on stage, or by how others talked about what resonated with them and why.

As much as I believed in what theater could do, I was wary of leaving our short, focused work and building towards a larger project. Our successes were tempered with the challenges we faced with

focus and resistance. The students had not chosen to be part of a theater class. For some students, this class was a welcome opportunity to shine, for others this was a scary leap into the unknown. My own leap of faith to move towards small team creation and performance was a pivotal moment in the curriculum. This shift allowed students to go deeper in their creative impulses, which gave the audiences more to interpret and analyze.

The students had many drama tools to draw on by the last third of the residency: students could offer their storytelling ideas, show their ideas through movement, improvise characters, and shape the work of their peers. Much of our creative time was spent in small, teacher-led groups that provided a safe structure for students to express their ideas and allowed for teacher modeling and positive feedback. Students of all abilities found roles that challenged them and productive ways to share their thoughts as they built towards their collective goal. In the final sharing, the students' desire to interpret and engage with the texts that they brought to life themselves was in stark contrast to their experience with their history textbooks. Over the course of the residency, students made creative choices that showed us not only their academic knowledge and grasp of drama skills, but that the very nature of educational drama, with its multitude of options and entry points, is inherently inclusive.

ENGAGING CULTURALLY DIVERSE LEARNERS THROUGH COMICS AND IMPROVISATION

BY RICHARD JENKINS WITH NICOLE AGOIS HUREL

INTRODUCTION

How can the arts help students with and without disabilities learn together? What does inclusion look like when you combine two non-inclusive classrooms for an eleven-week artist residency? What are some common artistic processes in visual arts and theater and how can they serve as learning processes? These are some of the questions that kept coming up for me as I worked with a group of 3rd graders and their teachers through a VSA of Massachusetts artist residency at the Condon Elementary School in Boston, MA.

The VSA of Massachusetts Artist Residency Program partners with local schools and teaching artists to develop multi-sensory arts-based teaching strategies, opening new windows onto the general curriculum for students of all abilities and learning styles. My role as a teaching artist was to collaborate with teachers to guide students through an inclusive arts learning experience-using cartooning as the primary art form. We worked with a group of 22 students from 2 different classrooms: 19 students came from an ESL (English as a Second Language) classroom and three came from a Special Needs classroom. Through this program, the students would come together for forty-five minutes once a week for eleven weeks and learn together in and through the arts. Although students came from two separate classrooms, they often had the occasion to interact with each other during certain scheduled school events and enrichment activities so they were already familiar with each other, which made the inclusion process a smoother experience.

The ESL students were a highly social group, enjoying acting and the visual arts. Seven of the students were not fluent in English and needed frequent translation into Portuguese by the instructor and by their more fluent peers. Reading, writing and speaking in English were often barriers to their engagement with the curriculum. The three students from the Special Needs classroom had a very different set of strengths, learning styles, needs, and challenges. They were well motivated and

attentive. The youngest wanted to do well and was quick to express her need for assistance or clarification. They all loved to draw. Two of them had good social skills and could interact well with other students. One student in particular often had many ideas and was a prolific visual artist. In addition to their many strengths, the students with special needs also had a range of learning challenges. The two older boys had issues including developmental delays, difficulty with paying attention, receptive and expressive language issues, and gross and fine motor skill issues. The youngest of the three students had issues including auditory processing issues and auditory memory issues. To varying degrees, verbal instructions, reading text, writing text, and sitting down for extended periods were barriers to these students.

After discussing the strengths and needs of the students in our initial planning meeting, the teachers and I identified learning goals for the program. Since many of the students were immigrants from Cape Verde, it seemed natural to explore different cultures in our arts activities. We thought it would be interesting to have the students explore the “first meeting” experience of an immigrant person and a native person and what that experience might look like from the perspective of both the immigrant and native. They would do so by creating a fictional “Outer Space Alien” character with his or her own set of traits, customs and traditions, and then create fictional narratives about them meeting a child from Earth.

Because many of the children enjoyed acting, and I was investigating the connections between cartooning and theater, I decided to explore the possibility of incorporating drama and improvisation into the residency. From my own creative experience, I understand the advantages of physically acting out emotions and gestures in order to clarify my artistic intentions; when I decide which expression a character will have in a given scene, for example. Incorporating visual arts, storytelling, and drama in the students’ arts activities would also provide the students with multiple means of interacting with the curriculum content as well as multiple means of expressing their knowledge and understanding of that content.

In this meeting, I noticed that the ESL teacher was a bit nervous about this experience, since she had never had an artist in her classroom. So, she and I paid special attention to her role in the classroom, as I would teach. She was to be available to translate any of my instructions into Portuguese, as well as any students’ comments or questions into English. She also would be there to help assist and redirect any students if necessary. This role gave her more security about what to expect from this experience. After the planning meeting, I felt confident that I had enough information to begin my residency. Although, after two attempts at clarification, I was still uncertain as to what the Special Needs instructor meant by “receptive and expressive delays.” I trusted that as the residency progressed, I would be able to witness and observe the students at work, gain a more clear understanding of their needs, and then make adjustments to my curriculum and instruction to make learning more accessible to them.

CURRICULUM MAP

Enduring Understandings (big ideas or concepts):

Students will explore how people from different places each have their own way of interacting with the world and each other.

Students will apply their understanding through storytelling.

Massachusetts State Frameworks	<p>Visual Arts: 3.1 Create 2D artwork from imagination to tell a story or embody an idea.</p> <p>Math: 2.P.1 Identify, reproduce, describe, extend, and create simple rhythmic, shape, size, number, color, repeating patterns.</p>	<p>Theatre Arts: 1.4 Create characters through physical movement, gesture, sound and/or speech and facial expression.</p>	<p>Theatre Arts: 1.3 Pretend to be someone else, creating a character based on stories or through improvisation.</p> <p>5.5 Give and accept constructive and supportive feedback.</p>	<p>English Language Arts: 19.9 Write stories that have a beginning, middle, and end and contain details of setting.</p>
Instructional Activities	<p>Outer Space Immigrants Drawing Activity: Create and draw fictional alien characters with attributes, names, home worlds, and favorite foods.</p>	<p>Back on my planet... Alien Customs Acting Activity: Explore and enact different greetings from Western & Japanese cultures. Invent fictional greetings for alien characters.</p>	<p>A New World with New Customs Improvisation Activity: Student performers will invent character dialog and action through Improvisation activity. Student audience will provide ideas and suggestions for improvisation performances. Students will re- invent scenes .</p>	<p>Outer Space Immigrants Story Creation: Draw/write the beginnings and endings of their stories.</p>

ANNOTATED UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING CHECKLIST

Use of multiple means of REPRESENTATION	Use of multiple means of EXPRESSION	Use of multiple means of ENGAGEMENT
<p>1. Provide options for perception</p> <p>1.1 Options that customize the display of information: Information is displayed in writing, orally and visually. Examples are provided. Students are allowed more time to process auditory information (i.e., instructions and feedback). Repeat instructions.</p> <p>1.2 Options that provide alternative for auditory information: The teaching artist provides print handouts that visually demonstrate the steps in drawing characters.</p> <p>2. Provide options for language and symbols</p> <p>2.4 Options that promote cross-linguistic understanding: Students are given instructions and can communicate in English and Portuguese.</p> <p>3. Provide options for comprehension</p> <p>3.1 Options that provide or activate background knowledge: The teaching artist provides visual examples of Western handshakes and Japanese bowing customs. Then the artists and students share different customary greetings from their own cultures.</p>	<p>4. Provide options for physical action</p> <p>4.1 Options in the mode of physical expression: Students draw, write and use their bodies, facial expressions and voices (improvisation) to create characters.</p> <p>5. Provide options for expressive skills</p> <p>5.1 Options in the media for communication: Students can communicate orally or in writing in English or Portuguese, draw and act out stories.</p> <p>5.2 Options in the tools for composition and problem solving: Students are allowed to dictate/transcribe their story ideas.</p> <p>5.3 Options in the scaffolds for practice and performance: Use prompt questions to help students clarify character and story ideas.</p> <p>6. Provide options for executive functions</p> <p>6.4 Options that enhance capacity for monitoring progress: The teaching artist uses “think-alouds” to remind students of the assessment criteria for each project.</p>	<p>7. Provide options for recruiting interest</p> <p>7.1 Options that increase individual choices and autonomy: The teaching artist encourages students to create unique alien greetings by adding their own movements, gestures, sounds, and/or words. During the improvisation activity, the teaching artist encourages students to invent variations of the dialogs and actions that they see their peers perform.</p> <p>8. Provide options for sustaining effort and persistence</p> <p>8.3 Options that foster collaboration and communication: The teaching artist provides student audience with the opportunity to contribute ideas to the overall story that is developing onstage.</p> <p>8.4 Options that increase mastery-oriented feedback: As the students create their stories, the teaching artist challenges students to devise endings that are not simply video game endings or awakenings from dreams.</p>

OUTER SPACE IMMIGRANTS: CREATING FICTIONAL CHARACTERS

For the first activity in our journey, I guided the students through a drawing project in which they would create their own fictional outer space alien characters. We explored different lines, shapes, patterns and colors and used them to create the characters and give them individual traits. Drawing was already appealing to many of the students, which recruited immediate interest in the activity and transcended language barriers by allowing students to express their ideas in the more universal form of images.

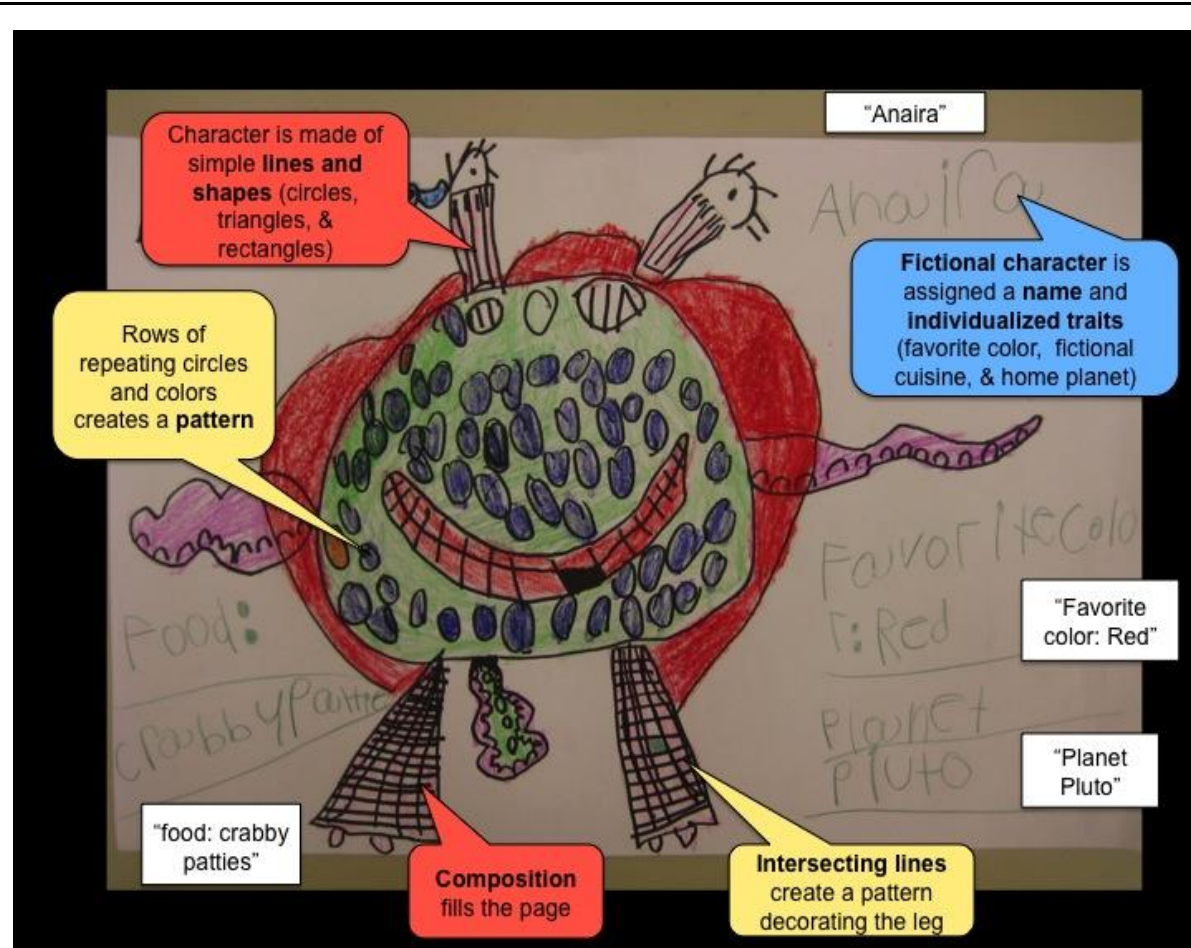
The students enthusiastically began creating their characters, though I found that many of the children needed help meeting the artistic criteria. In response, I used rhetorical “think-alouds,” to remind students of the steps in the creative process as well as to remind them of the assessment criteria: drawing large central shapes, using a variety of lines, shapes, colors and patterns, and having a wide distribution of the art elements across the page. Using statements such as “remember to start with a large central shape first,” or “remember to include lots of different lines, shapes, patterns, and colors in your character,” gave the students strategies to monitor and assess their own progress.

Next, the students began to assign names, favorite colors, favorite fictional cuisine, and planets of origin to their characters. The students with special needs required additional means of expressing their ideas. So, I took dictation of their ideas, wrote them on a board, and had them copy the writing onto their paper. This worked well for the two boys who quickly began transcribing their ideas. The youngest special needs student, however, needed to have my finger pointed at each individual letter as she wrote them down. As I worked with her, I began to understand what the Special Education teacher meant by “receptive delays.” She seemed to struggle with remembering a sequence of verbal instructions, and needed to hear the small steps one-at-a-time. This modification proved to be a helpful option for the ESL students as well, in their own comprehension of the instructions. For the students not yet fluent in English, the ESL teacher also provided translations of my instructions. Witnessing the students’ enthusiasm and engagement, she began to have more confidence in the residency.

SPACE ALIEN GREETINGS: INDIVIDUAL CHARACTER TRAITS AND CULTURAL CUSTOMS

With the success of the drawing activity, I was eager to see our “Outer Space Aliens” come to life through the use of improvisation and theater processes. Many of the students already enjoyed performing in front of their classmates, which recruited initial interest in the activity. In addition to visual aids and discussion, acting would provide another way for students to comprehend the concept of customary greetings.

OUTER SPACE IMMIGRANTS: CREATING FICTIONAL CHARACTERS



Assessment Criteria:

- Artwork shows evidence of a variety of lines, shapes, colors, and patterns
- Composition fills the page
- Evidence of character traits (name, favorite food, and home planet)

Massachusetts Curriculum Strands

Math:

2.P.1 Identify, reproduce, describe, extend, and create simple rhythmic, shape, size, number, color, and letter repeating patterns.

Visual Arts:

2.1, 2.4, 5 Explore uses of lines, shapes, color, & pattern in art works.

3.1 Create 2D artwork from imagination to tell a story or embody an idea.

Objectives:

- Students will learn about lines, shapes, patterns, and colors, and practice identifying and drawing them
- Students will create a Fictional Alien Character using different lines, shapes, and patterns

We began by practicing non-fictional greetings from different cultures, thereby activating the students' background knowledge. Then, providing options for comprehending the steps in the process, I demonstrated the creation of my own fictional alien greeting. Though a little timid at first, most of the students warmed up quickly and began to experiment with and perform their own fictional greetings. While the students created their gestures, I again used rhetorical "think-alouds" to remind them of the criteria: a variety of sounds, words, gestures, and/or movements. As the more reluctant students watched the others, they better understood the process. Then they began to vocalize variations that they could use in their own greetings.

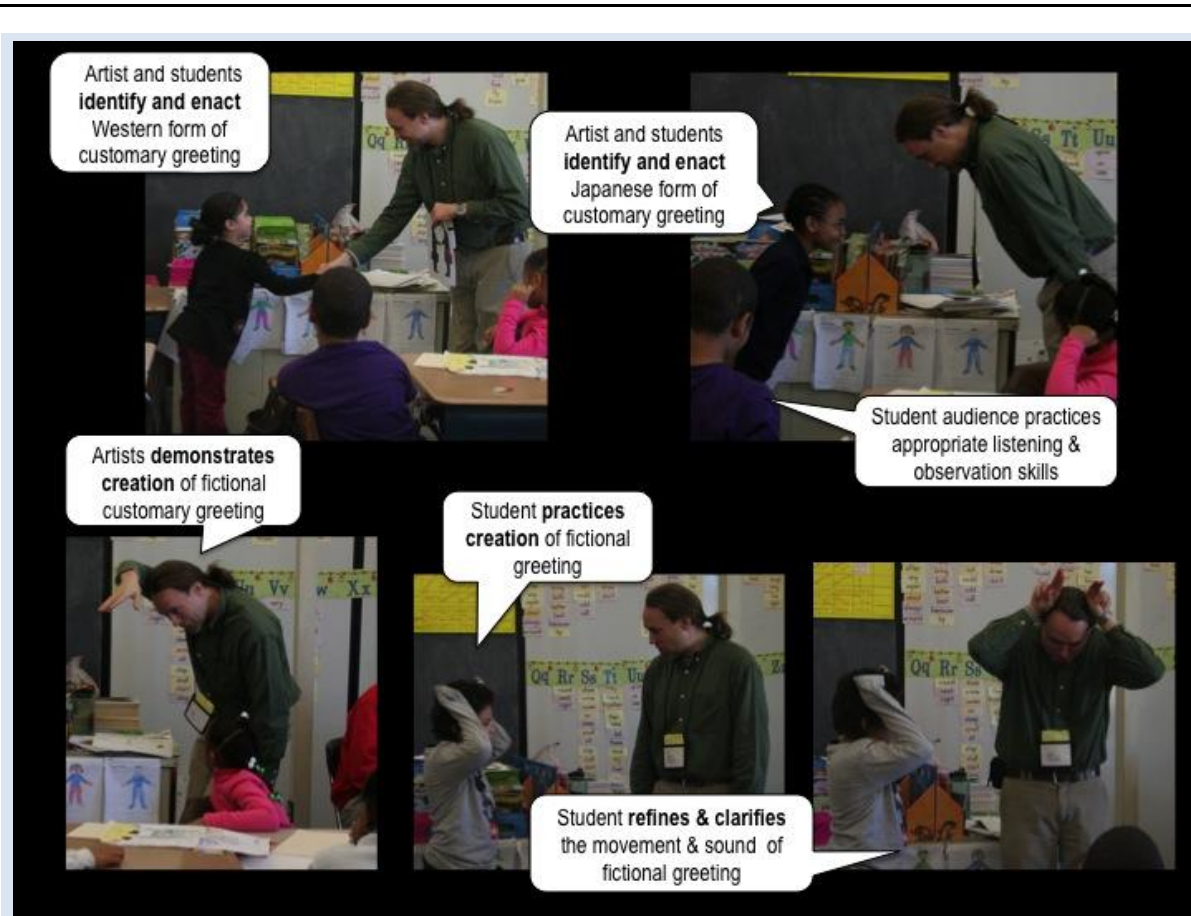
The ESL instructor continued to translate my instructions into Portuguese. For the students with special needs, I repeated the instructions and used prompting questions to help identify their best ideas. As I listened to the oldest special needs student, who demanded extra listening and clarification from me, I suddenly understood what the teacher meant by "expressive delays." This student has so many ideas firing off in his mind at the same time, that he could not get them out fast enough. He had a hard time pinning down a single idea down for his "best choice," so I would repeat his ideas to him, and then he could quickly identify which one he wanted to use. This new understanding, while very helpful, also made me nervous about his performance in the next activity.

ALIEN IMPROVISATION: CREATING FICTIONAL DIALOG AND ACTIONS FOR THEIR CHARACTERS

Building on the students' growing confidence with acting, I chose to employ dramatic improvisation as a "writing" activity. In addition to writing and drawing, improvisation would provide another way for students to engage with story making, specifically creating character dialog and action. Also it would allow students to revise their ideas on stage, as they perform.

Students began by enacting a meeting between their alien characters and a fictional child. The alien characters initiated the scenes with their fictional greetings, created in the previous activity, and the child characters would respond with improvised lines. This would develop into an improvised dialog between the two. The student performers were allowed multiple "takes" in order to revise their ideas, thus providing options for sustaining their efforts. Recruiting interest by encouraging individualized choices, the student audience was given opportunities to suggest variations or revisions of the performances. In their eagerness, the audience sometimes forgot their role, so I reminded them to "hold onto their ideas" until they were on stage or they were called upon, thereby giving them a strategy by which to manage their emotional engagement. When the special needs students were onstage, I used shorter instructions and gave them more time to process, allowing them options for comprehension. For the oldest special needs student, I gave him extra time and multiple chances to improvise lines, as well as listening to his many ideas, on stage, so that he could select his "best choice." With a few extra takes, he quickly engaged in the improvisation and invented his own lines. My fears were allayed.

SPACE ALIEN GREETINGS: INDIVIDUAL CHARACTER TRAITS AND CULTURAL CUSTOMS



Assessment Criteria:

- Performance shows evidence of a variety of movements, gestures, words, and/or sounds
- Students refine, clarify, and individualize their fictional greetings

Massachusetts Curriculum Strands

Theatre Arts:

1.4 Create characters through physical movement, gesture, sound and/or speech and facial expression.

1.3 Pretend to be someone else, creating a character based on stories or through improvisation.

Objectives:

- Students will explore the differences in how people in different cultures greet each other
- Students will create a greeting for their fictional alien character

The ESL teacher continued to provide translation of my instructions, and she transcribed the students' dialog in order to help the students make the connection between improvisation and writing. With the improvisation finished, each of the students were then assigned the task of imagining and creating the next scene. Providing options for expression, the students were allowed to write or draw the next scene, which they quickly began to do with much gusto.

OUTER SPACE ALIEN STORIES: CREATING COMPLETE NARRATIVES

With the close of the improvisation activity, we arrived at the final project, story creation. Using their written/drawn scenes created in the last activity as the "middle" the students would now craft complete stories with a beginning, middle and end. This made a meaningful connection to their English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum, helping students practice sequencing skills in story writing. Again, the students were allowed to write or draw their stories, thus providing options for expression. I continued to encourage individualized choices, making their stories unique. Also, giving them mastery-oriented feedback, I reminded them to create endings other than "then the alien ate him" or "then she woke up." Recruiting interest I had students discuss and share ideas for different endings. The teacher transcribed these onto the board, providing the students with options for comprehension as well as ideas for their stories.

All of the students worked steadfastly on their stories and shared their ideas with each other, while the teachers and I continued to do transcriptions for the students with special needs, as well as extra listening to help the oldest student select his "best choices" for the story. With our journey nearing the end, the special education teacher would help her students revise and finish their work when they returned to her classroom. The ESL teacher was eager to have her students continue and finish their stories during their reading and writing period. We closed the residency with a sharing session and "publishing" the students work in a photocopied booklet, which was kept in the classroom library for all students to read.

REFLECTION

Looking back at this journey I am struck by the broad diversity of student learners who participated in these activities. This unusually varied and dynamic environment demanded a heavy amount of observation and responsiveness on my part. With three special needs students with a variety of learning challenges, seven non-English speaking students, and fifteen additional students, it was a delicate task to design activities that would prove to be accessible and engaging to all of these students of different learning styles and needs.

OUTER SPACE ALIEN STORIES: CREATING COMPLETE NARRATIVES

How does your story begin? Draw or write your ideas below!

Black color, indicating time of day

Revisions, indicating individual choice

Beginning

One day an Alien named Junior met his/her first earthling, a student named Devin in the bus. ~~Then they~~ Devin was on the bus. Then the bus transformed into the alien Junior.

"One day and alien meet named Junior met his first Earthling, a student named Devin. Devin was on the bus. The bus transformed into The alien Junior."

Middle

Next, the alien and the student They play bas ketball and he glows when hes happy and make's his tea (team) happy and he calls his friend.

"Next, the alien and the student they play bas ketball and he glows when hes happy and makes his Tea .. (team) happy and he calls his friend."

Ending

They Meet. the kid B ikowsky got ana ike and the alien fell into a trap that the kid set the alien

"They. Meet. The kid Bikowsky got ana ike (away) and the alien and the alien fell into the trap that the kid set. The alien went (back to his planet)."

Massachusetts Curriculum Strands

Language Arts:

19.9 Write stories that have a beginning, middle, and end and contain details of setting.

Objectives:

- Students will learn about story structure and sequencing
- Students will learn how to create their fictional stories, complete with a beginning, middle, and ending

Assessment Criteria:

- Student work shows evidence of a beginning, middle, and end
- Student work shows evidence of individualized characterization and dialog

Making use of the three art forms, drawing, acting, and writing, proved to be successful in creating broad student accessibility and engagement with the activities. The special education instructor later told me that her students continued to talk about their experience in that activity after the close of each session. She remarked at how much more eager her students were to practice their writing when it was about their time in art class drawing their outer space alien characters, or acting them out. So, she seized the opportunity to have her students create regular oral reflections and then practice writing them down- thereby extending the students' learning beyond the art activity and into the classroom.

Working closely with the special needs students, I came to better understand what the Special Education teacher meant by "receptive and expressive delays." These are disabilities that are impeding the students' capacities for the intake and output of ideas and knowledge. Providing options for comprehension, allowing extra time for processing and/or expressing information and understandings enabled these students to more fully engage with the activities and curriculum. I have begun to understand that these terms, though they may sound specific, are quite broad and can manifest in many different ways. This new understanding of these "delays" has provided me new strategies with which to make my own pedagogical practices more flexible and effective for students of all learning abilities, needs, and styles.

As the residency progressed, the ESL teacher observed and commented about how highly engaged her students were in the activities. Many of the ESL students were anxious to share their ideas in English. One student in particular, who only arrived to America in November, insisted on reading his story aloud in English. He did well in his reading. The teacher was surprised at how comfortable he and others were with reading their stories in English. It became quite clear that these activities were creating a highly personal motivation for the students to master their skills.

I look forward to future residency opportunities in which I will be able to deepen my knowledge of and experience with children who possess a wide range of learning abilities, needs, and styles. This residency has taught me new means and strategies for my responsiveness to a variety of learners, in order to help them better engage with the content and curriculum. Also, I have been invigorated by my first experience of using drama in the activities. It has been artistically engaging as well as giving me more tools in my teaching repertoire. I will continue to explore the connections between cartooning and drama, and I will definitely employ drama and improvisation again in future residencies.

APPENDIX

CURRICULUM DESIGN AND EVALUATION TOOLS

CURRICULUM MAP

Enduring Understandings (big ideas or concepts):

Learning Outcome 1:				Learning Outcome 2:				Learning Outcome 3:			
Assessment Criteria:				Assessment Criteria:				Assessment Criteria:			
Instructional Activities				Instructional Activities				Instructional Activities			
1											
2											
3											
4											
5...											



PROTOCOL FOR GENERATING ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

1. Presenting the unit of study (10 minutes): A teacher or teaching artist presents an arts unit of study by briefly describing:

- What students were expected to know or be able to do (intended learning outcomes)?
- What students were asked to do (instructional activities/assessment tasks)?
- What the expectations for good work looked like (assessment criteria)?

During this presentation, a designated scribe should document the learning outcomes and expectations for good work. The group will listen carefully to the presenting teacher, and then ask brief clarifying questions.

2. Reviewing the student work (15 minutes): The group now examines the student work samples and documentation to find evidence of learning. The group discusses the evidence in light of the intended outcomes and expectations of good work. During this discussion, the designated scribe should make a list of learning evidence cited in relation to the intended learning outcomes (See Student Learning Assessment Summary). The presenter listens and also takes notes:

- What did the students seem to learn?
- How do we know?
- Does the evidence of learning match the intended outcomes and expectations of good work?
- Did the students learn something that was unexpected?

3. Reflecting on assessment criteria (10 minutes): The whole group then works with the teacher or teaching artist to:

- Confirm the relevant and essential learning outcomes for the unit of study.
- Create a checklist of assessment criteria using the documented evidence of learning to describe what the learning outcomes look like when demonstrated in student work.
- If possible, provide multiple anchor pieces of annotated student work to illustrate various levels of achievement of each learning outcome and to improve validity of assessment criteria.

4. De-Brief the protocol process (5 minutes): The whole group discusses what they learned from the process, as well as considers fostering group norms and habits for presentation and feedback.



Universal Design for Learning Checklist

UDL Guidelines	Unit of Study
I. Provide multiple means of REPRESENTATION– Recognition Networks	
1. Provide options for perception	Arts Options:
○ 1.1 Customize the display of information	
○ 1.2 Provide alternatives for auditory information	
○ 1.3 Provide alternatives for visual information	
2. Provide options for language and symbols	Arts Options:
○ 2.1 Define vocabulary and symbols	
○ 2.2 Clarify syntax and structure	
○ 2.3 Decode text and mathematical notation	
○ 2.4 Promote cross-linguistic understanding	
○ 2.5 Illustrate key concepts non-linguistically	
3. Provide options for comprehension	Arts Options:
○ 3.1 Provide or activate background knowledge	
○ 3.2 Highlight critical features, big ideas, and relationships	
○ 3.3 Guide information processing	
○ 3.4 Support memory and transfer	

Universal Design for Learning Checklist

UDL Guidelines	Unit of Study
II. Provide multiple means for ACTION AND EXPRESSION - Strategic Networks	
4. Provide options for physical actions	Arts Options:
○ 4.1 Provide options in the mode of physical response	
○ 4.2 Provide options in the means of navigation	
○ 4.3 Provide options for accessing tools and assistive technologies	
5. Provide options for expressive skills and fluency	Arts Options:
○ 5.1 Allow choices of media for communication	
○ 5.2 Provide appropriate tools for composition and problem solving	
○ 5.3 Provide ways to scaffold practice and performance	
6. Provide options for executive functions	Arts Options:
○ 6.1 Guide effective goal setting	
○ 6.2 Support planning and strategy development	
○ 6.3 Facilitate managing information and resources	
○ 6.4 Enhance capacity for monitoring progress	

Universal Design for Learning Checklist

UDL Guidelines	Unit of Study
III. Provide multiple means for ENGAGEMENT - Affective Networks	
7. Provide options for recruiting interest	Arts Options:
○ 7.1 Increase individual choice and autonomy	
○ 7.2 Enhance relevance, value, and authenticity	
○ 7.3 Reduce threats and distractions	
8. Provide options for sustaining effort and persistence	Arts Options:
○ 8.1 Heighten salience of goals and objectives	
○ 8.2 Vary levels of challenge and support	
○ 8.3 Foster collaboration and communication	
○ 8.4 Increase mastery-oriented feedback	
9. Provide options for self-regulation	Arts Options:
○ 9.1 Guide personal goal-setting and expectations	
○ 9.2 Scaffold coping skills and strategies	
○ 9.3 Develop self-assessment and reflection	

CAST's Universal Design for Learning Guidelines



What are the Guidelines?

The UDL Guidelines were developed in response to the call from stakeholders in the education field to make the application of UDL principles and practices more concrete. The Guidelines are organized according to the three main principles of UDL that address representation, expression, and engagement. For each of these principles, specific “checkpoints” for options are highlighted, followed by examples of practical suggestions.

The UDL Guidelines are not meant to be a “prescription” but a set of strategies that can be employed to overcome the barriers inherent in most existing curricula. They may serve as the basis for building in the options and the flexibility that are necessary to maximize learning opportunities for all students.

CAST first published version 1.0 of the UDL Guidelines in April of 2008. Updated versions of the Guidelines will be published in the future in order address feedback from the field as well as to stay current with emerging research.

Who are the Guidelines for?

The UDL Guidelines have been developed to support educators, administrators, curriculum developers, policymakers, and publishers.

Who funded the development of the Guidelines?

The Guidelines were developed with support from the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs through the National Center on Accessing the General Curriculum (1999-2004), a collaborative project led by CAST. The Emily Hall Tremain Foundation supported publication of the Guidelines through the National Center on UDL.

What research supports the Guidelines?

The UDL Guidelines are based on research from several different fields: education, cognitive science, cognitive neuroscience, neuropsychology, and neuroscience. That research has been reviewed, compiled and organized by educators and researchers at CAST. The process has spanned a 10 year period, and the Guidelines are currently supported by more than 1,000 quantitative and qualitative articles.

To learn more about the UDL Guidelines please visit The National Center on Universal Design for Learning: <http://www.udlcenter.org/>

Universal Design for Learning Guidelines

I. Provide Multiple Means of Representation

1. Provide options for perception

- Options that customize the display of information
- Options that provide alternatives for auditory information
- Options that provide alternatives for visual information

2. Provide options for language and symbols

- Options that define vocabulary and symbols
- Options that clarify syntax and structure
- Options for decoding text or mathematical notation
- Options that promote cross-linguistic understanding
- Options that illustrate key concepts non-linguistically

3. Provide options for comprehension

- Options that provide or activate background knowledge
- Options that highlight critical features, big ideas, and relationships
- Options that guide information processing
- Options that support memory and transfer

II. Provide Multiple Means of Action and Expression

4. Provide options for physical action

- Options in the mode of physical response
- Options in the means of navigation
- Options for accessing tools and assistive technologies

5. Provide options for expressive skills and fluency

- Options in the media for communication
- Options in the tools for composition and problem solving
- Options in the scaffolds for practice and performance

6. Provide options for executive functions

- Options that guide effective goal-setting
- Options that support planning and strategy development
- Options that facilitate managing information and resources
- Options that enhance capacity for monitoring progress

III. Provide Multiple Means of Engagement

7. Provide options for recruiting interest

- Options that increase individual choice and autonomy
- Options that enhance relevance, value, and authenticity
- Options that reduce threats and distractions

8. Provide options for sustaining effort and persistence

- Options that heighten salience of goals and objectives
- Options that vary levels of challenge and support
- Options that foster collaboration and communication
- Options that increase mastery-oriented feedback

9. Provide options for self-regulation

- Options that guide personal goal-setting and expectations
- Options that scaffold coping skills and strategies
- Options that develop self-assessment and reflection



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