Ensuring Success for All Students in the Art Room with Universal Design

The arts are and have been an essential part of human history, mythology, and belief systems as a means of expressing the ideas that matter most to individuals and society. It is essential that art education be an integral part of all students’ education. Visual arts have been considered a universal language through history. Visual arts enable students to solve problems by manipulating materials. Visual arts allow the opportunity to express both verbal and visual stories and develop self-worth and self-esteem. Art is the language for children who may not speak. Art is the focus for children who cannot organize. Art is the expression for children who may have difficulty understanding. Art allows children to succeed.

The art room must be accessible for all students. Each student should have the tools and instruction to be able to work independently. It is my hope that educators continue developing accessibility for our art rooms.

Consider the following goals for all of your students, all of your students.

- Opportunity for all students to create independently in a safe and successful environment
- Development of student’s artistic skills
- Integration of personality through creative experience in the arts
- Enhancement of self-image and self-esteem
- Strengthening of ability to make decisions for oneself
- Expression of inner feeling and moods
- Improvement of communication skills
- Improvement of coordination and use of equipment and tools
- Involvement of families and the community
It is important to recognize the variety of abilities within our classrooms and embrace that not all students will learn or behave the same in our art room. Ensuring that art is accessible for all students, art tools and lessons may need to be reinvented with Universal Design. What is Universal Design?

**Universal Design UD**

Ron Mace, one of the original universal design movement leaders, defined universal design as: "Universal Design is the design of products and environments to be useable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design."

The principles of UD would include:
- Equitable use
- Flexibility in use
- Simple and intuitive
- Low physical effort
- Human factor with safety

Resources:
http://www.universaldesign.com/
http://www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/

**Universal Design Learning UDL**

UDL assumes each learner brings individual strengths needs interests and limitations to the classroom. Flexibility in curriculum and teaching methods increases access to learning just like curb cuts and ramps increases physical access.

1. multiple methods of presentation-communication
2. multiple options for participation-choices
3. multiple means of expression-media & materials

Resources:
http://www.cast.org/research/udl/index.html
http://ada.osu.edu/resources/fastfacts/
http://www.washington.edu/doit/Resources/udesign.html