

Disability and Arts Education

The arts are essential learning tools...tools that inspire creativity and imagination...tools that provide meaningful experiences for academic and personal growth. We know that students can utilize the arts for successful interpretation, innovation and integration of concepts. We also understand that all students should have access to quality arts education experiences.

The following are just a few resources that might be of interest and assistance to anyone engaging in, or advocating for, inclusive arts experiences.

- The **National Arts Education Association** (arteducators.org) has a *Special Needs in Arts Education* (**SNAE**) issues group. This group (<http://specialneedsart.weebly.com>) shares resources, publications and professional development opportunities. The publication, *Reaching and Teaching Students with Special Needs Through Art* (Editors: Beverly Levett Gerber and Doris M. Guay), is a very useful tool for any art educator working with students with disabilities.
- The **Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts** (kennedy-center.org) has an extensive online education resource. The sites online digital resource, *ArtsEdge*, provides a wealth of information on arts integration. The *VSA/Accessibility* link provides resources for supporting individuals with disabilities' engagement in the arts. This resource also hosts many professional development opportunities including webinars and conferences devoted to the intersection of disability, education and the arts.
- **STEAM** is the idea that STEM education requires innovation and creativity in order for students to be successful. The Rhode Island School of Design has championed the STEAM (STEM + Art) effort and provides an inspiring resource (stemtosteam.org) that is just as much a call to action as a resource.
- **Universal Design in Learning** is an educational framework based on research in the learning sciences that guides the development of flexible learning environments that can accommodate individual learning differences. Loosely based on universal design in architecture concepts, UDL provides a blueprint for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that work for everyone--not a single, one-size-fits-all solution, but rather flexible approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual needs.
 - www.udlcenter.org - National Center on Universal Design for Learning

- <http://community.udlcenter.org> - *Communities of Practice* focusing on UDL, including UDL and the Arts.
- **Everyday Arts for Special Education (EASE)** is a U.S. Department of Education Innovation Fund (i3) award program that is developing arts programming for special education students, as well as professional development programs for educators. This inspiring program (urbanarts.org) is an innovative example of the positive work that can be accomplished when the arts and education communities unite to support inclusive arts experiences.