Strategies for Inclusion: Multi-Sensory Methods of Engagement

LOOKING AT ART

- **Tactiles**: Provide materials that relate to the artwork for students to touch. This could include the physical material the artist used, and can be as simple as allowing young students to touch a paintbrush while they view a painting.
  - Texture: “How does it feel?”
  - Artist’s Process, Tools, and Materials: “How did the artist make this?”
  - Scale, Form, and Shape: Compare/Contrast
  - Scent: “How does it smell?”

- **Movement**: Give students a chance to respond kinesthetically to a work. This works best with certain figurative and abstract works.
  - Pose/Gesture of a Figure: “How can you pose like this figure? How do you think they are feeling?”
  - Narrative/Performance: “How would these figures move/behave?”
  - “The Machine”: For more abstract works, “How can you move your body like a line/shape in this work?”

- **Sound**: Make some noise! Anything from a simple sound to using instruments will work to make the piece more memorable.
  - Soundscape: “What would this artwork sound like?”
  - Instruments
  - Round Robin

- **Extra Visual Prompts**: A social story as well as a visual vocabulary are helpful, especially for students with autism or English Language Learners. A social story can be used at home prior to a visit to give students a sense of what to expect when they visit or have a class. Visual vocabulary can be used in the classroom or the gallery to reinforce conversation with visual cues. Students who are non-verbal may also choose to point to the pictures as a form of participation.

MAKING ART

- **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**: Give students plenty of opportunities for success by providing material choices. If a student has restricted mobility, they may gravitate towards thicker paper. If a student doesn’t like the sensation of messy media, they may want a glue stick over a glue bottle. All students will choose the right choice for their ability, not just students with disabilities.

- **Classroom Setup**: Students may need to face each other, see materials clearly, or have distractions (loud music, excess materials/furniture) cleared away. With butcher paper on tables, you can write messages to students who may need encouragement or their own visual cues.

SHARING ART

- **Nonverbal Shares**: A walk around the room or a quiet time to be contemplative can be just as fruitful as conversations about student work.

- **Play as Share**: An interactive skit or a fun game can be just what students need at the end of a class or session, and provide that same opportunity to reflect.

Questions or Ideas? Contact Us!
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