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ART TEACHER PREPARATION FOR TEACHING IN AN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM:

A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PRE-SERVICE PROGRAMS AND

A PROPOSED CURRICULUM

by

LAUREN J. REAVIS

Under the Direction of Dr. Melody Milbrandt

ABSTRACT

Based on my experience and the available literature I believe that many art teachers perceive that they are unprepared to adequately teach special needs students in their art classrooms. The review of literature supports the visual arts for individuals with disabilities. The inclusion movement in schools increases the likelihood that a teacher will have students with disabilities in their art classroom. It is suggested that art educators would benefit from at least one course in their pre-service training that specifically addresses art education for students with special needs. This content analysis of pre-service art education programs reveals that 5 of 18 programs studied, (28%), require such a course, with no other option, to fulfill the special education requirement. Using the published literature, my own experience, and current practices a proposed

curriculum was created for an undergraduate course in art education for special needs in the inclusive art classroom.

INDEX WORDS: Art education, Pre-service art teacher , Special needs, Special populations, Inclusion, Visual arts

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by

LAUREN J. REAVIS

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Art Education

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2009

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by

LAUREN J. REAVIS

Committee Chair: Dr. Melody Milbrandt

Committee: Dr. Kevin Hsieh
Dr. Melanie Davenport

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Studies
College of Arts and Sciences
Georgia State University
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# DEDICATION

This project would not have been possible without the dedication and encouragement of my parents, Jane and Jack. Your willingness to become my part-time nannies along with my in-laws, Bonnie and Bob, made this endeavor a reality. To my baby, Elise, thank you for your sweet nature and understanding when mommy was working. To my husband, Ryan, I am thankful for your heart for children with disabilities. Your caring spirit is an inspiration.

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

"Solving problems to meet the needs of students begins with a concern, however slight, that something could be better" (Guay, 1993, p.60).

My first year of teaching art unveiled many concerns in the area of art education for special needs students. As one of three art teachers at a public high school, I taught five daily class periods that ranged from approximately twenty one to thirty students. Three of the five classes included two to five students with varying levels of cognitive and physical disabilities. I was unprepared to address the issues present in an inclusive art class and my attempts at classroom solutions were reactive rather than proactive. I expected assistance in the form of an aid or paraprofessional for students with more challenging disabilities. Lack of assistance was the norm with one exception; two of my students were accompanied by their own shared aid.

Being a novice I was striving to find my voice as a teacher, create a strong curriculum, establish effective classroom management, handle discipline problems, and stay organized. These tasks were complicated by the fact that I taught in three separate classrooms from an "art cart". While the addition of my special needs students was welcomed, the lack of communication with the special education teacher, the lack of assistance, and my lack of experience proved frustrating. My desperation was secondary, however, to the fear that my special education students were not receiving appropriate individualized instruction.

Were my students with exceptionalities receiving the best art education for their development in the least restrictive environment? Or, rather was my inclusivity somehow creating a more restrictive environment in which they in fact, felt excluded and incapable? Insecurities abounded. I did not know what adaptations should be made or what materials or assistance I had a right to request. I was often left with the impression that some of my

colleagues felt that placing the students amongst general education students was enough – that the art they created and the benefits it gave them were secondary at best. Simply put, there was a lack of understanding and communication between myself, the students, the special education teachers, and the administration.

The program in which I received my pre-service art teacher education required a course entitled Exceptional Children and Youth. This survey of special education was informative but it failed to offer instruction that specifically related to an art teacher's experience. In hindsight, I would have benefited from a pre-service education course that directly approached issues of teaching art to special needs students in the general art classroom.

In "Students with Disabilities in the Art Classroom: How Prepared Are We?," Guay (1994) surmised that "all art teachers must be prepared to teach students in integrated classes and to respond to the social, instructional, and curricular needs of students with a broad range of ability" (p.44). Guay's study surveyed 212 art teachers, with the purpose of measuring their perceived "preparedness to teach students with disabilities in mainstreamed, integrated class settings" (p. 45). In response to the question, "My preservice art education program prepared me to effectively mainstream and provide for the need of students with a range of abilities," 58% of the respondents disagreed, 15.6% felt "minimally prepared," and 26.4% reported being "adequately or extensively prepared" (Guay, 1994, pp.50-51).

In addition, teachers are often uncomfortable working with students with disabilities. As stated in "Inclusion Policy in Practice," some teachers express disinterest in teaching special populations (Keifer-Boyd & Kraft, 2003). Keifer-Boyd and Kraft (2003) suggested that "such discomfort may result from lack of opportunities in preservice preparation for teachers to gain confidence and proactive strategies for teaching art to differently-abled learners" (p.48).

There are many published accounts defending art for students with special needs. Frances Anderson (1994) specified four areas of benefit for students with disabilities taking visual arts. Anderson's categories were "Art as a Vehicle for Learning Academic Concepts, Art as a Reinforcer of Social Skills, Art as a Means of Enhancing Positive Self- and Body Concepts, and Art as a Means of Inclusion/Integration of Children with Disabilities" (pp.102-103).

In addition, the number of special needs students educated in the art classroom is on the rise. Indeed, Causton-Theoharis and Burdick (2008) stated that the art classroom is one of the first mainstream settings in which a student with special needs is placed. This reality goes hand-in-hand with schools' ongoing efforts to meet the legislative requirements that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) – the currently-applicable legislation first enacted as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 – has made universal (Causton-Theoharis & Burdick, 2008). IDEA is the leading legislation that protects the rights to education for children with disabilities, from birth to 21, who require special education services.

## Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

Based on my experience and the available literature I believe that many art teachers perceive that they are unprepared to adequately teach special needs students in their art classrooms. Despite this, due to IDEA 2004, the least restrictive environment, and the movement towards full inclusion, it is probable that a public school art teacher will teach students with special needs. For practicing art educators, this issue is addressed in in-service programs, the collaboration of professional organizations, and other continuing education opportunities. In order to be proactive, however, pre-service art teacher programs should require at least one course that directly addresses the issues related to the teaching of art to special needs students in an inclusive setting.

In this study I reviewed the required coursework for 18 pre-service art teacher programs. These programs were selected from respected colleges and universities offering undergraduate art teacher preparation (certification) programs. The selections cover a range of national regions. This illustrated the lack of formal art-specific training for the education of special needs students. I then used information from the review of literature to create a curriculum proposed for a K-12 pre-service art education undergraduate course that directly addresses teaching art to special needs students in an inclusive art classroom.

My research questions are:

1. What type of special education course(s) are required by current undergraduate art teacher preparation programs?
2. What factors, issues, and methods are most relevant and practical in the training of art teachers to teach special needs students in an inclusive classroom?

## Methodology

First, I reviewed the required coursework of 18 undergraduate pre-service art teacher preparation programs. This data was retrieved from the course requirements, course catalogs, and course description information provided on the college or university websites, respectively. When available I reviewed the course syllabi for content. I then presented the findings of this content analysis focusing specifically on the type of required course(s) in the field of special education.

Secondly, I combined ideas and methods from my experience, the review of literature, and the content analysis data to create a suggested curriculum. This curriculum is a proposed pre-service undergraduate art education course that directly addresses the issues of teaching art to special needs students in an inclusive art classroom. The course is established on the foundation

of normalization (Guay, 1993). This approach to inclusion encourages a student's sense of normalcy and acceptance. The desired result of modifications is to avoid further isolation in keeping instruction and experiences as similar as possible for all students.

## Participants

There are no human participants in the study.

## Timeline

The content analysis of the art education preparation programs and the suggested course curriculum was completed over a period of two months. The program content analysis was completed during April and the first half of May of 2009. The remainder of May and the month of June 2009 were reserved for the completion of the suggested course curriculum.

## Limitations of the Study

Limitations of the study include the assumption that the data obtained from course catalogs is accurate. Pre-service art teacher preparation programs were evaluated based on the written content provided to the public by their respective universities. Course listings alone do not divulge the entire content taught during the scheduled semester/quarter. In fact, instruction regarding art for special populations may be embedded within the structure of other methods courses. However, the extent of coverage cannot be considered comprehensive if teaching art for students with disabilities is not listed as the primary focus or goal of instruction.

In the instance that a program does not require a course in special education, how they meet the federal and state mandate for certification is outside the scope of this study. Additionally, some programs may involve students in outreach community programs or have partnerships with special population organizations. For the purposes of this project the pre-

service art teacher's experience with individuals with special needs, outside of the required coursework of the program, was not considered.

The proposed course curriculum was based on the published literature related to the field of art education for students with special needs, my personal experience, the course descriptions and available syllabi. I am aware that art teacher preparation programs are overwhelmed by the amount of content requiring coverage. I will not suggest how to fit this course into established curricula, but I hope to provide a foundation for why and how it should be taught.

## Definition of Terms

**Pre-service Art Teacher Education** - The public university training and instruction, in the field of visual arts, which a teacher receives prior to becoming certified in the area of art education.

**Special Needs Student** - A student who has been identified as having a disability that requires specialized instruction and services to meet their individualized learning needs.

**Inclusion (inclusive setting)** - "The process of educating students with disabilities in the general education setting" (Colarusso & O'Rourke, 2004, p.555). Full-inclusion presumes that the student be in the general education classroom for the entire school day.

**Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)** - "The policy mandated by IDEA that students with disabilities be educated in the general school environment with their nondisabled peers to the greatest extent possible and appropriate" (Colarusso & O'Rourke, 2004, p.555).

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA)** - The legislation most recently reauthorized in 2004, that mandates the rights and benefits of students with disabilities.

**Disability** – As defined by IDEA 2004, a child with a disability includes one with "mental retardation, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairment (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this title as

‘emotional disturbance’), orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairment, or specific learning disabilities; and (ii) who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services” (IDEA, 2004, Sec.602 (3)(A), p.6).

# CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

## Inclusion and the Least Restrictive Environment

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) was first initiated by congress in 1975 as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. Reauthorized in 2004, IDEA protects and mandates the rights and benefits in education for a student with disabilities. The purpose of this legislation includes

> (1)(A) to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living; (B) to ensure that the rights of children with disabilities and parents of such children are protected; and (C) to assist States, localities, educational service agencies, and Federal agencies to provide for the education of all children with disabilities (IDEA, 2004, Sec.601(d), p.5).

A traditional definition of education includes providing students with the skills and knowledge necessary to reach their full potential as active contributing members of society. Special education shares these goals, yet with the additional intention of providing uniquely designed services and instruction for the individual child with disabilities (Colarusso & O‘Rourke, 2004). IDEA 2004 defines a child with a disability as one

> (i) with mental retardation, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairment (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance (referred to in

> this title as ‘emotional disturbance’), orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairment, or specific learning disabilities; and (ii) who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services (IDEA, 2004, Sec.602 (3)(A), p.6).

Historically, students in special education were physically and socially ostracized from their general education peers. Progressing from the first enactment of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, special education and general education have become less separate. The movement towards inclusion, backed by the least restrictive environment, has necessitated more collaboration for the education of students with special needs. Inclusion is the method of schooling children with disabilities in the general education classroom (Colarusso & O’Rourke, 2004). Mainstreaming is an earlier term used to describe a similar process. Full-inclusion describes placing all students in the general education setting regardless of their level of disability (Menzies & Falvey, 2008).

The least restrictive environment (LRE) requires that students with disabilities are given the opportunity to be educated alongside their general education peers. Section 612 of IDEA 2004 defines the mandate of LRE in the following manner:

> To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities are educated with children who are not disables, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature and severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids

> and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily (IDEA, 2004, Sec.612 (5)(A), p.31).

Colarusso and O'Rourke (2004) clarify that "the appropriate placement for any one student is determined by the multidisciplinary team and is based on the student's needs. The first choice of placement should always be the least restrictive setting in which the student's educational needs can be met with the option of moving to a more restrictive setting if needed" (p.13). The continuum of educational setting options from the least restrictive to the most restrictive includes the regular or general education class, the resource room, separate class, separate school, residential facility, and the homebound/hospital setting (Turnbull, Turnbull, Shank, & Leal, 1999).

In deciding the appropriate education plan and placement setting, the multidisciplinary team must create an individualized education program (IEP) for each student with a disability. The IEP is an individual educational plan that states the student's annual goals and the instructional supports necessary to assist the child in reaching those goals (Bush, 1997). The IEP team typically includes "the parents, at least one general educator, one special educator, one school district representative, one individual qualified to interpret evaluation results, and optionally, others such as related services personnel, parent advocates, and, if appropriate, the student" (Turnbull, Turnbull, Shank, & Leal, 1999, p.62).

The most recent reauthorization of IDEA allows, with guardian approval, for decisions to be made without the presence of all team members (Erwin & Soodak, 2008). It is important that the art teacher be included in the IEP discussions because it is then that a student's supports are decided. It is the responsibility of the art teacher to evaluate the student's performance and if it is

established that the student would receive greater benefit in art from additional supports and services he or she may request them through the IEP team (Keifer-Boyd & Kraft, 2003).

General education teachers, art teachers included, are finding that they are increasingly being trusted as team members in the education of special needs students. Not only are school systems revising their curricula to reach a more diverse selection of students, teachers are also presented with new responsibilities towards their students with disabilities. In direct relation to the inclusion mandate, art teachers became part of a collaborative group effort to advocate for the full benefits of education, including supports, for students with disabilities (Doris Guay, 2003).

The art classroom is not a new setting for mainstreaming or inclusion. The initial education legislation of 1975 began the practice and disciplines not considered academic were singled out for initial mainstream assignments, art not excluded (Guay, 1995). Why was the art classroom one of the first accessible options for inclusion? What do we now know about the benefits of art for students with disabilities?

## A Case for Art

Why is art a common discipline for inclusion? The arts promote learning through activities that concurrently encourage educational and social development (Mason & Steedly, 2006). Art educators are in a unique position because the visual arts have the ability to connect with all students in spite of developmental limitations (Wiebe-Zederayko & Ward, 1999).

When the idea of mainstreaming first entered the vocabulary of the public school system, the art classroom became a trial setting for inclusion (Causton-Theoharis & Burdick, 2008). During the late 1970's, mainstreaming began as the first attempt at inclusion in which students with disabilities were slowly introduced into the general school population. The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) reports that "mainstreaming was implemented by having students

with disabilities participate in the nonacademic portions of the general education program, such as art, music, and physical education" (Council for Exceptional Children, 2003, http://www.cec.sped.org). However, unlike the current inclusion movement, placement in general education was warranted and only addressed some students with disabilities (Guay, 1995).

Today, it is the goal to place all students in the least restrictive environment, as long as they can receive appropriate instruction with aids and services. This movement towards full inclusion has increased the number of students participating in general education classrooms. Additionally, the diversity of type and level of disability found in the inclusive general education classroom has increased. The current generation of art teachers is in a position to revise their programs to meet individual needs (Guay, 1995). Not only to respond to the mandate of IDEA 2004, but also to provide their exceptional students with the opportunities and benefits that an art education offers.

The roots of art education owe much to the philosophies of John Dewey and Viktor Lowenfeld. Although the field shifted towards a more discipline based approach, their ideas still hold merit within the current system. Dewey believed that the school setting gave students the liberty to progress, make decisions, and overcome obstacles (Bates, 2000). These ideas were woven into the discipline based art education (DBAE) curriculum. Today, postmodern principles and concepts are gaining attention in the contemporary art classroom furthering the freedom of discovery for students.

Viktor Lowenfeld was attentive to the entire child including his or her cognitive, expressive, physical, and artistic capabilities (Bates, 2000). Lowenfeld has been accused of confusing the ideas of art education and art therapy, but in regards to children with special needs

his hope "was to try to rescue the children by supporting them through an art process which breathes richness and a sense of well-being back into their lives" (Henley, 1992, p.15). There is a great distinction between art teachers and art therapists, yet art as a vehicle for promoting self-worth and image carries across both fields.

*Self-Image and Self-Expression*

The visual arts, when effectively taught, can increase a student's awareness of the world and his or her role in it. Student's can gain a perceptive view of the world by way by examining the areas of art production, history, aesthetics, and criticism (Carpenter & Carpenter II, 1999). Carpenter and Carpenter II (1999) followed two case studies enrolled in an art course designed to encourage students with disabilities use art materials to communicate their thoughts on self and the world. The results suggested that "the opportunity to promote a positive self-image through visual and verbal inquiry appears to have merit and further attempts toward this goal for all students is strongly needed and encouraged" (p.130).

According to Susan Unok Marks (2008), students with disabilities are oppressed and segregated in many aspects of their lives. To counteract this, Marks calls for inclusion, asserting that these students must be at liberty to discover and encounter the expressions and activities of their general education peers. She insists that if the schools fail to aid a student in forming a sense of self-determination or becoming a representative in their own lives, students will continue under the patterns of oppression into adulthood. Students with disabilities, if given the same opportunities as their general education peers, receive instruction in the visual arts that encourages personal determination and individual expression.

As mentioned, students with disabilities are in many respects an oppressed group. The expectations of those determining their education are all too often minimized due to the stigma

attached to the disability. Henley (1992) states that "the relationship between one's artwork and one's self is seen by Lowenfeld as reflecting the quality of self-identification and investment that a child brings to his or her art" (p.25). Art education, with appropriate adaptations, can intrinsically provide students with disabilities the opportunity to create individual expressions of self.

*Visual Language and Communication*

The visual communication of two dimensional media or three dimensional forms may potentially inspire children with special needs more than the communication of the written or spoken word (Anderson, 1994). No child is the same, and students with disabilities may draw at a stage that differs from the 'norm'. Yet, art education can provide them with the language, element and principles, to visually communicate to their fullest potential. Bates (2000) suggests that "if we believe that visual expression can have intrinsic value to every individual and that visual language, like verbal language, can be taught, we must address the teaching of art as seriously as we address the teaching of English" (p.113).

The idea of art as a visual language is particularly important for students with language disorders or hearing impairments. Eubanks (1999) suggests that if we are to consider art as a form of language, then achieving that language is as simple as converting one form of communication to another. Based on her own research, Eubanks proposes that

> Drawings provide a visual representation of the students' ideas onto which language can be mapped and an opportunity for students to request new vocabulary relevant to their interests. Classroom teachers, art specialists, and parents need to be sensitive

> to this opportunity for language development, giving students time to talk about their drawings (p.114).

It is important to note that art is also an important form of communication for the visually impaired. According to Lowenfeld, there are two types of learners – haptic and visual (Bates, 2000). Texture, space and scale assist in helping haptic learners express and perceive through touch. As opined by Janet Olson (2003), "parents and teachers ought to consider the drawings of children as a gift, one that provides them with insight and understanding for seeing the voices of children" (p.36). Not only is art an alternative form of communication for some students, it is an opportunity for others to socially connect with a child who might otherwise seem uninterested.

*Social Inclusion and Peer Interaction*

Inclusion in the art classroom affords many opportunities for social interaction between students with disabilities and their general education peers. In fact, many proposed frameworks for teaching in an inclusive art class include pairing students with disabilities with a non-disabled peer. Guay (1995) suggests that students become part of a collaborative team, "pursue goals," and use their diversities to "produce art, discover and inquire about art, and participate in portfolio evaluations" (p.54).

Human Empowerment through the ARTS, (HEARTS), an art teacher preparation program, experimented in lessons that required peer collaboration (Keifer-Boyd & Kraft, 2003). In this program, pairings of general education students and students with disabilities helped the individuals become more attentive to the potential in others while bettering social connections. All students were included in processes to the fullest extent of their abilities. In conclusion of the program, one teacher reported that a non-disabled student initiated conversation with a visually impaired student in a calm sensitive manner. Another teacher participant in HEARTS shared

that at the end of the program the initial distinction between general education students and students with disabilities was less evident.

Studies show that inclusion, and the peer interaction to which it contributes, benefits both the student with special needs and the general education student. June E. Downing (2002) cites studies that reported the effect of inclusion on the happiness and behaviors of students with disabilities. One of the studies followed five students who "showed a higher percentage of behavior that was described as happiness when typical peers were present versus classmates with similar disabilities" (Downing, 2002, p.8). A similar study conducted in 1997 by Kennedy, Shula, and Fryxell found that in the mainstream classroom, children with disabilities communicated more with their general education peers than they did with their peers in the special education classroom (Downing, 2002).

Students without disabilities are also positively affected by the inclusion process. A study by Helmstetter, Peck, and Giangreco followed students who interacted with students with varying levels of disabilities in inclusion general education classes or programs (Downing, 2002). They found seven areas of benefit for the general student: "increased responsiveness to others' needs, valuing relationships with people with disabilities, personal development, more tolerance for others, increased appreciation for human diversity, development of personal values, and positive changes in peer status" (Downing, 2002, p.9).

To iterate, art is a common setting for inclusion and the number of students and severity of disability involved in the inclusion process is on the rise. The collaborative nature of the art classroom should increasingly continue to foster these positive social relationships.

*Enhances Learning*

Arts education advocates often point to an across-discipline approach to justify the worth of their programs. Others fight the trend and demand that art is a valuable study in its own right. Both stances have merit, and there is a middle ground for each. An art teacher does not have to sacrifice art content when collaborating with general education teachers. Communication is crucial because the art teacher and the general education teacher alike do not share the same curriculum expertise (Anderson, 1994).

Inclusive art education programs allow students with disabilities the opportunity to learn through the repetition of concepts without the repetition of activity (Anderson, 1994). According to Anderson (1994), the best learning environments engage many senses and hands-on experiences. Therefore, art is ideal for enhancing and buttressing the academic content that the student has already obtained (Anderson, 1994).

*Therapeutic*

It is noted that the boundary between art educators and art therapists should be respected. Henley (1992) quoted Edith Kramer who stated "the term therapy must remain within the clinical and analytical sphere, whereas, the term therapeutic can safely imply processes which 'elevate the mind, quicken the spirit or ease the body'" (p.16). Students with cognitive, behavioral, and physical disabilities, with correct adaptations and modifications, can benefit from the therapeutic advantages inherent in the visual arts.

What does all this mean for the art teacher? Teachers must be prepared if their students with disabilities are to gain the full benefits of art education. The pre-service art teacher should be aware of legal and ethical implications, adaptive strategies, modifications of curriculum, classroom management and arrangement, communication techniques with specialists and other

matters. The most important goal is to ensure that a disability does not prohibit a child from participating in the art experience.

## Art Teacher Preparation for Inclusion

The most current draft of the National Art Education Association's Standards for Art Teacher Preparation states that programs should facilitate an applicant's ability to learn and apply principles and methods of instruction for unlike learners (National Art Education Association, 2008). Additionally, it requires that study should include "the particular needs of special populations--such as behavior-disordered, gifted, hearing or sight-impaired, mentally or physically challenged, and English language learners (ELL)--and of teaching strategies appropriate to these populations" (p.4). The Standards also require that candidate's have the opportunity to observe art teachers successfully instructing diverse populations, including students with special needs. This study and observation must include the opportunity for the applicant to put acquired knowledge into practice in the form of planning.

The new standards confirm the need to train art teachers for diverse learners and learning environments. This and the information presented previously leads us to ask, Are art teachers prepared to teach in an inclusive environment? As stated by Pochedley and Dorff (2008) in regards to the art classroom, "in order for all students to find this environment welcoming, teachers must be confident in their abilities to teach all children" (p.18).

In "Students with Disabilities in the Art Classroom: How Prepared Are We?" Doris Guay (1994) surveyed 212 art teachers. The purpose of the study was to discover "to what extent do art teachers teach students with disabilities in kindergarten through grade 12 art classrooms," "what kinds of preparation to teach students with disabilities did these teachers experience in

their preservice education," and "how do they perceive their preparedness to teach students with disabilities in mainstreamed, integrated class settings?" (Guay, 1994, p.45).

The results suggested that the majority of K-12 art teachers, 85%, are teaching students with disabilities and over 70% of the participants considered themselves ill-equipped to teach in an inclusive art classroom (Guay, 1994). It is important to note that most of the research participants did experience some type of special education coursework in their preparation. The types of courses experienced by the participants and the number of teachers in each group were reported. Of the 212 participants, 71 teachers experienced an "infusion of special education curricula in regular art education methods courses," 39 took an "art education in special education course," 83 completed a "non-art special education course," 31 received "more than one course," and 43 teachers conveyed that they had "no coursework" regarding special needs (Guay, 1994, p.48). In ranking the coverage content of courses, the teachers who encountered the most preparation were the ones who participated in more than one course (Guay, 1994).

Guay (1994) speculates that the growing demand of content coverage for art educator preparation programs may be the reason for inadequate special education coursework. Therefore, she advocates for the continuance of infusion programs in which art education and special education are not segregated. In addition, art teacher pre-service programs should work collaboratively with the special education departments and allow for in-field experiences for inspiring art teachers (Guay, 1994).

In "Inclusion Policy in Practice" (2003) some teachers expressed disinterest in teaching special populations. One special educator was noted for hoping that future art teachers would have the desire to work with special populations (Keifer-Boyd & Kraft, 2003). An art teacher's uneasiness may be a product of their inexperience and his or her lack of preparation could

impede confidence and self-efficacy in teaching art to students with special needs (Keifer-Boyd & Kraft, 2003). After participating in a hands-on learning experience in which they were partnered with individuals with disabilities, pre-service art teachers stated that the program "resulted in an increased level of comfort, decreased anxiety, and (in some cases) a change in attitude among that art students regarding people experiencing severe disabilities" (Keifer-Boyd & Kraft, 2003, p.48).

Pochedley and Dorff (2008) implemented a course for pre-service art educators called *Art Education Field Experience*. This course was designed by a college professor and a high school teacher and it included practical hands-on experience. The goal was to help their pre-service art teachers view all students with compassion and to conquer any trepidation that might impede their ability to include all students (Pochedley & Dorff, 2008).

Research also shows that art teachers are often too dependent on paraprofessionals to provide instruction to students with disabilities. Learning to communicate with paraprofessionals is necessary - without this collaboration the aide often becomes the student's first source of art instruction (Guay, 2003). Causton-Theoharis & Burdick (2008) found that paraprofessionals and art teachers lowered their expectations of students with disabilities because of their own notions regarding why a student was placed in the art classroom. They also suggest that art teachers need to know how to work directly with students who have disabilities. Additionally, teachers need to know how to guide and support paraprofessionals. Therefore, these skills must be specifically addressed in art educator preparation programs, as working with paraprofessionals is an increasingly important job responsibility (Causton-Theoharis & Burdick, 2008).

From a legal perspective, IDEA stipulates that appropriate professional education mirror the needs of diverse learners. It dictates the necessity of "supporting high-quality, intensive pre-

service preparation and professional development for all personnel who work with children with disabilities (20 U.S.C. sec. 1400(c)(5)(E))" (Huerta, 2008, p.27). According to Canter, training for in-service teachers and pre-service teachers is essential (Huerta, 2008). She suggests that school systems depend on university training and in her experience teachers often "do not have the skills to create the necessary structure, meaningful environment, and high expectations that students need in order to focus their energies on learning rather than participate in inappropriate behaviors" (Huerta, 2008, p.28).

The National Art Educators Association (NAEA) has also addressed the need for more information and support for art educators in teaching students' with disabilities. NAEA now has a Special Needs Issues Group that meets at the annual conference and reports in the bi-monthly newsletter (Special Education and the Arts, n.d., Home page). Special Education and the Arts, asserts that because most art teachers receive only minor special education schooling there continues to be a want for information concerning learners with disabilities (Special Education and the Arts, n.d., NAEA Special Needs Issues Group).

The research suggests that most teachers are ill-equipped to respond to the inclusion of special needs students in their classrooms. Not only are teachers unprepared, but they often form an opinion of students with disabilities that contributes to their limitations. Some aspects of teaching can only be learned through practical experience and not all situations can be anticipated. Pre-service art teacher education programs, however, can be improved to allow for more experiences and familiarization with the issues of an inclusive setting.

## Suggested Framework of Curriculum

In what ways can an art teacher preparation programs proactively address the concern that novice art teachers are ill-equipped to teach in inclusive classrooms? There are articles and texts

available that offer suggestions in art curriculum for special needs including what teachers should know and anticipate. Although all situations cannot be foreseen, certain skills, techniques, and a strong knowledge base can prime a pre-service teacher to plan and adapt accordingly.

*Normalization for All Students*

Doris M. Guay, Professor Emeritus of Art Education at Kent State University, has devoted a portion of her studies to the collaboration of arts education and special education. She has written texts and articles on the subject and presented information in a variety of speaking engagements. Guay also served as the Ohio Department of Education's first consultant in the "Arts for the Handicapped" (Brunswick Arts Council, 2009, Board of Directors).

Guay (1993) advocates for the normalization of art education for all students. In this process, the educator strives to offer "analogous routines for students. In art these routines include preparation and cleanup, creative production, critiques, the display of art, and participation in group discussions, activities, and field trips" (Guay, 1993, p.59). This concept is the foundation for a successful approach to inclusion in the art class. Although it does require specific modifications and preplanning, normalization does not imply that a teacher should simplify or isolate students from their peers, but encourages curriculum adjustments to provide for diversity (Guay, 1993). Normalization as a foundation for instruction focuses on the best interest for the individual student. This in turn creates a culture of success in the classroom.

## Points of Consideration in the Inclusive Art Classroom

In Guay's 1994 article presenting her study of teacher preparation, she defined 15 areas of content to measure art teacher's perceived preparation to teach in the inclusive setting, specifically:

> Teaming/Consulting, Adapting Instruction/Media, Teaching to Learning Strengths, Assessment for Partial Participation, Ethical Issues, Interg./Segregation, Assessment of Student Abilities, Cooperative Grouping Techniques, Establishing Goals for IEP's , Using Peer Helpers and Adult Aids, Desc./Prescriptive Information, Classroom Organization, Directive Instruction, Laws and Regulations, Task Analysis/Behavioral Objectives, Behavioral Management. (Guay, 1994, Table 6, p.53)

Using this list as a guide, I will use a modified/condensed version to outline the main areas of concern for art teachers preparing to teach students with disabilities in the art classroom.

*Laws and Regulations*

Art teacher candidates and current professionals should be aware of the legislation that governs the practices of inclusion in the least restrictive environment. Since inclusion has appropriately become an established practice in the art classroom, teachers should be advised that they are expected to ensure that all students are participating. Keifer-Boyd and Kraft (2003) report that the practice of inclusion is not always applied in the manner intended by IDEA because some students remain passive members of the art class. Understanding the law and its mandates clarifies the position, rights, and expectations of the teacher in the inclusion movement. This includes an understanding of the IEP process in which the student's short and long term goals are set. Indeed, IEP meetings may be the best opportunity to discuss and request necessary supports and services.

*Funding*

Our nation's current administration has requested a significant increase for special education funding. It is a 3.1% increase (337 million) for special education services for ages served under Part B of IDEA (United States Department of Education, 2008). According to the IDEA website, the funding for special education is dictated at the local and state level. IDEA regulations insist that certain funds may be allotted to "support the use of technology . . . to maximize accessibility to the general education curriculum for children with disabilities" (United States Department of Education, 2006). In addition, teachers can apply for national and local organization grants (Burnette, 2006). Teachers may also present a request for additional services from the IEP team. No matter the route taken to obtain necessary tools for students, it is important for art teachers to know that there are ways and channels of communication available. However, one should be prepared to defend, explain, and present their case in detail.

*Collaboration and Communication*

Collaboration and communication between all individuals who work with a student with disabilities is central to his or her educational development. In a collaborative model of inclusion presented by Guay (1995), education is identified as a shared responsibility. In the public school, the art teacher is often the only representative of their field. Therefore, they must initiate conversation and become the one who pilots their cause in working with a collaborative team focused on building a concerned and truly inclusive environment for all students (Guay, 1995). The article outlined three methods of problem-solving including communicating through consultation, classroom assistance, and co-teaching (Guay, 1995).

Consultation involves all parties including student peers, parents of students with disabilities, and special education staff members to help the art teacher establish proper goals and

objectives (Guay, 1995). Classroom assistance includes experienced paraprofessionals, student peers, and anyone else present in the class who could offer aid and unique perspectives (Guay, 1995). Lastly, co-teaching refers to the process in which special education specialists and therapists assist the art teacher when working with small groups that require more specified instruction (Guay, 1995).

Guay (1995) also points out the importance of including school administrators in planning and discussion because they are the ones who must approve the art teacher's requests for support. Art teachers need to learn from the professional teams. Collaboration with other teachers and service providers and attending skill building workshop can provide much needed support ( Additionally, as shown in a case study by Pochedley and Dorff (2008), pre-service art teachers should be connected to established art educators. This gives them the opportunity to "meet the students [with disabilities], talk with the teacher and paraprofessionals, and begin to develop ideas regarding instruction" (Pochedley & Dorff, 2008, p.19).

*Cooperative Learning and Peer-Participation*

Social inclusion is one of the benefits for children in the art classroom, both those with and without disabilities. IDEA and the least restrictive environment encourages that students with disabilities be educated with their general education peers. Research suggests that this strategy is beneficial and therefore valuable in the training of candidates in art teacher preparation programs.

*Adaptations and Modifications*

According to Anderson (1994), the prerequisite to modifications and adaptations is communication and assistance from the team of providers for the individual student with disabilities, including everyone that is aware of the individual's abilities and hindrances. Art

teachers should request information regarding their students with disabilities prior to beginning the school year or new semester to adequately prepare.

*The physical space.*

The physical space includes any area in which the art experience takes place (Anderson, 1994). The design of the space can help a child stay focused, on task, and create with greater independence. According to Guay (1999), "attention to the organization of the physical environment prior to the opening of the school year results in smoother functioning of routines later" (p.18). There are many good sources of guidance when adapting the creative physical space (Anderson, 1994; Henley, 1992; Guay, 1999).

Depending on the disability, adaptations may include reducing visual stimulation, keeping materials stored out of sight until ready for use, preparing individual work stations for the distractible student, and allowing students to work on multiple surfaces (e.g., floor, table, lap boards) (Anderson, 1994). Guay (1999) provides a valuable list of questions to ask oneself when setting up an inclusive art classroom. The questions are meant to anticipate situations the might lead to confusion and frustration for all working in the environment. Art teachers should address their line of sight with students, pathways to demonstration, set-up, and clean-up, while storing materials in a manner that allows for student independence (Guay, 1999). Students should also be placed in groupings that consider distractions and physical requirements (Guay, 1999).

*Materials and tools.*

Students with disabilities may require adaptive art materials and tools, as well, to ensure safety and creative independence. With the understanding that all students should be active in the art class, modifications may be simple or complex. Teachers should be willing to be innovative in problem solving and to research past practices and supports for students. Pre-

service art teachers should be made aware of the available resources in regards to adaptive art materials and tools.

Wiebe-Zederayko & Ward (1999) make suggestions for modifying the drawing tool. These adaptations allowed two students to draw independently, which was a gift not formerly experienced (Wiebe-Zederayko & Ward, 1999). Materials can also be modified during lesson planning. For example, providing larger paper for students with less dexterity and setting aside a lap boards. Students can use straight edges for tearing paper, pre-cut materials, four-hole scissors, and rounded tip scissors for safety (Anderson, 1994). Materials already in the classroom can be altered by thickening the handles of brushes with foam and tape and adding Velcro or "orthoplast" to customize an individual's hand grips (Anderson, 1994, p.72). Assistance in the form of helmet and mouth holders is available for students with physical impairments (Anderson, 1994).

The many adaptation possibilities are too numerous to list, and vary based on the disability or disabilities of the child. In general terms, art teachers must strive to ensure safety and creative freedom in the classroom for all students. In regards to art teacher preparation, the introduction of possible modifications, planning for those modifications, and offering published reference sources could provide support in times of frustration.

*Assistive technology.*

Some students may require the use of a computer to communicate and excel in the classroom. In an article by Margaret Taylor (2005), she contends that the addition of information communication technology (ICT) to education has enhanced the learning experience for several students with special needs. She clarifies that "ICT solutions can include increased

magnification, low or high contrast screens, colour variation, key guards, adaptations to hardware and software and input devices" (Taylor, 2005, p.326).

Receiving proper technical assistance may be difficult due to funding restrictions and because the personnel of the school may not be dedicated to obtaining ICT equipment nor to the training necessary to operate such equipment (Taylor, 2005). Although these obstacles may intimidate and seem insurmountable, art teachers should advocate for the necessary supports that will help a child succeed in education.

*Behavioral Management*

Some elements of classroom management include the arrangement of the environment, addressed above. Lowering the frustrations of accessibility can temper behavior problems. The use of visual cues and schedules provides advance notice to students and in turn improves the mood of the classroom by reducing a student anxiety (Pochedley & Dorff, 2008). Visual schedules include prompts in sequence of participation such as demonstration, getting materials, and clean-up. The use of visual timers can also aid in keeping students on task (Pochedley & Dorff, 2008).

Just as a teacher becomes familiar with a 'typical' student's behavior triggers, a student with disabilities will display similar indications. Guay (1999) provides suggestions for helping students manage their own behavior based on "Dreikurs, Grunwald, and Pepper (1971) . . . four goals of student misbehavior: attention, withdrawal, control, and revenge" (p.19). If the student does not respond to traditional methods, further intervention strategies are listed in the article including conferences and written contracts (Guay, 1999).

*Instructional Strategies*

Guay (1999) defends the foundational idea behind inclusion: schooling for students with disabilities should parallel that of general education students to the greatest extent possible. She states that "an in-process assessment of a student's prerequisite skills and understanding of art concepts reveals areas for individual instructional emphasis if modification of an assignment becomes necessary" (Guay, 1999, p.22). Perhaps the most important factor in teaching students with disabilities is to employ instructional variety that includes a range of activities - activities that stimulate different senses such as dramatizing, reading, and creating (Guay, 1999).

Instructional strategies in the inclusive art classroom include "cooperative learning groups," "Map/McGill Action Planning System [MAPS]," "adult aides/tutors," "curricula modification through individualized strategies," "modifying cognitive complexity," "modifying media or forming process complexity," and "modifying art products" (pp.26-30). For clarification, during cooperative learning everyone works as a team and the whole is greater than the individual. MAPS is a system that guides the teacher in familiarizing herself with a student's needs through communication with the student, parents, teachers, etc. It also includes preparation of general education students through discussion and assessments to see how relationships are progressing. The other strategies include proper training for paraprofessionals, modifying the difficulty of subject matter, modifying the steps of a technique or process, and modifying the type of product created (e.g., painting for a drawing or a verbal monologue in place of a visual product) (Guay, 1999).

*Assessment*

A student's IEP stipulates how short and long term goals will be evaluated. Anderson (1994) suggests that teachers should conduct a pre-assessment prior to the start of the IEP

process. She also recommends conducting more than one test and on different days to get a more accurate reading of the student's strengths and weaknesses (Anderson, 1994). This pre-test will provide a guide to the teacher in evaluating the student's progress and the effectiveness of the art program. Troeger (1981) stated that "a child must be evaluated within her own maturation and learning context" (as cited in Anderson, 1994, p.89). Anderson's book *Art Centered Education and Therapy for Children with Disabilities* (1994) offers suggestions for testing and setting annual goals for a student with disabilities.

In other sources it is advised that evaluation tools be customized for an individual to increase the validity of the student's evolvement (Guay, 1999). This can be in the form of portfolio or process folio reviews and forms of communication from the student to the teacher stressing their reflections (Guay, 1999). In short, it is important to review with the student his or her progress and accomplishments (Guay, 1999). Evaluation in art is often based on the criteria of the project or lesson. When teaching in an inclusive classroom, the criteria may need to be modified based on the individual's strengths and limitations. However, accessing a student's achievement of skills and concepts in the discipline is crucial to their sense of progress and worth.

This review of the literature focused on four areas of relevance in regards to art education for students with disabilities. The first section, inclusion and the least restrictive environment, addressed the mandates of legislation. These mandates determine why, from a legal perspective, educators should respect and strive for effective inclusion. The second section, a case for art, defended the rationale for supporting the arts for children with special needs. The third section, art teacher preparation for inclusion, presented research that has lifted concerns regarding the art teachers' preparedness to teach in an inclusive setting. The fourth and final section, suggested

framework of curriculum, outlines classroom concerns and points of consideration that translate into areas of curricula content for an art teacher preparation program.

Each of these topics is important to this study. They establish the need for strong inclusive art programs as well as the apparent deficiency of well-prepared art teachers for special needs. The preceding research demonstrates extensive content that could be shared in a pre-service art education program. To include that content as a sidebar in methodology course cannot provide the opportunities necessary for effective instruction. The analysis of pre-service art education programs revealed the course offerings currently in place and attested to the need for more course offerings specific to art education of special needs students. The literature cited led me in constructing a curriculum for such a course.

# CHAPTER 3: CONTENT ANALYSIS

## Findings

I reviewed the undergraduate art education program curriculum for 18 universities and colleges (Table 1). The study focused on schools that offer undergraduate programs culminating in a bachelor's degree and K-5, 5-12, P-12, or K-12 art teacher certification. These schools were selected based on their professional reputation in the field, strong graduate programs, and with the attempt to represent various regions of the United States. In addition, Anderson, Eisner, and McRorie's article "A Survey of Graduate Study in Art Education" was used as a guide in selecting schools with top ranking graduate programs in art education (1998).

**Table 1 Reviewed Schools and Their Art Education Undergraduate Programs**

| University/College | Undergraduate Program |
|---|---|
| Arizona State University | Bachelor of Fine Art (B.F.A.), art education |
| The University of Arizona | B.F.A., art education |
| Central Connecticut State University | Bachelor of Science (B.S.), art education |
| Florida State University | B.S., art education |
| The University of Georgia | B.F.A, art education |
| Indiana University Bloomington | B.S., visual arts |
| University of Illinois Chicago | B.F.A, art education |
| Northern Illinois University | Bachelor of Science in Education (B.S.Ed.), art education |
| Kent State University | Bachelor of Art (B.A.), art education |
| Kutztown University | B.S., art education |
| University of Massachusetts Dartmouth | B.F.A., art education |
| University of New Mexico | B.A., art education |
| The Ohio State University | Bachelor of Art Education (B.A.Ed.) |
| The Pennsylvania State University | B.S., school certification option |
| The University of North Texas | B.F.A., visual arts studies |
| Virginia Commonwealth University | B.F.A., art education |
| The University of Wisconsin Madison | B.S., art education |
| The University of Wisconsin Milwaukee | B.F.A., art education |

The curriculum framework for each degree program was reviewed in order to determine what type of special education course was required. This information was obtained from the respective school's websites and online academic bulletins. When available, course syllabi were reviewed for content. The special education course requirement for each program fit into one of

six scenarios. The art education programs required one of the following: a general special education course, an art education for special needs course, an option between a general special education course or an art education for special needs course, an option between multiple general special education courses, an option between multiple art education for special needs courses, or no course option. One of the goals of this analysis was to discover how many of the selected schools were requiring an art education course specific to teaching students with special needs.

Of the 18 programs studied, 7 require a course in general special education (39%), 4 require an art education for special needs course (22%), 3 offer an option between a general special education course or an art education for special needs course (17%), 2 offer an option between multiple general special education courses (11%), 1 offers an option between multiple art education for special needs courses (5.5%), and 1 requires no course work in the field of special education (5.5%).

Combining the 7 schools that require a course in general special education and the 2 that offer general special education course options, 50% of the reviewed schools offer programs in which their graduating pre-service teachers are required to take a general special education course. Combining the 4 programs requiring an art education for special needs course and the 1 that offers an option between multiple art education for special needs courses, 28% of the selected schools offer programs in which their graduating pre-service teachers are required to take a special needs course specific to art education. The 3 programs that offer an option between an art education for special needs course and a special education course (17%), graduate pre-service teachers that may not have had a course that directly addresses art for the special needs student. Lastly, one of the programs does not require a course in special education (5.5%). How this program meets the federal mandate for certification is beyond the scope of this study.

The following sections clarify the difference between the two types of courses offered: a general special education course and an art education for special needs course. The general goals in the schools' online course descriptions were reviewed and when available specific syllabi from the analyzed programs were reviewed to shed light on content. Common themes were distinguished through the researcher's personal notes and reviewed to develop a summary of each type. Every course is designed by a different instructor and may be modified each semester to better serve the students.

The syllabi and course descriptions attainable at the time of the study were used to form the following descriptions. Which are not exhaustive, but are intended to provide a general summary for each type of course. A total of 14 syllabi, 5 specific to the visual arts and 9 to special education, were reviewed from 12 of the undergraduate programs studied. Syllabi of the remaining courses and programs were not available at the time of review. In those circumstances the description was the sole source of information, which is posted online for all offered courses.

The first course type presented is art education for special needs. These courses were specifically designed for the instruction of pre-service art teachers. The second course type described is the general special education course. These courses are designed in the special education department for the instruction of general education pre-service teachers.

## Type One, Art Education for Special Needs Course

### *Course Descriptions*

The classes specified as "art education for special needs" are referenced in the universities' departments of art education. Each course description was reviewed for common terms, ideas, and goals. The focus of each description varied, yet the collective ideas are analogous. The written descriptions for this category of class include the following concepts: art

as therapy (physical and cognitive), the value of art in special education, the examination into the aspects of teaching art in an inclusive setting, current practices, and the development of programs, curriculum, and methods for teaching art to students with special needs. Additionally, courses aim to acquaint teachers with special education issues including the different types of exceptionalities, related definitions, and understanding diversity. A number of programs list exploring areas of adaptations and appropriate materials, resources for art education in special education, and art education advocacy. Some courses stress teacher understanding and sensitivity and the valuable position of art in the education of students with disabilities.

*Reviewed Syllabi of Art Education for Special Needs*

Syllabi or outlines were available for 5 of the 9 reviewed art education for special needs courses. As in the course descriptions, each syllabus was unique and content varied. However, some common themes emerged. The main goals and instruction methods for the art education specific courses are presented in visual form (Table 2). The table data is specific to art education instruction and inclusion for special needs students. The information is not exhaustive but it presents the courses' foci and main methods of instruction as described in their course descriptions and/or syllabi.

*Content and objectives.*

The five art education syllabi include the goal to develop the confidence and self-efficacy of art educators teaching students with disabilities. Select courses encourage the critical reflection of one's own construction of identity. The objectives also incorporate an understanding and knowledge of a variety of exceptionalities and their characteristics. Most classes incorporate the adaptation of methods and materials and the development of teaching strategies for students with special needs. The knowledge of the laws and regulations relative to

special education are also given priority. Additionally, collaborative strategies and communication with other professionals involved in the education of individual students with special needs are mentioned. Lastly, required in-field observations are common.

Common course goals include understanding adaptations and instructional strategies for differentiated learning, gaining knowledge and responsibility for the special needs students in the art classroom, and understanding exceptionalities. More than one course emphasized understanding the value of art for special needs and the relationship between art therapy and art education. These three courses appear to have a strong foundation in art as a therapeutic practice.

*Instructional methods.*

According to the available syllabi, the art education for special needs courses integrate several instructional methods for the pre-service teachers. Individual and group work is offered. All courses require readings from texts, articles, and/or selected novels of related content. Often, films are selected and reported in group presentations. The readings are typically followed by discussion, student responses and reflections, and occasional group presentations. Many of the class lectures include guest lecturers and speakers to address certain expert topics. Research papers are common with subjects covering specific disabilities and art accommodations, special population organizations, and interviews with individuals associated with a student with special needs.

Other research assignments offer a more hands on approach including developing and implementing lessons at an on-site location. In-school practicum experience, field trips, and/or observations are listed as requirements or research options in each of the 5 syllabi. Students are to observe and be involved as each case allows. Observations and reflective essays from these experiences are recorded and shared via discussion boards or in class presentations.

At least one syllabus addresses role-play to familiarize pre-service teachers with the stigmas and daily activities of those living with specific disabilities. Modified lesson plans with adaptations are assigned to attend to differentiated learners. The lessons are often written to address multiple exceptionalities and include final works of art created by using special adaptive tools. Different adaptive tools may be purchased or constructed to assist students with a variety of special needs. Finally, some courses require a final portfolio to combine valuable information and knowledge gained to serve as a professional resource.

**Table 2 Art Education for Special Needs Courses and Course Details**

| University/ College | Course(s) Offered | Art Education for Special Needs Course Details | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Primary Foci of Course** | **Instruction Methods and Assignments** |
| University of Massachusetts Dartmouth | 1 art education course (AEC) | -to promote understanding<br>-art teachers role in inclusion<br>-value of art (art as therapy)<br>-current issues in special education<br>-characteristics of exceptionalities<br>-instructional strategies (collaboration)<br>-laws and regulations<br>-adaptations and modifications | -readings/discussion<br>-lecture<br>-guest lecturers<br>-group work/reports<br>-field work (observation in inclusive and self-contained classrooms)<br>-reflective observation logs<br>-modified lesson plan |
| The Ohio State University | 1 AEC | -professional advocacy<br>-instructional strategies (collaboration)<br>-characteristics of exceptionalities<br>-laws and regulations<br>-develop art teacher's confidence in teaching exceptionalities<br>-understanding personal identity | -readings/discussion<br>-guest lecturers<br>-field work (field trip to school for special needs)<br>-critical film review<br>-resource/reflective papers<br>-reflective journal<br>-final portfolio (handbook) |
| The University of Wisconsin Madison | 1 AEC | -adaptations and modifications<br>-instructional strategies (collaboration)<br>-assessment of abilities<br>-characteristics of exceptionalities<br>-laws and regulations | -readings/responses<br>-field work (interview, integrated art room, or special population agency)<br>-critical book review<br>-research paper<br>-modified lesson plan (role play) |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Florida State University (*) | 1 AEC | -value of art (art as therapy)<br>-exploring special populations<br>-human relations<br>-relationship of art education and art therapy | -assignments not listed in course descriptions |
| University of New Mexico (*) | 2 AEC options | option 1:<br>-value of art (art as therapy)<br>-adaptations and modifications<br>option 2:<br>-adaptations and modifications<br>-studio-based for working with at risk students | option 1:<br>-assignments not listed in course description<br>option 2:<br>-assignments not listed in course description |
| The University of Georgia | 1 AEC *or* 1 special education course (SEC) | -instructional strategies<br>-characteristics of exceptionalities<br>-value of art for special needs<br>-introduction to special education<br>-current issues in special education | -readings/discussion<br>-guest lecturer<br>-field work (inclusion classroom practicum)<br>-reflective essays<br>-final portfolio (student created handbook)<br>-group work (presentation of reading) |
| Virginia Commonwealth University | 1 AEC *or* 1 SEC | -characteristics of exceptionalities<br>-laws and regulations<br>-professional advocacy<br>-develop art teacher's confidence in teaching exceptionalities | -field work (observation and participation w/ exceptional organization)<br>-reflective journal<br>-modified lesson plan |
| Northern Illinois University (*) | 1 AEC *or* 1 SEC | -instructional strategies<br>-adaptations and modifications<br>-resources in art education in special education | -lecture<br>-discussion<br>-field experience |
| *Note.*<br>(*) art education for special needs syllabus/syllabi not available from review, information from course description | | | |

Type Two, General Special Education Course

*Course Descriptions*

The classes classified as "general special education" are referenced in the universities' departments of education, special education, and/or exceptional education. Following the method used for the art education courses, each description was reviewed for common terms, ideas, and goals. Although each course was different and the instructor's focus varied, most offer

an introduction, overview, or orientation to special education and inclusion in the general education classroom. More detailed descriptions specify the following topics: the history of special education, legal issues, ethical implications, current issues, specific learning and personality characteristics, special education services, the IEP process, multidisciplinary team collaboration, and educational strategies for the general education classroom.

*Reviewed Syllabi of Special Education Courses*

Syllabi or outlines were available for 9 of the 15 reviewed general special education courses. Again, each syllabus was unique and the content varied, yet some common themes emerged. The main goals and instructional methods for the general special education courses are presented in visual form (Table 3). The table data is specific to general education classroom instruction and inclusion for special needs students. The information is not exhaustive but it presents the courses foci and main methods of instruction as described in their course descriptions and/or syllabi.

*Content and objectives.*

The content of the 9 general special education syllabi covers a range of topics in the field of special education. Issues of inclusion and teaching students with special needs in the general education classroom are addressed. Most courses identify the need to familiarize students with the history of special education and the relevant laws that regulate the education of students with disabilities. This includes the different perspectives placed upon such individuals and the influences on development. The IEP is also identified as an important focus along with the teacher's role in the process. An understanding of the characteristics of the learner with disabilities is stressed along with an understanding of the various categories of disability.

Common goals of the general special education courses include the knowledge of the special education referral process, available services and settings, and the roles of families, teachers, and schools. In consideration of the inclusion movement, issues for the general education teacher are emphasized. These include tolerance, modifying the classroom space, instructional methods and strategies, assessment, and evaluation to benefit all learners. Collaboration and communication with parents, paraprofessionals, special education teachers, and schools are listed in some of the syllabi objectives. One syllabus highlights that students should become aware of the available resources regarding special education.

**Table 3 General Special Education Courses and Course Details**

| University/ College | Course(s) Offered | General Special Education Course Details | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Primary Focus of Course** | **Instruction Methods and Assignments** |
| Arizona State University (*) | 1 special education course (SEC) | -orientation to the exceptional child | -assignments not listed in course description |
| The University of Arizona (*) | 2 SEC options | option 1:<br>Introduction to inclusion in the elementary grade classroom<br>option 2:<br>Introduction to inclusion in the secondary classroom | option 1:<br>-assignments not listed in course description<br>option 2:<br>-assignments not listed in course description |
| Central Connecticut State University | 1 SEC | -attitudes and attributes of special education teachers<br>-legal precedents<br>-historic events<br>-special education services<br>-characteristics of exceptionalities | -group work (team discussions and projects)<br>-in class activities<br>-quizzes<br>-reflections documenting new learning<br>-field experience (in student's field)<br>-disability specific report |
| The University of Georgia | 1 SEC *or* 1 art education course (AEC) | -foundation of special education<br>-laws and regulations<br>-the IEP<br>-characteristics of exceptionalities<br>-instructional strategies and behavior management for general education classroom<br>-parents and families<br>-multicultural aspects of special education | -readings<br>-modules<br>-quizzes<br>-discussion board/chat room<br>-interview of parent or family member of child with a disability |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Indiana University Bloomington | 1 SEC | -history of special education<br>-referral process<br>-categories of exceptionalities<br>-the IEP<br>-IDEA<br>-inclusion<br>-instructional strategies (collaboration) | -readings/discussion<br>-paper examining current media<br>-book report<br>-group presentation of assigned teaching strategy with lesson modification<br>-reflections on novel reading |
| University of Illinois Chicago | 1 SEC | -foundation of special education<br>-characteristics of exceptionalities<br>-instructional strategies (collaboration) and assessment in the general education classroom | -readings/discussion<br>-field work (students choose practicum setting)<br>-lecture<br>-group work<br>-student presentation<br>-videos<br>-case study analysis |
| Kent State University | 1 SEC | -introduction to and history of special education<br>-characteristics of disabilities<br>-laws and regulations<br>-impact of exceptionalities (family, school, community) | -readings<br>-lectures<br>-group work (critical review of film)<br>-reflective log for all readings, videos, and activities |
| Kutztown University | 1 SEC | -teacher as life-long learner<br>-history of special education<br>-categories of exceptionalities<br>-curricular models<br>-guidelines for successful inclusion<br>-functions of agencies and individuals | -readings/discussion<br>-written examinations and assignments<br>-group and individual oral participation<br>-quizzes |
| Northern Illinois University | 1 SEC *or* 1 AEC | -characteristics of exceptionalities<br>-assessment and evaluation in the general education classroom<br>-adaptations and modifications for general education classroom<br>-laws and regulations<br>-collaboration/school support<br>-social adjustment | -assignments not included in course outline |
| The Pennsylvania State University (*) | 1 SEC | -laws and regulations<br>-characteristics of exceptionalities<br>-collaboration, assessment, and behavior management for inclusion in the general classroom | -assignments not listed in course description |
| Virginia Commonwealth University | 1 SEC *or* 1 AEC | -teacher as critical reflector<br>-history of special education<br>-laws and regulations<br>-the IEP<br>-characteristics of exceptionalities<br>-culture, family, ethics | -readings<br>-portfolio (characteristics, laws, and ethics)<br>-group work (referral, create IEP, identify modifications in lesson plan)<br>-brochure (summary of disabilities)<br>-child abuse recognition and intervention training certificate (Virginia code) |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| The University of Wisconsin Milwaukee (**) | 3 SEC options | option 1:<br>-history of special education<br>-current issues and trends for exceptional individuals<br>option 2:<br>-characteristics of exceptionalities<br>-history of special education<br>-laws and regulations<br>-child advocacy<br>option 3:<br>-history of special education<br>-understanding diversity<br>-the IEP<br>-instructional strategies<br>-effects of ableism | option1:<br>-assignments not listed in course description<br>option 2:<br>-assignments not listed in course description<br>option3:<br>-readings/online discussions<br>-critical film review<br>-final (student choice, present all information gained) |

*Note.*
(*) general special education syllabus/syllabi not available from review, information from course description
(**) general special education syllabi not available for two of the three course options, information for option 1 and 2 from course descriptions

*Instructional methods.*

The instructional methods for the general special education courses combine individual and group assignments. Readings and lectures serve as the foundation. Individual tasks include research papers, book reports, quizzes, written exams, online postings reflecting the assigned readings, and personal reflections on course content. Two of the reviewed syllabi require field visits in which the students observe and write reflections on their experiences. In other circumstances, courses require creative presentations of the content learned in the form of interviews, portfolios, brochures, and other creative organizers.

Group work includes presentations, lesson plan modifications and adaptations, in-class small group activities, film reports, and online discussions. Observations in the community regarding accessibility and environmental obstacles are noted in one syllabus.

# CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

Although the findings cannot be generalized they offer a glance into the current special education practices in art education undergraduate programs. It is proposed that pre-service art educators should receive training specifically in art education for the inclusive classroom. The findings demonstrate that the majority of programs in this study do not require such training prior to graduation. In response to the first research question, "What type of special education course(s) are required by current undergraduate art teacher preparation programs?" this study produced the following data.

Fifty percent of the 18 undergraduate programs reviewed require a general course in special education. These courses serve as an introduction to special education and inclusion for general education teachers, not specific to art education. Twenty eight percent of the schools reviewed require an art education course in special education. These courses represent the option in which pre-service art teachers are presented with information relative to their field and their future experiences of instructing students with special needs. Seventeen percent of the programs reviewed provide an option for their pre-service art teachers in which they can fulfill the requirement with a general special education course or an art education course in special education. In this model, pre-service teachers are not equally trained. Graduates entering the profession may or may not have art specific training in teaching students with special needs. One of the programs reviewed did not offer a course in special education.

In developing an art course for teaching special needs students in an inclusive environment, aspects of each course type are employable. The content and instructional methods of the special education courses expose topics and knowledge that benefit all educators and their

students. However, much of the coursework is designed for the general educator which could cover a range of disciplines: math, science, language arts, etc. Considering the short time allotted in a semester to engage the student, the required course option in special education should be focused on the pre-service teachers' discipline. The art education courses reviewed focus on the visual arts as a vehicle to understanding adaptations and instructional strategies. They also address issues specific to the value of art in the education of students with disabilities.

In response to the second research question, "What factors, issues, and methods are most relevant and practical in the training of art teachers to teach special needs students in an inclusive classroom?" this study bared a variety of topics. The review of literature and the content analysis pointed to several factors relative to art inclusion. Topics and areas of interest include laws and regulations, inclusion, and the least restrictive environment. Regarding the value of art for students with disabilities, self image, visual communication, social inclusion, the enhancement of concepts, and therapeutic benefits were outlined in the research. Normalization in the art classroom, cooperative learning, peer participation, collaboration and communication, adaptations and modifications, behavior management, instructional strategies, and assessment issues were also introduced. Understanding the categories of exceptionalities, the history of special education, and sensitivity to diversity are goals for some courses.

In choosing the key elements of a curriculum, the enormity of the content demands consideration as topics are given priority. Some content must be removed in order to concentrate on the issues specific to the discipline of art. The final product of the study, the proposed curriculum, is a creation of the data and a suggestion for college programs. The course was designed with the intent to prime pre-service art educators for the inclusive classroom. Although

two courses would best cover the amount of information, the course presents the heart of essential information and experiences for the novice art educator as he or she prepares to lead and instruct all learners in the inclusive classroom.

# CHAPTER 5: PROPOSED CURRICULUM

The content analysis of the eighteen undergraduate programs presented principal ideas for introducing special education to general education teachers and for familiarizing art teachers to the task of teaching students with disabilities. Following the current practices of the reviewed art education for special needs courses and the general special education courses I have included similar content. Topics include understanding the art teacher's role in inclusion, knowledge of special education laws and regulations, understanding exceptionalities and their characteristics, adaptations and modifications, and methods for differentiated instruction. In addition students will learn about assessment, the individualized education program, behavior management, professional advocacy, and the importance of remaining life-long learners.

I combined elements from the reviewed art education for special needs courses and the general special education courses in selecting instruction methods and assignments. Readings, reflections, discussions, online postings, and lectures were supplemented with guest lecturers, in-field observations, class field trips, modified lesson plans, and an end-of-semester portfolio.

Finally, the chosen text book is required by at least three of the reviewed art education for special needs courses. After reviewing the book it was determined that the text's content and philosophy aligned with the proposed course. Additional readings were selected from the review of literature.

## Course Introduction

This course is fashioned by a fundamental concern for the quality of art education delivered to exceptional students in the inclusive classroom. It is hoped that the information presented will provide tools and knowledge to pre-service art teachers that will aid them in proactively planning their first years of professional service. It is also anticipated that students

will leave the course with confidence to teach students with disabilities and with the aspiration to be professional advocates in the field. Art teachers have a privileged position in that they teach a variety of students from different backgrounds with different life experiences and interests. Art classrooms provide them with opportunities to express their individuality while offering the greatest creative independence possible.

Art teachers are often the only specialist in their discipline at any given school. In the efforts to provide exceptional instruction for art inclusion they must be leaders and assertively reach out for information. For this reason, students will not only be provided with information but they will be active researchers in the proposed course. It is imperative that students not only gain knowledge but that they also acquire hands on and observational experience in inclusive art classrooms. Assignments will attempt to sensitize students and build confidence in their ability to instruct students with special needs.

Following Doris Guay's lead, normalization of the art classroom is the goal for inclusion and the foundational theory for this course (1993). In adapting the ways of teaching and attitudes instruction should not contribute to a student's isolation and perceptions of exclusion. Exceptional students and general education students should not work on different projects and activities. The philosophy of the course follows that the goal of art modifications is to create parallel experiences for every student.

## Course Description

The goal of this course is to build awareness and prepare pre-service art teachers to tackle unforeseen situations that might hinder the art education of any individual with special needs. By the end of the course students will have engaged in new experiences, extended their knowledge

and skills to include instruction of students with disabilities, and acquired the sensitivity and efficacy necessary to lead the arts for special education in their place of employment.

The first years of teaching are incredibly rewarding and at times overwhelming. In those moments it is important to remember the value of art in the lives of ALL students. This course serves as an introduction to serving students with special needs in the inclusive art classroom. It will cover content including, but not limited to, inclusion, the least restrictive environment, the art teacher's role in the IEP process, and the categories of exceptionalities and their learning characteristics. The bulk of information will focus on art for exceptional students and how art teachers can modify the culture of our classrooms, our communication with other professionals, our instruction, the physical space, evaluation tools, materials, and preconceived perceptions.

## Course Strategy

This course will begin with a spotlight on the basics of special education and inclusion. Just as special education aims to mold with general education, topics specific to art education for special needs students will be introduced. Early in the semester the focus will shift entirely toward teaching students with special needs in the inclusive art classroom. For the duration of the course the assignments will require more personal reflection and individual research to build confidence and professional motivation. Course content will build upon knowledge already gained in methodology courses. Pre-service art teachers will engage with new information and skills in learning why and how to modify their own strategies and curriculum to serve the needs of their individual students.

## Course Objectives

1) To become familiar with the concepts and ideas relative to inclusion and placement in the least restrictive environment.

2) To become familiar with the various categories of exceptionalities and their learning characteristics.
3) To understand the art teacher's role in the education of students with special needs.
4) To gain sensitivity and respect for all students including an awareness of the issues, stigmas, and difficulties present in the daily lives of students with special needs.
5) To acquire knowledge and strategies for proactive problem solving in the inclusive classroom and for becoming professional advocates in the schools.
6) To acquire knowledge, strategies, and resource materials for effectively instructing students with special needs in the visual arts.

## Course Requirements

Mirroring the need to offer multiple learning strategies in the classroom, students of this course will be asked to complete a diverse selection of activities and assignments. Student learning and experiences include class participation, readings and reflections, a group project, field observations with reflective journal entries, a modified lesson plan, an inclusive teaching philosophy, a letter of introduction to special education teachers, and an inclusion portfolio.

### *Class Participation*

The purpose of active participation is to encourage professional behavior and to contribute to the class culture through peer collaboration and team learning. Class participation will be based on class attendance, group involvement, punctual submission of all assignments, and appropriate participation in class discussions. Guest lecturers will be invited to speak throughout the semester and professional respect is expected.

*Reading and Reflections*

The purpose of the readings is to encourage critical review and reflection, peer communication, and to cover a breadth of information. Readings will be assigned during class sessions. Each reading will require a personal reflection, posted online, in which the student will comment on the main points of the text. In addition, they will participate in an online discussion by responding to one or more of their classmates' postings. Readings and responses will be discussed during the following class meeting. Class lectures and guest speakers will build upon ideas presented in the weekly readings.

*Group Project on Exceptionality*

The purpose of this requirement is to encourage team collaboration and to become familiar with the available resources for researching specific disabilities and adaptations. In addition, students will become familiar with the various categories of disability, their learning characteristics, and suggested adaptations. Small groups of two will be assigned one category of exceptionality from the required text. Each group will research that disability, the learning characteristics of that disability, and the modifications for that disability. Findings will be written following a format designated by the instructor. A power point of the information will then be presented to the class and hard copies will be distributed to each individual for placement in the inclusion portfolio.

*Field Observations/Journal Entries*

The purpose of this requirement is for the pre-service art teacher to gain insight into the real world aspects of teaching in an inclusive environment. Removing the student from the world of academia and placing them in an environment similar to their future positions will enhance their personal connections to the content of the course. It will also provide first hand

familiarity to the active inclusion art room. Journal entries will also include the student's perceptions of inclusion before and after the experience.

Ten hours of field observation are mandatory for each individual. Two inclusive art classrooms in the public school system will be assigned to each student. Five hours of observation in each setting is required. At each observation personal notes and observations are expected. Journal reflections for each visit will cover topics of observed lesson modifications and adaptations, student-teacher interactions, peer interactions, classroom management and set-up, and teacher-aid communication. Students are encouraged to talk with the working art teacher to discuss their experiences in the inclusive classroom. If the classroom teacher allows, pre-service teachers are encouraged to communicate with the students. Journal reflections will be posted online no later than two days following the observation.

*Lesson Plan with Modifications*

The purpose of this activity is to introduce students to the research, time, and sensitivity necessary to effectively teach students with disabilities. Through research, students are made aware of the modifications that best serve a specific disability and how to access that information. Each individual will design a lesson plan for elementary, middle, or high school general education students. Once the lesson is complete, modifications must be made to fit the learning characteristics of an assigned disability. The category of disability must be different from the category explored in the group project. Individual research and the information from class readings and discussions will drive the process. The lesson plans will address adaptations to instructional presentation, cognitive complexity, the production process, and product. In addition, students attend to classroom set-up, material management, clean-up, and evaluation.

The lessons will be presented in class with a modified production activity. Hard copies of these lessons will be shared with each classmate and placed in the inclusive portfolio.

*Teaching Philosophy and Letter of Introduction*

The purpose of this assignment is to encourage the professional development of pre-service teachers. The teaching philosophy for inclusion will encourage students to reflect upon their own beliefs that will mold their future practices. Students will also write a letter of introduction to special education teachers. This letter is a proactive approach toward collaboration and communication at the start of the school year. The philosophy and the letter of introduction will be saved in the inclusion portfolio. Students will share their teaching philosophy during the final exam class meeting.

*Class Field Trip*

The purpose of this activity is to experience a different setting of art for special needs children. It is hoped that students will continue to gain sensitivity and respect for all students including an awareness of organizations providing exclusively for students with special needs.

At the end of the semester the class will spend approximately three hours at an after school arts program for students with special needs. After a short tour and introduction of the special needs school pre-service teachers will work with the program's art instructor to assist students. At the following class meeting, pre-service teachers will have the opportunity to compare their experiences in the inclusive classroom with the experience at a school for special needs. Students will identify similarities and differences in hopes of generating new ideas for approaching their own classroom. Tuition at a private school for special needs is expensive. How can we offer similar rewarding experiences in the public school system?

*Inclusion Portfolio*

The purpose of this assignment is to provide students with a compilation of material from the course for their professional use. It will serve as a hands-on manual with lesson ideas, information on various disabilities, and resources for continuing research. The inclusion portfolio will consist of all completed assignments, copies of assigned articles, and any hand outs received during the semester. Students are encouraged to add another divider for information and sources gathered during their own research. Each of the following bullets will be filed in the portfolio under its own divider.

- Copy of assigned readings, except for those in the text book
- Reading reflections and discussion postings
- Posted journal entries from in-field observations
- Compilation of each groups' research work on categories of exceptionalities
- Compilation of each individuals' lesson plan with modifications
- Teaching philosophy and letter of introduction
- Any additional resource information for continuing education

## Course Content

The issues and topics chosen for the course are categorized under three headings: special education, art education for students with special needs, and professional advocacy. These subjects represent the substance selected for the course and the methods chosen to teach the material. Each topic is taught through selected assignments listed in detail on the course calendar (see Appendix A for weekly assignments (Table A1)). The information is interrelated and concepts will reemerge throughout the semester through readings, guest speakers, discussion, group and individual work, and observations.

*Special Education*

*Inclusion.*

Inclusion proposes that each individual student is included in the general classroom. Not just by physical placement but in every manner. Art classrooms are common settings for inclusion and students can profit from art teacher preparedness. This course will introduce pre-service art teachers to the main ideas that drive the inclusion movement.

The least restrictive environment (LRE) is a concept wedded to the idea of inclusion. LRE denotes that when a student with special needs is placed it is done with the attempt to provide them with an education in the general educational setting to the greatest extent possible. The flexibility of instruction in the visual arts, with necessary support, provides opportunities for tailoring an environment to meet the needs of students.

*Laws and regulations.*

Anyone working alongside a student with special needs should be familiar with the laws and regulations that shape the special education system. This includes the required plan of education for student achievement. Each student receiving special education services has an individualized education program (IEP). Each teacher that works with a student with special needs is part of his or her IEP team. Therefore, an inclusive art teacher should understand the process, be familiar with the form, and be an active member of the team. This is one platform to ask for services and assistance for a student.

*Exceptionalities and their characteristics.*

There is much debate about labeling students living with disabilities. No matter one's stand on the issue, students are currently categorized in special education. Each disability may

necessitate different methods of learning and instruction. Art teachers can benefit from this knowledge when creating and implementing modified lessons.

*Art Education in the Inclusive Classroom*

*Value of art for exceptional students.*

Published research shows the value of art for individuals with disabilities. Benefits such as increased self-image, self-expression, social inclusion, and peer bonding have been documented. Art offers visual language as another form of communication for students. In addition to art concepts, knowledge from other disciplines can be enhanced through repetition and creative presentation. Art also has a therapeutic quality that can enhance attitude and quality of life. It is imperative that art teachers embrace the opportunities art presents to their students with exceptionalities.

*Adaptations and modifications.*

Some of the adaptations that an art teacher can make are simple and others are complicated. We can create easier access in the physical space including placement of materials. Deciding where to place students can increase or impede their independence and socialization. Modifications of materials and tools can be minor or require ingenuity on the teacher and students behalf. In some instances, assistive technology may be utilized or requested through the IEP team. In planning for these adaptations it is important to be aware of proven research and available suggestions as situations arise.

*Funding.*

Certain adaptations and technical assistance tools can provide a student with disabilities the opportunity to create. Some students, specifically those living with physical impairments, do not have the expressive freedom that many of us take for granted. In order to obtain these tools

there are channels and resources available for teachers. These include requests made through the IEP team and applying for local and national grants.

*Behavior management.*

All students have the potential to act out when frustrated or bored. Behavior management involves getting to know the individual and learning their behavior cues and tendencies. Working one on one with his or her special education teacher can be a reliable way of handling issues before they escalate into a problem.

*Instructional strategies.*

Differentiating instructional strategies for the individual learner is critical in reaching students with exceptionalities. Instruction planning may include methods such as cooperative learning and peer participation, the use of aids and paraprofessionals, individualized planning, and modifying cognitive complexity, process, and product.

*Evaluation and assessment.*

Assessment in art is often measured by a student's success in meeting the assigned objectives. A student with exceptionalities should be assessed based on their personal strengths and established goals. Evaluating a student's strengths and weaknesses prior to working in the visual arts provides a baseline from which to monitor their progress. Evaluation and assessment requires sensitivity on the part of the educator and familiarity with the individual student. Setting goals and reviewing progress with the student can encourage and motivate.

*Professional Advocacy*

In schools, art teachers may have to be the lone advocate in their discipline. The search for assistance and information requires professional efficacy and self-motivation. Staying abreast of situations and solutions requires that the teacher remain an active learner for the life of their

profession. Being an art advocate for students with special needs demands an understanding and sensitivity on the teacher's behalf that will be enhanced through the opportunities of this course including in-field experience with students with disabilities.

## Course Calendar/Assignments

This course is based on a semester schedule. Hypothetically it will meet for approximately 6 hours a week divided between two evening classes. This allows for 16 weeks of instruction and 1 class meeting for the final exam. Holidays were taken into consideration and 3 of the 32 instruction class times were removed. Therefore, the content is covered in 29 class meetings plus 10 hours of in-field observation.

## Course Required Text/Readings

The required textbook selected for the course is Gerber and Guay's 2006 publication, *Reaching and Teaching Students with Special Needs through Art*. Additional readings for specific topics will be assigned throughout the semester and posted on the course website (see Appendix B for additional assigned readings). In addition, students will be provided a list of suggested websites as research and reference resources (see Appendix C for research resources).

# CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

In summary, my two research questions are:

1. What type of special education course(s) are required by current undergraduate art teacher preparation programs?

2. What factors, issues, and methods are most relevant and practical in the training of art teachers to teach special needs students in an inclusive classroom?

Based upon the foregoing research, my conclusions related to the same are as follows:

1. The content analysis of the 18 undergraduate programs revealed a variety of course options to fulfill the special education requirement. Two types of courses were required or offered as electives. With the exception of one school, the analyzed programs require an art education for special needs course or courses, a general special education course or courses, or a choice between the two.

Twenty-eight percent of the reviewed programs require an art education for special needs course. Half of the programs studied require a general special education course. Seventeen percent of the programs reviewed provide an option for their pre-service art teachers: i.e., a general special education course or an art education course for special needs. As aforementioned, one school did not require a course relative to special populations. It is noteworthy that the results of this study cannot be generalized due to the limited number of undergraduate programs reviewed.

2. The review of the literature and the content analysis of the undergraduate programs exposed factors, issues, and methods for consideration in the training of art teachers to teach special needs students in an inclusive classroom. The literature outlined four areas of focus: inclusion and the least restrictive environment, a case for art for special populations, the need to

prepare art educators to teach in the inclusive setting, and concerns for consideration in teaching students with disabilities. These topics were addressed as content in the proposed curriculum. In addition, the content analysis revealed that the majority of the 18 programs reviewed do not require an art education for special needs course. In response, I designed a proposed curriculum for the training of pre-service art teachers using the information obtained from the review of literature and content analysis.

The subject matter conveyed in the proposed curriculum is based upon the current practices of established courses in the content analysis. These factors and issues include understanding the art teacher's role in inclusion; knowing special education laws and regulations; discerning exceptionalities and their characteristic, adaptations, and modifications; and learning methods for differentiated instruction. Both the literature and the content analysis discussed the value of art in the lives of students with disabilities. This information inspired and steered the design of the proposed curriculum.

The information obtained in the study also led the proposed curriculum toward specified areas of content. Accordingly, the curriculum includes such categories as evaluation and assessment, the individualized education program (IEP), behavior management, professional advocacy, and the importance of life-long learning. In addition, the content analysis of the programs presented many ideas for assignments, learning, and instruction methods for imparting knowledge and information to art teachers in an effective, reliable manner. Following their lead, I included similar assignments in the proposed curriculum, including guest lecturers, field experiences, reflective journals, and an end-of-the semester portfolio.

To expound, the factors and issues related to this study include a pre-service art teacher's awareness and understanding of inclusion. Developing an effective inclusive classroom requires

that a novice teacher be primed with professional confidence, the ability to reflect upon their practices, and the aspiration to connect with the educational needs of individual students. In addition to becoming life-long learners, novice art educators should recognize that they are the professional advocates for art at their places of employment. This mission involves campaigning for the needs of the department, individual classes, and individual students. In embarking on such tasks, teachers benefit from a basic knowledge of the laws that govern special education and the resources available in support of art education for special needs.

The content presented in the instruction of pre-service art teachers fosters the individual qualities mentioned above and provides a foundation of knowledge on which to build an inclusive program of quality. Insight into the therapeutic value of art for students with disabilities and sensitivity to the plights they face improves the relationship between teacher, student, and others involved in their education. Familiarization with the individual categories of disability and the characteristics aids the teacher in creating appropriate modifications and adaptations. Proper assessment and evaluation - along with communication with the special education teacher and other multi-disciplinary team members - can encourage the independence and self-determination of the student. Finally, recognition of the individual's strengths directs the instructional strategy chosen for activities and lessons.

The methods of instruction related to this study include a diverse mix of traditional and non-traditional requirements. When preparing art teachers for the inclusive setting, assignments need to challenge the pre-service teacher's ability to reflect critically and encourage them to confront what may be unfamiliar and uncomfortable subjects. One example of such coursework includes field experiences with available opportunities to work with individuals with disabilities. Further, recording thoughts, reflections, and observations experienced during the course develops

individual growth and perception. In addition to the traditional methods of readings and class lecture, expert guest lecturers provide a real-world slant on topics. Group and individual research not only increases the amount of information covered, but also it imitates the relationships and work necessary in the inclusive classroom. A portfolio containing the information gained and shared during the course assists the novice teacher once they enter the profession.

Future research is needed to follow the success of teachers in the inclusive classroom who have taken an art education for special needs course. This study has presented a case for why such a course is important, but succeeding research should assess a program's success once a pre-service teacher becomes a professional in an inclusive setting. Case studies of operational inclusive art classrooms would also be valuable to further understand the central needs in improving teacher training. Lastly, assessment of the effects of a successful inclusive art class on the overall achievement of students with disabilities would be constructive in building a stronger case for art in the lives of students with exceptionalities.

In conclusion, the preparation for pre-service art teachers should include a course in art education for students with special needs. As art teachers enter the professional inclusive setting they are confronted with new and intimidating situations. How they respond dictates the quality of art education received by their students with special needs. Research shows that many art educators feel ill-equipped to teach effectively in an inclusive setting. The cause of their stress varies from lack of knowledge to lack of tolerance and understanding. The undergraduate preparation of pre-service art teachers needs to address this concern in the training of their students. Basic knowledge of the laws, understanding the value of art for special populations, awareness of the alienation unprepared teachers feel when faced with these challenges, and

knowing how to develop a successful plan for classroom preparation and curriculum are subjects worthy of program consideration. All students warrant equal opportunities in education, and the visual arts provide a uniquely flexible platform to reach, educate, and promote an individual with special needs into a more developed and well-rounded learner and, accordingly, a more promising future.

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# APPENDIX A: WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS

Chapter readings are selected from the required text book listed below. All other assigned readings are listed in the following section.

Gerber, B.L., & Guay, D.M. (Eds.). (2006). *Reaching and teaching students with special needs through art*. Reston, VA: National Art Education Association.

**Table A1 Weekly Assignments**

| DATE | TOPIC | IN CLASS | ASSIGNMENT(S) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 8/17 | Introduction<br><br>*First day of class | (1)Introduction and syllabus review | (1)Read additional assigned reading # 1 for 8/19. Post reflection and discussion response<br>(2)Prepare questions for speaker |
| 8/19 | Inclusion and Art Teacher Preparation | (1)Guest Speakers – Novice art teachers (in 2nd year with inclusive experience)<br>(2)Question and answer with speakers<br>(3)Receive in-field observation placements | (1) Read Chapter 1 of text for 8/24. Post reflection and discussion response.<br>(2)Schedule and begin inclusive classroom visits with placement teachers – out of class |
| 8/24 | Inclusion and Art | (1)Discussion of reading | (1)Read additional assigned readings #'s 2, 3, & 4 for 8/26. Post reflection and discussion response<br>(2)Prepare questions for speaker |
| 8/26 | Inclusion and Art | (1) Guest Speakers – Two inclusive art teachers share their experiences<br>(2)Discussion of readings | (1)Read Chapter 2 of text and assigned reading # 5 for 8/31. Post reflection and discussion response |
| 8/31 | Laws and Regulations and the IEP | (1)Discussion of reading<br>(2) Introduce group work/ exceptionality research – each group assigned to one of six listed in text<br>(3)Pick and meet with partner to exchange contact information | (1)Read Chapter 4 for 9/2. Post reflection and discussion response<br>(2)Begin group work on exceptionality research– post online by 10/14. Presentations on 10/14 and 10/19. |
| 9/2 | Exceptionalities and their characteristics<br>• Emotional and/or Behavior Disorders | (1)Discussion of reading | (1)Read Chapters 5 and 6 for 9/9. Post reflection and discussion response |
| 9/7 | *No Class (Labor Day observed) | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9/9 | Exceptionalities and their characteristics<br>• Mental Retardation<br>• Learning Disabilities | (1)Discussion of readings<br>(2)Introduce lesson plan modification assignment | (1)Read chapter 7 for 9/14. Post reflection and discussion response<br>(2)Begin non-modified version of lesson plan. Due on 10/19<br>*Have first in-field observation completed. Post journal reflection. |
| 9/14 | Exceptionalities and their characteristics<br>• Physical Disabilities | (1)Discussion of reading<br>(2)Discuss and share first in-field observation | (1)Read chapter 8 for 9/16. Post reflection and discussion response |
| 9/16 | Exceptionalities and their characteristics<br>• Visual Impairments | (1)Discussion of reading | (1)Read chapter 9 for 9/21. Post reflection and discussion response |
| 9/21 | Exceptionalities and their characteristics<br>• Hearing Impairments | (1)Discussion of reading | (1)Read chapter 11 for 9/23. Post reflection and discussion response<br>(2)Prepare questions for guest speaker |
| 9/23 | Value of Art for Exceptional Students<br>• Art education and art therapy | (1)Guest Speaker – Art Therapist<br>(2)Discussion of reading | (1)Read additional assigned reading # 6 for 9/28. Post reflection and discussion response |
| 9/28 | Value of Art for Exceptional Students<br>• Self-image | (1)Discussion of reading | (1)Read additional assigned reading #7 & 8 for 9/30. Post reflection and discussion response |
| 9/30 | Value of Art for Exceptional Students<br>• Visual language and other enhancements | (1)Discussion of readings | (1)Read chapter 3 for 10/5. Post reflection and discussion response.<br>(2)Prepare questions for guest speaker |
| 10/5 | Adaptations and Modifications | (1)Guest Speaker – Adaptive Arts Specialist<br>(2)Discussion of reading | (1)Read additional assigned readings # 9 & 10 for 10/7.<br>*Have second in-field observation completed. Post journal reflection. |
| 10/7 | Adaptations and Modifications | (1)Discussion of readings<br>(2)Discuss and share first in-field observation | (1)Read additional assigned reading # 11 for 10/12. Post reflection and discussion response |
| 10/12 | Adaptations and Modifications | (1)Discussion of reading. | (1)Prepare for group presentations on 10/14 & 10/19 |
| 10/14 | Group Presentations | (1)Group Presentations – Power point of exceptionality research. Give each classmate a hard copy of group project for inclusion portfolio. | No Assignment |
| 10/19 | Group Presentations | (1)Group Presentations – Power point of exceptionality research. Give each classmate a hard copy of group project for inclusion portfolio.<br>(2)Non-modified lesson plan due. Turn in hard copy. | (1)Read chapter 13 for 10/21. Post reflection and discussion response |
| 10/21 | Funding | (1)Discuss second in-field observation experience<br>(2)Discussion of reading | (1)Read chapter 10 for 10/26. Post reflection and discussion response |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 10/26 | Instructional Strategies<br>• Collaboration | (1)Discussion of reading<br>(1)Graded non-modified lesson plan returned. Each individual assigned a disability for modifications | (1)Read chapter 12 for 10/28. Post reflection and discussion response<br>(2)Begin work on modified lesson plan for assigned disability. Final lesson plan due on11/30. Present lesson to class with activity on 11/30& 12/2. |
| 10/28 | Instructional Strategies<br>• Paraprofessionals | (1)Discussion of reading | (1)Read additional assigned reading #12 for 11/2. Post reflection and discussion response<br>*Have third in-field observation completed. Post journal reflection. |
| 11/2 | Instructional Strategies<br>• Normalization | (1)Discussion of reading<br>(2)Discuss and share third in-field observation | (1)Read additional assigned reading #13 for 11/4. Post reflection and discussion response. |
| 11/4 | Instructional Strategies<br>• Instruction, behavior management, and evaluation | (1)Discussion of reading | (1)Read additional assigned readings # 14 & 15. Post reflection and discussion response<br>(2)Prepare questions for guest speaker |
| 11/9 | Instructional Strategies<br>• Collaboration and communication | (1)Guest Speakers – Special Education teacher and Art Education teacher (working collaborative team)<br>(2)Discussion of readings. | (1)Read additional assigned reading # 16 for 11/11. Post Reflection and response. |
| 11/11 | Professional Advocacy<br>• Teacher efficacy | (1)Discussion of reading | (1)Read additional assigned reading #17 & 18 for 11/18 |
| 11/16 | Field trip to after school enrichment program for students with special needs. Will be observing and helping out during an art lesson. Meet at location at scheduled time. | | |
| 11/18 | Professional Advocacy | (1)Discuss field trip experience. Compare to public school inclusive classroom<br>(2)Discussion of readings<br>(3)Receive teaching philosophy for inclusion and letter of introduction assignment | (1)Work on philosophy and letter of introduction<br>(2)Prepare for lesson plan presentation |
| 11/23 | *No Class (Thanksgiving observed) | | |
| 11/25 | *No Class (Thanksgiving observed) | | |
| 11/30 | Lesson Plan Presentations | (1)Lesson plan presentations. Give each classmate a hard copy of lesson plan for inclusion portfolio. | *Have final in-field observation completed. Post journal reflection |
| 12/2 | Lesson Plan Presentations<br><br>*Last regular class meeting | (1)Lesson plan presentations. Give each classmate a hard copy of lesson plan for inclusion portfolio | (1)Complete Inclusion Portfolio. Turn in on 12/14. |
| 12/14 | Final Exam (5:30-8:20pm) | (1)Turn in Inclusion Portfolio. Pick up after 12/17.<br>(2)Share teaching philosophy for inclusion and recommendations for the course.- | |

# APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL ASSIGNED READINGS

1) Guay, D.M. (1994). Students with disabilities in the art classroom: How prepared are we? *Studies in Art Education*, *36*(1), 44-56. Retrieved January 28, 2009, from JSTOR database. Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/1320347

2) Asante, Shafik. (n.d.) What is Inclusion? Retrieved June 11, 2009 from http://inclusion.com/inclusion.html

3) Inclusive Settings. (2003). Retrieved February 14, 2009 from http://www.cec.sped.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Search&template=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&ContentID=1871

4) Keifer-Boyd, K. & Kraft, L.M. (2003). Inclusion policy in practice. *Art Education*, *56*(6), 46-53. Retrieved January 26, 2009, from Research Library database. (Document ID: 476633421).

5) Colarusso, R. & O'Rourke, C. (2004). The referral and placement process. In *Special education for all teachers* (pp.86-93). Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.

6) Carpenter, D.S., & Carpenter, B.S.II. (1999). Promoting a positive self-image through visual and verbal inquiry: Art appreciation for students with multiple disabilities. In A.L. Nyman, & A.M. Jenkins (Eds.), *Issues and approaches to art for students with special needs* (pp.118-131). Reston, VA: The National Art Education Association.

7) Eubanks, P. (1999). Art as a visual language that supports verbal development. In A.L. Nyman, & A.M. Jenkins (Eds.), *Issues and approaches to art for students with special needs* (pp.109-117). Reston, VA: The National Art Education Association.

8) Fuller, J., Jongsma, F., Milne, K., Venuti, S. & Williams, K. (2008). Art for art's sake: A qualitative study exploring the facilitation of creativity within disability services. Retrieved June 14, 2009 from http://www.aarts.net.au/resources/articles-2/

9) Wiebe-Zederayko, M., & Ward, K. (1999). Art class: What to do when students can't hold a pencil. *Art Education*, *52*(4), 18-22. Retrieved February 02, 2009, from Research Library database. (Document ID: 42992702).

10) Art Activities for Children with Disabilities. (2003). Retrieved February 14, 2009 from http://www.cec.sped.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Search&template=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&ContentID=1346

11) Anderson, F.E. (1994). Art adaptations for children with disabilities. In *Art-centered education and therapy for children with disabilities* (pp.55-83). Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas.

12) Guay, D.M.P. (1993). Normalization in art with extra challenged students: A problem solving framework. *Art Education*, 46(1), 58-63. Retrieved February 02, 2009 from JSTOR database. Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3193418

13) Guay, D. (1999). A way in: Strategies for art instruction for students with special needs. In A.L. Nyman, & A.M. Jenkins (Eds.), *Issues and approaches to art for students with special needs* (pp.17-33). Reston, VA: The National Art Education Association.

14) Guay, D.M. (1995). The sunny side of the street. A supportive community for the inclusive art classroom. *Art Education*, *48*(3), 51-56. Retrieved February 02, 2009, from JSTOR database. Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/313522

15) Pochedley, E., & Dorff, J. (2008). The power of collaboration: Two teachers working together for their student's success. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, *75*(1), 18-22. Retrieved February 02, 2009, from Academic Search Complete database.

16) Chester, M.D. & Beaudin, B.Q. (1996). Efficacy beliefs of newly hired teachers in urban schools. American Education Research Journal, 33(1), 233-257. Retrieved June 14,2009 from JSTOR database. Stable URL http://www.jstor.org.stable/1163386

17) Schwartz, D.C. & Pace, D. (2008). Students create art: Expanding an after-school program. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 40(4), 50-54. Retrieved June 14, 2009 from Academic Search Complete database.

18) Frequently asked question about the philosophy of teaching statement. (n.d.). Retrieved from on June 13, 2009 from http://www.oic.id.ucsb.edu/TA/port-FAQ.html

# APPENDIX C: RESEARCH RESOURCES

Accessible Arts, Inc., http://accessiblearts.org

Art Partners, http://artpartnersprogram.com

Clements, C.B. (1984). *Art and mainstreaming: Art instruction for exceptional children in regular school classes*. Springfield, IL: C.C. Thomas Publisher, Ltd.

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), http://www.cec.sped.org

Dick Blick Art Materials, http://www.dickblick.com/categories/specialneeds

KinderArt, http://www.kinderart.com/special

National Art Education Association, http://www.naea-reston.org/olc/pub/NAEA/home

National Endowment for the Arts, http://www.nea.gov/resources/Accessibility/rlists/ArtistsResource.html

The Moss Foundation for Children's Education, http://www.mossfoundation.org

Rodriquez, S. (1992). *Special artists handbook: Art activities and adaptive aids for handicapped students*. Dale Seymour Publications.

Special Education and the Arts, http://www.southernct.edu/~gerber/SEDarts

VSA Arts (formerly Very Special Arts), http://www.vsarts.org