2020 Texas Focus: Self-Determination
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2:30 PM-3:30 PM
Creating with Blind Abandon: Creating an Accessible Art Program for Visually Impaired Students

Presented by
Katherine Trimm, CTVI, Humble ISD, Humble, TX
creatingwithblindabandon@gmail.com
Linda Brown, Braillist, Conroe ISD, Conroe, TX
creatingwithblindabandon@gmail.com

Developed for
Texas School for the Blind & Visually Impaired Outreach Programs
CREATING WITH BLIND ABANDON

Katherine Trimm, CTVI
Linda Brown, Braillist
https://creatingwithblindabandon.com

Slide 1: Introduction

Over the years, we have had so many students who love art, but do not usually have the opportunity to express themselves creatively! We decided that it was time for a change! Together we researched artistic opportunities for our students to no avail! We resolved that our students could become the tactile artists that we could not find! With the help of some wonderful people, we saw our vision come alive!

Step away from the **dough** and create an accessible art program for students with visual impairments!

![Figure 1 Art created by Zack Cole](image)

Slide 2:

Step away from the *play dough* and create an accessible art program for students with visual impairments!
Figure 2 Toddler squeezing pink Play-Doh.

Slide 3: Let’s Talk ECC!

Slide 4: Expanded Core Curriculum

Social Interaction Skills

- Build friendships
- Participate in team-based projects
- Working together to support and encourage each other

Figure 3 Two girls decorate a pumpkin.
Self-Determination Skills

- Working with fellow members
- Working with volunteers in the program
- Gain the confidence to express preferences / dislikes, in an appropriate manner.

*Figure 4 Adults stand behind children at the art table.*

Slide 5: Expanded Core Curriculum

Independent Living Skills

- Selecting materials to use
- Organizing materials and project planning
- Cleaning up work area
- Practicing personal hygiene during and after working

*Figure 5 Two girls explore a variety of materials such as shells and glass that are in trays arranged along a long table.*
Slide 6:

Career Education

- Opportunities to meet artists and learn that there is value in expressing themselves creatively

Recreation and Leisure

- Learn about materials used to create accessible art
- Encouragement to independently pursue their personal creative artistic expressions

Figure 6 A young blind girl poses with adults in front of several pieces of art.

Figure 7 An adult stands in front of a blackboard while another adult listens.

Figure 8 Two young girls show clothing they have decorated for Christmas.
Slide 7: Where do we start?

Finding the kids

Slide 8: Collaboration with VI Professionals

- Certified Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (CTVI)
- Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists (COMS)
- Braillists
- Education Service Center Visual Impairment Specialists
- Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI)

Slide 9: Community Collaboration

- Texas Workforce Commission – Department of Blind Services (TWC-DBS)
- Low Vision Clinics
- Local Artists (Stained glass artist, art car artist, etc.)
- Parent Organizations – Texas Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairment (TAPVI), Texas Parents of Blind Children (TPOBC), etc.
- School District Special Education Offices
Slide 10: Participate as an organization in the community!

- White Cane Safety Day
- Houston Art Car Parade
- Houston Area Visual Impairment Network (HAVIN)
- Art Exhibit – The Color of Blind

Figure 9 Display at White Cane Safety Day.

Figure 10 Float in the Houston Art Car parade.

Figure 11 Display at the Houston Area Visual Impairment Network.
Slide 11: Where do we get the materials?

Slide 12: Look Around!

**Donations of materials**

- Social Media Requests – NETWORKING!
- Organizations that cater to supplies needed for specialty projects (musical instruments – school bands, local band members, etc.)

**On the Cheap**

- Local artsy recycling shops – (Texas Art Asylum)
- Local resale shops – (Goodwill, Assistance League, etc.)

**Funding**

- Organizations such as All Blind Children of Texas
- Fund Raisers
- Art Markets – sell some art!

*Figure 12 Items in an art exhibit tilted The Color of Blind.*

*Figure 13 Social media logos*

*Figure 14 Clipart image of recycled items.*

*Figure 15 Clipart showing a heart-shaped word cloud with FUNDRAISING highlighted in red.*
Slide 13: Where can we meet?

Slide 14: Locations!

- Local Library Meeting Rooms – FREE!!
- Local Park and Recreation Departments (Metropolitan Multi-Services Center)
- Community Centers
- Art Leagues
- If school specific, ask about using a special education classroom (usually equipped with a sink!)

Figure 16 Library building.

Figure 17 City of Houston Metropolitan Multi-Service Center

Figure 18 Clipart image of a school building
Slide 15: What Can We Do?

Think Multi-sensory!

Figure 19 A young girl holds a triangle made of tree limbs with various materials hanging from them.

Figure 20 Guitar decorated with beads and buttons.

Figure 21 A girl holds a framed fleur-de-lis made from beads and buttons.
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Figure 22 Image of the float in the Art Car Parade with various pieces of art attached to it.

Figure 23 Adults observe as two girls work on art projects at a table.

Figure 24 An adult works with a girl on her art project.
Slide 16: Smell It!

- Add scent to paint – Kool-Aid, herbs, spices
- Cinnamon Applesauce ornaments – add braille by using whole cloves for added fragrance!

*Figure 25 Heart-shaped cinnamon applesauce ornament.*

*Figure 26 A young girl works with scented paint.*
Slide 17: Touch It!

- Clay – sculptures, jewelry pieces, cut with cookie cutters
- Confetti – confetti bowls, confetti jars, confetti eggs
- Textured paint – canvas painting
- Add gauze – textured beach bottles
- Add stones, rocks, shells
- Add twine, rope, ribbon, yarn
- Add textured fabrics, or necklace weaving with strips of fabric
- Pumpkin decorating contest – ADD EVERYTHING!
- Dream Catchers – use sticks/branches, weave yarn, add feathers and beads

Figure 27 Framed Christmas tree images made of various materials.

Figure 28 Artist holds a vase that has various textures on its surface.
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Figure 29 A young girl shapes clay with cookie cutters.

Figure 30 Artist holding a framed image of a fleur-de-lis made with beads and buttons.

Figure 31 Individuals decorate pumpkins.
Figure 32 Art piece that includes rocks.
Slide 18: Hear It!

- Wind Chimes – horse shoes, glass bottles with beads, records with hanging bottle caps on string
- Bells – added to ugly Christmas sweaters, added to canvas projects
- Bubblegum machine ornament with added beads to hear when shaken
- Invite a guest DJ who happens to be visually impaired

Figure 33 A DJ stands behind her equipment.

Figure 34 A child adds beads to a string attached to an old 45 RPM record.

Figure 35 A young girl holds a wind chime she has made.
Slide 19: Taste It!

Braille cookies, cupcakes, etc. – add braille to iced cookies and cupcakes by using various round candies for the dots

Figure 36 Heart-shaped iced cookie with braille dots on it.

Figure 37 M&M candies are used to make braille letters on the top of cupcakes.
Slide 20: Creating a program like this takes:

- Excitement for the possibilities!
- Tons of hard work
- Dedication
- Resourcefulness
- A strong desire to do something special for these kids! This is their thing!

And having a Pinterest account helps!

Slide 21: We do it because…

“Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all!” – Helen Keller

*Figure 38 Poster of Helen Keller with the quote, "Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all!" from www.personalityinsights.com*
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Outreach Programs

Figure 39 TSBVI logo

Figure 40 IDEAs that Work logo.

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