Smannell Field School, Andover
Case study (Years 8-11) Art and SEN

Task/project – working with a visiting artist

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Final version

Working with a visiting artist - art and SEN

Set the scene - the context, pupil, year group, issues, timescale etc.

We are a very small PRU in the Test Valley which takes in both behavioural and EV referrals from a wide range of schools in Hampshire.

We have been part of the Hampshire Cultural Trust's Horizon 20:20 scheme since 2016, which aims to bring artists in to the classroom and facilitate getting students out of the school to improve cultural capital.

The project for this case study covers a period of 5 days of an artist visiting us one day a week to build on painting techniques and skills, with students from years 8 to 11 participating.

Did you find out anything to assist from a conversation about transition?

- Most students had not taken part in any similar artist sessions due to continual changes in students within the school, and the less frequent sessions as the Horizon 20:20 scheme winds down.

- Students had been prepared for the artist's arrival so that it would not come as a surprise.

- Classes and timetable stayed as it always is for some continuity to the structure of their day.

- All classes consisted of between 1 and 4 students max.

- Due to the timing, only a very small number of students did not get to participate as their lessons were not timetabled for that day.

What were the considerations used to plan inclusive lessons in art?

- The room was rearranged to more of a group work feel so that students would feel like this was something different to the normal lessons and that they were all having the same experience.
- Tasks were planned to build up over the 5 lessons from very easy and basic skills, through to producing their own responses on canvases by the end of the project.
- The artist introduced himself to all students (their names up on the board so he had something to refer to and would get used to putting names to faces) and told them about what he does.
- He brought in examples of his work - 2 different large scale paintings per session which linked together but also showed how he incorporated some of the techniques in to his own work (at a higher level of finish).
- Demonstrations were done at the start of the lessons, and again within a lesson if required – individual help was given by the artist or myself if a student seemed to be struggling.
- Art specific vocabulary was used repeatedly to describe and explain techniques so that they were able to use these words confidently by the end of all the sessions.
- There was usually only one main task and one or two additional tasks, to be completed each session so that everyone had time to reach a satisfactory point of completion. On the rare occasion of a student not completing a task in the artist session, we could use their art lessons in the rest of the week to help them catch up.
- All of the students not only coped with having someone new in their class but all showed success at using the painting techniques.

How did you create an inclusive environment in the art classroom? (things you did)

- All students were treated similarly and given the same input, with high expectations of achieving results – the techniques allowed us to celebrate the differences achieved rather than see them as a negative.

- All sitting facing each other allowed them to look at how others were working, gaining confidence from the sharing of new experiences.

- Students were quick to encourage each other and compliment each other's work.

- Taking photographs of the students working, and the results they achieved, made them feel successful and their efforts valued.

What teaching and learning strategies did you use?

- The teaching was mainly up to the artist – students felt like they were learning from the 'expert' and so were very focused and followed instructions.

- Only occasionally did I have to speak up to add in small, forgotten details to help students understand/remember the instructions better.

- Both the artist and myself were on hand to help and advise individuals as and when needed.

- Having a go at using the techniques myself whilst the students were working, not only showed them I was learning along with them, but helped me also understand some of the finer points of positives and negatives that they may come up against.
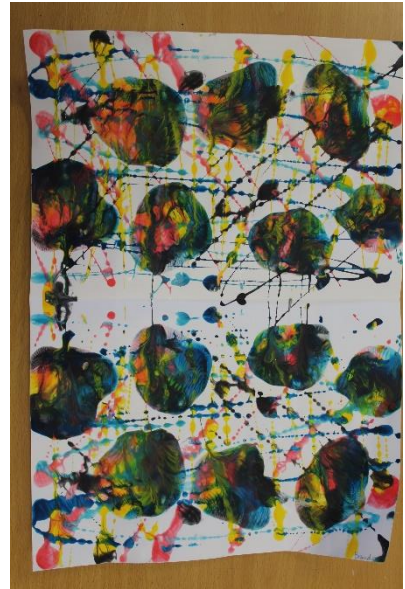
Session one – acrylic paint pouring and marbling

Session two – sponged night sky blending with template silhouettes and added details

Session three – brushed sunset blending, mirror printing and string pull techniques as extras

Session four – starting to use the pouring, sponging and brush-blending techniques to create final canvases
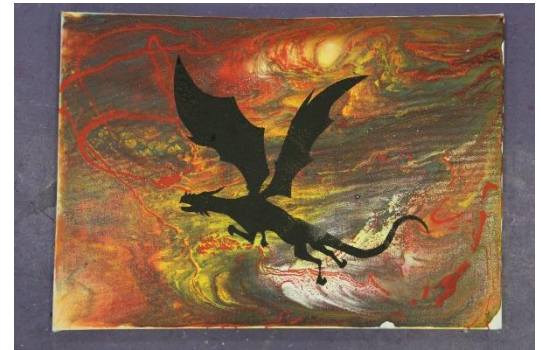
Session five –
Finishing canvases
with stencils, and
added materials/
details

Some final
canvases and
diptychs

What resources were useful in the classroom to support SEN learners in art?

- Although many of our students are on the SEN register for a wide variety of reasons, we tried to treat everyone in a similar way.

- Breaking down the sessions in to definite tasks which they could practise before producing final canvases, allowed everyone to achieve.

- All were given the opportunity to add their own ideas to the final canvases to personalise their work.

- The mix of controlled paint blending, and more haphazard techniques allowed for different working styles to be covered.

Art

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