Media Arts Inclusion Strategies: HS Advanced Model Cornerstone Assessment
VSA/Accessibility
The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
Kylie Peppler, Meryl Alper

HS-Advanced

There are a number of tasks outlined in this MCA that may pose challenges to youth with sensory, cognitive, emotional, and intellectual disabilities. However, provided that inclusion guidelines are met by the teacher prior to and throughout the assignment of the tasks, most students have the capacity to produce a short-length documentary on emerging trends in media arts. This will likely require the media arts teacher consulting with special education teachers and becoming familiar with individual students' IEPs so that the abilities and disabilities of each student are known, that appropriate goals are targeted, and that the proper accommodations are applied.

Success for both the media arts teacher and the student relies on creativity, an expectation of excellence based on individual ability and the application of the three guiding principles of UDL:

1.   Represent information in multiple formats and media.
2.   Provide multiple pathways for students' actions and expressions.
3.   Provide multiple ways to engage students' interests and motivation.

Because each student's learning capability and strength is different, even within a category of disability, instruction must accommodate a broad range of communication and learning styles. Some suggestions for how the Model Cornerstone Assessment may be adopted for students with varied abilities are described below but are not meant to be inclusive of all possibilities.

Representation
Perception
● Offer non-visual alternatives to visual information, evidence, and editing. For example, instead of producing a documentary on emerging trends in media arts, students can produce a podcast. (*In the "Resources" section, possible audio editing software should be listed, e.g., Garage Band.)
Language, Expression, and Symbols
● Consider "pre-teaching" the Key Vocabulary and other core concepts prior to the assignment.
● Consider clarifying that the terms "documentary" can apply to different media (e.g., documentary film, documentary photography, or radio documentary). At its core, a "documentary" is telling a story about something that happened in real life.
Comprehension
● Students may need explicit prompts to evaluate the work of others.

Action and Expression
Physical Action
● Provide students with assistive technology/alternative means of input for using the computer and editing software (e.g., switch access).
Expressive Skills and Fluency
● Students may need to "script" their projects in a mode other than through the written word (e.g. visual storyboards, talking into a tape recorder). Since it is unclear (from the way the MCA is written) in what form the final "student reflection" should be, students should also be able to communicate this reflection in a manner that works best with their strengths and preferences for mode of communication.

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Executive Function
- Scaffold students' organization of assets they are gathering and creating (e.g., helping the student to set up and label folders on the computers).
- Instead of using editing software to create a documentary, a program with more scaffolding structure, such as a Prezi, may be a more appropriate tool for constructing a montage of imagery, panning and zooming, writing corresponding content, etc.

Engagement
Recruiting Interest
- Provide extended time to work on the project.
- During the production sessions, use cues to mark the pace of working, the length of the session, and the availability of breaks.
Sustaining Effort and Persistence
- As this assignment is very complex, encourage the division of long-term goals of video production into short-term objectives.
Self-Regulation
- Check in with students frequently and inquire about their proposed next steps.