



Older Individuals who are Blind – Technical Assistance Center

# **Part 3:**

# **The Vocabulary**

# **of Art**

# **“Art Speak”**

In order to focus on which terms will be most immediately useful to learners, we will review a list of vocabulary words that will come up in relation to the two upcoming sample projects. Many of these words were used in Part 2: A Survey of Art. Feel free to return to the works of art shown there to review the context in which these terms are used.



# **Selected Vocabulary:**

1. Shape (Organic/Geometric)
2. Form
3. Volume
4. Composition
5. Layers
6. Overlap
7. Contrast
8. Positive and Negative Space
9. Mind's Eye
10. Gesture



# Art Vocabulary Resources:

The two links below can be searched for informative definitions of “art-speak.”

General art terms and definitions:

[http://arttango.com/art\\_terms/art\\_definitions.html](http://arttango.com/art_terms/art_definitions.html)

Historical art terms and art movements:

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms>



# **Tactile Collage Terms:**

1. Collage
2. Mixed-Media
3. 2-D/Two-dimensional
4. Outline/Contour
5. Texture/Tactual
6. Shape
7. Background/Foreground
8. Overlapping
9. Symmetrical/Asymmetrical



# Papier-Mâché Terms:

1. Papier-Mâché
2. Sculpture/3-D (Three-dimensional)
3. Form
4. Shape
5. Volume
6. Outline/Edge/Contour
7. Curve
8. Armature
9. Scale



# Workspace

Prior to delving into our two anticipated art projects, it will be useful to review some best practices for assisting the participant in setting up an appropriate and comfortable workspace.

These points apply to any work environment, whether you are inside a home (kitchen table, den floor, outdoor patio), at a health care facility or in a classroom.



# Creating a Comfortable Workspace

Creating a comfortable workspace allows us to revisit the work of artist Frida Kahlo, who was mentioned earlier in the course. The following photographs document the adaptive changes Kahlo made to her workspace so she could paint when she had to be restricted to a full-body cast and, thereafter, a wheelchair. Kahlo channeled her pain into fueling her dedication to making art that, in turn, relieved some of her suffering.





# Workspace Example:

Kahlo is lying in bed and there is an easel fitted over the top half of the bed, angled so that she can reach the picture she is painting. Books and a gourd full of paint brushes sit on her bedside table. A young boy stands next to her admiring the painting she is working on.



# Workspace Example:



There is a brown leather wheelchair facing an easel with a still-life painting of fruit on it. The height of the easel is adjusted for someone in the wheelchair to comfortably use it. A tray of paint bottles sits on a table behind the wheelchair. The floor is terracotta and there is a stone wall with wooden sculptures next to a window.



# Ergonomics

Consider your workplace: If available, utilize adjustable chairs or props on the work surface that can lean and orient materials to make them easier to see/touch.

For example, an easel or block to prop up a flat work, marker/pencil/brush grip-aids.



# Task Lighting:

Consider the following related to task lighting:

1. Lighting changes
2. Position in room or on work surface/task
3. Facing away from sunlight
4. Glare reduction



# **Work Surface:**

Use a protective cover that considers the individual's specific vision (e.g., use black or white paper to improve contrast).

Provide an apron or old shirt to protect your own and the participants' clothes.



# **Adaptive devices to consider:**

1. Magnification
2. Contrast
3. Illumination
4. Video Magnifier (e.g., Da Vinci) with an overhead camera that students can use to draw and modify viewing modes.
5. A lightbox to provide backlighting for VI students.
6. Smartphone or tablet that can illuminate, enlarge, describe, photograph, or otherwise assist in the viewing of a given student's project.
7. Apps such as a color-identification app





# Tip #1 for Success:

Containers of different shapes and sizes can be used to organize and separate materials, including different colored tissue papers, to make them identifiable to blind/VI participants. These can also be labeled with braille, if needed. Learners can prepare this in advance to assist participants with organization.



# Tip #2 for Success:

For papier-mâché, it is advisable to give the participant a large container of water and paper towels so they can intermittently rinse the adhesive paste off their hands.



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# Tip #3 for Success:

When giving materials to participants, it is best to place an object in their hands so they can place it in a spot best suited to their own sense of organization. If you are placing materials around their workspace, use the idea of a clock face to note where in front of them an object might be located (e.g., paper strips are at 2 o'clock, the paste is at 5 o'clock, there is a container of water at 3 o'clock and a roll of paper towels is standing upright just to the left of the water container).



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