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VSA Florida

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VSA Florida

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Modern Skills

ArtThread Residency Program

Building on the success of year one of the **VSA Florida (VSAFL)** ArtThread Residency Program, VSAFL has continued providing the ArtThread Residency Program to Florida's transition students. The opportunity to participate in this residency is available statewide, and is not for just a select few. This residency program provides a way for the young person with a disability to take incremental yet substantial steps toward self-reliance. The program offers a comprehensive set of activities to provide participants with the technical, communication, and creative skills required to be successful in the small business world. The residency emphasizes that all students will succeed.

The ArtThread Residency Program gives students the tools to compete and be successful in today's web-based business world. Participants will: 1) increase their skills with digital image manipulation and specialized web applications; 2) increase their presentation and communication skills, which leads to improved self-confidence and self-reliance; 3) improve peer-based support and community involvement by being involved in a peer-to-peer mentorship program; and 4) receive training in entrepreneurship and micro-enterprise

development by getting a chance to start up an online e-commerce business. The ArtThread Residency Program “lights the light” for transition students throughout Florida to use online technology for creative expression and to learn important job skills.

The ArtThread Residency Program is patterned after the traditional VSAFL residency program. The residencies are for eight weeks with one-hour sessions. VSAFL works with the district’s transition specialist in selecting the participating classroom and are approved by the school district’s ESE Director. Teaching artists for the ArtThread residencies must use the Interactive Online Gallery and *Splash*, the integrated art-making tool, a major difference from a traditional residency.

Once the selected classroom is approved by the school district’s ESE director, the VSA Florida Residency Coordinator (VSAFLRC) connects with the selected classroom teacher and the teaching artist. The teaching artist meets with the classroom teacher to work out the details of the residency and gather information about the students including class culture.

All teaching artists that are selected for this program are part of the VSAFL roster of teaching artists. To be a member of the roster the teaching artist must meet the following criteria: demonstrated artistic abilities; educational background and experience as a professional teaching artist; participation in a regional/statewide artist-in-residence professional development workshop; demonstrate appropriate experience for working with students; and demonstrate an ability to work with other professionals in the proscribed setting. Artists participating in the program must intrinsically believe that every participant has unique abilities and that the only way to be successful is through identifying the needs and abilities of the each participant and then to create art using individual strengths. All teaching artists sign an agreement that specifies the services they will render. In addition, the teaching artist has participated in a one-day training on



the Interactive Online Gallery and *Splash* (the art making tool), as well as participating in continued education through webinars and teleconferences.

The teaching artist, using UDL techniques, provides step-by-step directions for the students on how to use *Splash* and how to also upload traditionally created artwork. The step-by-step instructions begin with logging onto ArtThread to create a new painting in *Splash*. Then images are uploaded from the computer to *My Gallery*. Threads are begun for each *Splash* piece and participants learn how to reflect on images in threads. *Splash* images can also be shared with someone else via email. Learning and practicing how to use the new technology provides extensive skill development in using specialized web applications and how to work with digital images. Part of every residency (see curriculum map) includes creating a class collaborative piece. This work helps develop skills in working as part of a team, including learning how to positively interact with peers. The final session includes critiquing and discussing the collaborative piece, including its design elements and expressive elements of the work. This component of the residency helps the student sharpen their skills in presenting their artwork. Depending on the participating classroom teacher and the interest and ability of the students, the teaching artist works with the students on beginning their online-e-commerce business by posting their art for sale.

The VSAFL Statement of Work is to provide twenty ArtThread Residencies for Transition Students. VSAFL completed ten ArtThread residencies in December 15, 2011 and completed an additional ten on May 15, 2012. It is estimated that 300 transition students participated in this project. In 2010 there were approximately 785,000 students in Florida public schools grades 9-12 and of that approximately 110,000 were identified as having disabilities.

Data is gathered by a VSAFL designed evaluation form, which is based on observation and includes anecdotal data.



Statistical data is also collected on usage of the ArtThread Gallery site.

VSAFL has developed many replicable tools to assist in the implementation of the ArtThread residency. Tools include a Training Guide and Checklist, a Curriculum Map and FAQ sheet. Costs to replicate this program in other states would entail teaching artist training and contracting with the ArtThread Foundation to develop a specific gallery for their use. Technology requirements for participating classrooms include: 1) enough computers for each student to either have their own or share with one other student; 2) computers must have broadband access to the Internet with Internet Explorer 7 or above, Firefox 3 or above, or Safari 2 and above; 3) upload and download permissions for www.artthread.org; vsaf1.artthread.org; and www.zazzle.com; 4) keyboard, mouse, and monitor; 5) Adobe Flash player installed and enabled in the browser; and 5) accessible USB port for teaching artists to upload art from a flash drive.

The ArtThread Residency Program addresses the Department of Labor *Guideposts for Success Connecting Activities* (<http://www.dol.gov/odep/categories/youth/>). Participants in the VSAFL ArtThread Residency Program learn all the techniques for using the Interactive Online Gallery. Students love to share the joy of and share their work with peers, friends, and family.

The National Collaborative on WorkForce Development for Youth or NCWD (<http://www.ncwd-youth.info>) criteria for exemplary programs identifies several points to consider when developing programs for transitioning youth from school to career: 1) provide workforce preparatory experiences; 2) provide youth development and leadership opportunities; 3) tailor services to individuals; 4) demonstrate awareness and attention to serving youth with disabilities; and 5) have quantitative or qualitative outcome data. The VSAFL ArtThread Residency Program fully meets these criteria. The residency works with students





to: 1) successfully work with online technology; 2) develop creativity; 3) provide a vehicle for sharing through social networking; 4) provide an avenue for small business enterprise; and 5) help transition-aged students work toward self-determination. Each student works at their own level and accommodations are made to adapt the tools for specific needs. VSAFL and ArtThread collected data throughout the residency.

NCWD also stresses that successful transition includes these guideposts to success: 1) access to high quality standards-based education regardless of the setting; 2) information about career options and exposure to the world of work; 3) structured internship; 4) opportunities to develop social, civic, and leadership skills; 5) strong connections to caring adults; 6) access to safe places to interact with their peers; and 7) support services and specific accommodations to allow students to become independent adults. The VSAFL ArtThread residency follows these guidelines by providing teaching artists that are trained to successfully work with students with disabilities and have specific training on the interactive online gallery and *Splash*, including career options using online art making tools. The residency also provides a structured eight week residency allowing participants to develop speaking and presentation skills as part of the curriculum, connecting one-on-one with teaching artists working within the student's school setting and making appropriate accommodations.



History of Project & Project Development

VSAFL first partnered with the ArtThread Foundation in 2008 using a program that brought technology to adult artists with disabilities. The use of the technology was a challenge for many of these participants. Through the

evaluation process VSAFL learned that using computers was a better tool for young adults than adults who have less experience using a computer. As a follow up to the 2008 project, ArtThread partnered with Project 10. Their approach was to provide instruction to the trainer on the mechanics of using the technology and also train teachers who in turn would work with the students. The evaluation of this model showed that very few teachers felt comfortable with the technology and most did not spend the time necessary to work with the students.

In 2010 the VSAFL, ArtThread, Project 10 partnership began. In the more than ten years since we began the residency program, we know the impact a teaching artist has on working with students with disabilities. Incremental steps are best used to learn an arts process. We brought to the partnership this knowledge. ArtThread had the technology and Project 10 had the expertise and connection with transition students. VSAFL selected the teaching artists through an RFP. VSAFL selected the artists based on their experience working with transition-aged students and their interest in learning the online technology. In the first year of the partnership VSAFL teaching artists worked with two hundred seven transition students in fourteen schools. With the expertise of the teaching artists, the participating students had an outstanding experience working, creating and sharing their art. The success of this partnership is seen in the more than three thousand pieces of art work created in the student's private My Gallery Space, and the one thousand six hundred and forty-two pieces of art that have been posted to public threads or art conversations on ArtThread.

The project is coordinated by the VSAFL Professional Development Coordinator. The VSAFL Regional Program Coordinators provide oversight statewide. The coordinators have received *Splash* training and all are experienced teaching artists.



Project Partners include Project 10 the State of Florida Transition Education Network and the ArtThread Foundation.

The mission of **Project 10: Transition Education Network** is to assist Florida school districts and relevant stakeholders in building capacity to provide secondary transition services to students with disabilities in order to improve their academic success and post-school outcomes. Project 10 uses regional personnel, 21st Century technology, extensive collaboration, and data-driven accountability to deliver services, supports, and information to all stakeholders focused on improving post-school outcomes for students served in exceptional student education within Florida.

Transition representatives from Project 10 work closely with school district personnel within their region to identify the programmatic and training needs of each district, and assist them with meeting their goals in the area of secondary transition. 21st Century technology is used for on-going electronic communications via a transition listserv, Transition Wheel topics, the Project 10 website, and timely products and updates on transition issues. Project 10 collaborates in related state activities and provides support to the State Transition Steering Committee and District Interagency Councils. It also produces a number of products, supports pilot transition activities across the state, provides training and technical assistance services, and develops research-supported activities.

The **ArtThread Foundation** is a 501(c)3 that evolved from a U.S. Department of Commerce and NIH/NCI-funded arts-based research and patient service program at the University of Florida. Drawing on the expertise gained from five years of research and hands-on service to people with physical limitations, the Foundation forged a partnership with Carnegie Mellon University to develop technology that brings the tools of art-making and creative expression to people with limited access to the traditional art tools. In 2006 ArtThread moved from its academic-based roots to a



community-based organization in order to offer the benefits of its research and its mission to a broader population. To that end ArtThread began its work with VSAFL in 2008.

The mission of the ArtThread Foundation is to improve the quality of life for persons with special needs and people in crisis through the universal reach of technology and the power of creative expression. ArtThread technology enhances creative expression through accessibility and community building.

Modern Skills

Modern Skills is a replicable program that can be accessed and used by anyone; teacher, student, or parent. Virtually anyone can create by going to ArtThread.org. Art can be made at ArtThread then uploaded. Once uploaded, students are able to respond to other art threads. Young adults familiar with the computer can begin to create at anytime, anywhere.

For a sustained approach to Modern Skills any classroom teacher, that is computer savvy, can use our PowerPoint tutorial, the training guide, and checklist to learn the basic steps to create art. With practice, users are able to improve their knowledge of the software and use their skills for more creative expression. During practice with the software we suggest that a trained teaching artist assist the classroom teacher in working directly with the students to understand the program.

VSA Florida is committed to assisting anyone that wants to replicate the program through webinars. The webinar aid the participants through the creation process using the software.

The Modern Skills residency program provided a way for the transition student to take incremental, yet substantial steps toward self-reliance. The residency offered a comprehensive



set of activities that provided participants with the technical, communication, and creative skills required to be successful in the small business world.



Evaluation

Each residency includes an evaluation completed by the teaching artist and the classroom teacher. The teaching artist must also submit a completed curriculum map.

Lessons Learned

The Modern Skills Program works extremely well for high functioning transition students. Many of these students intuitively figured out the process before the teaching artist began instruction. Students with vision or hearing loss had successful experiences. Additional time in the residency should be allotted to explore jobs that use similar computer skills. Difficulties arose when the participating students did not have access to the computers or had technical difficulties. If possible, the program should be held in a computer lab.

Summary of Evaluation Completed by Classroom Teachers



How strongly did the VSA program satisfy the objectives listed below?
Please check the appropriate box with 5 being the most effective.

Residency Program	5	4	3	2	1
Classroom teacher and artist collaborated on the goals	71%	21%	7%	0%	0%
The goals of the residency were met	79%	21%	0%	0%	0%
The art activities were age appropriate	86%	7%	7%	0%	0%
The lessons integrated the arts with the classroom curriculum	57%	14%	21%	7%	0%
The art activities helped to increase artistic skills and techniques	71%	29%	0%	0%	0%

Facilitated Skills	5	4	3	2	1
Making choices	86%	14%	0%	0%	0%
Negotiating / conflict resolution	71%	7%	14%	0%	7%
Self expression	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Diversity acceptance	93%	7%	0%	0%	0%
Fine and gross motor skills	86%	14%	0%	0%	0%

Evaluating the Teaching Artist	5	4	3	2	1
The artist used adaptive strategies	79%	21%	0%	0%	0%
Was on time and used session time wisely	93%	7%	14%	0%	7%
Was organized and prepared	93%	7%	0%	0%	0%
Was comfortable working with students of all abilities	86%	14%	0%	0%	0%

Success Stories



High school students with varying disabilities including low cognitive functioning students

“Most of the students in this class needed repetitive instruction and a lot of individual attention. In observing the students working, I watched how well they connected with the program. The students were really trying the different tools and understanding how to use the color palette to change options and control, going back and forth between brushes and color variations. One student was intrigued by uploading other images to which he added his own artistic style. This became his favorite way to use the program. He learned how to search for specific images online, download them, and then upload them to the VSA Gallery where he could navigate the site to manipulate the images and save them into the gallery.” *(teaching artist)*

High school students ranging from high functioning students with specific learning disabilities and students on the autism spectrum, to very low functioning hand over hand students

“The greatest success of the Modern Skills Residency is the time spent with the classroom teachers and the paraprofessionals. Each fully participated in the residency and took the time to create, save, and respond to pieces. Discussions included various applications and the proof of success is demonstrated by the fact that artwork is still being created after the residency has ended.” *(teaching artist)*

High school students with other disabilities

“Other teachers in the school have requested the opportunity to participate in the program. Students who had a difficult time with paper and pencil assignments have been able to better follow directions and complete illustrations for other classes/subjects, as well as vocalize the thought process used.” *(classroom teacher)*

Technical School

“One of the students is developing a graphic arts business.” *(classroom teacher)*

“I watched how well they connected with the program.”



Modern Skills Interactive Gallery



Come connect with your friends by making and sharing art online! This Gallery is for you—use it to unleash your creativity and explore the world of computer art and graphic design. Be sure to try creating art using *Splash*, the ArtThread online art making tool.

Jump in! Start by **adding art** from your computer or **making art online**. Everything goes into **My Gallery**, and from there you can start or respond to a thread. Choose **All Art** to browse the art or choose **Thread View** to see the “thread” of an art conversation. Go for it—become part of the **VSA Florida Modern Skills** community!

Visit <http://vsaf1.artthread.org/>.



VSA Florida Curriculum Map for School Residency Program

Theme / Enduring Understanding /
Essential: **The use of an online art
creating tool and its uses**

Questions: Did the students learn to:
Set up a personal account; Use the tools;
Save artwork into class and personal
gallery; View and respond, create threads,
add to threads, upload artwork

Teaching Artist:

Site:

County:

Residency Dates:

	#1 Date	#2 Date	#3 Date	#4 Date
Learning Outcomes: Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to program • Learn tools of <i>Splash</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review <i>Splash</i> • Create art w/ <i>Splash</i> • Save art into class gallery and thread • Each week, save one piece into this gallery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review <i>Splash</i> • Review creating a new thread • Adding to favorites and then to a thread • Responding to an art piece 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add a piece of artwork from another source by uploading • Add to a thread using this piece • Learn to share artwork
State Standards	Meet the IEP & VA.A.1#2	VA.B.1.4#4	VA.B.1.4#2	VA.A.1.4#1
Learning Objectives: (skills, content and concepts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To explore the properties of the online tool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create artwork using the online tool, saving a piece and starting a new thread with it, beginning the art to art conversation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Browse main gallery and add pieces to favorites • Add to an existing thread • Respond to an existing piece you like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To upload an external visual art piece or photo to My Gallery. Art can be created in class if desired • To take an uploaded piece and incorporate it into a thread
Instructional Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate each tool in program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student will save their image in "My Gallery" • Start new thread and title it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student will browse "All Art" for pieces to add to my favorites. Use either My Gallery or My Favorites to add to an existing thread. Respond to pieces they like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student will upload an external image by adding art followed by adding it to an existing thread • Email an image using share option

VSA Florida Curriculum Map for School Residency Program

Date #1 – 4

	#1 Date	#2 Date	#3 Date	#4 Date
Adaptations Accommodations Modifications Examples: Time element, amount of assistance needed, Buddy / mentor classmate system Physical aids: mouse, keyboard				
Assessment Evidence: (Performance tasks / rubrics / other evidence)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observing students on task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the student save image in My Gallery? • Did they successfully start a new thread and title it? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the students find art to add to favorites? • Are the students adept at adding to My Gallery, My Favorites and responding to pieces? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the student able to upload an image and add it to an existing thread? • Was the student able to email images using the share option?
Comments (What worked and what didn't)				

VSA Florida Curriculum Map for School Residency Program

Date #5–8

	#5 Date	#6 Date	#7 Date	#8 Date
Learning Outcomes: Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a class collaborative piece via “round robin” • Continue creating threads, adding art to threads and responding to art in a thread 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating art with art 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a slide show 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review the coursework and view each student’s contribution to the class slide show
State Standards	VA.E.1.4#1	VA.A.1.4#3	VA.A.1.4#4	VA.D.1.4#1
Learning Objectives: (skills, content and concepts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative piece created that includes a specified amount of time for each student • To be proficient in working with threads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To learn how to select an existing image from My Gallery or My Favorites and upload it • To use image to create another piece and save in My Gallery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To compile several images into a slide show 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review and discuss class slide show
Instructional Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using one computer, have students add to a collaborative piece. Give each student only 30–45 seconds to add their own touch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once in program, upload image. Use creative stamping options to create a new piece of work. Save this piece into My Gallery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will select images from a variety of places to develop a slide show • Have students contribute to a class slide show 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critique slide show with positive responses and discuss feelings as they view • Discuss elements of design if appropriate, i.e. color, shape, patterns

VSA Florida Curriculum Map for School Residency Program

Date #5–8

	#5 Date	#6 Date	#7 Date	#8 Date
Adaptations Accommodations Modifications Examples: Time element, amount of assistance needed, Buddy / mentor classmate system Physical aids: mouse, keyboard				
Assessment Evidence: (Performance tasks / rubrics / other evidence)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the students able to work together to create a common piece of artwork? • Can everyone create and add to threads, etc.? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were students able to bring a piece of artwork from their favorites or gallery to use to create another piece of work... and save it? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were students able to gather pieces for their own slide show and contribute approx. 3 pieces each for a class slide show? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did all students contribute to slide show and class discussion?
Comments				

Project Guidelines & Internet Parameters



- a. Classrooms must contain students of transition age with any form of disability.
Students without a disability may be included to promote inclusion.
- b. Computer lab availability
 - 1) Must include enough computers for each student to either have their own or share with one other student.
 - 2) All computers must have *broadband access to the Internet with browsers already installed* on either Mac or PC. A dial-up connection will not work.
 - Browsers that can be used:
 - Internet Explorer (version 7 or up, IE6 will not work)**
 - Safari (version 2 or up)**
 - Firefox (version 3 or up)**
 - Access with upload and download permissions for ArtThread and partner websites:
vsafi.artthread.org
 - Keyboard, mouse, and monitor working properly
 - **Adobe Flash player installed and enabled** in the browser
 - **Accessible USB port** (in case trainers need to upload art from a flash drive)