



# The Intersection of Arts Education and Special Education:

## Exemplary Programs and Approaches

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An Attack on the Tower of Babel:  
Creating a National Arts/Special Education  
Resource Center

BEVERLY LEVETT GERBER AND LYNNE HOROSCHAK

The Kennedy Center



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# An Attack on the Tower of Babel: Creating a National Arts/Special Education Resource Center

BEVERLY LEVETT GERBER AND LYNNE HOROSCHAK

A reciprocal relationship exists between educators of the arts and educators who work with students with special needs. Arts educators far too often lack necessary information about students with diverse special needs. Special educators and classroom teachers, meanwhile, need information both about the arts and working with teachers of the arts. This observation was a recurring and frequently discussed goal at the 2012 Kennedy Center forum, “Examining the Intersection of Arts Education and Special Education: A National Forum.”

Arts and special education information and research literature are currently housed in a variety of settings nationwide, rarely easy to access. How can we make that information accessible to all? Most teachers do not know that information about the arts for students with special needs exists. Arts teachers who seek information about students on the autism spectrum in their classrooms, for example, should be able to tap into that information easily (Gerber & Kellman, 2010; Kellman, 2001). The same holds true for a variety of learners. Teachers of the arts, who have had to navigate their own complicated relationships with paraeducators (paraprofessionals) in their classrooms have been without guidance and support. They should know that information about paraeducators in the art room is now available (Guay, 2010; Guay & Gerlach, 2006).

In this paper, we share our professional stories to demonstrate why access to this information is so important. We offer perspectives on our rapidly changing world of information accessibility. In addition, we reflect on the differences in professional languages, an unintentional Tower of Babel. These differences are confusing. For example, the plethora of special education acronyms caused one art teacher to refer to the field as “alphabet soup.” In addition, not all categories of special needs are alike. A “one-size-fits-all” approach for students in special education has never worked and should not exist. Information should be readily available for teachers to help all students meet their potential. A national arts/special education resource center can dismantle that tower and bridge separate, but related, professions with accurate information and professional training.

The visual and performing arts and arts therapies overlap in their goals to bring success to students with special needs through the arts. All have their own resources. Currently, the availability of arts/special education information is problematic. While members of a professional organization are more likely to hear of new research and publications in their own field, relatively few professionals belong to two or more organizations to access information in special education and the arts. There is a crucial need for a *national* arts/special education resource center to make that information accessible to all. That is the goal of this white paper.

### **Rationale for a National Arts/Special Education Resource Center**

Arts research is growing, but there is still too little focus on students with a wide range of special needs in the arts. In addition, arts/special education research is difficult to find and access. Too often information depends on chance and colleagues' knowledge. At a recent convention, members of two different universities (one in special education, the other in art education) discovered they were both working on similar arts research - eye-tracking with students on the autism spectrum. Luckily, a mutual colleague connected them. But, leaving such a pivotal connection up to random encounters does not benefit students with special needs and talents.

Connecting arts research can save time and money when information and methodology is shared. These are obvious points, but there also can be unintended and unpredictable benefits. Sound teaching approaches can be applied effectively in completely different settings. For example, task analysis, a special education teaching strategy, is now used in hospitals to everyone's benefit. A hospital task analysis in the form of a check list of pre-surgery procedures ensures patients, doctors, and hospitals that all necessary steps and precautions are followed. A Boston doctor, Dr. Atul Gawande (2007) of Brigham & Women's Hospital, adapted this "educational" approach to medicine. A pilot's preflight check list is another use of a task analysis. If "good teaching is good teaching," effective teaching methods can have ripple effects in other fields.

Information is a powerful ally. All teachers can benefit from an easily accessed arts and special education resource center. Arts research can demonstrate the value of the arts for students with special needs. This type of research not only justifies bringing more, not fewer, arts to students, it can truly *individualize* their education. There are many stories of artists with learning needs who have been helped, sometimes saved, by their school arts experiences. The

lives of painters Chuck Close (New York) and Pat Moss (Virginia), and New Jersey glass artist Paul J. Stankard were dramatically changed because of their school art experiences (Gerber, 2011, Lokerson & Joynes, 2006). Arts teachers who may not realize their power and positive impact on students' lives should hear these artists' inspirational stories. Arts experiences emphasize the artists' skills and strengths. Their abundant artistic skills and arts classroom experiences brought them success in otherwise dismal school careers, often due to art teachers without a special education background.

Our current national focus on test scores puts students like these artists at an extreme disadvantage. It raises the question - why pile on more traditionally taught reading/math/etc. for students who have demonstrated learning difficulties in these same subjects? Do provide the remediation skills and incorporate assistive technologies and the instructional strategies students need when they learn in a different way. But, at the same time, **provide more arts opportunities** so students with special needs who are skilled in the arts can excel. More arts research and stories of success are needed to support and justify school arts programs for the students who need them most.

In the sections that follow, we describe radical changes in information access that have occurred during our own professional lifetimes. Our stories describe efforts to bring arts/special education information to teacher training at the university level and in the public schools. In addition to the experiences of the paper's authors, graduate students at Moore College of Art & Design in Philadelphia share their arts/special education information needs. We conclude with a list of categories and recommendations for a National Arts/Special Education Resource Center.

### **Gerber's Stories**

**Changes in professional information access.** The process of information retrieval has radically changed within a relatively short period of time. My own experience and that of my husband, Stuart Gerber, (professor emeritus of special education), illustrate those changes. Stu's research methods as a doctoral student at the Harvard School of Education would be unrecognizable to today's students. In the mid-60's, Stu carried a long cardboard box filled with hundreds of perforated IBM cards to the basement of a building that housed the campus mainframe computer. Each card contained hand-punched, raw research data (in itself a slow and time-consuming process). During Stu's pre-scheduled time slot, the punched cards were

“fed” through an enormous, apartment-size computer that filled three rooms. After a wait of several days, while the information was processed, Stu returned to the data center for a printout of the statistical results of information he had entered on the cards.

In the mid-1980’s, research information and journal articles could be found on computers located in university libraries. Individual computers were not yet available. Graduate students had to sign up for computer research time and access was limited. I reserved my computer access time for one of the designated computers in the Teachers College, Columbia University library. Today, all this can be accomplished on hand-held devices. Older colleagues may still be in shock at our students’ easy access to almost unlimited, nearly simultaneous information. Imagine the ability to access significant information about arts/special education programs and schools in this country and around the world.

There is no need for arts teachers to reinvent the wheel. They can quickly learn about and adapt methods from model programs that teach students with special needs through the arts. One model school is the Port Phillip Specialist School (PPSS) in Melbourne, Australia ([www.portphillip.gov.au](http://www.portphillip.gov.au)). PPSS unveiled its Visual and Performing Arts Curriculum (VPAC) in 2005. Sara James (2012) describes PPSS’s arts curriculum.

VPAC isn’t a program to teach the arts, but a vehicle to deliver a curriculum through the arts. Put another way, PPSS isn’t training students to be dancers, musicians, artists or actors; rather, the school employs dance, music, art and drama to teach children communication, numeracy and living skills. While there are other schools teaching special education that uses the arts, no-one else offers an arts-based curriculum quite like VPAC” (p. xvi).

Closer to home, the Academy in Mayayunk (AIM) in Philadelphia, ([www.aimpa.org/New/index.shtml](http://www.aimpa.org/New/index.shtml)) uses the arts to teach students with learning disabilities. The mission of AIM Academy is to:

Provide extraordinary educational opportunities to children with language-based learning disabilities such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia, using research-based intervention strategies and an arts-based learning environment that is college preparatory in scope and sequence.

Teachers who find their own art programs under budgetary threats may find persuasive arguments for arts defense from AIM and PPSS “down under.” AIM uses research based on

the Lab School in Washington, D.C., created by Sally Smith in 1987, to shape its arts-based philosophy and teaching strategies. PPSS's documented visual and performing arts curriculum continually demonstrates the power of the arts to reach and teach students with special needs (Smith, 1987).

**A professional Tower of Babel.** At Teachers College, I unexpectedly learned about some subtle professional differences between special educators and art educators. My doctoral courses combined special education and art education and were located in adjacent buildings. The buildings shared a common wall and stairs, joining one building to the other. Although next to each other, the buildings are architecturally quite different. The art department building has very high ceilings and hallways trimmed with dark wood paneling. It is considerably older than its special education neighbor, designed in a contemporary style with glass curtain walls and low ceilings.

When I moved from a class in one building to a class in the other, the staircase separating the two became a metaphor for the subtle changes to come. Art education classes were on the 4th floor, special education classes on the 5th. But, to go from the 4th floor of the art education building to the 5th floor of the special education building meant taking the staircase down, not up, one floor. The reason – the high ceilings in the art building did not match the low ceilings in the special education setting. The 5th floor in the special education building was actually lower than the 4th floor in the art building.

Going “up the down staircase” or “down the up staircase” became a physical prompt to prepare for differences in professional language and focus. Sometimes it was a bit unnerving. The excitement generated in an art education class about children's involvement in graphic arts processes drew a polite, but distant look in my fellow special education graduate students. A similar “ho-hum” attitude ensued when I described a special education experience, filled with jargon and acronyms, to art education graduate students. Each group could relate to their own stories and experiences, but not fully to the other's because the professional words and examples were different. These experiences emphasized the qualitative differences in languages and methods used to teach the same children.

It is important to recognize these everyday word nuances, differences, and difficulties in communication. To demonstrate this, give a spouse, partner, or well-meaning neighbor your grocery list. Your assumption would be that grocery items written on your list will be the same

items that are purchased. Assumptions are so often wrong. Each of us interprets those written grocery items and sizes based on our own past experiences and judgments. If the grocery purchases do match those on your list, consider yourself lucky. More likely, some items will be variations of those written and others will need to be returned or exchanged.

The classroom is far more complicated than this simple exercise. Just as each person brings his/her own personal experiences and language interpretation to a routine domestic task, teachers bring their unique professional backgrounds and learned vocabulary to the classroom. Do not assume we all speak the same professional language. Burton (2012) reflects on our differences. "At the end of the day, good teaching remains an intimate, personal, and idiosyncratic profession, and willingness to be a thoughtful, ongoing, and energetic learner is paramount" (p. XI).

**Creating a collaborative textbook.** As an art education undergraduate student teacher in 1961, I found no textbooks that addressed students with special needs in the art room. At that time, I was the first Connecticut art education undergraduate to student teach in the art room of a residential school for children with developmental disabilities. My special education information came from Lowenfeld's (1960) detailed descriptions of children's developmental stages in art. Lowenfeld's stages helped me informally, but accurately, identify and understand my students' interests, levels, and skills (Gerber, 2011). I knew then that art education pre-service teachers needed their own text about students with special needs, one addressed to their teaching setting.

Years later, as a member of the SCSU Special Education faculty, I taught "Introduction to Special Education" to pre-service undergraduates (a survey course of special education that Connecticut art education students are required to take). The course and textbook was developed for special education undergraduates and was loaded with special education history, laws, academic diagnostic, and remediation approaches. None of the chapters in the special education textbook addressed the art room, the numbers of students taught weekly by art teachers, or classroom behavior strategies that fit the art room. We have come a long way since.

Today, two textbooks have been collaboratively written for teachers of the arts by experts in art education (National Art Education Association, NAEA) and special education (Council for Exceptional Children, CEC). *Reaching and Teaching Students with Special Needs*

*through Art* (Gerber & Guay, 2006) was written for art teachers. Special education leaders wrote about their special education area of expertise. Art educators wrote about their classroom art experiences with special education populations. Whenever possible, chapters were collaboratively written to reflect the languages and viewpoints of both fields. Authors who contributed to this book had over 500 years of professional experience. No single author could have written such a comprehensive textbook. *Understanding Students with Autism through Art*, (Gerber & Kellman, 2010) was written in response to art teachers' requests for information about the growing number of students on the autism spectrum in their classrooms. It too, brings the combined experience and perspectives of experts from special education, art education, and neuroscience.

Special education, arts therapies, and the visual and performing arts education include vast amounts of information. A collaborative effort was necessary to bring reliable, relevant, and appropriate arts/special education textbook material to classroom teachers. A similar effort is now needed to make arts for special education information accessible to practitioners across disciplines.

### **Horoschak's Stories**

**Teaching art in the inner city.** There they were - children in wheelchairs with tracheotomy tubes, children curled in the fetal position, lying on mats on the floor, and children whose arms were flailing and heads bobbing as they stood propped up by a standing device. I had been teaching in the inner city of Philadelphia for ten years and now, in 1976, I stood in front of my new class, having no idea what to do. I mean no idea. Art College hadn't prepared me for this. My life hadn't prepared me for this. Now what?

After the initial panic subsided, I went to each student, softly saying "hello," calling each by name and giving a compliment on their hair, shirt, barrette, or smile. It was the beginning - the beginning of a lifelong love affair of using art to work with children with special needs. It was a beginning that resulted in the design of a one-of-a-kind *Master's Degree in Art Education with an Emphasis in Special Populations*. Over the next few weeks, I recognized the personality of each student, saw them for the individuals they were, learned their strengths and challenges, all the while discovering my own.

We grew to know each other, creating hand-over-hand art-making, rolling aluminum foil balls around wheelchair trays, finger painting with butterscotch pudding, and giggling at the

crinkling of shiny paper. I laughed when Anna, who is non-verbal and uses a wheelchair, played that two-year-old game of throwing her marker on the floor so I would pick it up. Later, she had a look of disbelief on her face when the marker didn't fly out of her hand because I had velcroed™ it onto her glove. I no longer saw a wheelchair or a tracheotomy tube. I saw a child. I saw an artist.

Resources? There were none, with the exception of the excellent classroom teacher aides and special education teacher who knew the children and taught me about them. I learned what worked in the art room by trial and error, adapting the lessons of my typical children. The art of my "Severely and Profoundly Impaired" (SPI) students in 1977 - who are the Life Skills students of today - was matted and hung in the school hallways along with their schoolmates. At Halloween, I dressed the students in costumes and painted their faces to include them in the school parade. They knew something special was happening. Their presence was integral to the school community. It was through the practice of making art and being artists that they shined.

**Moore College of Art & Design Graduate Program.** The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 guaranteed all students an education with services to meet their needs. It did not guarantee that the "services" – this art teacher – would have resources to learn the best ways to teach the children. This initial experience prompted me, after 36 years of teaching hundreds of children with Individualized Education Programs (IEP's) in the Philadelphia School District, to design a Master of Arts degree program in Art Education with an Emphasis in Special Populations for Moore College of Art & Design. My first-hand experience with children with disabilities opened my eyes to the importance of creating a Master of Arts Program that specifically focuses on best practices of teaching art to children with disabilities.

In 1996, I was an Adjunct Professor at Moore College of Art & Design teaching art education classes in the evening and my elementary school children during the day. Before my college classes, I talked with the Interim Chair of Art Education, Margie Thompson, SSJ, about art-making with my special needs students. Our conversations evolved into a proposal for a required three-credit Special Populations class for the B.F.A. Art Education students.

What makes this course unique is that from 9:00-10:30 on Saturday mornings, Moore students teach art to children with various disabilities. Their teaching is under the guidance of a certified art teacher and takes place at Moore. This class is hands-on, real-life learning. When

“Jeffie” refuses to engage in the art lesson, preferring to spend the entire morning looking out the window, how does an art teacher modify that behavior – in real time? With a real child?

After the children leave, class time is devoted to processing the morning activities. To this day, the class continues to be invaluable to Moore’s art education students, the children with disabilities, and the parents of the children who dedicate their Saturday morning to bring their child to class. One parent wrote:

Until we discovered this class, we’d been unsuccessful in our efforts to find a program for him. Art has become the high-note in his life. It’s all I can do to get him dressed fast enough on class days. I can’t imagine a more wonderful education.

The semester culminates with a student art exhibition. Installed by the Moore students, the children’s exhibit boasts of the exciting art created during class. Family and friends, complete with cameras, come to enjoy the event. We celebrate those who reach 21 years of age with bittersweet goodbyes. With the success of this course for the children and the Moore Students, I realize that my practical background as an art educator in the city of Philadelphia has served me well - well enough to know that art educators are missing an important component of their education, learning how to teach children with disabilities. In designing an M.A. in Art Education with an Emphasis in Special Population ([http://www.moore.edu/graduate\\_programs/ma\\_art\\_education](http://www.moore.edu/graduate_programs/ma_art_education)) in 2009, that missing component was found.

Our Program is designed for the working art educator. There is an intense six-week summer session and courses are held one weekend a month in the fall and spring. The degree can be completed in four semesters, or seven semesters if one attends part-time. Moore’s new program has graduated sixteen students and eight students are scheduled to graduate in August, 2013. Most of our graduates are art educators working in public, private, or charter schools. Four students did not have art teacher positions, but after earning their M.A., three of the four are currently teaching art full time.

Students follow these procedures for their individual thesis: (1) develop a question and research it; (2) gather and analyze data from their field study; and, (3) come to a conclusion and develop an action plan. Finding appropriate research for a thesis in journal articles has proven difficult (as outlined by the students below). However, our graduate students’ theses have already had an impact on art and special education. The data from one thesis changed a school district policy regarding the inclusion of children with autism in the lunch room, bus, and other

school activities.

One of our graduates presented data that successfully tracks integrating art in math and English classrooms in an urban school district in New Jersey. Another graduate's art curriculum is being incorporated in a Youth Detention Center. Still another applied and was accepted into a doctoral program to further her study on the acquisition of language and literacy skills by English Language Learners. The graduate students at Moore are making a difference in a brief time. They are emphasizing the need for arts education for children with disabilities. They are making us more aware of the lack of information that connects art and special education.

Because of her experience in Moore's MA in Art Education with an Emphasis in Special Populations, Linda Moye, a 2012 graduate, is currently assembling available arts resources into one place and reporting them to the Kennedy Center. We hope to continue to expand on her effort, gathering more resources and educational sites where the arts and special education intersect. With suggestions from graduate students and colleagues in higher education, the Arts and Special Education Resource Center will house pertinent and current material reinforcing the importance of teaching the arts to children with special needs.

My graduate students quickly realize that the best teaching methodology for diverse learners can be applied to typical children in their classroom. After our first summer session in the MA Program, Kim Gavin, a graduate student wrote:

I had no idea how much the decision to go to this graduate program was going to change my life and the way I see the world . . . I needed to reach deeply within myself to expose my own prejudices and preconceived ideas.

I needed to feel as exposed and vulnerable as someone who is outside of normal.

The graduates' theses include a variety of topics ranging from "reinforcing the social skill of listening for special needs students' through culturally responsive pedagogy" to "analyzing the impact of technology with students who have special needs." The challenge encountered by our graduate students when writing their literature review was sorting through data bases to find information on their specific topic. For example, typing in "emotional behavioral disorder," "social justice," and "art" did not yield any sources. Knowing which sources were reputable and which were reliable was also a concern. Developing a database of current and relevant articles, books, and journals that is housed in one site would significantly improve the research for arts and special education.

Each year, on the second Saturday in November, Moore hosts an “Art and Special Education Symposium.” Noted experts in the field of art and special education, including Beverly Levett Gerber, co-editor and contributing author of *Reaching and Teaching Students with Special Needs through Art*; Peter Geisser, visual artist and retired art teacher at The Rhode Island School for the Deaf; and David Flink, Co-founder of “Project Eye,” have addressed the participants. This year we look forward to Beverley Holden Johns’ (past president of the International Council for Children with Behavior Disorders) keynote on “Behavioral Techniques for the Art Room: Real Stuff You Can Use to Modify Behavior of Children with Special Needs.”

Round Table Discussions follow the keynote address and give voice to the successes and challenges art teachers, special education teachers, and parents face each day. Participants leave rejuvenated and excited to put into action the techniques and strategies they have learned about and experienced during the symposium. And, it is free ([http://www.moore.edu/graduate\\_programs/ma\\_art\\_education/symposium](http://www.moore.edu/graduate_programs/ma_art_education/symposium))!

**Feedback from Moore College of Art & Design graduate students.** Both of us have experienced difficulty locating arts/special education information throughout our professional careers. It would be gratifying to report at this time that information has become easier to discover. That is not the case. As described above, our graduate students continue to encounter difficulties finding relevant arts information about students with special needs. Information is scattered among diverse sites (i.e., national arts and art therapy professional organizations, national, state, and local special education organizations, parent organizations, and world-wide artists with disabilities sites, etc.). Accessing existing information requires not just persistence, but a prior knowledge of each organization’s goals, professional language, and the specific search words used to research topics. It still is difficult to fathom why an early search using the words “art education” and “teacher creativity” brought up so many references to “business entrepreneurs.”

Without courses or a program to teach and mesh the knowledge and skills from both fields, teachers are left with a “hit-or-miss” approach. This is not surprising. Time is limited and today’s teachers continually juggle many roles. Multi-tasking during their busy school day is routine. Teaching the arts brings even more classroom demands and pressures. Inclusive arts classrooms have increasing numbers of students with learning and behavioral needs to address (often without teacher training or supports). There are external pressures because teacher

evaluations are in flux and are often contentious. Add budgetary restraints to this complicated scenario, particularly in arts funding. Arts budgets are cut even as we observe students with special needs benefitting from their arts experiences!

Most arts classroom teachers do not have combined backgrounds in the arts and special education. And, despite increasing teacher certification requirements to include information about special education, some arts teachers still have no training to teach students with special needs. The Moore College of Art & Design Graduate Program is unusual. Moore's graduates learn to navigate art education and special education's professional goals, methods, and languages.

Moore's graduates were recently asked about their experiences accessing arts/special education information during their training. They compiled the following list:

1. Difficulty finding information on specific topics involving art and special education (e.g., a search for "Emotional and/or Behavior Disorders (EBD)," "social justice" and "art education" yields no sources).
2. Difficulty finding peer reviewed articles from recent years.
3. Difficulty finding information that referenced "art." The information was very general.
4. The search for research by the M.A. students in Art Education with an Emphasis in Special Populations candidates proved that there was information in other content areas (highlighting the need for research in art and special education).
5. Art educators "do" and we need to research in a scholarly manner to prove that what we do impacts special education students. (In fact, much from the special education field can be transferred to non-special education classes.)
6. A list of reputable authors, programs, and advocacy groups would be a tremendous resource.
7. A way to refine the search would be useful because the word "art," for instance, yields "Language Arts" and "Bachelor in Art," not the intended subject.
8. Articles flagged with the specific content topic and reader comments would create a more efficient path to pertinent information. Abstracts written by the authors *should* offer a clear, concise overview. Often, once you get past the abstract to the substance of the article, you find it doesn't meet your needs. Flagging articles with comments could cut down on that problem.

9. The vocabulary was different in different search engines (e.g., “parent involvement” in one site and “parent participation” in another”).
10. There is a need to know about arts/special education research conducted in other places.
11. The Resource Center could notify researchers of cutting edge articles on the specific topic they are studying.
12. There is a definite need for a databank of reputable, preselected articles relevant to art and special education

### **Conclusion**

The Tower of Babel has been constructed by the miscommunication that exists, not only between arts and special education, but within each field. Working with a student with autism (who is on a spectrum of disorders) can differ from teaching with a child with dyslexia or Williams Syndrome. Arts teachers have learned to adapt their teaching to diverse groups of students, but more and better communication is needed to highlight this information.

The arts can reach students in ways that differ from traditional classroom approaches. Temple Grandin (2006) describes the visual language, not the spoken language, as her primary language. Grandin teaches us to look for the learning avenue that fits each student’s skills and needs. The arts have always provided a visual, auditory, or movement approach to learning and they use sensory modalities that reinforce concepts and teach to the students’ strengths. Theatre and dance allow students with kinesthetic skills to excel and become comfortable with their bodies in space. The visual arts provide many different forms and media that expand students’ skills and allow them to find their own area of expertise.

While the skills taught in and through the arts may need to be modified for some, they reach many others because of their open-ended, creative qualities. Students can tell their own stories in their unique ways. There are no test scores, no “right” or “wrong” answers. The arts are different. As we learn each other’s language, the alphabet soup can become part of our mutual short-hand and the arts can lead the way to individualize instruction. The arts and special education need to learn from each other. The Tower of Babel of professional language does exist. But it can be dismantled as professionals access the research, teaching strategies, and success stories from each other.

## **An Inclusive National Arts/Special Education Information Resource Center**

We have organized a list of topics to suggest the scope of a National Arts/Special Education Resource Center. One of its goals is to begin the dialogue among professional organizations and individual arts teachers in the schools and related settings. We hope that a National Arts/Special Education Resource Center is continually updated to reflect classroom practices and ongoing research. More specifically, we hope that the Arts/Special Education Resource Center will be the go-to site.

- Information about national arts, arts therapy and related organizations including:
  - The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC),
  - The National Art Education Association (NAEA),
  - The American Art Therapy Association (AATA),
  - The National Association for Music Education (NAfME),
  - The American Music Therapy Association (AMTA),
  - The National Dance Association (NDA),
  - The American Dance Therapy Association (ADTA),
  - The Educational Theatre Association (EdTA),
  - The National Association for Drama Therapy (NADTA),
  - The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP),
  - The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD),
  - The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and  
Rehabilitative Services,
  - The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.
- Publications and Websites:
  - Arts Education Professional Teaching Journals
  - Special Education Professional Teaching Journals
  - Professional Organization access sites
  - Parent Organization sites
  - Arts/SED Research Articles
  - Arts/SED Dissertation sites
- In-service SED/Arts teacher training model
- Working with paraeducators (paraprofessionals) in the art room

- Pre-service arts training:
  - Descriptions of teacher training courses/programs that focus on the arts for students with special needs.
  - Course syllabi
- Model arts programs:
  - National and international arts-based special education school programs
  - Arts infused curriculum models
- State listings of arts programs for students with special needs:
  - Descriptions of existing programs and population served
  - State arts/special education awards/grant opportunities.

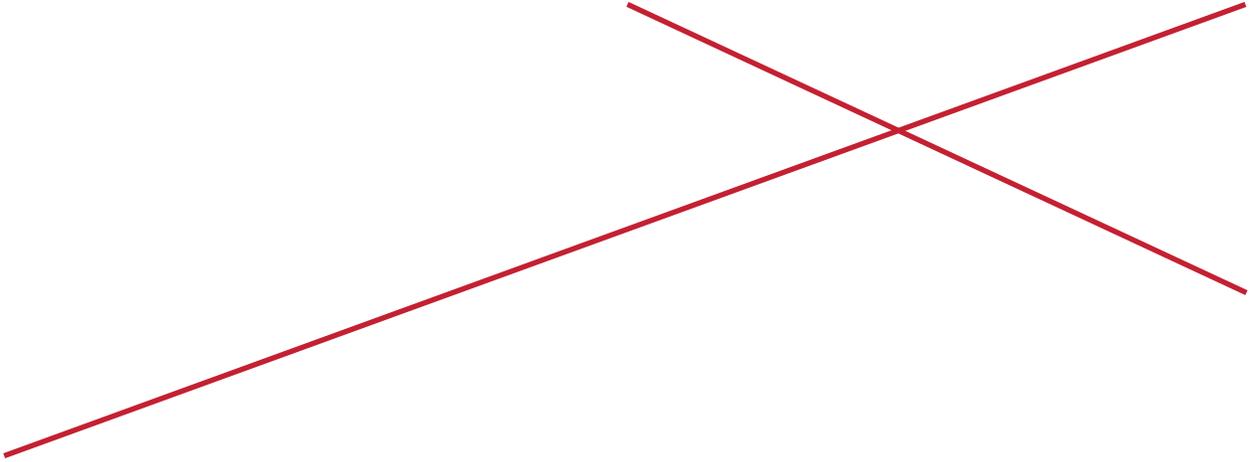
### ***Recommendations***

Because we are familiar with individual and group past efforts to create an arts and special education information site, we offer suggestions for a more permanent, financially sustainable resource center. In the past, small arts/special education resource sites have been established by faculty at universities, issues groups at national organizations, and local non-profit groups. All have experienced challenges due to limitations of time and personnel. A National Arts/Special Education Resource Center will require personnel to maintain an active Resource Center. These past experiences logically lead to the conclusion that a National Arts/Special Education Information Resource Center also needs a sustainable system of financial support.

Another Kennedy Center 2012 Forum recommendation is to establish a national arts/special education group to become an advocate of the arts for students with special needs. Representation should include members of the varied special education, arts education, and arts therapy professional communities. Members of this group might also act in an advisory capacity to the Arts/Special Education Resource Center. An advisory group of three to five members from the professional organizations listed above can guide the content and practice of the National Arts/Special Education Information Resource Center.

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