

K

KNOW WHAT'S IMPORTANT, LET THE REST GO:

Be clear about your goals for an activity. The picture you may have in your mind about how an activity will proceed may not be the same as how students envision it; if the activity's goals are still being addressed, this is okay! Let it go! Other than issues of safety or damage to materials, exploration of materials is totally fine. This exploration could include: Painting with the "wrong" side of the brush; Playing the instrument the "wrong" way; Making the length of tape "too long"; Putting "too much" water or paint on the paper.

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NOTICE, USE, AND CREATE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES:

In any activity, there can be many different learning opportunities. You can notice and capitalize on these as they arise in the classroom, and you can also anticipate, plan for, and even create them when structuring your lessons. • Handing out supplies is an opportunity for interaction. • Students needing and wanting supplies is an incentive for authentic communication. • Moving tables and chairs, or getting out and putting away supplies; these tasks are excellent opportunities to practice all sorts of ADL and cooperation skills. • "Failure" is an excellent opportunity to discover how the world works. The tape got stuck to itself? How can we solve that problem?

O

ONE THING AT A TIME:

• One conversation at a time! Background noise can be confusing and overwhelming. • One prompt at a time! Receiving instructions from many people at once can be confusing and overwhelming. • One focus at a time! Watching is an excellent form of learning. • One step at a time! Master the basics before trying more difficult variations.

W

WAIT! SEE WHAT HAPPENS.

• Many students with language processing issues require time to respond to prompts. • Before we initiate hand-over-hand assistance, we are interested to see what initiative students will take on their own to engage in a task. • If a student initially rejects materials, or rejects participation in the activity altogether, s/he may come to the activity of their own accord once others are engaged in it. • This is a research project! We are interested to see how students interact with these activities, so we must give them the time and the physical space to do so. If, given the opportunity, their response is minimal or absent, this is not a failure, it's information.