



CASTA

Communication and Socialization through the Arts:
A Multidisciplinary Approach for Students with Autism

Workshop 4
April 29 and May 1, 2009

COLORS IN THE CORNERS

*Although we've called this activity "COLORS IN THE CORNERS," you need not use colors – you can use **shapes, numbers, letters, names**, or whatever else you're working on.*

The idea behind this activity is to find the correct color, in a variety of contexts. Below are some variations.

1. **At the table:** With everyone sitting at a table, lay out four (or, two, or three) color cards on the table. When the teacher says "Red!" all the students point to the red card.
2. **Individual charts:** Give each student their own chart with all of the colors on it. When the teacher holds up the red card, students point to their own red card on their individual chart.
3. **Working Around the Room:** Put the color cards in different corners of the room.
 - **Point** - The teacher goes to a corner and holds up the color card, and says its name – students point to the card.
 - **Walk (or hop, or jump, or slide)** - The teacher goes to a corner and holds up the color card, saying its name. The students say the color (as applicable), point to it, and walk to that corner.
 - **Matching** – Put duplicate cards in the center of the room. Give the students a card, they have to find the matching card in the corner, say the color (as applicable), point to it, and walk to that corner.
 - Try this as a group, individually, or with pairings of higher- and lower-functioning students.
4. **Students lead:** Any of these variations could be led by a student rather than a teacher.

PAINTING ACTIVITIES

EXPLORING THE MEDIA: PART 1

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Flat trays with raised sides, water, paintbrushes, liquid watercolor, white tempera paint

1. **Explore the tray:** How does it feel? Put your hands inside, and outside. Feel the corners. Touch it with your paintbrush.
2. **Water:** The teacher pours a small amount of water on the tray, making tiny puddles in different spots. Students can use brushes to:
 - move puddles or drops of water around
 - join one puddle to another
 - build a bridge from one puddle to another
 - make a new puddle

NOTE: *The water stays IN the tray!*

3. **Liquid watercolor – light color (yellow):** The teacher adds a drop to a puddle of water, using the lightest color, such as yellow.
 - Wait and watch!
 - Take a puddle to the color, or the color to another puddle.
4. **Liquid watercolor – darker color (blue or red):** The teacher adds a drop to a puddle of water, using a darker color, such as blue or red.
 - Wait and watch!
 - Play with it!
5. **White tempera paint:** The teacher adds some to the puddles, at which point the liquid will become opaque.

EXPLORING THE MEDIA: PART 2

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Flat trays with raised sides, paintbrushes, white, red, yellow, and blue tempera paint

1. **White tempera:** The teacher puts white tempera in each student's tray, asking the student what letter or shape they would like the paint to be squirted in.
2. **Explore:** Students explore the paint with their brushes. Prompt them with questions:
 - Can you make an "M"?
 - Can you make a triangle?
 - Can you move it to a corner?

EXPLORING THE MEDIA: PART 2 (cont.)

3. **Add a second color:** Prompt with questions:
 - Which color do you want? Where do you want it?
 - How will you move it around in their tray?
 - What happens when the colors mix?
4. **Table tour!** Everyone stands up and walks around to view others' trays
5. **Repeat:** Repeat steps 3 and 4 with other colors.

RICE PAPER MURAL

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Individual-sized sheets of rice paper (or flattened white coffee filters) with individual trays, OR one large piece of rice paper with newspaper or plastic to go underneath, small containers for paint, paintbrushes, liquid watercolor in two or more colors

1. **Prep:** Put paint in separate containers.
2. **First color:** Students dip their brush, put it on the paper, and WAIT and WATCH.
3. **Next colors:** Students can repeat step 2 with different colors. Put the colors NEXT to each other and see what happens!
4. **Mural:** If using individual sheets of paper, have students glue their sheets, one at a time, on a piece of poster board to create a mural.

FOUND OBJECT BUILDING

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Large piece of flat cardboard (at least the size of a posterboard)
 - Assorted items for building with – anything made of paper, cardboard, wood, fabric, or Styrofoam (no plastic or metal) – paper cups, pieces of cardboard, small boxes, corks, toilet paper rolls, popsicle sticks, wooden beads, pipe cleaners, foam trays or disposable bowls or plates
 - Elmer's glue
1. **Build it:** Take turns gluing items on to the sculpture. Items can be touching one another, on top of one another, attached to one another ... this process could extend over several classes.
 2. **Paint it:** On another day, students can paint the sculpture using tempera paint.

IMPROVISING WITH PITCHES – PENTATONIC SCALES

These activities use “pitched” instruments: resonator bells and Boomwhackers.

Improvising just means making it up as you go.

What Are Pentatonic Scales: A pentatonic scale is a group of five notes (*MUSIC THEORY ALERT: made up of whole steps and minor thirds that includes no semitones or tritones*). Pentatonic scales are used in folk music from around the world.

Why They Are Useful: The pentatonic scale is useful for improvising because all pitch combinations sound generally “good” -- there are no clashing pitches.

“DRONE” IMPROVISATION

In this exercise, you can use resonator bells or boomwhackers for the drone, and resonator bells for the improvising.

1. **Grouping:** one person is the improviser, the others play the drone pitches or other rhythm instruments
2. **Drone players:** The drone/rhythm instruments players keep a steady beat together.
3. **Improviser:** The improviser plays whatever they want on their pentatonic bells.
4. You must match the drone pitches with the corresponding pentatonic scale. A chart is provided below. Each drone gives the music a slightly different “flavor.”

PENTATONIC SCALE	POSSIBLE DRONES
C D E G A C	C-G or D-A or G-D or A-E
C D F G A C	C-G or D-A or F-C or D-G
D E G A B	D-A or E-B or A-E or G-D

RECORDED PENTATONIC IMPROVISATION

Using the “CASTA Pentatonic Improvisation” recording, students improvise using the following pentatonic scale:

C D E G A C

BLUES IMPROVISATION

Using the “CASTA Blues in D” recording, students improvise using the following pentatonic scale:

D F G A C

WARM-UP/OPENING/CLOSING RITUAL

Many types of warm-up or opening rituals work well; here is one that we like.

OPENING RITUAL

1. **Play music:** This works well with music that is uplifting but not too stimulating.
2. **Stand in a circle:** Make sure everyone has both feet on the floor, parallel to each other.
3. **Hands down in center, scoop up:** Together, everyone puts their hands in the center and bends down so the hands are close to the floor. Together, lift hands up until they are above the heads.
4. **Clap, hands together, wiggle down:** Clap hands above your head but leave hands stuck together. With hands together, wiggle the arms down your body, bending your knees.
5. **Repeat Steps 3 and 4 two more times**
6. **Tap knees:** Keep a steady beat to the music by tapping on knees
7. **“Swimming”:** Cross the midline with each arm (one at a time), using a swimming motion
8. **Roll hands:** Roll fists over one another, then do some dancing, or end the activity.

ENDING RITUAL

1. **Repeat STEPS 1-4 from the Opening Ritual**
2. **Arms around:** Everyone comes together in the circle and puts their arms around their neighbor's shoulders.
3. **Arms up, clap hands, move hands straight down**

SIMON IS COOL

For this activity, you can use any music that is instrumental, i.e., without words. We have provided a recording of "Simon is Cool."

1. **Play music:** Play instrumental music on the CD player.
2. **Follow the leader:** The leader moves in various ways, and says what they are doing. Others follow. Action examples are listed below.
 - "Touch your head" (or nose, ears, eyes, chin, cheeks, hair, feet, knees, elbows, shoulders, fingers, arms etc.)
 - "Shake your hands" (or shoulders, head, knees, hips, eyebrows, etc.)
 - "Hands up" (or down, to the side, behind your back, etc.)
 - "Step forward" (or backward, or to the side)
 - "Look in my eyes"
 - "Jump" (or hop on one foot, dance, stand on one foot, walk in place, squat, bend over, etc)
 - "Walk to the corner" (or to middle, or make a line, or stand in a circle, etc.)
3. **Students lead:** Some students may be able to lead the activity, with the others following.