DRAW ME IN

INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS WEEK
MURAL PROJECT

INCLUSIVE
SCHOOLS
NETWORK

MLK
COMMUNITY

Draw Me In! INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS WEEK 2023

As far back as the days of cave drawing, art has been a way for humans to express themselves. Many children begin to communicate through the language of art even before using words. We have often heard, "A picture is worth a thousand words."

Our theme for Inclusive Schools Week 2023 is ***Draw Me In!*** Participating in art provides a pathway to self-discovery, and sharing art opens doors to understanding and respect for different ways of thinking. Do we see the faces of all children and youth drawn into the canvas of our schools and society today?

The need to belong is a basic need of all students and an integral component of effective inclusive schools. To be inclusive implies a fundamental commitment to building relationships among students, families, educators, and the community to support safe and positive learning environments.

Artist and muralist, Kyle Holbrook, founder of Moving the Lives of Kids, has joined with us at the Inclusive Schools Network to share his vision and knowledge of public art as a way to reach and include all kids. As we celebrate Inclusive Schools Week 2023, let us respond—***Draw Me In!***

This five-activity mural project can be drawn on individual canvases or painted on a wall in your school, classroom, or community. The project is designed for all ages, skill levels, and interests. There are no right or wrong answers; the intent of the mural project is to create a visual representation of the 2023 theme for Inclusive Schools Week, ***Draw Me In!***

There are several entry points to the mural project, so a participant can contribute at any stage of the process. Artist Kyle Holbrook from Moving Lives of Kids, MLKmural.com, will provide demonstration video(s) for each step in the process. Students, teachers, families, and community members are also invited to contribute to the mural project.
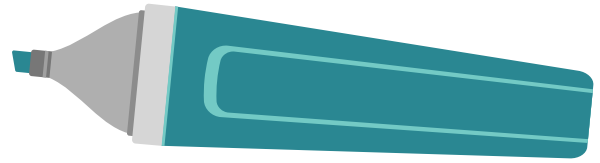
Participating in art provides a pathway to self-discovery, and sharing art opens doors to understanding and respect for different ways of thinking. Schools are encouraged to send samples of their completed murals and student artwork to the Inclusive Schools Network (ISN) at https://inclusiveschools.org to be displayed on the ISN website for viewers around the world to see. Artist Holbrook will create a digital poster representing the images received for Inclusive Schools Week 2023, and the poster will be available to order on the ISN site.

Table of Contents

Activity 1

FREE DRAWING AND STORYTELLING

"Free Drawing and Storytelling" is a great activity that promotes student conversation and interaction and provides students an opportunity to get to know each other better. The intent of this initial activity is to help students feel comfortable drawing and sharing their artwork with their peers.

In a sketchbook or on paper, each student creates an image that tells a story about a robot. Students may use pencil, pen or colored pencils. Direct students to ask themselves questions about their robot. Who is this robot? Is it a sad or happy robot and why? What does this robot do for a living? Does it have friends and family?

Encourage students to use their imagination and use images only to draw their robot story–no words or typography in their artwork. Provide an opportunity for students to mingle with other classmates during the drawing activity to get to know each other better and share information about their robot and themselves–where they were born, interests and hobbies, favorite book or movie, etc.

When drawings are complete, invite students to share their robot image to the class– what is their robot saying and what does it mean to them. Encourage classmates to ask "why" questions about the drawings in order to better understand the different robots and the artists who drew them.

Participating in art provides a pathway to self-discovery, and sharing art opens doors to understanding and respect for different ways of thinking. Some students may draw simple shapes or abstract images; everyone's contribution is important!

After each student has shared their robot, gather students into groups ensuring diversity in terms of background and abilities. Ask the members of the group to create a collaborative story about their robots. Each student contributes a sentence or two in sequence to the story and writes it on their drawing.

Encourage students to be creative and supportive of one another's ideas. If a child is hesitant, offer prompts or suggestions, so every child has an opportunity to contribute. Provide assistance with writing when needed but ask students to take the lead in storytelling reminding them that the story belongs to everyone in the group and each person's contribution makes the story richer and more interesting.

Once the story is complete, ask students to read it aloud or designate a reader to share their story. Invite students to think about how they can tell their collective story in a mural that represents the contributions of all members of their group.

Discussion Questions

How did you feel when everyone contributed to the story?

Did everyone's ideas and perspectives matter? Why or why not? How did working together make the story better?

| Did you learn anything new or interesting from someone else's contribution? How does this art activity encourage all members of the class to participate? How can we apply the same principles of working together in our everyday lives? |
| --- |
| |

This free drawing and storytelling activity encourages student participation, collaboration, respect for diverse perspectives, and fosters healthy relationships that promote safe and supportive learning environments in our schools.

Mural Activity 1

SITE PREPARATION

If students are painting a public mural in the school or community rather than on an individual canvas, the first step for the teacher or administrator is to secure the necessary permissions. Students and participants then work together to beautify the mural location as much as possible.

Thoroughly sweep and clean the immediate area of the mural. Discard litter and trash in a trash receptacle. Seal any major cracks in the wall surface and remove any plants growing in cracks at the base of the wall. Scrub the wall with water and brushes and allow it to dry completely before applying paint. For those using canvases or any other substrate other than a wall, make sure all dust and smudges are removed, and the surface is ready to be painted.
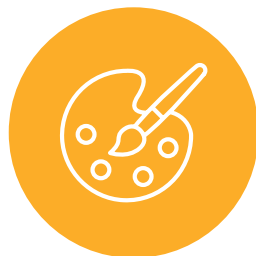
Activity 2

PATTERN EXERCISE

Students divide their paper into four sections and draw four distinct patterns using a pen. Encourage them to create interesting and repeating shapes and use equal amounts of black and white. This step should take students about ten minutes for each space.

Younger students may draw different basic shapes such as circles, squares, diamonds, triangles or handprints in each space. Words and symbols related to "Draw Me In!" or inclusive schools may also be used and repeated to create a pattern.

Promoting effective inclusive schools involves engaging students of all ages in activities that encourage collaboration, creativity, and respect for diverse perspectives. Students learn how using simple shapes that produce a pattern can generate art–an important step in creating a community mural.

Here are some pattern exercises that can be done with students of all ages.
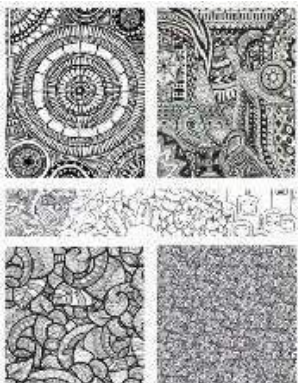
PATTERN SEQUENCING

Create a sequence of patterns using different shapes, colors, or numbers. Ask students to continue the pattern by identifying and adding the next element. This exercise enhances critical thinking, observation skills, and logical reasoning.

COLLABORATIVE ART

Divide students into small groups and provide each group with a large sheet of paper or a canvas. Ask them to create an artwork together, incorporating diverse ideas and styles. This activity encourages teamwork, cooperation, and appreciation for different artistic expressions.

CULTURAL PATTERN EXPLORATION

Choose a theme related to cultural diversity, such as traditional patterns from different countries. Provide materials like colored pencils, crayons, markers, and paper. Ask students to create their own designs inspired by these patterns. Encourage discussion about the significance of the patterns in different cultures to foster cultural understanding and appreciation.

STORYTELLING WITH PATTERNS

Give students a set of picture cards with different patterns, colors, or shapes. Ask them to create a story by arranging the cards in a specific order. This activity promotes imagination, narrative skills, and the ability to recognize and communicate patterns.

Discussion Questions

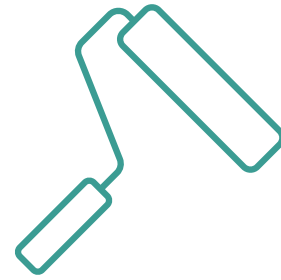**What pattern exercise works well for you?**

What feeling or emotion does each of your patterns create?

Does the pattern have direction? Balance? High contrast or low contrast?

Mural Activity 2

PRIMING

Priming is messy! Send appropriate communication home with students in advance of priming activity to secure necessary permissions/releases for this activity. Students will likely get paint on their clothes, so advise them to wear suitable clothes in case of paint stains and protective clothing to avoid excessive paint on their skin. Use water-based paint and suggest students wear a hat, goggles, and gloves when painting.

Lay out materials first each day before beginning to prime the surface. Place drop cloths as close to the wall as possible and supplies up against the wall to avoid tripping or spilling any buckets of paint when stepping away from the wall. Clean up spills immediately and run water over the area to avoid the paint drying and staining the ground or surface. Every student artist should have a paint roller or a 4" brush.

Place paint trays up against the wall on top of the drop cloths. Start at the top of the surface and make sure you cover the top lip thoroughly to seal the mural edge. Work your way down making sure the wall is completely covered. Use a brush to touch up any cracks or small holes. The wall should have an even and thick coat of all-white primer.

At the end of each day's work, students wrap their rollers in plastic to keep the paint from drying overnight. Brushes must be thoroughly rinsed of paint and laid flat to dry. Caution students to not let paint dry on their brushes and to avoid leaving their brushes in water.

PRIMING A WALL

Prepare the area by clearing the wall of any obstacles, such as furniture or decorations. Cover the floor and surrounding areas with drop cloths or plastic sheets to protect from damage.

Clean the wall:

Use a damp cloth or sponge to wipe down the wall and remove any dirt, dust, or grease. If there are stains or marks, you may need to use a mild detergent solution.

Repair and patch:

Inspect the wall for any cracks, holes, or uneven surfaces. Fill in these imperfections with spackling compound or a similar product. Smooth the patched areas with sandpaper once they are dry.

Protect trim and edges:

Apply painter's tape along the edges of any trim, windows, or other areas you want to protect from paint. This will ensure clean lines and prevent accidental smudges.

Prime the wall:

Choose a high-quality primer suitable for your wall surface to ensure the longevity of the artwork. Use a roller or paintbrush to apply an even coat of primer to the wall. Follow the manufacturer's instructions regarding drying time and additional coats, if necessary.

Let the surface dry:

Allow the primer to dry completely before proceeding with painting. The drying time can vary based on the product used, so refer to the instructions.

For students using a canvas or another surface other than a wall, use gesso, white paint or primer to provide a painted opaque layer. You do not want the canvas texture to be prevalent; a smooth surface created by a thick layer of paint is preferable.

Activity 3

CREATE ONE PATTERN

Students decide what pattern(s) will be used to create their mural from their previous Activity 2 - Pattern Exercise. Multiple patterns may be selected, or everyone can paint their own pattern to collectively create one background. Please note this is the painted version of Activity 2, so artists will now use orange paint instead of a black pen.

All students can use smaller brushes (1" or smaller) holding the brushes as they would hold a pencil or pen. Smaller brushes are preferable for this activity to allow detail and variations of line. Students may use one pattern or all of their previously drawn patterns. They may create new patterns based on what they learned in the pattern exercise activity practicing on canvas paper before painting on the wall to become familiar with the various brushes.

Remember to adapt the complexity and the materials of the exercises according to the age and developmental level of the students. Encourage teamwork and emphasize the value of diverse perspectives to create a safe and inclusive environment, so all students feel respected and valued for their contributions to the project.

Mural Activity 3

ORANGE "UNDERPAINTING"

MLK Mural utilizes a painting technique referred to as orange "underpainting"—a fun way for artists to get creative and let loose their artistic skills. Similar to the earlier patterning exercise done in a sketchbook, students will create orange paint patterns on top of the white primer.

Please note when the mural is completed, there will be semi-transparent areas on the mural that will reveal this patterned layer underneath. This gives the mural a feeling of motion, perspective and multiple layers to relate to the theme of "Draw Me In!" Much of the pattern will be covered by the mural text and imagery, but when anyone comes close, they will see the "underpainted" patterns.
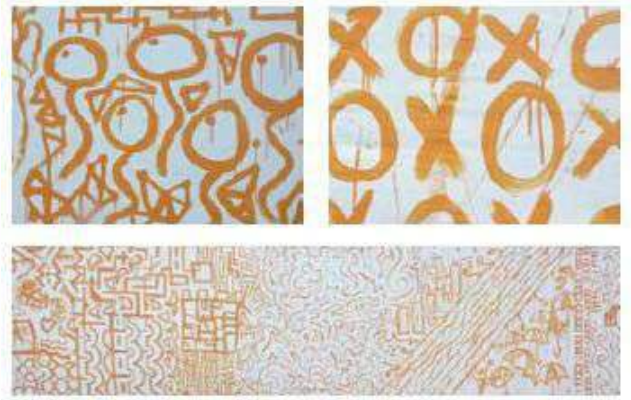
Remember to lay drop cloths against the wall. Prepare several buckets of water in case of any spills. Place all materials up against the wall, so no one trips when stepping back from the wall to see what they are painting. Use 1" brushes or larger if the mural wall is large. You want your paint consistency to be 80% paint to 20% water, so the paint flows like a pen or marker.

Begin painting the selected patterns with orange paint. The objective is to cover approximately 50% of the wall with orange. Try straight-line patterns and rounded-line patterns with lots of variety. Blend the patterns together as much as possible. Avoid excessive drips and runs; some runs will happen and that's just part of painting.

Remember many artists prefer some drips. Stress the value of individual drawing preferences and design as students work together on their mural for Inclusive Schools Week 2023, "Draw Me In!"

After the patterns are painted, students may add messages to any extra space remaining on their mural. Instruct the students to think of one word or a brief comment about how schools, students, families, or the community can "draw in" or include all students for success and safe and supportive learning environments.

Activity 4

COLOR

"Color Mosaic" is another activity that uses different colors to create a collaborative art project that allows children of all ages to not only work together to appreciate diversity, but also to create visually stunning artwork. If students are not using paint, here are the needed materials:

- Large poster board or the canvas that students have already done from their pattern exercises in "Activity 2 – Pattern Exercise"
- Assorted colored paper or construction paper in various shades
- Scissors
- Glue sticks or tape
- Markers or crayons

PREPARE THE MATERIALS

Cut the colored papers into various shapes (squares, rectangles, triangles, circles, etc.) and different sizes. Ensure you have a wide range of colors to represent diversity around the world.

INTRODUCE THE ACTIVITY

Gather the children and explain that they will be working collaboratively to create a color mosaic, a type of artwork to represent unity and inclusivity. Emphasize the importance of appreciating and celebrating the uniqueness of each color in the mosaic and how they come together to form a beautiful whole.

SET THE CANVAS

Place the large poster board or canvas in a central location where all the students can easily reach it. This will be the base for the artwork.

BEGIN THE MOSAIC

Instruct the students to select their favorite colored paper shapes. They should arrange and glue or tape their chosen shapes onto the canvas, creating a colorful mosaic pattern. Encourage them to overlap shapes, mix colors, and explore different arrangements.

COLLABORATE AND SHARE

Encourage the class to interact and collaborate with other classmates during the activity. They can exchange shapes, share ideas, and work together to create a harmonious design and promote communication, cooperation, and appreciation for different perspectives.

DISCUSS INCLUSIVITY

Take breaks during the activity and encourage students to share their thoughts about respecting differences and effective inclusion. Prompt questions like:
- How do the different colors represent different people or cultures?
- What can we learn from working together?

PERSONAL TOUCH

Provide markers or crayons for students to add their personal touch to the artwork. They may draw symbols, write positive messages, or add illustrations that represent safe and supportive learning environments.

DISPLAY AND REFLECTION

Once the artwork is complete, find a prominent place to display it in the classroom or school. Gather the class together to reflect on the activity and discuss what they learned through the creative process.

By engaging students of all ages in this activity, educators provide an opportunity for meaningful discussions about the importance of collaboration and appreciating differences and promote a sense of belonging within their classroom and school.

Mural Activity 4

SHAPES/COLOR WASHES

Creating shapes using thin "color washes" is another technique used in mural art. Although each mural is different, blocking in major shapes from the very beginning helps to construct the visual image.

Place drop cloths and several buckets of water up against the wall. All materials should always be placed up against the wall for safety. Carefully plan major shapes before using tape or brushes. Students select a space that will be their part of the overall mural project. If the students are doing individual canvas murals, they can use either tape or brushes to block off the shapes.

Often creating large abstract geometric shapes can create a dynamic use of space. Using tape the students will create diverse shapes. This activity promotes collaboration and teamwork as one side of the tape will be their individual design and their classmate's will be on the other side.

The entire mural will illustrate the "Draw Me In!" theme. Students take turns putting down a 5" length of tape to collaboratively create their shapes. If when stepping back and discussing their work the students collectively decide to change the shape, this is a perfect example of a key component of this activity–working together!

Shapes should be large–typically, one per student. Create the shapes with tape or a brush. Each color should be a 60:40 ratio of paint to water to ensure transparency of the paint. Use large 4" brushes and make sure the colors don't run into each other. Caution students to paint slowly!

Fill in large washes of color taking time on each section as the paint will run and requires constant strokes to ensure the paint stays within each shape. It is most important to make sure that the edges where the different colors meet don't mix together. Use a balanced mix of cool colors, warm colors, dark and light colors when viewed from a distance.

Keep the paint thin enough to see the pattern underneath but not drip. Some drips will happen. When paint drips, use wet rags, or wet paper towels to remove--no big deal!
Use bright and saturated colors, and do not mix colors.

Change the water frequently to avoid muddy colored water infecting your paint vibrancy. Do not let paint dry on brushes, as that will destroy the brushes.

Thoroughly clean brushes when you are finished and avoid leaving brushes in water too long. Rinse brushes clean and let them lay flat to dry. Everyone should clean up together to further the collaborative goals of the project.

Engaging students of all ages in this "Shapes/Color Washes" activity, promotes a sense of belonging and also provides another opportunity for meaningful discussions about inclusion and appreciating differences.

Activity 5

TYPOGRAPHY EXERCISE

Choose an often-used term such as belonging, community, all, everyone, or another word or phrase related to the theme for Inclusive Schools Week. Use typography, an art form that arranges type/print in words to represent the message of a word or phrase on paper. Create illustrations from the letterforms. Limit yourself to type, and avoid introducing other graphical elements.

After students have designed their piece, they can introduce color. Allow time during this activity to discuss what else needs to be done to ensure that schools continue to improve in their efforts to successfully educate all students. Consider the following discussion questions:

- How is designing with typography different from designing with patterns, colors, and shapes?
- How does the way the type is designed help tell the story behind the word(s)?
- How did you use color to add meaning to your composition?
- What kind of typeface did you use and why?

Creating a typography project that promotes "drawing" or bringing all students together can be a fun and engaging activity. Typography involves designing and arranging text in visually appealing ways. Here's a step-by-step guide on how to make a typography project that promotes all students working together.

INTRODUCTION

The need to belong is a basic need of all students and an integral component of safe, supportive, and positive learning environments. Explain that their typography project will focus on visually representing these values in their school and community.

BRAINSTORM KEYWORDS

Encourage students to brainstorm and compile a list of words that they associate with belonging, support, and acceptance. These keywords might include words like unity, respect, all, and empathy. Students have already begun thinking about these concepts of "Draw Me In!" since their first activity, and now they have a mural with geometric shapes painted over their underpaintings. The messages and theme should be visible.

Next, students decide on one word or phrase to represent the theme of 'Draw Me In!" Remember to be inclusive implies a fundamental commitment to building relationships among students, families, educators, and the community to support safe and positive learning environments.

VISUAL RESEARCH

Provide students with resources such as books, magazines, or websites that showcase different typography styles and examples. Allow them to explore and gather ideas/ inspiration for their project. They can analyze fonts, layouts, styles and colors that they find visually appealing and aligned with the theme of inclusivity.

DESIGN PLANNING

Ask students to sketch and plan their typography designs on paper before painting. They should consider the layout, font choices, color schemes, and any additional visual elements they want to incorporate.

TYPOGRAPHY COMPOSITION

Instruct students to create their typography composition using digital paint and the techniques they learned during the pattern activity. They can experiment with different fonts and font sizes to emphasize certain words or concepts related to inclusivity.
Encourage them to play with colors and layout to create visually appealing designs that reflect the theme.

VISUAL ELEMENTS

Students can enhance their typography designs by incorporating relevant visual elements that represent inclusion including symbols, icons, or illustrations that depict diversity, unity, or acceptance. They can also use inclusive imagery like different skin tones, hairstyles, or cultural symbols.

REFLECTION AND EXPLANATION

Once the typography designs are complete, ask students to reflect on their choices and explain the meaning behind their designs. Encourage them to discuss how their typography and why they made certain design decisions.

Engaging students in this typography project encourages creativity, critical thinking, and visual communication skills and provides students with an opportunity to express their understanding and appreciation of effective inclusive practices through visual design.

Mural Painting Activity 5

TYPOGRAPHY

After a discussion of the questions from the typography exercise and the significance of typography to foster cultural understanding and appreciation, students paint their selected design inside their shape created in Activity 4.

Remind students to crop off part of the typography to fit inside their shape to create depth or to center their message. Students may use their design done on paper to place on the mural or canvas. Please note each step of the process—pattern, shape, color, and any techniques like washes and using white, may be incorporated along with the typography.