



Preparing the workspace

We all work best in a space that meets our needs. Art students are no exception. When students are comfortable in their space, appropriately situated toward their work and their neighbors, and enjoy ready access to their tools, they may be able to create more happily and successfully. These strategies can help you provide that setting for all your students.

Setting up students for artistic success

The versatile slantboard

A slantboard can be more functional than a traditional tabletop surface for a variety of student needs. It can bring the work surface closer to the student's vision and within physical access. It also allows paint to drip in a more controlled manner. Work can be secured to the slantboard so it doesn't move and may not need to be removed until dry.

Depending on their needs, students can create work in the slanted position or a more upright one. For those who become anxious when seated traditionally with peers, the slantboard lets them sit elsewhere in the classroom, possibly in a beanbag chair or lying prone on the floor.



All tools are for all students

When using adapted materials in the classroom, integrate them into all the options available to all the students rather than setting aside a selective set of materials for only one or a few students. When you normalize all the art materials in this way, you reduce any stigma and resistance to using "special tools." If you have buckets or baskets of art materials on student tables, mix adapted and traditional tools together. As long as the needed specialized tools are available to the students who require them, make clear that anyone is free to try any tool. Many students find loop scissors less fatiguing than traditional scissors once they use them!

Masking tape helps your workspace work

- Fasten art to the table or slantboard with tape. If the tape is really sticky, de-stick it a bit by quickly pushing it onto art apron and lifting off a few times. You want just enough stick to hold the paper in place, not to tear it.
- Put one or two rolled pieces of tape under containers of paint, paint palettes, or water dishes. This keeps the containers from sliding away as the student accesses the materials.
- For students who drop art tools on the floor and then can't reach them, tape a length of yarn to the scissors and the table. Students with visual challenges may benefit from this strategy as well.
- Some students need boundaries between their workspace and that of the students next to them. Mark off the student's space with masking tape, and remind them to keep their art and their hands within it.



A table that fits its users' needs

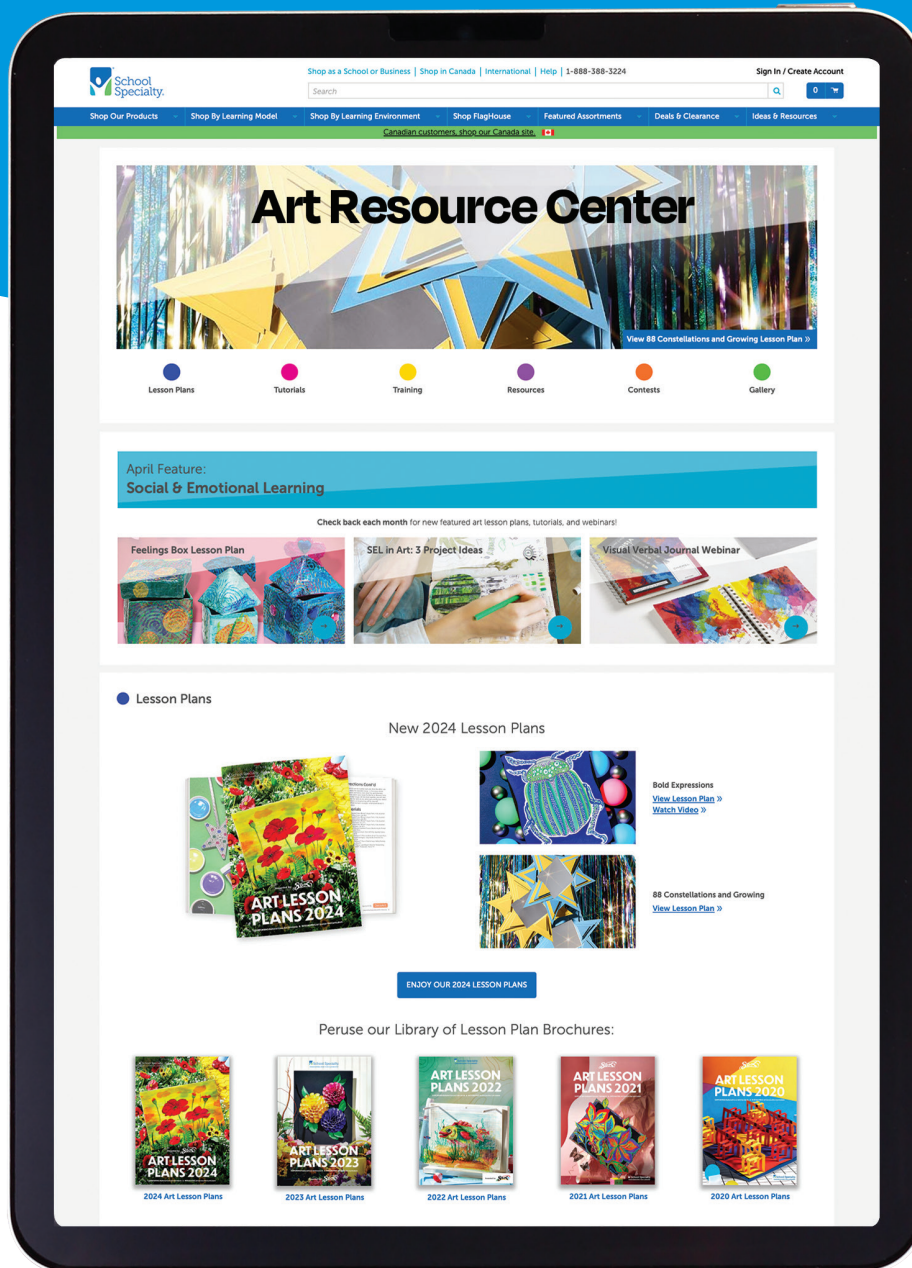
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A more rewarding workspace starts here

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