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JFK CENTER WEBINAR

TEACHING ARTISTS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE THE SPECIAL
EDUCATION RESIDENCY

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>> LISA DAMICO: Hello everyone and welcome to What You Need to Know Before the Special Education Residency. I'm Lisa Damico, your moderator and Webinar organizer. Today's Webinar is part of a monthly Webinar series that comes of the Office of VSA and Accessibility at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. This series addresses topics related to arts, disability, and education.

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Before we get started, let's take a moment to ensure that everyone is ready and familiar with the GoToWebinar control panel that you should see on the right side of your screen.

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You have the ability to submit questions using the chat pane located near the bottom of the control panel. Your questions will come directly to me and during the designated question and answer time at the end of the presentation, I'll relay them to our presenters.

I want to emphasize that following the presentation I will send out a follow-up email with a link to the recording of today's presentation, a copy of the PowerPoint, some handouts that Stephen has prepared, and a copy of the transcript. This means you don't need to worry about frantically taking notes during the presentation.

Before I turn it over to our presenters, I'd like to let you know about next month's Webinar -Demystifying Individualized Education Plans (IEP): An Introduction to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act & IEPs with Jennifer Zielinski, the Program Coordinator and Parent Education Coordinator at Idaho Parents Unlimited and Heather Kirk Skinner, the Arts Coordinator and Parent Educator at Idaho Parents Unlimited on Tuesday, September 17 from 3-4 PM Washington DC time.

And with that I would like to introduce you to today's presenter Stephen Yaffe. So Stephen, I'll turn it over to you. Are you ready, Stephen?

>> STEPHEN YAFFE: Yeah, I'm just waiting for that message to come up. Can you see my screen?

>> LISA DAMICO: I see your screen now, yes.

>> STEPHEN YAFFE: All right. Well, let me remove this so that that's all everybody's seeing.

Okay. Welcome. And thank you all for joining on this Webinar in the summer, when you probably would all rather be at the beach. Actually, for all I know, you may be there, and if you are, please don't write in because it's only going to make me very jealous. My name is Stephen Yaffe, and I'm very happy to be presenting this VSA Webinar, what you need to know before the special education residency. That would be

in self contained, as well as in inclusion settings. Two quick notes. As we proceed, think of the purple slides you'll see as sort of soliloquies, comments from the side, and the second note, this Webinar is primarily directed for TAs. As such, it has implications, of course, for arts administrators, school administrators, teachers and school staff. It also has important implications for TAs and others working with special populations in after-school settings, on school premises or not. Some of those applications discussed may have to be adapted.

So what's the deal? What's at stake? Why now? Teaching artists are increasingly working with special needs learners. There are a number of reasons for this. Chief among them are more special needs learners are being mainstreamed. More students are being diagnosed as special learners. More arts education organizations are reaching out to students on the special ed spectrum, in inclusion and self-contained settings.

>> LISA DAMICO: Stephen, I'm going to jump in really fast. Would it be possible for you to use a full screen view of your PowerPoint?

>> STEPHEN YAFFE: Let's see.

>> LISA DAMICO: If you go up to slide show. Go to slide show about five over, and then view slide show. There you go. Great. Much better. Thank you.

>> STEPHEN YAFFE: Sorry about that, guys.

All right. Now that I'm on here, how am I advancing this?

>> LISA DAMICO: You'll just click on the actual screen.

>> STEPHEN YAFFE: Okay. Let me get up to where we were. Sorry about that.

Thanks for the heads up.

>> LISA DAMICO: Sure.

>> STEPHEN YAFFE: Second point. Teaching artists are not always getting the professional development they need in working with special needs populations. Now, this is beginning to change, but there's much to be done, especially in terms of deepening TAs' understanding about the disabilities they may be working with and the teaching approaches that might be very helpful and, this VSA Webinar series is clearly responding to that need.

Teaching artists working on a high level with special needs populations are in increasing demand. Please keep this in mind as we go through this today. We'll come back to it in more detail later. Teaching artists work with special education students is often based on a general education model. This is actually more habit than intent, and it's very often unconscious, which is all the more reason to talk about disconnects explicitly and bring to conscious awareness what may inadvertently be getting in the way of providing high-quality work and maximizing students' success, because when those obstacles are removed, that success is impressive. Big things can happen. Things that you will find absolutely inspiring. I mean, I saw a group of kids this past spring all on the lower end of the autism spectrum, members of an iPad band, play opera, jazz and a few things in between flawlessly. Arts in special education work should not be based on a general education model.

The special ed context calls for different ways of thinking and planning and partnering and implementing. A different model is called for. And it starts with the pre-residency planning meeting.

In a special education residency, it's very important to know about the students you'll be working with. And the pre-residency planning meeting is a time to bring the TA together with all the classroom teachers to do just that. It's a time to raise some key questions, the answers to which you must have before you plan your unit in order to plan your unit. What do you want to find out?

What's the population or populations you'll be working with? What are their disabilities? What are their capacities of these particular students? For example, if you're working with kids on the autism spectrum that, information in itself doesn't tell you much because well, it's a spectrum. There's a wide range. On the low end, it might mean your class of 16-year-olds is reading on a beginner's level with functional capacity way below their chronological years and minimally verbal.

On the high end it might mean you're going to have extremely verbal kids, veracious who might mean more on subjects than you. And if you're going to have a classroom with kids on the spectrum, chances are very good they'll be within a range in that class. Ascertain what that range is. Of course, if you're working in an inclusion class, a setting which contains general and special education students together, there will definitely be a range you'll want to find out about.

I just want to stop for a second and talk about the difference between disability and capacity.

Disability is the diagnosis. Autism is a diagnosis. Cerebral palsy is a diagnosis, as are Down's syndrome, blindness or visual impairment, deaf or hard of hearing, PTSD, the list goes on.

The diagnosis tells you what a student has, not what he or she can do. Those deaf students you're going to have, they all have cochlear implants, and if you wear a wireless and stay within range, they'll hear everything you say, or, the deaf students you're going to have don't have cochlear implants, but you'll have an ASL, an American Sign Language interpreter with you, at all times. Remember to talk directly to the kids when addressing them, not the interpreter.

Or, your kids that you're going to have, they're all in wheelchairs or use walkers. They may move slowly, but their minds are clear and fast. Two of them can't hold pens and if you're thinking of drawing a painting, they're going to need adaptive devices.

Okay. In these examples, I purposely pair capacity with need and pedagogical suggestions. In the pre-planning meeting, however, these connections cannot be made as readily or specifically.

When teachers tell you about capacity at the meeting, take the information in on at least two levels. Let it build a context for you, and let it lead to more questions about what you may need to do to maximize student success, participation, engagement and access.

Okay. Time for a caveat. Use the information you receive about capacity to help you understand the context, to provide you a starting point, not to lid possibility. Just because that class of 16-year-olds is reading on a beginner's level doesn't mean they can't write. I've seen that actual class. A group of teenagers with severe cognitive impairments compose sometimes sunning metaphors, similes and verses and perform them at a school poetry slam. For those of you teaching artists out there who don't want to ask yourself about disabilities and capacity beforehand for fear of what you're going to do, I say this, you're absolutely right in believing the arts can reveal previously unknown and unsuspected capacity. This, in fact, is particularly true with special needs students. But you're not knowing those, quote unquote, known capacities beforehand makes you fly blind. If you don't have that information, you're in a land of assumption, and that will actually limit your capacity to target meaningful, achievable objectives, and it will greatly limit your understanding of how you can best help those students gain access, achieve fuller engagement and maximum success.

So, kids with very low cognitive function, like those teenage writers I just spoke about, are by definition not going to be engaging in higher order thinking skills, right?

No. That's exactly what they did in that poetry residency. What are metaphor and simile, if not finding points of commonality between seemingly similar things. Analogy, comparison, and that thing that sits on the very high end of thinking skills, synthesis. Who's limiting possibilities? These are doors opening. And it happened in that residency because the right scaffolding and pedagogical approaches were devised based on the kids' capacities. A lot of visuals, images, pictures, a lot of repetition, a lot of prompts and scribing, when necessary, what was orally composed. This was all about possibility. This is all about more, which brings us back to that pre-residency planning meeting.

What are some of those student learning needs and how might they best be met? Here are some areas you might want to consider. And remember, this is not an exhaustive list, and these items coming up are not necessarily in order of importance. Consistency, routine, comfort zone. Some students are really thrown by change. If that's the case for those you'll be working with, what might that mean for you?

If you were planning to work in the auditorium, will moving out of the classroom cause a problem? If you have to re-arrange part or all of the classroom, is that going to be an issue? If the students need to know what's coming next, should you always post a visible agenda and refer to it as you move through each session?

Something that can be related to this, but is also a stand-alone entity is transitioning. Do the students have a problem moving from one thing to the next? Especially from one activity to another? If so, how do the teachers transition the kids? How do they bridge? Can you borrow from this?

Is pacing an issue? How slow? How fast should you go? Chunking. To what extent, if any, should information and/or tasks be broken down into small manageable chunks or steps, and how small is appropriate?

What are preferred or stronger learning modalities? Visual, verbal, kinesthetic, small group, whole group, no group?

Behavior. This can be as simple a thing as ascertaining what, if any, students not to pair up, to know about the possibility or likelihood of emotional outbursts, how they're generally dealt with, and very importantly, if there are any warning signs.

Are there trigger points? That is anything that might cause an emotional outburst, or a child to shut down, or increased stress or discomfort? Is there, for example, hypersensitivity to being touched, or handling certain materials, or textures or light, sound? Are there allergies that might put a child at risk to highlighters and markers, to any paints you might be thinking of using, or fabrics you might want a costume in.

Material alerts are much, much better in advance.

Okay. It's a lot of questions, it's a lot of areas. Just one more to go.

Are there accommodations or adaptations, especially physical ones that may need to be made?

For example, are some students going to need a special grip for that paint brush?

Things like that. You always want to know before you start planning your unit what, if any, adaptive materials or devices may be needed.

Okay. It's time for caveat number 2, also known as a note to the potentially overwhelmed. Because this is a lot of information, and I can see you, and some of your eyes are glazed over from all that.

All right. I really can't. I'm just kidding. But here's the caveat. You may not get to all these questions and areas, but if they're on your list, they're already in your head, and that makes you more sensitive to them as you hear about student capacity. You'll know what to ask when you need to, and what, if anything, you may need to follow up on with an E-mail. There's also another way to get at some of this, and we'll get to that later.

Also, there's what to ascertain at the pre-residency planning meeting, this emerging protocol. It's not a checklist. It's a tool. Use it to help you prepare, to focus, and add to it as you see fit. If you use it as a checklist at the meeting, you might be too focused on what to cross out and what's still left than on what's happening in the moment. And you know things are going to come up you could never have thought of that are going to need your attention.

So, what else do you need to know before the special ed residency? Here's a new category. What, if any, related services are your special needs students receiving and when are they being provided? Related services, sometimes called support services, include occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech/language therapy, counseling. If you're working on a play or spoken word unit and one or some of your students are receiving speech therapy, it would be good for the speech therapist to know about your residency. But don't assume he or she does or will. The same goes for the OT and the PT who may be working with your kids in dance or movement or visual art or drumming classes. But this is not just a matter of what related service providers can learn from your work, like new and viable entry points or unknown capacities revealed to the arts. There are many potential benefits to you, like further information about the students, or new and viable approaches, new partnerships, and deeper roots for your residency at the school. There are lots of good reasons to reach out to related service providers. And then again, they may be too busy to get involved, or simply not that interested in what you're doing.

But here's the thing. The chances are reasonably good that what they're doing is going to impact on your work. If a related service provider is scheduled to be with any of your students when you are, he or she is either going to pull them out or push them to your class. If he pushes in, he's either going to watch you teach or work to the side. And working to the side can be disruptive for your group, and for those kids working to the side. Pretty disruptive of their arts learning and your planning. The disruptions and interruptions of pulling out are pretty obvious. So the sooner you can ascertain if service providers will be working with any of your students when you are, the sooner you can reach out to them and ask if they can push in and watch or push in and participate. There will likely be less of a chance of them rescheduling because in most districts their timetables are set for the year.

New topic. Now you're ready for scheduling. Yep. I put it down at the end of the list. That's because scheduling for the special ed residency should be a function of student capacity and need. You don't want to start with it. You want to arrive at it. It's part of the discussion regarding what will best make this residency and your work in it as strong as it possibly can be. There's a tendency in arts education residency planning to get schedule and logistics first. Get to the students first. Let everything else fall into place around that. This is especially true in a special ed residency. As an assistant principal once told me, these kids need all the supports they can get.

So back to the question. What's the best schedule?

Okay. Class length. Can classes be the usual 45 minutes? Or might attention span dictate a shorter venue?

Class frequency. Is student retention low? Is there strong need for consistency? If so, what might make for undue hiatus. You were planning to start the residency on the 10th, but that's two weeks before vacation. You'll start only to have to start again. You were planning to do 16 sessions once a week, but a whole week may be too long a break. Perhaps it's better to do eight sessions twice a week. Another thing to factor into scheduling is testing. Look, most of us are probably painfully aware the havoc it can wreak on the residency, but in special ed conflict, there may be unanticipated

effects. You may have some students who won't be taking standardized tests and you can have other students on standardized assessment, which basically means that on test dates, you may have some but not all of your class. And those test dates are likely going to be later in the year, just when you need to whole class to rehearse for that end performance or ready for that final art exhibition. There may be absolutely nothing you can do about scheduling around test dates, but having this information up front and who's on standardized and who's on alternate can better prepare you. Otherwise, those surprises are going to hit you in late spring when there's less time to counter them. Something else you may have no control over is the time of day your classes are scheduled. If you have a session immediately following lunch, find out how, if at all, that might affect your students' energy, attention, mood. If you have a session first period or last period, ascertain how much actual teaching time that's going to leave. This will enable you to plan for truncated sessions, transitions out of interrupted morning announcements, or structure possible closures before the hullabaloo of dismissal. This next item on the list, something I've learned the hard way, and I really wish someone had given me a heads up about it. Don't assume the class you're teaching is an ongoing one. In some situations, classes may actually be mixed together by the school for an arts residency. There can be good reasons for this, and there can be questionable ones. We won't get into the reasons here. The point is, we may have a group of students who don't know each other, who have never worked together and won't again until the next time you come back. If, indeed, you will have a combined class or classes, find out what kind. Possibilities include one or more self-contained special ed classes brought together, or self-contained special ed class mixed with a general ed one. This ladder is not to be confused with the true inclusion class, which is ongoing, preexisting and composed of general and special ed students. I'm talking about a class that may have been inclusioned for your residency. The populations may be leery with one another. Their teachers may have never worked together before. Honestly, the chances of you working with ongoing classes are much higher than those combined or clumped, but it does happen, and in some buildings it may be more rule than exception. Obviously classes combined for your residency bring with them their own self problems, complications and needs. You'll have to ascertain in the pre-planning.

Last thing, logistics. It's pretty self-explanatory and you know better what your needs are in that regard so I'm not going to talk about finding out where you can store supplies or if there's a sink in the room. You know what you have to ask.

Who should be at that pre-planning meeting? It's essential that all the teachers from all your classes be there. Beyond the obvious reasons, it sets a tone of collaboration and respect and it puts a wealth of knowledge at the table. This can benefit you greatly. As teachers talk about problems and share solutions and ideas. It's also recommended a school and arts administrator if you're a TA working for an arts organization, as opposed to your own, be present as well. Sometimes things come up that can only be addressed upstairs. Having administrators at the table increases the possibility problems can be solved right then and there. It also creates a sense of institutional support. There's another means, not instead of, but as well as a pre-residency planning meeting, to get vital information. I alluded to it earlier.

Pre-residency observation, great way to get real world knowledge and information. You'll see transitioning in action. You'll see pedagogical approaches and preferred or stronger learning modalities. You may see behavior problems and how they're dealt with. You'll definitely see the kids in their natural habitat. I'm just going to scroll through

these because they're pretty self-explanatory. There's a handout of this in its entirety on one sheet that will be available to you after the Webinar.

The same goes for the things to ascertain at the pre-residency planning meeting protocol.

The teachers you observe may be models of excellence in these areas, and they may not be. So take in what you see and ask yourself, what works? What doesn't? And why, if you know. You may know. You may not. Questions will form in your mind about that and other things that will help you get greater clarity. Ask those questions. In the best of all worlds, you'll have access to the teachers on site after your observation and -- or you can E-mail or telephone if, of course, the teachers are open to that.

Some dos and don'ts. In the observation, don't drop into a class for ten minutes. That's only going to give you a snapshot, little chance to watch those transitions we talked about. Or see lesson development. You don't have to -- sorry. If you can't come in at the beginning of a class, try to find out the objectives for it beforehand so you know what you're watching within the context of its intentions.

You don't have to and you probably won't be able to see all of your classes, but observe a few. Be selective, and definitely go to the one or ones that feel the most problematic or personally challenging.

All right. There's something hanging in the air. For some, possibly many of you, and it goes like this. Observation and post-observation sound great, but they're not in the structure of the art organizations I work for. In fact, the pre-residency planning meeting, or at least one with all the teachers in attendance, may not be in that model either. Part of this has to do with that dissonance I mentioned before about having special education work following inadvertently and unconsciously general ed paradigms.

Working the special ed populations requires getting the information outlined above before your residency begins so we can plan appropriately, so you can target meaningful and achievable objectives and figure out how best they can be obtained.

What gives you the best chance of succeeding gives your students their best chance of succeeding.

If your art organizations don't have those venues in place and you think they should, suggest them. Even if it's just a pilot with you, and see the difference in the quality of your work and your students' learning. But here's another thing. If you believe that getting that information is necessary, and that these are strong, viable, meaningful ways of obtaining it, consider doing them as an investment. It will make you better at what you do. And like I said before, TAs working on a high level with special populations are in increasing demand. In fact, this is possibly the single largest growth and opportunity area for teaching artists right now. There is and will be more and more call for TAs and special needs classrooms and to provide professional development to other TAs, whether it's workshop presenters, mentors or curriculum developers. These TAs are not only getting additional work, they're becoming recognized as and/or taking a path becoming teaching artists in a specialized area.

But on a less personal and more macro level, let's get back to something just said.

What gives you the best chance of succeeding gives your students their best chance of succeeding. Of revealing unknown capacities to others and themselves. Teachers, parents, classmates. Of finding out what they have to say and finding new ways to do so. That is a finding new ways to communicate with and participate in a world that is often limited and sometimes closed to them. Doors opening. That's what's really at stake. More possibilities, the road lengthening. Thank you. Thank you for being a part of that. Thank you for being on this Webinar. Lisa?

>> LISA DAMICO: All right, Stephen. We will open it up for question and answer time, and I've already had some questions that have come in that I'll share, and while you all are listening to Stephen answer these, feel free to send me some more questions. So Stephen, is it appropriate for a TA to make sure that there's always a classroom teacher with you at all times? What kind of roles can we expect the classroom teacher to play during our residency?

>> STEPHEN YAFFE: Okay. Well, two parts to that. It's absolutely essential, is the classroom teacher with you at all times. First of all, for insurance reasons and second of all, because when you don't do that, you inadvertently trivialize the arts. You're saying, on a sort of unconscious level -- you're inferring, I should say -- implying -- that what goes on normally is totally distinct and different from and not on the same level as with what you're coming in with right now. If you don't have a teacher present, your work can't be followed up on.

The other side to that is -- what was the second part to that question?

>> LISA DAMICO: It was what kind of roles can we expect the classroom teacher to play.

>> STEPHEN YAFFE: Right. Okay. So the other side to that is if you're coming in without the teacher present, you're pretty much -- the chances are pretty good you're going to be doing a service delivery model kind of thing. You're not necessarily planning for what the kids are doing, how it might tie to something else. You want that classroom teacher in there for the reasons I just said. And also because you want a partner. You're somebody coming in from the outside world. Again, especially in self-contained classrooms. Those kids are oftentimes living pretty circumscribed lives. By virtue of the fact that you're coming in and partnering with the school, that says something about inside school and outside world possibilities, and also, those teachers and the related service -- I'm sorry, the support staff, like the paraprofessionals, they're going to know your kids better than you ever will. They can help you a whole lot. If that doesn't entirely answer your question, just, you know, click in another question regarding that.

>> LISA DAMICO: All right. Our second question comes from Laura. What are best practices for transitioning?

>> STEPHEN YAFFE: I think it really depends, Laura, on who you're working with. In other words, who the kids are. And there are transitions and there are transitions. For example, if you're working with kids on the autism spectrum, it's a investigate thing to have a visual agenda that's posted, or that you can pull up and you can check off, or if you Velcro the little signs for each activity that you're doing, you can take them off so that kids know exactly where they are in the process, and you've explained to them beforehand where you're going and what you're moving through, because with that particular population, they need to know where they are at all times. And of course you're, at least in the initial sessions of your residency, a stranger. So it helps the comfort zone. It helps these transitions. There are transitions that can happen and should happen before you come. You know, ask your teacher to remind the kids that, you know, they're coming at 11:00. Maybe put it on the blackboard for the agenda for that day for the kids so they know, and to remind the kids again and again, or if you're coming and moving to another room, like the auditorium I talked about before, same thing, remind them that they're going.

Let's not forget also that how you group kids in terms of how they'll work, is also part of that useful transition, or it can be. Because if you're working with a group, and you or the teacher -- another good reason for the teacher to be part of this, has helped you put together a group, when you're moving from, say, shared work within the group, or

different parts within the group, everybody would know ahead of time what they need to do.

Again, if there's a follow-up to that, please just, you know, send it in to Laura. When you're dealing with populations that have to do with emotional disability or PTSD, transitions can be of an entirely different nature, and that's definitely something you want to be talking to people about in the pre-planning. So again, I mean, we oftentimes have these discussions about disability and it's such a huge davit, it's why I said start those meetings with who are the populations, what are their disabilities, what are their capacities and what are their needs. Transitions will grow out of that. But in that observation, you can get to see transitions, and that's a really good thing to do.

>> LISA DAMICO: All right. Next question. They're starting to pour in now. This comes from Brenda. How do you get around the teacher who says she cannot divulge information about his or her students due to privacy issues?

>> STEPHEN YAFFE: Yeah, you know, it's funny, I was going to talk a little bit about IEPs, and I decided to stay away from it and you've got one coming up next month, and I think, you know, if you have the free time to do it, just definitely get on that.

Individualized education programs put together by IEP teams outline specific individual goals for students. They're really, really helpful to know, but by law, because you're not part of the team, or even part of the school, you're not privy to that information.

However, you can ask a teacher for general, quote unquote, IEP goals or needs. In other words, goals or needs that would apply to a number, if not the majority, of kids in the class that you're working with so that can give you something more to work with, something more to work from. If a teacher says specifically, I can't divulge that information, I suppose you could ask why, but I mean, you know, if the information is kinda critical, like the child is never speaking and you assume that the child is not paying attention, it would be good to know, like, at the beginning of the session, and not, you know, at the second to the last one, that the child is actually a selective mute, because if you know that there may be other ways in that you might want to go, like trying music if that's not something that you're already doing.

But there's so much -- there's only so far you can push. And sometimes, I'm sorry to say it, but, you know, sometimes there's that individual teacher who's got you in her class for whatever reasons, but they may not be the right ones, and they see you as coming in on their territory, and they don't want to share that much. And the best thing you can do is keep doing your work. Keep pulling the kids in. And hope. And it probably will happen, that the more the teacher sees how much the kids are engaged and how many more abilities and capacities they have that she may not or he may not have recognized before, the more that teacher might be drawn to you. So don't be afraid of asking the question again down the road.

>> LISA DAMICO: All right. Our next question, I'm going to combine. I had two questions come in from Nadia. Stephen, is your presentation meant for all different kinds of disabilities? Is your experience with special needs students, in schools, in centers? Are you talking about children of all ages? So I think she's asking a little bit about your background and if this can be applied to everyone.

>> STEPHEN YAFFE: I think the general principles can be applied across the board. But again, as I said at the beginning of this, the whole presentation is geared toward TAs working in the classroom during the school day. So in terms of after school work, where there are different groups, totally different situations where kids sign up, and, you know, some kids may show up each time, and other kids may not, in terms of after school, on a school site or in community centers, a lot of what I've talked about will have to be adapted because you won't necessarily have access to the classroom teacher.

So it's a different situation. But across the board in terms of many disabilities, yes. But as I said before, there's so many of them that you really need to find out who the populations are beforehand so that you can figure out how best to work with them.

>> LISA DAMICO: All right. This next question comes from Marlene. Is it possible to team teach with a classroom teacher? Can he or she help with the lessons while the TA works on the activities?

>> STEPHEN YAFFE: First of all, yes. It's absolutely possible, and some residencies are set up to do just that. Some residencies become that. And some residencies, especially residencies that stay at the same school year after year with the same teachers, and in some instances returning students, are perfect ground for that to happen. That requires more pre-planning. I think it's a really good model again because you increase the possibility of, you know, more knowledge at the table, more possibility for follow-up, more possibility for integration, more possibility that when you come in, say, every Monday, you know, it's not like, oh, yeah, who are you again? We saw you a week ago. It's like some of that work's been going on. But the kind of team teaching that you're asking about can be more than what you just posited, which is that they're doing a lesson while you're doing the activity. Unless I misunderstood you, I would hope that whatever activities people are doing is very much part of the lesson, and in the best of all possible team teaching things, you would both be involved in that, as would paraprofessionals if they're in the room, who can help.

>> LISA DAMICO: Speaking of paraprofessionals in the room, Gwendolyn wants to know at times there are paraprofessionals that are extremely helpful and others that are less than helpful to say the least. Sometimes they're in the room and are having outside conversations with other paraprofessionals, and can be a distraction more than a help. Also, the student adult ratio can be uncomfortably high. Is there a way to ask that fewer adults be present in the room? Or is that against what schools are required to do?

>> STEPHEN YAFFE: Well, it may very well be against what people need. They may need to have individual paras, you know, by such and such a number. So that's not necessarily something that you want to be messing around with. But yes, it's absolutely true that there are paraprofessionals who are great and paraprofessionals who don't understand the pork, or their instincts are off, and, you know, you've asked the children to paint a certain thing, and I've seen paraprofessionals say, no, it doesn't look like that and actually paint over a child's thing.

What I found in the people I'm working with in New York have found is that it's really worthwhile for arts organizations to offer workshops to paraprofessionals about the values of the arts and how to work in and through them. There are paraprofessionals, a surprising number of paraprofessionals, actually, who have arts backgrounds, or, you know, very secret arts lives who want to be involved, and there are paraprofessionals who care about the kids, and again, they will know those kids very, very well, especially the ones who are working one-on-one, with a know a little bit more about the arts because in this particular case they may be very, very uninformed, would have a better sense of how to be in that classroom when you're there, and how to work with a child. But it's very hard for you to do that unless you have, you know, time, or your arts organization is providing, you know, a workshop to bring them together and to provide them exactly what we have right now, a sense to ask you questions that you can respond to. And all of that said, there will also be paraprofessional, you know, who just, you know, is going to talk during the thing and not really care. I shouldn't say always but there's always a chance for that.

>> LISA DAMICO: I think that the issue of paraprofessionals is a popular one because we had a question that came in before I asked this one from Kim that says what would

do we do when we observe a paraprofessional or a teacher doing the work for the student when you believe that the student has more capacity in that activity? Maybe you can give us some specific examples of how to address that.

>> STEPHEN YAFFE: Sure. I mean, we were just talking about it, you know, with the para who paints over the child's thing because it really didn't look like whatever it was you were painting.

Okay. So you're in the moment and you have to make a decision. Based on where you are and what's going on with the rest of the kids or the particular child that you may be working with, is this is time to speak with the para? It may be and if it is, be very kind, and if it's not make it a point to speak to the para after class. The thing about and this is always an easy thing to do, well, I don't want to do it, I don't want to offend anybody and maybe it will get better next week. If you don't talk about things sooner than rather, those mistakes, those misunderstandings, those things that come from just being misinformed, not being mean or nasty, they get solidified, so you want to head them off sooner than later. But there are ways to say what the child needs and what the situation needs as opposed to what you're doing wrong, so that's the way you want to frame things.

And if it's possible, ask the para to do the activity, not with the kid, but, you know, alongside the kid so that he or she, the para is doing the same activity while the child is, if that's at all possible, so they can see a little bit more about process.

>> LISA DAMICO: Great. Thank you for those suggestions.

Our next question comes from Terrence. Sit possible to conduct the pre-residency meeting over the phone or in a Webinar setting? Often I work in school districts that are hundreds of miles away from where I live.

>> STEPHEN YAFFE: Well, believe it or not, I actually got a phone call in the middle of that. Could you repeat the question?

>> LISA DAMICO: Sure. Terrence would like to know is it possible to conduct the pre-residency meeting over the phone or in a Webinar setting? Often I work in school districts that are hundreds of miles away from where I live.

>> STEPHEN YAFFE: That's a really good question. I mean, yeah, in situations like that, it would be great if you could do it, you know, in a Webinar. Something that's still whole group, because in that situation, people are going to understand that's a long distance to go. But I think if you try to do the kind of compromise where you're having the pre-planning meeting early in the day before your first class, you're defeating the purpose. I know that wasn't what you said, but I wanted to throw it out there because some people think that might be, you know, an alternate means. So yeah, go for that rather than not have one at all, and should be fine. But just try to make sure that everybody's there.

>> LISA DAMICO: Okay. Marilyn says as a 2D art teacher, do you have any suggestions for working with the visually impaired? That's kind of a general question that we're asking you. And actually, I think Marilyn has followed up -- well, maybe not. This is someone who's with Marilyn. Marilyn, would you want to speak and get a little more specific with that? See if I can put her on. Are you there, Marilyn? Hello? Marilyn, can you hear us?

>> STEPHEN YAFFE: Can barely hear you, Marilyn.

>> LISA DAMICO: I think that's us. We'll go on with our next question then.

>> STEPHEN YAFFE: Okay. Marilyn, if you have a chance, can you just type in how bad the visual impairments are, if it's completely blind or partially sighted? And maybe if there's time I can try to get back to your question.

>> LISA DAMICO: Well, Brenda has a question that's following up on Marilyn's. How would you handle this? You're doing a visual arts project, specifically collage, and three students are legally blind.

>> STEPHEN YAFFE: Is there more to that question?

>> LISA DAMICO: I don't think so. No. Brenda said no.

>> STEPHEN YAFFE: All right. So, I mean, I don't have a lot to go on, but a couple of thoughts. If it's a group collage, it's a very different situation than if it's an individual collage, and if it's a group collage, you might think about putting each one of those kids in a group where the other kids are sighted, making really sure that the sighted kids are going to be understanding and supportive, and listen to what the special needs kids want to do, what their intent is, what they want to convey. If it's individual, it's hard for me because I don't know exactly what the materials might be, if there are materials that are, you know, highly textured, then -- or have clear shapes to them, as opposed to just flat and different colored papers, you know, this might be a time to think about or re-think or maybe you've already done it, what materials you want to use and if you're using specific materials to help those sighted kids, don't just distribute those materials to those kids who are partially sighted. Make sure they're in the mix for everybody so there's, you know, no sensitive, oh, yeah, I have to do it this way. I'm not sure that completely answers your question, but it's a big question. It's the best I can do.

>> LISA DAMICO: I have another question that takes us a little bit -- well, it takes us outside of the classroom, but we're going to see if you have an answer. Put you on the spot a little bit, Steve, we'll see if you have an answer for this.

This comes from Suzie, and she's teaching in the early evening at a juvenile detention center that has no funding for an art teacher on staff. Security is always present. I want to make an impact on the children, as well as express a need for continuing art education program in the facility. How would I go about petitioning for this?

>> STEPHEN YAFFE: Can we put her on the phone?

>> LISA DAMICO: Let's see. I think she's with Marilyn Farber, who is signed on at six different people on my screen.

>> STEPHEN YAFFE: Oh, okay. I mean, I'm not really sure I understand the question because obviously you have the to petition whoever can make that happen at that facility. So I guess in the petitioning, you'd have to be able to convince them what the values of that might be. I thought you were actually going to ask how does one teach in a situation like that, which is an interesting situation, and actually one that I have some experience with, but you went a different direction, so -- and if you were talking about how does one petition on the money end, yeah, it's an interesting question. I mean, is it a juvenile detention facility where the kids have already been convicted of a crime, or is it, you know, in lieu of serving time? Because if it's in lieu of serving time, you might want to go to places, including lawyer's organizations, that are looking for ways to help kids rehabilitate. Maybe they would want to kick some money in, again, if you can convince them of the value. So if there's a way that you could be more specific in your question, I would try to be more specific in my answer.

>> LISA DAMICO: We'll see if a response comes in from one of the 15 Marilyn Farbers, I see on my screen.

>> STEPHEN YAFFE: By the way, I can't tell. How are we doing on time here?

>> LISA DAMICO: Actually, we're at 3:54.

>> STEPHEN YAFFE: No, we're great. You just tell me because I have no way of knowing that.

>> LISA DAMICO: Well, so actually Suzie has come in. Suzie here again. Yes, Stephen, then how is the best way to teach? Children are in wait time for bond, judge time, et cetera.

>> STEPHEN YAFFE: So this is one of those situations where because of the context you want to add some questions to your pre-residency planning thing. And again, not in order of importance. And I'm sorry to talk quickly, but, you know, you won't see this on the screen. You want to know if any of the kids that you'll be working with -- because sometimes this happens with that population -- if any of the kids that you'll be working with may have some mild or not so mild cognitive impairments due to drug use. Those are, you know, would probably be more chronic than acute -- I mean, more acute than chronic. You definitely -- Suzie, if you can type this in quickly, let me know what art form or art forms you're talking about because what I'm about to say may or may not be germane. You want to find out if the kids can physically touch one another. In some situations where there's a lot of gang-related activity, kids can't touch each other because that's just going to result in a fight and if you're doing drama exercises, boy, you need to know that beforehand.

Did we get her art form in yet?

>> LISA DAMICO: Not yet.

>> STEPHEN YAFFE: Okay. Clearly in that situation that you're talking about, you really want to know a lot of stuff beforehand, so the pre-residency planning meeting becomes really important. Also, try to find out in general what the rotation is. Are you working with kids who are always going to be there each week? Are you working with kids who, you know, may get out in between time depending on how long your residency is? Because again, those kids will potentially form a special kind of relationship if the work is really good and interesting to them, and if there are disruptions in who's there or who's not there, that would be good to know beforehand. And the only other thing that I would throw in is like it's always good to do this, but in that population especially, if you can build from the inside out, if you can start with the kids being able to -- whatever the art form may be -- communicate what they know, how they see the world, what their points of view are, without saying that that's what you're going to do because then they're going to go, oh, yeah, right, and build art skills from there, that's going to be a whole lot more successful to you than going from the outside in. Did we get an art form?

>> LISA DAMICO: We did. Suzie here, visual arts. No one is allowed to touch anyone else. Ages 10 to 18 years old. Every class is different. I've geared my art lessons from simple greeting card art to creating their own deck of cards.

>> STEPHEN YAFFE: Okay. So think about if this is of interest to you and again I don't know how long your residencies go for so it may not be doable. The greeting card, the deck of cards thing, that's good stuff. It's also a little bit more outside than in. So I don't know if you have skills in this area, but you might want to think about art forms that you feel, you know, you have expertise in that might lend more possibility to the kids, again, going from the inside out. And please let me know if you know what I'm talking about by inside out so that -- because a greeting card is a more generic thing than -- I guess what I'm trying to say is if you start with a proposition that what you have to say is important, and other people seeing it, because we're talking about visual art, it's important to them as well, that's just the starting point.

Then there's a greater opportunity for, you know, kind of the ongoing conversation, and also what's the word I'm looking for when people talk about it and more people come to your session next time.

>> LISA DAMICO: Are you searching for the word, Stephen?

>> STEPHEN YAFFE: Oh, no. No. I'm sorry.

>> LISA DAMICO: Okay. Great. Well, we are right at the end -- right at 4:00, so I'm going to switch you back over to my screen.

So I want to thank you all for joining us today, and thank you, Stephen, for a wonderful presentation, and for answering all of those questions. I think that was especially helpful to our participants. I would like to ask you all to stay on the line for a few minutes more. I have a quick eight-question survey that will appear after you exit the Webinar, and as I said before, you will all get an E-mail within the next week that includes the transcript, a copy of Stephen's PowerPoint, the handouts that he referred to. And if you have any questions or comments, please feel free to write to me at Lisa Damico, LVDamico@Kennedy-center.org. Thank you and I hope you all will join again next time. Good-bye!

(Webinar concluded)