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John F. Kennedy Center

CAN YOU FEEL IT?  
A TACTILE APPROACH TO MUSIC LITERACY

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>> LISA DAMICO: Good afternoon, and welcome to the December edition of the VSA webinar series. I'm Lisa Damico, your moderator and webinar organizer. Today's webinar is entitled "Can You Feel It? A Tactile Approach to Music Literacy," and is part of a monthly series that which is out 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.

If you would like to view live stream captioning of this webinar, you can follow the link you see on this slide and the chat box of the control panel located on the right side of the screen. Before we get started, let's take a moment to ensure that you're familiar with the Go to Webinar control panel on the right side of your screen. This control panel can be hidden by clicking on the orange arrow in the top left corner. If you need to leave the webinar early, you can exit out of the program by clicking on the "X" in the upper right corner. A recording of the webinar will be available afterwards, so you can catch up on any parts you miss.

Make sure that you have selected telephone or mic and speakers to correspond with how you're connected to the webinar. You have the ability to submit or answer questions using the chat pane located near the bottom of the control panel. If you would prefer to say the question instead of typing it, you can click on the raise your hand icon on the control panel and I will unmute your microphone.

Your questions will come directly to me, and during the designated question and answer time at the end of the presentation, I will relay them to the presenter. I want to emphasize that within the week, I will send out a follow-up E-mail with a link to the recording of today's presentation, a copy of the PowerPoint presentation, a handout, which Jennifer has prepared, and a copy of the transcript. This means you don't need to worry about frantically taking notes during the presentation. You can go back and watch the recording or review the supplemental materials at your leisure.

I'd like to invite you to join us next month as Mala Desai presents "Dance Across Cultural Paradigms with Bhangra, A Folk Dance From India". If you haven't already, you can register for it now by clicking on the registration link in the chat pane. If you're active in social media, I invite you to connect with us using the hashtag, #VSA webinar. You can find us on Facebook at VSA international. At twitter @VSAINTL and you can also join us on twitter during the webinar, where my social media intern Courtney, will be live tweeting today's webinar. Please say hi to her over there. On Instagram at VSAInternational. And

something new that we're doing this season, if you've attended our other two webinars, we have follow-along worksheets, so I sent out, at 2:30 Washington, D.C. time, an E-mail with copies of those worksheets that you can print and follow along. These are optional. But many people find it useful. If you didn't find that E-mail, you can look in the handout section of the control panel. We have both the PDF and a word document version. They're both the same. But print those out, because Jennifer is going to have you creating your own tactile music during the webinar.

And with that, I will turn it over to today's presenter, Jennifer Nichols. Jennifer, are you there?

>> JENNIFER NICHOLS: I am!

>> LISA DAMICO: All right. I'm going to let you share your screen with us.

>> JENNIFER NICHOLS: Okay.

>> LISA DAMICO: Perfect. I can see it.

>> JENNIFER NICHOLS: Great! Well, welcome, everybody. This is a presentation, as Lisa said, call "Can You Feel It?" It's about a tactile approach to music literacy. So today, we are going to be needing a couple of things. I'll give you a second here to gather them. You will need either a pen or pencil, that worksheet that Lisa mentioned, it's called "Create Your Own Tactile Music!" And if you have with that printed, that would be best. It was in an E-mail, or also she said in the handout section. And then you don't need it right now, but there's a handout that explains all the materials I used to create this tactile music, so there's that as well that you can use.

All right. Let's get started. So today, we're going to be talking about the limitations of using traditional notation in the music classroom. We will go over solutions that I found that engage the students so they can have tactile music. I'll show you some of the types of tactile music I have created and have found successful. I will also show you how to make those materials and what you need to make them.

I'm going to also share with you today some other music instruction ideas that I use with my students with special needs, and at the end of today, we are actually going to be creating three different examples of tactile notation. And those will be with just that pen and pencil or worksheet.

Okay. So we're going to start off here with the limitations of traditional notations. Typically it's only two-dimensional, and it uses a lot of symbols. And maybe some of these symbols are somewhat familiar to our students. There are a lot of unfamiliar symbols there. And it also requires, when you're reading these, advanced decoding and reading skills. And, you know, in school, we're always working on our decoding and

reading skills, and it's great to keep working on them, but sometimes traditional notation requires a very deep and advanced understanding, and it can be an overwhelming for the students. So traditional is great. However, some limits, and I felt that that was what was getting in the way of my students learning.

So to overcome some of these limits that I found with traditional notation, I decided to create tactile music notation. So here are some tactile solutions. I decided I wanted to create music notation notes three-dimensional so that my students could really feel pitch and feel rhythm. Instead of always having, in traditional notations, a lot of those unfamiliar symbols, I wanted to use familiar things with the students, so I was trying to use familiar shapes and objects that they see in everyday life, to help them read and learn to read music. And eventually, I would take -- I would transfer my students from these familiar shapes and go into more traditional notation, but this is just to really help them get started.

And then I decided -- I found out that some materials, some things, feel better for some students. So using different materials for our tactile music really helps my students learn how to read music.

We're going to move on to tactile notation. And here's an image of an example of something I've used, and it's just on a regular piece of paper, but we have these little Velcro stickers, and the students can feel them, and I use the fuzzy side but you can use the scratchy side, whatever works best, I'll show you a bunch of different examples that I use in different classrooms with different students. I'll then go in to how we make these. And that's where that route comes in handy because the handout I created lists the materials needed for each example. So if you know you want to try one example, it has a little shopping list for you. So I will go over all the materials I use.

I will also show you the instructions, and then, at the end, I'm also going to share with you -- maybe you already have a bunch of, you know, listening maps, or already printed examples of traditional notation. I'm going to show you how you can adapt those to become more tactile for the students.

All right. So our first topic here, the benefits of tactile music. I found that my students were more actively engaged in reading music, and I found that since they had something in their hands to feel and to tap while we were reading rhythms or singing songs, they were more engaged. I also felt they could feel these concepts in music such as pitch, rhythm and notation. When I just sing high and low sounds, I didn't know if they were understanding the concept of high and low or the concept of pitch. But when I have something for them to feel, I felt like

they were more engaged and learning more of the concepts. And the same goes for rhythm and notation.

And that's basically how I broke up my tactile music. I have examples that demonstrate just pitch. I have examples that demonstrate just rhythm. And then some with notations. For my pitch examples, I used these examples to teach high and low sounds. Sometimes I was just doing just two notes, just -- just one note to represent high and one note to represent low. So maybe I was singing hello to them, and I was only using so and me when I just said hello, and my pitch example was demonstrating so and me as the high and low.

I have some examples I will share with you today that work on just rhythm. And I was using rhythms, including quarter notes and quarter rests and other notes, but you could even just be doing rhythms that show sound, maybe a quarter note, and silence, just a quarter rest, just having those.

And then we're going to look at some examples that I was trying to make students work on their notation. And we will see some examples today where they actually got to feel what a quarter note looked like if they drew it. So we're going to look at some specific notations.

So let's go ahead and get started. The first ones here are all about pitch. This first example I called the simplified staff. Sometimes the five lines of the staff can be overwhelming, so I just took one line, and this line just helped the students differentiate between high and low. So I put high on the top and low on the bottom with that nice black line in the middle. And I use this throughout my lessons. I have my students point or tap, or even trace and write the word "High and low." While I'm singing high and low or if they hear high and low from an instrument. So even if I sing it -- I do a greeting with them every day when I see them, and I'll sing hello, and I sing hello using their names. [Singing] hello, Isaac. And when I'm singing, I hope my student Isaac is pointing high when I'm in the high part of my voice and low when I'm in the low part of my voice. And so he can tap along, or maybe I'm just playing one pitch, and they have to decide if it's higher or lower than another pitch. So I use this.

The simplified staff is, you know, drawn in black and has been glued over with a little bit of hot glue. And I did that so the students could feel like a barrier. They could feel that once they go over this bump, that means high, and if they go below it, it means low. And I also used two contrasting colors to show that high was, you know, in the blue up here, and low was in the bottom to give them that contrast.

So to make this, what I used was foam board. I tend to use a lot of foam board because I find it's very durable. And I cut

it in a small rectangle that the students could fit in their hands.

And now, I only made one and I sort of used it when I'm working with my kids with special needs, but you can definitely make multiple and have lots of students having these in their hands. So you use foam board and some permanent markers and a glue gun. Although a glue gun is a staple in a lot of these materials today, so the glue gun is very helpful.

All right. So what I did to do this was I cut the foam board into a rectangle, like you said, and with that black permanent marker, I drew one line down horizontally in the middle, and with one color I wrote the word "High" above the line, and with a different color, I wrote the word "Low." And then here's, I think, where this is a very helpful tool. With the glue gun, I glued over that black line. And in this image that we have right now, I'm hoping you can see the glue line. You can make it even thicker if that helps, but I use that so that the students can feel the difference between high and low.

So this is our simplified staff.

When I was working on our simplified staff, I decided that I would like my students to be able to one day transfer to a full staff. Here we have a five-line staff. I call this our writable staff. And with this staff it helped my students learn the properties of the staff and reading music, such as that it has five lines, and that there are lines and spaces. Once again, I drew the line in black marker and then glued over with a hot glue gun so that my students can feel when they're touching the bumpy lines of the blue, that's a line, and then when they're in between the two glue lines, that was a space. I just really tried to help them figure out lines and spaces.

For some of my students who maybe are learning the quarter, I wanted to have a way for them to practice their note reading skills, so this is also -- this writable staff, I have made it possible for them to use dry erase markers on it so they can write in where, you know, their "G" line is, or their second space "A," things like that.

So to make this writable staff, I just basically drew lines on a word document, just by lines, and I printed it out, and I printed it on card stock, so it's a little thicker there, and I laminated it, and that's how it became the writable staff, and used dry erase markers, and once again, that glue gun.

So here in this picture I think you can really tell that it has some hot glue in there and I printed it out. And then with that glue gun, we just glued over the black line. And I only did one line of glue, but you could definitely make it thicker. I've also seen things in, like, craft stores where they already

have those pre-done, the glue lines, so you don't have to use a glue gun, but that's what I did.

So so far we have seen two examples to help us with pitch. This next one example, it helps us with pitch, and it's very specific. But I found that the students really liked this example. This is our magnetic staff. And it helps the students not just learn high and low, but it's helping them learn specific notes of the staff. Once again, it's helping us differentiate between our lines and our spaces. Although in this example I did not glue, like I did the previous two. I did something a little different. And in this, the staff is drawn on with a permanent marker, and this is actually a baking sheet. And I know some people, when they've seen me ask, well, that's expensive. To tell you the truth, I got these baking sheets at the dollar tree, so it actually wasn't that bad, and they've held up quite a few years. And what we do here is the students can move these magnetic notes up and down on the baking sheet staff, and that's really where they seem to really enjoy it. It's a lot of fun.

So to make this magnetic staff, I printed out some notes, a quarter note, I think sometimes that quarter notes and quarter rests are great to start with, just because they use sound and silence, and then I laminate them for extra strength. And then I used magnetic tape and there are lots of brands who sell this, I just happened to have the Scotch kind. And then the baking sheet, I got those for a dollar at the dollar tree and I made a class set, and it's been really great to have those. And also scissors to cut out your notes, and I did find that with this project, the permanent marker was very helpful because these lines, you want to make sure they stay on pretty strong, so I did use a thicker marker.

So to make this, you know, you're going to print out your notes, and really whatever you think you're going to use most, one time I didn't even use -- I didn't have my notes, they were just missing in a bag, and I just seemed to have just circle magnets, so if you want to use notes, if you want to use a magnet that you find that has a nice, big circle, I find that works, too. As long as they fit within the lines. So if you cut out these notes. And then here's where you will take care of that magnetic tape, and I usually adhere it to the back of the note head and not the stem, and then using a permanent marker, I just drew that staff on the treble clef. Now, when I made these, I just used the treble clef. A couple of years after I turned them over and on the opposite side I did draw the bass clef for students who are at that level.

The best thing about this is that the students can put the baking sheets in their lap. They can put them on the table,

they can put them on the floor and I can call notes and they can move to them. I can just call lines and spaces and they get to actually move that note up and down.

So we've gone over three examples so far that really talk about pitch. But these next examples started mixing pitch and rhythm. What I call this next one is our student friendly notation. And what I've done here is I've taken traditional notation, but we've placed our note heads with what I call more familiar objects. So what I found is this helps students learn to read music are familiar images and objects. We won't have all that unfamiliar note head that maybe they weren't as comfortable with. The size of the picture, what image I used, would correspond is the note notation, so with this example of star light, when it was a quarter note, the image was what we have up here in the upper left corner, but when we had paired eighth notes, they were two smaller stars to demonstrate that these were shorter sounds. So in this traditional song, [singing] star light, star bright, first star I see tonight. Wish I may, wish I might, have a wish I wish tonight.

I'm only using two pitches and I know there are different variations of this piece where you have multiple pitches, but I was just using two. And I position the stars to correspond with so and me and also with the rhythm of the quarter and paired eighth notes.

Now, I also have the words below. We don't always have them -- we're not always maybe using the words. Maybe the students are not even looking at the words. But they're there. And what I really do with my student-friendly notation is the students don't just look at this paper and read it. They take their finger, and this is the size I usually try to make the quarter note image, and they put their finger on top of the star so that they're actually tapping through on the stars, not down here at the words. And you can, of course, create the student friendly notation without the words, if you want. But I did this so that the students could just tap and put their finger while they sing. Star light, star bright. And they're actually tapping while they go through.

So once again, that's the demonstration of pitch, the high and low stars, the rhythm, larger stars for quarter notes and smaller stars for paired eighth notes.

If I had something like a half note, I would take my image and I would draw an arrow going to the next piece to demonstrate that it was held for two and then they would have to trace that arrow with their fingers, so there are ways to make this -- or half notes and whole notes as well.

Here are some more examples. In the example on the left, I continued the star light star bright, still with that friendly

notation but now it's on a staff, and it's resembling more of what we know as our traditional notation, but we still are using student-friendly images. You will also notice here that the star size is actually all the same. So I actually took that one variable out and I made everything the same. And I did that, one, to help it, but two to help the students know now they know how long a quarter note lasts and hopefully how long eighth notes last, but now we're looking at the pitch and putting it all together in one picture.

On the right side we have another familiar song. This one has more than two pitches. This is a traditional song, Apple Tree. [Singing] apple tree, apple tree, will your apple follow me? I won't cry and I won't shout if your apples knock me out.

So we have quite a few pitches here. And one corresponds with both the pitch and the rhythm. So the higher the apple on the page, the higher our voice, and the lower the apple the lower our voice. Once again the bigger apples represent our quarter notes, and then our smaller apples represent or paired eighth notes.

So notice, I did put these lines to sort of help distinguish the different parts of our song. If you have a lot of apples on one page, it may look a little confusing so that sort of helps the students and where they need to sing next. And it's the same concept as I've done with Star Light.

To make these, I used just Microsoft Word, or you can use Microsoft Publisher, and I just used pictures to represent note heads, and I positioned these pictures on the page to represent high and low rhythm so I would alter their size and location. Now, some of these, I just made two-dimensional, and they just had that student-friendly notation, that image. However, for some of them, I'm hoping you can see in this picture of our apple up here, I put glue dots on them, and the smaller the glue dot, the smaller the duration of the note. We have two smaller glue dots and the two smaller apples to represent those paired eighth notes and then I've got my larger blue dot on the larger apple to represent that quarter note. And I use three-dimensional stickers, different types of foam, whatever the shape is, just so students can feel it so if they're tapping through them, they can feel those rhythms.

So in this example we sort of talked about pitch and rhythm. In this next example, we're going to be talking more about the notation. So what we have here are our notation vocabulary cards. And these I found helped students familiarize themselves with actual notations, so those unfamiliar symbols of traditional notation are no longer unfamiliar. What they're learning is how to make them and what they look like and what they feel like. So what I did here is I took foam. And there's

like sticky foam. I think this is just regular foam that I glued, but I took three-dimensional foam, and I cut it out, or I actually used our dye cutter machine at our school, and made these different notes, but you could cut them out if you didn't have that type of machine. And I cut them out in the different shapes, and then I just glued them on to a little book here. But it made it possible for the students to feel, oh, you know, this note has a line and a circle but it's not filled in. Or this note has just the circle and it is filled in, and it has a stem, you know, so they could learn about what actually made up that note.

They can also say the note, you know, they can say the note, however you're saying, like quarter note or half note, or if you're using, you know, different syllables, like Ta, or, you know, what have you. And then I did some binding at the top so I could slip through the pages of this book. I did make a couple of things so that the students could use them with one another and then I could use them with one another.

To make this book here, I used card stock for the actual pages, and then I used foam because I found that the students really liked the feeling of foam, and it's pretty durable, and it would stick up enough off the paper. I used a binding machine and some comb bindings, and once again scissors and a glue gun.

So I cut out pieces to be the actual pages of my -- to be the actual pages of my book, and all the things out of card stock. I think I actually might have laminated these so they're more durable, and then I glued the notes on top of that, and then I used the binding machine and I went ahead and already put the cards ready and had it bound at the top. After I made the actual book, that's when I put in those cut-out quarter notes, maybe paired eighth notes, whole notes, half notes, quarter rests out of the foam. And then I would glue one note or rest on each card. And I think actually they come sticky now so you could do that as well.

So we talked about a notation example, we talked about a rhythm example that are tactile and we talked about ways to make pitch more tactile.

Well, maybe you have some listening maps or other traditional notation already that you love using. There are some ways that you can adapt your current material. So here is Star Light Star Bright, and this is just actually the regular quarter notes and paired eighth note version. But what I used here was the adhesive Velcro, and these already came in circle sizes. I think they're called Velcro dots or something like that, and I think I just bought two different sizes, and I, you know, stuck on the circle a Velcro over the note head. Now, here I didn't

use the two different sizes but if you wanted just to use all the same size, you could do that as well. Here I was demonstrating to the students not only pitch but also the rhythm that the quarter note lasts longer than an eighth note. You could, of course, use more three-dimensional stickers, glue lines, glue dots. There are all these adhesive things that really help enhance our student learning.

So now I'd like to take some time and do our poll questions. So we have two here. And love to have you participate in the poll questions.

>> LISA DAMICO: I will launch our first one. So what are some materials that can be used to make tactile music? Please select one. Different types of glue? Velcro, stickers of varying materials? All of the above? I'll give you all about 15 seconds to vote.

Now I'm going to close the poll, get any last votes in. And it looks like 100% of the people who voted said all of the above.

>> JENNIFER NICHOLS: Oh, great.

>> LISA DAMICO: Paying attention.

>> JENNIFER NICHOLS: Yay! Then I have a second one for you here.

>> LISA DAMICO: So what is one piece of existing music literacy material that you currently have that can be altered to become tactile music? Please select one. Listening maps. Traditional notation. None, I'm excited to make tactile music from scratch. Or other. Five more seconds to place your vote.

So we had 4% who said listening maps. 54% who said traditional notation. 42% who said none, I'm excited to make tactile music from scratch, and zero percent who said other.

>> JENNIFER NICHOLS: Thank you, Lisa. Well, I'm so glad that some of you are excited to start making some. And those of you, I hope, who have the listening maps and traditional notation have found some ideas is that you can maybe use with your materials.

I want to actually keep going here and talk about some other ideas that sort of help me with my students with special needs in my music instruction. I'm guessing maybe some of you are familiar with the concept of the communication board. I know when I first started teaching, I had seen a lot of students with special needs use them. I'm at a job so I can always figure out a way to make it for music, but I'm going to show you the one that I have made for music and then I'm going to talk about some other books that I've used in my instruction that maybe have larger fonts, and also I have Braille.

So first is my communication board. So I use this for my students to communicate. At first, when I first saw other

teachers using them years ago, I was really jealous. I wanted all these great images, and I didn't know how to find them and I didn't know how to make one durable, but I found out all the resources, and I found a way to make it durable for my classroom, and I really -- it really can be altered for my content or any, you know, unit you're doing, or anything. I found this very beneficial for my non-verbal students, but beneficial for everybody. It helps increase having the students make sentences. It helps us learn new vocabulary, and learn what the word of movable vocabulary and the picture of it and the movement of it. Over here I have a picture of my current communication board and it might be difficult for you to read but the top strip up there said, "I want egg shakers." So I would have my students when they are selecting an instrument, in many of their IEPs, making choices of something they need to do on a daily basis, so I would present them maybe with two or three choices of instruments, and they needed to select an instrument and make this sentence using our pictures on our communication board and they might say I want egg shakers, or maybe I choose, or whatever word you would like there.

To make this, and I can say mine has really held up. It's been very durable, so that's what I'm always looking for. I don't want to have to keep making something so I wanted to make it durable the first time.

What I used with the three-ring binder, I did use what the stores call their durable sign, but I found that I really needed it to be like an inch thick. No bigger, once again, I used Velcro. I used foam board again. Now, I chose black foam board because I wanted it to match the black binder, but you could do whatever you want and then I have the communication board pictures. And I found this online and then I got the whole set so I got really excited and once again, the scissors and glue gun.

So to make this, I printed and cut out all of the pictures. And I actually put them on card stock, and then I laminated them individually. I really just wanted to make sure these things last. After that, I cut out foam board to match the side of my square pictures and I glued it right on top. Now, cutting out foam board is not always the easiest. Depending on how thick the foam board is, or I guess your finger strength, you can use scissors. I found it easier to use a straight edge or an Exacto knife, whatever works for you. So I glued those on with a glue gun and then on the very back of the foam board I put the little pieces of the Velcro. And then with the opposite Velcro side I put strips on my binder, and I had my binder lay or horizontally so that the rings are on top. So I made the binder go horizontally here. And then I put the strips of Velcro on top

of the binder, and I put additional pieces of voc crow on there so I could store the pictures. I created so many that I eventually needed an extra little crayon box for all of them, but I put the ones I use on a daily basis right inside the binder. So then with what I would have my students do is maybe choose an instrument or maybe select what they heard, or if we had an assembly, they would create a sentiment that we were going to a concert, and I just found that this communication board really helped them not only get to play different instruments, but be able to talk with me and communicate with me about music class. And so I found that to be very, very helpful, but it's lasted a decent amount. It's been very durable, and so I've been happy with the results.

I've had the opportunity in my classes this year to try a use a lot more books. And I had a lot of our folk songs and traditional songs, can be supplemented with books. So they're everywhere, and it's been really great. What I did here is I've lifted a couple of books that I used. "Five Little Monkeys," "Barn yard dance," and there's a great dine store called stomp. There was one that was bilingual with the Spanish words below, so that was very helpful as well. But I've been using these more in my classes and not only did they have the songs that we were using, but they also have movement. We're talking a lot about movement, so these children can move their bodies in different ways to different music.

Now, two of these books, I actually bought the board book version, so I can give you -- I was also able to find some of them in larger fonts for others that are maybe more visually impaired, and also some that you spray. So in this picture right here, what I was trying to show you is this actually has the text in Braille right below it. And it helps my students maybe stay more engaged when we were reading through the song or working on the lyrics and they were talking about that countdown of five monkeys and four monkeys and going all the way down to zero, which they really enjoyed having that book in their hands.

I found that a lot of these books are available in Braille, and/or larger font, and I, you know, before this year I actually didn't even it, but I just found them, and it's such a nice addition to our classroom. So these really do help our visually impaired students read along, sing along or maybe just follow when the music teacher is singing or if the music is being played.

So last thing we're going to be doing today is creating our own tactile music. So here is where you are going to want to try to find your -- I believe we called it our worksheet. So this is a create your own tactile music worksheet. It's also on our panel here for the webinar under handouts, so it's the one

that has worksheet in it. And you also will need a pen or a pencil. It doesn't really matter what you use. We'll give you a second to gather those.

All right. So I have three different versions of create your own tactile music. For this first one, what I have given you is just the -- the stems of paired eighth notes and a quarter note. And what they're going to be doing is drawing a picture that could be used to notate our song, "Doggie, doggie, where's your bone." So if you're unfamiliar with that song, it's [singing] -- doggie, doggie, where's your bone. Now, some ideas include maybe you want to draw a picture of your dog if you're that inclined, or maybe you want to draw a bone, or maybe you want to put a question mark for your note head so go ahead right now and choose a picture, something that you can draw on each of -- where the note has to be. So you're taking your pencil and drawing either maybe a dog head, maybe a dog bone, maybe a question mark, and you're placing where the traditional note head would be.

Now, what we've just created is our student friendly music notation, and the goal here is that students can actually touch or feel the high and pitch of the song using the mixture of the familiar, something they know with their dog bones, and the unfamiliar with the eighth note, pairs and quarter notes.

Now, you could also take this a step further and use three-dimensional stickers, and they have a tactile feel.

So that's one version. Now we go down to version 2. This really helps students feel the pitch and we're going to take our pen and pencil and we're going to actually poke a hole through our paper here as large as the note heads. So try not to go any larger than that. So I'm going to pole the hole. Now, you can do it from under the paper, or you can go from the back of the paper, wherever you prefer, if you can see it.

Okay. So I just successfully poked the note head, and I'm feeling over the paper and I'm hoping that you can feel as well the little bumps. And maybe you can feel it more on the other side if you poked from the back, but you can actually feel the pitch and the rhythm of this. Oh, that's a good idea. So here, I'll share with you what I've done. So here is our -- my actual paper, and I just poked through the note head, just like this, so that you can touch and feel it.

Now, if you do it from the back side, I guess you would get a little more of a bump, but do whatever works best for you, but you're getting an idea of what the student is doing with that tactile notation. I checked all the same amount, but on this third example here, we are going to poke a shoal through each of the eighth notes here. But now, when we get to that Cardinals, we'll have a different version. Let's go ahead and take it from

version 3. You can actually feel a little bit more of the bump. Go ahead and take that pencil and just make sure that that quarter note, the last one you do, is bigger. And the idea here is not only are the students working on pitch, high and low sounds, but now we're really incorporating the rhythm. These eighth notes have a shorter duration than these longer quarter notes. Now, we have doggy, doggy, where's your bone. So if we continue with the three-dimensional images, or these stickers up here, they would be following along through the entire song.

Okay. So now what we're going to do is we don't need any more of our tactile paper but I'm going to open this up to if anyone has any questions.

>> LISA DAMICO: We've had one question come in so far. And I encourage everyone else to type in your questions now. Brenda would like to know, do you always use the same picture for all notes? Would you ever differentiate for the lyrics? For example, dog, dog, question mark, question mark, bone.

>> JENNIFER NICHOLS: You know, I never really thought of it that way. I always tried to keep everything as -- maybe not simple, but I didn't want to have a lot of variables going on because I thought reading music might be a little overwhelming in general, but I think that's a really good idea. I do remember one song, it was the traditional song called Cuckoo. And it went Cuckoo, Cuckoo, who are you, I'm a bird, and I had the little boy sing and in that tactile piece of music, I did have an image just for the little boy part and then I had a bird image just for the bird part to help them differentiate between two-part singing. And I bet you could go further with any other kind of song. I find whatever seems to make the most sense for the students, but I did try to make it as simple as possible because I didn't want to have too many variables going on because I was already doing pitch and rhythm. But I think that's a really neat idea.

>> LISA DAMICO: Brenda Ike would like to know what age groups do you teach?

>> JENNIFER NICHOLS: I currently teach kindergarten through fifth grade, and I have about 700 students. Some of my students with special needs push in to that general education classroom, and some of them, I go to them and just work with them independently in their classroom. So I do have a mixture of music set up, but I do have the privilege of seeing everyone in my entire school.

>> LISA DAMICO: Charles would like to know if you can talk a bit about your work with students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

>> JENNIFER NICHOLS: I've had limited experience with students who are deaf. I have had a couple students who were

hard of hearing. And with that, I found that the glue dots and anything that I made that had like something more for them to touch was what they sort of gravitated for. They wanted anything that they could feel, if they weren't quite understanding what I meant with the high and low. If they understood it was higher on the page, and when I sang higher, that seemed to really help, so that's where I started actually using a lot of glue to help really -- to help them feel those bigger concepts.

And Lisa, I'm not sure. Did we have any other questions?

>> LISA DAMICO: Not yet. Sometimes it takes people a few minutes to get warmed up.

>> JENNIFER NICHOLS: Well, I can show you, if you want -- I think my web cam is still on. I can show you, this is the handout of what you all have here, and it's just sort of like a shopping list, if you will, of the different examples I talked about today and it has a little, like, checkoff, so you can check off, you know, if you need something at the store, but this has been organized by example, so that's what's on this.

>> LISA DAMICO: And I went ahead and uploaded the handout for those people who are watching the webinar live, I added those two handouts to the handout section, so if you want to download those now, you can. If not, those will be included in the follow-up E-mail that goes out.

>> JENNIFER NICHOLS: Great.

>> LISA DAMICO: Well, it doesn't look like we have any other questions.

>> JENNIFER NICHOLS: Okay. All right. Well, I just wanted to say thank you.

>> LISA DAMICO: Actually, we do have one question.

>> JENNIFER NICHOLS: Okay.

>> LISA DAMICO: Have you ever had students confuse the lines on the page of the whole song with the line that is high or low?

>> JENNIFER NICHOLS: I'm not sure -- oh, maybe with the touch chart? Okay. So I haven't. But when I did, like, if you think back to how I had star light star bright and I sort of had -- when I first introduced that to the students, the first quarter of it, and I presented it actually more horizontally, and then once they get used to it, then they see this whole page. So that might be why they've never confused it with high and low. Because I did present it horizontally first, and then we were able then to put all four of those spots on one page.

>> LISA DAMICO: I had myself on mute.

Positive feedback. Brenda says not a question, I just wanted to thank you for presenting such an informative and pleasant presentation. Julian says everything you taught us was

wonderful, and I wonder if you have any ideas as far as one visual of a music activity that everyone can see and engage in.

>> JENNIFER NICHOLS: You know, that's such an interesting idea. Sometimes I do, like, use that -- what's that called, that roll paper that you can get in those really big rolls, and they put that on the floor, and we have done things where the students have to move different, like -- different size disks to the different lines and spaces of the staff. I've done that. I've also just put down masking tape on the rug to represent a five-line staff and had different students sit on different lines and spaces. So there are lots of things. I usually meet my class always in a circle so we always have everything -- everyone's looking at everyone and we have everything that we're doing inside of our circle. But I find that they -- it's almost like twister. Because they're all sprawled out on this huge staff and they have to find like the second line or they have to find a "D" and such. So that's kind of how I've adapted some of these ideas into a large group.

>> LISA DAMICO: Charles was wondering do you use instruments, or mostly voice?

>> JENNIFER NICHOLS: I do both. We do a lot of -- I'm very, very blessed with my school right now. I have full drum ensemble, and I teach my students in grades two through five a recorder, so I have all those instruments plus a lot of auxiliary percussion instruments that I use on a daily basis, but I also do a lot with voice and a lot with movement. We do a lot of dance and movement, so I do a lot of everything.

>> LISA DAMICO: Brenda says thank you so much. I teach theatre to students with autism and I'm excited to bring a tactile approach to our musical theatre curriculum, and I will also remind, for those of you who follow the VSA international blog, Jennifer is going to be featured later this week on the blog. So if you want more tips from Jennifer, it's a good place to look.

All right. Well, I am going to take control back and show my screen. So thank you so much, Jennifer, for this presentation. I think it was really informative, and I love your visuals, too. And I want to ask you, our webinar participants, to remain on the webinar a few minutes longer and complete a short evaluation survey that will open when I close the window. And thank you for joining us today. I hope you will join us again at the end of January!

So thanks, everyone. Good-bye!

[Webinar concluded]