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John F. Kennedy CENTER

Who You Are:
Social Emotional Learning
Through Self Portraits

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>> LISA DAMICO: Hello, everyone, and welcome to "Who You Are: Social Emotional Learning through Self Portraits". I'm Lisa Damico, and today's webinar is part of a monthly series that comes out of office of VSA accessibility at the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts.

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You have the ability to submit questions using the chat pane located near the bottom of the control panel, or, 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 our presenter.

I want to emphasize that following the presentation, I will send out a follow-up E-mail with the link to the recording of today's presentation, a copy of the PowerPoint, a handout of resources our presenter wants to share, and a copy of the transcript. This means you don't need to worry about frantically taking notes during the presentation.

If you're active in social media, we invite you to connect with us on Facebook, twitter and Instagram. You can also tweet or post about today's webinar using #VSA webinar. And with that, I will turn it over to Sophie. Sophie, are you there?

>> SOPHIE LUCIDO JOHNSON: Yes, I'm here. Hi.

>> LISA DAMICO: Great. We're going to turn on your Web cam.

>> SOPHIE LUCIDO JOHNSON: Hi. Welcome to "Who You Are: Social and Emotional Learning Through Self Portrait." I'm so glad that you can join me here today.

Okay. I get to show you my screen now. This is exciting.

So we're going to be going over some strategies you can use for working with kids who have emotional behavioral disturbances and other exceptionalities relating to social emotional health, and really they're strategies that would work for everybody. It's very hot where I am. I'm in New Orleans. Isn't that crazy that it's hot here? It's probably not hot where you are, but

maybe you're in New Orleans, too, and it's hot there, too. Interesting to be so far away from everybody.

Well, I'd like to go to the next slide. Oh, I did it. Just figuring things out here.

So just a little bit about me. I'm a teaching artist here in New Orleans. I have been teaching for eight years, and I'm a -- I was a special education coordinator here for three years. And then a couple of years ago, I started to design an arts integrated social emotional curriculum for kids who have PTSD and emotional behavioral disturbances, and we just released that curriculum earlier this year. It's for free. And I'll talk a little more about it later as a resource that you might be able to use. And then for my teaching artist, the artist part of it, I'm mostly a professional water color artist, but I do some other things like theatre and comedy here and there as well.

So at the webinar today, we are going to discuss the importance of self-worth. So that sort of what is so important about knowing who you are and caring about the person that you are. We're going to describe some specific strategies for working with students who have emotional differences. And just to address some of the questions I read that you posted when you registered, we're talking about everything from autism to ADHD to emotional behavioral disturbance, which is an exceptionality that children can have, or maybe just those kids that you're working with who show characteristics of some of these emotional behavioral differences, but haven't been evaluated yet. There's no limit to the kinds of people that we can work with here.

And then we're going to be able to understand the components of a unit that uses self-portraits to help students build social emotional skills. So really we're going to go over all of the components to this one unit that you can adapt to your classroom anyway that -- any way that you want.

So before we do that, it feels really important that we go over sort of the elements of -- oops, let's go back. Can I go back? Yes.

The elements of social emotional learning. And there are four. There are a lot. All together they're called emotional interactivity, but let's just talk about these primary four, and they build on each other, right? So you take one, and then you start to build the next one. You don't start at the end. The first one is foundational.

So I like to frame these like questions because it's easier for the kids to get a handle on them. So the first question is, "Who am I?" And that's sort of your self-awareness. What about you is unique, special and who are you when you are at your best. And that sort of ties in with this self-love piece that

is absolutely integral for any of the rest of this work that we are going to do on ourselves.

And then "What am I feeling?" "So what are my emotions?" And "I'm really angry" and I can identify that that's what I'm feeling or even something as simple as am I uncomfortable right now, and so we're going to talk about that a little bit right now. And how do I solve my problems? So if something comes up and I'm having some kind of conflict, do I have the strategies and skills that I need to be able to solve those problems in a way that's safe and productive and helps all parties who are involved in the problem. And then finally, how do I work with others. So that's tying everything together so that you can recognize yourself as an important part of a group and also recognize everyone else's importance in the group and sort of create a group that's greater than the sum of your parts. Wouldn't that be amazing if we could all do that? Actually, I think that these skills are skills that grown-ups have a lot of difficulty with, too, and we can't spend enough time working on any of them. But for our purposes today, we're going to be really just looking at that first one, who am I, because that's the foundation to all of the rest of it. We need that the most. We need that first and foremost.

So I want to just mention, I think sometimes, as teachers, we have a tendency when we're working with children who have disruptive behaviors to say things like they're spoiled, or they're selfish, and I think that makes a lot of sense. Part of the reason is because when you lack self-worth and you're not feeling so good about the person that you are, you seek that validation constantly from others so you might actually be talking about yourself a lot more. So you might have students who seem to only care about themselves, and that's because they are lacking a fundamental deficit, or they have a fundamental deficit and self-worth. So the picture here is of a student of mine. I'll call him Jay. And he didn't talk for the first month of school. But then, you know, started to develop some things that he was proud of about himself. And one of them was that he was very good at caring for animals, which is why there's an adorable baby bunny in that picture. Too bad bunnies have to grow up. Children, too, though.

So I like to start every session that I do with a circle. This picture shows me with seventh graders, and we are all standing in a circle. We're about to play a theatre game. We're all standing in actors neutral, which is when you have your hands sort of pressed to your sides, or they're relaxed at your sides. Your feet are hip width distance apart. Feet are flat on the floor, and I just use actors neutral in all of my classes starting with pre-K just as sort of a starting point.

So I might say actors neutral, and clap twice, which would just indicate, you know, come to this pre-established position. And I find that children really enjoy being given a term like actors neutral that we actually use in the artistic workplace because it makes them feel more confident in themselves, and something maybe a little sillier or gamier.

I always start with circles. I love them! I love circles. They're so Democratic. Everybody is an equal in a circle. You can see everybody else, and everybody can see you. Nobody is the leader. Everybody has space. And I like to use talking pieces in circles. A talking piece might be something that's very valuable to you. And when you have it, that's your opportunity to speak. And when you don't have it, that's your opportunity to listen, which is actually such a gift, to be given the chance to really listen to others, and we can reward children for being able to do that.

I always use a coconut as my talking piece because here in New Orleans, that's a very rare throw. I can't catch them myself at the Mardi Gras parade, but children give them to me sometimes and I'm very fond of them, so I pick something kind of delicate and valuable so I show the children that I really trust them with my object. And I find that they treat the talking piece with a lot of care because they know what it means to me.

I mean, that's part of what's so important about a circle is that you're a part of the circle, too, as the educational leader. You're also a member of that community. So leveling yourself, it's a very humbling place to be.

So moving in to this unit, there are four lessons that we do to start to establish a sense of self-worth. And what we start with naturally is the head. So we're going to be talking about creating self-portraits, which you could do individually, in small groups, as a whole class, in any amount of time, and we just are going to do it in parts. And it's very important that when we're making this self-portrait, that it's a project. And it's not going to be done in one session. And that's something that is incredibly important for children to learn, project-based learning helps them to build investment and the things that they are starting to create, and it makes them feel like the sense of accomplishment that comes when you finish four projects. You've been working on something for a month and now you have this beautiful work of art. So we start with the head.

There's a picture here of my student. We're going to call him "C." I'm just going to go with letters. He's got a bow tie on. He's got a very winning smile, and a very good head.

So I'm obsessed with collage. It is one of the most powerful media for an art teacher to use, if you don't know that already yet. You may. Because it's extremely cheap, and anybody can do

it and it's easy to clean up. So I go to wallpaper stores and pick up just books of wallpaper samples that I cut up and use, and they always have stuff.

Grocery stores are another good place. Libraries are often throwing away magazines and catalogs and books, and you just slash the pages out of those and hand them over to whomever it is that you -- whomever it is that you're teaching. I like to use tissue paper, construction paper. White paper. I grab paper from other teachers who are recycling paper. I gather all the paper and now I can do collage. Now I just need scissors and glue, and actually not always scissors because you can tear with collage. Collage is this amazing thing that everyone has access to. And then also I like to teach, too, this artist named Romare Bearden. There's a lot of children's books about him also. He creates an incredible amount of collages that are really nice to show to the kids so that they start to learn what collage really means, which, of course, is just assembling pieces of paper or other goods to create a new image.

So we are creating a head shape using elements of collage, and it's very important that we teach to the word "Unique." I love the word "Unique," and I love to use it as a compliment. It's one of these big, beautiful words that you can't use enough. And so often, children are taught, maybe by their peers or parents or television, or whatever it is, or teacher. I mean, we all hear this all the time, right, that to be unique might not always be such a good thing. Like we want to fit in and be like everybody else. When, in fact, the things that make us unique are so precious and important and special, and sometimes we fail to adequately celebrate that in children. So I teach this word "Unique," starting from the first lesson. I celebrate it constantly from any choice that a kid might make that is her own. I might say wow! You just cut a zigzag for your eyebrow! That's so unique! What a unique choice you just made! No one else in the room cut a zigzag for their eyebrow! And just continuing to hammer that home. And then also keeping in mind the object of the self-portrait here, for our purposes, is not to create a face that looks exactly like the child's face. I like to use mirrors and partners and pictures so that the child can start to look at what's unique about her face.

Like, I have kind of -- one side of my lip is sort of crooked, and that's something I really like about myself. It's very unique. I wear glasses. That's sort of unique. So we can talk about what's physically unique. And then we can start to build on what's emotionally unique about us.

So once I had a girl do the head project, and she just covered -- she cut out a circle, and then she just covered the head in little cut-out hearts. There were no eyes, no nose, no

mouth. And I mean, I do teach this lesson with face shapes, but she covered her picture with hearts. And I really celebrated that because to her that represented who she was. I said that's so unique! That's so yourself.

The picture on the slide is of my student "T," and she asked if we could take out a piece of parchment that day and just paint on it, and I said that is a unique idea.

Also, she has unique amounts of paint all over her fingers, which parents don't love, but I always have my students have a lot of paint on their hands all the time.

Not for this project, though, because collage, we already talked about collage.

I want to emphasize that you shouldn't over-model. And what I mean by that is that it's okay to cut out the face and to sort of model, okay, when I look in the mirror, I notice that my nose sort of looks like a triangle, so I might cut a triangle out of this paper. But I try to keep that to a minimum because I really want to encourage children to make their own choices and to feel confident in sort of the things that in regular art classes we might think of as mistakes, because really beautiful things rise up. And when we're working with children who have emotional disturbances, one of the most important things, what we're secretly trying to do is just to encourage them to feel safe in the space. We want them to feel successful.

A lot of times at school they're going in and they're doing projects that are difficult for them, and they shut down. They're not able to feel successful in the classroom, so this is an opportunity for there not to be really any wrong answers.

I would also sort of add on to that and say, you shouldn't be afraid to help, either. I think it's a mistake for us to assume that all children are always ready to make unique choices. That's really hard to make a unique choice! I mean, even as adults, we want things to look certain ways, and it's a big step to be proud of our work. It really is.

So if you have a child who says, could you draw the nose for me, and you say, oh, any nose you draw will be fine, do whatever you want, and she gets upset and crumples up her paper, don't think of that as a failure, think of it as an opportunity to draw her nose for her at that time, and then celebrate whatever it is she does on her own. So you drew the nose for her and she cut it out and you can say I love how you cut out that nose all by yourself, that was really amazing, and maybe next time you'll feel like you can draw the nose on your own, but you did one thing for yourself, and that's really pretty spectacular. So we're trying to nurture some creative spirits here, so none of the normal rules of art teaching really apply.

So then the second lesson that we do in this unit is to create the body. So the picture that's here is there's three children, and they're all gathered around a parchment paper body that they've worked together. So I have the students in a general education setting with integrated special Asian students, or students with special needs, they work as partners to trace each other's bodies. You may want to, as the teacher, trace the child's body for her, or if she doesn't have, you know, faculties to lay down on a piece of paper so that you can trace her body for her, then you might want to just sort of take a look at the body and have her guide you through the drawing process depending on where you are.

For this lesson, I had the students work with a partner with whom they felt safe, and they would trace the body on a piece of parchment paper. Later, they're going to attach the head. These children have already attached the head, so you can see how that starts to look.

Parchment paper. Oh, my goodness. What an incredible -- it is similar to collage, and a lot of schools have parchment paper. If not schools, your church might have some parchment paper. It's not that difficult to come across because it's pretty inexpensive, and it's bright, and paint looks amazing on it, and you can make big pieces of art, and I can't emphasize to you enough how amazing it is for children to have a bigger canvas. It's just this game-changer. They're used to working on 8.5 X 11 sheets of paper so when you give them something really big they get really into it because, you know, they get the idea of they're going to take it home and it's really special to them. This picture is of a group project that I did with a group of students who had emotional behavioral disturbances IEPs, and we mixed paint colors to match how different emotion words felt for us. And that's a really beautiful work of art that cost me nothing at all, and we were able to hang it up in our classroom. So parchment paper is amazing.

So for this project, for the body part of the project, I have the children lie down on the parchment paper and trace the bodies, and then they have this very large sort of representation of their body.

I also use this opportunity to teach what I think are the two most important emotional vocabulary words, which are "Comfortable" and "Uncomfortable." I really, really emphasize those and teach them for the first six weeks of school, no matter what population I'm working with. I mean, including high schoolers. Because the truth is, emotional vocabulary is tricky.

Like, right now, wherever you are in the world, it might be kind of hard for you to identify exactly what you're feeling. Like, you're listening to webinar, you might be actually sort of, you know, some sort of thinking about something else, drawing something else, and if I were to say, hey, how do you feel right now, it might be hard for you to pinpoint exactly what emotion word you're feeling. However, if I were to say, are you comfortable or uncomfortable, you could probably answer that question. We generally know if we're feeling comfortable or uncomfortable. So if you give children these two vocabulary words as tools, that really empowers them to be able to make statements to each other, and to other teachers that are going to allow them to resist having meltdowns, because when you have the language to express how you're feeling, it's just a really important deterrent to having more emotional responses to difficult situations.

So I teach comfortable and uncomfortable because when the children are tracing their bodies on the parchment paper, it's important for them to be able to tell each other, hey, I feel uncomfortable. I don't want you to trace between my legs. That would really make me feel uncomfortable. And if they can say that, we can work -- we can find a way around it. Because again, there are no wrong answers here, right?

The picture is of -- this is a later unit. We do a lot on comfortable and uncomfortable, and I have the kids make masks out of paper plates. So this is "T's". She made a comfortable and uncomfortable face mask. Paper plates are another one of those nice, cheap tricks you can use.

The other thing that I teach -- so I go comfortable, uncomfortable, unique, and then the other word that I really like and use a lot is ensemble. I do that with my hands when I teach it because it helps the kids to remember it, so I go ensemble, which means working together. I like that word. You can use whatever works for you, team or group. I like ensemble because it works towards music, dance, theatre, and all other sorts of art forms. It's a professional term that you'll use if you decide to go into one of those disciplines, so that's a really teaching point for me.

But I use the word ensemble to celebrate any time a child is successfully working with another child, or an adult, or a group of children, or a group of children and adults. So, for example, if two girls had one pair of scissors, and I saw them, I noticed them putting the scissors down and picking them up and sharing the scissors, instead of saying, I like the way you're sharing, I might say, wow, I'm going to stop class. You guys are really working as an ensemble. Who can tell me how these two girls are working as an ensemble. And since I've been

teaching ensemble, someone would say, oh, they're sharing the scissors. There's only one pair of scissors. It's really hard to share supplies. Once again, it's all about celebrating these small things that sometimes we forget to celebrate. You know, children are accomplishing really amazing things every day, sometimes, for a child who has some more extreme emotional difficulties, just listening to another child, or watching a presentation indicates that they're working as an ensemble. Sometimes being an ensemble is being an attentive audience member. So I like to teach that word. This is a picture of "J" again. It was just very exciting that he was so happy and that he was hanging out with the other kids, and it had been said that he wasn't going to ever be able to integrate with the full class, so I mean, there he is next to that little girl, and he's not hitting anybody, and he's doing really well. So he was successful at working as an ensemble that day.

So then the third lesson that we go into is the heart. And so that's like the heart objects. So now we've made the head, right? And we made the body. And now we can make a heart object. So I have the children think about an object or a person or a food or a pet that they really, really love, and then the resource I'll point you to, I actually have templates for those things if you're working with younger kids who aren't sort of so free-thinking. I have them think about something that they really love. We've been talking about our physical appearances. Now we're going to start talking about what we love. Because the things that we love, like, that's what's so special and unique about us, right? Like nothing is more amazing and precious than your ability to love stuff or people or animals. Like, that's what makes us so profoundly marvelous, so really celebrating that, like what's something you like. And then I have them create that object using the elements of collage that we've been working on so far, and then I encourage them to create an abstract object. This little girl is making sort of an abstract representation of her baby sister in warm tones of tissue paper, and I think that's very beautiful.

So that's just to speak a little bit about the power of abstract art.

I also really love abstract art for working with kids who have emotional differences because it allows them to be successful once again. When you show a child a mural for the first time, and say, you know, these guys made a lot of money making art, they start to understand art not as something that has to look a certain way, but which can express a deeper sort of sense of emotion. And kids will really latch on to that, especially if they start to sort of see it modeled for them. So I use a lot of abstract art examples, and we do a lot of talking

about sort of what do you see in this example, and we know this how we all see different things. And actually, that's kind of amazing, so here you see the girls working with the paint and creating sort of abstract line drawings, and I've just -- I've seen children who can't express their emotions with words because language is pretty inhibitive. Totally, totally just flower with the power of abstract art. This is what it feels like right now, and there's a big, red ball of fire painted in the middle of a piece of paper, and that tells me a lot. So this ability -- this sort of gives us some language, when we don't always have it.

I talked a little bit already about sort of how this allows us to go a little deeper with unique. So we're not just talking about what's physically unique. Now we're really talking about what is so unique about your heart. What really makes you a special person. And just to keep bringing back these words and celebrating the same kinds of concepts so kids can start to really feel that success and really feel it every class session so that when they leave, they're starting to get the feeling that, oh, maybe school is okay, and, like, maybe things can be okay. And what's happening is they're starting to feel comfortable in a school setting where maybe they haven't felt comfortable before. I wanted to talk a little bit about crayons and water colors, before going in to my next slide because the final project involves these media. I love crayons and water color also as another sort of like trick that I keep up my sleeve. It is that, you know, the wax in crayons, or oil pastel will push away the water color if you use those together as a mixed media, and a lot of times, with children who are not so invested in school, this is the project. Like this is the one where they just want to do it, because they'll watch you draw a shape with a white crayon and a white piece of paper and nothing pops out and then just paint over it with the water color and just, oh, see the sort of thing pop out on the paper.

So I'm going to talk -- I'm talking about that because the next project I do does sort of use language, and sometimes that can be tricky for kids. But I get the investment in there through that crayons and water color technique, and I'm happy to talk a little more about that later if folks need me to, but it's also in the lessons that I'll point you to at the end of the session.

So the way that this -- so now we've done our head, our body, and our heart object. Then I move into the name, your name, and I have them do a poem, probably as you've seen done a million times before, they line and name the letters of their names down the side of the paper, and I have them think about qualities of themselves, about themselves, that are really unique, or things

that they really love that are unique, or sentences that describe something unique about them.

So for a kid who's on a base level, maybe, she would just write a list of words that she likes, and that would be great. And for another kid who's maybe on a more advanced level, she's writing a rhyming couplet using an acrostic format. I have them do that as a draft in pencil, and then they do it with the crayons down the side of the paper, write across with the crayons across the paper and then paint over with water color. This picture is of this little girl Jomani -- oh, I said her name. She's okay. No one's upset. No last name. Who I'm just obsessed with what she did here. I mean, really just amazed, because she got done with her acrostic, and then thought I need to put my fingers in the water color and then just smear it all over the paper, and that's just really embracing her art, and she's really into it. And she really has her fingers into her art and I don't know if you can see, but she was really experiencing a lot of joy, and that was something really new for her, so that was a fun project for that day.

This allows -- this project, the acrostic allows us to go deeper with self-awareness and it really allows us to work with the different levels that kids might be at. So self-love is one of those things that we are just constantly working on. And as adults, we are also working on it because, you know, sometimes you just want to blame yourself for something that went wrong. I would say most of the time. And really, this is a pretty normal reaction to things going wrong.

And children are exactly the same and they might not be saying it with their words, they may be defending themselves or not saying anything, but, you know, when they're having these meltdowns, what's going on for a lot of kids is that they're really blaming themselves. They're feeling really bad about the person that they are, or they're sort of unaware of speaking of children with more cognitive difficulties, unaware of sort of themselves as they are in the context of the rest of the world. That's just to say we use this opportunity to have some language so that kids who are ready can start to explore a little more about what's really special about them, and kids who aren't ready can really just explore how they have their own name.

The picture of a kid holding a heart that he drew outside, and starting to feel some comfortable, positive emotion.

I just want to reiterate that the whole point here is that there are no wrong answers, right? That children actually really need to hear that. They need to know that sometimes for some things, you can't get them wrong. And that's not to say that you shouldn't be developing an art form like a real -- you know, a real artist might. If you go to art school, someone's

going to tell you that the line you drew was wrong. And that's important. That's how you develop a craft. But that's not really the point here. We're exposing children to some -- we're exposing them to some visual arts and theatre vocabulary words and teaching them some of the skills and concepts, but what we're actually doing is just really trying to ease their transition into a classroom setting, and that's really the purpose, and to start to develop the social emotional skills that are so often missing and are not taught at school. They really don't have the opportunity to do this stuff as much as we would like to think that they do. They are really doing a lot of test prep no matter who they are, and they are not -- they're not getting a chance to not be wrong. We're going to give them the opportunity to not be wrong.

This is a picture of "T," and she was showing you what it feels like when she feels shy, and it's, as you can see, an abstract work of art, and that's the kind of thing I would celebrate the heck out of. I just think this is really amazing. "T" was actually able to articulate to me that, you know, she's the red dot in the middle and there are sort of shells of fear around her, something very profound, like, how do six-year-olds even think of smart things like that. She's a genius. But even if she couldn't explain it to me with her words, I would still really celebrate that. You respected the supplies, you used all these amazing lines and colors! You wrote the word "Shy," and that's worth celebrating! Way to go!

One more thing I want to add is about a day I always integrate into any unit, and I call it UFO Day. I actually learned that from a woman who taught me how to knit socks. She had one session where she said UFO day, we're all going to finish our socks, and I liked it, so I stole it from her. This is a day when we finish all the unfinished objects, all the things that we haven't done so far that we really were itching to do and oh, man, we had to put them away because the 40 minutes were up. This is the day. I used parchment paper again to have the kids create a really easy makeshift portfolio. You just take a sheet of parchment paper, fold it in half and tape the sides so that they can hold anything in it and then on days when they finish early, they can just decorate that portfolio to their heart's content. And everyone always has something to do. For this project, some children will want to color in their body drawings and some children are going to want to cut them out. Both are fine. I give a full 60 minutes to this. This is actually one of the most important days in the unit and there's no lesson plan to speak of. The kids love it. You see this little girl on UFO day totally finishing her drawing. So these lesson plans are all online and they're totally free. We

developed this curriculum because in New Orleans it didn't exist. There just wasn't a free curriculum that was really targeting children who had some more severe social emotional differences, and so I worked with some art therapists, child psychologists, teachers, parents, kids, a lot of different people to ensure that this would be relevant and useful and we were measuring to see if the amount of behavior referrals for the kids who were doing these projects would go down, and we found that they really did significantly. Now, I'm not going to bore you with all the data, but if you go over to kidsmart.org, click on the button at the bottom that says "With feeling," there are full lesson plans with national art standards, social emotion standards, and adjustments for K1. These are second grade level directions I gave you, but you could adjust for K1 or up to 3 and 4. And they're all in PDF format. So all of the things from the self-portrait are from unit 1. You can have those, download them, and all of the supplemental principles that you could possibly need are also there. It's just -- and I want to just also mention, it will prompt you for your E-mail address, and that's just because we would have liked to continue to get feedback and make sure this is helpful, but nobody is profiting and everybody just wants to just be happy.

Okay. Noises. Oh, I -- that's sort of the end, so I'm going to turn it back over to Lisa and Rachel, I think.

>> LISA DAMICO: Yep. We've had a few questions that have come in. That was a great presentation. I think everyone loved it, and have a new free resource. That's even better.

So first question is why are you using -- or you talked about abstract art, and so why did you mention that? Why is that an option? What's the value of abstract art?

>> SOPHIE LUCIDO JOHNSON: Sure. I used abstract art because abstract art in a unique way doesn't have to look any particular way. And I think that I find that the shutdown that most people, and, frankly adults, have around art is that it doesn't look right. This isn't what I wanted it to look like. I can't draw. I want to do a dog but it looks like a blob. And abstract art, I mean, with the understanding that abstract art is an amazing art form that people cultivate and work at for their entire lives, and, like, children who draw a splotch on a page are not fully grasping what abstract art means, we can use it as a tool to get them past that "I can't draw" stage and sort of move them into a world of being able to express themselves a little more, embrace sort of their unique emotional visual output, and really, anybody can create it. I've worked with kids who barely have functioning hands who, like, you know, are not able to hold a writing supply who can grasp the concept of

abstract art and feel real liberated by it not having to look a certain way.

>> LISA DAMICO: Thank you. Our next question comes from Gary. Do you consider this art therapy -- and this is -- there's a couple parts to this question, so I can either split them up. I'll give you the whole question and you can answer if you want.

>> SOPHIE LUCIDO JOHNSON: Give me the whole thing.

>> LISA DAMICO: Okay. Do you think this is art therapy? When you see something that is emotionally troubling, how do you handle it? Do you talk to them about it? Ask them to do a follow-up artwork that addresses the issue, or something else?

>> SOPHIE LUCIDO JOHNSON: This is not art therapy. Art therapy is about sort of dealing with your, like, specific emotional -- specific traumatic or emotional occurrences in your life through drawing or art or processing through art. And this isn't so much about processing through art as it is arts integration, we're using an art concept to, like, help us understand social emotional learning goals so if we think about arts integration, normally with objects like science or math, just replace the content area with social emotional learning goals because we are really building on some emotional standards that exist in the world. And actually, sort of align to some of the social studies standards that you'll find in different states, grade level expectations.

So it's different. But it definitely uses art therapy. Like some of the concepts. And we worked with an art therapist while developing the curriculum, but art therapy requires some really specific components, and this is not that. We are teachers. We are special educators. A lot of us. Some of us are working in other settings and we're really just trying to think about social and emotional learning as an objective, or as objectives that we can sort of start to integrate some art to help us access that knowledge and internalize it.

When I see something emotionally troubling happening, I am of the school of thought of the center for restorative approaches, which I did not go over in this, although it is in the curriculum, so that is something -- a conflict has happened, and this is preventative. So what we talked about today, these are all preventative skills that we're hoping to sort of help kids not have outbursts that, when they do happen, how can we fix them restoratively. I wouldn't have them do an art project, if you're talking about a conflict between two people, I would really need to bring them both into a circle. I bring in the parents and, you know, we'd repair there. Probably not the space to talk about it right now, but I'd be happy to talk more with you about it if you want to E-mail me and talk about

conflict resolution. But again, this is sort of preventative. And I think the point that is most important here is that we are teaching to specific social emotional skill objectives.

>> LISA DAMICO: Thank you. Two-part question from Martina. One, what was the name of the collage artist you mentioned?
Romeo --

>> SOPHIE LUCIDO JOHNSON: R-o-m-a-r-e B-e-a-r-d-e-n. He is an amazing African-American artist who has created extraordinary works of collage, and there are lots of books intended for children that have a lot of his work in them.

>> LISA DAMICO: Great. And then Martina says that she is a music teacher. Have you ever extended your work to include music?

>> SOPHIE LUCIDO JOHNSON: Yes. We did a unit once, and I -- where we did basically the same thing, but I worked with -- I integrated with a local jazz musician, which I'm so lucky I live in a place where I can integrate with a local jazz musician, but he came into the classroom and we worked to write songs about ourselves, so it was sort of just like a portrait and song, and, you know, we built on the same things. I would say the same elements apply. You have to have it be a project. It has to go week to week. It's not just going to happen all at once and we're still recognizing what's really unique. So if you wanted to instead of create a space, like a whole body visual representation of yourself, what it was for us was what does that sound like of the sound scape, and then we had him play clarinet using percussion instruments and making voice noises and sort of like, you know, singing words that felt unique to them, and it was amazing. I should have a music video because it was really cool. But anyway, yes, all of the same principles apply. We are just encouraging children to focus on what's unique about them. So what about a self-portrait and song? I would love to see it. I think it would be cool.

>> LISA DAMICO: Those are all of the questions that have come in so far.

>> SOPHIE LUCIDO JOHNSON: Great.

>> LISA DAMICO: All right. Well, I think with that, we will wrap it up. I'm going to take the control back from you, Sophie.

>> SOPHIE LUCIDO JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you all so much. It was such a joy to be able to know you're out there doing great work with children.

>> LISA DAMICO: It was a joy for us to have you presenting, sharing all of your pictures and lesson plans and resources. And going back to my screen.

And so, with that I'd like 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 you close the window. Rachel and I, we definitely read your answers, and now you have your Web cam, so we can see you now Sophie.

>> SOPHIE LUCIDO JOHNSON: Oh, it wasn't working?

>> No. No.

>> SOPHIE LUCIDO JOHNSON: Oh, no! I did all the things with my hands!

>> LISA DAMICO: You were on such a roll; we didn't want to stop you.

>> SOPHIE LUCIDO JOHNSON: Oh, sorry.

>> LISA DAMICO: Rachel and I are starting to go through all of the data that we collected from our last season so we definitely value that and take it into account as we try to plan the best webinar season yet. So you'll see that when you end. And with that, thank you. A big thank you to Sophie. This was great. And a big thank you to all of our participants for joining us today. We hope you will join us again next month.

So with that, I will say good-bye.

[Webinar concluded].