

**ROUGH EDITED COPY**  
**The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts**  
**JFK Center-The Teacher and the Teaching Artist: Collaboration and Community**  
**Building in the Classroom**  
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>> Hello everyone and welcome. I am Jenna Gabriel, and today's webinar is called "The Teacher and the Teaching Artist: Collaboration and Community Building in the Classroom." If you would like to view a live stream captioning, you can follow the link you see on the slide and on the chat box located to the right side of your screen. Before we get started, let's touch base on the go-to webinar control panel. This can be hidden by clicking on the orange arrow. If you need to leave, you can leave by clicking on the X in the upper right hand corner. You can catch up on any parts you miss. You can connect through your telephone or through your computer's microphone and speakers. If you are calling in from your telephone, please make sure and mute your speakers.

You can submit questions or answer questions in the chat pane of you control panel. I will monitor the chat throughout the webinar. If you prefer to speak your input rather than typing, please click on the raise your hand icon on the control panel and I will touch base with you and unmute your microphone at the appropriate time. You will have a few opportunities to participate during the webinar. There will be polls which you will be prompted to respond to on your screen. We will also have the opportunity for questions once Nancy and Chad's presentation has concluded. During the open-ended question and answer time, please click on the raise your hand icon or type your thoughts into chat.

Within the week, we will send out a follow-up e-mail, a copy of the Power Point, the hand-outs and a copy of the transcript. This means that you can go back to watch the recording and review any materials in addition to any notes you take during the webinar itself. Next month launches a new format. A month-long series of weekly lightning talks. This format called "Voices from The Field" will offer the opportunity to hear perspective from experts in our field. November's topic is teaching students with autism, and will include lightning talks using theater practices and social skills intervention for young people with autism. In the final talk we will talk about how the findings can impact classroom. These talks will take place on Tuesdays throughout November except Thanksgiving week at 12:30pm EST. You can register for the series now by following

the link on the slide.

If you are active on social media, I encourage you to connect with us. We would love to engage with you. With that, I would like to turn it over to today's presenters, Chad and Nancy. Take it away.

>> CHAD: Thank you, Jenna. Let's just get this started. All right. I think we are good to go. Welcome everyone. Welcome teaching artists, teachers, administrators, and anyone else who is tuning in to today's webinar. We are beaming to you directly from Brooklyn, New York, and we are here today to share with you the six characteristics of a successful collaboration between the teaching artist and the classroom teacher. Before we get this webinar underway, we would like to introduce ourselves as your presenters as well as get an idea of the background of everyone participating in today's webinar.

>> NANCY: I am Nancy Volante. My disciplines are dance, theater, and writing. My specialty, of course, is in this webinar, too, is special education, middle school and inclusion.

>> CHAD: Hi. I am Chad Hamilton. I've been a special education teacher for the last 11 years here in Brooklyn. I am part of district 75, which I may have to take a minute to explain as that may be an entity that is new to many people tuning in today. District 75 is very unique in that it is a very large city-wide special education district here within New York City. It's comprised of over 50 school organizations located at over 300 sites throughout all five boroughs. That includes the Bronx, Manhattan, Queens and Staten Island. The students that we serve are -- they include students with autism, intellectual disabilities, emotional behavioral disorders, hearing or vision impairment, as well as students with multiple handicaps. Sometimes you'll probably hear me referring to 12 to 1 to 1 or 6 to 1 to 1 classrooms. Whenever I refer to those types of classrooms, I'm referring to the classroom ratio. So when I say 12 to 1 to 1, I mean 12 students with one teacher and a minimum of one classroom Paraprofessional. If I make mention of a 6 to 1 to 1, I am speaking of six students, one teacher and one paraprofessional. Nancy and I have been fortunate to work together for several years. I think I first had her in my classroom, wow, like maybe six or --

>> NANCY: Yeah.

>> CHAD: Or seven years ago. We've collaborated several times throughout the years. Today we will be sharing with you some of the strategies that we have developed in our collaborations. But, before we get into that, we wanted to know the background of everyone participating in today's webinar.

>> NANCY: So what is your professional background? Teaching artist? Classroom teacher? Administrator? Education director?

>> CHAD: This is just to give us an idea of who we are speaking to today.

Operator: We'll give you about 30 seconds more to respond. So I'm going to go ahead and share out the results. We had a couple people know that they are outliers in this, but no less valuable to our community. We have a speech and language pathologist as well as parents joining us.

>> CHAD: That's great.

>> NANCY: That's wonderful.

Operator: Nancy and Chad, do you want me to launch the next one as

well?

>> CHAD: Yes, please. So our next question is how many years have you worked in the special education setting?

Operator: All right.

>> CHAD: Thank you very much. We're having a moment of technical difficulty in that we cannot see the results of the poll.

Operator: I'm going to go ahead and narrate. So you have a really nice mix. About 45% of you identified as teaching artist, 9% as classroom teachers, 31% as administrators, and 18% as education directors. Again, recognizing that we've got a couple folks representing our service providers and our families.

And relative to years, you've got, again, a really nice spread. About 10% who are early career professionals with one year of experience and about the same amount with five years' experience. About 24% have in the two to three year range and about half of your participants have been working in special ed for seven or more years.

>> CHAD: Excellent. Thanks. We really do have a broad range of background and years of experience. So that's exciting to have such a great mix with us today.

>> NANCY: So we wanted to -- I want to go over the take aways today from the webinar. So one is six characteristics defined of a collaboration and relationship with teaching artists and teachers and service providers. How to build and sustain the six characteristics. Outcomes from the six characteristics are present.

The six characteristics of a successful collaboration and the first one, and very important one is trust. Seeking input from one another and allowing one another to do their jobs without overbearing oversight. And here, one of the biggest characteristics that fit into that definition is listening. It's about active listening to each other and seeing where they're coming from in a classroom and school culture and really listening to how their students are learning, what the needs of the students are, and a lot of the behavioral strategies that might have to take place in order to keep the whole thing going.

>> CHAD: To chime in as a classroom teacher, I know that trust is something that many teachers may have to struggle with especially when someone new is coming into the classroom. This idea of doing our job without unnecessary oversight is a primary concern. So often when a teacher is meeting the teaching artists for the first time, there are concerns of trust and who is this person in my classroom, what is their role here? What are they doing?

>> NANCY: And I want to add, Chad, you will probably hear me say this a lot. You know, I'm going to direct this towards the teaching artists for a moment. We come in as the outsiders and we want to help build the community with the residency or the project that we're doing for the particular school. So as an outsider coming in, it's very important to listen and to look and to really have your observation skills, you know, really, really at the forefront, you know?

>> CHAD: That's a very good point. The second characteristic is diversity. Of course in New York City and in many cities throughout the country we're going to have diversity in student populations, but we're talking about diversity today, we're really speaking to difference in thinking and difference in opinions. We would say that diversity expands the number of potential outcomes and potential solutions and

enables everyone in the collaboration to learn from one another.

>> NANCY: That diversity is about lightbulbs going off, you know? As you're both talking, you know the teaching artists and the teacher, you know, paraprofessionals, even, everybody's talking. Everybody's having their light bulbs go off and you have to make space and room for that. We encourage everyone to have a voice and express ideas without ridicule or criticism. That is, again, about listening. You know, taking in -- you know, even if, and we've all been through this before. Somebody will say something and it doesn't really resonate with how your teaching practices or how you communicate. But if you take a moment and I'm going to say it because it's true. If you take a moment, take a breath, and take that in for a moment and digest, there's where conversations take place. There's where ideas and a place where everybody has a voice in order to express his or her ideas.

>> CHAD: Next is interrelatedness, which we define as understanding and being understanding and sensitive to the goal at hand. And also being aware of how your work can affect the work of the teaching artists. And vice versa how that work can affect that of the -- not just of the classroom teacher but any paraprofessionals in the room. Any related service providers such as speech pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, any of those professions that maybe pushing into the -- during one of these teaching artist class periods. Enrichment art-based opportunities.

This all comes back to what we spoke about earlier about trust. I feel that at first when the teacher is leading the teaching artist, they're still trying to figure each other out and figure out what is going to be the most effective way for us to collaborate in the classroom and what is going to be the most effective way for us to present our students with new and different learning tonights

>> NANCY: I want to say one thing, the goal at hand. Even though there's a goal that the teachers and teaching artists want to accomplish, I think it's really important for them to talk about the process. So we really can't get to the goal unless we're really deeply invested in the process of what we're doing.

>> CHAD: Thanks, Nancy.

>> NANCY: Respect. Interactions that are considerate, honest, and authentic. Being willing to change and shift in the midst of conflict and problem solve with tactfulness. I think that we all know what that's all about. And I think that we've all been in situations where, you know, the population that we work with, things can shift quickly, and we need together to think on our feet and to be considerate. Sometimes if things are not going smoothly, we need to go back and let the classroom teacher get his or her classroom under control. Do you agree, Chad?

>> CHAD: Absolutely. And that's something that, you know, the classroom teacher, I think, is always very concerned about. Maintaining order, protocols and routines that are already in place in the classroom. Even when the teaching artist is present, I think the teacher is always trying to keep an eye on things and trying to make sure that everything continues to run smoothly.

>> NANCY: And I have to say another thing. I think I have done this with you, Chad, and probably, I'm sure, I know with other teachers. Sometimes when maybe a teaching artist has an idea and wants to see if they can maybe take something in a different direction, I know that at first, I really always turn to the classroom teacher

and you know, I'm curious. I'm curious, do you think that we might be able to do this? It's good to create a shift in the class. It's not always easy for everyone in the room, but it's so good for the student. And really, that's why we're there.

>> CHAD: And of course a big part of respect is going to be effective communication. When you're communicating with each other effectively, you will be communicating through multiple channels. One channel is what we call a rich channel of communication. That can include face to face interaction. It can also include telephone conversations. Another channel of effective communication would be what we refer to as a lean channel of communication. That can include e-mails, text messages, communicating through Facebook or if you're of my age, instant messenger if that even still exists. I have no idea. That's one thing that you always have to take into consideration, what are the preferences of the classroom teacher when communicating. Some teachers may prefer that face to face in the moment communication with the teaching artist, whereas others may be -- they may want some time to themselves to reflect upon what happens during that period with the teaching artist, and then communicate via e-mail or through Facebook or text messages. Most likely e-mail, though.

>> NANCY: I think it's mostly e-mail. We're all busy. It's hard to do telephone conversations. Face to face is always great, and of course, we will talk about this later. Face to face is nice if you have a planning meeting that you can, you know, talk with the teacher first. Talk with the teaching artist first. But you know, that communication is so important to really keep that as clear as you can. And as mindful as you can.

>> CHAD: Absolutely. So, now we're moving on to a question that we have that Nancy and I will start to answer. How do we build and sustain the characteristics for the collaboration and work relationship?

>> NANCY: The first one, professionalism, the teaching artist enters the classroom essentially as I said before, as an outsider. So you're coming in as an outsider. Those first two visits, as we know, the first two visits are really about observing and really taking note if you can. You know? If there's a possibility of talking to the kids. And just really understanding what the inner workers of that classroom is. And really starts when you walk in the door. You see what the culture of the classroom is.

Observing the way students and teachers work together as well as examining the contributions is very important. I will say that again. As well as examining the contributions of a paraprofessionals and related service providers. I know for myself, and for Chad here too, when you go into a classroom, there can be a lot of people working in special ed and inclusion. That's a big dance to partake in. So examine and observe.

>> CHAD: Absolutely. And I do think it's important to rely on paraprofessionals as sources of information. They typically spend more time with the students than anyone else in the school, even more time with the students than the actual classroom teacher. And I often feel that paraprofessionals and their expertise is often overlooked. I feel like when the teaching artist opens up that line of communication with the paraprofessional, it can inform their practice that much more.

>> NANCY: And it gives everybody a space to know that they're important in the classroom. Everybody's there to do a specific job. And when you can

start leading those jobs in a way that helps the kids to take risks, to, you know, chances in learning, then the whole process is more complete.

>> CHAD: That's a good point. As for the teachers' part in this, in terms of professionalism, obviously the teacher is always going to be working to maintain the culture of the classroom, maintain classroom expectations such as the structure of the day, the structure of where kids are situated within the classroom. We want the teacher to give up some of that control and share the space with the teaching artist. Of course, there will be conflict. That's inevitable. We're all human. But if we're being professional, then we're looking at conflict as a way for us to learn from each other and to learn from experience and to go deeper into the learning process. And we want to be not taking things personally. We want to be moving forward in the relationship and continuing the collaboration even when it is difficult. That's when planning meetings with the teaching artist and teacher are essential.

>> NANCY: I love planning meetings. Sometimes in our residencies and projects that we do when teaching artists go into a school, I think it's happening more and more when planning meetings are being integrated into the process. It's important. That's really where the foundation begins are those planning meetings. It's where you get to know each other as not just teachers and not just classroom teachers but as people asking -- having small talk. And that's where, you know, there is going to be conflict. I take conflict as a way to, like Chad said, go deeper into the learning process to learn. It's hard. It's something that one has to be conscious of and learn. Just as we learn how to have a successful collaboration, there's also room for learning about a collaboration that has conflict. Because there's conflict there because there's passion. That's what I feel sometimes.

>> CHAD: Right.

>> NANCY: We are passionate about what we do.

>> CHAD: Very much so. It's a very deep investment in what we're all doing, especially in special education when the needs of our students are often times so much more pronounced. Conflict is inevitable.

Moving along, into our next area is pedagogy, this is one of the characteristics that we would want to certainly have in place in our successful working relationship.

So obviously when we're talking about pedagogy in terms of the teacher, we're talking, I think, about the teacher's relatively deep understanding of the personality and the learning characteristics of each child in the classroom. Even if it's a teacher who is new to that group of students for that school year, usually within, my feeling, usually within one to two months of working with those kids, the teacher has a relatively good idea of what is going to be the most successful way of reaching those students. The teacher will also have developed some understanding of what teaching strategies and what methodologies have proven to be most effective for each student in the classroom.

>> NANCY: The teaching artist is also keen with natural insight into the classroom with the strategies they've learned how to work with, you know? The different learning styles that they look at as far as theater goes, as far as dance goes, a lot of the kids are they static? Are most of the kids visual? Auditory? Or are they more vocal? Or how can you take three of those things and place them in the art form that you're going to be teaching. That's knowing how to break your art form down into the tiniest basic form so you can integrate and find entry points.

You know, really accelerating hopefully the outcome of students.

>> CHAD: And a big part of that is moving into collaboration, which we've already touched upon quite a bit. Be if you're collaborating effectively, then you're maintaining that open dialogue between the teacher and the teaching artist is -- it's really essential so that we can share what students have been learning across curricula. The teachers should really be informing the teaching artist, this is what we've been doing this month this is what we have been doing this week. This is what we're doing today. I think by making the teaching artist very aware of what goes on in the day to day running of the classroom.

Another very important piece to this is that the teacher should also be sharing what the students will be learning about in the future as well as any current challenges, any areas of strength that the students are experiencing. And also, I think presenting the teaching artist with some areas of where the teacher has had difficulty so that the teaching artist can really be there in a support role and help the classroom teacher troubleshoot some possible solutions to these problems. Hopefully in so doing this, the teacher will start to view the teaching artist as someone who's really there to enhance student learning.

>> NANCY: This is where the collaboration for me gets very rich and deep. You're not so much walking parallel with each other any more. Now you've really got to weave together to be able to -- like, for instance, now that he or she has been in the class, that idea will morph and maybe change. You have to -- and I know that you all know this -- to be so adapt at your craft that you can integrate that art form. And I said this before. I think it's okay to say it again. I think it's really important to integrate your art form on the most basic level. That you can unpack your art form in order for the kids to start to explore, to start to be curious. And also to blend in with the work the teacher is trying to teach and give to her students as well. So, you're looking at the -- you're looking and hearing and feeling and describing all those things and you are finding the essence of what the teacher is trying to teach and I'm not saying that this is 100%, but, you know, it's worked for me in the past and sometimes it's the opposite. Sometimes it goes to the classroom teacher, you know? Your English lesson is known so well, that you can say oh, I know where something can fit into that.

>> CHAD: Exactly. That's certainly something I've experienced so many times, especially when watching Nancy work with my students. Even if I don't necessarily have something to bring in that moment during that creative project. Or as part of an ELA unit or part of my math unit. And that I feel has been -- definitely something that has improved my own effectiveness as a teacher. Now we actually have a question that we're going to present to our audience. So, the question that we have is do any of you have of you have suggestions for how to move through conflict within a collaboration?

>> This is a unique opportunity in our webinars to attempt to mimic that classroom and in-person professional development environment. So Chad and Nancy are inviting your hands to be raised or if you would like to put things in through the question or chat panel, I'm happy to narrate them. We're going to try our best to facilitate a little bit of a dialogue over this.

All right. So Mya, I see your hand is up. I'm going to unmute your microphone. And you are good.

>> MYA: Hi. How is everyone? In pondering this question about moving through conflict within a collaboration, there are a couple of things that come to mind for me that have been really helpful in the past. And that is first trying to have a dialogue with just the participants in the collaboration. So in this case, just the teaching artist and classroom teacher. It should be initiated by one of those parties, and to have it be a dialogue that is approached from a listen, I just want to hear what your thoughts are about what's happening in the classroom. Because I find that often conflict comes up when people are not communicating. And being very open and honest through that.

For some people, that can always be a challenge. I it's something that everyone is constantly working on improving for themselves. And if that first step doesn't prove effective because one of the parties is perhaps a little resistant to moving through the conflict, reaching out to the next person that can help mediate, whether that is an administrator at your arts partner or the AP or liaison at the school to sort of help all of the goals that each party has for the residency or come to fruition.

>> NANCY: Was your name Mya? Thank you so much for that. It's really, you know, you've said everything that we've been saying. The webinar is about going deeper and working together to remember all of the aspects of communication. Because really collaboration is about communication. So it's remembering all of those different aspects and just being very mindful and noticing where to impart the communication or maybe not. It's a place of pause, if you will. So thank you. Yeah.

>> CHAD: And I do feel that Mya brings up a good point, if at all possible to have that initial meeting take place before we have the students present, to have that initial meeting with the professionals that will be involved in this creative endeavor. Often times if you're all thrown together, meeting each other for the first time with all the kids in the room, that can certainly make introductions and immediate communication very, very complicated to say the least.

>> NANCY: Thank you for chiming in. That was great.

>> CHAD: Thanks for sharing.

>> NANCY: Would you also --

Operator: We have a couple that I wanted to share with you through the chat pane. People said to ask questions like how would you do it? And then to use active listening and reflecting on the goals of the partnership. And someone also shared that they feel that taking an attitude where you don't have ground or territory to protect could produce results and be proactive.

>> NANCY: That's really beautiful. Absolutely. Thank you.

>> CHAD: Thank you.

Okay. So now we are moving on to some flexibility. Obviously flexibility is a trait that every classroom teacher must possess. But I think in special education, it can be sometimes a little bit more difficult just because the working with populations within a special education setting, we are adhering to routines and protocols that we have put in place for our students. So when working with the teaching artist, the classroom teacher really has to have an interest and willingness to be open to incorporating the creative and expressive methodologists that are presented by the teaching artists. Also, the classroom teacher has to be more willing to allow the classroom culture and classroom expectations to become more elastic. And also the classroom teacher has to really cultivate a curiosity about what else he or she could learn about students with the help

of the teaching artist and of the teaching artist pedagogy and methodologists

>> NANCY: And the flexibility of the teaching artist comes in, you know, you come in with a project in mind, and you know, just being really open to how your students can accomplish that. To be willing to be flexible in many different ways and not getting too attached to the vision and final outcome.

>> CHAD: Our fifth characteristic or trait is creativity. In terms of how creativity manifests in the teacher, really the teacher should be aware to take concepts and principles that are presented by the teaching artists and be -- be confident enough to put his or her own spin on these concepts, to engage the students. Ultimately a collaboration is not going to be that effective if the teaching artist comes in, spends one period a week, maybe at best five periods a week presenting students with this creative project, but then when the teaching artist leaves, the teacher does nothing with that. That, to me, is -- it's a waste of resources.

And really what the teacher should be trying to do is to try to determine, well, what aspects of the teaching artist methodology can I incorporate into my own practice? How can I use this when I'm teaching ELA or math or social studies? How can I use the teaching artist's expertise to expand my own practice?

>> NANCY: So I think the mindset of the teaching artist and everybody, but bestowing the idea that creativity will only enhance and move things forward for learning, education and socialization in the classroom as a whole experience.

So thinking of creativity not as a -- it can be. It goes both ways. Is it an art project or is it about communication or socialization? What is it that the class needs? What is it that you are bringing to the table? Just knowing that creativity is bigger than just our disciplines.

Trust. We go back to trust again. I think that, you know, building a community is all about trust and active listening and communication and kind of all the things that we've talked about, you know? When somebody doesn't feel included, it's nice to stop and talk if you have that amount of time. But it's really being included. That sums up that everybody matters and everybody's voice is present.

>> CHAD: Right and I think this is something that I mentioned earlier, which is that trust can be something that's difficult for classroom teachers. I feel especially so for special education teachers. I feel we are, by and large, very protective of our students and protective of the protocols and routines that we have in place. That we often times believe are the most beneficial ways to be reaching our students. Yeah, trust is definitely something that we struggle with.

>> NANCY: And it's a big one. I think sometimes for me, and I'll just -- something that I pull out of my tool box is small talk. You know? Before I go in and start like wanting to teach and rearrange and do all of this, you know? Small talk. How are you? You know? With the kids I'll sometimes ask what they had for breakfast. The smallest things that build community builds trust.

>> CHAD: It's a good way to show that you're invested in the school community even though you may be relatively new to that space. Just by communicating with people and relating to them on a very day to day human level, so that you have a genuine interest in being there. I do feel that that makes a really big difference. And also I feel that another thing that the teacher really needs to do is when working with the teaching artist is being willing to follow some of the suggestions that

the teaching artist present. I think the teacher needs to be more willing to just go with it and trust in the expertise of the teaching artist.

>> NANCY: I have to say thank you, Chad. And you know, it goes both ways, too. It's all about learning from each other. When you're really learning from each other, like Chad said, invested, and this will lead into our next topic, the kids are going to -- you're going to see the kids blossom. You're going to start to see the kids have ah-ha moments even through conflict.

>> CHAD: Absolutely. This brings us to our final trait or characteristic, which is something -- like this one I always view as an easy one because I feel this is something that is so apparent in so many of the people that I work with whether it's teaching artists, paraprofessionals, related service providers, this idea of altruism, there's a real commonality between us in what we're doing when we're working with the students. We're all there to make a difference and to do the best that we can for our students. And I feel that when the teaching artist comes into the classroom, it's really to create a change or a shift. To make everyone feel comfortable. To make people feel supported and safe so that they feel free to express themselves and to be creative.

You know, also, I feel that when we come into the classroom, we ideally are coming in with the best version of ourselves. So that we can inspire not only the students but so that we can inspire each other to do better.

>> NANCY: I like what Chad said about changing and shifting and the reason why you have an outsider come into your classroom is to create some kind of change or shift. That's not always easy for the kids in special ed. That's a real risk. And an area where if the collaboration is solid and working, you know, the kids can feel comfortable, the students can feel comfortable in that shift. And that's where the commonality between the teaching artist and the classroom teacher is really important, you know?

>> CHAD: Absolutely. And that brings us to, you know, the final point that we want to make. When this collaboration is really effective, when all of these traits and characteristics are in place, when we're firing on all cylinders, we'll see that the proof is in the pudding. We'll see it in the students. And in the staff.

And really, the entire classroom community, if what we're doing is effective, then students will feel safe. Students will feel supported. And they'll feel very confident and very -- they will be a lot more ready to express themselves in the classroom setting

>> NANCY: I think if they're willing to express themselves they're feeling safe and feeling like oh, we have two teachers in here now that are going to teach us something, you know? I feel really comfortable now because now I can do my English. But I can draw a picture, you know? I can tell a story but I can move. You know? And that's where the outcome of the collaboration get really, really rich. And that's when education changes and shifts.

>> CHAD: Absolutely. You start to see what happens during the creative project with the teaching artist. You start to see some of those outcomes, some of the modes expression starting to transition over into other subjects and during other times of the day. And that's when you know that your collaboration has really been successful.

We do have another question for the audience. That is what are some outcomes you have experienced in a collaboration with a classroom teacher or with a teaching

artist?

Operator: I'm going to look for anyone that wants to raise their hand via the icon on your screen or if you want to type in a comment into the chat or question box. Great, Letecia, I see your hand. I'm going to unmute your microphone. And you are good.

>> I didn't know my hand was up, but that's okay. I was just thinking about a collaboration I had a number of years ago. He had a tender heart, and it was a male teacher, with his tender heart to include every student in this particular art residency. I'm a story teller. So the students were creating their own stories and telling them. And even though some of these kids were at great risk, and he explained some of their circumstances where they came from difficult situations. They felt safe enough that they were willing to try -- because he had created that experience and he had talked to me about it, about some of the kids and the experiences so that I was aware and could tread not -- not -- I don't know. Carefully sounds a little too much. But at least that I would know some of the challenges that they had. And watching those kids support each other, watching a young boy with autism who communication was such a challenge for him, for him to become the star. Had the teacher not prepared the students to trust each other, and in collaboration, he opened up his classroom and told me about some of the classroom rituals that they had so that I could do things, I was giving different views and try some new things, the risk that the students took and how they supported this autistic boy, the next year, I was able to go back in the next grade level up, they wanted a second experience for these students. So I didn't have the same teacher, but I had some of the same students. Most of them were the same. They kept referring back to that experience that they had had in that particular classroom and about that boy.

It was very memorable and never would have happened without the teacher and I working together.

>> That's great. What was your name? Letecia? That's great. That's something that we have all had a highlight of that in our teaching practice on both sides of the coin. Thank you for sharing that. When you have moments like that, build on that. We keep building and building. When conflict does come up, we know, you know, it's a little easier to digest and communicate.

>> CHAD: Thank you so much for that. This really brings us down to the wire. We only have perhaps a few more minutes. Unless we're able to stick around a little longer to answer any questions anyone may have or talk about concerns or interesting points that people want to bring up. But this pretty much concludes our webinar unless you guys have any questions for us.

Operator: Great. Chad and Nancy, thank you so much. This brings us to the questions portion of our webinar. If you haven't already, now is the time to enter a question or raise your hand.

I'll share while we wait for questions to start coming in, we did have someone share an example from the last prompt. They wrote a student asked if they could write an answer to a prompt in a classroom as a monologue after one of their first workshops with us and the classroom teacher commented that it was a student who she often believed was not listening. It was obviously a strong entry point for that student in expressing their thoughts on the classroom subject.

>> NANCY: That's fantastic.

>> CHAD: That's brilliant. That's one of I'm sure many examples of a time when a teaching artist presents the teacher with a new strategy that can be used to reach our students.

Operator: Great. Another question, you mention earlier that paraprofessionals can be a wealth of information. How and when do you suggest connecting? In my experience they can be hard to get ahold of.

>> CHAD: This is absolutely true. One thing that we've done in my classroom in the past, you know, obviously paraprofessionals are not often times freed up to meet with the teaching artist or to sit in on the planning meeting. But what we can do sometimes is when the teaching artist first comes in, before the teaching artist greets the whole class, the teaching artist can come in, you know, five, 10 minutes before the next period starts and have the quick pow wow with the -- with the paraprofessionals while the teacher finishes the last parts of their lesson before the period with the teaching artist begins. Getting the paraprofessional out of the classroom is very difficult, if not impossible.

Operator: Great. Chad, this question is directed specifically at you. They write I'm curious as to what you might suggest teaching artists -- or realizes the teacher is not interested. How might the teaching artist work with a teacher that is resistant from day one?

>> CHAD: That's a very good question. I feel that at that point, you know, the -- hopefully, again, they're having an opportunity to have those planning meetings. I feel that should really be a requirement of any collaboration. And in those meetings, hopefully the teaching artist is at least getting the opportunity to ask the teacher, well, what are areas you feel have been areas of challenge within your classroom. If a teacher is so opposed to having the teaching artist there, really, the question that comes to my mind is why is the teaching artist there in the first place and how is that arranged on an administrative level where, you know, if a teacher is so opposed to that, the administrator really -- and I feel that this is a place where the administrator's job becomes important and the administrator needs to know staff well enough to know who will work well with the teaching artist or be open to the support that a teaching artist can provide.

Operator: We'll take one more question. Mark, I see that you have your hand up. I'll unmute you.

>> Thanks. I'm going to try to be succinct. I'm in a unique situation. I'm a theater educator that works in a K-5 school setting, and I see all of the students on a weekly basis, including the designation here in the state of Florida where students with special needs are referred to ESE labeled. And the two groups I see, one is -- they are moderate in terms of their disability and one group is very low and they come in with their paras and not the teacher. And I hold my mainstream kids to a very high bar in terms of accountability for respect and having discipline in order.

But when these students come in twice a week, many of them are non-verbal and have extreme autism on the spectrum where just sitting still is a problem. Lots of behavior that's really hard to make the class move forward. So I used to let that go, but now I'm kind of drawing a gentle line in the sand. I'm just wondering how I negotiate those kinds of obstacles and not seem like I'm coming in and trying to push my agenda

on the paras and the ESE teachers and their way of working with kids and the expectations that they have that are maybe different from the ones I expect from them.

>> CHAD: That could be a whole webinar.

>> NANCY: Yes. A whole webinar. Mark, I wanted to ask you a question, when you're working with a group that is non-verbal, how do you set up the classroom if you don't mind me asking?

>> I have a very large open space, carpeted area. And we come and sit on the floor and those students that have problems with physical self-control, there's usually a para that's sitting there giving them physical cues or stroking or just holding or just kind of like a human weighted vest, so to speak, to keep when they get really agitated. And that's how I have my spaces that's open.

>> NANCY: If you don't mind, there's a little collaboration between you and I, the two teaching artists. Do you have access to chairs?

>> There are a couple and sometimes the paras will say it's good if the student can just sit. So sometimes that -- I'm not opposed to allowing that. If it's going to make the class go forward and have most of the kids engaged, then I can give that up.

>> NANCY: You know what? I'm going to give you a couple of -- you might want to put it in your tool box or just try it out. If you have a circle of chairs, so it's more of a contained area, because sometimes kids in that situation feel safe when it's a little bit more contained. So like a circle of chairs that is closed.

And just doing, maybe, passing an object just to get, you know, you know the old pass the object theater game. You know, just to give everybody, you know, a little bit more focus. Or maybe some soft music just to create a circle. But in chairs. Sometimes the chairs give our kids that we're working with a sense of core and knowing where they are in space.

>> Uh-huh. And I also have a lot of really visually stimulating things in my room.

And some students get up and start wandering around and picking up things. The paras are pretty good about letting them know that that's not appropriate. And I will say thank you for not touching things that you haven't asked permission to touch.

>> NANCY: Uh-huh. That's great. That's wonderful. Yeah. So maybe, you know, just try maybe a couple of those things in a circle with chairs, and maybe taking some of the visuals out if you can. And maybe, I don't know if you can or not, but yeah.

>> Thanks. I know that's a very loaded question and I have kind of a really complex dynamic with those students.

>> NANCY: Yeah. You know what. It's not a loaded question at all, Mark. That's a whole-day workshop. It really is. It's about scaffolding a way that meets your students needs. From what I'm hearing, in my own experience that your kids need a place that they could feel that they are centered and stay maybe a little more contained. And a little bit taking away some of the distraction.

>> Today I took a big step and we role played the three billy goats gruff and I used my cubes to make a bridge, and I was surprised how successful it went.

>> NANCY: Put that in your tool box, Mark!

>> Thank you

>> NANCY: You're welcome.

Operator: All right Nancy and Chad, I want to thank you both so, so much for taking the time to do this webinar for us. And I would like to ask our webinar participants to remain on the webinar for a few moments longer to complete a survey that will open when you close your window. Your feedback is always appreciated. Thank you for joining us. For questions or comments you can connect me by e-mail. Have a great day.

>> NANCY: Thank you.

>> CHAD: Thanks.