



Los Angeles County
Office of Education



Promising Learners Project

“Storytelling: Through Student Voice & Student Agency”

Year Three - Your Story, Your Power.

Center for Distance and Online Learning

October 28, 2025





Los Angeles County
Office of Education

PLP Summit Schedule

Welcome and Introductions – Mike

Visual Thinking – Dr. Alvarez

Innovative Storyteller – JGB

Break - 10 Minutes

Advocate Artist - Kellen L

Lunch

Teaching as Performance Art – 24th Street Theatre

Doodle for Storytelling – Recipes for Connection

CASEL Connections & TEAL Modules– Jennifer

Survey, Coaching Session, & Closure - Mike





Los Angeles County
Office of Education

Welcome & Introductions

Miguel (Mike) Perez - Project Coordinator

- *Promising Learners Project*





Meet the **CDOL TEAM**

"Collaboration is our magic!"



Dotti Ysaïs
Project Director III



Preetom Bhattacharya
Coordinator III



Arleen Bates
Coordinator III



Jeannine Flores
Coordinator III



Jennifer Mataele
Coordinator II



Miguel Perez
Coordinator II



Shan Tu
Coordinator II



Karla Sequeira
Coordinator I



Gerald Grant
Web Coordinator



Jonas Nagy
Multimedia Developer



Thomas Amiya
Distance Learning
Resource Specialist



Lisa Sun
Budget Analyst



Elizabeth Cabrera
Secretary

Collective Impact Partners



**Los Angeles County
Office of Education**



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Featured Innovation Storyteller & Guest Artists



Jonathan G Brown
JGB Speaks



Debbie Devine
24th STreet Theatre



Jay McAdams
24th STreet Theatre



PLP Spiral Teaching Artists



Dr. Veronica Alvarez
CREATE CA



**Dr. Bianchi &
Ms. Cromwell**
Recipes for
Connection



Kellen Law
mskellenlaw.com



LACOE Partners - Child Welfare & Attendance



Dr. Andres Castro
Senior Program Specialist



Marie-Helene Demer
Senior Program Specialist





Los Angeles County
Office of Education



LACOE Child Welfare & Attendance (CWA) Unit

Dr. Andres Castro
Marie-Helene Demers



- Five Senior Program Specialists & One Coordinator dedicated to CWA
- Partnering with 80 school districts and charter schools across LA County
- Focus: early identification, prevention, and intervention strategies
- Commitment: reducing barriers and fostering equitable opportunities



Division of Student Support Services: Child Welfare and Attendance Regional Assignments

Coming
Soon :)



REGION 2
East San Gabriel Valley & Pomona
Senior Program Specialist:
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REGION 3
Alhambra, Glendale & Pasadena
Senior Program Specialist:
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REGION 4
Compton, Long Beach & Whittier
Senior Program Specialist:
Kevin Gilman, MSW
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REGION 5
LAUSD & South Bay Area
(Torrance & Beach Cities)
Senior Program Specialist:
Courtney Matz, PhD
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PROGRAM SUPPORT
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Antelope Valley & Santa Clarita
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Action-Agua
Dulce USD
Antelope Valley
Union HSD
Castaic Union
SD
Eastside Union
USD
Gorman Joint
SD
William S. Hart
Union HSD
Westside Union
ESD
Keppel Union
ESD
Hughes-Elizabeth Lakes Union SD
Lancaster ESD
Newhall SD
Palmdale ESD
Saugus Union
SD
Sulphur Springs
Union SD
Rowland USD
West Covina
USD
Wilson SD

Azusa USD
Baldwin Park
USD
Bassett USD
Bonita USD
Charter Oak USD
Claremont USD
Covina-Valley
USD
Garvey ESD
Glendora USD
Hacienda La
Puente USD
Montebello USD
Mountain View
ESD
Pomona USD
Rowland USD
Walnut Valley
USD
West Covina
USD

Alhambra USD
Arcadia USD
Burbank USD
Duarte USD
El Monte City SD
El Monte Union
HSD
Glendale USD
La Canada USD
Monrovia USD
Pasadena USD
Rosemead ESD
San Gabriel USD
San Marino USD
South Pasadena
USD
Temple City USD
Valle Lindo ESD

ABC USD
Bellflower USD
Compton USD
Downey USD
East Whittier
ESD
El Rancho USD
Little Lake City
ESD
Whittier Union
HSD
Long Beach USD
Los Nietos SD
Lynwood USD
Norwalk-La
Brea USD
Paramount USD
South Whittier
ESD
Whittier City
ESD

Beverly Hills
USD
Cerritos Valley
Union HSD
Culver City USD
El Segundo USD
Hawthorne SD
Hermosa Beach
City ESD
Inglewood USD
Las Virgenes
USD
Lawndale ESD
Lennox SD
Los Angeles
USD
Manhattan
Beach USD
Palos Verdes
USD
Redondo Beach
USD
Santa Monica-
Malibu USD
Torrance USD
Wesburn USD

Boy Republic of
Monrovia
Glendora USD
iPoly
Jones Salk
LACHSA
Los Padrinos
Mujeres y Hombres Noble





Technical
assistance &
training for districts
and schools

Guidance on Ed
Code, policy, and
compliance

Development of
toolkits,
handbooks, and
resources

Collaboration with
county agencies
and community
partners

Family engagement
& student support



Student Attendance Impacts



- Attendance is the number one predictor of dropout and graduation rates
- Only 17% of chronically absent students in kindergarten and 1st grade can read on grade level
- Attending school prevents learning loss
- Beyond academics, regular attendance impacts social-emotional skills, risky behavior, mental health, college and career readiness, and equity.



Chronic Absenteeism Data



2023–24 Chronic Absenteeism in Los Angeles County by Grade Level

	TK–KN	1–3 Grade	4–6 Grade	7–8 Grade	9–12 Grade
Eligible Enrollment	122,092	275,196	290,857	200,593	441,290
Chronic Absenteeism Count	34,304	51,716	50,668	41,314	114,879
Chronic Absenteeism Rate	28.10%	18.80%	17.40%	20.60%	26.00%



Chronic Absenteeism Trends



Data Retrieved 12/2024 from California Department of Education - Dataquest



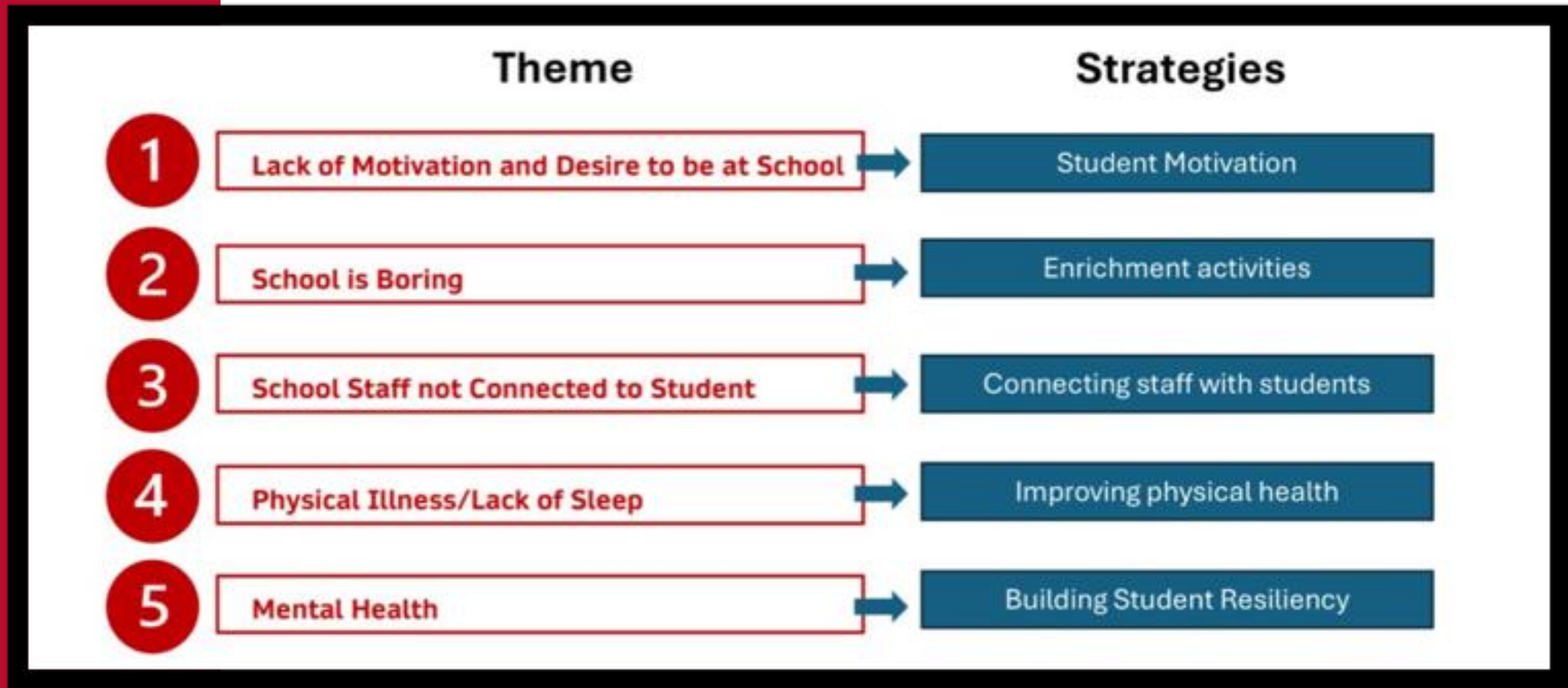
Overall Findings

Theme

- 1 Lack of Motivation and Desire to be at School
- 2 School is Boring
- 3 School Staff not Connected to Student
- 4 Physical Illness/Lack of Sleep
- 5 Mental Health

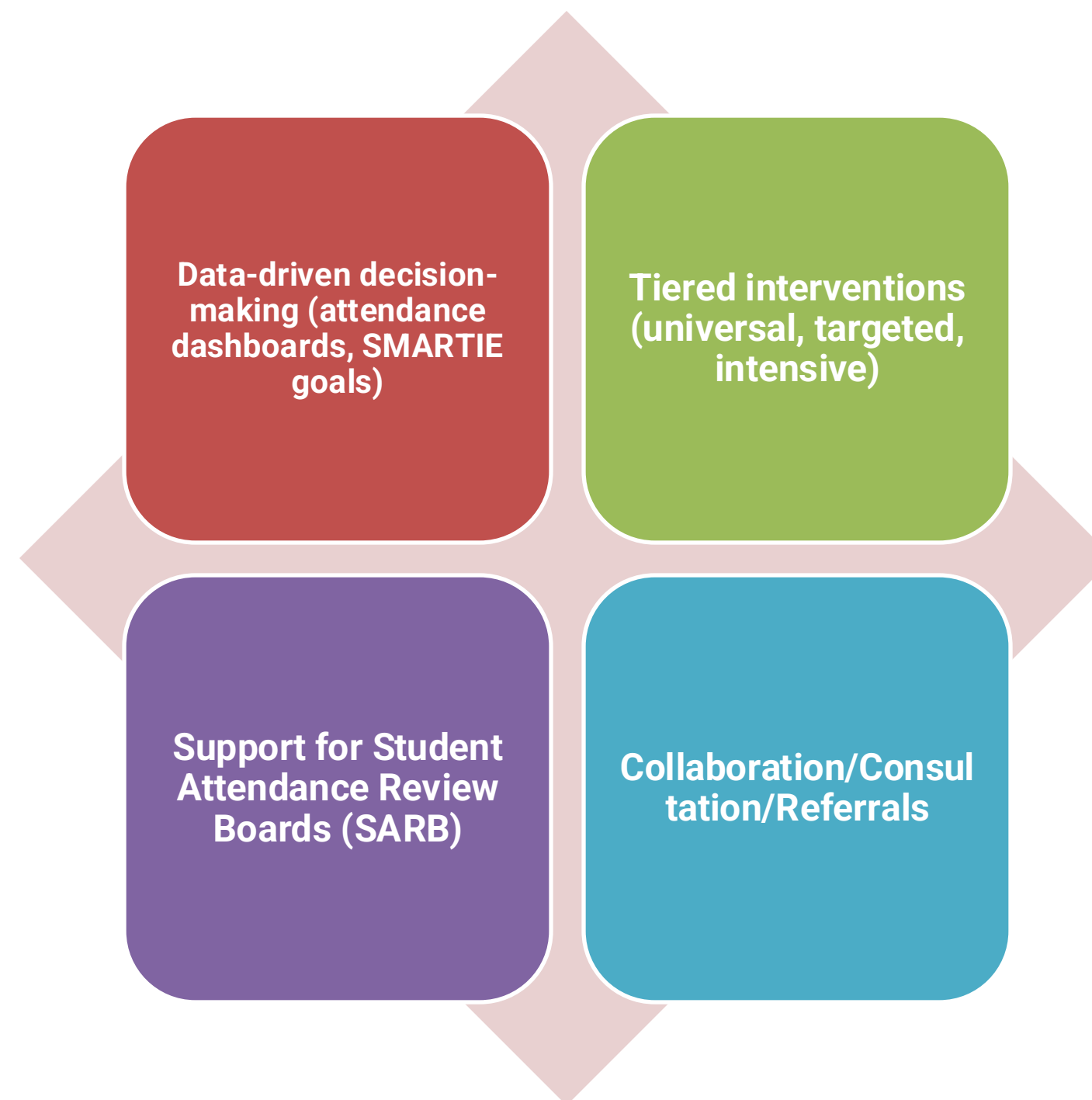


Selection of Strategies





How We Support Districts & Schools





CWA Canva Page

This resource will grant you access to many tools useful to your daily work. Scan the QR code below to access it!

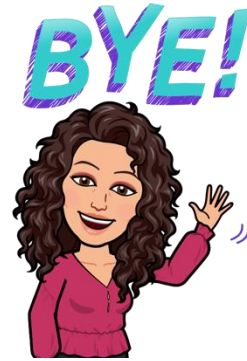


Contact Us

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LACOE Partners - Foster Youth Services



Miriam Lopez-Torres

Senior Program
Specialist



**Tanya Alvarez-
Espinoza**

Senior Program
Specialist



Christina Mayeshiro

Coordinator I



Foster Youth Services

FOSTER YOUTH SERVICES

Equitable educational outcomes for
youth in foster care in Los Angeles
County



**Los Angeles County
Office of Education**

How Our Program is Organized

- **60 team members** across 4 key programs:
 - Direct Services
 - Education Specialist Program
 - Tutoring Services
 - 5 Regional Learning Networks (RLNs)
- **Statewide Role:** Serves as a Technical Assistance Provider (TAP).



FOSTER YOUTH SERVICES COORDINATING PROGRAM

Why It Matters:

- **Students in foster care face the greatest educational gaps:**
 - Lower graduation rates
 - Higher chronic absenteeism
 - Higher suspension rates
- **FYSCP builds capacity across systems to address these inequities by:**
 - Supporting LEAs with compliance, training and technical assistance
 - Coordinating tutoring, FAFSA/CADAA completion and college/career readiness
 - Promoting school stability through transportation, enrollment and record transfer supports
 - Engaging youth voice and ensuring decisions include their perspectives

Impact: FYSCP ensures that no single school district, child welfare office, probation department or community partners are left to figure it out alone, we build a countywide safety net for foster youth education.

CONTACT OUR STAFF



[Visit our
website](#)

Featured Services | Contact Lists | Meetings & Webinars

LACOE FYSCP Staff Contact List

Los Angeles County Foster Youth Liaison List

Out of County Foster Youth Liaison List

Statewide County Office of Education FYSCP Coordinator List

New Foster Youth Liaison Contact Form

District EPS Administrator List

LACOE, FOSTER YOUTH SERVICES - CONTACT LIST

ADMINISTRATIVE & SUPPORT STAFF

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Bilingual Secretary	VACANT		
Secretary	VACANT		
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REGION 1

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STORYTELLING: THROUGH STUDENT VOICE & STUDENT AGENCY

Promising Learners Project Summit

Project Objective: Implement a comprehensive MTSS SEL-Arts Integration Program to create harmonious learning environments that address the unique challenges faced by youth in foster care and student experiencing homelessness while enriching the educational experience for **ALL** students.

Goal 1

DECREASE CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM



CENTER FOR
DISTANCE &
ONLINE LEARNING
(CDOL)



cdol.lacoe.edu

Goal 2

INCREASE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT



24TH STREET
THEATER

Goal 3

INCREASE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



RECIPES FOR
CONNECTION

Goal 4

INCREASE SAFE AND POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS



DR. VERONICA
ALVAREZ



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PLP Allowable Expenditures

Funds may be used for:

Contracted Services and Direct Service Providers

- Students: Direct services from contracted providers.
- Staff: Professional development through contracted services.

Direct Costs

- Programmatic Interventions: Training and release time
- Project materials and supplies
- Services for project staff, providers, parents, and students
- Travel: Staff training
- On-site technical assistance
- Reimbursement rates not exceeding bargaining unit agreements





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“Lights, Camera, Engagement: Reliving the 'Encore' Year”

Jeannine Flores - Coordinator III

- *Center for Distance and Online Learning*

PLP Academy 2024 - Year 2





Los Angeles County
Office of Education

Dr. Veronica Alvarez

Executive Director, Create CA



- **Champion of Arts Education Equity:** Transformed personal rejection in elementary school into 20+ year mission, ensuring all children have access to transformative arts education
- **From Immigrant Student to Statewide Leader:** Navigated LAUSD as an English learner, now leads Create CA's policy work to bring comprehensive arts education to all 6 million California students
- **Museum Access Pioneer:** 15 years at the Getty Museum, breaking down exclusionary barriers, making cultural institutions welcoming for diverse communities and first-time visitors
- **Community Impact Across LA & Beyond:** Transformed Charles White Elementary (MacArthur Park) into an arts magnet school; extended programs to Watts, Boyle Heights, Pacoima, and internationally
- **Academic Foundation:** Doctorate in Educational Leadership for Social Justice from LMU; researched how the arts support English language acquisition for multilingual communities



Storytelling: Through Student Voice & Student Agency

Veronica Alvarez, EdD

What do you SEE?

School Studies, 1944
Horace Pippin
Oil on Canvas





ARTISTS

- PLOT
- CHARACTER
- SETTING



AUTHORS

- PLOT
- CHARACTER
- SETTING



Artists codes/clues

- LINE
- SHAPE
- COLOR
- SPACE
- MOVEMENT
- MOOD
- EMPHASIS



AUTHORS CODES/CLUES

- **BOLD**
- HEADINGS
- FACT BOXES
- GLOSSARIES
- INDEX
- PICTURES
- PICTURE CAPTIONS
- TABLE OF CONTENTS

What do you
WONDER?



What do you
THINK?



See – Wonder - Think



College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for writing

Text types and purposes

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequence.

Research to build and present Knowledge

6. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.



See – Wonder - Think

ELD Standards

- **Collaborative.** Exchanging information and ideas via oral communication and conversations. Offering opinions and negotiating with or persuading others.
- **Interpretive.** Listening actively and asking or answering questions about what was heard. Reading closely and explaining interpretations and ideas from reading [an artwork]
- **Productive.** Supporting opinions or justifying arguments and evaluating others' opinions or arguments.
- **Expanding and Enriching Ideas.** Using noun and noun phrases to expand ideas and provide more detail. Modifying to add details to provide more information and create precision. P.14



SEL Core Competencies

Self-Management

- Regulating one's emotions
- Managing stress
- Self-control
- Self-motivation
- Stress management
- Setting and achieving goals

Self-Awareness

- Labeling one's feelings
- Relating feelings and thoughts to behavior
- Accurate self-assessment of strengths and challenges
- Self-efficacy
- Optimism

Social Awareness

- Perspective taking
- Empathy
- Respecting diversity
- Understanding social and ethical norms of behavior
- Recognizing family, school, and community supports

Relationship Skills

- Building relationships with diverse individuals and groups
- Communicating clearly
- Working cooperatively
- Resolving conflicts
- Seeking help



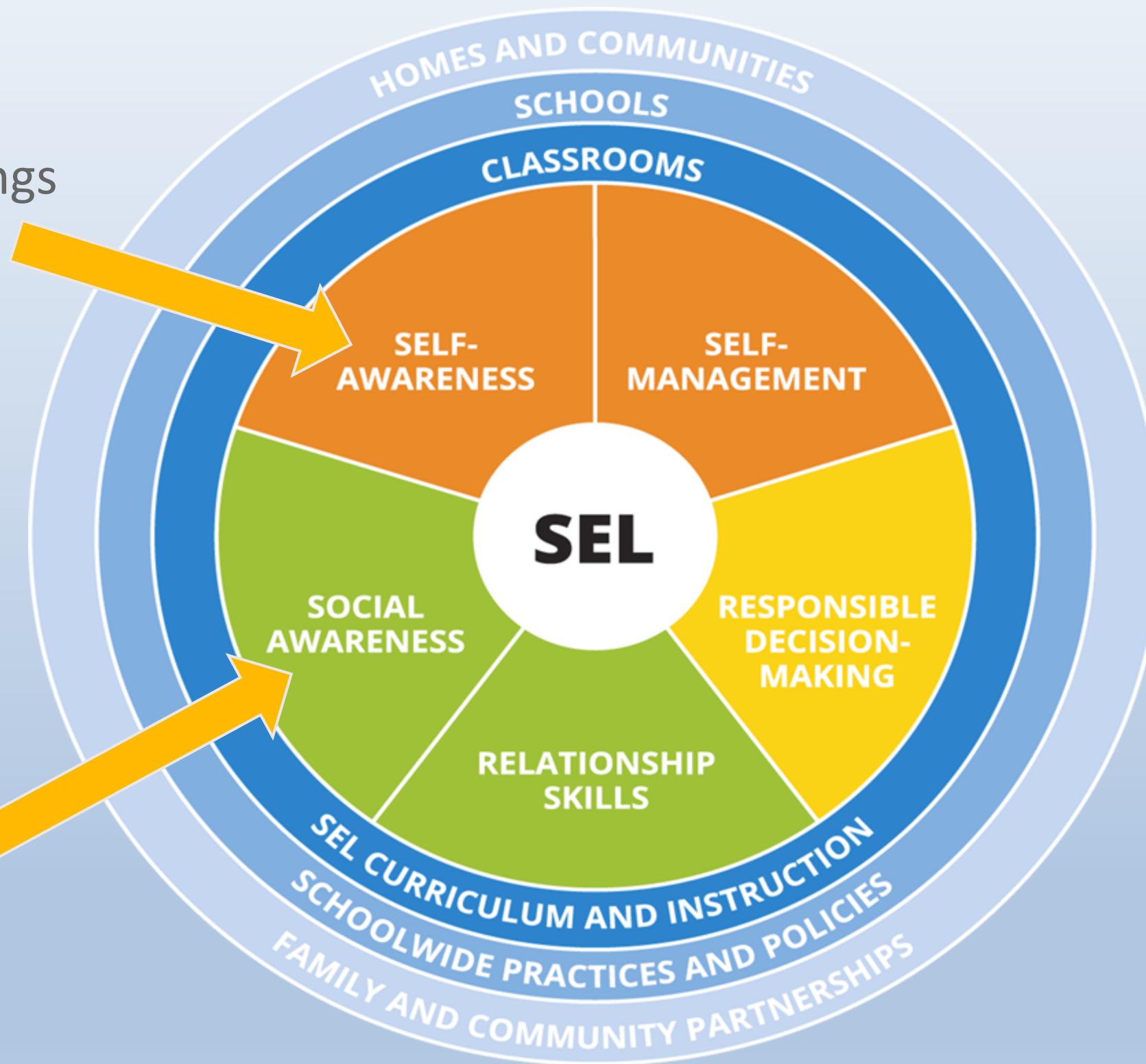
Responsible Decision-Making

- Considering the well-being of self and others
- Recognizing one's responsibility to behave ethically
- Basing decisions on safety, social and ethical considerations
- Evaluating realistic consequences of various actions
- Making constructive, safe choices for self, relationships and school

Sources: CASEL, Acknowledge Alliance



- Labeling one's feelings

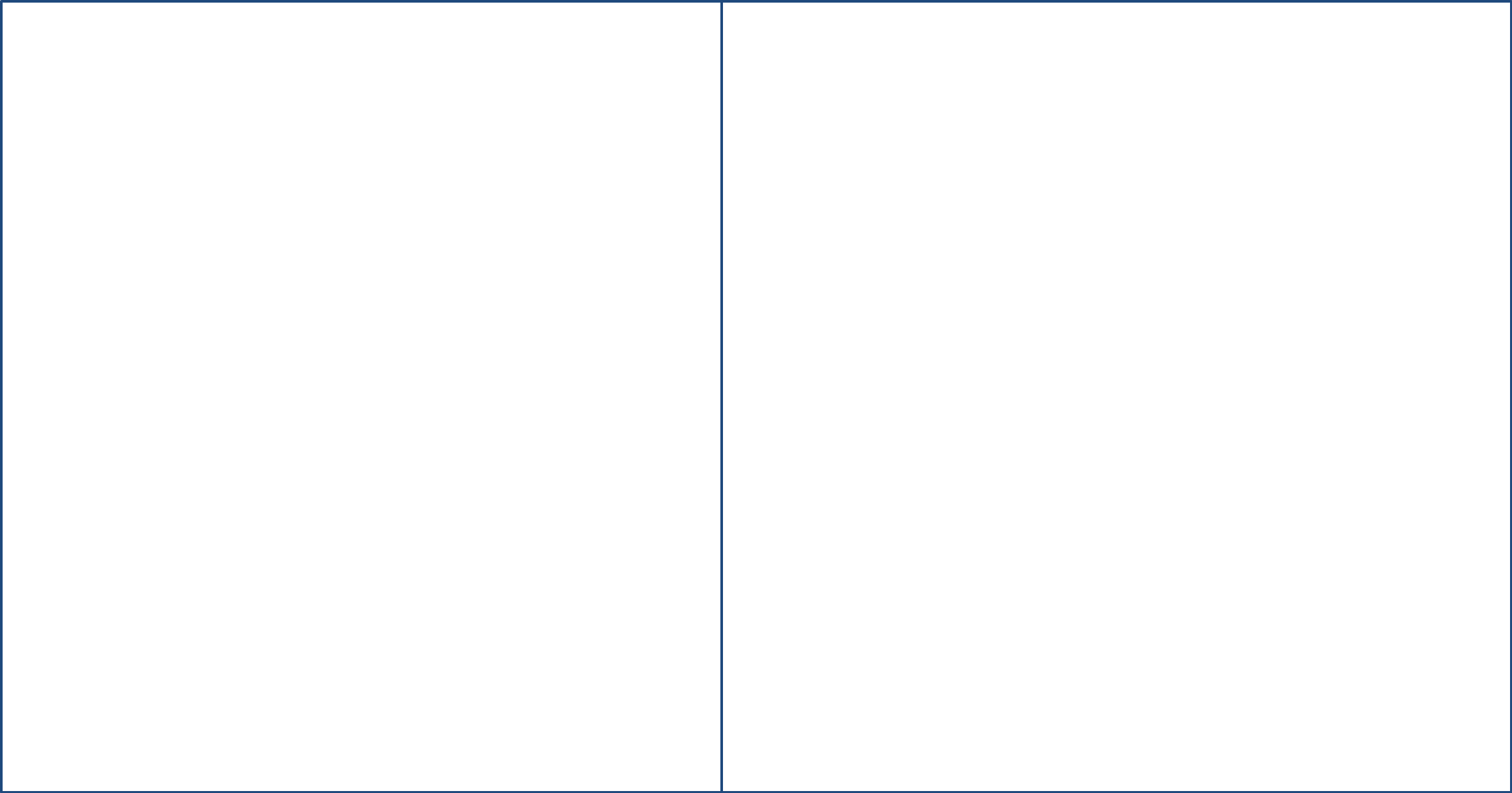


- Perspective-taking
- Empathy
- Appreciating diversity



ROY LICHTENSTEIN







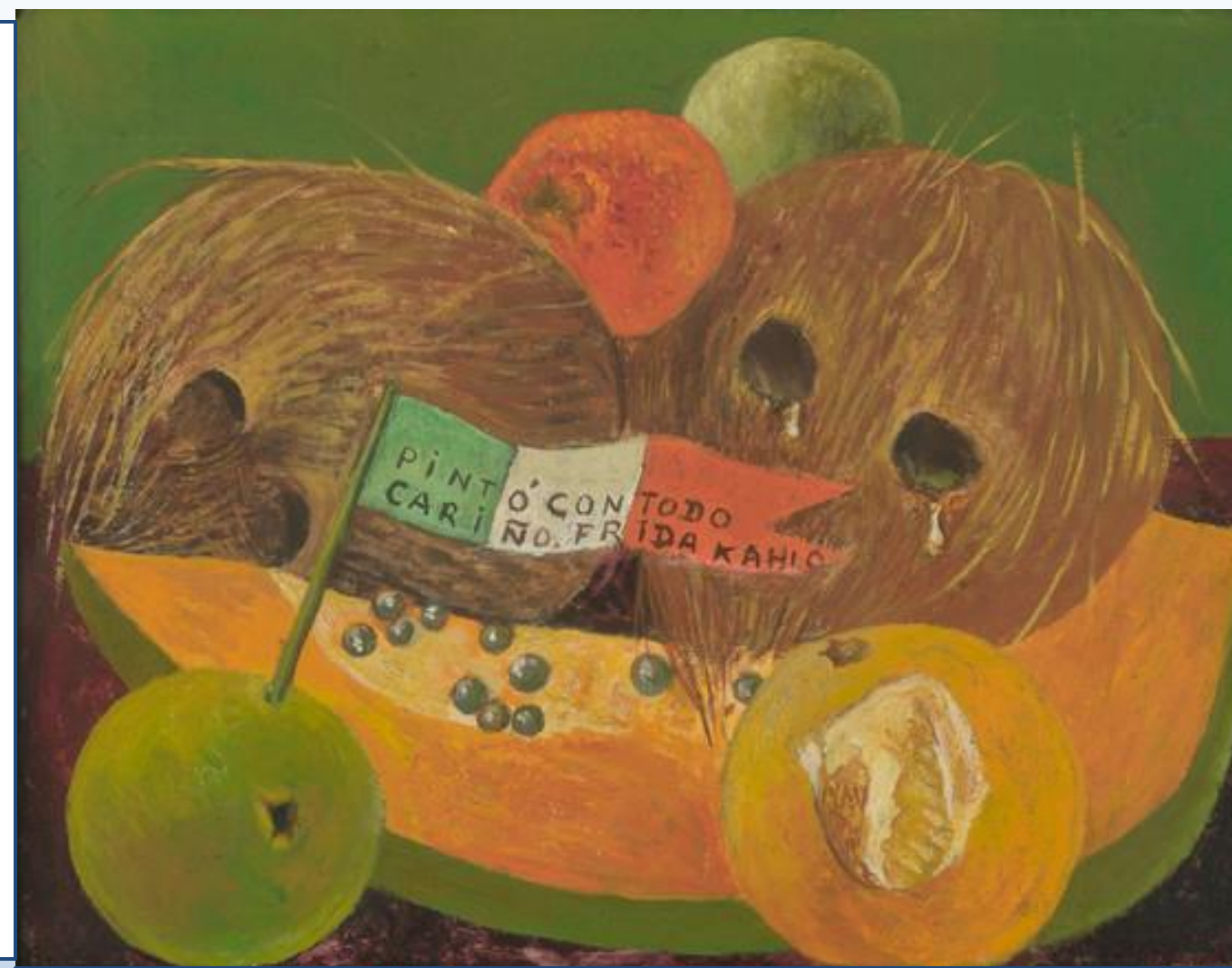
Weeping Coconuts (Cocos gimientes)

Frida Kahlo (Mexico, 1907-1954)

Mexico, 1951

Paintings

Oil on board





Instructions

- Choose one of the images.
- Think about the emotion being conveyed.
 - How did the artist convey the emotion?
 - What do you think the artist was trying to communicate?
- What is the story?
- What part of the story is being captured in this image?
- Create the rest of the narrative.

- **Culturally & Linguistically Responsive Arts**
- **Teaching and Learning in Action**
- **Strategies that Increase Student Engagement and Achievement**

PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES ADDRESSED BY THE STRATEGY		
✓ Check if addressed in the strategy.	SPECIFIC PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES <i>These essential pedagogical principles should inform our specific classroom practice. (Adopted by Creativity at the Core from Jackson's Pedagogy of Confidence)</i>	HOW ADDRESSED BY STRATEGY? <i>This strategy addresses and enacts these essential pedagogical principles, which operationalize our values around cultural and linguistic responsiveness.</i>
	Identifying and building on student strengths.	
	Establishing powerful relationships that nurture success.	
	Eliciting high intellectual performance.	
✓	Engaging students actively in the learning process.	Every stage of this protocol nurtures a students' natural sense of inquiry. The process starts with viewing closely and asking questions. Students are then given additional information to explore and ask further questions.
✓	Creating environments of enrichment rather than remediation.	The students are engaged in the process and are not reliant on the teacher to tell them what they should believe or find.
✓	Situating learning in the lives of students.	The protocol empowers students with confidence in asking questions and exploring new learning. The more that the teacher understands the lives of his/her students, he/she can incorporate artwork from the students' cultures/ community/background.
	Addressing the prerequisites for learning.	



College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading

Key ideas and details

1. Read closely to determine what the text [Artwork] says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats; including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

ELD STANDARDS

Collaborative

1. Exchanging information and ideas with others through oral collaborative conversations on range of social and academic topics
2. Interacting with others in written English in various communicative forms (print, communicative technology, and multimedia)
3. Offering and supporting opinions and negotiating with others in communicative exchanges

Interpretive

5. Listening actively to spoken English in a range of social and academic contexts
6. Reading closely literary and informational texts and viewing multimedia to determine how meaning is conveyed explicitly and implicitly through language

Productive

9. Expressing information and ideas in formal oral presentations on academic topics
11. Supporting own opinions and evaluating others' opinions in speaking and writing

VAPA STANDARDS

K.VA:Re8 Interpret art by identifying subject matter and describing relevant details.

Essential Questions: How does engaging in creating art enrich people's lives? How do people contribute to awareness and understanding of their lives and the lives of their communities through artmaking?

K.VACn10 Create art that tells a story about a life experience.

Adv.VA.Cn.10 Synthesize knowledge of social, cultural, historical, and personal life with art-making approaches to create meaningful works of art or design.

Essential Questions: How can the viewer "read" a work of art as text? How does knowing and using visual arts vocabularies help us understand and interpret works of art?



Los Angeles County
Office of Education

Jonathan G Brown

Innovative Storyteller



- **From Survival to Voice:** Growing up in foster care, feeling unseen until discovering competitive storytelling in elementary school—a transformative moment that gave him language, confidence, and freedom to become a powerful advocate
- **Breaking Generational Barriers:** First in family to attend college; earned degrees in Communication, Theater, and Professional Education while recognizing his mission to create transformative spaces for marginalized voices
- **National Impact Leader:** Spent a decade with a national education nonprofit closing opportunity gaps, training educators, and designing systems for marginalized students before launching JGBSpeaks LLC
- **Finding Your Voice Movement:** Created nationwide Finding Your Voice Club, combining keynote storytelling, student leadership workshops, and a 26-week character-building curriculum to help students unlock their futures
- **Champion for Overlooked Communities:** Works extensively with Title I schools, foster youth, juvenile detention centers, and ELL students, proving these students "aren't broken; they're brilliant" and transforming silent students into influential leaders

Finding Your Voice: A Storytelling Journey

Agenda

- Welcome and Setting the Stage
- Signature Opening Story
- Discovering your Storytelling Style
- Intro to the 7 Part Storytelling Model
- Building your Signature Talk

Welcome

Jonathan Grant Brown

Public Speaker, Educational Strategist, and Student
Success Advocate

Purpose is to create connection, set expectations,
and establish a safe space for personal sharing.





Learning Outcomes

- Understand the power of storytelling to connect, inspire, build confidence, and grow influence.
- Identify your natural storytelling style and signature talk content through peer interviews.
- Apply the 7-Part Powerful Storytelling framework to create your own signature talk.

Why Storytelling Changes Everything

Creates Emotional Connection

Stories bypass logic and speak directly to the heart, creating bonds that facts alone cannot forge.

Makes Ideas Memorable

Our brains are wired for narratives. Stories stick when statistics fade away.

Inspires Action

Great stories move participants from passive listeners to active participants.

Grows Influence

Great stories create shared identity and culture. Influence grows as others can see themselves in your story.

A Journey from Childhood to Fatherhood and Everything in Between

Permission Granted

What Did You Notice?

Moments That Stood Out

Which parts of the story captured your attention most powerfully? What images, emotions, or turning points are still vivid in your mind?

Emotional Impact

How did the story make you feel? Did you experience curiosity, empathy, inspiration, or something else entirely?

Memorable Elements

What made certain parts stick with you? Was it the vulnerability, the unexpected twist, or the universal truth within the personal story?

Your Storytelling Style

1. Pair Up

Find someone you'd like to learn from and connect with during this exercise.

2. Interview Each Other

Spend 8 minutes each sharing and discovering storytelling patterns together.

3. Reflect & Share

Offer each other a 1-2 sentence insight about what you discovered in their storytelling approach.



Interview Guide

The Defining Moment

Tell me about a defining moment in your life or a time when something shifted, changed, or became crystal clear for you.

The Emotion

What emotion stands out most powerfully in that moment? How does it feel in your body, heart, and mind?

Your Natural Focus

When you tell stories, do you naturally focus more on vivid details, deep emotions, life lessons, or finding humor?

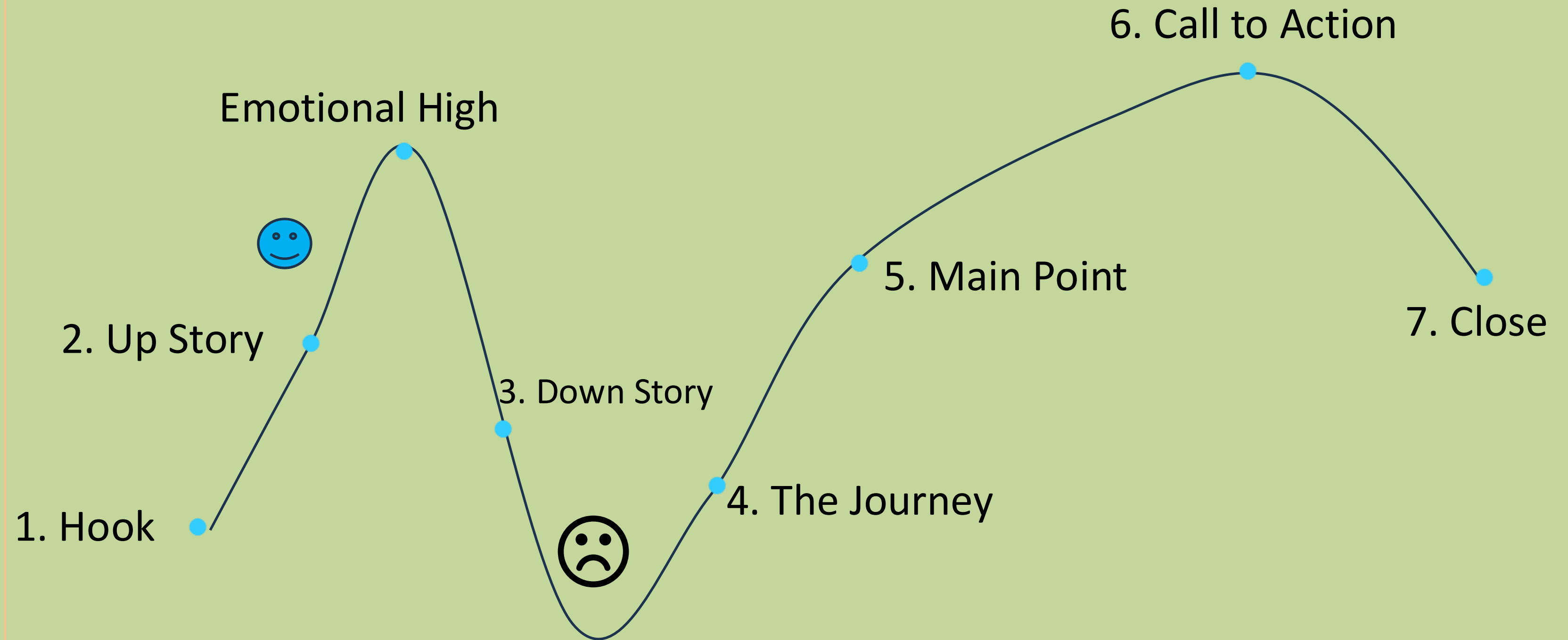
Storytelling Inspiration

Who is a storyteller you admire? It could be anyone from a friend to a famous speaker. What draws you to their style?

Your Go-To Story

What's one story you find yourself telling often? Why do you think you're drawn to sharing that particular experience?

7-Part Powerful Storytelling Framework



7 Parts

The Hook

What it is: The very beginning of your talk where you capture attention.

How: Start with a question, a bold statement, or a short story that makes people lean in.

Why it matters: If you don't win them in the first 30–60 seconds, it's harder to bring them along for the ride.

Up Story

What it is: A quick early “win” for the audience—often a moment of humor, hope, or a relatable truth.

How: Share something that feels light, uplifting, or makes people nod their heads (“that’s so true!”).

Why it matters: It establishes connection and creates an *emotional high* that sets contrast for what’s coming.

7 Parts

Down Story

What it is: The moment when the tension or struggle is introduced.

How: Reveal a challenge, loss, or obstacle that disrupted the high.

Why it matters: People don't connect to perfection they connect to struggle. This drop makes the story real and relatable.

Journey (Backstory + Connections)

What it is: The deeper exploration of the challenge. You describe the obstacles, your feelings, and what was at stake.

How: Give enough backstory for the audience to understand *why it mattered*—but keep it focused and purposeful.

Why it matters: This is where you build empathy and trust. The audience sees themselves in your journey.

7 Parts

Main Point (A-Ha Moment)

What it is: The turning point when you discovered the lesson or truth that changed everything.

How: Share the realization or breakthrough in simple, clear language.

Why it matters: This is your “gold nugget.” The audience feels the emotional rise as they learn alongside you.

CTA (Call to Action)

What it is: Show the bigger picture what life looks like *after* the breakthrough and invite the audience to step into it.

How: Paint a vision of what’s possible for them, then give a clear call to action (the one thing you want them to do differently).

Why it matters: Inspiration without action fades. This moment gives your talk purpose and impact.

7 Parts

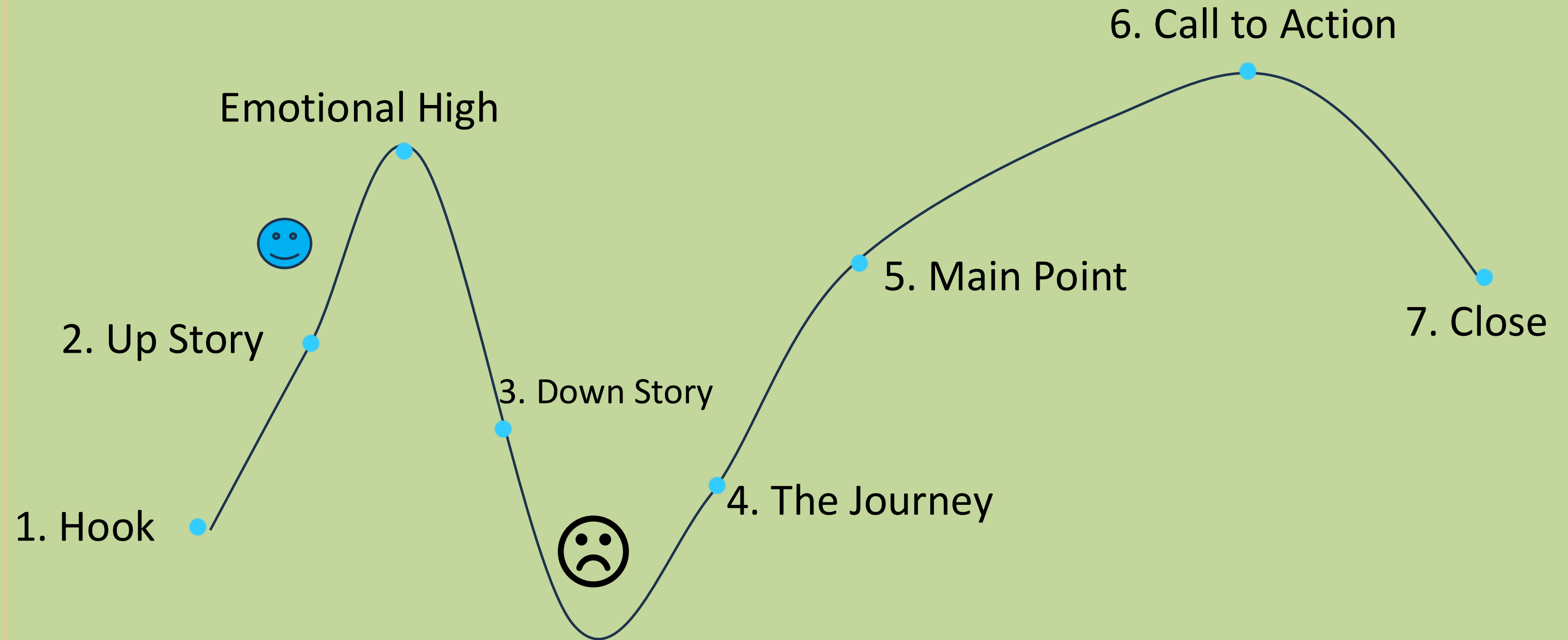
Close

What it is: A strong, intentional ending that ties the story together.

How: Circle back to your hook, leave them with a final thought, or tell a short closing story that reinforces your message.

Why it matters: Audiences remember the last thing they hear. A strong close makes your message stick.

7-Part Powerful Storytelling Framework



Thank
you

Jonathan Grant Brown

(254) 415-9069

interrupter@jonathangrantbrown.com

www.jonathangrantbrown.com



Los Angeles County
Office of Education





Kellen Law

Advocate Artist



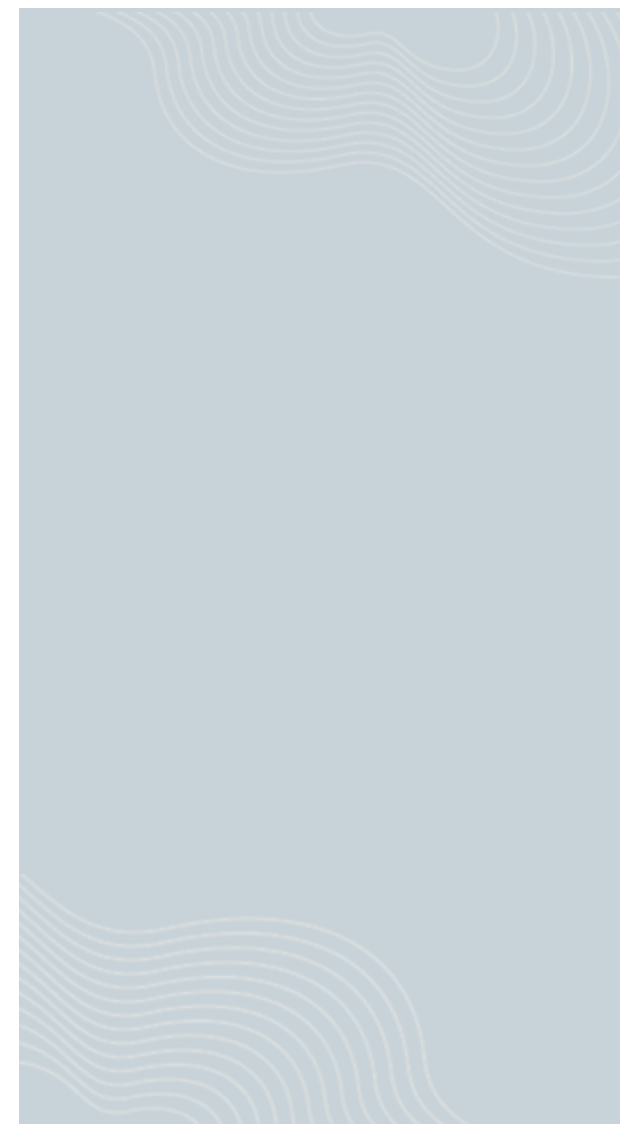
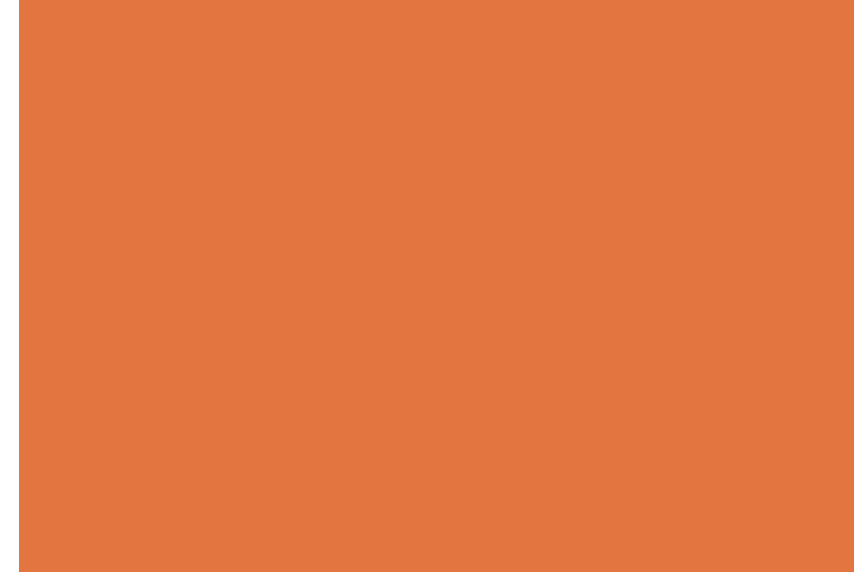
- **Artistic Foundation Through Community:** Lifelong performer raised in creative household; discovered passion for musical theater through Pasadena USD summer camp that united artists across age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic lines
- **Bridging Performance and Education:** Syracuse University B.F.A. in Acting (2009) evolved into NYU M.A. in Educational Theater (2013) after touring "The Red Sun and The Green Moon" revealed theater's transformative power for young audiences
- **Coast-to-Coast Teaching Impact:** From NY Theatre Workshop and Seattle Children's Theatre internships to collaborations with Pasadena Playhouse, Heartstrings Theatre, Boston Court, and LAUSD Fine Arts Conservatory
- **Hometown Leadership and Legacy:** Returned to Pasadena USD as Open Stage teaching artist (2017-2023) and Blair Middle/High School musical director (2015-2020), investing in the community that launched her career
- **Equity-Centered Arts Advocate:** Creates inclusive spaces where all students—especially those feeling marginalized—discover their voices through theater, championing arts education as a



MOVING STORYTELLING

EXPLORING STORYTELLING THROUGH MOVEMENT AND
SOUND

WITH KELLEN LAW

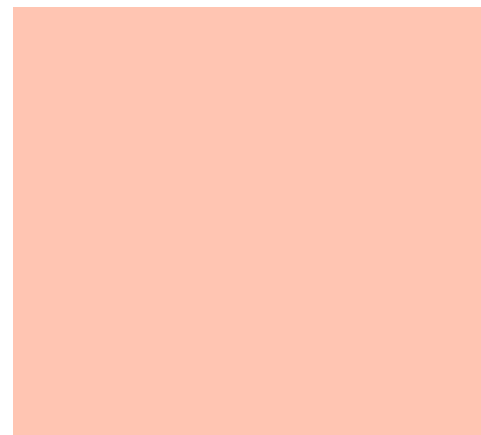
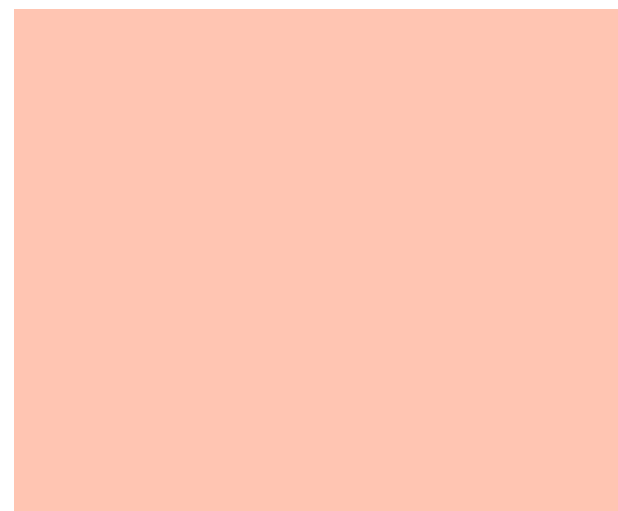
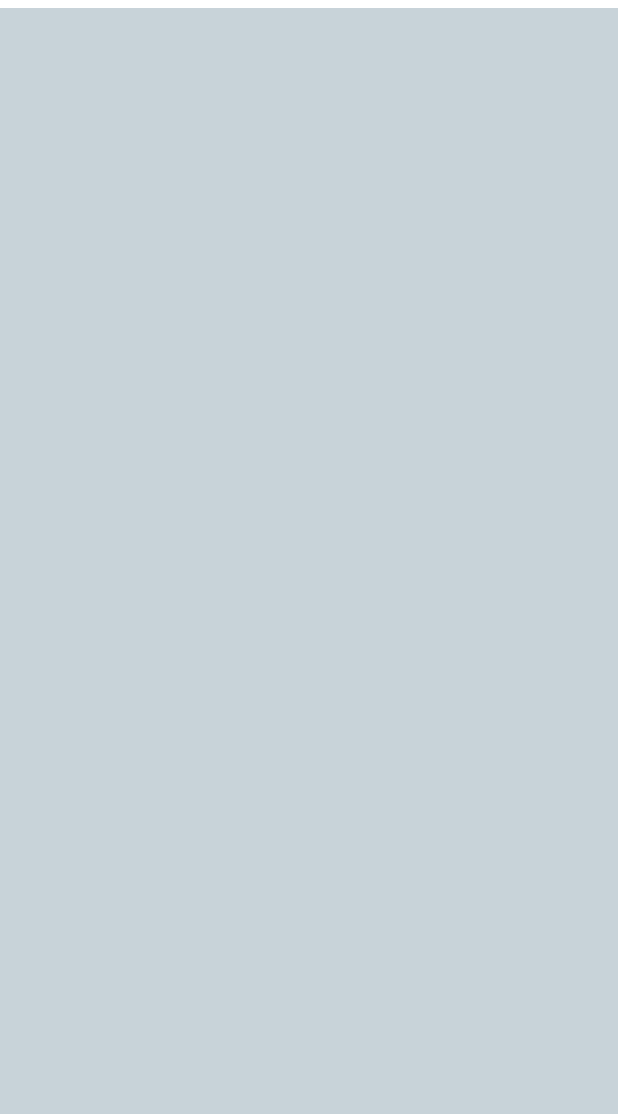




SOUNDSCAPES

Choose a sound that you might hear in the forest.

Listen for my voice and see if you can adjust your sound to reflect the different things that happen in the forest.

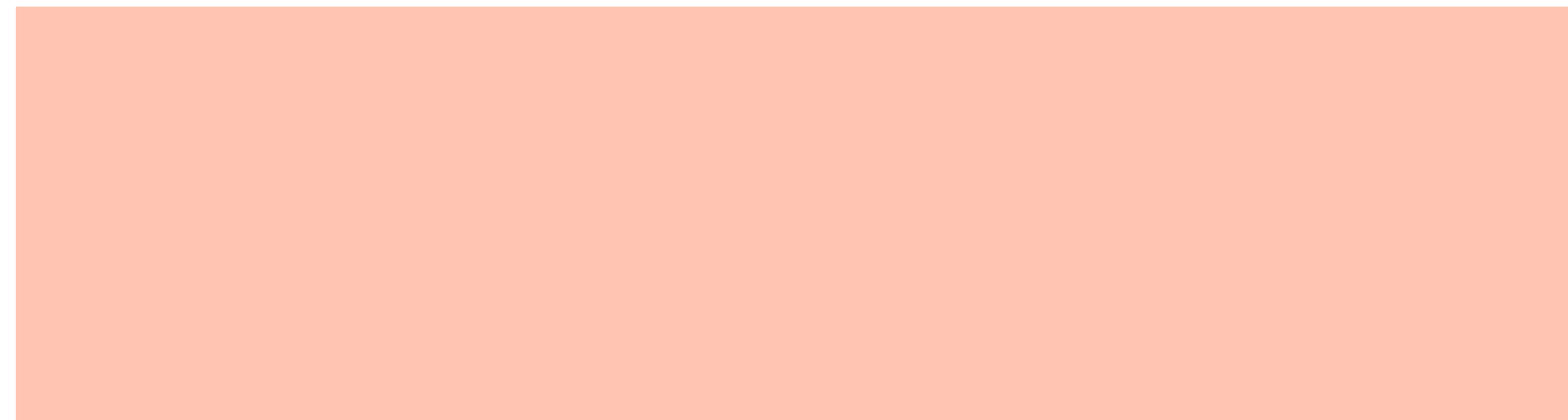


NONVERBAL

COMMUNICATION

“the act of conveying information without the use of words. Nonverbal communication occurs through facial expressions, gestures, body language, tone of voice, and other physical indications of mood, attitude, approbation, and so forth, some of which may require knowledge of the culture or subculture to understand.”

- APA Dictionary of Psychology



WHAT ARE THESE CHARACTERS SAYING?

Write one line of dialogue per page.
Like a silent film... or Love Actually.





GO, STOP, DROP, MELT WITH A STORYTELLING TWIST

GO - walking around the space

STOP - freeze the outside of your body

DROP - quickly move to the floor

MELT - slowly move to the floor

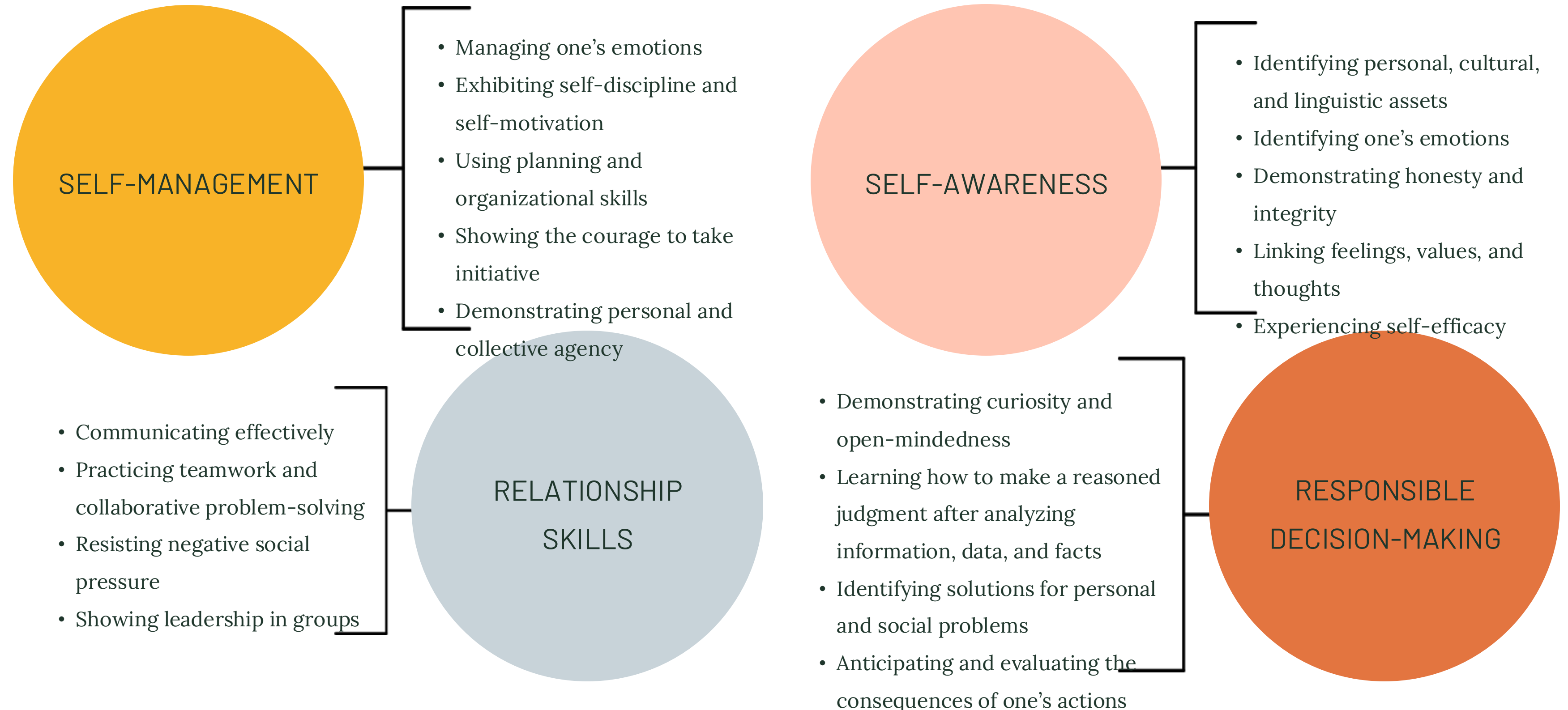
Your Turn...

- Give me a line of dialogue
- Create a series of 2-3 movements that communicate those words
- Teach them to the group

Let's Add Music! If you feel comfortable, try to sync your movement with the music

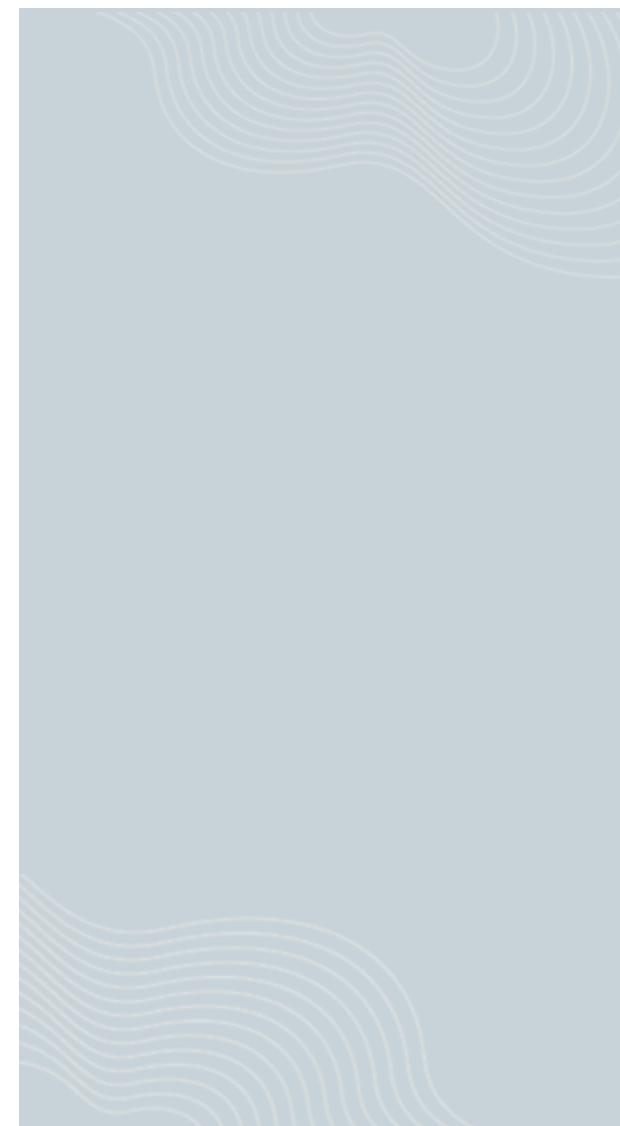
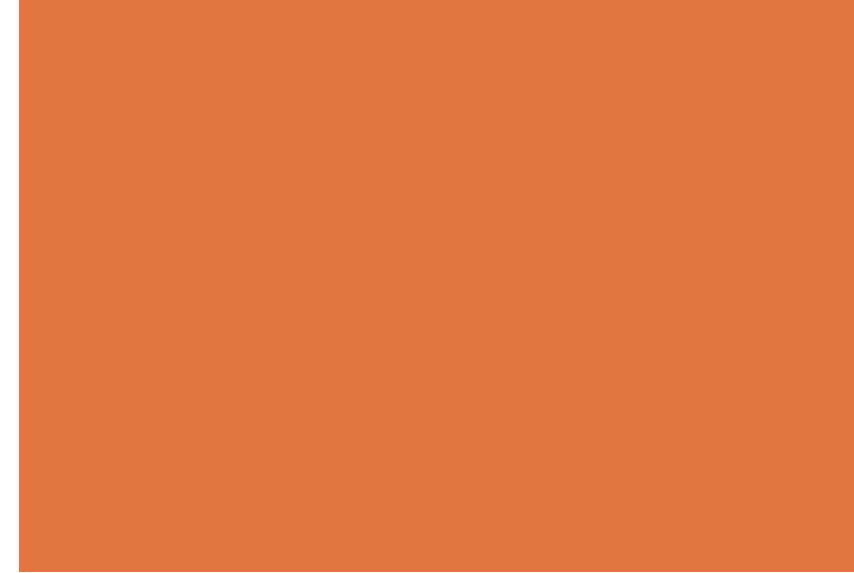
SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCIES

SOUNDSCAPES and GO, STOP, DROP, MELT





Thank you for having
me!





**Los Angeles County
Office of Education**

Lunch Time





Los Angeles County
Office of Education

Debbie Devine and Jay McAdams

24th STreet Leadership Team



Jay McAdams, Co-Founder and Executive Director:

- **Unlikely Journey:** Left football-obsessed Oklahoma after discovering theatre passion through a chance AADA brochure, trading Hollywood dreams for transformative children's theatre work
- **40-Year Partnership:** Met wife and artistic partner Debbie Devine through LA children's theatre, building an international legacy, teaching thousands across North, South, and Central America
- **Purpose-Driven Leadership:** Transformed from a shy boy hiding theatrical dreams into a passionate advocate proving arts education matters through four decades serving young audiences



Debbie Devine, Artistic Director:

- **Pioneer and Healer:** Female director breaking barriers when few women led theatres; discovered theatre's healing power, teaching expelled teens (including Jack Black), launching lifelong mission
- **Community-Centered Vision:** 27 years leading bilingual programming for multicultural families from Mexico, El Salvador, and Guatemala while advocating for mixed-status families during policy challenges
- **Empathy as Mission:** Centers all work on theatre's gift of building empathy—creating lasting impact like "Peter" discovering human connection through mirror exercises, still grateful decades later

24th Street Theatre

Teaching As a Performing Art



LACOE Promising Learners PD 10/28/25

24th Street Theatre
Debbie Devine & Jay McAdams



Tamara Koltes - Arts Education Director

Simile

Describe yourself using
a simile

I'm like a tree. I endure through all seasons

Metaphor

Describe yourself using a
metaphor

I am a tree. I endure through all seasons

Like Us, Trees....

- Are Strong and Resilient
 - Grow and Change
 - Need Each Other
- Rely on Care, Love, and Support to Survive

-



Tree by Florence Grossman

One night in winter
after the tree had begged for many
nights
to come in
I gave permission.
It was not an easy arrangement
the problem of blankets
a place to sleep
the branches curious to touch
everything.
Eventually it could compose itself
by the fire.
I would read aloud.
It would listen and nod.
I am sorry it is spring.
Sap is dripping on the rug.
____ The branches are feeling their way
toward the door.

Storytelling

What does the story mean to you?

Resilience of Trees and People

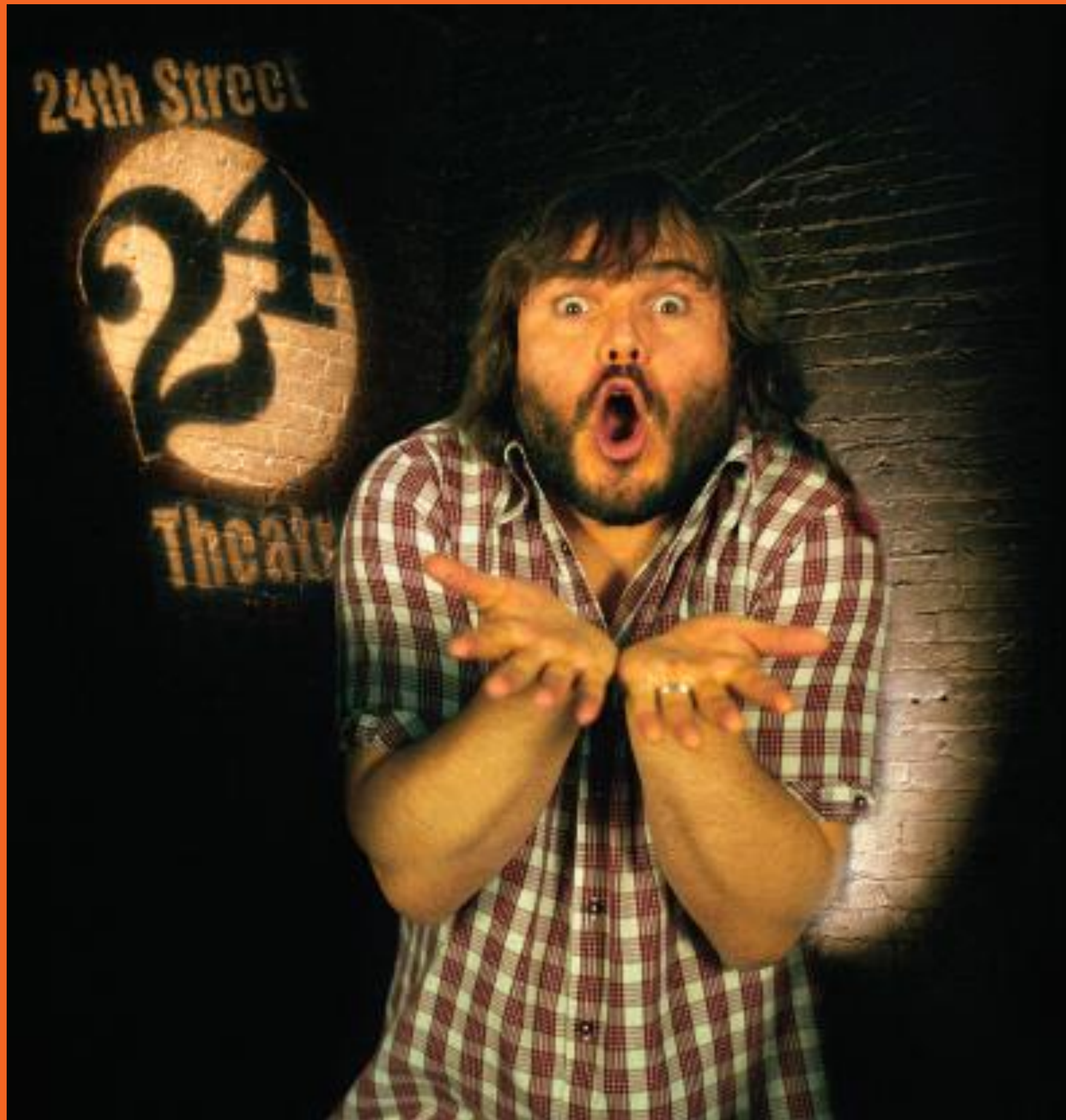
Trees Exist as a Community and Collaborate for Survival
We are collaborating today to create art, because art is a powerful force for hope and how the human spirit can triumph over despair

Trees care for one another and share resources for protection. They need each other



Very Essence of Theatre
We take on a character and their feelings, hanging them up when we are done, like we do our costume

When we see ourselves in one another, empathy instills responsible decision making



Enter Stage Right

LA's most fabulous Arts Ed Program is ready for the 25/26 school year! The program includes:

- **Pre-Show Workshop:** World-class teaching artists come to the school site to engage students with theatrical concepts aligned with the California Arts Content Standards!
- **Field Trip:** Students are brought to a wildly fun and interactive field trip at 24th Street Theatre where they see the show *Enter Stage Right* (ESR). ESR catapults students from the ancient history of the theatre to contemporary multimedia production, and brings the magic of theatre to life through improvisation techniques and production components of set, sound, lights, video and live music.

I became a teacher
because...



Thank you for
joining us

We can't wait to see you at 24th
Street Theatre!

www.24thstreet.org





Dr. Bianchi & Ms. Cromwell

Co-Founders - Recipes for Connection

Dr. Jessica Bianchi, EdD, ATR-BC, LMFT:

- **Art as Academic Tool:** An Elementary teacher who wove art-making into every subject from math to social studies, discovering its transformative impact on student growth and connection
- **Research-Driven Practice:** Earned doctorate in Education for Social Justice, studying how therapeutic art-making increases student resilience; now professor at LMU directing the Helen B. Landgarten Art Therapy Clinic
- **Theory to Practice Bridge:** Transforms academic research on resilience-building into concrete classroom strategies, ensuring art therapy principles reach students beyond clinical settings

Amber Cromwell, ATR-BC, LMFT:

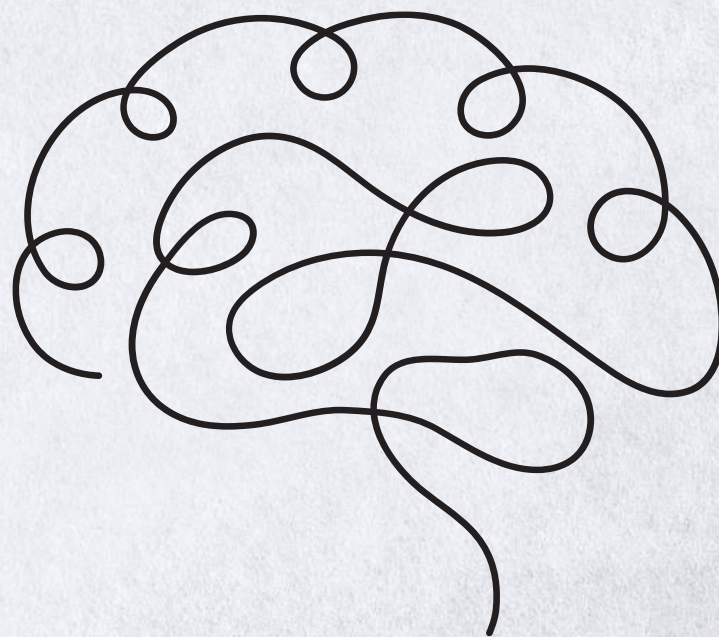
- **Community Mental Health Champion:** Worked across diverse LA settings—schools, hospitals, residential facilities—reinforcing commitment to art as a means to equity and community-based mental health
- **Social Justice Through Art:** Extensive experience with marginalized youth across all ages and abilities, championing culturally responsive interventions for students facing complex challenges
- **Next Generation Mentor:** Clinical supervisor and faculty at LMU, interim ARTsmart director, training future art therapists while expanding therapeutic arts reach in education





ARTS FOR SOCIAL EMOTIONAL
LEARNING

Recipes for COnnection



WITH JESSICA & AMBER



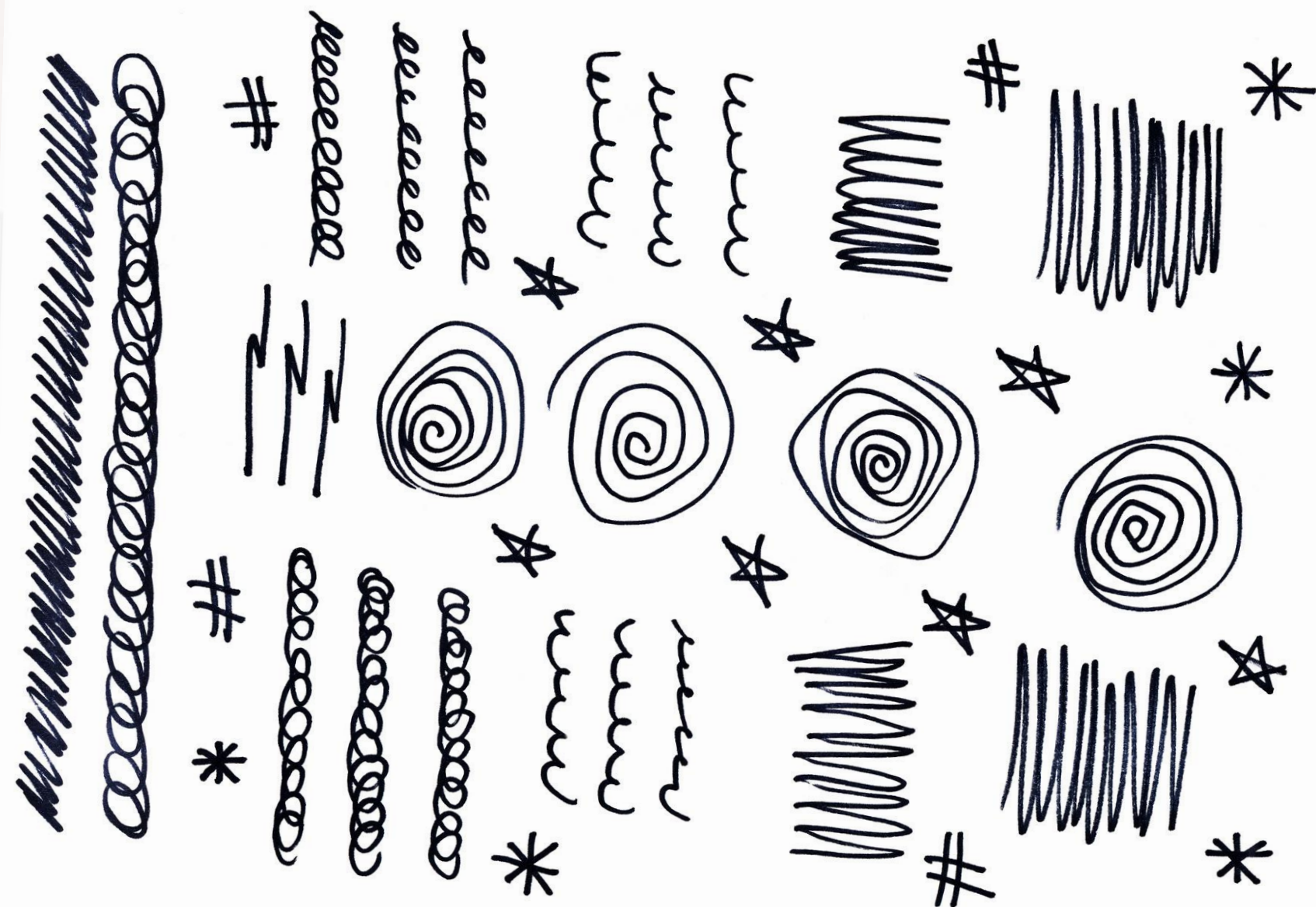
Today we will:



- Review Doodles and Doodle Efficacy
- Extend and Intergrate Story Telling
- Have Fun!



Doodle for your noodle



SELF-
MANAGEMENT

SELF-
AWARENESS

RESEARCH
APPROVED



ARTS FOR SOCIAL EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

Can Doodling be a Tool for Positive Mental Health?

Research Proposal Snapshot

Prepared by Recipes for Connection, Dr. Jessica Blumhagen, LSW, & Dr. J. C. Anderson, Counselor LSW, AASE



8th grade students creating initial baseline doodle portraits

INTRODUCTION

1 in 6 children 2-8 years old in the US and a quarter of adolescents globally have a mental health disorder. Teachers are increasingly the frontline responders yet research states 85% don't feel adequately prepared to help students manage mental health challenges. Arts engagement offers a simple yet clinically effective means to promote wellbeing (Gunawardena, et. al, 2024; Rodriguez, 2024; Sukowski, et.al, 2016)

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this study is to evaluate if art therapy based doodle interventions can support and improve 3rd-8th grade students' abilities to be emotionally regulated in the classroom as indicated by (a) mindfulness, (b) sense of belonging, and (c) increased positive emotional states.

METHODOLOGY

This study will use a mixed methods approach to measure change in behavior (mindfulness, sense of belonging, increased positive emotions) amongst 3rd - 8th grade students as a result of an art based doodle intervention.

- **Measure 1: ANONYMOUS** Student Retrospective Pre/Post Test Emoji Current Mood and Experience Scale (ECMES) (Davies, et. al, 2022)
- **Measure 2: ANONYMOUS** 4-item Likert Scale Teacher Observation Survey
- **Measure 3:** Open ended survey for teachers post week-long "Doodle Challenge" **OPTIONAL**

DOODLE WORKSHOP INTERVENTION

45 minute assembly style workshop that provides psycho-education on social emotional and community building skills through four different types of doodles. Students are provided with an individual doodle kit and led through four different doodling activities.



ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS

Recipes for Connection

- Organize and coordinate research plan with School Leadership
- Provide informational fliers for school administrators, teachers, and caregivers
- Coordinate school site visits with participating schools
- Order and assemble "doodle starter kits" for individual students and teachers
- Facilitate up to 4 school site assembly workshops (your 45 min presentations per site)
- Communicate and coordinate with teachers who choose to be involved in follow-up "Doodle Challenge"
- Distribute, collect, and manage data in an ethical manner
- Analyze data and present results to stakeholders

Research Partner

- Provide Letter of Support to Recipes for Connection to be submitted to LNU Internal Review Board
- Provide feedback on Recipe's for Connection research plan
- Assist Recipes for Connection in establishing communication and buy-in with school site principals



Group of 120+ 6th-8th grade students engaged in workshop for emotional regulation

School: _____ Name: _____ Grade: _____

Start here please.

Please circle the emojis that represent how you feel **NOW** after the Doodle Workshop.

 connected to others	 valued or appreciated	 sad	 bored	 relaxed
 happy	 lonely	 good about myself	 failure	 anxious or stressed



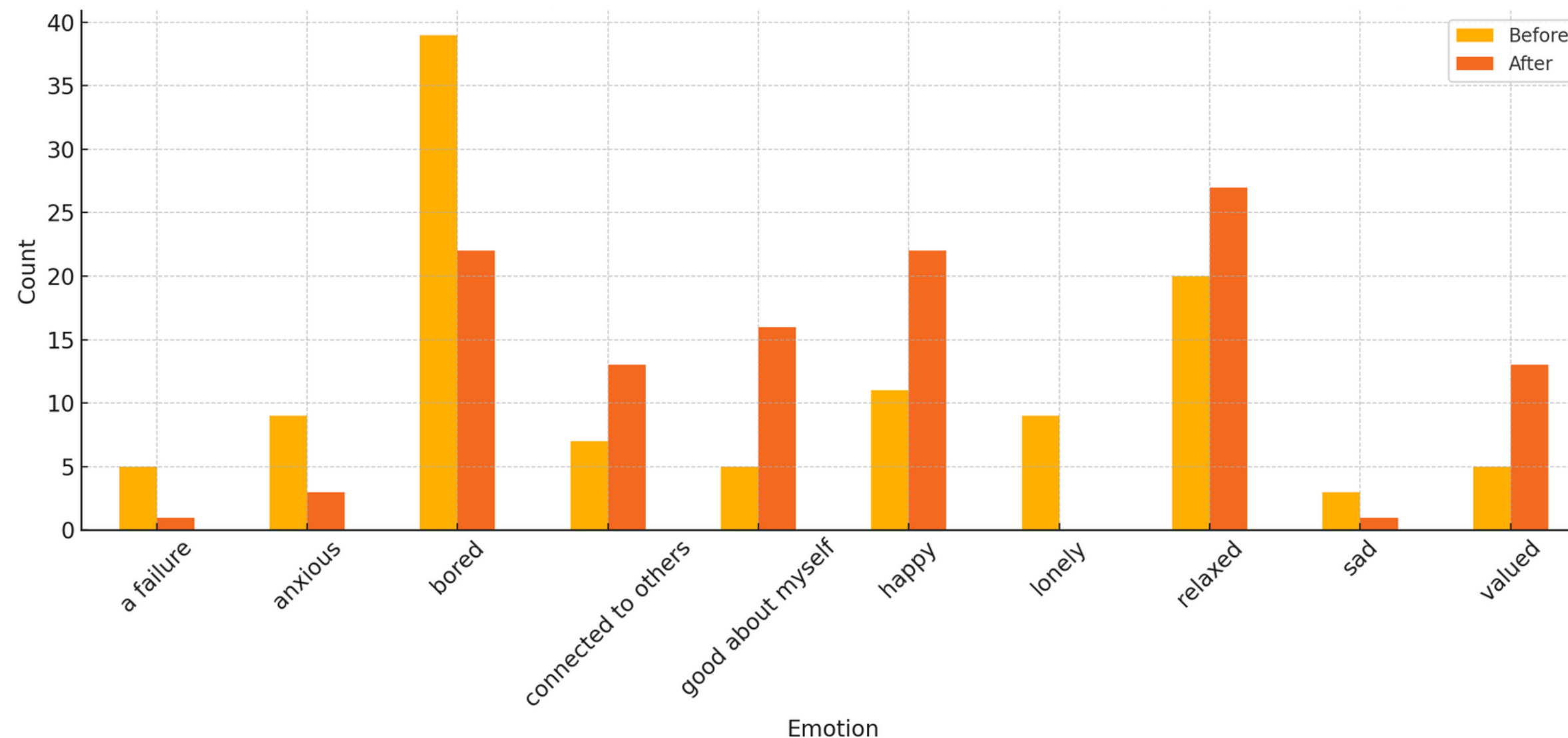
Now think about how you felt **BEFORE** the Doodle Workshop.



Please circle the emojis that represent how you felt **BEFORE** the Doodle Workshop.

 connected to others	 valued or appreciated	 sad	 bored	 relaxed
 happy	 lonely	 good about myself	 failure	 anxious or stressed

Emotional Shifts Before and After Doodle Workshop



75 6th, 7th, 8th Graders from Public Charter School in Los Angeles

Doodling for Regulation!

**Educational
Setting**

**Clinical
Setting**

A strategy to use in
multiple settings!

**Physical: Channel
Energy Productively**

- personalized doodle kit

**Mindfulness: Self
Awareness in the
Classroom**

- morning doodle ritual

**Cognitive: Limits
Cognitive Overload**

- Sketch notes for reading comprehension

**Social: Building Sense
of Belonging**

- class doodle wall

**Physical: Releasing
Emotional Energy**

- Kinetic and Tactile doodling

**Mindfulness: Learn
Grounding Strategies**

- doodling with guided breathing

**Cognitive: Processing &
Organizing Thoughts**

- Doodle while processing distressing events

Social: Building Trust

- doodle together for co-regulation

VAPA STANDARDS

Components of Artistic Literacy	Philosophical Foundations	Lifelong Goals
The Arts as Means to Well-Being	Participation in the arts as creators, performers, and audience members (responders) enhances mental, physical, and emotional well-being.	Artistically literate citizens find joy, inspiration, peace, intellectual stimulation, meaning, and other life-enhancing qualities through participation in all of the arts.
The Arts as Community Engagement	The arts provide means for individuals to collaborate and connect with others in an enjoyable inclusive environment as they create, prepare, and share artwork that bring communities together.	Artistically literate citizens seek artistic experiences and support the arts in their local, state, national, and global communities.

Doodle

Name
Doodle

Steps:

1. Write your name
anywhere and as big or
small as you would like.
2. Add doodles on and
around your name that
describe you.
3. Color if you would like!

RAMONA



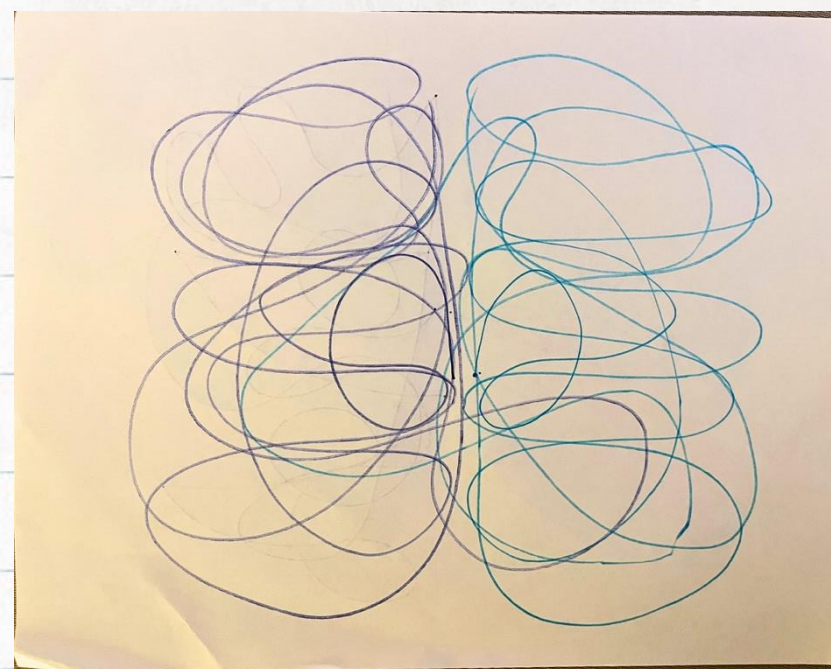
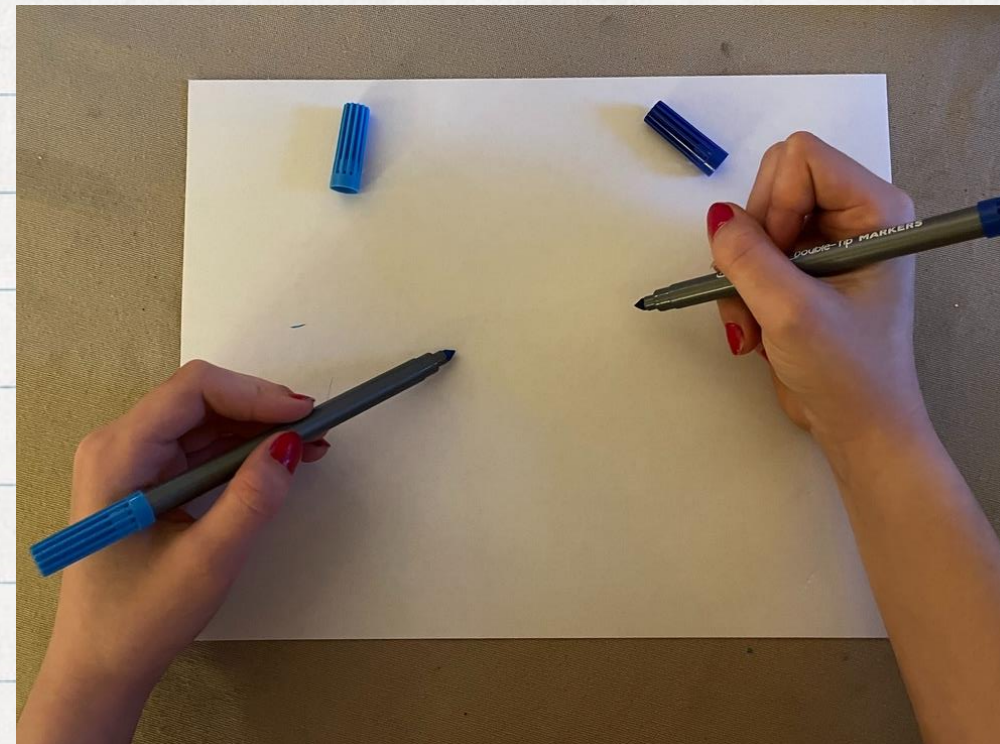
Doodle Review!

Doodle 2

Double Doodle

Steps:

1. Pick two markers and hold one in each of your hands.
2. Move the markers around your paper at the same time.
3. Create lines and shapes or images!

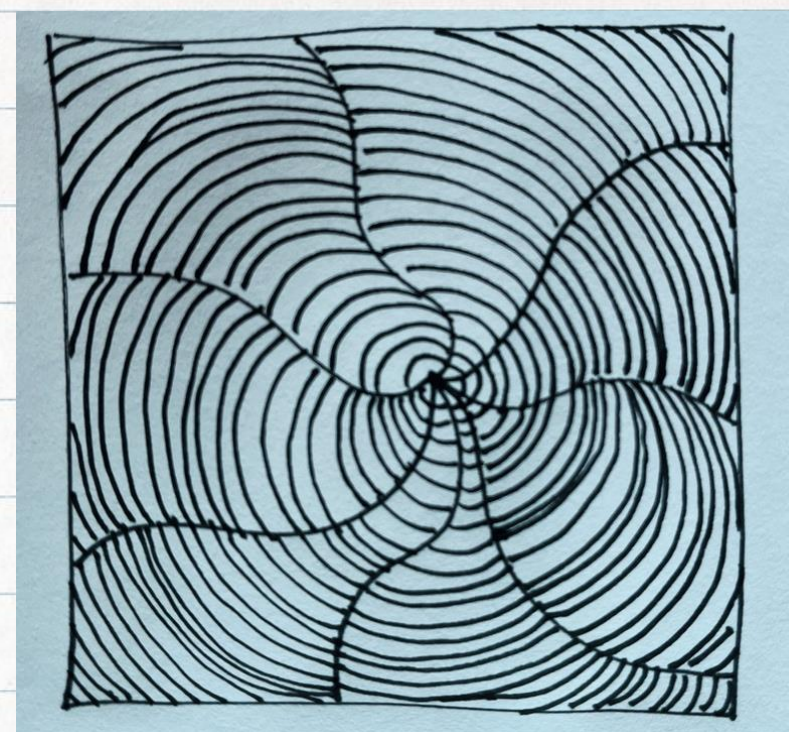
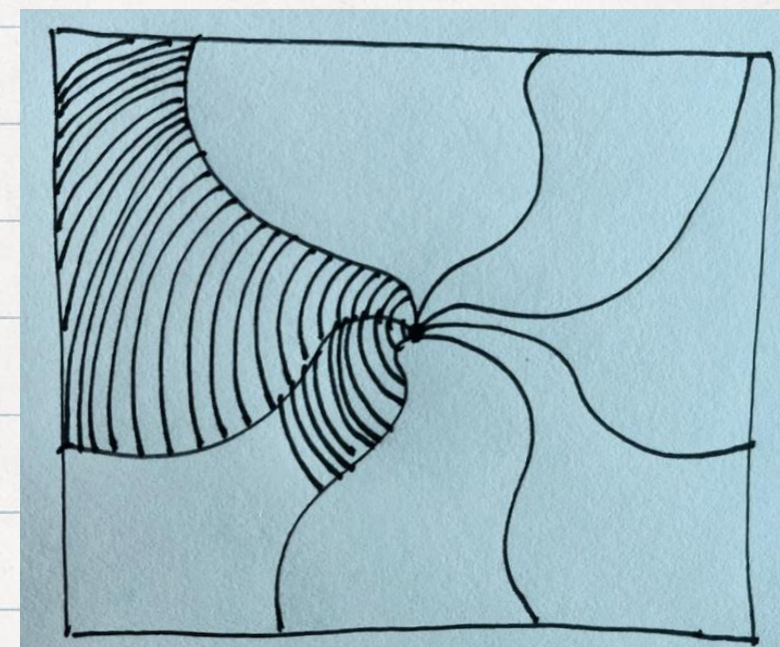
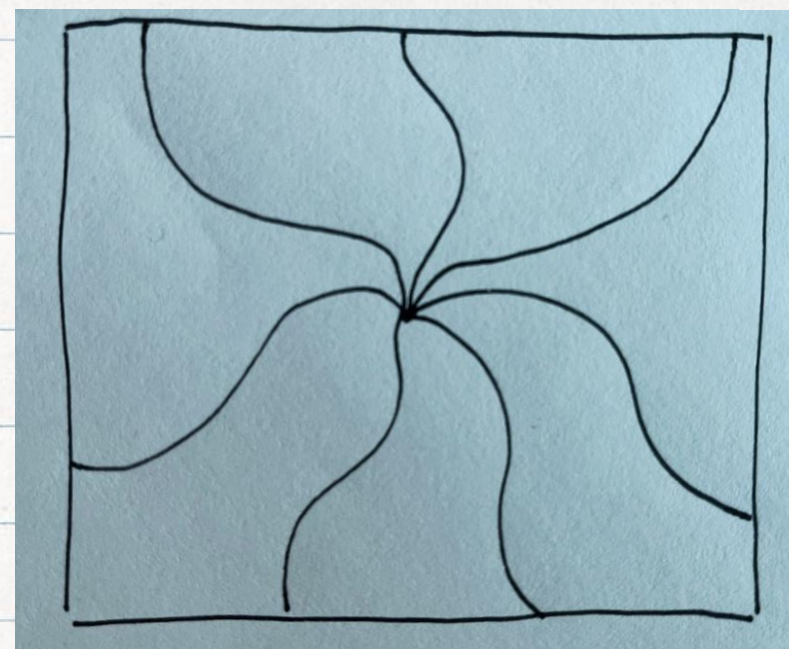


Doodle #3

Neuro Doodle

Steps:

1. Start by drawing curvy lines from the center of your paper to the edges.
2. Connect the curvy lines with other curved lines.
3. Leave it or add color!



Doodle

4

Blind Contour



1. Find a partner.
2. One person draws and the other person poses.
3. Without looking at your page, draw the contour of your model.
4. You can also pick an object in the room.
5. If you are laughing... you are doing it right!

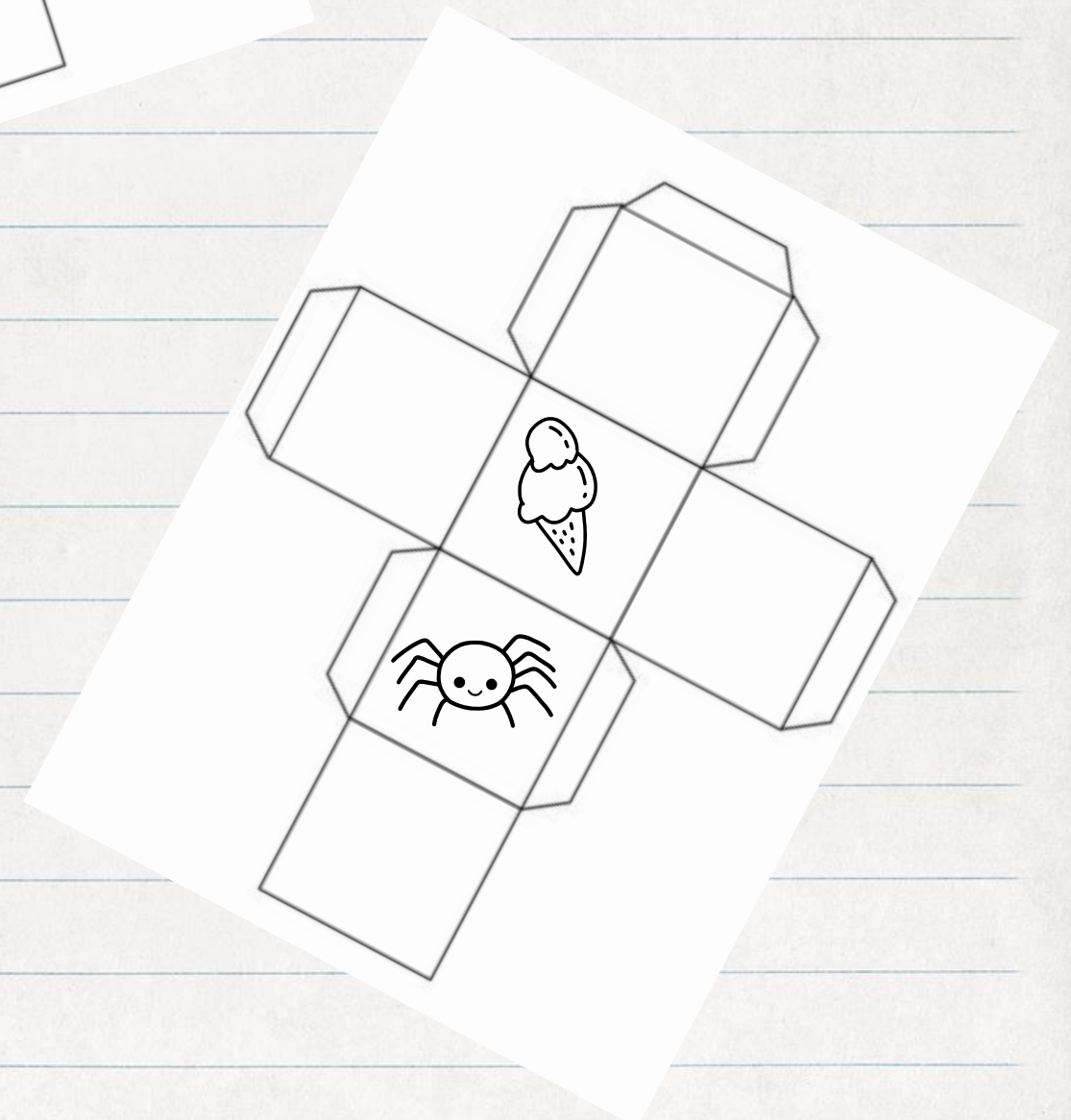
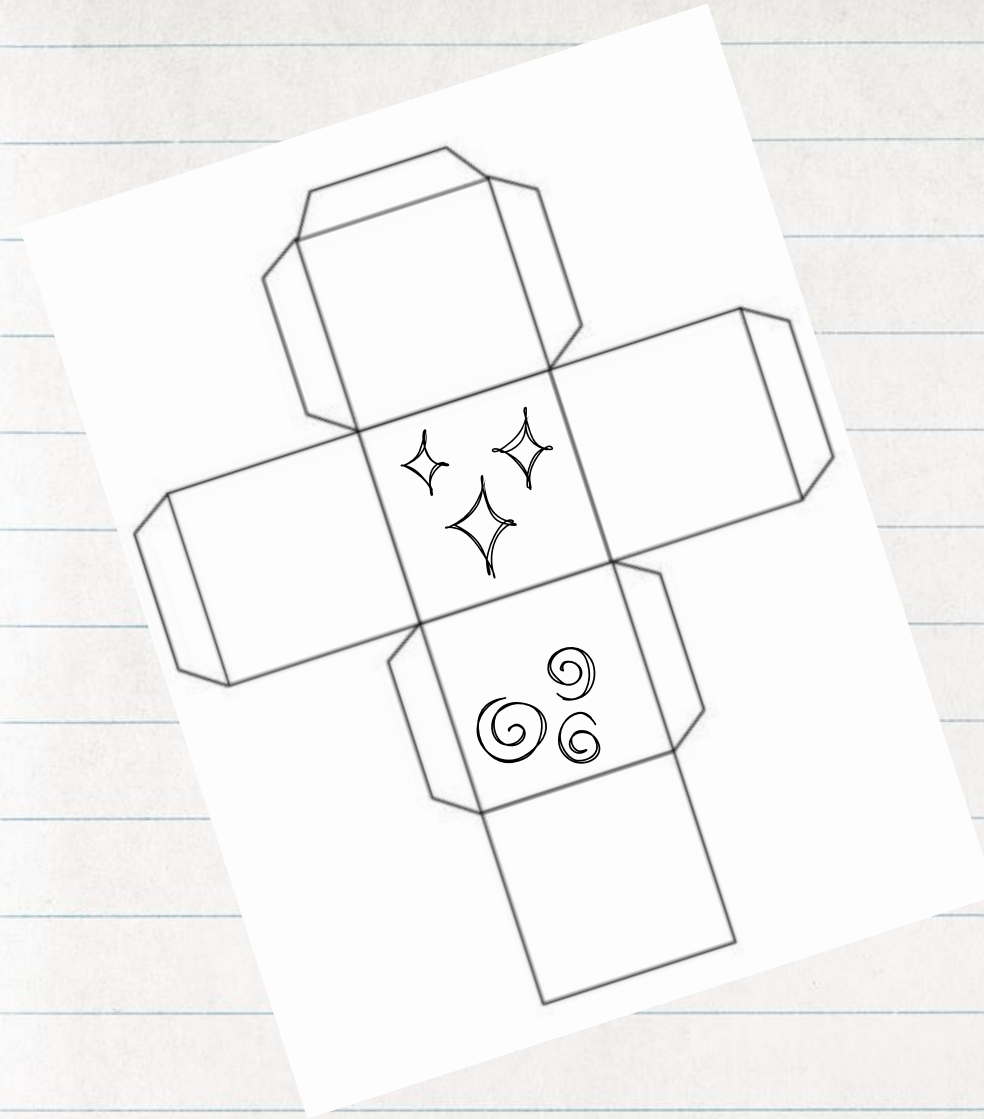
Doodle 5

Doodle Dice!

Great for brainstorming, problem solving, communication, and collaboration!

Steps:

1. Cut out two dice shapes.
2. Dice #1: Draw a doodle that represents each of the prompts:
 - a. An excited doodle
 - b. A calm doodle
 - c. A sad doodle
 - d. An angry doodle
3. Dice #2: Draw a doodle that represents:
 - a. Something you like to eat
 - b. Something you find scary
 - c. Something you like to do
 - d. Your favorite toy when you were little
4. Fold the cubes and use a glue stick to secure the flaps.
5. Start a story! "Once upon a time there was...(roll you dice to see what happens!"



Reflection

1. What did you notice about your own thinking or feeling as you doodled during the activity?
2. What adjustments might make the process more effective for your particular group of learners?
3. In what subjects or routines could you see yourself trying this activity?



Thank you!



Los Angeles County
Office of Education

TEAL Modules & CASEL Connection:

Online Modules & SEL Alignment

Jennifer Mataele- Coordinator II

- *Center for Distance and Online Learning*





CANVAS - Online Modules

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If you are from an outside agency, please select this option and sign in with your LACOE Canvas credentials.

If you require assistance with this process, please contact LACOE Canvas Support at lacoecanvassupport@lcoe.edu.



<https://tinyurl.com/PLP-Module>



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Storytelling: Through Student Voice & Student Agency

Year Three - Your Story, Your Power

Self-Awareness: Finding Your Voice

Discovering and understanding your own story

- **Jonathan Grant Brown's "Finding Your Voice":** Students identify defining moments and emotions through signature story development, transforming silence into powerful advocacy
- **Dr. Veronica Alvarez's "See-Wonder-Think":** Visual thinking helps students discover personal, cultural, and linguistic assets through artwork analysis and interpretation

Self-Management: Crafting Your Story

Building skills to express your narrative effectively

- **24th Street Theatre's Performance Techniques:** Students learn to "hang up emotions like costumes" - managing feelings through theatrical exploration and the resilience of the tree metaphor
- **Recipes for Connection - Doodle for Storytelling:** Mindful storytelling through guided breathing with doodles (Name, Neuro, Double) for emotional regulation and creative expression



Social Awareness & Relationship Skills: Sharing Your Story

Connecting through narrative and building community

- **24th Street Theatre's Community Building:** "Trees exist as a community" - understanding interconnected narratives and building empathy as the "very essence of theatre"
- **Kellen Law's Movement & Sound:** Creating collective narratives through collaborative soundscapes, nonverbal communication, and active listening exercises

Responsible Decision-Making: Your Story, Your Power

Using narrative for positive change and impact

- **Jonathan Grant Brown's Call to Action:** Making conscious choices about which stories to tell, developing student agency to use voice for advocacy and change
- **Dr. Bianchi & Cromwell's Arts-Based SEL:** Doodle Dice problem-solving and collaborative art spaces show how storytelling choices impact community well-being



Los Angeles County
Office of Education

Summit Survey, Upcoming Supports, & Closure

Mike Perez - Project Coordinator

- *Promising Learners Project*





Feedback Survey



Promising Learners Project



<https://bit.ly/PLPSUMMIT2025>



One-Word Whip Around

- Something I learned today...
- I am looking forward to tomorrow because...
- Something I'll do as a result of this meeting is...



- Resilience
- Integration
- Diaspora
- Inclusion
- Rhythm
- Ensemble
- Empathy

- Inspiration
- Growth
- Connection
- Discovery
- Application
- Exploration
- Transformation

- Innovate
- Implement
- Reflect
- Engage
- Adapt
- Create
- Motivate



Los Angeles County
Office of Education

Upcoming Customized Coaching Sessions

Tues. November 18 and
Tues. December 9, 2025
3pm - 4pm



Promising Learners Project Customized Coaching Sessions: "Find Your Voice"



promisinglearners.lacoe.edu

Jonathan Brown facilitates this interactive virtual session. Participants will unpack essential social-emotional and communication skills, empowering students to confidently find and use their voice.

- November 18, 2025 @ 3-4pm
- December 9, 2025 @ 3-4pm

SPACE IS LIMITED!

**REGISTER
NOW!**

<http://lacoe.k12oms.org/1533-273099>

CENTER FOR DISTANCE & ONLINE LEARNING
cdolhelp@gmail.com
9300 Imperial Hwy., Downey, CA 90242
(562) 922-8852





**Los Angeles County
Office of Education**

“Storytelling: Through Student Voice & Student Agency”

Year Three - Your Story, Your Power.

Thank You

**Contact Information
cdolhelp@gmail.com
(562) 922-8852**

**Visit our Website
cdol.lacoe.edu**



Promising Learners Project