

ART THERAPY BASED CURRICULA IN AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Afsaneh Ezzatyar and Alyson F. Shapiro, Ph.D.

San Diego State University

Abstract A primary concern of teachers of young children is persistent challenging behaviors, particularly in early childhood education settings where children are actively developing emotional and behavioral regulation abilities. The current teacher action research aims to partially address this challenge through the development, implementation, and evaluation of an after-school curriculum informed by art therapy techniques. The curriculum goals focus on promoting emotion regulation, anger management, problem solving, participation, and positive interactions with both peers and adults. The program aims to reduce the emergence of challenging behavior using art therapy techniques that have been successfully implemented in other settings. Participants were 10 children ranging from 4- to 8-years-old who were enrolled in an after-school program. The program consisted of eight lesson plans administered over four weeks. Program efficacy was examined using a pretest-posttest teacher action research study design, involving both quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Improved emotional and behavioral regulation was reflected through both qualitative emergent themes from reflective teacher journals, and significant quantitative decreases in behavior problem ratings from baseline to post intervention. Children also enjoyed engaging in the art therapy based activities, and increased their level of participation in the activities over time. These results suggest that art therapy based curriculum can be used as an intervention method in early childhood programs and after-school education settings to promote positive emotion regulation and social skill development.

Keywords: teacher action research, after-school, extra curricular, art therapy, early childhood education, challenging behavior, emotion regulation

Introduction

One of the main concerns of teachers and caregivers of younger children is persistent challenging behaviors (Strain & Timm, 2001). Challenging or disruptive behavior is defined as any frequent patterns of actions that inhibit learning or interactions in pro-social relations with peers and adults (Dunlap, Wilson, Strain, & Lee, 2013). These behaviors

persist despite the use of developmentally appropriate supervision techniques, and they can be exhibited in different forms, such as physical or verbal violence, persistent tantrums, self-injury, and disruptive motor and vocal actions (Dunlap et al., 2013). Each year, approximately five hundred million dollars are spent to replace properties that are destroyed by aggressive students (Powell, Fixsen, Dunlap, Smith & Fox, 2007; Strain & Timm, 2001; Tremblay, 2000). The current research aims to partially address this growing challenge through the development and implementation of a curriculum for after-school programs informed by art therapy techniques. The goal of the current teacher action research is to evaluate this art therapy curriculum in an after-school setting, through both a process evaluation and a comparison of challenging behaviors before and after the program.

Literature review

Challenging behavior. Based on a recent review, challenging behavior influences multiple developmental domains, teacher-child relations, peer interactions, and school performance (Powell, et al., 2007). Challenging student behavior has also been cited as one of the major stressors teachers face (Quesenberry, Hemmeter, Ostrosky, & Hamann, 2014). Families of children with challenging behaviors indicated this was one of the most difficult issues they have confronted (Doubet & Ostrosky, 2015). Specifically, these challenging behaviors: limited family activities, affected sibling relations, impacted confidence in parenting, and caused overall family stress.

Research indicates that persistent challenging behavior is connected to antisocial behavior, later negative development, educational failure, peer rejection, and aggression (Dunlap, Wilson, Strain, & Lee, 2013; Tremblay, 2000). Challenging behavior can have complex causes that are difficult for caregivers and educators to manage (Cohn, 2013). Low-quality childcare programs have higher rates of challenging behaviors (Tremblay, 2000), and may not deliver an appropriate curriculum to address the social and cognitive development needs of young children (Tremblay, 2000). Young children are removed from programs because they are not able to follow directions and meet teachers' expectations (Boulware, Schwartz, & McBride, 1999). Art therapy based curricula is one approach to addressing challenging behaviors (e.g. de Moraes, Nazário Dalécio, Vizmann, de Carvalho Bueno, Roecker, Jodas Salvagioni, & Eler, 2014)

Art therapy and early intervention. Early childhood intervention services promote children's wellbeing. A primary benefit of using art therapy as part of curriculum for children is that it is rare for children to resist playing with art material, such as clay, sand, and music. Thus, it offers a way for them to express their feelings that can be less stressful than having to talk about them (Rahmani & Moheb, 2010). Art therapy has proven to be a positive model for addressing mental disorders and behavioral problems while improving health (de Moraes et al., 2014; Garrett, 2014). It has been used with various clients, including young adults who have special needs such as autism (Durrani, 2014). It is a creative approach to improving challenging behaviors, and the art activities help people reflect on their emotions and build positive feelings (Lesser, 2002). Art therapy has a flowing and kinetic quality, which

encourages emotional expression and release of aggression, and is therefore curative (Garrett, 2014).

After-school programs. After-school programs provide opportunities for children across developmental domains, including educational, social, and emotional development (Halpern, 2002). For children in working and single parent households, after-school programs have helped students with diverse needs gain skills and be involved in a well-organized curriculum (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). After-school program teachers typically develop their own curriculum and aim to effectively respond to challenging behavior. A 15-year longitudinal study by Mahoney (2000) indicated that engaging in extracurricular activities was associated with building positive life skills linked to future workplace accomplishments. Characteristics of programs associated with positive outcomes included highly structured consistency, having a positive role model, and goals for each activity. Although research has been conducted about after-school programs, the use of art therapy in these programs has received little attention (Mason & Chuang, 2001).

Given the increasing numbers of children who suffer from mental disorders and behavioral problems, it is vital that after-school program teachers get practical training about the best curriculum for providing care for these children (Garrett, 2014; Quesenberry et al., 2014). Since young children with challenging behavior cannot seek out intervention on their own, after-school programs are a good setting for such programs. Research by Doubet and Ostrosky (2015) indicated that implementing behavioral services and interactive interventions in after-school programs can help address challenging behavior, keep students in the program, address educational issues resulting from the challenging behavior, and positively impact family dynamic. Art therapy techniques are one way that the staff in after-school programs could be trained to help children develop positive regulation skills and reduce challenging behaviors.

After-school programs and art therapy. Several studies have found positive effects from art therapy for children with challenging behavior, including music, clay, sand, narrative, and play therapy (Chong & Kim, 2010; de Morais et al., 2014; Rahmani & Moheb, 2010). Research has focused on using art therapy with children as young as 8-years-old, with most studies focusing on adolescents (de Morais et al., 2014; Garrett, 2014). Children in these programs with challenging behavior displayed significant improvement, which supports the utility for using art therapy in after-school programs. For example, they have demonstrated improvement in sensory, social skills, self-regulation, and academic achievement (Durrani, 2014; Mahoney, 2000; Wengrower, 2001). Art curriculum has been effective in helping young adults with attachment problems and social skills (Durrani, 2014). In their review, Sholt and Gavron (2006) indicated that art therapy helps people connect body and mind with each other in a way that is in harmony with their emotions. Communicating through art can help children develop a mind-body connection and express thoughts and emotions through their senses.

Children who have challenging behavior are typically not able regulate emotions and follow developmentally appropriate guidelines. However, children may learn to express anxiety

and other challenging emotions through three-dimensional materials such as clay, and sand. Parents reported an increase in self-regulation, social skills, and school performance after working with clay and narrative therapy in research by Rahmani and Moheb (2010). Clay therapy has also been effective in reducing depression and anxiety in hospital settings (de Morais et al., 2014). Research by Garrett (2014) indicated that the use of sand therapy in educational and counseling settings was effective for clients, and can be used as a tool to help in understanding problems. During play with sand, small items can represent people, places, and other concepts from the child's world. Since trauma may be stored in the brain at a sensory level, sensory rich approaches like clay and sand play may help address these issues. Thus, activities with clay and sand can help children regulate their emotions and facilitate expression of difficult emotions

A study by Brantley, Brantley, and Baer-Barkley (1996) examined the benefits of art in group-counseling interventions in the school setting as a tool to help children reduce challenging behaviors. Children in an art intervention group were compared to those in a control group over a two-year period between fourth and sixth grade. Students who received the art intervention exhibited decreased challenging behavior and experienced increased positive feelings about themselves. Thus, group counseling involving art therapy techniques can be an effective method for promoting positive emotion and behavior regulation.

Mason and Chuang (2001) conducted a study examining art activities in after-school programs. The 50 participants examined included both parents and children. The experimental group participated in a pretest and post-test assessments. Their results indicated that the intervention group participating in art activities demonstrated significant increases in self-confidence, leadership, and social skills compared to the control group. This study highlights the utility of art as an effective intervention tool for after-school programs.

Wengrower (2001) concluded in his review article that more evidence is needed regarding using art therapy in educational settings. He indicated that the culture of therapy and the culture of school-based settings emphasize different elements while sharing the same foundations. The underlying goal of both cultures is to provide support for the well-being and development of children. However, educational settings and classrooms follow routines and guidelines that may differ from therapeutic settings. Emotional and organizational issues also make it complex to have therapists in educational settings. Wengrower further indicated that some families of children who need intervention are not supportive and do not provide treatment for their children. Therefore, educating teachers who work in school and after-school programs can eliminate problems related to having a therapist in an educational setting, and can provide important intervention for children in families are not able to seek therapy.

The studies to date examining art therapy curriculum have focused on children over eight years old. However, children exhibit challenging behavior at younger ages, and early intervention could help the children and their families before the challenging behaviors become disruptive and negatively impact family, social, and educational experiences. The

current study is novel in that it builds on what is known about the use of art therapy in older children and extends this work by applying art therapy techniques to younger children in the after-school educational setting.

Developing curricula for after-school teachers and staff. Children who attend childcare programs come from diverse populations in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). Students not only vary culturally, but their learning, cognitive abilities, and educational preferences differ as well (Huebner, 2010). Approximately six out of 10 children participate in after-school programs (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

Research indicates that children who participate in high quality care programs are more likely to experience positive outcomes (Cohn, 2013). Unfortunately, Cohn points out that in many childhood education settings, programs often have employees who are not professionally trained in the field, get paid minimum wage, and typically work with the maximum number of children permitted by licensing regulations. Additional challenges contribute to high educator turnover rates, such as challenging student behavior, and poor relationships with co-workers and supervisors (Cohn, 2013). All of these factors are contribute to decreased quality of programs.

Research by Kaufmann and Wischmann (1999) indicated that there is a lack of staff with the necessary training to offer the quality of care required for children with challenging behavior. Thus, children are often suspended or removed from programs due to persistent problem behavior and the lack of skilled staff to teach a challenged child new skills. Quesenberry and colleagues (2014) emphasized the need for professional development programs and appropriate curriculum in child education settings to provide support for children and help reduce challenging behavior.

The research reviewed above indicates that art therapy intervention techniques are useful as a tool for older children in after-school programs. These art therapy techniques can be used by teachers in after-school programs to reduce challenging behaviors, which are often not responsive to other developmentally appropriate strategies. Therefore, the program examined in the current teacher action research integrates aspects of art therapy that are developmentally appropriate for young children in the form of a curriculum for after-school programs.

Theoretical approach. This teacher research and curriculum development is influenced by a Jungian orientation, which is one of the practical theories used in art therapy. A Jungian orientation, as part of the psychodynamic approach, focuses on the role of creativity in the unconscious that allows material to emerge. According to Jung (1966), a piece of art created by a client is not just a simple picture, but also a tool to help one understand what the unconscious is trying to express. The unconscious combines personal thoughts with inner feelings, so art can be used as a method of communication and expression that is linked to the memories of the past. Art therapy curricula can operate as a route to the unconscious levels, and non-verbal expressions can be beneficial to children who cannot express themselves verbally, or who experience anger. Sensory-rich techniques such as sand therapy

or play can allow unconscious material to arise. Language is not sufficient to reflect the inner thoughts, but the unconscious can be expressed through dreams and imagery; thus, art can facilitate healing (Rahmani & Moheb, 2010).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the current teacher action research was to develop, implement, and evaluate an art therapy based curricula in an after-school program with children ranging from 4- to 8-years-old ages to reduce the emergence of challenging behavior. The review of the literature provides evidence that art therapy intervention programs are associated with significant improvements in children's social-emotional behavior, later positive development, anger management, peer relationship, and overall wellbeing. It is vital for educators to develop viable curricula that positively influence children. Art therapy based curricula can provide opportunities for children to express feelings and otherwise communicate through art. After-school programs are one important context for promoting self-regulation and life skills for children because access to therapy is limited for many children with behavior challenges. The current teacher action research examines: 1) whether implementation of an art therapy curriculum is feasible in an after-school setting for use with children as young as 4-years-old, and 2) whether an art therapy curriculum is effective in promoting emotion regulation and reducing challenging behavior in an after-school setting with young children.

Methodology

Research Design. Teacher action research was conducted utilizing a pretest-posttest research study design. This was a longitudinal, mixed methods study that involved collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. Ratings were conducted both once prior to the beginning of the program, and again at the end of the program implementation. Teacher reflective journals were kept throughout the year as part of the teaching process, and journals were reviewed from the month prior to program implementation through the program. The initial behavior ratings and journal entries for the month prior to program implementation were assessed to reflect the child's baseline behavior prior to program implementation.

Participants. Participants consisted of 10 children in the Social Advocate for Youth (SAY) after-school program. They ranged in age from 4- to 8-years-old, and the gender distribution consisted of 60% females and 40% males. All children were of low to upper middle socioeconomic status. Challenges experienced by these children included: coming from a family with divorced parents, exposure to trauma, experiencing anxiety, and demonstrating challenging behavior. Children who attended the after-school program participated in the art therapy based curriculum of activities during their daily schedule. The primary investigator was the after-school program teacher for these children, and she had permission to conduct the activities as their teacher.

Procedures. The objective of the current teacher action research was to develop, implement, and evaluate an art therapy based curricula in an after-school program with young children to reduce the emergence of challenging behavior. The curriculum was developed by both creating and adapting art therapy exercises for use with children as young as a 4-year-old. Exercises focused on promoting the development of emotion regulation, anger management, problem solving, and social skills with peers and adults. The art therapy based curriculum was implemented and examined in the classroom taught by the primary investigator in an after-school program. Students participated in the activities as part of their daily after-school class schedule. The teacher/investigator examined the process of program implementation and its impact through using a combination of qualitative reflective journals and quantitative checklists and ratings.

Operational definition of challenging behavior. Challenging or disruptive behavior was defined for the purposes of this teacher action research as any frequent patterns of actions that inhibit learning or positive social interactions with peers and adults (Dunlap et al., 2013). Examples of challenging behavior both chronicled in the teacher journals included and assessed in the behavioral ratings included: refusing to comply with directions or participate in activities, losing one's temper (e.g. throwing objects or yelling), blaming others for their behavior, and arguing with peers or adults.

Art Curriculum. The teacher used curriculum with foundations in art therapy for this program. The curriculum was developed by the primary investigator by adapting existing art therapy activities to both make them developmentally appropriate for young children, and to make them appropriate for use in a classroom setting (see Rahimian, 2014). Each session started with a short warm-up exercise or discussion, which then lead to the core activities. The general objectives of the activities included promoting: anger management, expressing emotions, friendship, self-regulation, self-awareness, and problem-solving abilities. There were eight primary activities: 1) Angry Faces, focused on understanding anger and self-soothing through creating faces using the sensory medium of clay; 2) Friendship, which aims to promote positive peer relations through use of both drawing and a role-play activity; 3) Angry Balloon, which uses the blowing up of a balloon as a metaphor for accumulating anger; 4) Sarah's Story, in which students use sand play and dolls to express ideas about how the fictional character of Sarah can solve emotion laden problems; 5) Emotional Empowerment, focused on learning how a positive self-image can influence their mood through drawing and coloring; 6) Expressing Emotions, focused on understanding emotions and emotion contexts through a combination of role plays and drawing pictures that represent emotions; 7) Land of _____, teaches about the effects of negative emotions like anger compared to happiness through group creation of a three dimensional land for each emotion; 8) Cooperation, which focuses on the value of working together through having each person in a group create a body part that comes together to form a whole person only when everyone contributes to the project.

The core material and focus of each activity came from this source material (Rahimian, 2014), but the bulk of the other content was created by the teacher-investigator. For

example, the Angry Faces activity was adapted from an exercise that involved creating a mask of an angry expression out of clay, and was modified such that children first created an angry face out of clay, and then changed the face to a happy face also using the clay. Other aspects of the activity were all developed by the teacher-investigator. For example, the activity also involved asking the children questions about how they calm themselves when they are angry, and having children pretend to soothe the clay faces they created. These activities are outlined further in Table 1 and described in detail in the appendix to facilitate replication.

Table 1: Goals and Expected Outcomes for each Program Activity

Activity	Goal	Expected Outcome
Angry Faces	Promoting understanding regarding anger, expression of anger, and development of anger management strategies through both discussion and active work with the sensory clay medium.	Each student will: 1) work with clay to make an angry face and a happy face, 2) engage in a discussion regarding anger and soothing anger in oneself and others.
Friendship	Encourage the development of friendship with others, and to provide opportunity for them to practice defining friendship.	Each child will be able to: 1) contribute to a friendship role play activity, 2) identify their favorite method for making friends, and 3) with a group to practice defining friendship.
Angry Balloon	Promoting understanding regarding accumulated or rising anger, and identification of anger management strategies.	Each student will be able to give suggestions for anger management ideas. Each group will be able to relate their ideas to a balloon and draw a picture.
Sarah's Story	Promoting problem solving regarding emotion related challenges. At the end, each child will be able to practice different ideas for solving a problem using pretend play with sand.	Children will use sand tray to show a story and demonstrate their problem solving ideas. Children will also share their problem solving ideas with the class.

Emotional Empowerment	Help children identify things they like about themselves to promote positive self-esteem and help them understand the influence positive emotions can have.	Each student works individually to create a unique picture representing something they like about themselves.
Expressing Emotions	Promoting understand of different emotions and emotion context.	Each child will demonstrate the emotion understanding through: 1) participating in a role play activity, and 2) drawing a picture to represent the emotions.
Land of _____	Helping children to learn how anger it can affect people negatively compared to how happiness and positive emotions can affect people positively.	Each child work with a group to construct a 3D town reflecting a land of anger and a land of happiness, an engage in a discussion regarding the impact of anger versus happiness.
Cooperation	Promoting understand of the value of cooperation and teamwork to reach a goal.	Each child will work with a group to put different body parts together and create a whole body. One student in each group will be assigned as a leader.

The warm-up exercises at the beginning of each class aimed to reduce stress, promote self-awareness and self-esteem, and help children to get engaged in the main activity. For example, one warm-up exercise consisted of the teacher asking the children to draw or write down their concerns and throw them into a trashcan as a metaphor for letting go of those worries. In another warm-up exercise, the teacher asked questions, such as “What are you proud of? What is your accomplishment? What color is your mood today?” Most of the students talked about their family members and friends and associated different colors with their feelings. These warm-up exercises were designed to help children engage in the main activities, and children who refused to answer questions or engage in the warm-up exercises were less likely to start the main activity with excitement. These warm up exercises are also described in Appendix A.

Project implementation. The art curriculum activities were implemented over a span of four weeks. Each week consisted of two or three activities, and each activity took approximately one to two hours. Students engaged in some activities individually, and engaged in other activities as a group. Group activities included: Sand Play, Land of _____, Cooperation,

Expressing Emotions, and Angry Balloon. There were approximately two to five children in each group during these activities. The teacher assigned children to groups based on her previous knowledge of the group dynamics of the class. For example, children who were leaders were assigned to groups with children who were more inhibited, and children from a range of ages were in each group. This encouraged children to help each other during the activity. A fidelity checklist was used to monitor whether all aspects of the program were implemented as planned.

Materials. Several materials were used in this project that were appropriate for group activities. For instance, the teacher used clay to teach anger management or emotion-regulation. Other mediums, such as watercolor, paint, color pencils, and markers were used for drawing in different activities. Sand trays were used as a sensory tool, and also facilitate therapeutic pretend play around emotions because children could incorporate different objects in the sand play to create a scene within the sand.

Program Evaluation Plan

Teacher action research was conducted to evaluate: 1) whether implementation of an art therapy curriculum is feasible in an after-school setting for use with children as young as 4-years-old, and 2) the efficacy of an art therapy curriculum for promoting emotion regulation and reducing challenging behavior in an after-school setting with young children. Teacher action research is defined a systematic method of inquiry conducted by teachers with the goal of learning more about teaching and learning (Meier & Henderson, 2007). The current teacher action research includes both a process evaluation regarding curriculum implementation, and an examination of change in the children's behavior over time to compare behavior after versus before the program.

The process evaluation included an assessment of: fidelity of program administration, feasibility of curriculum implementation, and participation in activities. A fidelity checklist was reviewed to ascertain whether the program was implemented as planned. Feasibility was assessed from reviewing reflective teacher journals to identify regarding barriers to curriculum implementation and ease of administering the program in terms of the children's receptiveness to the program as well as other after-school program related factors (e.g. attendance, homework, variation in the time parents pick their children up).

Ratings regarding children's behavior and journal writings based on teacher observation were used in combination to assess the efficacy or impact of the program. Child satisfaction with the program was examined as an indication of the program's impact through informal questions the children were asked to monitor how receptive children were to the activities and whether or not they expressed enjoyment or excitement about them. Teacher journals were reviewed to examine children's comments regarding the curriculum across the time the program was implemented. Observations and ratings of children's behavior were regularly collected as part of the teacher's regular oversight of students, and these measurements were used as part of this teacher action research process. Specifically, at SAY San Diego, the after-school program, the teacher and staff are responsible to help children

follow the SAY rules. There are four SAY rules: 1) stay in front of staff at all times, 2) use appropriate words and actions, 3) respect people and property, and 4) follow directions. Teachers are responsible for monitoring and redirecting the children's behavior, being a positive role model, and otherwise helping them learn and grow in a safe and healthy environment. As part of this process, journaling and rating of child behavior is conducted in an effort to monitor children's behavior prior to the SAY rules being broken, and thus help children obey the SAY rules. Ratings and journaling before and after program implementation were compared as part of this teacher research process.

Measures

Behavioral Rating Scale - Teacher Form. The Behavior Rating Scale - Teacher Form developed by Dunne, which is consistent with SAY rules, was used in order to assess challenging behaviors (Dunne, 1997). The teacher used this rating scale to assess children's behavior based on her observations both prior to and after the intervention. This enables the comparison of the pretest and posttest ratings. This rating scale measures a number of aspects of behavior and regulation challenges, including: attention, self-awareness, taking turns, interruptions, friendship skills, relations with peers, willingness to participate in activities, anger management, and problem solving abilities. Examples of items rated include: "fails to give close attention to details or make careless mistakes in his/her work," "has difficulty awaiting turn," "loses temper," and "argues with adults" (Dunne, 1997). Items are rated on a zero to three Likert-type scale, with 0 reflecting that an issue "never or rarely" happened, and 3 indicating that an issue happened "very often." Items were then summed to create one total score, with higher scores reflecting more behavior problems. This is a scale that has been largely used for clinical and teaching purposes, and no published research was found indicating measures of validity and reliability from large-scale studies. The Chronbach's alpha for this measure in the current study was .96, reflecting excellent internal consistency of this measure. Note that because the ratings were conducted solely by the teacher-investigator as part of the teaching process, there was no second rating that could be used to assess inter-rater reliability.

Fidelity checklist. The teacher-investigator created a fidelity checklist to monitor whether all aspects of the program were implemented as planned. The fidelity checklist monitored implementation of the following components for each activity: the goal of the program, the use of all material effectively during the intervention, the amount of time devoted to the activity, and whether the teacher adhered to the planned curriculum. In any cases where an activity was not implemented as planned, specific notes regarding adjustments and the circumstances requiring the adjustments were made. The fidelity checklist for one of the activities is included in Appendix B.

Participation. The participation of children was noted for each activity. Although all children are required to participate in all activities in the SAY program, it was noted if children refused to participate in part of an activity and thus did not fully complete it. It was also noted if children left early because their parents arrived before the activity was completed.

Informal child feedback. Informal questions were asked to monitor satisfaction of children as part of the curriculum implementation process. For example, the investigator asked children how much they liked the activity, if they would want to participate in the activity again, and what changes they would like to see made (e.g. “What other kinds of things would you like to do with clay”). In cases where children did not want to participate, children were asked what would make them want to participate in the activity. Children’s responses were recorded in daily teacher journals.

Reflective teacher journals. The teacher noted her observations and provided feedback from her perspective about the ease of program implementation (feasibility) and effectiveness of the curriculum through chronically specific examples in her daily experience. These reflections discuss the ways that the program has made progress toward the improvement of challenging problems in children. The challenges and concerns were discussed in detail, including suggestions to improve the program in the future. The teacher provided answers to the following informal questions in her journal writing to help systematize her reflections: 1) “How did the art activity help the students?”, 2) “How did the children feel about the activity?”, 3) “What new skills were introduced?”, 4) “How can children’s feedback be used to improve the activity and instruction?”, and 5) “How do activities such as clay or sand help children to express their emotions?” The teacher used this journal to find emergent themes in order to evaluate the program.

Data Analysis Plan

Quantitative analyses. Descriptive statistics were used to assess participation in the curriculum. Program efficacy was examined by comparing the quantitative behavior ratings before and after the curriculum implementation through using a paired sample t-test.

Qualitative analyses. Template analysis (TA) was used to examine emergent themes from the reflective teacher journals, which is a systematic method for analyzing qualitative data thematically. In this approach, themes are collected based on the grouping of responses among data driven templates (King, 1998). Template analysis (TA) is a process that helped organize and analyze textual data based on the themes. The reflective teacher journals were reviewed to identify both emergent themes regarding the program overall and themes that appear to reflect changes in child participation and behavioral regulation over time (i.e. across the program implementation period).

Results and Discussion

Program Efficacy

Changes in challenging behavior. A paired sample t-test was used to test program efficacy through examining the difference between the pretest and posttest total score on the Behavior Rating Scale - Teacher Form. The results indicated a significant decline in behavioral problems between the baseline assessment ($M=25$), and the post program assessment ($M=17$; $t(9) = 2.89$, $d = 0.905$, $p = 0.018$). The means for each item from the rating scale both pretest and post-intervention are listed in Table 2. Problematic behaviors decreased for

eight out of 10 students who participated in the art curriculum. One child did not have any problems at baseline, and thus could not show a decrease in behavior problems at the post intervention assessment. Only one other child did not show a decrease in behavior problems from the baseline to post intervention assessment.

Table 2: Behavior Rating Scale Pretest and Posttest Item Means

Items	Pre-test (Mean)	Post-test (Mean)
1. Attention to detail challenges	1.20	0.80
2. Fidgets	1.20	1.00
3. Difficulty sustaining attention	1.10	0.80
4. Leaves seat	1.10	0.80
5. Doesn't listen	1.00	0.60
6. Restless	1.10	0.60
7. Doesn't follow instructions	1.20	0.60
8. Difficulty engaging in leisure	1.20	0.40
9. Difficulty with organization	0.90	0.50
10. Driven by a motor	0.90	0.80
11. Avoids work with sustained mental effort	0.90	0.80
12. Talks excessively	0.90	0.20
13. Loses things	0.70	0.40
14. Blurts answers prematurely	1.10	0.80
15. Easily distracted	1.30	0.90
16. Difficulty awaiting turn	1.50	0.70
17. Forgetful in daily activities	0.60	0.60
18. Interrupts	1.00	0.80
19. Loses temper	1.30	0.70
20. Argues with adults	1.00	0.80
21. Refuses to comply with adults or rules	0.90	0.80
22. Deliberately annoys others	0.60	0.50
23. Blames others for own mistakes	1.50	0.90
24. Touch & easily annoyed	0.80	0.40
25. Angry and resentful	0.90	0.60
26. Spiteful or vindictive	0.60	0.50

Qualitative emergent themes. Template analysis (TA) was used to examine emergent themes from the reflective teacher journals, by identifying themes based on the grouping of responses among data driven templates (King, 1998). The themes that emerged from reviewing the journals were: decreased externalizing problems, increased participation over time, child satisfaction, communication about emotions, and social competence with peers and adults. Each of these themes is described below. Although some themes reflect aspects of the project implementation process associated with the process evaluation, all themes will first be described in this section, and then referred back when appropriate in the process evaluation following section.

Decrease in externalizing behaviors. In addition to the quantitative analysis of the observational ratings, the teacher journals also reflected that the program's activities

appeared to be associated with improved children's behaviors. Externalizing behaviors chronicled in the reflective teacher journals that decreased over time included: disobeying roles, not respecting people or property, and use of inappropriate words and actions. The journal writings reflected more positive and less negative behavior from the children over time. The teacher particularly noted that children became more calm and regulated in expressing their needs and emotions over time, with decreases in anger being particularly evident. Prior to program implementation, children would often get upset about things, such as losing in a game, and act out with their peers. This behavior gradually decreased over the time of program implementation. Moreover, this decrease in externalizing behaviors appeared to be accompanied by an increase in more positive group behaviors. For example, children became more engaged in sharing in front of the group, made more positive comments to their peers, and had more overall harmonious interactions. This was particularly evident in the Sarah's Story activity, in which children worked as a group to tell a story through their sand play that involved problem solving to come up with ideas that would help the fictional Sarah resolve her challenges.

Increased participation in activities. One goal of implementing the art therapy informed curriculum was to help children increase their participation and involvement in after-school program activities. Children's level of engagement varied throughout the project, but overall increased participation and was reflected through the journal writings. All children participated in all parts of the following activities: Angry Faces, Cooperation, and Emotional Expression. These activities appeared to not only be successful in teaching children teamwork and expressing emotions, but also created an environment where some children with traditionally challenging behaviors made comments expressing an increased desire to participation, such as "Can we make this again? "

One specific child who typically exhibited insecure behavior and often refused to participate in activities showed change over time in participation. This child usually expressed negative comments and showed lack of interest in participating in any activities. When the curriculum was first implemented, she was easily distracted and would leave her art activities unfinished. She would often sit at a separate table even when engaging in the activities, and would even throw away her art pieces. However, she gradually became more inclined to finish her projects, showed more interest in her peers, and not only completed the later activities but even made positive comments about them. For example, shortly after implementing the art therapy curriculum, the teacher-investigator wrote that this child said, "I don't care." However, towards the end of the program the teacher journal indicated that the child said, "Can we make this again?" This reflects her increased interest in participation.

Child satisfaction. The satisfaction of children regarding the art therapy informed curriculum was evident from journal writings that noted positive comments they made about the activities. Some children, who failed to show interest in the art activities prior to implementation, later expressed excitement and raised their hands when the teacher asked if they liked the activity. They increasingly reported being interested in similar activities over time (as the program implementation continued). Students universally showed enjoyment

and satisfaction regarding the following activities: Land of _____, Emotional Empowerment, and Angry Faces. Additionally, in the Cooperation activity, all children except one raised their hand when they were asked about their enjoyment. During the Emotional Empowerment activity, one child even expressed, "This is the best activity ever!"

Communication about emotions. Based on the teacher journal reflections, the activities appeared to also help the children express their emotions. Art materials and activities created an environment for children to communicate their emotions and feelings, giving these students a positive outlet for emotional expression. The art material and the choice of the activities provided the means of communication for children. For example, drawing pictures of their feelings and experiences provided a starting point for children to communicate their thoughts and feelings. For example, after mixing colors together and splashing watercolor on their paper, some children would make verbalizations that reflected emotions, such as "I love this activity," or "This is the best activity ever."

This theme was particularly evident in writings regarding the Angry Faces activity that involved creating faces with different facial expressions using clay. When working with clay, some children felt the necessity and freedom to destroy the clay creation, which served as an outlet for anger and frustration. After this destruction, they were then able to create a new piece of artwork. Additionally, when working with clay, children suggested different things that could help them become calm when they are angry. For example, one girl said, "I would like to play with my cat." Additionally, pretending to play roles through the sand play in the Sarah's Story activity appeared to help children express how they felt about emotional situations.

Social competence. This theme reflected improved child-adult relations, peer relations, and overall teamwork. The majority of children exhibited less behavioral problems in the classroom when communicating with peers and adults over time. Several activities specifically focused on teaching children about friendship and positive problem-solving by drawing on everyday life examples. For example, the teacher used examples of things that have happened in the classroom for the Friendship activity, and modeled the activity for them. Examples of role play scenarios used to engage the children in this activity that were based on classroom examples included: a) imagine there is new child in the program and try to start a friendship with her or him; and b) a girl who is in first grade is doing her homework and comes to you and asks for a help, and you laugh at her and say this is an easy homework assignment. Role-plays were also included in Sarah's Story, which used a sand tray for the children to use for pretend play in the sand. The reflective journals indicated that these role-play activities helped encourage student to positively verbalize their emotions with each other.

Several activities also appeared to help students learn to cooperate as a team. For example, when using sand play, students worked in a group to address the problem in the activity and shared some suggestions about using sand tray. In one of the groups, the student that usually refused to share before the beginning of the program, willingly participated and shared her group suggestions while giving the credit to the other group members rather

than herself. Building teamwork was also a focus of the Cooperation Activity, in which each student team-member created a different body part and worked together in a group to create a complete person. As the program progressed, the teacher-investigator observed that some children started interacting more positively with each other through both comments and actions during other activities, as well as the activities that focused on promoting positive relationships.

Process Evaluation

Fidelity. Review of the fidelity checklists used indicated that all planned activities were implemented. Additionally, the goals of every activity were clearly met for all but one activity, and in this case there was limited attendance on that particular Friday (fewer than usual children attended and several of those left early with their parents). In cases where an activity was not implemented as planned, specific notes regarding adjustments and the circumstances requiring the adjustments were made. For example, in the Angry Faces activity, the original planned curriculum was designed to have students create a clay mask with an angry or whining expression. However, due to the time limitations, the teacher-investigator changed the activity to focus on making an angry face out of clay rather than making a mask. This modification allowed the children to complete the activity within the class time available, and allowed the teacher to more easily work with a group of 10 children who all required assistance at the same time. The teacher also subtly modified other activities based on a variety of circumstances. For example, the teacher-investigator originally planned to allow each child to choose a group for the “Land of _____” activity, but there were arguments over which group they would be in, so the teacher assigned the children to a group. The short story and the “Sarah’s Story” activity is an example of an activity that seemed to be really easy for most of the children and was implemented completely as planned.

Feasibility. Implementing the program was feasible, since the teacher was able to implement all of the activities outlined in the art therapy informed curriculum. However, there were challenges regarding implementation of the curriculum that were encountered. In these cases, the teacher needed to adjust to the situation in order to help children participate and get engaged in the activity. The feasibility of the program, in terms of ease of program implementation, was assessed through teacher journal reflections. Major logistical factors encountered that were beyond the control of the teacher included class attendance, and variation in the time when parents came to pick their children up from the after-school program. In some activities, such as Emotional Empowerment, Angry Balloon and Sarah’s Story, some children were not able to complete the activity because they were picked up by their parents and left the program early.

The teacher-investigator encountered a variety of other issues and group dynamic challenges that required subtle adjustment to the way activities were implemented or the level of help she gave children to help them fully engage in the activities. For example, one child developed a lice problem, and the teacher made a last minute modification in the Cooperation activity such that it did not involve using a hat for sharing suggestions. The

teacher gave a greater level of help that she initially anticipated for the Friendship activity, because the students initially argued about which roles each person would take in the activity. Specifically, the teacher gave the students prompts to actively guide them through the role-play portion of this activity. In the Angry Balloon activity, the teacher used online sources for illustration cards, which unintentionally distracted the children because they wanted to play with the electrical device, so this was something she would change for future implementation. In the Sarah's Story activity, the short story and related activity seemed to be easy for the children to understand and engage in, and they engaged in a harmonious discussion by sharing similar thoughts and feelings during the exercise.

Participation. There was a trend approaching significance that suggests an association between participation and time of activity administration, such that refusals to complete activities were lower for later activities ($r(7) = -.59, p = .12$). Details regarding participation in each activity are provided in Table 3. Increased participation in activities is also reflected in the qualitative coding from the reflective teacher journals described above.

Table 3: Participation in Each Program Activity Listed in Order of Activity Administration

Activity	Started	Refused to complete part of activity	Left early (with parents)	Completed
1. Angry Faces	10	2	0	9
2. Friendship	9	1	2	6
3. Angry Balloon	6 (out of 6)	2	2	3
4. Sarah's Story	10	0	2	8
5. Emotional Empowerment	10	0	3	7
6. Expressing Emotions	10	0	0	10
7. Land of ...	10	0	0	10
8. Cooperation	10	1	0	9

Discussion

The purpose of the program was to develop, implement, and evaluate an art therapy curriculum in an after-school program in order to reduce challenging behavior. The results from the current teacher action research indicate that the program was successful at fulfilling this goal. This is an important area of teacher research given that challenging student behavior has become one of the most cited major stressors for teachers (Quesenberry et al., 2014), and because challenging behavior has been associated with multiple negative outcomes for the children who exhibit them (Dunlap et al., 2013; Powell et al., 2007; Tremblay, 2000). Children in after-school programs are a population of particular interest both because they are an understudied group of children, and because they are in non-parental care for the majority of the day. This population likely comprises both children of high SES parents in high demand professions, and also some of the highest risk children of parents who are working long hours to support their families (Wengrower, 2001). The current study is novel in that it builds on what is known about the use of art therapy with older children and extends this work by applying art therapy techniques to younger children in the after-school educational setting.

The current teacher action research examines: 1) whether implementation of an art therapy curriculum is feasible in an after-school setting for use with children as young as 4-years-old, and 2) whether an art therapy curriculum is effective in promoting emotion regulation and reducing challenging behavior in an after-school setting with young children.

Implementation of the art therapy curriculum in an after-school setting was indeed feasible given that all activities were implemented as planned, and were used successfully with children as young as 4-years old with only minor modifications being needed. The art therapy informed curriculum focused on promoting emotional regulation, anger management, problem solving, participation, and positive interactions with both peer and adults. Progress in areas related to all of these goals was reflected both statistically significant quantitative decreases in behavior problems, and the emergent themes from qualitative coding of teacher journals. Specific findings across quantitative and qualitative results are discussed below.

Results indicated that challenging behavior decreased after implementation of the art therapy based curriculum. Specifically, total scores from the Behavior Rating Scale – Teacher Form (Dunne, 1997), reflecting challenging behavior and difficulty with emotion regulation, significantly decreased from the baseline to post intervention assessment. Decreased externalizing behavior was also observed and documented through teacher journal reflections, and was highlighted as an emergent theme. Students demonstrated more control of their behaviors when getting angry or upset. These two sets of results suggest that art therapy based curriculum can be an effective tool in order to help children improve emotional regulation and decrease behavior problems in after-school programs. These results are similar to previous studies with older children indicating that children in high quality care and education programs are more likely to experience positive outcomes (Cohn, 2013), and that art therapy curricula in particular can be used to promote behavior

regulation and reduce challenging behaviors (Chong & Kim, 2010; de Moraes et al., 2014; Rahmani & Moheb, 2010).

Children's increase in participation in program activities over time was reflected by both quantitative and qualitative analyses regarding the program. There was a trend that approached significance suggesting that children's participation improved over the time of the implementation. For example, across the first four sessions there were five refusals to complete the activities, and across the second half of the program there was only one refusal to complete an activity. One of the emergent themes found from the teacher reflective journal also indicated an increase in children's participation throughout the intervention. Children expressed more positive verbal statements expressing their opinions or reactions over time. Moreover, children's satisfaction regarding the program improved over time. More children raised their hand to express their enjoyment after later sessions compared to earlier ones.

Children also appeared to use the art materials to express their emotions as reflected in another emergent theme from the teacher reflective journal. This expression of emotions is critical because it can help children to regulate their emotions and associated behaviors (Durrani, 2014). Clay, sand play, and painting tools provided a conducive context for children to verbalize some of their feelings. For example, clay appeared to give them a sense of control, and facilitated discussion about feelings of anger. It is also important to note that children are sometimes not able to verbalize their emotions, and art material can help them to express these feelings through artistic images or clay forms, as well as through using words to express themselves.

Children in the program also became better team players over the time the art therapy techniques were implemented, reflecting better social skills and communication strategies. Role-play and drama-based activities helped them to use problem-solving skills. It also provided an opportunity to come up with new ideas for friendship and peer interactions in group contexts. These activities enabled active learning to take place for these students. Rather than listening to a lecture on how to be nice to your friends, the students actively created and applied strategies for having successful friendships.

Program administration. Overall, there was high fidelity of program administration in that all activities were implemented, and in seven out of eight cases the goals the activities were clearly met. The program was also well received in the after-school program setting, which reflects good overall participant satisfaction. However, there were some challenges regarding certain aspects of program administration. In some activities the planned curriculum was modified in order to ease the process. For example, a story read to the children during one of the activities was too simple for the children, so the teacher modified it when applying it to the art in order to include more details. This created more opportunities for the children to engage in problem solving. In addition, the teacher also modified some of the activities due to the material that was used. In one activity the teacher changed an activity from making a clay mask to just making a face with clay due to the time

limits for the activity. There were also challenges for program administration in that on some days (particularly Fridays), the parents of the children sometimes took their children home early, and those children were not able to finish the activity.

Limitations and Future Directions

One limitation of the project is that the project was implemented in only one program, which consisted of only 10 children between four and eight-years-old. Therefore, the small sample size from a single site is limited in its generalizability to the larger population. Thus, the promising findings should be interpreted cautiously, and replication with larger samples across multiple sites is recommended. Another limitation is that the program was observed and evaluated by the primary investigator who works as a teacher, which could easily reflect the teacher's personal bias. Her presence during the activities may also have unconsciously focused on specific elements of the program most associated with the outcomes of interest. This reflects the subjectivity inherent in teacher action research. Another limitation of the study is the lack of inter-rater reliability due to having only one teacher as a rater. Additionally, the Behavior Rating Scale – Teacher Form used in the current research has been largely used for clinical and teaching purposes, and no published research was found indicating measures of validity and reliability from large-scale studies.

This program focused on multiple aspects of emotional social development across the eight sessions included in the curriculum. Even though the results of the program showed significant improvements, more intensive intervention may be needed for children with the highest level of behavior problems. A four-week program may not be enough time to facilitate different areas of developments for these children of highest risk. Future research is encouraged using an art therapy based curriculum with higher risk children. Examination of a curriculum with more activities focused on one specific aspect of development at a time may also be beneficial for high-risk children or children with specific challenges, such as curriculum of activities focusing exclusively on anger management. Children with extreme challenges should also be referred for therapy.

Implications

The current teacher action research indicated that art therapy techniques could be used in after-school programs to reduce the emergence of challenging behaviors. Professional development programs training after-school and early education teachers to use these techniques is recommended, given both the results of the current study and research by Quesenberry and colleagues (2014) emphasizing the need for professional development programs in child care and education settings to help reduce challenging behavior. The process evaluation of the current program also suggests that teachers in after-school programs may need to be flexible in the administration of their program activities to adapt to logistical factors such as parents taking their children home at various times of the day.

The successful implementation of art therapy techniques in the current study with children as young as 4-years-old, suggests that these techniques can be used even with very young

children who have limited emotion and behavior regulation abilities. Children also enjoyed engaging in the art therapy based activities and increased their level of participation in the activities over time. These results in combination with past research indicating that art therapy have been used with clients who have special needs such as autism (Durrani, 2014), suggests that these techniques may also be used effectively in the field of early intervention. Based on the results of the current study, art therapy based curriculum may be particularly beneficial across educational and intervention contexts to promote positive emotion regulation and help children play together and learn new skills. Further research as well as application is recommended in this area.

Art therapy based lesson plans provide children with the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings through nonverbal art mediums as well as verbally. This approach may help children who experience behavior problems when they not able to communicate their distress and grief. Program such as the one examined in the current teacher research that focused on providing children with the opportunity to foster social-emotional skills, team work, anger-management, self-regulation, and problem-solving can foster their early developmental skills and help prepare them for brighter futures.

About the Authors

Alyson Shapiro, Ph.D. Alyson Shapiro received her Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology from the University of Washington, and then went on to pursue post-doctoral training in the area of Infant Mental Health at the Barnard Center for Infant Mental Health and Development at the University of Washington. She is currently serving as tenure track faculty in the Department of Child and Family Development at San Diego State University. Her professional work aims to promote the wellbeing of infants, children, and families through: 1) conducting and disseminating high-quality, application-relevant research; 2) teaching in the university setting; and 3) translating research findings for practitioners, educators, students, and parents. She has interests in teacher-action research focused on the development and evaluation of curriculum design to promote early social and emotional development, and focused on teacher processes aimed at promoting parent involvement in their children's education and development. Many of the graduate students she mentors are teachers of young children, and she actively promotes the use of teacher-action research to help them better learn from their teaching experiences and create improved curriculum that will further the learning and development of the children they work with. Email: ashapiro@mail.sdsu.edu

Afsaneh Ezzatyar. Afsaneh Ezzatyar received her M.S. in Child Development from San Diego State University. She aims to provide quality education and evidence-based services to children and families experiencing challenging life circumstances through both her applied work and her teacher-action research. She served as an after school teacher for several years, and used art therapy curriculum to help children with challenging behavior in that

setting. She designed and implemented curriculum to enhance problem solving, critical thinking skills, social skills, and emotional regulations. She is currently working as an early childhood educator to provide services to children with developmental delays and their families, actively promoting positive development through evidence-based strategies and activities. Email: aezzatyar@rchsd.org

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Appendix A: Lesson Plan Curriculum

Overview

This curriculum was created through drawing on foundational concepts and techniques used in art therapy. The curriculum was developed by the primary investigator by adapting existing art therapy activities to both make them developmentally appropriate for young children, and to make them appropriate for use in a classroom setting (see Rahimian, 2014). Each session started with a short warm-up exercise or discussion, which then lead to the core activities. The general objectives of the activities included promoting: anger management, expressing emotions, friendship, self-regulation, self-awareness, and problem-solving abilities. The eight core activities that comprise this program are described in detail below. Several examples of warm-up activities are also introduced at the end of this set of lesson plans.

Lesson plan name: Angry Faces

Summary. Students are introduced to sensory art material to create an angry face, which can help the student to understand anger, as well as have a discussion regarding situations that may be frustrating to the student.

Goal. Promoting understanding regarding anger, expression of anger, and development of anger management strategies through both discussion and active work with the sensory clay medium.

Learning outcomes. Students will be able to: 1) discuss emotions such as anger, frustration, happiness, or sadness; 2) understand that emotions that are both angry, happy, and sad can all occur; and 3) suggest ways to regulate anger and change emotions in others and in themselves.

Step by step instructional plan. Students are introduced to the topic of anger and frustration with an interactive conversation with the teacher. For example, the teacher may say, “who can share with me a time when you felt really frustrated or maybe even angry” Students will then be given some clay and instructed to flatten the clay to make an angry face and a happy face. Students are instructed to use the clay tools or their fingers to make the eyes, nose, and mouth. The students are instructed to make the face of a whining person while kneading the clay. Students are asked about time when they were angry or frustrated. Examples of times children may have felt angry are shared with students to generate discussion include, “when someone ate your cookie that you saved”, and “when someone shoved you while you were standing in line”. When the student is done making the face out of clay, they are asked to talk for the clay face and express his/her concerns to a friend. Then, after the friend listens, they try and soothe the clay face, to making it less angry and making it happy. Students are then instructed to change the expression of the angry clay face so that the expression is happy.

Timeline. Entire activity takes 45-50 minutes.

Modifications. English language learners are able to show the feelings on the clay faces. These students will also be asked question to check their comprehension, and the teacher will demonstrate what the activity entails.

Assessment. Students are engaged in a debrief discussion where they are asked about what helped soothe the angry face, whether they could do this for another person, and is it a good strategy for them to use for themselves when they are angry.

Image 1: Angry and happy clay faces created from clay in this activity.



Lesson Plan Name: Friendship.

Summary. This is a role-play activity that seeks to involve all students taking turns in the role-play process focused on making new friends. The children discuss what friendship is and what good friend making strategies are in a group. Each child will then identify their favorite friendship method and draw it on a paper.

Goal. To encourage the development of friendships with others and to promote greater understanding of what friendship is and to interact in friendly ways.

Learning outcomes. The student will be able to articulate what friendship means and be able to think of behaviors that can contribute to in-class friendship.

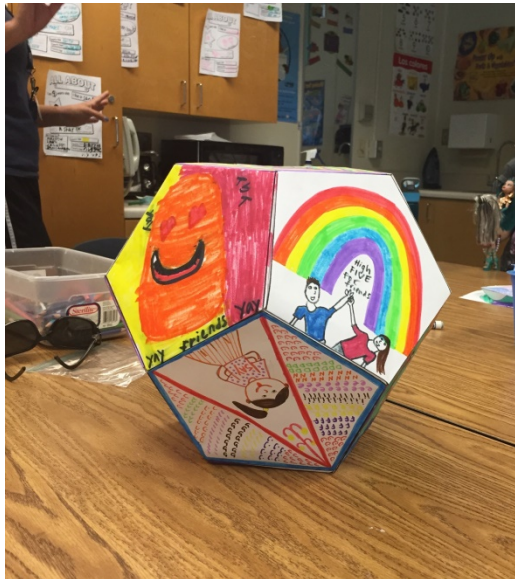
Step-by-step instructional plan. The teacher assigns students into groups and explains that in this activity we can use a chair and call it a “magical chair.” One of the students sits on a chair and the teacher asks other students to initiate the conversation and use different strategies for making that person a friend. The teacher models some examples: “Imagine you are meeting a new student; I want to see how you start a friendship with him/her. You see a girl in your class is crying, what you would do to make her feel better?” Then students are given a time to discuss their ideas in their group. At the end, the student in the chair picks the friendship method he/she likes best. This is the point of view of the child who sits on the chair. Each child has an opportunity to sit on the chair and pick the friendship method that is most satisfying to her/him as well. At the end, each child draws her/his favorite method on a paper. The teacher then puts all of the pictures them together that reflects and creates a 3d project that can be displayed in the classroom to remind children of the friendship art they all contributed to as friends.

Timeline: 45-50 minutes

Modifications. Since this is a role play, minimal modifications are needed, as this is how the student will actually engage in building a peer relationship from who they are and their ability. Checking in with students regarding vocabulary and understanding during the process will help.

Assessment. Students will be asked to articulate what it is that they liked best or the behaviors that they saw that were the best. Students will also engage in individual assessment by drawing the method that was the most appealing to him or her.

Image 2: Three-dimensional figure created from all the student's drawings representing friendship



Lesson Plan Name: Angry balloon

Summary.

Goal. The purpose of this activity is for a student to see how anger can accumulate through the visual metaphor of a balloon. The student also learns ways to help let this anger out through both the visual of letting air out of the balloon and through drawings and discussion about strategies for letting go of anger.

Learning outcomes. Each student will develop an understanding of how emotions can accumulate over time. Students will share suggestions for anger management and draw pictures reflecting those strategies.

Step-by-step instructional plan. First, the teacher divides students into two or more groups. The teacher will give each group a blown-up balloon and ask each group to draw an angry face on the balloon. Then, the teacher shows different pictures to each group reflecting situations that children may respond to with anger (e.g. a girl who was pushed in the line, someone who didn't have a turn on the computer). Children will indicate whether or not each situation would make them angry. For any picture that represents an outraged face, the group has to blow their balloon up more based on the picture. The students determine how much to blow-up their balloon based on how angry they would feel, and inflate the balloon. Each group is also instructed to come up with anger management ideas and draw them on the easel board. When they come up with an anger management strategy, then they let some air out of the balloon. For example, children may suggest that the angry girl can count to 10, and then they draw her counting on the easel. The activity continues till one of the balloons is blown up so much that it pops. The teacher asks the whole class (across groups) questions, such as "Who can tell me why the angry balloon popped?" The teacher then leads further

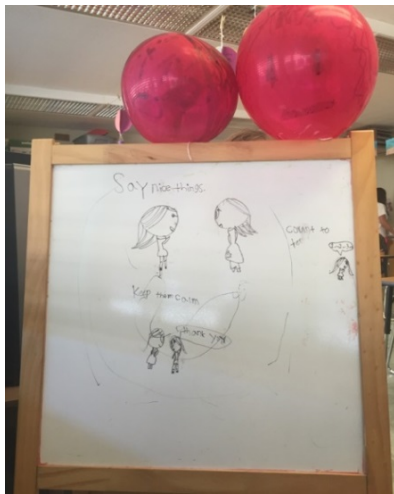
discussion about how we can feel like we “blow up” when we feel really angry, and how anger management strategies can help us to calm down when we feel angry.

Timeline. Activity is given 45-50 minutes.

Modifications. Students are shown pictures as a way to communicate with students who may not have an understanding of the terms associated with the situation.

Assessment. Students return to a large group where they are asked specific questions about what they observed and how it applies to themselves and others that they know.

Image 3: Balloon with angry faces drawn on them above drawing of ways to let out anger



Lesson Plan Name: Sarah's Story.

Summary. Students are encouraged to find solutions for problems on their own and using other people. Students use a sand tray to communicate suggestions for a hypothetical person (Sarah). They will both practice the problem solving through the pretend play and verbally tell the teacher and their classmates what they are doing.

Goal. To promote problem solving regarding emotion related challenges.

Learning outcomes. The student will be able to identify alternative solutions to an issue and see the perspectives of other people when problem solving. Each child will be able to practice different ideas for solving a problem using pretend play with sand. The students will also be able to identify that sometimes non-linear solutions can help a problem.

Step-by-step instructional plan. Teacher prepares a sand box for sand play with a house or doll in it. Teacher also has a story prepared in which the primary character faces some kind of challenge that involves negative emotions. The name of primary character could be Sarah or it could be another name that does not belong to someone in the class. The teacher reads the story, and asks the students to role play the story with dolls to reinforce the story.

Story: Sarah needs some ideas. Every morning Sarah's parents wake her up with a loud voice, but she can't wake up easily. Even after getting out of bed, she has a hard time choosing an outfit. She has to spend some time to figure what she wants to wear, and it is hard for her to make a decision. In addition, it is hard to choose what to eat for breakfast as well. That makes her mom upset, and then Sarah feels upset too.

After reading the story the teacher asks them to role-play the story using the sand tray with the dolls. The teacher has the students suggest different solutions for the character story, and to act the solutions out with their sand play as well as explaining what their suggestions are verbally. Children will use sand tray and show the story and tell the teacher what their suggestion is for Sarah. The teacher can ask questions like, "What are the positive and negative aspects about Sarah's situation?" Some examples of children's suggestions include "Sarah can ask her parents to wake her up earlier, so that she still do things at her pace, but will be on time." "Sarah can apologize to her parents and say, 'I'm sorry, I'll do better tomorrow. I'll lay out my clothes, and set my alarm clock. Also, I won't watch TV at night.'" "Sarah can think about doing something to make her parents happy, for example, by waking up early each morning."

Timeline. Activity is given 50-75 minutes.

Modifications. English language learners and others will receive additional instruction or reinforcement of vocabulary throughout activity.

Assessment. A de-brief discussion with the whole class will be used so that children can talk about some of the solutions that they came up with as well as identify that sometimes a person has to take responsibility to help find a solution. The teacher can guide this discussion and highlight particularly good solutions as part of this discussion.

Image 4: Sandbox and sand play toys for demonstrating problem solving ideas related to the story.



Lesson Plan Name: Emotional Empowerment

Summary. Each student individually creates a unique picture, representing self. Each student will be able to paint the project with spray in any color they want.

Goal. To help children develop positive self-esteem and an understanding about the way positive emotions can influence them.

Learning outcomes. The student be able to identify something happy to help influence their thoughts, and will create a picture reflecting something positive about themselves.

Step-by-step instructional plan. The teacher starts the activity by bringing examples: “I want you to close your eyes and think of a nice place, a place you want to be, or think of something that is special to you, or special about you, how does that look like? Let’s hold your thoughts and use a white crayon to draw them on a paper.” We can draw a picture that when someone looks at it, it reminds him/her of you. After having students draw their favorite picture on a construction paper, the teacher provides an appropriate space to place their art. Then, the teacher helps the student use spray bottles to color their picture. The color from the spray bottles do not remain on a white crayon, art from the white crayon stands out, enabling the student to create a unique piece of art reflecting the self of things important or loved by the child.

Timeline. 45-50 minutes.

Modifications. Additional or individual instruction will accompany the initial instructions to check for individual understanding about what to do for this activity.

Assessment. Following the activity, students will share what they have done with the class, and others, and the teacher will lead the class in a large group debrief discussion focusing on how imaging someplace else can help calm someone down or bring them happy thoughts.

Image 5: Art reflecting the self by spraying paint on paper where an image or word reflecting the child is creating using white crayon



Lesson Plan Name: Expressing Emotions

Summary. The student will exhibit his/her understanding of an emotion through the effective use of roleplay and by drawing representations of emotions. Students are introduced to vocabulary surrounding emotions as well as proper actions to demonstrate that emotion.

Instructional Plans. The teacher will have each group engage in a role play by creating a scene involving some of the emotions provided.

Goals. To promote understand of different emotions and emotion context.

Lesson Outcomes. Each child will demonstrate the emotion understanding through: 1) participating in a role play activity, and 2) drawing a picture to represent the emotions.

Step-by-step instructional plan. Teacher will need to acquire different examples of emotions in advance that are not just verbal, but also include images and/or short clips from television shows or YouTube videos, or movies. Pictures from the *Inside Out* movie, for example, have good examples with pictures of characters representing happiness/joy, sadness, anger, and disgust. The teacher first divides students into small groups. Each group is provided with the list of emotions; the teacher can bring examples of the movies, cartoons, or any animated characters that represents emotions such as from the movie, *Inside Out* (with a picture, such as happiness, sadness, excitement, and anger). Then, she gives each group time to create and play a scene based on the emotions. Each play should include all the emotions that the group has a picture for. The children in the other groups will guess what emotion the play is illustrating, and then draw a picture representing the emotion.

Timeline: 45-50 minutes

Modifications. Incorporation of different examples that include images.

Assessment. Students will demonstrate their understanding both through their acting out a scene that demonstrates an emotion, and through guess what emotion is illustrated in the other group(s) plays. The “guessing” will occur through a picture made by the student, thus giving individual feedback about where students are at with their understanding of the emotions.

Image 6: Drawing reflecting an emotion that was guessed from the role-play activity.



Lesson Name: Land of _____

Summary. Students create a three-dimensional visual representation of feelings, such as anger, and understand how anger and the absence of anger can create a healthy or unhealthy town. Each student will have an opportunity to contribute to the discussion about what they envision a town looks like with happy and unhappy feelings.

Goal. To help children to learn how anger it can affect people negatively compared to how happiness and positive emotions can affect people positively.

Learning outcomes. Students will be able to describe the impact of anger verses the impact on happiness. Discussion will focus on explain how some anger is okay, but being angry all the time can have some negative consequences.

Step-by-step instructional plans. The teacher first divides up students into two groups, with each group responsible for creating a land. One land is the land of happiness and people never get angry. The second land is a place where people are always angry. Each group will be given ample time and teacher support to create a three-dimensional representation of the land they are creating. Students within each group are encouraged to discuss what each land would look like as they create that land. Once the art production reflecting each land is completed, each group should present what is beneficial and harmful in the land that they have created. For example, they may say, "It is good to get angry because you have to stand up for yourself," or "It is not good for you to be angry all the time," "In a happy land they always have fun and play," "They don't know how to stand up for themselves in a happy land." In the Angry Land the students create a town which demonstrates arguments, fears, and violence", "the Happy Land demonstrates the more peaceful nature." After encouraging children to express their thoughts and feelings, the teacher explains that these two lands show us that having too much anger, and not getting angry at all is not healthy for us. Being able to get angry at the right time can be healthy for us, and being able to let anger go and embrace happiness is also healthy for us.

Timeline. Activity is given 45-50 minutes.

Modifications. English language learners are supported through being asked direct questions regarding how they feel or what their thoughts are about the exercise. They can also be asked to draw images that reflect their thoughts and feelings.

Assessment. In a large group setting, students are asked specific questions about what they thought was good and bad about each city (both the one they worked to develop and the one other students worked to create).

Image 7: Three-dimensional figures illustrating what a land of anger (left) and a land of happiness (right) would look like.



Lesson Plan Name: Cooperation

Summary. Each child works with a group to put different body parts together and create a whole body. Each group has a leader that assigns their group responsibilities.

Goals. To promote understand of the value of cooperation and teamwork to reach a goal, and to promote leadership within groups.

Lesson outcomes. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the value of cooperation by, 1) working with a group to put different body parts together and create a whole body, and 2) contributing to a discussion about how a group of people can be successful in completing a task.

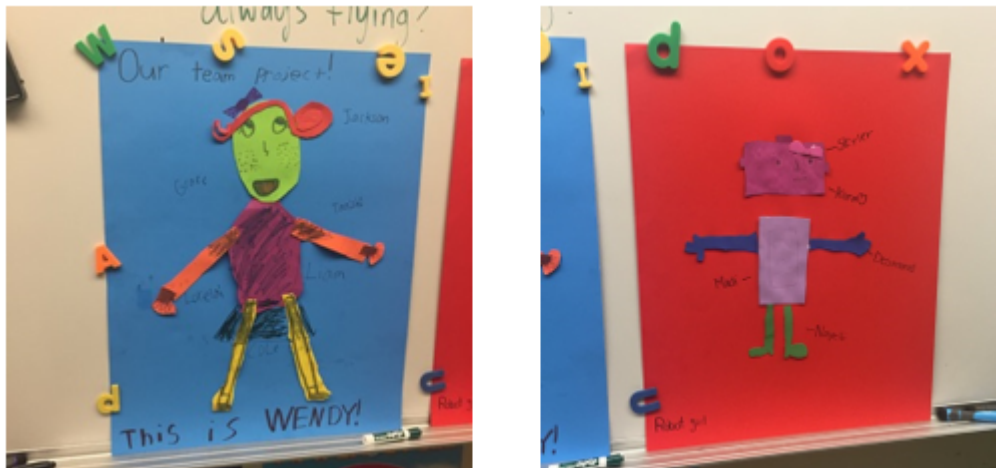
Step-by-step instructional plan. The teacher will assign each child into a group and asks them to draw the assigned part of the face/or body. A leader is also assigned to each group. After creating a whole picture (face or body), the leader of the group puts the name of the students on the parts that they have made. The teacher shares the final picture and explains how everyone had a major and unique role in creating the whole picture and it would not have been possible to create the whole picture if someone did not perform her/his task. Then the teacher asks general questions about the missing parts: “Why do you think this body doesn’t have a neck?” “What’s wrong with not having a neck?” “Why do you think we should work in a group?” Then the teacher explains that working together is not always about what each of us like, or what each of us wants, but that sometimes we need to work together to get a positive result.

Timeline: 45-50 minutes

Modifications. The teacher will develop groups that seek to balance the skills of the students to support one another. Teacher will also follow-up with each group to give in students additional direct support as needed.

Assessment. Students will return to a larger group and engage in a debrief discussion about what it was like to work with other people in a group. Students’ articulation of their experiences will reflect what they learned from this exercise.

Image 8: Pictures of the people that were created by each group when all of the body parts made by different students and assembled through collaboration. Note that the person in the picture on the right does not have neck because one child did not fully contribute to the activity, while the picture on the left reflects a complete person.



Lesson Plan Name Warm-Up Activities

Summary. Short warm-up activities are used to prepare children to get into the group and create a safe and trusting space before starting a main activity. Warm-up activities typically occur in conjunction to main activities, but as a pre-activity. Multiple warm-up activities are presented and can be varied based on the main

activity. Any warm-up activity can be used before any of the main activities, and the warm activities can be repeated as many times as the teacher desires.

Warm-up A. Students are asked imaginative questions in a group setting by the teacher. Questions can include: 1) What are you proud of? 2) Who is your favorite person in the world and why? 3) If your mood could be a color, what color would it be? 4) If you were invited to a costume party, what would you be wearing? 5) If you could fly, where would you go? and 6) What do you wish someone would say about you?

Warm-up B. Students are paired in groups or with a partner and are asked to start naming their favorite locations, favorite places, or any other “favorites.”

Warm-up C. A continuous drawing activity is introduced in which the teacher begins by drawing a line of any shape and color and then the students add to the image. The student is asked to keep his/her pencil on the paper, and then when he/she is done, the next student continues drawing with the pencil affixed to the paper as well. The finished product is a random final drawing that all members have contributed to creating.

Warm-up D. Students are asked to sit alphabetically by first or last name.

Timeline. All warm-up activities have a timeline of 15-20 minutes.

Modifications. Changes can be made based on students’ needs for clarification, definitions, or demonstrations.

Assessment. The teacher will verbally check students for understanding by asking students to verbally explain what they heard or saw from a classmate or what they saw in the art.

Appendix B: Fidelity Checklist ExampleAngry Faces:

- ☐ The goals were met
- ☐ Material Used: ☐ clay ☐ water pans ☐ newspaper ☐ clay tools
- ☐ Creating a angry face out of clay
- ☐ Soothing a friend's angry clay face
- ☐ Changing the angry face to a happy face

Time duration:

Number of children attended:

Notes on any modifications: