



Helping teachers work with children when they first return to education following major traumatic or life-changing events



## Navigating the Waves

<b>Topic</b>	Social Emotional Visual Art
<b>Designed for Ages</b>	8 - 13 years old
<b>Adaptable for Ages</b>	8 - 18 years old
<b>Time</b>	6 half hour lessons with a half hour gallery review.
<b>Lesson Overview</b>	This activity offers a space where students can contemplate emotional and physical responses to help navigate the circumstances they are experiencing. They do this while creating imagery that encourages them to identify what will help them cultivate a sense of resilience and self regulation as they move forward. Students will create a collage (collaborative or individual) that depicts a boat within the water, where they create a sail and different elements within their environment as they navigate a journey of questioning how they can find their way.
<b>Connections to <u>Nā Hopena A'o (HĀ)</u></b> (Hawai'i Education Framework)	Sense of belonging as students work together and support one another.
<b><u>Te Whare o Oro (Māori framework for understanding the brain):</u></b>	<p>Limbic System: Emotional engagement/belonging, social connections &amp; experiences, narratives, validation, complex movement.</p> <p>Cortex: learning, complex conversions, social interactions, and exploratory play.</p>
<b>Other cultural connections</b>	<p>A widely recited 'ōlelo no'eau, or Hawaiian proverb, is “A`ohe hana nui ke alu`ia – No work is too big when shared by all.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• As a collaborative artwork, this project creates a sense of unity as participants experience laulima, which translates as “many hands working together.”</li><li>• As everyone accomplishes small tasks in unison, it becomes evident that many hands make light work, as the larger undertaking is propelled with ease by the group, as opposed to</li></ul>



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one individual bearing all of the burden.

Aloha is present as one shares love, compassion, and respect to people and places, as they process how to live in harmony with everything around them.

### Materials

- ☐ large/approximately 24" x 36" background surface (poster board, watercolor paper, fabric, collaged newsprint, packing paper roll, wooden board, etc.)
- ☐ narrow strips of papers (roughly 1 cm X 10 cm) primarily for woven sail, but any excess can also be used for other collage elements. Plan for 2-6 pieces per participant for the sail. (colored construction, plain, tonal, or textured papers, magazine, newsprint, ribbon, fabric, etc.)
- ☐ Rectangular and triangular pieces of papers for water, boat, sun, land & wind. (ranging from 1 x 5 cm through 2x15 cm) (colored construction, plain, tonal or textured papers, magazine, newsprint, material, ribbon, etc.) 1-3 pieces for each element per participant.

The total would be 5-15 if you create all elements.

Keep in mind that the boat, land and sun may be smaller than other elements, so offer the smallest collage pieces for these details and perhaps only 1 per participant. Larger or multiple pieces will be best for water and wind.

- ☐ scissors
- ☐ glue
- ☐ any coloring supplies enough for each child
- ☐ tape/clips/pins to hold up the collage

Optional: for children under 10, or groups that may need more direction, use large papers & create a cutout shape for each of the collage elements you plan to include. The participant's collage pieces will be arranged atop of these. For the background, trace an outline of your cutout where the sun, boat, land, and sail will be placed, so students can visualize the finished project. Students may collage the water and/or wind directly onto the background.

Optional: Prior to class, the teacher (and anyone assisting) may prepare their own collage piece for each element to contribute to the project and provide an example that inspires the group.



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## Message for Teacher

**Modify:** If you feel uncomfortable facilitating any of the questions within a given component, or you feel your students are not ready to respond to the objective within a particular element, you may modify that specific visualization (i.e. make the shape without words or images), leave that element out, or substitute it with something more relevant to the individuals you are working with.

**Times:** The total creation & assembly time for each collage element will be about 30 minutes. For each of the 6 components in the instructions below, plan for 20 minutes of independent work time & use 10 minutes to assemble/collage their pieces within the background. Upon completion and after students have had time to independently notice and contemplate the finished collaborative work, facilitate an additional 30+ minute class where students can respond to the artwork. All 6 components and a gallery review will take approximately 3.5 hours.

**Group size:** Up to 20 students for each 36" x 24" background.

**Assembly:** Decide how you want to facilitate the students working on each elements of the collage. You may want to set up stations where participants can work on specific elements in small groups. Each station can have assorted collage papers and supplies. Students will create their collage contributions and add them to that station's larger pre-cut shape (i.e. boat hull) that you have prepared. Wind and water can go directly onto the background. An additional adult to support each of those spaces would be advised, because students will likely open up about their art choices and experiences during the process. You do not need to time the rotations because some stations may capture the attention of students for longer times and this work should not be pressured by time constraints. Instead, have students rotate to an open seat at a station. A quiet reading space, sensory corner, or something to the like, could be available for those who finish first, or are waiting for a seat to open.

**Intention:** Throughout the project, emphasize how the community can help us navigate difficult journeys and how we can build big things when we team up and work together.

**Examples:** you may want to pre-make some of your example elements to add to the picture to show the children.

## Instructions:

1. Gather the children at tables where they can engage in art projects.
2. **Introducing the activity** with the children: "I'd like to see what happens when we work together and create a "wa'a" which is a Polynesian boat. Traditionally, hundreds of years ago this kind of boat



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would have been carved out of a large tree and made with a woven sail. Journeys of all kinds, throughout Polynesia would have happened on boats like these. It would have been very challenging and required a lot of determination, strength, and experience to navigate these ancient boats. Today we are going to collage a wa'a. As we create our collage, we can think about what could help the wa'a and us to navigate and move forward on a sea journey. We get to celebrate what makes us feel strong or supported as we combine everyone's collage papers into a beautiful picture."

3. **Share with the children that as a group we are going to glue pieces of paper, images and text together to collage the different elements of our picture: water, boat, land, sail, wind and sun.** Share that there is a station for each of the elements and that students can move between the different stations at their own pace to create their offerings for the group collage.
4. Share with the children:
  - they can add emotions to our artwork today, by using words or designs.
  - they can create and share in a way that feels safe to them. So they may glue any of their creations on with the words/pictures face down or hidden if they want to keep them private.
  - Encourage older children who gravitate to text to write artfully with beautiful or interesting lines or with a rhythm that follows some kind of visual flow.
5. Feel free to modify or adjust any of the focus prompts for each of the following elements.
  - a) **Water.**
    - i. As you draw a horizon line midway through the large background paper, ask the children:
      - What kind of water might this boat encounter?
      - Are there any challenges on your mind today that you want to acknowledge in this water?
      - Using words, designs or drawings, how could you show that on your piece of paper and where would it be added into this collage?
      - Do we want to give our boat calm water? How might that look? Show me on your paper.
    - ii. Invite the students to use the strips of paper to create colorful collage wave elements to attach to the lower portion of the page. Older children may also cut the edges of the strips to create undulating lines.

*Note: Teachers may focus on just calm water or encourage the transition from rough to calm. You might ask the class if they feel okay placing the calmest words and images at the top, while rougher, more turbulent & energetic depictions are placed deeper/at the bottom. Or they may prefer lack of order and you may not want to address placement at all.*



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- iii. Take about 20 minutes to create the wave strips and begin attaching the work with glue/tape/staples/thread of those who finish first to the background sheet. You may want to oversee where work gets placed for younger students. Fast workers may help fill the water by making multiple water elements.

**b) Boat**

- i. Share with the children: “The hull of a boat is courageous. What or who makes you feel brave? What does being brave look like? How can you use colors, words, drawings or patterns to show that?” If students are hesitant or unsure, address it. i.e. “If you’re not sure, that’s okay. Draw some shapes or designs that seem like they might make our boat stronger or details that could help our boat sail along. Patterns or details will look great on our collage.”
- ii. Invite children to draw and/or write on strips of paper about what makes them feel courageous & what supports them.
- iii. Help the children fasten these strips (with glue, tape, staples or thread) above the water/waves in the shape of the hull of a boat.

**c) Land**

- i. Ask the children: “Let’s imagine something good in the future. What might be waiting for you on this island that we are making? Maybe it is something we can see? Maybe it is peaceful designs, or something that makes us feel happy?” Replies such as ice cream, a house, no nightmares might be responses.  
*Note: you may verbally offer what you would add to the collage or show students your personal premade collage component.*
- ii. Invite the children to create collage elements on triangular or rectangular strips of paper showing physical &/or emotional ideas of the possibilities of something good in their short-term or long-term future. Then collage them into one or more land masses.
- iii. Help the students fasten the pieces of paper to the background with glue/tape/staples/thread.

**d) Sail**

- i. Let the children know: “We will need to work together to weave a sail. Let’s add words and pictures that will make our sail strong. So strong that it can withstand a storm. What could you imagine on a strong sail?”



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- ii. Using 2-6 narrow strips, invite children to create 1-3 sail sections by overlapping 2 rectangular strips into a plus shape (+). Then invite the children to decorate the shape with words and images that show strength.
- iii. Combine finished sail pieces into the collage, by lining them next to each other in an over, under pattern. Assist the students as they fasten the pieces of paper to the background with glue/tape/staples/thread.
- iv. Ask the children to imagine how the ideas depicted could collectively get the wa'a to shore.

*Note: Alternatively, if you are overwhelmed by creating a woven look for the sail, you may simply collage the sail pieces in place or create a pseudo woven look.*

**e) Sun**

- i. Prompt the children: "Let's add positive messages on our sunshine and/or its rays. What can you draw or write that will brighten someone's day?"
- ii. Invite children to create narrow triangular or rectangular collage components that become rays of sunshine to show what could be said to uplift others.
- iii. Help the students fasten the pieces of paper to the background with glue/tape/staples/thread.

**f) Wind**

- i. Share with the children: "Wind can be tricky. It can be out of control, pushy, and uncomfortable. Let's try to identify something that might be hard or out of our control and what we can do to shift our sails. Or can we think of a way that will help us navigate towards what is depicted on the land elements of the collage?"
- ii. Invite children to create collage elements that may express how they are being/feeling pushed right now. Encourage them to try to identify at least 1 way that they could shift their sails to meet the winds as they (redirect) navigate. They may also choose to focus only on depicting the positive aspect of the winds.
- iii. Help the students fasten the pieces of paper to the background with glue/tape/staples/thread.

**g) Optional environmental elements**

- i. Ask the children: "Are there any additional meaningful elements that you want to add to the collage?" i.e. clouds, rain, rainbow, objects, in the ocean, barriers/items on land, etc.



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- ii. Participants may also want to add finishing touches with paints, markers, or papers on any unfinished looking areas.

6. After you have completed the collage, invite the children to independently notice and contemplate the finished collaborative work.

*Note: You may want to offer an additional 30+ minute class for reviewing the work as this will validate the voice, artistry, and experience of participants. If you feel the students are not ready to verbalize and respond as a large group, you may choose to facilitate individual or small group reflection. For older students, a written reflection may also provide a safe space to respond.*

7. You may want to ask the children reflective questions while they are viewing the collage such as:

- How do you feel about this artwork?
- What really stands out to you in our collage? Why might that be?
- Is there any part you are particularly proud of and would like to point out to the group?
- Do you have a favorite detail or element/part? Why?
- How did it feel to work on a large artwork with other people?
- Did you learn anything as you created this collage? If so, what?

8. You may also want to offer compliments to the artistry during the review period. Some potential compliment prompts are:

- I love the movement you created with the lines in your \_\_\_\_.
- The way you used or combined colors makes that part very \_\_\_\_\_ i.e. soothing, bright, stand out, etc.
- Wow! You really/accurately captured the contour/outline of the \_\_\_\_\_ in your picture.
- The texture you created on \_\_\_\_\_ is very interesting/was a great choice.
- The variety of marks/colors/shapes you chose looks \_\_\_\_\_.
- That's a lovely composition in a tiny space!
- That's a beautiful pattern on your \_\_\_\_\_.
- Thank you for thinking to add \_\_\_\_\_ to our collage.

9. Ask the students where they would like to display their collage artwork and if they would like to invite their families to view the finished work.

### **Evaluation and Assessment:**

*We know this lesson is successful if:*

- Students participate individually and collaboratively.
- Students work together with respect and develop stronger connections while understanding &



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- uplifting one another.
- Students feel their emotions are validated, develop empathy, and identify that we can work through difficult things if we try.