



Emotional Literacy Unit One

“Who Am I?”

The theme of the first unit is self-awareness and recognition of one’s unique differences. Students spend the entire unit learning about the elements of collage, using increasingly complex materials and techniques, such as scrunching, tearing, and scaling. The unit project is a full-scale self-portrait, complete with head, body, and “heart object,” created entirely from collage materials. The theme encourages students to begin to feel proud of their work through presentation. Students become accustomed to showing their work to the group and accepting compliments from teachers and peers. No constructive criticism is used; instead, the emphasis is on seeing the positive in every work. By the end of the unit, students are making positive comments about their own work, citing elements of their art that make them feel proud.

We start with this unit because the most foundational skill in social-emotional learning is self-awareness. Many students who suffer from depression, post-traumatic stress disorders, or other emotional disturbances are deeply self-deprecating and have been conditioned throughout their school experience to lack confidence. This unit is all about getting students to take ownership of their own success. For many, success at school is not a typical experience, and it’s important to ground all students in an awareness of their inherent worth.