

Emotional Robots

Social-Emotional Learning, ART, and Tech

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At the beginning of 2021, I found myself in the middle of a pandemic trying to teach students to sort out, label, and identify feelings as they learn to cope with the ever-changing challenges of life during a crisis. I needed that too. I was feeling a full range of emotions as I rode the rollercoaster of Covid teaching from remote to hybrid, to full in-person juggling dual modalities. Creating art was helping me sort through my tangled emotions.

I recalled The Color Monster story by Anna Llenas. It had a visual of a monster feeling many different feelings all at once as represented by scribbles of 6 colors all through his body. The author used color to represent emotions. Yellow was happy, green was calm. Blue was sad. Red was angry.

I began thinking of how I could intentionally layer social-emotional learning into our art projects to help students explore color theory, expression, and how they connect to emotion.

I pulled out 6 canvases, my paints, and began designing emotional robots. I chose robots as a subject for my project examples since it gives an opportunity for students to creatively use the features of the face to express emotions as well as exploring shape, form, tint, and shade to enhance the illusion of 3D form.

As I looked at my 6 emotional robots I realized I had created a color wheel of emotions that could help students learn color theory while also providing a mood meter where they could identify how they are feeling at any given moment with the addition of augmented reality to demonstrate expression through movement.



The first step of the lesson connects regulation of emotions to artistic choice as students are asked to randomly pick a color and make a robot that expresses the emotion represented by this color. The random choice helps reinforce the idea that we don't always get to pick our feelings, but when they arise, we work with them.



Secondly, students focus on transforming shape into form using 3-dimensional drawing techniques and color value. Their robot portrait design includes nuts, bolts, buttons, antennae, switches, gears, and/or gauges creatively assembled into human-like portraits to express emotion.



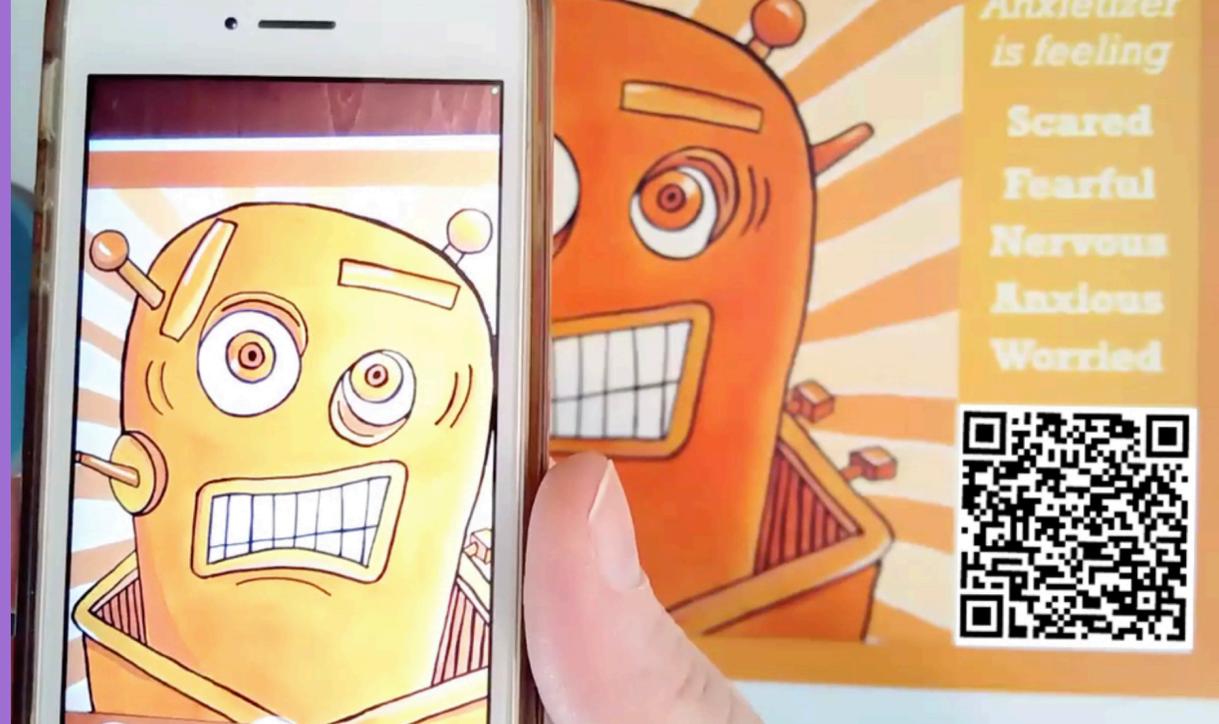
Thirdly, every robot is painted with a monochromatic palette with contrast created through mixing shades with black, tints with white, and neutrals with gray. The individual pieces would then come together to create a full-color wheel for a beautiful and informative display.



Fourthly, students transform a photo of their final piece into a digital animation that further expresses the intended emotion. Perhaps the eyebrows rise and fall, the mouth narrows, the eyes widen, the antennae extend, the buttons blink as each artist considers the use of digital media to express emotion. My examples were made by importing the original image into a free drawing app, adding layers, matching colors, then changing a few things until I showed movement in 3 frames.

These images were imported into ezgif.com to make a simple animated gif.

Hint, I duplicated the second image and moved it to the 4th position to make a smoother loop then slowed the animation to 1/2 second per frame.



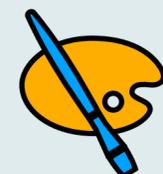
Emotional Robot, Anxietizer, comes to life with augmented reality. Scan the code with Eyejack app then hold it over the image below.



The final step in creating an emotional robot is to set up both the digital and physical aspects of the transdigital artwork into one augmented reality experience. I use a free desktop app called, Eyejack creator to upload the trigger image (original painting) and the overlay (animated gif) to generate a QR code. This code can then be scanned by the Eyejack app on any device to make the emotional robot come to life to fully express its feelings. See all directions <https://bit.ly/38InQuo>



SEL
Identifying Emotions



ART
Color, Form, Expression



TECH
Animation, Augmented Reality



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