

Title

Name, School, Grade/Subject Taught, Date

System: *What is the system or area of growth that you have been focused on or would like to focus on moving forward in study group sessions?*

Population: *Who are the people/students you have been intending to impact by exploring innovations in this system/area?*

Outcome(s): *What specific changes have you been hoping to bring about as a result of your explorations into this system?*

Intervention(s): *What strategies or changes in practice have you engaged in to bring about your intended outcome(s) for your focal population?*

Insights: *What are some key insights or a-ha moments you have had as a result of experimenting with your practice?*

Documentation: *Samples of images, audio, video, text, observation notes, student work, or other artifacts that show what your explorations have looked like over time.*

Puzzles: *What are some new questions, challenges, or puzzles that have emerged for you as you have been experimenting with your practice?*

Next Steps: *What are some ideas, strategies, approaches that you would like to explore next as you try to further bring innovation into this system?*

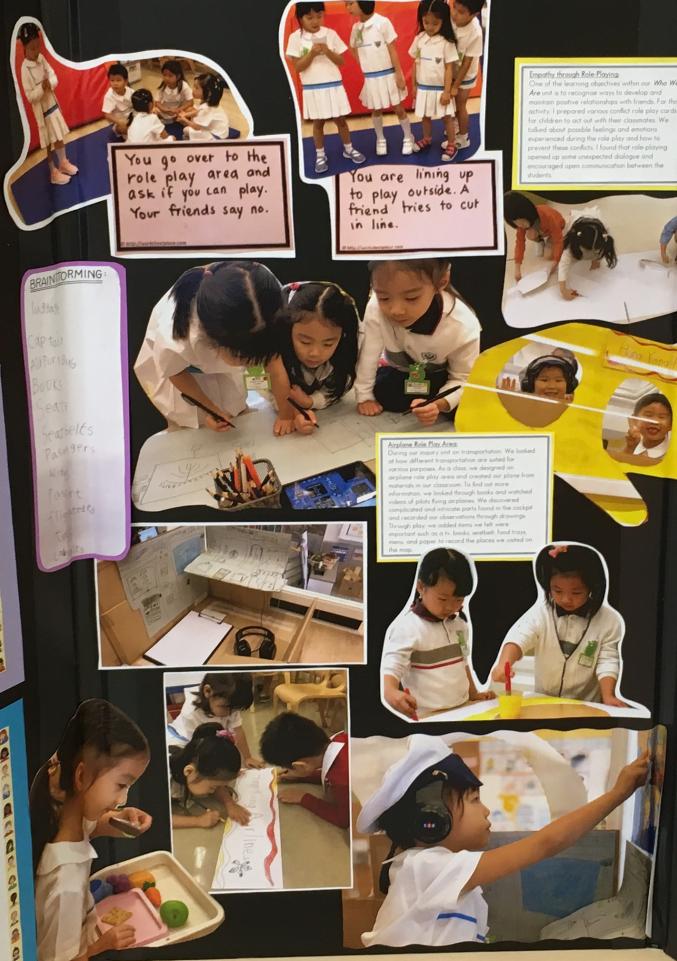
A Closer Look at Perspective Taking and Empathy

Inquiry Focus:

What **strategies** or **activities** can we use to help children grapple with the idea of **perspective taking?** **Empathy?**

Population:
I work at Victoria Harbour Heights Nursery. I teach English in a trilingual classroom with 5-6 year olds.

Outcomes:
As a result of these activities, I hope to see children becoming more aware of different perspectives and using a wider range of vocabulary to describe their feelings. I wish to see children taking more agency over their learning by creating their own learning areas.



Insights:

As a result of exploring this inquiry, I learned a lot about my student's sense of empathy and ability to consider the needs and feelings of others. Through these activities, I was amazed at the discussions and dialogues my students came up with and it changed my initial assumptions.

Interventions:

After the initial session where I asked children to role-play conflict scenes, I felt that they required additional support in terms of their language. It was also difficult for them to come up with their own dialogue without prompting. I felt it was necessary to take a more visual and simplified approach. I decided to focus my inquiry primarily on perspective taking through the use of literature. I found that using wordless storybooks was particularly effective for prompting discussion and it allowed children to associate feelings and actions with the characters in the stories.

Puzzles

One of the challenges I faced during these activities was how to support the esl language learners. I felt that it was difficult for them to take part in discussions and often felt inclined to give them the answers as they had difficulty expressing their ideas. I want to include these children as much as possible and give them more ways to express themselves.

K3

Population:

My research and practices have been centered around K3 children, ages 5-6. I believe nurturing empathy in early childhood can lead to much stronger empathy later in life when they become adults.

Victoria Harbour Heights Campus

Jennifer Lee
January-May 2019

Empathy is seeing with the eyes of another, listening with the ears of another and feeling with the heart of another.
Alfred Adler

Exploring Perspective-Taking and Empathy in Early Childhood

Outcomes:

- As a result of these activities, I hope children can...
- Make connections between feelings, thoughts, and behaviours
 - Develop a stronger awareness of different perspectives
 - Be able to take on the perspective of someone else in a shared situation
 - Use a wider range of vocabulary to express their emotions

Interventions:

- To discuss abstract concepts of perspective and empathy in an early childhood classroom, it is important to scaffold each lesson carefully to simplify the concepts
- Teaching children about feelings and emotions is crucial for open dialogue. Visual posters with pictures or photographs depicting emotions or empathetic scenes can help encourage children.
- Reading stories and having discussions about the actions and consequences is an engaging way to bring in the themes of perspectives, emotions, and empathy.
- Asking open-ended questions about characters in picturebooks can encourage children to think of meaningful ways to help.

Literacy

Exploring Points of View: The Three Little Pigs

An effective way to explore points of view is through composition. By reading multiple versions of the story, children can compare two different versions of the same story, students recognize there are not only different versions of a story but also different perspectives. This activity was inspired by the book *The Three Little Pigs* and compared it with *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* as well as a third online version of the story (*Story Tale: A New House for Wolf*).

- In the original version, the wolf simply has allergies which caused him to be kept blowing the big houses down. The three pigs figure this out and decide to help the wolf build a strong house.
- This comparison of the characters demonstrates how our thoughts and feelings of a character can change depending on the context. Comparison helps to increase our perspectives as we can sympathize with the character's point of view.
- After reading multiple endings, the K3's used thought speech bubbles to look closer at the character's feelings and perspectives. They took part in the thinking process independently. We then applied the thought speech bubbles to the characters of the *Three Little Pigs*. When we compared the thought bubbles and went back to the original ending, we could see that the perspectives for the wolf in two iterations were different.
- My students realized that different people can see the same situations and feel more and less differently from one another. Sometimes the things we see are not always what they seem to be. It is important to keep an open mind to the world around us.

Inquiry Focus:

What strategies or activities can we use to support children in understanding empathy and perspective taking?



Insights:

My inquiry cycle work has shown that literacy truly has a powerful way of engaging and educating children on with the concepts of perspective taking and empathy. Through the study of characters and their motivations and intentions, children are able to understand different roles and perspectives. In addition, story based question prompts also facilitate their language for expression. By using puppets, the child's imagination is placed on the illustrations which invite children to develop their vocabulary through narrative storytelling. Integrating literacy along with physical manipulatives such as sticks, sticks, and bubble sticks also helps to advance abstract concepts into a concrete understanding for young learners.

Puzzles:

One challenge that became apparent with my learners was a lack of vocabulary when it came to expressing ideas relating to their feelings. In role play scenarios, students with basic language skills struggled to express their needs, in turn, my interactions resulted to only using very basic terms such as 'good' and 'bad'. Some students conversely struggled with the 'care' part of the 'Think, Feel, Care' routine as it was not always easy to identify other people's emotions, values, and priorities. This led me to consider whether some thinking routines could make sense to young children to grasp.

Thinking Routines

Exploring Complexity to Prompt Perspective Taking:

Parts, People, Interactions: When the K3's studied the environment and the impacts of humans change, they identified the system of recycling centre, mapping out the various interactions. This routine encouraged children to slow down and make detailed observations. They compared the differences between the recycling centre versus the trash dump and were able to show how elements of the system are interconnected.



Think, Feel, Care:

My students enjoyed putting people in a system think, feel, and care routine about the people in their environment. They understood that people can think differently about the same situation. The Think, Feel, Care routine encouraged children to identify the different perspectives of the characters in the story and begin to change them. The characters hide in a slide and the students had to guess who they were. They had to consider the other characters' perspectives because they could see exactly what the characters were facing.



Imagine If:

Our unit on inventions and inventors gave children the opportunity to research and study successful children inventors. The K3's used the framework of the *Imagine If* routine with an emphasis on how could we make our world better/more beautiful or more efficient. The students recorded what they learned about a particular inventor and generated ways to make their invention even better.

SCAN THE QR CODE to view the activity

