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Bliain / Year group: Master of Education

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Ábhar / Subject: Thesis Master of Education (Research in Practice)

Léachtóir / Teagascóir:

Lecturer / Tutor: Dr. Patricia Kennon

Spríoclá / Due date: 25th September 2020

Teideal an tionscadail / Assignment title: How can I teach Emotional Literacy to Junior Infants using Picturebooks?

Líon na bhfocal / Word Count: 21956

Líon leathanach / Number of pages: 178

Aon ábhar eile sa tionscadal / Any other material in the assignment: Hard Copy Thesis

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OLLSCOIL NA HÉIREANN MÁ NUAD
THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND
MAYNOOTH

Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education

M.Ed. (Research in Practice)
2019 - 2020

How can I teach Emotional Literacy to Junior Infants using Picturebooks?

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A Research Dissertation submitted to the Froebel Department of Primary and Early
Childhood Education, Maynooth University, in fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Education (Research in Practice)

Date: 25/9/20

Supervised by:

Dr. Patricia Kennon

Abstract

The purpose of this self-study action research intervention was to discover how I could improve my teaching of Emotional Literacy to junior infants using picturebooks. With mental health issues a growing concern for Irish children and facing into a new era of education following the initial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the responsibility to support the wellbeing of their pupils has never been more present for Irish teachers. As the country resumes schooling after the lockdown, the government also recognises the need to support teachers' wellbeing. This study took place in a junior infant class in a mixed junior national school in North County Dublin. The group sample comprised of nine girls and seven boys, five of whom were attending support for English as an Additional Language, and all of whom were all 4-5 years old at the beginning of the intervention.

I followed the action research paradigm, planning to change my practice to live more closely to my values of empathy and care. I received ethical consent and assent from the children and their parents and used both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. Rigour and validity were established through reflexivity and collaborative dialogue with critical friends and a validation group.

The study found that picturebooks effectively taught new emotional vocabulary which was used by the children in school, at home and in response to the emotional states of their peers. The children expressed a list of 83 emotion words, far more than the 16 named by the current curricular content. Teacher-guided questions of picturebook stories allowed inferences to be drawn as to the internal thoughts and feelings of characters not explicitly named in the narrative. These picturebook discussions indicated that children were demonstrating emotional understanding usually expected of children aged 7-11. The study fostered a positive classroom environment allowing the children to lead their learning using a class display. As the children were given choice with the display, they felt listened to and

safe to contribute, which built a sense of self-efficacy. This thematic learning of Emotional Literacy, supporting the expression and autonomy of the children within a positive climate, enhanced the children's wellbeing.

Recommendations from this study suggest that a more cohesive curriculum be developed employing a whole-school, thematic approach. It also recommends that greater attention be given to teacher-wellbeing and toward improving teacher training regarding effective support of the Emotional Literacy.

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Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Patricia Kennon for all her time, words of support, guidance and insight into the subject matter.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to my schools' Board of Management, for allowing me to conduct this study. I would like to thank the staff of my school, particularly those who assisted me in this study, as my teaching team, critical friends and validation group.

I would like to dedicate this to my family. Their endless support and belief in me, has allowed me to get to where I am today.

Finally, I would like to thank the pupils and families of my class without whom this thesis would not be possible.

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Explanation
AC1	Action Cycle 1
AC2	Action Cycle 2
AC3	Action Cycle 3
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
AR	Action Research
BD	Book Discussions
DPCF	Draft Primary Curriculum Framework
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EL	Emotional Literacy
FBU	False Belief Understanding
KEDS	Kids' Empathic Development Scale
LGBT+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual Plus
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PLC	Primary Language Curriculum
PSHE	Personal Social Health and Economic Education
RJ	Reflective Journal
RSE	Relationships and Sexuality Education
SEL	Social and Emotional Learning

SESE	Social, Environmental and Scientific Education
SET	Special Education Team
SPHE	Social, Personal and Health Education
TEC	Test of Emotional Comprehension
ToM	Theory of Mind

1. INTRODUCTION

“Children are great at identifying with characters in their favorite stories...When children are introduced to ways to understand, accept and manage their feelings, the benefits are invaluable. Emotional literacy is one of the greatest gifts you can give...” (Im-Wang, 2013).

1.1. Background to the Researcher and the Research Question

I graduated at the dawn of the last “new” curriculum and watched the example of my experienced colleagues eagerly upskilling, challenging their previous practises and biases. Encouraged to collaborate by the principal, these colleagues helped me to better know and understand the needs and values of the community. I believe that this empathy and the building of respectful relationships has made me a more effective teacher, allowing me to teach with care and compassion for my students. Naming empathy and care as my personal values allows me to reflect on how they, along with my assumptions and biases, impact on the judgements I must constantly make as a teacher (Kelchtermans, 2009).

Over the years, I have met children with varied skills, challenges, cultures and backgrounds. I have tried to better understand the realities of these children and their families, believing, as Froebel did, that the differences and uniqueness of every child adds richness to our community (Tovey, 2020). I wish for the children to believe this of themselves.

Evolutions in Irish culture and education have given us in increased diversity and technological advances, but also new concerns and challenges. Schools must adapt to the changing needs of their students and families, incorporating evermore initiatives to meet issues as they arise. Occasionally, however well-intentioned, their effects are not felt as intended. Themed assemblies highlight differences rather than include, lesson content is hurried through and interventions watered down to fit into an already-full timetable

(O'Donoghue, 2019; Cavioni et al., 2020b). Recent concerns about the wellbeing of children have prompted a review of the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in European schools (Cefai, et al., 2018). Downes (2016) encourages European schools and students to take ownership of the teaching of SEL to improve its effectiveness. There has not yet been a comprehensive framework provided for this area apart from one proposed by Cavioni et al. (2020b) which places the mental health of both students and teacher at its heart and draws attention to the need for these programmes to be incorporated by a whole-school community.

On those days when I have placed the timetable or curriculum objectives ahead of the perspectives of the children, I have felt uncomfortable, aware that I am experiencing myself as being Jack Whitehead's "living contradiction" (Whitehead, 1989: 41). A standout moment for me happened during a picturebook lesson a few years ago, when a child indicated that she did not see herself in my picturebooks. I share my love of books with every class, but here I found that I was not respectfully representing my pupils in the selection of picturebooks in my classroom. I set about finding new picturebooks to allow children to experience them as "mirrors, windows and sliding glass doors" (Sims Bishop, 1990: 1), to feel valued and to share their realities in this respectful manner with their classmates, knowing that their perspective was important.

However, modelling this empathy was not enough; I wanted to teach the children not only to label and understand their emotions, but to learn that other people too have their own thoughts and feelings. Studies show that managing and responding to our own feelings while empathising with others are teachable skills that can impact positively on children's social and academic lives (Goleman, 1996; Durlak, 2011; Elswick, 2018). I wished to combine the power of picturebooks and my values of empathy and care to improve my practice by asking *how can I improve my teaching of Emotional Literacy (EL) to junior infants using picturebooks?*

1.2. Focus and Aims of the Study

In recent years, there has been an increasing focus on Emotional Literacy (EL) in schools, with policies emerging in the USA and teachers in Europe adjusting their practices to meet the needs of their pupils (Downes, 2016). As Cavioni et al. (2020b) note, a commonly accepted theoretical framework has not yet been outlined in Europe, and in advance of the new Draft Primary Curriculum Framework's (DPCF) more focussed curriculum on wellbeing (NCCA, 2020), I decided to bring together the elements of the current Irish curriculum to better teach this important theme. Determined to live more closely to my personal values of empathy and care, I designed a roadmap to lead the children to a better understanding of emotions and of others by demonstrating my respect for them and valuing their perspective in the learning process.

1.2.1. Current Irish Context

In recent years, Irish primary schools have recognised the growing need to focus on the wellbeing of the child, and curricula, policies and interventions have had to adapt to support its teaching and learning in schools (NCCA, 1998; PDST, 2016; MacIntyre & Lawlor, 2016; Knox & Gavigan, n.d.; DES, 2015; DES, 2019). Valuing the holistic care of school children, the social and emotional education of the child has been part of the curriculum as a formal subject - Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) - since 1999 (NCCA, 1999a). My school took up The Incredible Years (The Incredible Years, 2013), Weaving Wellbeing (Forman & Rock, 2017) and Friends for Life (NCSE, 2019) programmes to help address these issues. The changes I made to my practice, using more positive reinforcement and specific praise with the Incredible Years Programme, was more challenging than I had expected and made me reflect upon the habits I had formed over the years.

The Irish government are making efforts to promote wellness in schools including the key competencies of “Wellbeing” and “Learning to be a Learner” in the current DPCF (NCCA, 2020: 7) and fostering the wellbeing, emotional health, relationships and empathy of children (DES, 2015; DES, 2019). Initiatives such as Roots of Empathy (Gordon, 2013) and those that my school has already implemented are in place to enhance the wellbeing of children generally taught through the SPHE curriculum (NCCA, 1999a). They also support the Aistear framework, which aims to foster children’s empathy and understanding of emotions (NCCA, 2009a).

My school staff has striven to establish a supportive and caring school culture for our pupils and school community since we became a junior school two years ago. When reviewing and updating our school’s SPHE plans and policies, it proved difficult to incorporate the revised curricular material and additional interventions related to growing social issues such as LGBT+ bullying, homelessness, internet bullying and poor diet and fitness levels. As a teacher with limited time and given the short attention spans of my junior infant pupils, I was concerned about how to teach these lessons effectively. The already-overloaded curriculum has been adjusted to make more time for literacy and numeracy in their timetable (circular 0056/2012, DES, 2011a). However, pupils’ poor social skills and emotional dysregulation also warrants time to support. I have felt a conflict in these moments where I can see the benefit of giving time to attending issues around emotions carefully, but feel the pressure to return quickly to more quantifiable literacy and numeracy lessons. Teachers under stress can find it difficult to foster the positive classroom climate required to enhance the wellbeing of all, including that of the teacher themselves (Kwon et al., 2019).

1.2.1.1. Integration

Integration of curricular areas is a principle of the Irish curriculum which states that “learning is most effective when it is integrated” and that “skills that facilitate the transfer

of learning should be fostered” (NCCA, 1999c: 9). I used picturebooks to integrate literacy and language skills along with knowledge from other subjects including SESE and Art as suggested by the English Teaching Guideline Exemplars (NCCA, 1999d), the Aistear Framework (NCCA, 2009a) and new DPCF (NCCA, 2020). I intended to provide engaging, motivating learning experiences to support children’s wellbeing and agency, but I had been limiting these learning experiences mainly to the hour dedicated to Aistear in the manner described by O’Donoghue (2019).

Integration became more than an academic methodology with respect to its natural pedagogy in this intervention. Taking EL as a roadmap, I more comprehensively examined the curricular material and skills regarding emotions across all SPHE curricula and the Aistear Framework (NCCA, 2009a). As my view had recently changed regarding the power of picturebooks to teach my pupils about different perspectives and experiences: it became clear to me that I could utilise picturebooks to teach EL thematically.

1.2.1.2. Picturebooks for teaching ToM and EL with an adult

The Aistear support materials (NCCA, 2009b) suggest using storytelling and higher-order questioning to deal with racism. The children are valued in this way as they are encouraged to express themselves respectfully, guided by the teacher to explain and challenge their own thinking. This effective use of picturebooks to encourage and facilitate critical thinking skills is also used by the new Primary Language Checklist (PLC) (NCCA, 2019b). The “We All Belong” (Knox & Gavigan, n.d.) document, which teaches about diversity to primary school children, is based around picturebooks including the appropriate strands and strand units of the SPHE (NCCA, 1999a) curriculum and appropriately suited to each age group. Allowing children the opportunity to discuss picturebooks, guided by a teacher is a powerful pedagogical tool with which emotions, perspectives and assumptions can be explored. Using picturebooks to integrate a theme of learning motivates children to engage with the topic. The new DPCF (NCCA, 2020) sees this approach as one of a

competent, playful teacher, fostering a positive disposition and confidence in the children. While wellbeing is an important curricular area of the new DPCF (NCCA, 2020), EL is not yet mentioned. Teaching EL as outlined by this intervention would provide teachers with a roadmap to teach emotion labels, understanding emotions in oneself and others, and regulation of emotions. These components can foster empathy and the wellbeing of the child, which are key competencies of the new curriculum.

1.3. Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five sections. The Literature Review sets out the current context for wellbeing in Ireland, describing the concerns for the mental health of our children and the responses to this situation, both at the national curricular and school level. It then defines the relevant terminology of social emotional wellbeing and understanding, explaining the benefits of EL and the factors that affect its development. The review then looks at international and Irish approaches to teaching EL, describing the difficulties teachers face in its development. In the absence of a cohesive curriculum and in line with the current Aistear (NCCA, 2009a) and new DPCF (NCCA, 2020) an integrated thematic approach to EL using picturebooks is proposed.

Chapter 3, Research Methodology, outlines the suitability of the action research paradigm for this study, describing in detail the action plan and its components. The data collection tools, both qualitative and quantitative, are outlined and the limitations and ethical considerations of the study identified. The role of the researcher, as a critically reflective practitioner providing rigour and validity through collaborative dialogue with critical friends and validation groups, is established.

Chapter 4, Findings and Discussions of Data, describes the significant outcomes of the research. The significance of the intervention was determined by the changes in practice that allowed me, as a researcher, to live more closely to my values.

Chapter 5, Conclusions and Recommendations, outlines the implications of the findings both personally and for the wider educational community. I then reflect on my personal experience of Action Research (AR). Recommendations for future practice, training and studies are detailed.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review is organised in accordance with a selection of headings and subheadings. To effectively explore the role of EL, a subset of literature has been selected based on its relevance to the following:

Current Situation

Emotional Literacy

Current Approaches

The Difficulty and a Proposed Solution

Picturebooks to Teach Emotional Literacy in an Integrated Way

2.1. Current Situation

Teachers' care for their pupils is a core value upheld by the Teaching Council (The Teaching Council 2016: 6). Although the social and emotional education of the child has been a formal subject of the curriculum since 1999 (NCCA, 1999a), in recent years primary schools have recognised the growing need to focus further on the wellbeing of the children in their care. Studies show a worrying rise in mental health issues for children in Ireland with a significant increase of referrals to the Psychiatric Liaison Service since 2016 (Maguire et al., 2019). Additionally, the PERL Group found Irish children to have higher rates of mental ill-health when compared to similar children in the USA and the UK (Cannon et al., 2013).

2.1.1. Response

Teachers are continually adapting to incorporate revised curricular material and additional interventions, contending with a growing number of social issues, all of which have impacted on my school to some degree. These include those related to internet and LGBTQ+ bullying, diet and fitness concerns and homelessness. Generally, in education,

changes are reflecting a shift in direction from knowledge- and subject-based, to one that nurtures skills and attitudes to educate hearts, minds and bodies (Beck, 2012; Firth, 2016). This change has allowed me to get to know my pupils and their perspectives better, understanding what they value in education. It has allowed me to provide more holistic care for the children but has also proved challenging regarding planning with a change of focus from content to skills. Teachers are struggling with time, resources and their own wellbeing, in their attempt to attend to the social, emotional and physical health of their pupils (Keating et al., 2018). Irish frameworks are also moving towards encompassing appropriate interventions and curricular areas under the theme of wellbeing. The Aistear framework presently includes Wellbeing as a key theme (NCCA, 2009a: 13) and the current DPCF proposes Wellbeing as a curricular area focussing on fostering children's emotional health, wellbeing, relationships and empathy (NCCA, 2020: 7).

2.2. Emotional Literacy

The new DPCF addresses the concerns regarding Irish children's wellbeing by providing opportunities that enhance their physical and emotional understanding (NCCA, 2020). In order to outline a roadmap to enhance the children's wellbeing without a formal curriculum, the components of emotional understanding were examined.

2.2.1. Definitions of Related Terms.

Defining the components of EL can be confusing as some definitions tend to intersect. Steiner (2003), who is credited with creating the term, says that EL includes understanding our own feelings, recognising and empathising with the feelings of others and managing our emotions (Eden et al., 2017). EL is defined as "the ability to understand and manage one's own emotions and to understand and empathise with the emotions of others" (Cefai et al., 2018: 38). When children are taught to start "[i]dentifying, understanding, and expressing emotions" (Borba, 2016: 7) in themselves, they can then start to do so in others,

laying the foundation of empathy, a competency often aspired to in the curricular documents but not delineated as a teachable skill (NCCA, 1999a; NCCA, 2009a).

There is both an affective and cognitive element to empathy. Affective means “feeling as another might feel” (Hoffman, 2018: 26) and cognitive describes “the ability to ascertain what the other is thinking” (Kokkola, 2018: 99). The cognitive aspect of empathy is often considered to be equivalent to Theory of Mind (ToM) and False Belief Understanding (FBU) (Ziv et al., 2015; Tabullo et al., 2018). ToM is defined as “the understanding that people have mental states such as intentions, desires, beliefs which guide their actions” (Conte et al., 2019: 2) and FBU is children’s “capacity to reason about a perspective that is different from their own” (Tompkins, 2019: 111), understanding that someone can believe something that is, in reality, not true. Researchers often use FBU as an indicator of the presence of ToM (Tabullo et al., 2018). When children develop their ToM, they more fully understand the perspective of others and this in turn affects their responses. Adapting one’s behaviour in considering another’s perspective and emotional state is referred to as behavioural empathy (Messinger & McDonald, 2011; Reid et al., 2013). These three components of EL are also how Cavioni et al. (2020a) describe emotional understanding.

Deeper understanding of these terms allowed the creation of a roadmap to guide the teaching of EL, beginning with the labelling of emotions, identifying them in themselves and others (affective empathy) before investigating the internal states of others (ToM, FBU, cognitive empathy) (Messinger & McDonald, 2011). These skills are what can lead the children towards empathy - “[t]he ability to understand how other people think and feel” (Nikolajeva, 2018: 3) - which is an essential component of social competence as it informs how the children choose to respond (behavioural empathy) (Maynard et al., 2011; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2012; Nikolajeva, 2013; Bensalah et al., 2016; Moruzi et al., 2018; Cavioni et al., 2020a).

2.2.2. *Why teach Emotional Literacy?*

Numerous studies highlight multiple benefits of improved EL to children's wellness, behaviour, interpersonal relationships, emotional regulation, problem-solving abilities and academic success (Brackett et al., 2012; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2012; Vaish et al., 2016; Booth et al., 2019). As they develop their EL, children's emotional and decision-making skills are improved and they become kinder, more popular, content and resilient (PHSE Association, 2017; Borba, 2016; Bowles, 2017; Hoffman, 2018; Conte et al., 2019). So, whilst some teachers may feel pressure to teach more academic learning objectives (O'Donoghue, 2019), in time, the fostering of wellbeing and EL teaches children essential skills that leads them to a better understanding of themselves and others, thus "enhances schools' ability to teach" (Goleman, 1996: 284).

2.2.3. *Teaching and Supporting EL*

Understanding the role of the teacher is an important step when planning to teach EL. It is important that the teacher provide a supportive classroom environment where all emotional states are attended to and all emotions are accepted (Harper, 2016). The Walk Tall programme (PDST, 2016) and many studies recommend that teachers model the management of strong emotions, offer support if children are worried or frightened and encourage children to discuss all their feelings, aiding greater understanding (Hemmeter et al., 2012; Gallingane & Han, 2015; Kozak & Reccia, 2018). Children need both teacher support and scaffolded face-to-face social interactions to develop these skills (Booth et al., 2019; Borba, 2018; DES, 2019). These have been missing in primary education during the COVID-19 pandemic (Zhou et al., 2020) and one can only speculate about the consequences for children with 42.2% of parents already noting a significant negative impact on the social development of their children (Central Statistics Office, 2020).

Within our community we learn the culturally acceptable ways to express our emotions and so Froebel suggests that teachers must cultivate a strongly connected and respectful school community (Gergely & Kiraly, 2019; Tovey, 2020). This is the setting within which teachers lead the children towards autonomy with respect for others (Tovey, 2020).

2.3. Factors that Influence.

Several different factors can affect children's EL development. As with any form of literacy, not all children will develop these skills simultaneously (Messinger & McDonald, 2011). Interventions must keep in mind that the age, learning abilities and gender of the children in the research group can impact on their acquisition of EL.

2.3.1. Age

Affective empathy first presents in new-borns with full empathy continuing to develop, possibly only fully maturing in adolescence. At the age of four and five, junior infants may present with a wide range of emotional understanding (Messinger & McDonald, 2011; Eisenberg, 2014; Nikolajeva, 2018). Where two- and three-year-olds respond pro-socially to the distress of another, increased language of four- and five-year-olds allows them to become more capable of seeing another's perspective (ToM) and perform well in FBU tasks (Messinger & McDonald, 2011; Ziv et al., 2015). Junior infants are therefore, at this important developmental point of great potential and in undertaking this work I might maximise their language abilities, allowing them to better understand the point of view of others. While curriculum expectations for junior infants seemed limited in dealing with emotions, my experience led me to believe that these children may be supported to have a better understanding of the perspectives of others.

2.3.2. Learning Difficulties

Language skills can affect FBU and ToM, which can in turn affect children's social cognition (Garner & Parker, 2018; Conte et al., 2019; Tompkins et al., 2019). It is more difficult for children on the autism spectrum and those with attention difficulties, hearing impairments or language delays to develop ToM. Although none of the pupils had diagnoses at the time of the study, there was a range of speech and language abilities present. Therefore, I was mindful that poor ToM makes it difficult to predict or interpret the behaviours of others. The long-term impact of this could affect children's reading, maths, prosocial behaviours and how they respond to teacher feedback (Tehrani-Doost et al, 2017; Wellman, 2018; Conte et al., 2019). I address how these potential difficulties regarding language may be mitigated in Chapter 3 leveraging for example, additional support from the Special Education Team (SET).

2.3.3. Gender

Multiple studies have explored differences in how parents speak to boys and girls regarding emotions (Denham, et al., 2010; Messinger & McDonald, 2011; Garner & Parker, 2018; Conte et al., 2018, 2019). As conventionally there are expectations of girls to be more emotionally aware, parents use more emotion-based language with them (Borba, 2016). They implicitly instruct girls to be more sensitive and boys on how to control their emotions. This may, in part, explain Fidalgo et al.'s (2017) findings that girls performed slightly better on the Test of Emotional Understanding (TEC) (Albanese et al., 2006) regarding ToM and FBU. Teachers can mitigate this gender bias by maintaining equal expectations and questioning for all children. This gender-related difference was anticipated and mitigated as I planned my intervention in Chapter 3.

2.3.4. The Role of the Teacher

It has been acknowledged that teachers find themselves in a role that now goes “far beyond teaching and learning” (DES, 2020: para 1) with poor teacher wellbeing having a negative effect on class environment and on pupils’ behaviour (Kwon et al., 2019). My role of teacher-researcher added a level of responsibility that required close monitoring of my own wellbeing. Preparation for this is addressed in Section 3.10 and recorded in my Reflective Journal (RJ) (8/1/20). A range of online resources and CPD training are now available to support Irish teachers’ teaching and wellbeing (PDST, 2020). Supporting teachers’ training and wellbeing cultivates a positive classroom environment. It has never been more important than at this moment in time for teachers to support each other and proactively maintain self-care (Dolev & Leshem, 2017; PSHE Association, 2017; Valente et al., 2018; Bezzina & Camilleri, 2020; Krause et al., 2020; DES, 2020).

2.4. Current Approaches

This section looks at the impact of interventions made to develop EL in schools internationally and in Ireland. Despite some criticism of EL, such as that of Ecclestone and Hayes (2009), there has been a rapid global movement of SEL curricula and interventions in schools (Wigelsworth et al., 2016).

2.4.1. International Programmes.

While Wigelsworth et al. (2016) are cautious in their affirmation of the hurried spread of cross-cultural SEL programmes, they recognise the success of the Incredible Years Programme (The Incredible Years, 2013) from the USA. Another internationally successful intervention is Roots of Empathy (Gordon, 2013). Their Seeds of Empathy programme (ROE, 2019) uses books to teach EL to younger children. A meta-analysis of the programme found a decrease in aggression as well as increases in empathy, prosocial behaviour, resilience and wellbeing (Connolly et al., 2019). Not until 2017 did the Personal Social

Health Economic (PSHE) Association put forward their argument for the statutory status for the subject in schools in the UK (PSHE Association, 2017). Although these interventions have been found to best benefit the children who need it most (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2012; Blair & Raver, 2014), many supplementary initiatives come from the USA, Canada or Australia. There has been a call for more European-based projects to be developed addressing those culturally-specific needs (Cefai et al., 2018). Weaving Wellbeing (Forman & Rock, 2017) is an excellent Irish programme but designed for children from the age of 8 and so it was necessary to create my own action plan for my junior infants.

2.4.2. Irish Approach.

Currently, many elements of EL are included in the complimentary and mandatory resources of the SPHE, optional programmes and championed by the Aistear framework and new PLC (NCCA, 1999a, 2009a, 2019).

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) in Ireland is supporting schools as they include a holistic approach to promoting the wellbeing of children in primary schools through the School Self-Evaluation process (DES, 2019). The Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (2018-2023) document was intended to provide direction to all schools as they draw up School Self-Evaluation plans, prioritising children's wellbeing as a primary focus by the year 2023 (DES, 2019). Staff wellbeing is pragmatically framed as an effort to increase their effectiveness. However, this document effectively lays out how a school can identify and build on their strengths, focussing on the key elements of the wellbeing framework with the domains for School Self-Evaluation (DES, 2019). Furthermore, the new DPCF (NCCA, 2020) subsumes the subject areas of SPHE (NCCA, 1999a) and PE (NCCA, 1999e) under the broader, more adaptive curricular area named Wellbeing (NCCA, 2020: 11).

As the Irish curricular material delivering EL is fragmented across many programmes and subjects, my previous teaching of this has also been somewhat disconnected. This project draws these teachings together through picturebook lessons in a progressive manner, closer to the thematic comprehensive teaching that Cavioni et al. (2020b) say is lacking currently in many schools in the EU. The Aistear framework includes Wellbeing as one of its four themes (NCCA, 2009a: 13). All elements of effective EL learning are identified, however it remains an aspirational framework (Leen, 2014), one which could have a greater influence were it more fully supported by policy makers (French, 2013).

2.4.2.1. *Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) (1999)*

SPHE was formally introduced into the Irish Primary School Curriculum in 1999 in response to issues related to child abuse, drug misuse and sexuality education and after identifying the need for a less haphazard approach to tackling these topics (NCCA, 1999a). The programmes within have been revised and updated as the diverse needs of Irish children have changed. A wealth of supporting resources is now available from the PDST (2020) and SPHE Network (2020) websites. Approaches to teaching EL, such as dealing with feelings in oneself and others and navigating them socially are integrated across many of these programmes, infusing many of the content objectives.

The Stay Safe programme states that children should have cross curricular opportunities to recognise, name, discuss and understand feelings (MacIntyre & Lawlor, 2016: 9) and these lessons could be supported by the teaching of EL in the classroom. Stay Safe is a mandatory programme however, which must be explicitly taught (Circular 65/2011) (DES, 2011b) and cannot be fragmented (PDST, 2017: 6). Keating et al. (2018) found teachers reported poor confidence due to time and resource management in the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) (NCCA, 1998). Therefore, cross-curricular planning with the other areas of SPHE could mitigate these issues (Messinger & McDonald, 2011). Prior to the project, detailed curricular planning involved ensuring curriculum

objectives were to be completed. Deeper investigation into EL allowed me to better see the long-term importance of teaching children to identify, name, and manage emotions. I approach these lessons now with a view to improving the life-skills of my pupils made possible through a thematic methodology using picturebooks.

Introduced in the mid-1990s and revised in 2016, the Walk Tall Programme (PDST, 2016) has increased its content objectives, supporting the revised Stay Safe programme with expanded lessons on emotions (MacIntyre & Lawlor, 2016: 5). Additional content objectives of the revised Walk Tall lessons are a challenge to incorporate into established plans but integrated planning could allow teaching to be more effective.

2.5. Integration

Not only have schools had to continually integrate interventions within the SPHE curriculum (NCCA, 1999a), they have also been encouraged to compress more time for literacy and numeracy in their overloaded timetable (circular 0056/2012). Teachers, under stress from dealing continuously with behavioural problems due to emotional deregulation and poor social skills, find it difficult to foster the positive classroom climate required to enhance wellbeing. While Making the Links and Beyond - Revised Edition (PDST, 2017) is an invaluable tool to guide planning of the strands and strand units, it does not as easily allow teachers to see where all lessons related to emotions are in order to more efficiently integrate the teaching and learning of EL.

Integration is not simply a tool for efficient planning and time management but a key learning principle, repeated throughout the 1999 curriculum which states that “learning is most effective when it is integrated” (NCCA, 1999: 9). This is repeated by the Aistear framework (NCCA, 2009a) and the new DPCF (NCCA, 2020), both of which take a thematic approach to the child’s learning. The agency of teachers and children is valued in creating and engaging with motivating learning experiences, which are seen to promote wellbeing

(NCCA, 2020). Unfortunately, a recent study found that the teachers, rather than use it as a pedagogical approach, view Aistear as a separate hour of play outside of the curriculum and feel that they must prioritise concrete curriculum objectives (O'Donoghue, 2019). I felt more confident to dedicate time to the lessons regarding feelings as I could see the long-term benefits would help the children and class management as the children increased their EL. I was surprised at the frequency that the children integrated emotions naturally in everyday classroom life. I will start my school years with this theme and hope to teach other themes in such a way in my future practice.

2.6. Picturebooks Integrating EL

“Social and emotional education must be included at school. We need to read, talk about what we read, and be transformed by what we read. We need to teach humans about how to be human and how to be humane, which is the heart of empathy and should be the heart of education” (Hoffman, 2018: 3).

It is widely accepted that using story, particularly fiction, is highly effective in teaching social and emotional skills to children (Nikolajeva, 2018; Kidd & Castano, 2017). Reading literary fiction moves us away from stereotypes and disrupts our expectations, forcing us to see life in all its complexities while representing and normalising the differences within which our children live (Kidd & Castano, 2017). The SPHE guidelines (NCCA, 1999b) value integration through story as an academic methodology with respect to its natural pedagogy. The multimodality of picturebooks allows for the broadening of comprehension, and their complexity and potential should not be underestimated (Aukerman & Chambers Schuldt, 2016; Garner & Parker, 2018; Nikolajeva, 2018). Although Aggleton (2017) suggested that pictures can make the reader passive, the work of Horowitz-Kraus and Hutton (2017) on brain connectivity showed a positive correlation between reading books and cognitive learning. Florentini (2020) recommended that read-aloud stories throughout

school closures consist of static images rather than animations for optimal learning, supported by the findings of Hutton et al. (2018).

Sharing high-quality picturebooks with children can make them aware of the feelings of others, providing them with a framework for building friendships, empathy, problem-solving skills and to deal with conflict resolution (Harper, 2016). Picturebooks and story are suggested and used by all previously mentioned curricular programmes of the Irish Primary Curriculum (NCCA, 1998, 1999a, 2009a, 2019; MacIntyre & Lawlor, 2016; PDST, 2016). Bergman et al. (2020) found that learning is enhanced when reading is conducted with smaller groups and retention is improved with repeated reading of the book (Gallingane & Han, 2015; Ziv et al., 2015; Wasik et al., 2016). Finding additional support to facilitate small groupwork is often a challenge and in the 2020/21 school year may not be possible with social distancing.

2.6.1. Picturebooks to Teach Emotion Vocabulary.

“Development of emotional literacy accelerates once children have language to express themselves” (Harper, 2016).

Picturebooks allow for the identification of emotions, teaching the vocabulary of feeling words by allowing expanded learning to include subtle nuances (Gallingane & Han, 2015; Pantaleo, 2016; Garner & Parker, 2018; Kozak & Reccia, 2018). The RULER feelings word curriculum (Maurer & Brackett, 2004) lists steps to teach emotion words, a study of which showed that children who followed the programme had improved scores in English language arts lessons, social competence and work habits (Brackett et al., 2012).

Emotion words are generally categorised as basic and complex. Basic emotion words, as originally described by Plutchick (1980, 2001) and Ekman (1992) are fear, anger, joy, sadness, disgust, and surprise. To this Plutchick adds acceptance and anticipation but both understand that these basic emotion words are universal in their development and

expression. Nikolajeva (2013) sees emotion words as foundational in emotion verbalisation for young children. Although picturebooks can convey emotion in non-standard ways, such as the blobs of colour in “*Little Blue and Little Yellow*” (Leoni, 1959) and the rather unanimated penguin in “*Penguin*” (Dunbar, 2007), readers identify emotion usually based on visual cues from the mouth or eyes (Nikolajeva, 2013; Harper, 2016). When junior infant children are taught to identify and name emotion words by their teacher, it can lead to more greater understanding of their own and others’ emotions and better emotional regulation and competence (Garner et al., 2019).

2.6.2. *Picturebooks with Scaffolding– ToM.*

“Reading makes us better human beings, which teachers certainly must seize upon” (Nikolajeva, 2013: 254).

Affording children the opportunity to discuss picturebooks, guided by a teacher, is a powerful pedagogical tool with which emotions, perspectives and assumptions can be explored, valuing and respecting the child’s voice. Group discussions allow children to learn from each other (Aukerman & Chambers Schuldt, 2016). Books chosen for this study created conversation requiring inferring and ascribing thoughts, beliefs and motivations to characters not explicitly outlined and going beyond the literal to explore ToM and FBU (Tompkins et al., 2018). Reconstructing a story, referring to the mental states of the characters as suggested by Ziv et al. (2015), helps children to see how other people live and think and therefore gain understanding of the inner lives and perspectives of others (Sims Bishop, 1990; Borba, 2018; Garner & Parker, 2018; Hegarty & Kennon, 2018). Learning ToM through fiction prepares children to be more empathetic in real life, not only understanding why someone might feel and deal with a certain situation, but also preparing themselves to deal with issues in advance (Gallingane & Han, 2015; Hegarty & Kennon, 2018). This pedagogical paradigm, adopted by the Irish curriculum (NCCA, 2020) to facilitate critical thinking provides a platform to safely discuss sensitive topics at a distance

such as bullying, racism and global issues (NCCA, 2009b; Knox & Gavigan, n.d.; Gallingane & Han, 2015; Hegarty & Kennon, 2018). It is recommended that they be taught as early as possible (Cefai, et al., 2018) which inspired me to use a picturebook to address an issue of racism that arose in my classroom (RJ, 28/2/20).

2.7. The Power of Teaching EL Using Picturebooks

“[E]verything changes when we read” (The Reading Agency, 2015: 3).

It is important that teachers make thoughtful book selections as through literature, messages may implicitly or explicitly be conveyed to children about how they ought to feel about certain issues (McCallum & Stephens, 2011; Trites, 2014). When books have human characters, Larsen et al. (2018) found that children responded with more prosocial behaviours when the setting and characters were realistic rather than fantastical. Regarding this, I address my own book selection approach in section 3.7.1 and when attending to a child feeling worried in my RJ (20/1/20).

2.8. Conclusion

The wellbeing of primary school children, both nationally and internationally, is appropriately being given greater priority in education, driving the need to teach EL. In response to increasing issues in Irish children’s mental health, the government has revised curricular material and introduced additional initiatives into primary schools. Schools themselves have introduced both Irish and international programmes compressing them into an already full timetable. This driving force has helped shape the upcoming Irish curricular framework and is a focus of education at the European level. The review of the literature looks to the Aistear Framework (NCCA, 2009a) new DPCF (NCCA, 2020) and draws on the use of thematic integration to teach the curricular content related to emotions to help to teach EL. It then describes the wide-ranging benefits of EL and the factors that influence its acquisition, including that of the wellbeing of teachers. Finally, the review describes a

proposed use of picturebooks to teach this content, an approach that is well-regarded and effective when teaching EL. From improved relationships, greater academic performance and increased empathy, the positive impact of enhanced EL is a wide-reaching and worthy ambition. This approach allows me to live more commensurate to my value of care and helping to foster empathy within my classroom, another core value of mine.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research focussed on improving my practice of teaching EL to my junior infant class using picturebooks. The separate areas of the curriculum and frameworks that deal with emotions, fragmented across SPHE (NCCA, 1999a), the new PLC (NCCA, 2019a) and the Aistear framework (NCCA, 2009a) were brought together under the theme of EL. This lays out a roadmap to teach EL using picturebooks, from labelling emotion vocabulary, recognising and managing emotions in oneself with others, as described by Knowler and Fredrickson (2013), to improving social interactions to encourage empathy, a core value of mine. A further core value of mine is care, and EL, as outlined previously, has many benefits to the lives of children (Bowles et al., 2017; Booth et al., 2019; Conte et al., 2019). I used a self-study action research paradigm and both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection as I worked towards transforming my teaching of this important area of the curriculum.

3.1. Values

Action Research (AR) invites the researcher to first establish their values - epistemological and ontological - and then turn a critical lens on their current practice, to see if they are, as Jack Whitehead describes “living contradictions” (Whitehead, 1989: 41), asking themselves “How do I improve my practice?” (Whitehead, 1989: 14). My ontological values are based on the understanding that each of us is unique and interacts with the world and each other from our own distinctive perspective. Everyone is born capable of adding extraordinary value to the world (Arendt, 1998). From this ontological perspective I was compelled to follow an epistemology supported by Polanyi’s understanding that we all come to knowledge with our own personal tacit knowledge and that these personal interactions with learning, create new knowledge (Polanyi, 1967; Nye, 2017). I value empathy and care where the meeting of the unique individuals, each with their own knowledge perspectives,

can foster broad, shared learning experiences. There are times in a busy classroom where I have cut short the voices of some children due to time constraints, contradicting the value I place on care for the child and their perspective (Whitehead, 1989). Empathy is a difficult concept for young children to grasp, so I focussed first on building their EL, which can encourage empathy, guided by my framework (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006; Messinger & McDonald, 2011; Nikolajeva, 2013).

3.2. Paradigms

Kuhn (1996) first used the term paradigm to describe a framework for inquiry. When conducting research, these paradigms provide shared rules, assumptions and patterns with methods that are appropriate for specific areas of study. These are ways of thinking about knowledge. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) describe approaches to educational research as the positivist, interpretative and critical or action research paradigms.

The positivist approach is often used in the research of the natural or physical sciences where the researcher is an external observer who maintains an objective stance (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006; Kemmis, 2012). It is their responsibility to maintain a value-free observational stance, privileging quantitative methods of data collection which generate universal theories (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Teacher researchers cannot separate themselves as objective observers of their teaching and so a positivist approach to my study was not appropriate.

Interpretivism is an approach that sees the social world as constructed and perceived differently by individuals through interactions. It cannot be quantified with statistics as in positivism. Methods used are usually qualitative, verbal and take perspectives and feelings as data. The researcher is aware that their presence and interactions affect their inquiry but remains an objective approach and so was not suitable to my research (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

3.2.1. *Action Research (AR)*

AR is a process whereby the researcher looks at their own practice to identify if they are working closely to the values they hold, with a view to transformation of their practice which is more commensurate to those values. Researchers may even generate a theory from the learning gained from that process. As I was researching my practice with my pupils, with the participants as opposed to on them, this paradigm was most appropriate (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006; Kemmis, 2009; Glenn et al., 2017). The great benefit of AR is that I, as the practitioner, can enhance my current practice and gain new insights as I draw on theory guided by my values (McDonagh et al., 2020). I wished to live more closely to my values of care and empathy and AR allowed me to do this.

3.2.1.1. *Quantitative and Qualitative Research*

Quantitative research is concerned with measurable factors and is often numerical and empirical in nature (Sullivan et al., 2016). Using checklists in my research helped me to keep track of the children's learning regarding their emotion vocabulary and affective empathy. Quantitative analysis of responses to BD was also useful in describing aspects of the research occurring in the classroom. However, quantitative research alone was not sufficient to assess the learning during the research process (Sullivan et al., 2016).

Qualitative research is interpretive and not easily measured but gives a better understanding of how and why things have occurred, with the process being as important as the findings (Cohen et al. 2018). It describes and explains data and notes patterns from the participant's definition of the situation and thus was suitable for the analysis of information gathered from BD. Qualitative data was a useful source to compare against my checklist, allowing me to interpret the meaning of those findings (Cohen et al., 2018). This is evident as I questioned if the children's performance correlated to their perception of the checklists

(Observation, 9/1/20). Interpretations were influenced by my efforts to live more closely to my values of care and empathy (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006).

3.3. Role of the Researcher

Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) and Wood et al., (2019) propose that while positivists and interpretivists study the phenomena of their surroundings, action researchers are trying to improve them. I wished to change my practice in my classroom with a strong ethical respect for my pupils. I created procedures and reflected on the outcomes, remaining open to critical examination of my findings and framework by others. At all times I reminded myself that it was myself I wished to change, articulating my values and identifying where I was a “living contradiction” (Whitehead, 1989: 41). As I revisited my RJ, I could see that my value of care for the children was ever-present and guided not only how I designed my intervention, but continually guided my assessment of the intervention as it occurred.

3.4. Data Collection Instruments

Check and Schutt (2012) suggest using varied data collection instruments to strengthen a statement of new learning. I used observations, a RJ, checklists and children’s work samples.

3.4.1. Observations

Observations are concerned with live situations and data, noting people, events, behaviours and artefacts (Cohen et al., 2018). I observed my practice, the children and their interactions, as well as the interactions with my critical friends, keeping in mind that this is a selective and biased method. I attempted to mitigate my own bias by being reflexive (Aubrey et al., 2018), consulting with critical friends (McDonagh et al., 2020) and using a variety of data collection tools (Sullivan et al., 2016). Guided by Mayne et al.’s (2018) framework for right-based research, I worked with the children as social actors using an

interactive narrative approach, aware of my changing role from participant in direct conversations with individuals to more detached observer. After sharing a book with the children, I asked three questions designed to draw out an understanding of ToM. My questioning was guided by the cognitive empathy questions regarding perspective taking in the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1983) and from Zoll and Enz's (2010) questions, using Cassidy et al.'s (1998) subtypes to discuss ToM and FBU. I was conscious to mitigate the power imbalance of my role by maintaining continued assent (Cohen et al., 2018) and reflexivity as per Palaiologou (2012). Observations taken in class were brief, and later transcribed formally. All names used are pseudonyms.

3.4.2. Reflective Journal

The accounts generated in the journal informed an awareness of my work, encouraging reflexivity and honesty, synthesising my understanding and guiding my forward thinking (Lawn & Barton, 1985; Sullivan et al., 2016). As suggested by Whitehead and McNiff (2006), they were communicated to my critical friends and validation group for further critique and discussion to guide changes in my practice. The reflective framework I chose combined Whitehead and McNiff's (2006) cyclical reflective process and Borton's framework (1970, as cited in Rolfe, 2014) that uses the questions, "What? So what? and Now what?" (Rolfe, 2014: 489). This framework allowed for quick and effective reflection, and reflexivity that allowed me to make alterations to my practice promptly. Revisiting the journal entries revealed new perspectives as changes occurred.

3.4.3. Checklists

Frels et al. (2011) believe that checklists can be used as a valuable tool in quantitative research. As there are no specific assessment tool for Junior Infant SPHE feelings lessons, I adapted checklists from Reid et al. (2013) and Pons et al. (2004) designed to assess emotion recognition, cognitive and affective empathy, as a form of assessment similar to the UK-

based approach for 7-16 year-olds (GL Assessment, 2017). I collected a baseline, interim and final snapshot of emotion vocabulary and recognition as per Bruce (2010) in the UK with 3-8 year olds. Time constraints of this one-to-one setting were mitigated by careful planning with the SET (Palaiologou et al., 2012). An initial checklist was designed to gather emotion words that the children knew and used when labelling a picture of a character. Most assessment tools of this type provide the children with a set of words to use during the test (Pons et al. 2004; Albanese et al., 2006; Reid et al., 2013). I wished to elicit from the children as many emotion words as I could and so I used Todd Parr's Feelings Flashcards that have been employed to support verbal expressions of emotions (Anglely, 2017; Hodges et al., 2018). I wished to uphold my value of care by ensuring the children's comfort, making the study a positive experience. The flashcards provided this causing me to note in my journal, that "[t]he cards provide so much enjoyment" (RJ, 8/1/20).

The second checklist was designed to assess the children's ability to affectively infer what the character was feeling (Reid et al. 2013). I used the images from the Kids' Empathic Development Scale (KEDS) but adapted my questioning to focus solely on the affective element. To provide me with additional information regarding the children's emotion understanding I added two images from the well-regarded Test of Emotion Comprehension (TEC) (Pons et al., 2004) representing emotions caused by an external factor (Component I) and mixed emotions (Component VIII) (Cavioni et al. 2020a).

3.4.4. Children's Work Samples

Due to the young age and diverse oral language ability of my class I asked the children to represent their thoughts, ideas and learning of emotions as drawings and colours, appropriate to their literacy level (Negi, 2015; Steyn & Moen, 2019). Drawings collected represented different developmental stages (Cox & Mason, 1998). The graphic cues, colours and richness of the children's drawings represented an indicator of their emotional

understanding (Pope et al., 2012; Brechet & Jolley, 2014; Bonoti & Misalidi, 2015; Katz et al., 2018; Sanak-Kosmowska, 2018). One child initially did not wish to use this medium. However, when reassured that he did not have to provide a drawing, as prepared for in the Risk section of this chapter, I noted in my RJ that he told me that he felt better. This outcome is reflective of Bland's study (2018) whereby the focus of the child centres on the drawing and not the expression.

3.5. Research Context

I work in mixed junior primary school in rural area of Dublin with a diverse socio-economic, multi-ethnic population. There are 441 children, 220 boys and 221 girls, in the school. Of the approximately 100 children receiving school support, 22 are on school support plus plans. There are 7 members of the SET and 11 Special Needs Assistants. (see Appendix A).

3.5.1. Research Participants

I worked with my junior infant class, 26 four and five-year olds, 16 of whom consented and assented to partake in my examination of my teaching of EL using picturebooks. The children were a random sample of that year's junior infant intake. I asked my professional colleagues and SET members to be my critical friends and validation group.

3.6. Research Design

I wished to see my values of empathy and care more present in the lives of the children in my class by improving my teaching of EL, guided by a progression of understanding of empathy and supported by Doyle and Bramwell (2006), Messinger and McDonald (2011) and Nikolajeva (2013). I planned the actions I would take in my classroom with my students to improve my practice. I included reflection of the process to implement and adapted the plan to continually work towards living closer to my values (McNiff, 2013;

Salajan & Duffield, 2019). I used qualitative and quantitative data collection tools and dialogue with critical friends and a validation group to add rigour and validity to my research (Sullivan et al., 2016) (see Appendix B).

3.7. Action Cycles

Often action researchers will use several research cycles, building upon what has been learned in a cyclical process of reflecting, planning, acting and observing before beginning a cycle again (McNiff, 2013). I outline two action cycles below. Intervention lessons were integrated with discrete SPHE lesson time, integrated English oral language and reading lessons as suggested by the NCCA (2005, 2008). They lasted approximately 25 minutes and were conducted on Monday to Thursday where possible, within the recommended time allocation for infant classes as per circular 0056/2011 (DES, 2011a).

3.7.1. Action Cycle 1

After establishing a baseline of the emotion words that the children use from the KEDS/Parr checklist I then began a class display based on the theme of emotions. This checklist was repeated at the end of the cycle. The children were invited to add to the display with labels which I annotated, drawings or any other images they wished. I modelled adding an image from a picturebook and photographs of a critical friend. Where Montero et al. (2013) and Treceñe, (2019) used Plutchick's emotions wheel (2001) as a way to sort and assess learning of their students, I used the same concept to display the emotion words provided from the children but I asked the pupils themselves to sort the words.

I selected picturebooks that contained explicit and implicit emotion words for Action Cycle 1 (AC1) (see Appendix C) to explicitly teach new emotion words to the children guided by Izard et al. (2001) and the RULER method (Brackett et al., 2012). I used the literature and my value of care and empathy when selecting, for example choosing not to use *That's Not Fair!* (Willis, 2011) as I believed the final message was confusing and noting in

my journal that I did not want the children to tire of the theme. I maintained my RJ and recorded observations and reflected upon them using Borton’s (1970, as cited in Rolfe, 2014) and Whitehead and McNiff’s (2006) reflective frameworks (see Appendix D).

3.7.2. Action Cycle 2

The second checklist used in Action Cycle 2 (AC2) assessed affective empathy, identifying the emotions people feel in different scenarios as represented by the images from KEDS (Reid et al., 2013) and TEC (Albanese et al., 2006). Picturebooks were selected that contained storylines where ToM was required to explain a character’s emotion or perspective (see Appendix C) as suggested by Kucirkova (2019) and Tompkins et al. (2019). The RJ, observations and the display continued to be enhanced. The children were shown “Milkshake Breathing” (Barrett, 2012) exercises to calm them if necessary, as lessons regarding emotions may unintentionally elicit strong emotions. This issue is further addressed in section 3.10 and the sensitivity section of my ethical statement (see Appendix E) (Barrett, 2012; PDST 2016). The checklist was repeated at the end of the cycle (see Appendix F).

Picturebooks in this cycle were used to discuss the visible physical responses to emotions and the internal states of the characters (ToM and FBU) (Davis, 1983; Cassidy et al., 1998; Zoll & Enz, 2010; Galligane & Han, 2015; Ziv et al., 2015; Borba, 2018). Three questions were asked (see Table 3.1).

1. How can you tell what the character is feeling?
2. What does that character think is happening in this situation?
3. Is there something they don’t know?

Table 3.1 Book Discussion Questions

3.8. Validity

Wishing to establish validity to the trustworthiness of my claims to new knowledge, I maintained a process of critical reflection upon my ontological, epistemological and

methodological values as the standards by which I judged my work (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). Reflexivity on my practice, as I considered my values and the voices of the children, was crucial in my decision-making. I invited critical friends and a validation group to meet throughout the research cycles to ensure clarity of learning and that standards of judgement were being met. I used a range of data collection tools to strengthen my statement of new learning (Check & Schutt, 2012). I read appropriate literature extensively to ensure my research was relevant and maintained professional standards. AR incorporates three levels of communication, the personal, formal public dissemination and, included as an essential component, the informal discussion (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006; Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2015). My fellow junior infant colleagues were integral to the process as a community of collaboration. Sharing my experience with my fellow researchers prepared me to explain and defend my process, calling on me to question my assumptions and maintain a critical eye on my decision-making. Testing the robustness of findings and practice in a public forum, allows for validation of a claim to new knowledge and prompted me to look again critically at my findings (McNiff, 2002; Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2015; Glenn et al., 2017).

3.8.1. Critical Friends

Advice, feedback and honest criticism from my critical friends proved invaluable at all stages of the research, providing support, encouragement and an objective, reflective viewpoint (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). In my research I included as critical friends, a fellow action-researcher, members of my junior infant teaching team, professional colleagues with an interest in the research and members of the SET as some of the pupils receive support for EAL.

3.8.2. *Validation Group*

While organising the validation group was challenging, the time spent with them provided me with great support and the suggestion of the check-in that I used in AC2. There were times where their words of encouragement drew my attention to aspects of my research that I could not see. One such example was their admiration of the language on the display. As I had become concerned with ensuring the words from the children were displayed promptly, I had stopped to appreciate how extensive the words were, some more likely to be understood by 7-10 year-olds (Baron-Cohen et al., 2010). My raised expectations of the children's vocabulary can be seen in a positive light as Brackett et al. (2011) say that high teacher comfort and confidence in teaching social and emotional programmes can positively affect their outcomes. I met with a validation group to discuss evidence, methodologies, new knowledge and design modifications. The creation of a learning community facilitates important dialogue that Glenn et al. (2017) outline as being central to a learning partnership that influenced multiple aspects of their studies. Publicly disseminating your work holds it up to the scrutiny of the public, tests its reliability and credibility and thus establishes the rigour and robustness of your claim (McNiff, 2013; Sullivan et al., 2016).

3.9. Limitations

Herr and Anderson (2005) recognise that in Action Research (AR) there are limitations regarding bias around the research as the researcher is also a participant and co-ordinator of the project. It is impossible to avoid issues regarding power in the case of AR on the pupils in my class. I made repeated efforts to be open about my decision-making expressed in my RJ and observations where I noted, "I think I am being very open and honest about my decisions for the sake of behaving ethically...and the children really appreciate the honesty." (Observations, 20/1/20). I was reminded that the imbalance remained when I asked them to provide colour work samples to match with an emotion. I positively responded to

some children using multicolours for an emotions and Mabel told me that some children may have done so because they did not know what to choose (Observations, 27/2/20). I will continue to remind my pupils that they can be open with me about how they feel about tasks going forward, working towards greater communication and allowing them to feel their voice is heard and valued.

3.9.1. Sample selection and size

I received consent and assent from 16 of the 26 children and their parents: 9 girls and 7 boys. I used multiple mixed methods of data collection and included triangulation from my critical friends and validation group along with my critical reflection to add rigour to my findings.

3.9.2. Sample Bias and Statistical Data

There is an intrinsic bias within the sample of children in the research group in that most of the pupils and their families are Irish and native English speakers (see Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2).

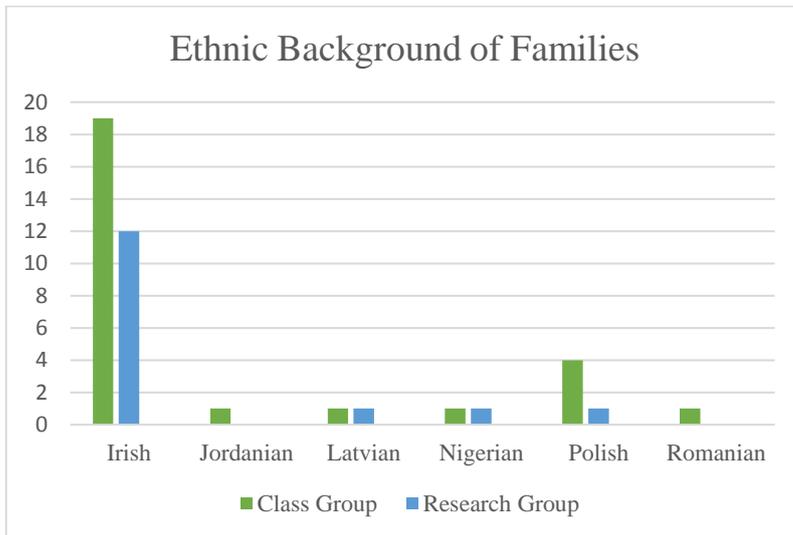


Figure 3.1 Ethnic Family Background

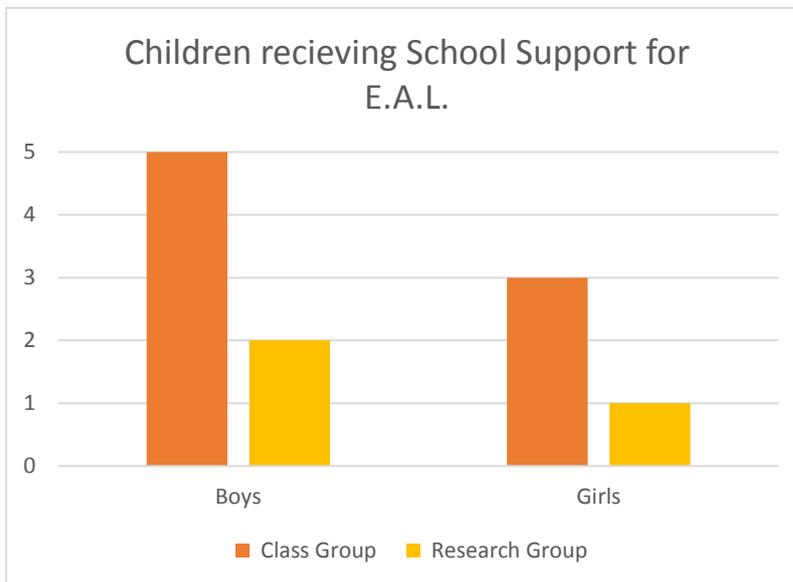


Figure 3.2 EAL Support

3.9.3. Researcher Bias

As the researcher, I cannot escape the fact that I will hold my own biases and assumptions. I attempted to limit the impact of this by consulting with third parties such as critical friends and maintaining critical reflexivity. Children ought to find the comfort of seeing themselves represented in the books I read and so my book selection included those that represented children of different genders, ethnicities and family types (Sims Bishop, 1990; Leerkes et al., 2015; Pennell et al., 2018). To mitigate a general bias towards “emotion instructing” (Borba, 2016: 9) for girls over boys (Conte et al., 2019) questioning was directed evenly in lessons.

3.9.4. Teaching Methods and data collection

Due to the limitations of the age and literacy levels of the pupils in my class and of those with English as an Additional Language (EAL), I carefully introduced new vocabulary and concepts and accepted responses from the children verbally, pictorially or of their choice of expression. The SET was aware that there were lessons of emotion words being conducted and were ready to support if necessary.

3.9.5. Time Constraints

The cycle schedule was disrupted by school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There was significant difficulty in obtaining opportunities to conduct one-to-one checklists and the SET supported me with this. It was not possible to receive further support to allow for small group BD so these were conducted as a whole class.

3.10. Risk

Potential risks include psychological harm to the participants and researcher or infringements of privacy of the participants. Children were reminded that their participation

was voluntary and they could withdraw from the study at any time or participate to the extent they wish, as is usual classroom procedure. The children were offered non-verbal forms of response and reminded that they could refrain from responding as is our normal class procedure. I was prepared to respond to disclosures, following school guidelines. It was possible that unintended strong emotional responses may have occurred amongst the participants. Guided by the Walk Tall programme (PDST, 2016), I prepared a quiet place in the classroom for the children to go to with a friend if requested and to show them breathing techniques to feel calmer. I would then speak to their parents. I planned to minimise stress and disruption for myself as a researcher through careful planning and practised reflexivity to mitigate bias. I prepared to speak to a critical friend if necessary.

3.11. Data Analysis

Researchers must analyse collected data to show evidence of change and demonstrate a claim to new knowledge.

3.11.1. Quantitative Data Analysis.

Quantitative analysis of the information from the checklists collated emotion words, preference and accuracy. I also collected responses that demonstrated affective knowledge and limited emotion understanding that were compiled into charts (McNiff, 2013). However, this data alone was insufficient to accurately convey the findings of the study. I used the well-regarded Test of Emotional Comprehension (TEC) (Pons et al., 2004) to assess the learning from the responses to the book discussion lessons. The TEC was designed to assess nine components of emotional understanding (see Appendix G).

The authors suggest that the components are hierarchical, increasing in complexity and related to age, and can be categorised into three stages of understanding, external, mental and reflexive. They found that the external stage, Components I, II and III emerged at the ages of 3-5, the mental stage, Components IV, V and VII emerge at age 5-6 and the belief

stage, Components VI, VIII, and IX at the age of 7-11 (Cavioni, et al., 2020a). I believed that many of these components were accessible to the children with teacher scaffolding and chose to analyse the children's emotional understanding of stage 1 and stage 3 as I expected them to exceed these expectations during AC2.

3.11.2. Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is more suited to this AR study, drawing out themes and behaviours from the data. Researcher reflexivity is required during analysis (Cohen et al., 2018). Conclusions drawn regarding success have been judged by the standards set by my values of empathy and care (McNiff, 2013). My RJ entries were recorded using Borton's (1970, as cited in Rolfe, 2014) and Whitehead and McNiff's (2006) frameworks which allowed for reflexivity. My observations too included reflexivity and this critical reflection was a vital part of my research.

3.11.3. Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a flexible method of identifying patterns within and across data (Clarke & Braun, 2017). It was used to analyse the data from my RJ, BD, and general observations. Codes, generated to capture the smallest unit of interesting features, were used to build themes and meaning in and across the data which were gathered for analysis guided by my research question (Clarke & Braun, 2017; Cohen et al., 2018). I began with data-driven, inductive analysis and found I had to repeat this process with Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases, through Schön's "messes" (Schön, 1983: 82) to the clearest view of my findings. Discussing my emerging findings with a critical friend was essential to ensure that my analysis made a relevant, supported argument to answer my research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.11.4. Critical Reflection

This process involves much self-reflection and questioning (McNiff, 2014; Brookfield, 2015a). The reflective process encouraged me to draw on many forms of evidence such as the children's responses to book discussion and in providing work samples, as well as suggestions and reflections from my critical friend to inform and enhance my teaching (Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2015). The changes made in my practice from the role of teacher-researcher, in my attempt to be transparent in my decisions, gradually influenced my teacher identity and led me towards a more democratic practice (Goodnough, 2010; Kemmis, 2012; Brookfield, 2015b). This change often did not only impact my teaching but had an "educative influence" on my colleagues (McNiff, 2002: 2).

3.12. Conclusion

I had hoped to see a transformation of my teaching that brought together the specific areas of the new PLC (NCCA, 2019a), Aistear (NCCA, 2009a) and SPHE (NCCA, 1999a) curricula related to EL. My roadmap allowed me to lead the children from learning EL, towards expressing empathy, one of my core values. I found that as I changed my practice and reflected upon the learning and teaching in my room, each factor of AR played a part to lead me to live more closely to my values. Engaging in dialogue with my critical friends and validation group supported me in guiding my research.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

Picturebooks were used to teach the children new emotion words. Individual checklists indicated that the research group used a range of 83 emotion labels, increasing to 95 by the end of AC1. Picturebooks were also used to teach the children about how emotions appear in others, understanding that others have internal states that explain their thoughts and feelings. BD contained characters whose thoughts and feelings had to be inferred through understanding ToM and FBU. Their emotional understanding and recognition of emotions (affective empathy) improved.

The children examined new words during BD and began to use them in class, at play and at home. A display of the words they learned and shared was created and added to with labels, pictures and work samples. Their drawings of emotions included postural and contextual cues which Bonoti and Misalidi (2015) state are expected of children aged 8 years and older. One example of this is Fay's drawing which include downturned eyebrows that Sayōl (2001) says are difficult for children to draw, and she includes the context of a character with an ice cream the other desires (see Figure 4.1). Jackie too, uses another character, an object (heart) and arm positions to convey love (see Figure 4.1).



Figure 4.1 Work Samples of Fay and Jackie

A positive climate around EL was created that gave the children confidence to contribute, with their voice and perspective valued from the morning check-in throughout the whole school day. The children’s ownership of the display fostered cross-curricular, child-led, thematic lessons that extended learning beyond my personal, professional colleagues’ and curricular expectations. My practice changed to allow me to live more closely to my values and to identify a new direction for my future practice.

4.1. Emotion Vocabulary

I utilised my checklist, adapted from the KEDS (Reid et al., 2013) and using Todd Parr’s “Feelings Flashcards” (Parr, 2010). Checklists were conducted in a one-to-one setting. From the initial emotion words that the research group provided, I found that the children were most reliant on basic vocabulary words (see Figure 4.2).

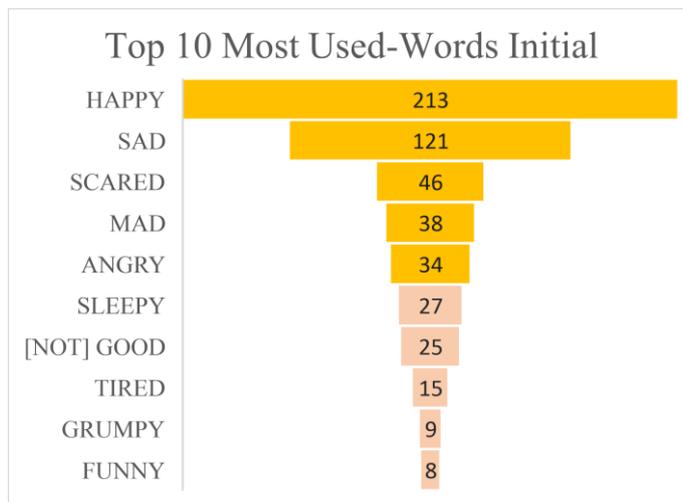


Figure 4.2 Top Ten Most-Used Words Initial

These basic words, named as such by Ekman (1992) and Plutchick (1980, 2001), are those that are universally identified by facial features (Brogaard, 2015). I found during the checklists that even where I tried to provide a context to draw out a more complex word, some children persisted with the basic word.

“I tried to use the same prompts with certain cards to indicate an emotion such as ‘proud’ for ‘coming in first place’. It highlighted that most of the children...listened to the context but still based the emotion word mostly on the eyes and mouth of the character” (RJ, 7/1/20).

Relying so much on the basic emotions (67%) and facial cues demonstrated an emotional understanding and recognition of a facial expression of emotion that Reid et al. (2013) say emerges at the age of 3-4. Initially this would appear to represent poor emotional understanding considering the average age of the research group was approximately 5 years 7 months. However, this data was extracted without using the TEC images or analysis. Therefore I compared the initial result to the post-intervention result, which showed less reliance on the basic emotion words, down to 58% (see Figure 4.3).

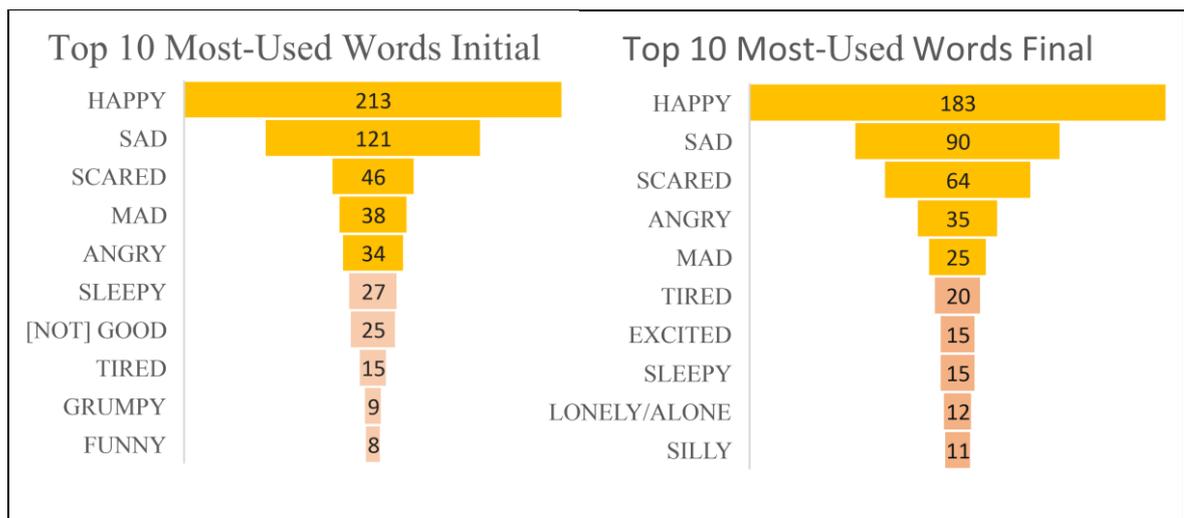


Figure 4.3 Top 10 Most-Used Words

My intention had been to expand the range of their emotion words and I saw evidence of an increase of total words used from 83 to 96 (see Appendix H). Benjamin and Terry used

less words, but Edith and Hallie demonstrated a significant rise and the range of words used by the group showed an average increase of 32% (see Figure 4.4). This allowed me to lead the children towards being better able to label and name their emotions, the first step in developing their EL (Nikolajeva, 2013).

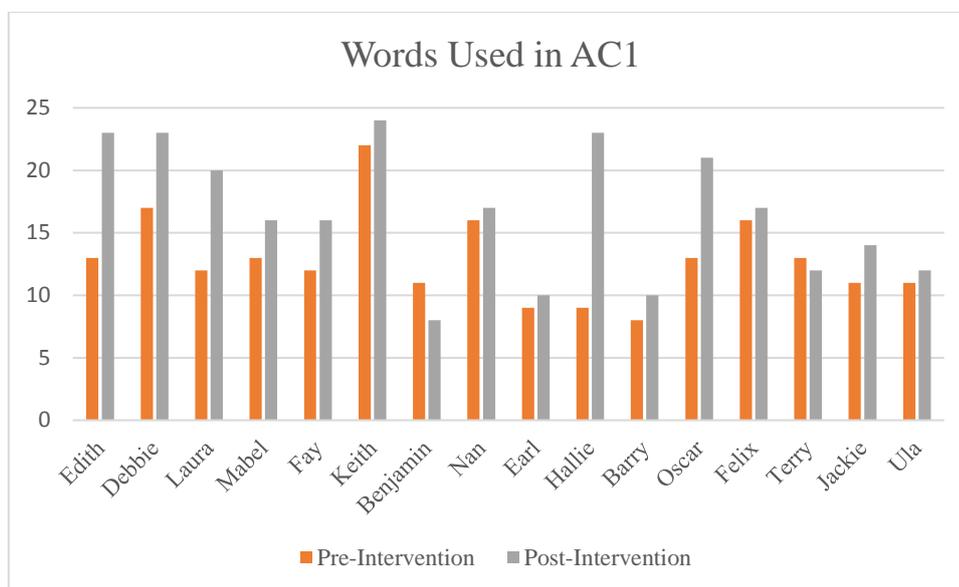


Figure 4.4 Words Used in AC1

4.1.1. Using Picturebooks to Teach Vocabulary

The first selection of picturebooks I read to the children comprised of books about feelings, specifically to introduce new emotion words. Poventud et al. (2015) explain that with teacher scaffolding, directly teaching emotion words can improve children's EL. The RULER method (Brackett et al., 2012) also guides the learning of new emotion vocabulary, outlining steps to recognise, understand, label and express the new words. The SPHE curriculum (NCCA, 1999a) names 16 emotion words. I had my own expectations that the children for whom English was their first language would know more. Confirming Poventud et al. (2015) and Nikolajeva's (2013) theories, the verbal statements combined with the illustrations inspired scaffolded discussion that enhanced the learning of new emotion words. The children also began to use the new words.

“I heard today that a child used the word ‘envy’ in the appropriate context at home!!” (RJ, 17/1/20).

“ I told him (Keith’s father) about the (Keith’s) use of the word ‘invisible’ and he said Keith had asked him about it at home” (Observation, 30/1/20).

Discussing new emotion words at home is one of the steps of the RULER method (Brackett et al., 2012). After introducing the new feeling words directly using picturebooks selected for that purpose, I felt that I ought to move to picturebooks with more of a narrative. This maintained my value of care for the children, ensuring they found the study enjoyable. If I were to repeat the intervention, I would like to spend more time exploring these first books, still interspersed with narrative stories. Where Clarke and Barry (2010) found children grew tired sitting for discussions during long EL lessons, I used my professional judgement and followed the interest of the children to gauge their engagement and so every class would be different. A child did ask me why we kept “reading a lot of books about feelings.” (RJ, 20/1/20). I was reassured however, that she was not overly weary of the topic as she later demonstrated her internalisation of the topic and sharing of it at home, as suggested by Goleman (1996) and Aistear (NCCA, 2009a), bringing in a picturebook from home assuring me “that she felt had great feeling words in it.” (Observation, 12/2/20).

4.1.2. Class Display

Before the picturebook lessons, the class brainstormed emotion words they knew to create a display (see Figure 4.5).

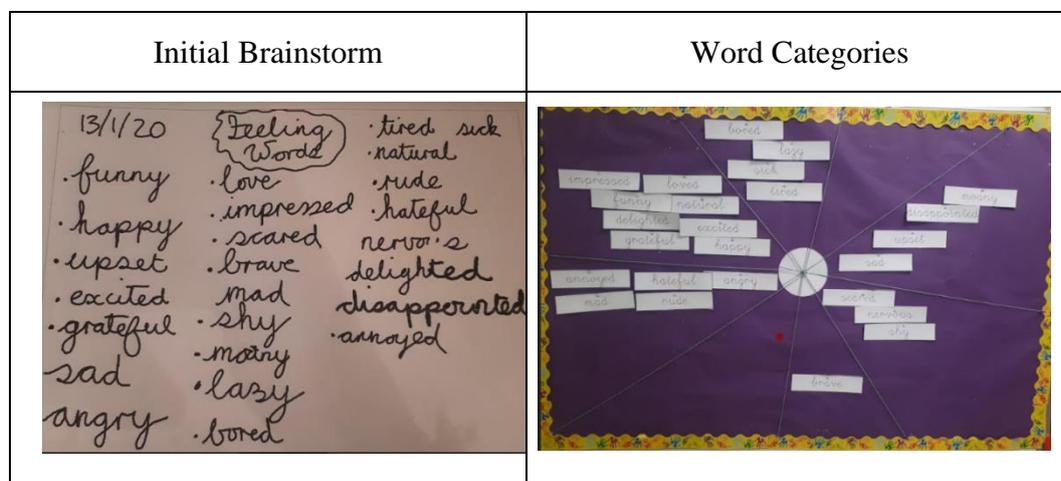


Figure 4.5 Feeling Word Brainstorm

The whole class created the display as, ethically, I wished to improve all children's EL, which Hoemann et al (2019) say happens when emotional vocabulary is expanded. In all photographs of the display any work samples of children who were not participating in the study have been removed or covered. I had to transcribe the words for the children due to their young age. I intended the display of words to act as a record of the children's learning as suggested by the new PLC support materials (NCCA, 2019b). Newland et al. (2019) and Treceñe (2019) sorted children's written emotion words according to Plutchick's (2001) emotions wheel, and as the new PLC (NCCA, 2019a) suggests children learn to categorise, I asked the children to group similar emotion words together. Hoemann et al. (2019) explain that this begins in infancy and the class initially created six groupings (see Figure 4.5). This challenged my assumptions as I noted that "[s]orting the emotions happened much more easily than I imagined" (Observation, 13th January 2020).

The display prompted discussion focussed solely on emotion words, encouraging the sharing and detection of such words. It allowed them to introduce their own vocabulary, thus

learning from each other (Aukerman & Chambers Schuldt, 2016). Sorting the emotions into similar categories further enhances their understanding (Plutchick, 2001; NCCA, 2019a). I feared I imparted some unconscious biases to the sorting, in accordance with the answers I anticipated, and so I offered the children the opportunity to reorder the words but they declined (RJ, 31/1/20). BD with a focus on emotion words continued for AC1 and continued during AC2 with a focus on the internal states of the characters and the display was continually added to until the school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The number words on the display grew from 25 to 83 (see Figure 4.6 Display Progression).

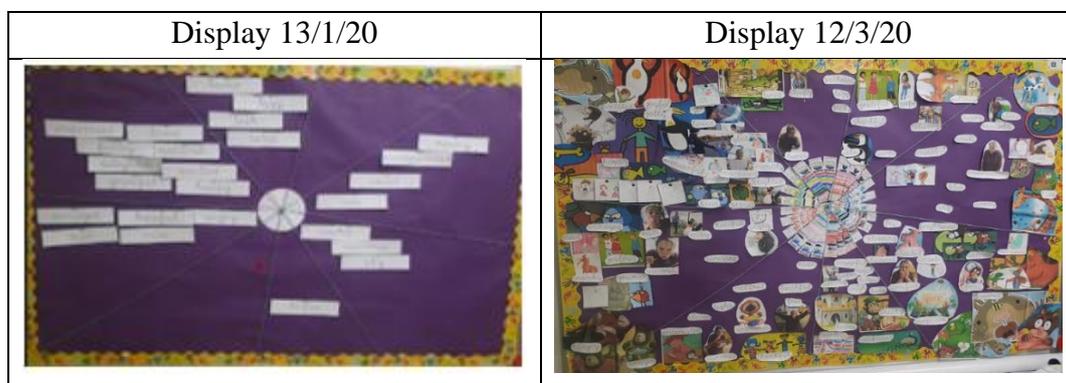


Figure 4.6 Display Progression

While the display showed a large increase (58 words) in their exposure to new emotion words, this increase was not reflected in the checklists conducted at the end of AC1. A surprising result showed that their reliance on the basic vocabulary had only reduced by 13% and their overall accuracy had only risen by 2% (see Figure 4.7).

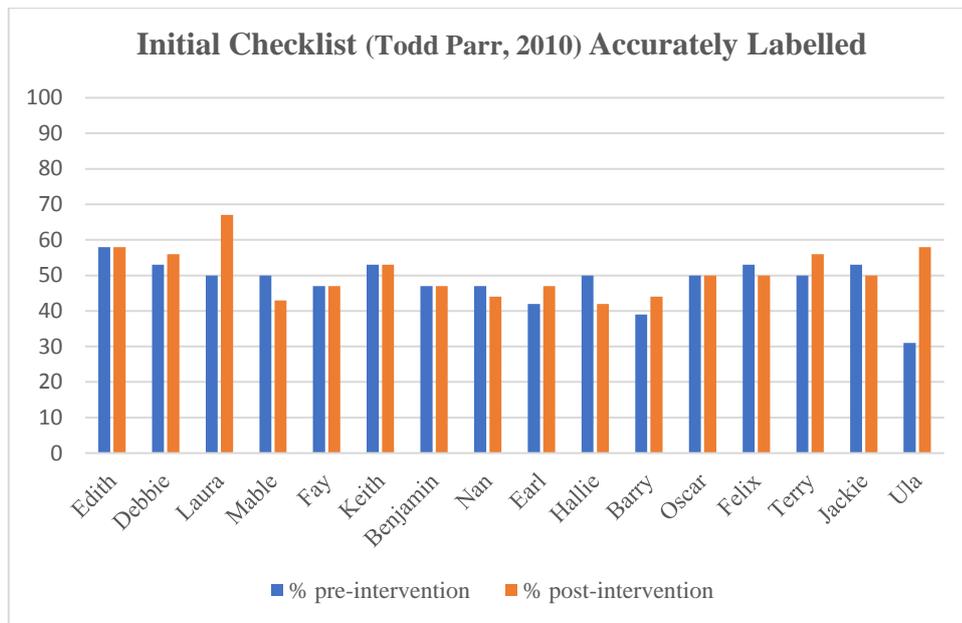


Figure 4.7 Accurately Labelled Images Initial Checklist (Todd Parr, 2010)

This checklist was designed to draw out emotion words, not to assess the accuracy of labels, indicating that it was not the most suitable instrument to use for the reassessment. It may be the case that a longer intervention focussed on the internalising of the new words using structured steps such as those in the RULER method (Brackett et al., 2012) could assist the children in using the words. I believe a thematic, whole-school approach to EL as suggested by Cavioni et al., (2020b), building on vocabulary every year, would allow for natural internalisation of the emotion words.

4.1.3. *The Child's Perspective*

I noted in my journal that children had mixed attitudes to the repeated checklist. Some treated this as a test while others had found confidence to pass when they were unsure.

“I finished the checklists but for Mabel I felt that she was feeling huge pressure to produce great words and avoid “happy” and “sad” and I felt terrible about it” (RJ, 30/1/20).

“The children are quicker to use PASS” (RJ, 30/1/20).

Should I wish to assess my pupils’ emotion vocabulary in my future practice, I would do so in a more informal setting, such as during books discussions. In this setting, Mabel

was happy to contribute and did so with great consideration. Reassuring her that “happy” and “sad” were perfectly acceptable seemed to ease her concerns. Her discomfort, however mild, during the repeated checklist, affected her performance as suggested by Weber and Harris (2020) and goes against my value of care and empathy. I wished for the project to have a positive impact (McDonagh et al., 2020). I did not expect her feel pressure to perform and could only spot this subtlety due to knowing her so well as her teacher, as outlined by Murray (2019).

4.2. Using Picturebooks to Introduce ToM and FBU

Confident that the children had expanded their emotional vocabulary, I used the images from the KEDS (Reid et al., 2013) to evaluate their ability to make an affective inference based on a given context. These images comprised of a character in a setting with a blank face. The child must therefore infer from the context what emotion they would feel, moving them beyond naming an emotion from the first checklist. The children had to consider how the character feels in that situation, which is using affective empathy. Initial results indicated quite a high level of affective emotional understanding with an average accuracy of 91% (see Figure 4.8). Reid et al. (2013) performed the test on 7-10 year olds and weighted the answers. Where they rated the answers from 0-2, a score of 2 indicating a complex answer. It was not possible to conduct the test to this extent within this study and so used a scale of 0 or 1 where 1 indicates a correct answer, similar to Bensalah et al. (2016).

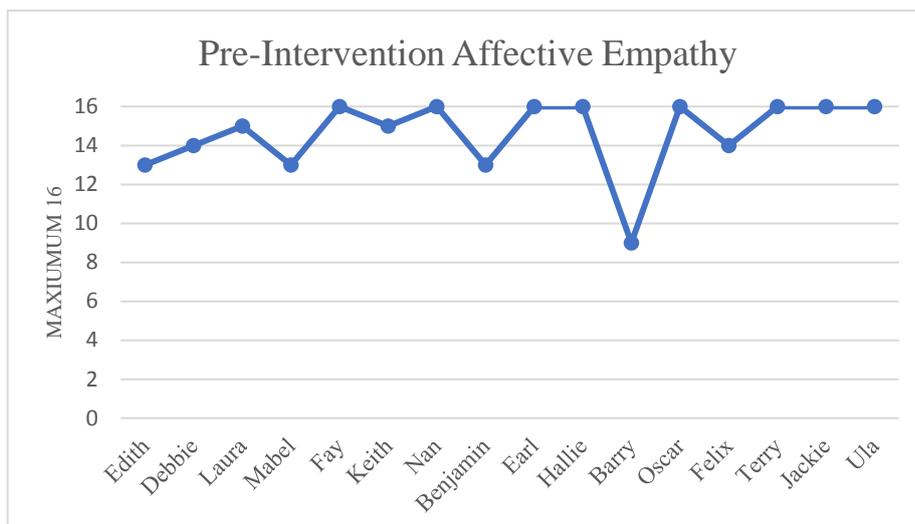


Figure 4.8 Affective Empathy Pre-Intervention

This score indicated that the children were well prepared to explore ToM and FBU. I included two items from the TEC (Albanese et al., 2006), the first was to check the child’s understanding of an emotion due to an external cause. The second, to check for an understanding of mixed emotions (Albanese et al., 2006) (see Figure 4.9).

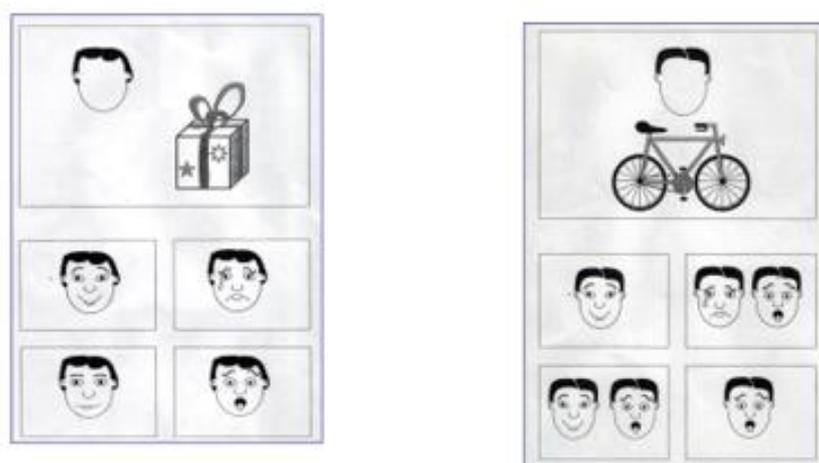


Figure 4.9 External and Mixed Emotions TEC (Albanese et al., 2006)

All but three of the children successfully identified the first emotion but only one child correctly identified the mixed emotions. This confirmed their ability to identify and label emotions well which Cavioni et al (2020a) explain is expected by the TEC of children aged 3-4 and showed the appropriate challenge to identify a mixed emotion expected of

children aged 9-11. While not analysed in exactly the same way as Pons et al. (2004) who found a success rate for the first image of 75% of the 5 year olds they tested, my pupils rated closely at 81%. Pons et al. (2004) found that 15% of 5 year-olds successfully recognised mixed emotions whereas my pupils showed a score of only 6% (see Appendix I).

4.2.1. Picturebooks to teach EL through Guided Book Discussions

I approached the reading of stories in the manner suggested by Ziv et al. (2015), reconstructing the story through referring to the emotional and internal states of the characters. I found the children were very involved in the stories, a professional colleague even complimenting their engagement. The children encouraged me to use eBooks and animated books. However, I felt that the children were more passive in their engagement with them, as is suggested by current literature (Horowitz-Kraus & Hutton, 2017; Florentini, 2020).

“I will say that they do ask for a retell of a story more after I have read it...Nevertheless, I had expected them to prefer the e-books and that is not the case” (Observation, 6/3/20).

4.2.2. Teacher Scaffolded Questions for ToM and FBU

Teacher questions, founded in theory from Davis (1983), Cassidy et al. (1998) and Zoll and Enz (2010), supported by Nikolajeva (2013) and Poventud et al. (2015) during BD, led to a deep level of inference and consideration of ToM. This led the children to empathise with the characters and to have a better understanding of their behaviours as per Vygotsky (1978). These scaffolded BD also allowed for demonstrations of empathy.

“This child (Keith) demonstrated great empathy for the character Gerald in ‘Giraffes can’t dance’... He told us that he is also too shy to dance as he doesn’t want others to make fun of him. All of this is deeply implied in the story and he is so sensitive that he could place himself in the same position” (RJ, 7/2/20).

When discussing the story *Fergus’s Scary Night* (Maddox, 2012) we spoke about the animals listening to a ghost story and a child said “[t]heir hearts are beating very fast” (BD, 26/2/20) which was not mentioned in the story. I could not know if these children, truly empathising with characters, were able to do so as a result of the intervention as Elliot (2016) found or were very naturally empathetic children, a possibility demonstrated by Murray et al. (2019). Nonetheless, I found it an unexpected and affirming response from these young children and will raise my expectations of empathy for junior infants in my future practice.

During guided BD the children demonstrated that they recognised emotions from facial features and postures of the characters, text and context (see Table 4.1). This change in focus by the children from the initial checklist is likely due to attention being drawn to the setting, determining causation of the emotions by myself and the narrative, as suggested by Brechet et al. (2009).

<i>facial features</i>	“making a sad face with its eyes” (BD 10/2/20) “her eyebrows” (BD 4/3/20)
<i>posture</i>	“hands to their faces” (BD 26/2/20) “turning around not looking at her” (BD 27/2/20)
<i>text</i>	“we can tell by the words” (BD 12/2/20)
<i>context</i>	“the boys were being mean” (BD 10/2/20) “they are listening to a ghost story” (BD 24/2/20)

Table 4.1 Book Discussion Observations

4.2.3. *Emotion Understanding*

Analysis of the responses to the BD questions (see Table 3.1 Book Discussion Questions) showed that all questions elicited a broad demonstration of understanding, but question two and three extended the children’s understanding beyond Stage 1 (Albanese et al., 2006) (see Figure 4.10).

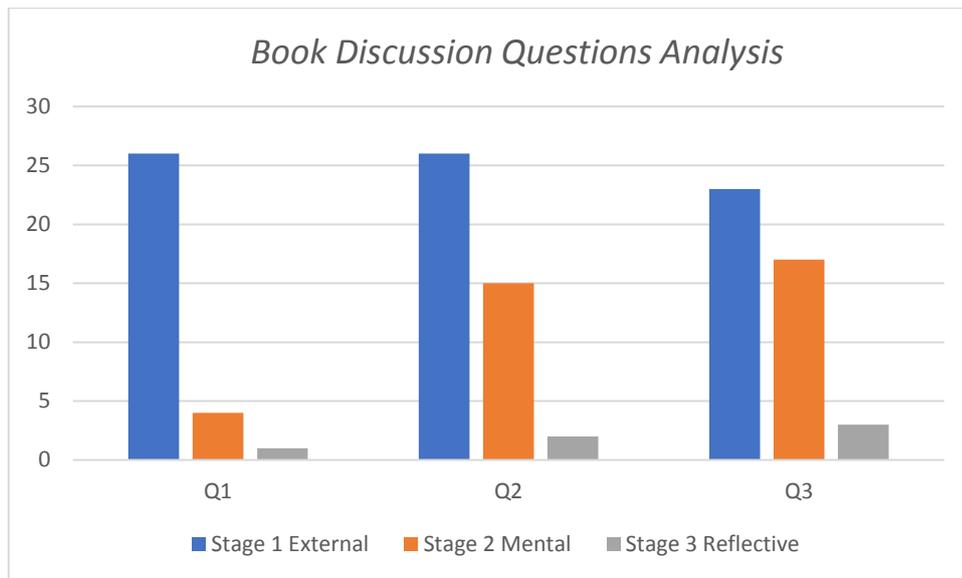


Figure 4.10 Analysis of BD Questions (TEC, Albanese et al., 2006)

TEC analysis of the BD show that the class were demonstrating a level of emotional comprehension higher than expected for their age, (see Appendix J).

Repeating the KEDS (Reid et al., 2013) checklist of affective empathy showed that after the intervention, the children demonstrated a 94% accuracy of affective empathy (see Figure 4.11). I believe that as he felt supported and more confident, Barry was better able to represent his ability in his scores. I had felt the responsibility of my value of care to allow him the opportunity to do so.

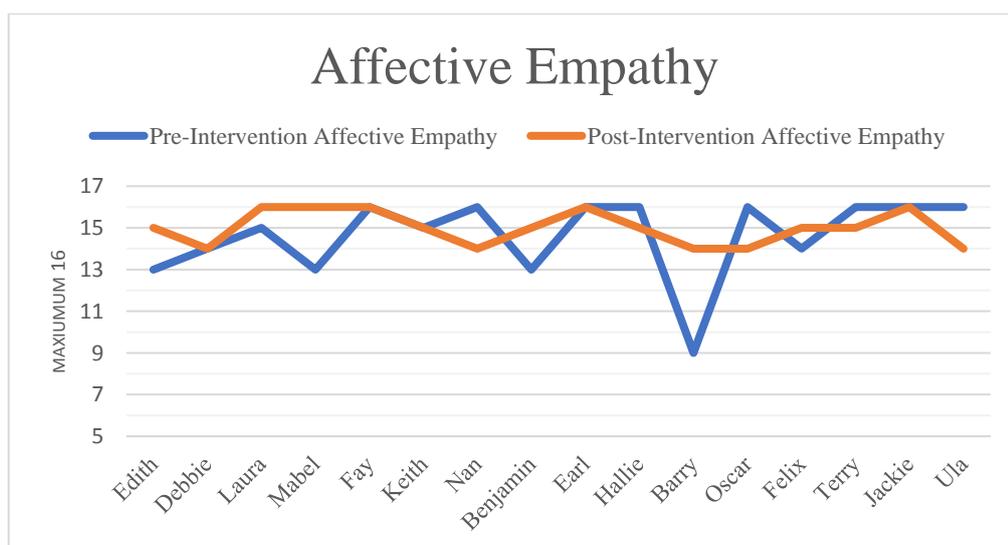


Figure 4.11 Affective Empathy Pre- and Post-Intervention

After the intervention, 100% of the children identified the externally affected emotion and there was an increase from 6% to 31% of the children who could identify mixed emotions (see Appendix I). This was encouraging as mentioned before, in their weighted analysis, the 5 years olds in Pons et al. (2004) study scored 75% and 15% respectfully. This could indicate that guided BD provided the children with scaffolded learning experiences of ToM that allowed them to interpret the context more thoroughly (Vygotsky, 1978; Tompkins et al., 2018) (see Appendix I).

4.3. Positive Climate around EL.

Conducting checklists inadvertently provided me with a platform on which I built on my rapport with the children, giving praise and asking them to share their ideas. Maintaining my value of care for the children I tried to ensure that they understood they were not being tested and that they were helping me improve my teaching. My endeavour to assure them that they were valuable agents in this process, praising all their efforts, impacted positively on the pupil-teacher relationship which was clear from my journal entries.

“She (Ula) smiled a lot during the checklist task and that is something I have always wished to see from her” (RJ, 9/1/20).

“Again, I found it so interesting how much the children enjoy the one-to-one time and the fun cards” (RJ, 8/1/20).

This effect was mentioned in my observations (7/1/20) as being felt by the whole class and was an opportunity to continue to encourage the child’s voice in a classroom where their contributions and individual styles were catered for as is encouraged throughout the research (NCCA, 2009; Roche, 2009; PDST, 2016). I supported communication style differences and encouraged nonverbal opting out.

“While Oscar jumped around excitedly, Jackie gradually created space between us and Earl, Felix, Terry and Benjamin became completely engrossed and drew closer to the cards” (RJ, 8/1/20).

“I will continually remind Barry that he can ‘Pass’/shrug and there is no pressure on him” (RJ, 8/1/20).

One child, Laura, even demonstrated an understanding of the emotion by taking on the role and making a statement that suited the setting, unexpectedly trying to “imitate the images that she found difficult to interpret” (Observation, 6/1/20). This was the foundation upon which a positive climate around emotional language was formed, as described by O’Grady (2013) and supported by Gruenert and Whitaker (2015).

4.3.1. Display

Initially, I intended that the display would collect emotion words the children learned and be supplemented by their work samples and other images. However, the children did not all have a positive response to the request for drawings.

“At one point a child began to cry and say he wanted to go home as he did not know how to draw ‘Happy’. Once I reassured him that it was ok for him not to draw it and I could take the paper away he told me that he was happy again” (RJ, 16/1/20).

Bland (2018) reminded me that, although my intention in asking for drawings from the children was to facilitate their literacy levels due to their young age, some children may get preoccupied with their drawing skills and that other methods could be used. Analysis of the work samples showed that the emotion words chosen comprised of 73% basic words, with a reliance on facial features to depict emotions as per Bonoti & Misalidi (2015) (see Table 4.2). This correlates with their responses in the first checklist and could indicate to me that the children’s drawings of emotion can indicate their emotional understanding which is supported by Brechet and Jolley (2014) - a fact that I will take note of in my future practice.

Emotion Words	Facial	Postural	Contextual
73% Basic	16	3	8
27% Complex	6	2	3
Total	22	5	11

Table 4.2 Graphic cues in work samples (Bonoti & Misalidi, 2015)

I modelled image-gathering from picturebooks and a critical friend posed for photographs, giving permission for them to be used in the study (see Figure 4.12).

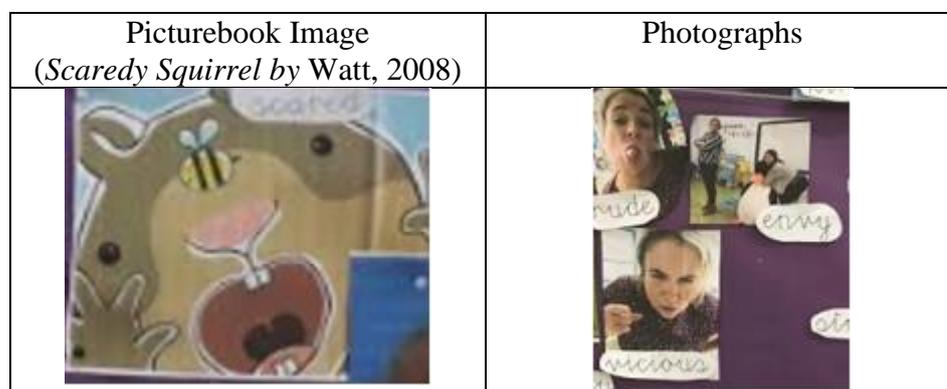


Figure 4.12 Teacher Contribution

While speaking to a critical friend I found myself stating that the class “came up with a greater selection of possible words when presented with a picture” (RJ, 28/1/20). Adding images was a planned action for the display and very impactful. However on reflection, although my value of care for the upset child and my wish to behave ethically led me to move away from gathering drawings, I would make an effort to include them from children who wished to do so in my future practice as suggested by Bland (2018).

Prompted by my example, their confidence and comfort grew. The children began to lead their learning, directing me to stop an animation for an image for our display and to add images from Stay Safe (PDST, 2016). They chose images from the animation, eBooks, picturebooks and animated books which were used as normal practice in the classroom, and I began to include in the study. Their confidence grew as they began to drive the word and image collection. One child even brought in his own photos. The display provided an ever-present reminder of emotion words from sources not limited to SPHE lessons. All emotion words were valued and described neither as positive nor negative as recommended by Stay Safe (MacIntyre & Lawlor, 2016). Two American studies noted that scaffolded direction provided opportunities for choice, including displays, affording children a chance to explore their autonomy (Luna & Grey, 2019; Isik-Ercan, 2020). Collaborating with the child as agentic in their learning is a principle of Aistear (2009a) and the new DPCF (NCCA, 2020) and allows me to live more closely to my value of empathy, respecting the child’s perspective. The expansion of the display was one that the children were proud of and also impressed my validation group.

4.3.2. Work Samples

Children were given freedom to choose any emotion word for the work sample collection as recommended by Jolley et al. (2004). Their contributions included words not typically described as positive (see Figure 4.13).

“Nervous” by Laura	“Angry” by Oscar	“Sad” by Keith	“Mad/Grumpy” by Fay
			

Figure 4.13 Work Samples: Non-Positive Emotions

I realised upon reflection, that I had held the assumption that the children would wish to draw more positive emotions and recognising this, I am glad to see that I did not allow this to influence their choices. Another explanation could be that “pencil, brush and paper are the best means of conveying their fondest hopes and most profound fears” (Farokhi & Hashemi, 2011: 2219). While the graphic cues the children used were greater than expected according to Brechet et al. (2009) the fact that this was a teacher-directed task may have influenced the children’s high standards of intrinsically-motivated choices and depiction (Chad-Friedman et al., 2018). I can see that after this, I expected emotion words of any valency while still being impressed by the standard of vocabulary such as “Frustrated, nervous, cheeky, selfish, satisfying, lucky” (Observation, 10/3/20).

Praise was received for the word “fearless” resulting in two children using that word for their work samples. I had felt that this meant a missed opportunity for one child to use her own word, but my critical friend pointed out that this demonstrated not only a positive learning response from praise but an example of how the children were learning from each other which the literature supports (Goleman, 1996; Roche, 2009, Ziv et al., 2015; Aukerman & Chambers Schuldt, 2016) (see Figure 4.14).

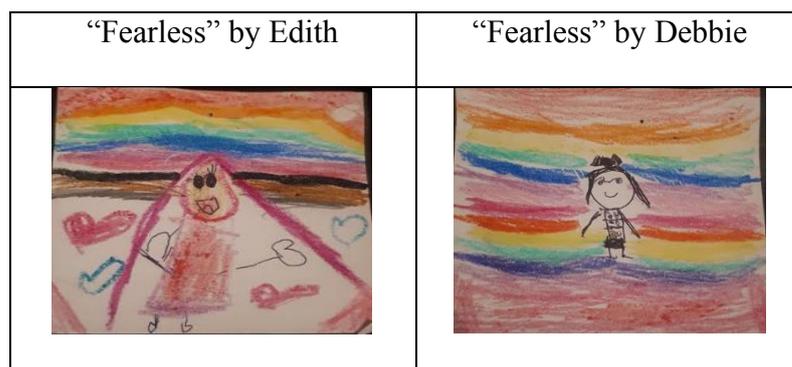


Figure 4.14 Work Samples: Fearless

4.3.3. Colour–Emotion Associations

Some of the picturebooks make colour-emotion associations such as *The Colour Monster* (Llenas, 2012). These associations can be a measure of their emotional understanding (Pope et al., 2012). Although I had not shown it to them, work samples collected on the 12th and 27th of February (2020) demonstrated a definite colour-emotion preference of the children somewhat consistent with Plutchick’s emotions wheel (see Figure 4.15) (Thorstenson et al., 2018).

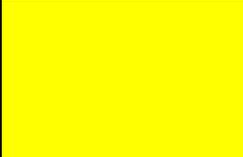
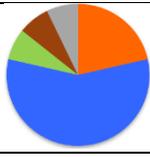
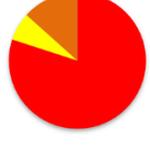
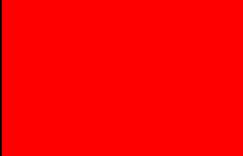
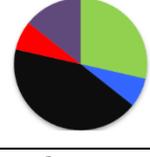
Colour-Emotion Associations in Work Samples		
Work Sample	Digital*	Plutchick (2000)
Happy		
Sad		
Angry		
Scared		
* Grey on pie chart indicates multicoloured sample		

Figure 4.15 Colour-Emotion Associations

Visible consistencies between the children’s work samples, picturebooks and Plutchick’s (2001) wheel suggested a colour-emotion correlation that I believe I could investigate more comprehensively in my future practice to assess children’s mood non-verbally as suggested by (Carruthers et al., 2010). This tool may have assisted my least

verbally confident child whom I discovered appreciated non-verbal support during the KEDS checklist.

4.3.4. *Check-in*

Following the suggestion of my Validation Group, I began a daily “check-in” wherein the children were invited to express how they were feeling each morning, creating an opportunity to demonstrate their new emotional vocabulary in a social context. The children grew in confidence and respectfully shared their feelings on their own terms, building a positive classroom climate consistent with research in this area (O’Grady, 2013).

“I was happy [to] see continued sharing by most children and sometimes two emotions expressed.....They don’t always want to say why. They’re happy to just state the emotion but not follow up. It nearly seems that saying aloud that they are feeling sick or sad is enough.” (RJ, 10/3/20).

Initially, students spoke in turn gradually responding with a ““good for you” or a “poor you”” (Observation, 11/2/20) generally just stating how they felt. As I reflect on the approach I took not to expand on feelings raised, I wished for the children to feel safe enough to be open and honest to the degree they wished without the influence of my response due to my position of power. In fact, I was present as an “equal participant” (Roche, 2009: 57). I always followed up outside of the check-in with any child who expressed they were upset but rarely did the child want any further intervention. Occasionally it proved a “useful indicator” (Goleman, 1996: 261) of their emotional state for that day. One girl appeared to begin to use emotion labels to express herself more accurately which may indicate the effectiveness of the intervention that improved her EL. An interruption to our check-in one day necessitated that I follow up with a small group check-in and a child who had never before contributed, spoke in the circle. The next day, after talking about it with his parents, he spoke in the larger check-in. As he was my least verbally-confident child I was truly feeling that I was in fact now living more to my values of empathy and care.

4.4. Autonomy and Expectations

The display became a focal point around which the children's autonomy in their learning of EL was realised. While I modelled and encouraged the integration of emotional vocabulary throughout the school day as suggested by Brackett et al. (2012), it was not until the children became confident with their own voice and took ownership of their EL that it became naturally integrated into everyday class life. The children were aware that my research was related to emotions as I explicitly stated it when conducting checklists, asking for permission to use work samples and when asking the set questions during books discussions. When I began to add words to the display, they paid more attention to sharing emotion words with me, finding multiple opportunities to use the new vocabulary themselves. This allowed for immediate feedback as suggested by Cuticelli et al. (2015) to support their learning.

“The word ‘envy’ was used in a picturebook and in explanation I used the word ‘jealous’ which they knew. By the end of the day three children remembered ‘envy’ but it will need further reinforcement. The word ‘hope’ was also used” (RJ, 14/1/20).

Tuned into emotion words, when I included a picturebook picture as an example for the display, they began finding sources of emotion pictures to add themselves. The additional assistance of context, the pictorial image and, of course the emotion word, allows children a better understanding which the literature supports (Schickedanz & Collins, 2012; Murray, 2019). They saw emotion words everywhere, in eBooks, animated books, picturebooks, curricular material, class displays and confidently stopped lessons to point them out to me. “A child told me I was missing images from Peep as they watched” (RJ, 3/2/20). I maintained a positive attitude to every contribution even if they did not always understand the words as I wished to encourage and support their efforts (O’Grady, 2013). This was mentioned in my journal. “They keep adding words they do not understand but that is ok” (RJ, 31/1/20).

I noted in my journal that the children incorporated the new vocabulary not only to state how they felt but to seek support from the teacher to solve problems (Joseph & Strain, 2010).

“Fay told me she felt ‘invisible’ on yard” (RJ, 3/2/20).

“Today the child (Keith) who suggested that my critical friend in her photo looked ‘invisible’ told me that he himself felt ‘invisible’ on yard. This led to a discussion about how we might deal with this type of situation in future... It became productive, positive and blame free. I am thrilled that the child felt able to verbalise that emotion” (RJ, 29/1/20).

This event shows a change in my practice, unrecognised by me at the time. I was scaffolding for the children my own EL in my practice during conflict resolution, something it took a critical friend to highlight for me. Teaching the children EL encouraged me to validate the children’s feelings and rebuild relationships during conflict resolutions which is supported by Bezzina and Camilleri’s (2020) study.

During the guided BD, the children went beyond simply answering my questions designed to support ToM and FBU. They empathised with the characters and used complex emotion word labels such as “jealous, envy, terrified, curious, nervous” (BD, 10/2/20). On one occasion, when discussing a picture in a book, the children accurately inferred “she was scared and shy. There were so many kids in the school” (BD, 10/2/20). I will admit that although I expected the children to be capable with scaffolding, and it is a key competency to be taught in both the Aistear framework (NCCA, 2009a) and new DPCF (NCCA, 2020), I internally celebrated when they demonstrated empathy.

During the check-in, without teacher direction, the children began to listen more thoughtfully to each other.

“One girl (Mabel) said that she was grumpy and her neighbour asked why. The reply was that she hadn’t had enough sleep” (Observation, 28/2/20).

It was also during the mini check-in that the words “lucky”, “frustrated” and “nervous” were shared and I was asked to put them on the display (RJ, 5/3/20). All words were used correctly in context and they followed up by asking that I add them to the display with pride.

“Such great words were given in check in that they kickstarted themselves with asking to add extra words on our display” Observation (6/3/20).

I had expected that they might tire of the activity at the end of AC1, surprised that “[t]hey still seem really interested in giving me words” Observation 24/1/20.

EL was not limited to picturebook lessons and as a result became part of the class climate. The children exceeded the expectations set by the curriculum regarding emotional vocabulary attainment and understanding (NCCA, 1998; NCCA 1999a; MacIntyre & Lawlor, 2016; PDST, 2016; NCCA, 2019a).

4.5. Implications of the work for next cycle

My intended goal for Action Cycle 3 (AC3) was that after I had taught the language of emotions to the children and then how to recognise emotions in themselves and others, I would extend their learning to teach ToM and FBU. This was how I was to prepare them to practice empathy (Maynard et al., 2011; Messinger & Mc Donald, 2011; Bensalah et al., 2016; Moruzi et al., 2018). However, even AC2 did not go as planned. AC1 resulted in the children learning a far greater range of emotion vocabulary than I had expected, and they created a class display of these 83 words sorted into themed groups (see Appendix K).

As I helped the children to identify what emotions looked like in the characters, in line with my plan for AC2, I led them to investigation of ToM and FBU. What I did not investigate was how emotions look and feel in themselves. This deviation from my original plan happened as the children thoroughly enjoyed and explored the characters. I considered conducting the recorded BD planned for AC3 after AC2 as an assessment of sort of their ToM and FBU. I was reviewing my original plan for AC3 now that I had adjusted to my new

AC2, similar to Naveed et al. (2017). I changed my plan to record the children's BD of *Enemy Pie* by Derek Munson at the very end of the AC3 as a true assessment of their ToM and FBU. One benefit of using voice recordings is that data is collected in its natural state, encouraging important, free dialogue and discussion in a somewhat unobtrusive form (Lawn & Barton, 1985). All information would be collected without omissions, be appropriate for this age group as they cannot write their thoughts and would therefore prove to be very informative (Gibson et al., 2005). Research supports holding EL lessons as group discussions among peers, facilitated by an adult (Vygotsky, 1978; Galligane & Han, 2015; Borba, 2018; Tompkins et al., 2019).

As the cycles ran smoothly and the children's affective empathy and emotional understanding rose to a high standard, I reassured myself that through the cyclical process of action research, I could dedicate AC3 to emotional regulation as suggested by Sullivan et al. (2016: 68). Analysis of the BD showed that the children were displaying a level of emotional understanding above what was expected for their age. It surprised me that my original lesson progression was so flexible, a feature of action research described by McDonagh et al. (2020).

In addition to their high affective empathy scores, I had begun to see the strong cognitive and behavioural empathy of only some children due to the sudden school closure, as I repeated the KEDS (Reid et al., 2013) and TEC (Albanese et al., 2006) checklists (see Figure 4.16).

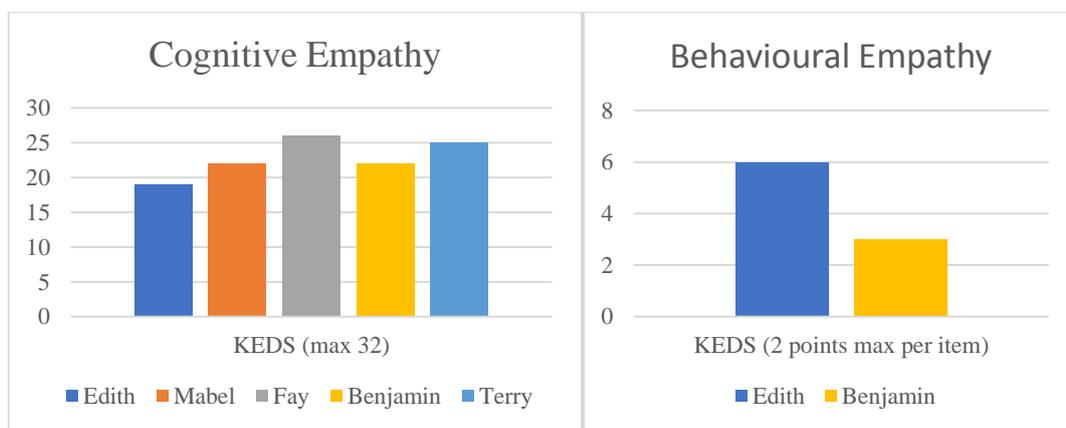


Figure 4.16 Partial Cognitive and Behavioural Empathy

My validation group meeting at the end of AC1 encouraged me to take a risk, as described by Dadds and Hart (2001), and introduce an unplanned element to AC2, that of a morning check-in. This proved to be successful in allowing the children to feel their individual voices and communication styles were valued. It afforded them the opportunity to use their new vocabulary as they began to empathise with each other.

4.6. Action Cycle 3

My planned AC3 would allow me to build on the language the children had learned and practised from AC1 as well as the knowledge of how different contexts, thoughts and perspectives can lead to characters feeling various emotions from AC2 (see Appendix L). Self-regulation is linked to EL and this class would be well-equipped to learn this skill as described by Booth et al. (2019). There will always be a range of ability to self-regulate in a class group, requiring the teacher to help guide the children as they learn at their own pace through interactions with each other (NCCA, 2009a; Booth et al., 2019). Class BD that explicitly deal with anger, worries, sadness and how to manage them will allow the children

to learn from each other and feel supported by the teacher (Gallingane & Han, 2015; Borba, 2018; Booth et al., 2019). Practice in dealing with these big emotions away from the direct emotion experience in a safe setting allows children to practice techniques before they require them (Nikolajeva, 2013; PDST, 2016). A reading of *Happy* by Edwards and Hickey (2018) would add a mindful element encouraged by the RSE curriculum (NCCA, 1998). I would use the display as a reminder of these techniques, accessible always as suggested by Aistear (NCCA, 2009a). A classroom that supports the expression and discussion of emotions and that facilitates children to explain their perspectives respectfully ensures that, with an alert teacher, outbursts and arguments can be resolved calmly and respectfully (Goleman, 1996). I would continue the check-in and see what developed from it over time.

4.7. Next Steps

I would include the mini check-in during Aistear for those children who requested it during AC2. “Teacher Time”, a one-to-one conversation for the children with me once a week was a concept that emerged from a conversation with by my critical friend. I had noted a strong positive effect from the individual attention the children received during the checklists and mentioned that I wished I had allowed for that time earlier in the year. As I face into a new school year with mandatory social distancing, I am concerned about the possibility that much of the individual attention and collaborative group discussions that make up good EL lessons will be minimised or impossible.

In my original value statement, I named empathy and the perspective of the child as important to me. Where my focus on developing empathy in the children led me to structure my action cycles to teaching EL, it was my own empathy for the child’s perspective that directed the learning. I wished to treat them as “critical agents” (Giroux & McLaren, 1986: 215) and therefore, inspired by their sustained drive to learn more emotion words and their enjoyment of discussing emotions in picturebooks, I moved smoothly from my planned

AC1, through most of AC2 towards a revised AC3. This allowed for the strengthening of ownership the children had of the subject as it aligned with the opportunity for them to share their feelings during the check-in and through direction of the display. I feel that in my future practice I will use thematic displays in this way, scaffolding the children's learning by allowing them to take charge of the display and realise their autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

4.8. Conclusion

This chapter looked at the findings of my research and how the reflective process of action research, combined with discussion with my critical friends, validation group and data collection tools, guided my teaching of EL in the classroom. The decision-making process was guided by using frameworks grounded in literature and my value of care. The next chapter looks at the impact of the action research process and findings on my teaching, outlining recommendations for my future practice and potential implication for the wider school community.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The experience of conducting Self-Study Action Research has influenced me in many ways. I begin this final chapter by describing the messiness of the process of AR and summarise my study and the findings. Following this, I discuss some of the limitations of the study. Next, I discuss the implications of the study for myself and my school before outlining some recommendations based on my findings. Finally, I reflect on the broad educational environment and its current direction and values, as I look forward to living closer to my own revised personal values.

5.1. Messiness and Challenges

Schön's "messes" (Schön, 1983: 82) of AR refers not to sloppiness, but issues that Mellor (2015) describes as difficult to deal with. This finally made sense to me as I tried to articulate my learning from my research. I had expected the mess to lie in the everyday practice of teaching where teachers adapt constantly to changing demands (Schön, 1983). As a teacher-researcher I sought support to deal with familiar issues such as academic and time constraints (Sullivan et al., 2016).

"Getting some support in the classroom was incredibly helpful in gathering data today" (RJ, 8/1/20).

"This will change my plan a lot as this is simply not a good day for research lessons (Friday)" (RJ, 10/2/20).

As with Naveed et al. (2017), I encountered, embraced and adjusted to unexpected changes of the plan such as when my validation group suggested the introduction of a daily check-in. There were communication issues where one child's "lack of confidence in his oral language led to him shrugging in place of answering" (Observations, 8/1/20). There was then the premature ending of the research due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Started and finished KEDS and TEC Final Test Some children didn’t wait and just fired words at me and others gave me further insight, and a few I had time to draw out but time was running out. So disappointed not to have had time” (Observations, 12/3/20).

What I had not been prepared for, was that searching through the messes of data feels as though the ground underneath your feet is constantly evolving and changing and, with that, your perspective. My attempts to find the learning in my data felt indeed like “nailing jelly to a tree” (Sullivan et al., 2016: 29). I found this tremendously “destabilising” (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011: 35) but appreciated its necessity in AR (Goodnough 2008).

My plan to learn from the collection of emotional words from a checklist caused me to question if the list showed me the accuracy of their interpretation or rather an indication of their reliance on particular vocabulary. Perhaps it was a list of words they thought I would like to hear? My simple quantitative data set suddenly became, as Mellor (2015: 73) describes, “slippery” and told me something new every time I looked at it. I needed to continue to go back to my values and call on my critical friends to recentre myself in the “fog” (Sullivan et al., 2016: 85) to guide my learning in the data.

Discussing my thinking with a critical friend proved invaluable to refine, redirect and reframe my thinking through dialogue (Glenn et. al., 2017). As I struggled to list definitive evidence of the times the children used new emotion vocabulary in their interactions during conflict resolution, my friend reminded me that it was more important how I, the teacher, had changed my practice in the way I supported them and that was, in fact, the whole point.

I was comforted that my seemingly reverse-order understating of my research was reminiscent of Mellor’s (1998; 2015). In my role as a participant of the research it was vital that I engaged with and critiqued my data. This learning and “unlearning” (McDonagh et al., 2020: 104) added rigour to my work, acknowledging how I dealt with my own bias (Cook, 2009). I followed my values, listening to the voice of the children as they led me towards

using eBooks. In practice however, they did not engage as well and so I had to reassess this decision.

Wading through the messes with a critical friend was, for me, a life-line (Brydon-Miller et al., 2003). It was a critical friend who saw sense in my mess and the learning in my narrative. She was able to highlight “punctum point[s]” (Cook, 1998: 101) that illuminated learning and connections I could not see previously.

Sullivan et al. (2016) had identified the complexity of the journey of AR but I was still unprepared. Cutting short the research has given me a chance to pause and reflect on what I have learned and what I can change and continue this cyclical process in my future practice (Sullivan et al., 2016: 68). The willingness to take a risk and be wrong leads to an evolution of practice which becomes a continual learning process (Brydon-Miller et al., 2003; McNiff & Whitehead, 2011: 35). The reflective and cyclical nature of where one feels they are “living the research” rather than just “doing it” as Dadds and Hart (2001: 162) state, can make it all the more rewarding when one sees one’s values being realised (Ukani & Rawal, 2009). As Laidlaw (2009) experienced, it is in the turning of the mess into a positive that makes the risk of AR worth taking (Dadds & Hart, 2001).

5.2. Summary and Findings

This study asked the question, how can I improve my teaching of EL to junior infants using picturebooks? In order to improve my practice, trying to live closer to my values of empathy and care, I planned to use picturebooks to teach the children emotion words, building on this new understanding to teach ToM and FBU. Checklists identified the emotion words the children used and assessed their ability to identify an emotion in context (affective empathy). A display of the words that the class learned was maintained and there were BD where scaffolded questions drew out ToM and FBU.

The findings showed that the picturebook lessons did indeed appear to increase the children's emotion words, with the class display showing 83 words by the end of the process. Similar results were found in an Irish study of teaching EL using story to 5 to 8 year olds (Clarke & Barry, 2010). The children's use of the words began with the checklists showing the children using 83 words and then 95 at the end of AC1. The introduction of a check-in, suggested by my validation group at the end of AC1, began as a turn-taking exercise but had developed over time, with the children expressing more of their new emotion words and responding to the emotions expressed by their peers.

BD focussed on ToM and FBU and showed that the scaffolded questions led the class to demonstrate strong emotional understanding. They afforded the children an opportunity to display empathy for the characters from deep inferences of the story and images. A second checklist, similar in approach to that used by Partnership for Children (2015), showed that the children had high affective empathy at the start of AC2 and at the end of the study the same checklist suggested the potential for them to have good cognitive and behavioural empathy. Two parts of the checklist also showed that a quarter of the children in the research group learned a complex component of emotion understanding, usually expected of children aged 7-11 (Pons et al., 2004).

Perhaps the most significant finding for me was the unexpected impact on the positive class environment and the use of the display. My efforts to live to my value of care and ensure the positive impact of the study on the participants were highly focussed on the individual children as the checklists were conducted. Instead of my intended simple data-gathering, the exercise built the foundation of this new climate for EL which was discovered to be one important factor of successful teacher practice in Finland (Leite, 2018). The display provided a focus for the children, fuelling their enthusiasm to add their contributions to the growing collection of words.

“When I made a fuss over the word grateful, I got it back as a suggestion for other pictures as well as a garbled enunciation of it in order to receive praise. So, while praise elicited brave responses and enthusiasm, built a trusting relationship with the children and created a positive environment, the power imbalance present, also introduced an element of the children providing me with the responses they thought I wanted. I am not sure how to navigate this as I ethically want the children to enjoy the lessons as the onus is on me to ensure the beneficence of the research. I also want genuine thoughtful, natural responses from the children. I think overall it is better that they enjoy the lessons” (Observations 10/1/20).

This decision, supporting all the children’s efforts and enthusiasm and fostering their intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2020), established trust. This enabled scaffolded child autonomy which has asserted itself as a new value I wish to enhance in my practice going forward (Luna and Grey, 2019). Affirming my value of empathy, respecting each child as a learner and valuable member of society directs where I would like to take my teaching in the future. It is supported by the Aistear framework (NCCA, 2009a) and new DPCF (NCCA, 2020).

Once I modelled the addition of an image from a picturebook for the display, the children then began to see emotion words represented in their picturebooks, eBooks, animations and other subjects. Their confidence grew as I enthusiastically welcomed all contributions, demonstrating my values of empathy and care to support their efforts in the form they chose, as the children took ownership of the display. Empowering the children to be agentic in their learning is a strategy supported by the Irish government (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2015).

The children displayed autonomy in their learning of EL, bringing in their own picturebooks to share, gathering new words they wished to see added to the display until the end of the study and one child even asking his mother to take photographs of himself and his sister to represent “love” on their display. Allowing the children to express their emotions in their preferred manner, and providing them the opportunity to lead their learning led to cross-curricular integration of EL.

I planned to teach the children more emotion words so that they could understand and identify their emotions. ToM and FBU would give them a greater awareness of the internal states of others and allow them to better understand another point of view and in this way teach the children about empathy. In changing my practice to try to better teach EL to lead to empathy, I found myself demonstrating greater empathy, valuing the child's voice and perspective and facilitating them as they became active agents in their learning. My decision to focus on picturebooks as a tool to pull together many connected areas of the curriculum (MacIntyre & Lawlor, 1991; NCCA, 1998; NCCA, 1999a; NCCA, 1999b; PDST, 2016; NCCA 2019) allowed me to move my teaching away from the "didactic triangle" (Kelchtermans, 2009: 258) of the curriculum, the pupils and the teacher, and take a step towards a more emancipatory classroom (Giroux & McLaren, 1986: 215).

5.3. Limitations

Limitations to this study included the cutting short of the intervention due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to school closures, I did not get to voice record the BD of *Enemy Pie* (Munson, 2000) with the children and complete my planned AC3. The children led the learning towards a more in-depth discussion of Tom and FBU than initially planned during AC2, and this would have made the *Enemy Pie* BD more suitable to use as a final assessment of the children's ToM and FBU after AC3. I would have altered the third cycle to focus on emotional regulation as an important component of the definition of EL by Cefai et al. (2018).

The premature school closures affected the conduction of the affective empathy checklists (Pons, et al., 2004; KEDS, Albanese et al., 2006). As I was aware of the impending closures I was forced to rush the checklists and was not able to follow the lead of the children as they began to provide me with additional information that could have allowed me to learn about their cognitive and behavioural empathy also.

Another limitation from my particular research was that in adapting the TEC and KEDS checklists so as to elicit unrestricted emotion words from the children, I had attempted to allow children with difficulties in verbal expression to express themselves in any way they wished. This allowed Laura to use an inner monologue and Oscar to use physical expression. What I had not anticipated was Barry's low confidence in his responses. It took longer for him to build this confidence over the course of the study. If I were to repeat this intervention, I would encourage the children to build up an emotion word bank, with a broader range of images than the KED screener (Albanese et al., 2006), perhaps in the form of Plutchick's (2001) colour emotion wheel to allow children a non-verbal response closer to the word they wish to provide, so they could expand upon alongside their emotion word learning as suggested by a British study (Carruthers, 2010).

There was a limitation of resources regarding classroom management of one-to-one and small group work. It was difficult to provide additional teacher support in the classroom to allow me the time to conduct the one-to-one checklists, but they were a wonderful setting with which to build a trusting, respectful, positive relationship with the children regarding EL. It was not possible to conduct BD in the small groups suggested by Gallingane and Han (2015), Ziv et al. (2015) and Wasik et al. (2016), although a lot of valuable learning occurred in the class group discussions. With responses gathered in a group setting it is difficult to know exactly what learning occurred on an individual basis.

5.4. Implications

This study highlighted for me that my junior infants were capable of exceeding not only my expectations, but those of my professional colleagues and expected curricular outcomes.

5.4.1. *Emotional Literacy*

As a result of their exceedingly high standards of vocabulary, I was motivated to attempt to sort emotion words by intensity which I had not expected to do with junior infants, when a child introduced the word “exquisite”.

“We came up with a scale of Happy words. I found below a happy word hard to elicit. It started with one child suggesting exquisite, Happy, delighted, excited, fine. It was a difficult class activity” (RJ, 9/3/20).

This was a difficult activity but what I felt I achieved was to extend the limits of learning beyond my own and my validation group’s expectation. The Walk Tall curriculum (PDST, 2016) encourages discussion of similar emotion words, naming sixteen and my class had built a display of eighty-three words, enhanced with drawings and pictures. This could show that there is far greater potential for vocabulary development - also identified in the checklists - than expected by the curriculum. The Aistear (NCCA, 2009a) and new DPCF (NCCA, 2020) both speak of fostering empathy. It is a difficult concept and it seems to me that perhaps teachers need further training to gain confidence in their own understanding of empathy to teach it as I did, and as suggested by Brackett et al. (2011). The display drew attention from my professional colleagues who noted that the children used words that were not expected of junior infants.

“The display has received many positive comments from teachers. (critical friends) They are impressed and surprised that the children came up with so many words” (RJ, 5/3/20).

BD observations noted that incorporating focussed ToM and FBU questioning, allowed the children to demonstrate at times an emotional understanding expected more of 9-11 year-olds. My observations also highlighted that the children were achieving learning outcome 12 for Oral Language at progression steps d, e and f (NCCA, 2019a), generally outlined in the new curriculum as being for upper junior infant and senior infant abilities (NCCA, 2019a: 51). Going forward, I plan to continue to use the questions I formulated for

that purpose but extend my teaching by using a broad, diverse selection of books, guided by Dolan (2014) through which I shall promote critical thinking guided by Roche (2014).

5.4.2. Positive Atmosphere and Child Autonomy

With adequate support and with careful planning, I would like to incorporate into my day the “Teacher-Time” that the checklists provided. This provides the opportunity to speak to students on a one-to-one basis, developing a relationship based on praise and positivity to allow the children to feel confident that I wish to know them better. Doing this early in the school year will allow for more effective differentiation and better understanding of the diversity of my students. Having empathy and valuing the voice of the children enables me to provide better care for them. I will continue to include the daily check-in where children share how they feel with no pressure or judgement. This will allow the children to practise identifying and labelling their own emotions and learn to listen and better understand the emotions of their classmates. I will use this opportunity to model and encourage empathy towards one another. I feel that I did not, perhaps, exploit the full potential of the check-in. This will also support my intended change in practice of conflict resolution within the classroom.

This coming year may prove extremely challenging in terms of implementation of important practices such as these as it is expected that there will be restrictions on social distancing. It is be important for me to find the best possible way to live more closely to my values within the new social reality. I also plan to use a display board for thematic learning but have the display child-led, facilitating their autonomy as also explored by Luna and Grey’s (2019) study. This change in practice was perhaps the most impactful finding for me and I wish to expand on its potential. An emotionally supportive classroom where children feel safe to explore their autonomy is highlighted in a Finnish study looking at effective strategies to build positive teacher-pupil interactions (Leite, 2018) and a key principle of the

new DPCF (NCCA, 2020). I would also spend more time allowing the children to express their emotion understanding through their drawings as I could see quite a lot of graphic cues used and I would like to use Plutchick's (2001) wheel, colour and drawings for the children to express themselves if they are not verbally confident (Carruthers et al., 2010; Bonoti & Misalidi, 2015).

5.4.3. School-Wide Implications

While the vocabulary on the display had drawn the attention of my colleagues, it was the discussion about the child-led formation that caused my validation group to discuss its potential. Allowing the children to direct this display resulted in the theme of EL being ever-present in their minds. I shall explore the possibility of using a display to allow a picturebook to spill out into the classroom, tied to our Aistear themes and using their drawings to support and personalise their learning. As we return to school after the extended lockdown, my school will be focussing on the wellbeing of the children and EL will be an essential theme. I will be able to provide my colleagues with my roadmap and action plans to give clarity and confidence in the progression of emotional understanding and regulation. I can also direct them to the wealth of online resources available on the PSDT website (PDST, 2020) and have a broad range of picturebooks for our school to build on under the theme of wellbeing. Schools have been provided with resources to support the return to work with teachers required to be proactive in maintaining their own wellbeing as it impacts on the learning environment and wellbeing of the children (Kwon, 2019; DES, 2020).

5.5. Recommendations

I would recommend that schools take a more effectively planned, thematic, progressive and targeted delivery of programmes that teach EL. Whole-school planning and more extensive training could provide teachers with greater confidence in the multiple benefits of this integrated teaching and learning. Wellbeing is a key area of the new DPCF

and Aistear frameworks (NCCA, 2009a, NCCA, 2020) and valued internationally in schools (Pirskanen et al., 2019). This study shows how picturebooks can be effectively used to teach many of the components mentioned in the frameworks as well as the curriculum content of the current SPHE curriculum and new PLC (NCCA, 1999a; NCCA, 2019a). Integrated teaching and learning are supported in the new curriculum as reported by the NCCA (2018).

I would also recommend that teachers use a display of a current theme, named as a “Topic Board” on the support materials of the new PLC (NCCA, 2019a) or draft framework (NCCA, 2019a), not as a KWL chart (What I know, What I want to know, What I learned), but as a focus for child-led learning. It will be a visual reminder to keep the theme in the children’s minds and allow for cross-curricular, integrated learning that the children themselves add to, facilitated by the teacher. I would recommend a morning check-in, found in this study to be a powerful way of bonding in the class and a good indicator of how the children were feeling that day. It was also a platform for the children to express honestly, and with increasing effectiveness, what they felt and why, allowing space for the development of empathy (RJ, 27/1/20).

Finally, I would recommend further studies be carried out to investigate the limited expectations for junior infants. The potential for EL development with my class demonstrated that, with greater understanding and training, teacher-scaffolded learning can extend the children’s development beyond teacher and curriculum expectations. Careful selection of picturebooks, informed by literature and professional colleagues, allowed me to get the greatest impact out of the picturebooks and see the EL learning potential.

5.6. Reflection

There has been a push in education in recent years to focus on Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects in response to results from the Programme for international Student Assessment (PISA) demonstrated by the Organisation for Economic

Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2018) which judges success on reading, maths and science (DES, 2017). I too have enthusiastically focussed my efforts to promote these curriculum areas. However, until I began this course and reflected on my values, I had not considered that this push for STEM subjects was for economic gain. The scientific areas are valued by Irish parents too, influencing the proposed restructuring of the new PCDF (NCCA, 2020; O'Dwyer & Hammilton, 2020). I value the inquiry-based, critical thinking, problem-solving teamwork that this area promotes but hopefully not at the expense of the Arts. Nussbaum (2016) has demonstrated their power in regards to critical thinking and democracy which is an educational direction I wish next to follow.

I know that I can continue to use picturebooks to encourage critical thinking guided now by Mary Roche's example (Roche, 2014), which forms part of the support materials the new PLC (NCCA, 2019a) and can infuse all curricular areas. I feel more prepared to take on the new concept of thematic, play-based teaching and learning within a framework designed to foster competencies and dispositions. However, I do feel that there is more training required to support teachers in this change. The concern to adhere to completing learning objectives feels more concrete to teachers than facilitating wellbeing, which might be considered a vague term (O'Donoghue, 2019). As Sjøberg (2019) calls for caution in aspiring to follow the example of high-ranking countries, the Irish government are restructuring the new curriculum, following advice to prioritise wellbeing in education (Cefai et al., 2018; Cavioni et al., 2020b). There will be a need for clear, mandatory training and concrete sample plans. It is a difficult task to fully implement change on all levels and that must begin, not from new policies but from empowering teachers to see themselves as agentic professionals collaborating to bring about change (Fenwick, 2012).

Prior to the research, reflection identified a sense of deskilling for me in the current curricular design as noted by Apple (1999) which led me not to improved action (Knowles, 1993), but rather dissatisfaction with my teacher identity (Alsup, 2006). Through embracing

the navigation of the power relations within which I worked as described by Kelchtermans (2018) and engaging in open and dialogical interactions with the children as a teacher-researcher promoted by Freire (2016), I can see that I am making steps towards my ultimate hope of a democratic classroom (Halpin, 2003). This could not have occurred without my engagement in action research, as research conducted on, rather than with, children - particularly where the researcher does not know the children well - can do a disservice to the child. Assumptions can be made by the adult as they interpret the child's voice (Murray, 2019). Inspired by the changes I have seen in my practice, creating a dialogical, democratic and emancipatory classroom seems possible (Giroux & McLaren, 1986: 215; Nussbaum, 2016). In verbalising these new values, the child's voice and autonomy, I now identify a sense of being a "living contradiction" (Whitehead, 1989: 41). Rather than dissatisfaction, I feel hopeful that by enhancing my current new practices of the check-in and display for EL, implementing Teacher-Time and introducing critical BD as per Roche (2014), I will negotiate my way to an emancipatory classroom (Halpin, 2003; Kelchtermans, 2018), leading to the liberation of my pupils (hooks, 2003).

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APPENDICES

Appendix A Statistical Data about the school

Religions of the pupils in the school, 2019

Religion	No. of Pupils
Catholic/Roman Catholic	425
Christian	6
Church of Ireland	1
Hindu	3
Muslim	1
Orthodox	4
None	1

Nationalities of pupils in the school, 2019

Nationality	No. of Pupils
American	1
British	1
Gambian	1
Indian	1
Irish	408
Irish/American	1
Irish/Latvian	1
Irish/Polish	1

Italian	3
Jordanian	1
Latvian	4
Lithuanian	1
Lithuanian/Irish	1
Nigerian	2
Polish	9
Polish/Irish	1
South African	1
Ukrainian	3

Ethnic Family background of pupils in the school, 2019

Ethnic Background	Number of Pupils
American	2
British	1
Chinese	1
Gambian	1
Ghanaian	1
Indian	3
Irish	372
Irish/American	1
Irish/Finish	1

Irish/Italian	1
Irish/Latvian	2
Irish/Nigerian	2
Irish/Polish	2
Irish/Thailand	1
Irish/Vietnamese	1
Italian	3
Jordanian	1
Latvian	6
Lithuanian	2
Lithuanian/Irish	3
Nigerian	7
Nigerian/Irish	1
Polish	19
Romanian	3
South African	1
Ukrainian	3

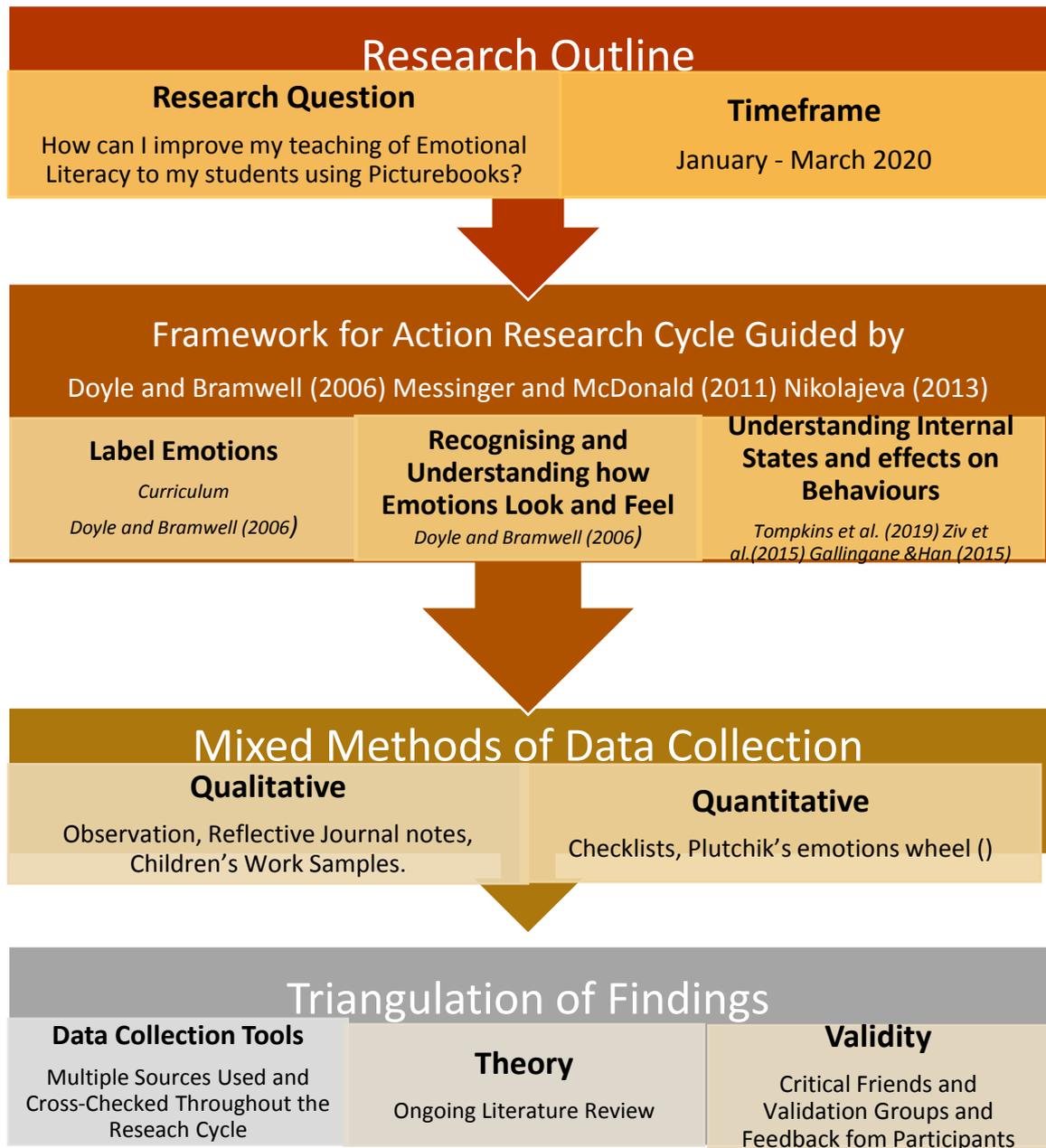
Appendix B Overall Research Outline

Appendix

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Appendix C Initial List of Books for teaching Emotional Literacy

Books to be used to teach emotion words and how they look and feel			
Author	Book Name	Emotion word Explicitly Mentioned	Emotion word Inferred
Parr, Todd	<i>The Feelings Book</i>	Silly, scared, lonely, brave, cranky,	Energetic, quiet, calm, peaceful, excited, relaxed, ‘ants in your pants’, cuddly, affectionate, messy, sick, comfortable, sad, shy, reserved, loud, confident, worried
Brownjohn, Emma	<i>All Kinds of Feelings</i>	Good, ashamed, hurt, jealous, generous, busy, chill, angry, anxious, happy, lazy, negative, loving, warm, relaxed, lonely, angry, mean, friendly, sad, confident, cold, positive.	Upset, safe.
Moniz, Madalena	<i>Today I feel</i>	Adored, brilliant, curious, daring, excited, free, grumpy, heroic, invisible, jealous, kind, light, mini, nervous, original, patient, quiet, relaxed, strong, tall, uncertain, victorious, warm, yucky.	
Dr. Seuss	<i>My Many Coloured Days</i>	Good, bright, low, busy, quiet, sad, happy, mad	Shy, energetic,
Llenas, Anna	<i>The Colour Monster</i>	Happiness, sadness, anger, fear, calm.	Love
Baker, Laura Rozelaar, Angie	<i>The Colour of Happy</i>	Calm, happy, sadness, anger, envy, hope, proud, excitement, love.	Negative
Breslin, Niall	<i>Take Five</i>	Excited, quiet, mean, upset, happy, warm.	Happy, jealous, sad, love
Ironside, Virginia	<i>The Huge Bag of Worries</i>	Happy, worried, cross	Left out, sad, overwhelmed
Bang, Molly	<i>When Sophie Gets Angry – Really, really Angry</i>	Angry, glad	

Latimer, Alex	<i>Penguin's Hidden Talent</i>	Worried, talented,	Ashamed, excluded, proud
Innes. Shona Agócs	<i>Worries are like Clouds</i>	Warm, loved, special, cranky, tired, friendly, worried,	Happy, unfriendly, relax, anxiety
Karst, Partice	<i>The Invisible String</i>	Calm, quiet, worry, love, anger, alone	Afraid, scared
Edwards, Nicola Hickey, Katie	<i>A Children's Book of Mindfulness - Happy</i>	Relaxing, loving, appreciating, happiness	
McCloud, Carol Messing, David	<i>Have you Filled a Bucket today?</i>	Happy, good, sad, lonely	
Cahill, Emma Nugent, Paul	<i>Under the Mask</i>	Happy, strong, worried, angry, confident, brave, fierce, fear, sad	
Mao, Xiao Yun, Tang	<i>I love you</i>	Love	
McBratney, Sam	<i>I'm not your Friend</i>		Anger, love, forgiveness
Velthuijs, Max	<i>Frog and a very Special Day</i>	Excited, angry, astonishment, surprise, warm	Annoyed, grumpy, exasperated, sad, upset, surprised, delight, thrilled,
Sykes, Julie Chapman, Jane	<i>Dora's Eggs</i>	Proud, excited, sad, miserable, surprise	Disappointed, jealous

Books that can be used to teach ToM and FBU and how emotions look and feel.	
Author	Book Name
Barnett, Mac Klassen, Jon	<i>Extra Yarn</i>
Chung, Arree	<i>Mixed</i>
Doyle, Malachy Samuel, Janet	<i>Danny the Duck with no Quack</i>
Dumont, Jean-Francois	<i>The Chickens build a Wall</i>
Dunbar, Polly	<i>Penguin</i>
Faulks, Ben Tazzyman, David	<i>What makes, me a me?</i>
Goldsack, Gaby Leach, Emma	<i>Little Mouse, Makes a Friend</i>
Grey, Kes Wildish, Lee	<i>Leave me Alone</i>
Jeffers, Oliver	<i>The Day the Crayons Quit</i>
Keats, Ezra Jack	<i>A Letter to Amy</i>
Kim, Patti	<i>Here I am</i>
Kobald, Irena Blackwood, Freya	<i>My Two Blankets</i>
Lee, Spike Lewis Lee, Tonya	<i>Please, baby, Please</i>

Munsen, Derek	<i>Enemy Pie</i>
Murphy, Jill	<i>Five Minutes' Peace</i>
Newman, Marjorie Bowman, Peter	<i>Is that what friends do?</i>
Reynolds, Peter	<i>The Dot</i>
Sendak, Maurice	<i>Where the Wild Things are</i>
Trivias, Eugene Oxenbury, Helen	<i>The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig</i>
Waddell, Martin Oxenbury, Helen	<i>Farmer Duck</i>

Appendix D Action Cycle 1

Action Cycle 1 (6th – 31st January 2020)			
Emotional Vocabulary			
Baseline established			
<p>Class Display: I wish to establish a baseline bank of emotional vocabulary at the start of the research cycle. I will represent this visually using an adapted version of Plutchik’s emotions wheel (Pluchik, 2001) (see Appendix M). The children can help add to this, using labels, work samples, drawings, magazine clippings, images from books etc. as desired. The display will be added to over the course of the research until the end and emotion words will be represented in a way that is chosen by the children.</p> <p>Checklist: A checklist will be used to assess the baseline of emotions words and based on the Walk Tall programme (PDST, 2016) and KEDS screener (Reid et al., 2013) (see Appendix O). I will extend the vocabulary options as required using Todd Parr’s ‘Feelings Flashcards’ (Parr, 2010). (See Appendix N)</p> <p>Reflective Journal: A reflective journal will be maintained throughout the entire research cycle and beyond.</p>			
Intervention			
I will directly teach the children new emotions vocabulary as supported by Izard et al. (2001) and guided by the RULER method (Joseph & Strain, 2003). Picturebooks will be used to explicitly and contextually teach new emotion vocabulary (see Appendix C). I will strive to expand and consciously add sophistication to the baseline vocabulary, led by the children.			
Data Collection			
<p>Observations: Annotated work samples from the children, conversations from critical friends or validation group, accounts of important learning moments.</p> <p>Checklists: Drawn from an expanding baseline bank of words, picture prompts will be used to establish the emotion words known by the children.</p> <p>Work Samples: Labels, drawing, clippings, images, photocopies that the children use to establish a definition of a new emotion word.</p> <p>Reflective Journal: Will contain reflections on teaching and learning through a critical lens with a view to living more closely to my values of empathy and care.</p>			
Evidence of Change – Increase of Emotional Vocabulary			
Demonstrated by:			
<i>Initial Data Collection</i>	<i>Interim Data Collection:</i>	<i>Final Data Collection Cycle 1</i>	<i>On-going Assessment</i>
Checklists Display	Observations	Checklist Reflective Journal Display	Display Reflective Journal

Appendix E Ethical Statement



Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education Master of Education (Research in practice) (MEd)

Ethics Approval for Master of Education (Research in Practice) (Please read the notes in the course handbook before completing this form)

Student name:	Jennifer Frances McGovern
Student Number:	19251912
Supervisor:	Dr. Patricia Kennon
Programme:	Master of Education Research in Practice
Thesis title:	How can I improve my teaching of the emotional literacy of the children in my classroom focusing on the use of picturebooks?
Research Question(s):	How can I improve my teaching of the emotional literacy of the children in my classroom focusing on the use of picturebooks?
Intended start date of data collection:	January 2020
Professional Ethical Codes or Guidelines used:	Maynooth University, School and Safeguarding Children policies, Maynooth University Research Integrity Policy, Maynooth University Research Ethics Policy, Maynooth University Data Protection Guidelines and Revised Ethical Guidelines for Ethical Research 2004, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Maynooth University Policy for Child Welfare, My School's Data Protection policy and G.D.P.R. guidelines.

1(a) Research Participants: Who will be involved in this research? (*Tick all that apply*)

Early years / pre-school

Primary school students

Secondary school students

Young people (aged 16 – 18 years)

Adults

P
P

I will work with 26 four and five-year old junior infants, who will participate in my research. I will collect and examine data collected from the children and reflect on my practice. I will discuss findings with my critical friends, validations group and supervisor regarding my research in order to validate my findings.

1(b) Recruitment and Participation/sampling approach:

I will invite the children of my junior infant class to participate in my research. They are a random selection of this year's intake. I will reflect on the lessons I teach, collect data from and observe the children to assess the efficacy of my teaching. I will ask my professional colleagues, validation group and S.E.T. members to be my critical friends to validate my research and findings. I will request informed consent from the parents/guardians and the children with the option to leave the research at any time. The principal acts as gatekeeper regarding permissions around the research permitted by the BOM. Parents/guardians are gatekeepers regarding their child's participation.

2. Summary of Planned Research

I work in junior primary school in rural Dublin with a diverse socio-economic, multi-ethnic population. The purpose of my research is to develop my teaching of emotional literacy in my class. The aim of my research is to improve the children's emotional vocabulary and recognition of emotions in themselves and others using picturebooks. My research will be self-study action research examining the question "How can I improve the emotional literacy of my students focusing on the use of picturebooks?". I will use a mixed-method approach employing qualitative and quantitative data collection methods.

I will keep a reflective journal, reflecting on important findings, observations and dialogue throughout the research. I will collect anonymous samples of the children's work to circumnavigate expressive language difficulties. I will use adapted tests as data collection tools (Appendix A). Voice recordings taken during group discussions of picturebooks will allow me to obtain a fair and accurate account (Cohen et al., 2007) of their perceptions of emotions and interpretations of the internal states of others, as they are too young to accurately record ideas and insights in writing, It is through teacher-led discussion with peers that much learning is gained (Tompkins et al., 2019).

These tools, group and individual accounts, recordings of picturebook discussion and observations will allow me to analyse the children's emotional vocabulary and interpretation of the internal states of others throughout the research. I will invite colleagues to participate as critical friends to validate my findings. The research will be carried out from January to March 2020. I will analyse the data collected to observe if the children's emotional literacy has improved as a result of my teaching.

3. Ethical Issues:

Vulnerability

When exploring emotional literacy, some children may experience some overwhelming emotions. I will follow The Walk Tall programme regarding this issue, providing a quiet time-out space. The children will be reminded that they do not have to participate and can leave the study at any point. I can provide the parents with the book titles if requested should they wish to discuss the themes at home. Should any disclosure be made to me during this study I will follow school policy and child protection guidelines. Children will be made aware of the data I am collecting. All data will remain confidential and anonymity maintained to the best of my ability.

Power dynamics

The children and their parents/guardians may feel obliged to participate in the study. I will remind them that it is voluntary and that they may leave at any time. I will assure them that I want their genuine, voluntary responses and thoughts in dialogue or discussion. I will consult with the member of the S.E.T., regarding children with E.A.L. and any other special educational needs, to support the language used during the research. I will further explain the letter of consent and research in simpler language upon request by parents and children with E.A.L. I will ask my critical friends and validation group to be critical with their input.

Informed consent and assent

I will request permission for the Board of Management through the principal to conduct the research in the school. The children are a vulnerable group and so parental permission will be obtained as well as assent from the children. The study will be presented orally to the children in age appropriate language with the guidance of their parents/guardians. All permitted data will be made available to the parents/guardians for viewing at any time. I will ensure I am available to go through the consent form if parents require clarification. I will provide my principal, critical friends, S.E.T. colleagues and professional colleagues with consent forms for their participation in my research.

Sensitivity

As my research deals with the topic of emotions, some children may discuss a painful experience. I will follow school policy and the Walk Tall guidelines to deal with this potential outcome. If a sensitive disclosure occurs, I will follow child protection and safeguarding guidelines, referring to the D.L.P. Issues may arise regarding language difficulties and I will look for support from the S.E.T. and principal, speaking to the parents and putting in supports where necessary. The children will be reminded that they may opt out at any time and as is normal class procedure may participate in all discussions and tasks to the extent with which are comfortable.

Data storage

In adherence to University, UN, and school policies and guidelines in the collection, storage and destruction of manual and digital data (Appendix B), data collected will be securely maintained, accessible only by me, with personal data rendered anonymous, where possible, after collection. Data collected on password-protected mobile devices will be encrypted where possible. Findings published for Maynooth University in my research paper will keep personal information confidential to the best of my ability (Appendix C). The research project and its findings will be used for examination module purposes, read by Froebel Department module lecturers, my supervisor, made available for the external examiner and may be published and disseminated at conferences.

Attachments

Please attach, where available and applicable, information letters, consent forms and other materials that will be used to inform potential participants about this research.

Declaration *(Please sign and date)*

'I confirm that to the best of my knowledge this is a full description of the ethical issues that may arise in the course of undertaking this research.' If any of the conditions of this proposed research change, I confirm that I will re-negotiate ethical clearance with my supervisor.

Signed: _____ *Jennifer McGovern* _____ Date: 13/11/19

Supervisor use only:

Date Considered: _____

Approved

Approved with recommendations (see below)

Referred back to applicant

Referred to Department Research and Ethics Committee

Recommendations:

Signature of supervisor: _____

Department use only: *(only where applicable)*

Date Considered: 21 November Marie Mc Loughlin

Approved by Froebel Department Research and Ethics committee

Approved with recommendations (see below)

Referred back to applicant (changes to be approved by supervisor)

Referred to Maynooth University Social Research Ethics Subcommittee

YES

Recommendations:

Signature of Dept. Ethics Committee Chair: _____

Maynooth University Social Research Ethics Subcommittee use only <i>(only where applicable)</i>	
Date Considered: _____	
Approved	<input type="checkbox"/>
Referred back to applicant and supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Signed: _____	
FSS Research Ethics Committee nominee	

Checklist for students

<p>Please complete the checklist below to confirm you have considered all ethical aspects of your research.</p> <p>(Note that the consent form/s, assent form/s and information sheet/s that must accompany this application will be scrutinised and any omission or inadequacy in detail will result in a request for amendments).</p>	<p>Please tick</p>
<p>I have attached (an) appropriate consent form/s, assent form/s and/or information sheet/s</p>	<p>✓</p>
<p>Each form and sheet is presented to a high standard, as befitting work carried out under the auspices of Maynooth University</p>	<p>✓</p>
<p>Each consent form has full contact details to enable prospective participants to make follow-up inquiries</p>	<p>✓</p>
<p>Each consent form has full details, in plain non-technical language, of the purpose of the research and the proposed role of the person being invited to participate</p>	<p>✓</p>
<p>Each consent form has full details of the purposes to which the data (in all their forms: text, oral, video, imagery etc) will be put, including for research dissemination purposes</p>	<p>✓</p>
<p>Each consent form explains how the privacy of the participants and their data will be protected, including the storage and ultimate destruction of the data as appropriate</p>	<p>✓</p>
<p>Each consent form gives assurances that the data collection (questionnaires, interviews, tests etc) will be carried out in a sensitive and non-stressful manner, and that the participant has the right to cease participation at any time and without the need to provide a reason</p>	<p>✓</p>
<p>Please include here any other comments you wish to make about the consent form(s) and/or information sheet/s.</p>	

References:

Albanese, O., Grazzani, I., Molina, P., Antoniotti, C., Arati, L., Farina, E. and Pons, F. (2006) Children's Emotion Understanding: Preliminary Data of the Italian Validation Project of Test of Emotion Comprehension (T.E.C.), (2006) In: Pons, F., Daniel, M.F., Lafortune, L., Doudin, P.A. and Albanese, O. (2006) *Toward Emotional Competences*. Aalborg: Aalborg University Press.

Barrett, P. (2012) *FRIENDS for Life: Group Leader's Manual for Children*. Pathways Health and Research Centre, Australia: Barrett Research Resources Pty Ltd.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K, (2007) *Research Methods in Education*. 6th ed. London.: Routledge.

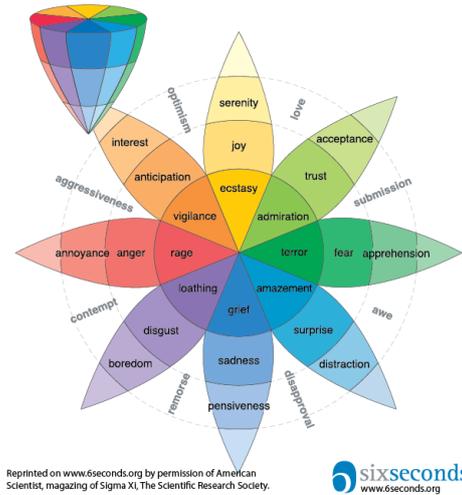
Donaldson, M. (2017) Plutchick's Wheel of Emotions [online]. Available at: <https://www.6seconds.org/2017/04/27/plutchiks-model-of-emotions/> (accessed 29 November 2019).

Tompkins, V., Jeffrey Farrar, M. and Montgomery, D.E. (2019) Speaking your mind: Language and narrative in young children's theory of mind development. *Advances in Child Development and Behavior*, 56, 109-140.

Appendixes:

Appendix A: Samples of data collection tools.

Plutchik's emotions wheel



Test of Emotion Comprehension (TEC) by Pons & Harris (2000)

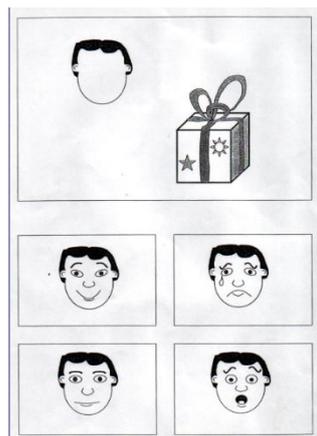


Figure 1. Comprehension of external causes of emotion (Component II) (Pons, Harris, 2000)

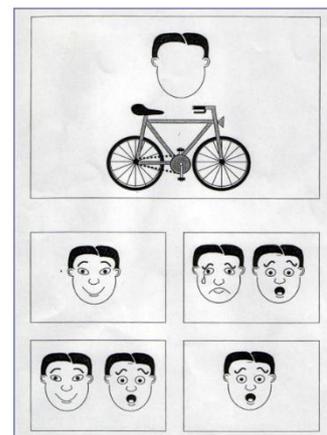


Figure 2. Comprehension of mixed emotions (Component VIII) (Pons, Harris, 2000)

Appendix B: List of policies and guidelines to adhere to regarding child and data protection.

Maynooth University, School and Safeguarding Children policies

https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sites/default/files/assets/document/Child%20Protection%20Policy%20%28Dec%202017%29_1.pdf

Maynooth University Research Integrity Policy

https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sites/default/files/assets/document/MU%20Research%20Integrity%20%20Policy%20September%202016%20_2.pdf

Maynooth University Research Ethics Policy

https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sites/default/files/assets/document/Research%20Ethics%20Policy_0.pdf%20August%202015_0.pdf

Maynooth University Data Protection Guidelines and Revised Ethical Guidelines for Ethical Research 2004

https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sites/default/files/assets/document/Research%20Ethics%20Policy_0.pdf%20August%202015_0.pdf

Maynooth University Policy for Child Welfare

https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sites/default/files/assets/document/Child%20Protection%20Policy%20%28Dec%202017%29_1.pdf

G.D.P.R. guidelines

<https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/act/2018/7/eng/enacted/a0718.pdf>

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

<https://www.unicef.org/sites/default/files/2019-04/UN-Convention-Rights-Child-text.pdf>

My school policy states that “Portable devices storing personal data (such as laptops) should be encrypted and password protected before they are removed from the school premises.”

Appendix C: The Freedom of Information Act (2014)

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2014/act/30/enacted/en/html>

Appendix F Action Cycle 2

Action Cycle 2 (3 rd – 13 th March 2020)			
How Emotions Look and Feel			
Baseline established			
<p>Class Display: Children will continue to add to the display. If they are able, they may begin to make connections to different feelings, assign a colour to the feeling, compare, contrast or categorise feeling words.</p> <p>Checklist: A checklist will be used to assess the understanding of how people might feel in different scenarios as represented by the images in Appendix P from and TEC (Albanese et al., 2006) and KEDS (Reid et al., 2013)(see Appendix Q).TEC also allows the child to ascribe two possible emotions to a scenario. The request for a second emotion word can be offered as an extension of the assessment.</p> <p>Reflective Journal: A reflective journal will be maintained throughout the entire research cycle and beyond.</p>			
Intervention			
<p>Picturebooks will provide a visual example of emotions that the children can discuss how they feel physically, removed from their own personal experiences (Gallingane & Han, 2015). It may be worth introducing “Milkshake Breathing” (Barrett, 2012) as a way of feeling calm should our discussion elicit a strong emotional response.</p> <p>When using picturebooks in cycle two I will be more focused on identifying the physical responses to emotions. I will model for the children ways in which one can recognise emotions in oneself and others (Ziv et al., 2015). This can be done by visible physical clues and by context. Group “discussions” and “paired sharing” of thoughts and ideas about emotions represented the books will allow the children to learn from each other’s insights while facilitated by the teacher (Borba, 2018:24) (see Appendix T).</p>			
Data Collection			
<p>Observations: Annotated work samples from the children, conversations from critical friends or validation group, accounts of important learning moments.</p> <p>Checklists: Drawn from an expanding baseline bank of words and scenarios from KEDS (Reid et al., 2013) and TEC (Albanese et al., 2006) allowing the child to ascribe two possible emotions to a scenario (see Appendix R).</p> <p>Work Samples: Labels, drawing, clippings, images, photocopies that the children use to establish a definition of a new emotion word and in response to discussion of how emotions look and feel from picturebook lessons.</p> <p>Reflective Journal: Will contain reflections on teaching and learning through a critical lens with a view to living more closely to my values of empathy and care.</p>			
Evidence of Change – More Sophisticated Analysis of Emotions in Context			
Demonstrated by:			
Initial Data Collection	Interim Data Collection:	Final Data Collection Cycle 2	On-going Assessment
Checklist (KEDS and TEC) Display	Observations Annotated Work Samples	Checklist repeat Reflective Journal Display	Display Reflective Journal

Appendix G Test of Emotion Comprehension Components (Pons et al., 2004)

TEC Components (Pons et al., 2004)		
Component I: facial expression	Component IV: belief	Component VII: hidden emotions
Component II: external cause	Component V: memory	Component VIII: mixed emotions
Component III: desires	Component VI: regulation	Component IX: moral

Appendix H Words used by the children during checklists

Words Used	Pre-Intervention	Poet-Intervention
ANGRY	34	35
HAPPY	213	183
SHOCKED	1	1
AFRAID	7	1
SAD	121	90
SCARED	46	64
LOVED	2	9
LONELY/ALONE	7	12
TIRED	15	20
RELAXED	4	4
QUIET	6	9
SILLY	3	11
OK	1	1
DISAPPOINTED	1	7
SUPER	0	2
NERVOUS	5	8
ENJOYED	0	3
WORRIED	6	8
DELIGHTED	1	2
BORED	2	8
ANNOYED	1	4
FUNNY	8	2
EXCITED	5	15
[NOT] GOOD	25	6
FEARLESS	0	2
CONFIDENT	3	2
SLEEPY	27	15
MAD	38	25
NAUGHTY	2	0
SURPRISED	2	11
BRAVE	0	2
COOL	2	2
WARM	0	2

MUDDLED UP	1	0
LOUD	6	6
FRIENDLY	2	5
CROSS	6	5
BUBBLY	0	2
HURT	1	1
GRUMPY	9	6
STRONG	3	4
RUDE	1	5
LEFT OUT	2	1
FANCY	0	1
INVISIBLE	0	3
CALM	0	3
MEAN	5	2
SAFE	1	3
STINKY	0	3
UPSET	1	6
IGNORED	0	4
HEAVY	0	1
SUN-LOVED	0	1
UNFAIR	0	1
YAWNY	0	1
HUNGRY	2	1
CRAZY	7	1
NICE	4	2
TINY/SMALL	1	1
GREAT	0	1
CONFUSED	1	0
FRUSTRATED	1	0
KIND	1	1
PROUD	1	1
SHY	3	3
WEIRDED OUT	1	1
GRATEFUL	0	1
STRESSED OUT	0	1
FUN	1	2

SUPER[HERO]	0	2
DIZZY	2	3
FAT	1	0
CRYING	0	1
AWESOME	1	0
MISERABLE	0	1
MESSY	0	1
CLEAN	1	1
NOISY	1	1
[ALL] TOGETHER	0	3
SICK	2	4
OLD	1	1
WET	0	1
BOLD	1	0
SORRY	1	0
DANGEROUS	0	1
NAKED	0	1
HUGGY	2	0
TERRIBLE	5	1
CRIES	0	1
NOT WELL	0	3
WEIRD	0	2
JEALOUS	0	1
DISGUSTING	0	1
LIKE A PRO	0	1
SHOUTING/Y	3	2
THINKING	2	2
MOANY	2	3
GOOD MOOD	0	1
DIRTY	0	1
Total Distinct Words used	83	95

Appendix I TEC Emotion Understanding (Pons et al., 2004)

TEC Emotion Understanding Start of AC2 (Pons et al., 2004)

Start of Action Cycle 2	Edith	Debbie	Laura	Mabel	Fay	Keith	Benjamin	Nan	Earl	Hallie	Barry	Oscar	Felix	Terry	Jackie	Ula
Recognition External	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
Mixed	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗

TEC Emotion Understanding End of AC2 (Pons et al., 2004)

End of Action Cycle 2	Edith	Debbie	Laura	Mabel	Fay	Keith	Benjamin	Nan	Earl	Hallie	Barry	Oscar	Felix	Terry	Jackie	Ula
Recognition External	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mixed	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗

Appendix J Book Discussion TEC Analysis

TEC Book Discussions <i>(Approximate average age 5 years 7 months)</i>	Stage 1 [External] <i>(3-5years approx.) (I)Recognition (II) External Cause (III)Desire (V)Reminder</i>	Stage 2 [Mental] <i>(6-7years approx.) (IV)Belief (VII)Hiding (VIII)Mixed</i>	Stage 3 [Reflective] <i>(9-11years approx.) (VI)Regulation (IX)Morality</i>
<i>117 recorded class responses</i>	<i>(I)32</i>	<i>(IV) 25</i>	<i>(VI) 5</i>
	<i>(II)23</i>	<i>(VII) 5</i>	<i>(IX) 1</i>
	<i>(III)20</i>	<i>(VIII) 5</i>	
	<i>(V)1</i>		
Totals	76	35	6

Appendix K Final List of Grouped Display Words

Final List (Repetition*)[83]							
Happy	Sad	Angry	Scared	Bored	Calm	Hope	Powerful
Funny	Dreadful	Hateful	Nervous	Sick	Warm	Faithful	Strong
Excited	Small	Envy	Afraid	Tired	Thankful	Natural	Super
Joyful	Blue	Stressed	Surprised	Sleepy	Grateful	Free	Regal
Jolly	Shy	Rude	Worried	Lazy	Safe	Light	Tough
Wonderful	Moany	Vicious	Terrified	Pathetic	Relieved	Clever	Heroic
Loved	Heavy	Grumpy	Unsafe		Relaxed	Dramatic	Bold
Kind	Disappointed	Jealous	Frightened			<i>*Thankful</i>	Brave
Proud	Alone	Annoyed	Shocked			Curious	Sneaky
Impressed	Invisible	Mad	Shivered			Interested	Fearless
Glad	Lonely	Cranky	Pleading			Amazed	Confident
Friendly	Upset	Hungry	Fear				
Delighted	Hurt						

Appendix L Action Cycle 3

Action Cycle 3
How Emotions Look and Feel and Emotional Regulation (4 weeks)
Baseline established
<p>Checklist: The KEDS checklist will be used to assess the children’s cognitive and behavioural empathy (Reid et al., 2013) (see Appendix R).</p> <p>Voice Recording: Unobtrusive voice recording would be taken where I would read them a book they are familiar with “The Feelings Book” Todd Parr, 2000 and when the words “angry”, “sad” and “scared” or “worried” were mentioned directly or eluded to I would ask the children what they do when they feel those feelings (Lawn & Barton, 1985).</p> <p>Reflective Journal: A reflective journal will be maintained throughout the entire research cycle.</p>
Intervention
<p>Picturebooks will be used to continue book discussions regarding ToM and FBU with teacher scaffolding and related to the emotions theme of the week (Tompkins et sl., 2019).</p> <p><i>“I’m not your Friend”</i> by Sam McBratney (2001).</p> <p><i>“Leave me alone”</i>, by Kes Gray (2012).</p> <p><i>“My Two Blankets”</i> by Irena Kobald (2014).</p> <p>Picture books will also be used to promote the well-being and emotional regulation of the children in three ways.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The picturebook <i>“Happy”</i> by Edwards and Hickey (2018) will be used to provide some quiet mindfulness daily (NCCA, 1998:11; NCCA, 209:22). 2. One book a week will be discussed that focusses on a strong emotion. <i>“When Sophie Gets Angry-Really, Really Angry...”</i> by Molly Bang (2004) <i>“Worries are like Clouds”</i> by Innes Shona (2016) <i>“Penguin’s hidden Talent”</i> by Alex Latimer (2012) 3. <i>“Under the Mask”</i> by Emma Cahill (2019) will be used to provide the children with suggestions for how they might deal with anger, worry and sadness in a safe setting (Gallingane & Han, 2015). <p><i>“Milkshake Breathing”</i> (Barrett, 2012) can be used as a way of feeling calm should our discussions elicit a strong emotional response (PDST, 2016).</p> <p>Group discussions and “paired sharing” of thoughts and ideas about emotions represented the books will allow the children to learn from each other’s insights while facilitated by the teacher (Borba, 2018:24).</p>
Data Collection
<p>Observations: Annotated work samples from the children depicting emotions and ways to deal with them, conversations from critical friends or validation group, accounts of important learning moments (Cohen et al., 2018).</p> <p>Checklists: If the KEDS (Reid et al.,2013) checklist showed that the children had room for improvement in the areas of cognitive and behavioural empathy I would repeat it. If, however, they scored very highly I would then administer the TEC (Albanese et al., 2006) checklist that will show their emotional understanding of different scenarios covering the external, mental and reflective stages of emotional development of children from the ages of 3 to 11.</p>

Class Display:

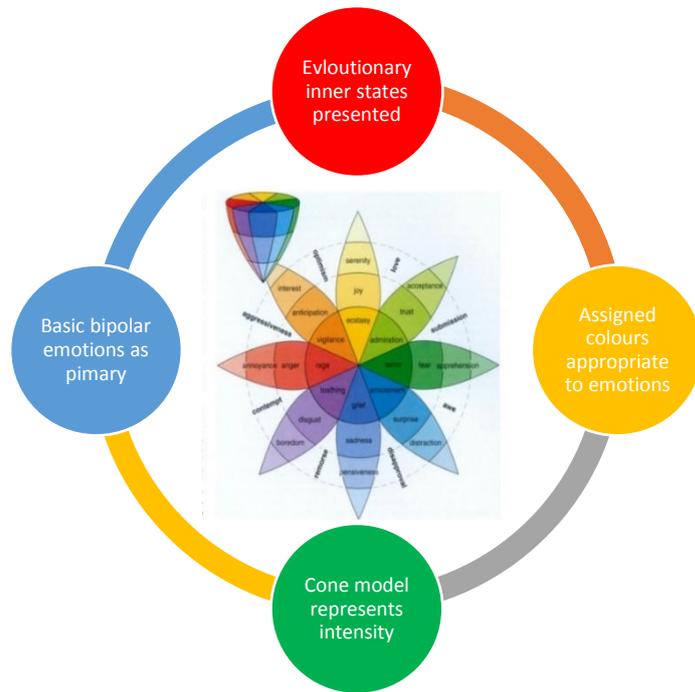
The Display will be used to support well-being (DES, 2015, DES, 2019). The children will be encouraged to represent ways they can deal with big emotions reminding themselves and tuning into calming activities and with a focus on positive actions (NCCA, 2009:21; Galligane & Han, 2015:251; PDST, 2016:128). Children will continue to add to the display over the action Cycle.

Reflective Journal: Will contain reflections on teaching and learning through a critical lens with a view to living more closely to my values of empathy and care.

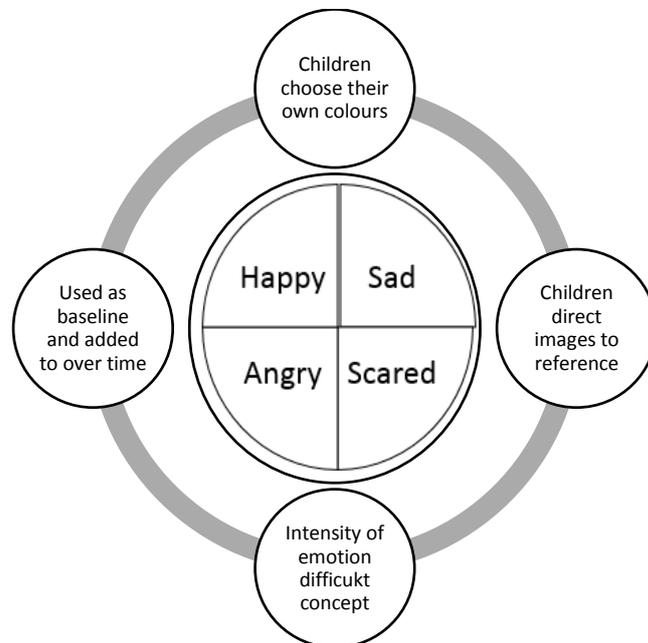
Evidence of Change – More Sophisticated Analysis of Emotions in Context**Demonstrated by:**

<i>Initial Data Collection</i>	<i>Interim Data Collection:</i>	<i>Final Data Collection Cycle 3</i>	<i>On-going Assessment</i>
Checklist (KEDS Checklist) Voice Recording of how children deal with anger, worry and sadness. Display	Observations Annotated Work Samples	Checklist Repeat KEDS unless previous score is very high. If high, then TEC checklist. Reflective Journal Voice recordings repeated. Voice recording of book discussion of “ <i>Enemy Pie</i> ” by Derek Munson to assess ToM and FBU (see Appendix S). Display	Display Reflective Journal

Appendix M Plutchik's Emotion Wheel (Plutchick, 2000) and Adaptation for Research Project



Adapted emotion wheel for research project



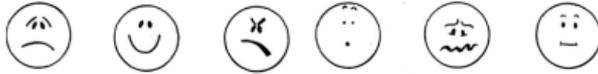
Appendix N Todd Parr ‘Feelings Flashcards’ (2010) Emotion Words

Flashcard	Identified	Comment
Happy		
Sad		
Disappointed		
Excited		
Brave		
Scared		
‘Cuddly’		
Lonely		
‘Ants in my pants’		
Tired		
Calm		
Nervous		
Cheerful		
Cranky		
‘Loud’		
‘Quiet’		
Bored		
‘Busy’		
Serious		
Silly		
Angry		
Peaceful		

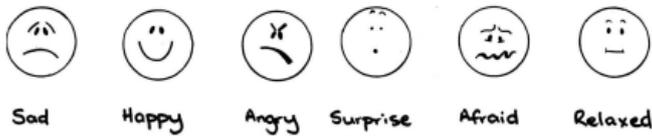
Ashamed		
Proud		
Friendly		
Mean		
Confident		
Shy		
Comfortable		
Uncomfortable		
Carefree		
Worried		
Included		
Left out		
Frightened		
Safe		
Delighted		
Disgusted		
Overjoyed		
Annoyed		

Appendix O Images from the KEDS screener.

SHOWCARD 1a



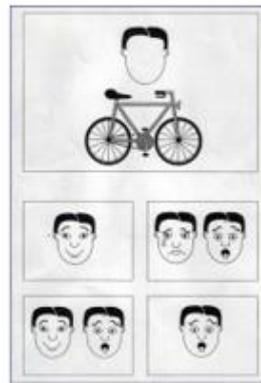
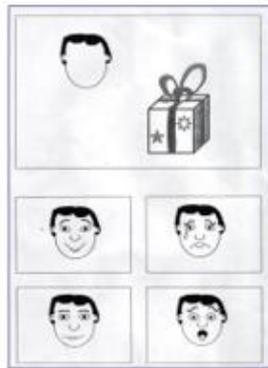
SHOWCARD 1b



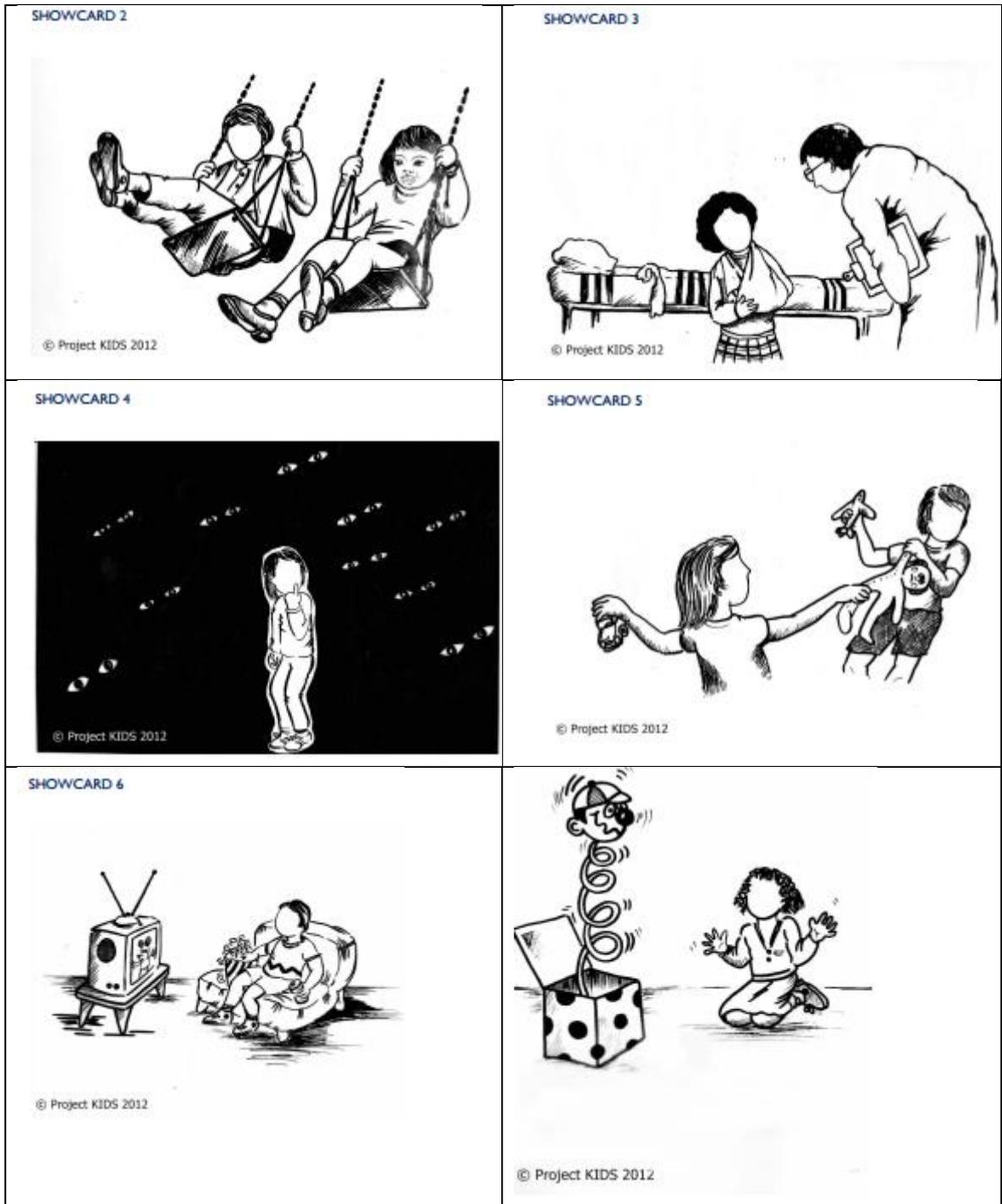
Feeling/Emotion Words	
KEDS Screener Reid et al. (2013)	
These pictures show feeling. Can you tell me what feelings they show?	
Feeling/ Emotion word	Identified
Sad	
Happy	
Angry	
Surprise	
Afraid	
Relaxed	

Initial Emotion Word Checklist

Appendix P TEC images



Appendix Q Images from KEDS, (Reid et al., 2013)



SHOWCARD 8



© Project KIDS 2012

SHOWCARD 9



© Project KIDS 2012

SHOWCARD 10



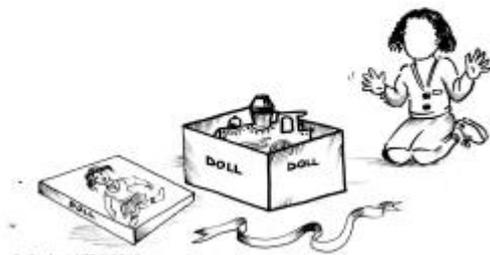
© Project KIDS 2012

SHOWCARD 11



© Project KIDS 2012

SHOWCARD 12



© Project KIDS 2012

Appendix R Checklist of Emotion Words from KEDS and TEC

Feeling/Emotions Words		
Look at the people in the pictures. How do you think they are feeling?		
Images from KEDS	Felling(s)/Emotion(s)	Comments
1, Swings - happy		
2. Broken arm - sad		
3.Dark room – afraid/scared		
4.Toy fight – angry/mad		
5.Watching TV – relaxed		
6.Jack-in-the-box – surprised		
7a. Ring-a-Rosie excluded – sad/lonely		
7b. Ring-a -Rosie included – happy		
8a. Kick victim – afraid		
8b. Kick aggressor – angry		
9.Rocking chair – relaxed		
10a.Parent/Child parent – angry/cross		
10b.Paretn/Child - afraid/sad		
11.Gift unwrapped – surprised		
12.aSandcastle victim- afraid		
12b.Sandcastle vandal – happy		
Images from TEC	Feeling(s)/Emotion(s)	Comments
13. This child just received a gift		
14. This child just received a bicycle but hasn't learned to cycle yet.		

Appendix S Book Discussions Questions, "Enemy Pie" (Munson, 2000)

Book Discussion: 'Enemy Pie' by Derek Munson (2000) Initial and Final Discussion			
Page Number	Question	General Response Accuracy	Comment
Page 4	How can you tell what the character is feeling when Jeremy Ross moves in?		
Page 8	What does that character think his dad will make?		
Page 8	Is there something his dad isn't telling him?		
Page 10	How does the character think the pie will work?		
Page 11	Why will his dad not tell him?		
Page 12	How can you tell how the character feels? (<i>at the cooked pie</i>)		
Page 13	How can you tell how the character feels? (<i>on his bicycle</i>)		
Page 15	Why did the character ask Jeremy to play?		
Page 15	How can you tell how the character feels? (<i>at Jeremy's door</i>)		
Page 16	How can you tell how Jeremy feels? (<i>at Jeremy's door</i>)		
Page 18	How does the character feel about Jeremy? (<i>with the water balloons</i>)		
Page 23	Why did he let Jeremy up in the treehouse?		
Page 24	Why did they hide from Dad?		
Page 25	What will happen when they eat Enemy Pie?		
Page 29	How do know how the boys feel in the last picture?		
Page 30	Why did Dad make Enemy Pie?		

Appendix T Questions Investigating Internal States and Behaviours.

Book Discussion:		
Question Types	General Response Accuracy	Comment
1. How can you tell what the character is feeling?		
2. What does that character think is happening in this situation?		
3. Is there something they don't know? <i>(someone/something may be in disguise/hiding/pretending)</i>		

Appendix U Permission, Consent, Assent and Information Letters

Plain Language Form

Plain language form



**Maynooth University Froebel
Department of
Primary and Early
Childhood Education**

**Roinn Froebel Don
Bhun- agus Luath- Oideachas
Ollscoil Mhá Nuad.**

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

I am a student on the Master of Education programme at Maynooth University. As part of my degree I am doing a research project. I am looking to research how I can help Junior Infant children develop their emotional literacy. I intend to carry out research in the classroom by using picturebooks to help develop the children's understanding of emotions and reflecting on the effectiveness of my approaches and lessons. These lessons form part of the curriculum, integrating the subjects of S.P.H.E., English and the Aistear programme.

The data collected will be from observations, samples of the children's work, a daily teacher journal, checklists, and voice recordings. The children will be made aware of when their voices will be recorded. They will be recorded engaging in group discussion about the picturebooks so that the best account of their language of emotions and understanding of the characters' states of mind can be recorded. The recordings will be password protected and the discussions then typed up with all identifying information removed. All data collected will be securely maintained and accessible only by me.

The child's name and the name of the school will not be included in the thesis. Your child will be allowed to withdraw from the research process at any stage.

All information will be confidential and information will be destroyed in a stated timeframe in accordance with the University guidelines. The correct guidelines will be complied with when carrying out this research. The research will not be carried out until approval is granted by the Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education.

I would like to invite you and your child to give permission for him/her to take part in this project.

If you have any queries on any part of this research project, please do not hesitate to call in to speak with me before or after school hours or feel free contact me by email at jennifer.mcgovern.2020@mumail.ie

Yours faithfully,

Jennifer McGovern

Jennifer McGovern

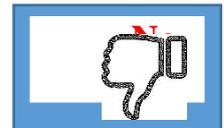
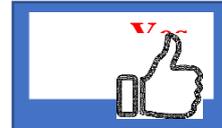
Child's Form



Child's name _____

I am trying to find out how children can learn about their own feelings and how other people feel and think too. I would like to find out more about this. I would like to watch you and listen to you when you are in school during lessons in which we talk about feelings and to write down some notes about you and record your voice as we discuss some of our picturebooks.

Would you be ok with that? Pick a box



I have asked your Mum or Dad or Guardian to talk to you about this. If you have any questions I would be happy to answer them. If you are happy with that could you sign the form that I have sent home?

It is ok if you change your mind at any time. You do not have to explain why.

_____ *Jennifer McGovern* _____

Ms McGovern.



**Maynooth University Froebel Department of
Primary and Early
Childhood Education**

**Roinn Froebel Don
Bhun- agus Luath- Oideachas
Ollscoil Mhá Nuad**

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

I have read the information provided in the attached letter and all of my questions have been answered. I voluntarily agree to the participation of my child in this study. I am aware that I will receive a copy of this consent form for my information.

Parent / Guardian Signature _____

Parent / Guardian Signature _____

Date: _____

Name of Child _____

Child's _____ signature _____ / _____ Initial _____ / _____ mark: _____

Date: _____



**Maynooth University Froebel
Department of
Primary and Early
Childhood Education**

**Roinn Froebel Don
Bhun- agus Luath- Oideachas
Ollscoil Mhá Nuad.**

Information Sheet

Parents and Guardians

Who is this information sheet for?

This information sheet is for parents and guardians.

What is this Action Research Project about?

Teachers studying for the Master of Education in the Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood, Maynooth University are required to conduct an action research project, examining an area of their own practice as a primary teacher. This project will involve an analysis of the teacher's own practice. Data will be generated using observation, reflective journal notes, voice recordings, checklists and samples of children's work. The teacher is then required to produce a thesis documenting this action research project.

What are the research questions?

- How can I improve the teaching of emotional literacy of my Junior Infant pupils using picturebooks?

What sorts of methods will be used?

- Observation, Reflective Journal notes, Voice Recordings, Checklists, Children's Work Samples.

Who else will be involved?

The study will be carried out by me, Jennifer McGovern as part of the Master of Education course in the Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education. The thesis will be submitted for assessment to the module leader Dr Bernadette Wrynn and will be examined by the Department staff. The external examiners, critical professional friends and validation group will also access the final thesis.

What are you being asked to do?

You are being asked for your consent to permit me to undertake this study with my class. In all cases the data that is collected will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and the analysis will be reported anonymously. The data captured will only be used for the purpose of the research as part of the Master of Education in the Froebel Department, Maynooth University and will be destroyed in accordance with University guidelines.

Contact details: Student Email: jennifer.mcgovern.2020@mumail.ie



**Maynooth University Froebel Department of
Primary and Early
Childhood Education**

**Roinn Froebel Don
Bhun- agus Luath- Oideachas
Ollscoil Mhá Nuad.**

Child's assent to participate

**My parent/guardian has read the information sheet with
me, explained it to me, and I agree to take part in this research.**

Name of child (in block capitals):



Signature/Initials/Mark: _____

Date: _____



Maynooth University Froebel

Department of

Primary and Early

Childhood Education

Roinn Froebel Don

Bhun- agus Luath- Oideachas

Ollscoil Mhá Nuad.

Dear Chairperson of the Board of Management,

I am currently studying for a Master of Education in Self-Study Action Research through Maynooth University. As a Junior Infant teacher, I am looking to research how I can help Junior Infant children develop their emotional literacy. I intend to carry out research in the classroom by using picturebooks to help develop the children's understanding of emotions and reflecting on the effectiveness of my approaches and lessons.

The data will be collected using a mixed-methods approach, primarily focusing on Self-Study Action Research and keeping my own reflective journal. I will also be collecting data in the form of observations, reflective journal notes, voice recordings, checklists and samples of children's work.

The children's names and the name of the school will not be included in the thesis. Before embarking on data collection, I will seek consent from both the

children and parents of my class. Children (and parents) will be welcome withdraw from the research process at any stage.

All information will be confidential, and information will be collected, stored and destroyed in a stated timeframe in accordance with the University guidelines. The correct guidelines will be complied with when carrying out this research. This research will not be carried out until approval is granted by the Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education.

I would like to request permission from the Board of Management to embark on this research. If you have any queries on any part of this research project please feel free to contact me by email at jennifer.mcgovern.2020@mumail.ie.

Yours faithfully,

Jennifer McGovern

Jennifer McGovern



**Maynooth University Froebel Department of
Primary and Early
Childhood Education**

**Roinn Froebel Don
Bhun- agus Luath- Oideachas
Ollscoil Mhá Nuad.**

Declaration by Researcher

This declaration must be signed by the applicant(s)

I acknowledge(s) and agree that:

- a) It is my sole responsibility and obligation to comply with all Irish and EU legislation relevant to this project.
- b) I will comply with Irish and EU legislation relevant to this project.
- c) That the research will be conducted in accordance with the Maynooth University Research Ethics Policy.
- d) That the research will be conducted in accordance with the Maynooth University Research Integrity Policy.
- e) That the research will not commence until ethical approval has been granted by the Research and Ethics committee in the Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education.

Signature of Student: _____ *Jennifer McGovern* _____

Date: 13/11/19
Critical Friend Letter



**Primary and Early
Childhood Education**

Roinn Froebel Don

Bhun- agus Luath- Oideachas

Ollscoil Mhá Nuad.

Dear Critical Friend,

I am currently studying for a Master of Education in Self-Study Action Research through Maynooth University. As a Junior Infant teacher, I am looking to research how I can help Junior Infant children develop their emotional literacy. I intend to carry out research in the classroom by using picturebooks to help develop the children's understanding of emotions and reflecting on the effectiveness of my approaches and lessons.

The data will be collected using a mixed-methods approach, primarily focusing on Self-Study Action Research and keeping my own reflective journal. I will also be collecting data in the form of observations, reflective journal notes, voice recordings, checklists and samples of children's work

I would like to invite you to act as a Critical Friend to assist in the validation of my research. This will involve engaging in discussion with me regarding my experience and findings. I will be collecting data by writing transcripts of our

discussions relating to this research or reflecting on these discussion, and samples of our discussion if in written format.

Your name and children's names and the name of the school will not be included in the thesis. Before embarking on data collection, I will seek consent from both the children and parents of my class and other professional colleagues who may act as a critical friend. You will be welcome to withdraw from the research process at any stage.

All information will be confidential, and information will be collected, stored and destroyed in a stated timeframe in accordance with the University guidelines. The correct guidelines will be complied with when carrying out this research. The research project and its findings will be used for examination module purposes, read by Froebel Department module lecturers, my supervisor and made available for the external examiner and may be published and disseminated at conferences. This research will not be carried out until approval is granted by the Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education.

If you have any queries on any part of this research project please feel free to speak to me before or after school hours or contact me by email at jennifer.mcGovern.2020@mumail.ie.

Yours faithfully,

Jennifer McGovern

Jennifer McGovern.

Appendix V Reflective Journal Excerpts

Reflective Journal Excerpts Referenced:	
Date:	Quote:
6 th January 2020	<i>“Something unexpected that I found was that Laura tried to imitate the images that she found difficult to interpret.”</i>
7 th January 2020	<i>“ I tried to use the same prompts with certain cards to indicate an emotion such as ‘proud’ for ‘coming in first place’. It highlighted that most of the children, if they didn’t interrupt my prompt, listened to the context but still based the emotion word mostly on the eyes and mouth of the character”</i>
7 th January 2020	<i>“When he (Keith) gave me the word ‘frustrated’ I reacted so excitedly to tell him it was the best word he became more confident.”</i>
7 th January 2020	<i>“Another child who is not in the research group is very anxious to complete the checklist</i>
8 th January 2020	<i>“Barry was very unsure and so lacking in confidence... The cards provide so much enjoyment sometimes that he forgot to doubt himself”</i>
8 th January 2020	<i>“Again, I found it so interesting how much the children enjoy the one-to - one time and the fun cards”</i>
8 th January 2020	<i>“Oscar was full of energy and loudly enjoying the task. He used his whole self to try to get across the emotion which I found interesting. . One time he told me that he knew the word in another language but couldn't recall it. I asked him to give me that word so I could see later if it was correct, but he then said he couldn't remember that either.”</i>
8 th January 2020	<i>“While Oscar jumped around excitedly, Jackie gradually created space between us and Earl, Felix, Terry and Benjamin became completely engrossed and drew closer to the cards.”</i>
8 th January 2020	<i>“Getting some support in the classroom was incredibly helpful in gathering data today.”</i>
9 th January 2020	<i>“She (Ula) smiled a lot during the checklist task and that is something I have always wished to see from her.”</i>
10 th January 2020	<i>“This will change my plan a lot as this is simply not a good day for research lessons.”</i>
13 th January 2020	<i>“I do not wish to enforce a colour system but I wonder if a colour representation will evolve naturally.”</i>
14 th January 2020	<i>“The word ‘envy’ was used and in explain action I used the word ‘jealous’ which they knew. By the end of the day three children remembered ‘envy’ but it will need further reinforcement. The word ‘hope’ was also used”</i>
16 th January 2020	<i>“At one point a child began to cry and say he wanted to go home as he did not know how to draw ‘Happy’. Once I reassured him that it was ok for him not to draw it and I could take the paper away he told me that he was happy again.”</i>
17 th January 2020	<i>“I heard today that a child used the word ‘envy’ in the appropriate context at home!! I am delighted!!”</i>
20 th January 2020	<i>“They are now a bit more aware of the topic of feelings as being important to me and certain children are picking up on certain words over others. I am worried that I will make them weary of the topic and I will have to be a little more creative in keeping them engaged.”</i>

24 th 2020	January	<i>"We discovered that I can save screenshot images from the educational animation that we watch They stopped me on nervous, proud, sad and tired. They were so engaged with the images and loved to see them saved. It led me to a discussion with my critical friend about eBooks which I will have to investigate further"</i>
27 th 2020	January	<i>"Sometimes they say words they don't actually know the meaning of. I need to define 'grateful' for them"</i>
27 th	January	<i>"They asked me to use the Stay Safe story to find picture for emotion words."</i>
27 th 2020	January	<i>"One girl (Fay) today told me she was sad and tired. I like that she gave me these words because she usually tells me that she misses her parent. This seems more self-aware???? Maybe not"</i>
28 th 2020	January	<i>"Today the children came in to see the photos of my colleague on their wheel and they loved it! The words they gave me were excellent*"</i> <i>*[invisible, disappointed, vicious]</i>
28 th 2020	January	<i>"I was discussing it with my neighbour and found myself telling her that they came up with a greater selection of possible words when presented with a picture."</i>
29 th 2020	January	<i>"Today the child (Keith) who suggested that my critical friend in her photo looked 'invisible' told me that he himself felt 'invisible' on yard. This led to a discussion about how we might deal with this type of situation in future. I introduced the idea of calling for a time out to say if one felt left out, thought the game too rough, wanted to change the game or that someone was missing. It became productive, positive and blame free. I am thrilled that the child felt able to verbalise that emotion."</i>
29 th 2020	January	<i>"I have some new photos for tomorrow. They told me to get more pictures from the animation again so tomorrow I will instead play e-books and tell them we can take pictures from picturebooks."</i>
30 th 2020	January	<i>" I finished the checklists but for Mabel I felt that she was feeling huge pressure to produce great words and avoid 'happy' and 'sad' and I felt terrible about it"</i>
30 th 2020	January	<i>"The children are quicker to use PASS"</i>
30 th 2020	January	<i>".... today again I hear a complaint of not more feelings"</i>
31 st 2020	January	<i>" I asked if they wanted to reorder the word and they did not."</i>
31 st 2020	January	<i>"They keep adding words they do not understand but that is ok. The display is filling up"</i>
3 rd 2020	February	<i>"Fay told me she felt 'invisible' on yard."</i>
3 rd 2020	February	<i>"They understood that Chirp saying "Thank you" didn't mean that she was actually delighted and she was still a little bit scared. This is interesting as they couldn't comprehend this for unicorn and horse"</i>
3 rd 2020	February	<i>"A child told me I was missing images from peep as they watched."</i>
4 th 2020	February	<i>"The check in and the response to the story was very telling today at the inner emotional state of one child. She did not want to expand for me and I would not force this but it has proven a useful indicator"</i>
7 th 2020	February	<i>"This child (Keith) demonstrated great empathy for the character Gerald in 'Giraffes can't dance'. We started watching them on VOOKS. I used the"</i>

	<i>three questions about what they believed to be true and what was hidden from them. He told us that he is also too shy to dance as he doesn't want others to make fun of him. All of this is deeply implied in the story and he is so sensitive that he could place himself in the same position"</i>
12 th February 2020	<i>"I need to finish getting more colours and delve into more books."</i>
14 th February 2020	<i>"It was Valentine's day today and we got more caught up with that than had time for stories."</i>
24 th February 2020	<i>"The children will very quickly pass or answer now without any fuss or question. There had never been pressure to share"</i>
26 th February 2020	<i>"I like that they unquestioningly will state that they are happy and sad and give reasons"</i>
28 th February 2020	<i>" One girl said that she was grumpy and her neighbour asked why. The reply was that she hadn't had enough sleep."</i>
5 th March 2020	<i>"mini check in lucky frustrated nervous[Barry contributed!!!]"</i>
5 th March 2020	<i>"The display has received many positive comments from teachers. (critical friends) They are impressed and surprised that the children came up with so many words"</i>
6 th March 2020	<i>"His mam spoke to his dad and he shared in the big check-in !!!!! Other children want the small check in to and I will let them know it is an option."</i>
9 th March 2020	<i>"We came up with a scale of Happy words. I found below a happy word hard to elicit. It started with one child suggesting exquisite, Happy, delighted, excited, fine. It was a difficult class activity"</i>
10 th March 2020	<i>"Gave me a lot of words for the story today. Frustrated, nervous, cheeky, selfish, satisfying, lucky"</i>
10 th March 2020	<i>"We did our morning check-in and I was happy see continued sharing by most children and sometimes two emotions expressed and sometimes reasons given for them. They don't always want to say why. They're happy to just state the emotion but not follow up. It nearly seems that saying aloud that they are feeling sick or sad is enough."</i>

Appendix W Observation Excerpts

Observations Excerpts Referenced:	
Date:	Quote:
6 th January 2020	<i>“Something unexpected that I found was that Laura tried to imitate the images that she found difficult to interpret. When she did this, she began to make a statement about the situation rather than use an emotion word, for example, “Oh can I have that?”. This became a way of her to explain the emotion words in a context. Such as, the girl is happy because it is her birthday. I found this is a very empathetic way for a young child to behave”.</i>
10 th January 2020	<i>“ So while praise elicited brave responses and enthusiasm, built a trusting relationship with the children and created a positive environment, the power imbalance present also introduced an element of the children providing me with the responses they thought I wanted...I think overall it is better that they enjoy the lessons.”</i>
12 th February 2020	<i>The girl who said something akin to “not more feelings” brought in a book about friends that she felt had great feeling words in it.</i>
13 th January 2020	<i>“Sorting the emotions happened much more easily than I imagined”</i>
14 th January 2020	<i>“I did today’s book lesson in the library and they were extremely attentive. Even another teacher commented on how well-behaved they were. I think it would benefit the quality of the engagement with the concepts in the lessons.”</i>
20 th January 2020	<i>“One child got upset by the idea of feeling ‘heavy’ with worries”</i>
20 th January 2020	<i>“When I did this though, another girl why we keep reading a lot of books about feelings. I explained why. I think I am being very open and honest about my decisions for the sake of behaving ethically. and the children really appreciate the honesty. I really do think we underestimate them.”</i>
30 th January 2020	<i>“K’s dad asked how he was and I told him about the use of the word ‘invisible’ and he said K had asked him about it at home. I do like that conversations are happening.”</i>
11 th February 2020	<i>“ I can tell that some children are still reluctant to share and the children who say that they are sad do not elaborate at check in. But they seem to like it, and that same child will pick up on what others are saying with a “good for you” or a “poor you”.”</i>
31 st January 2020	<i>“A boy in the class brought in photos of himself and his little sister to show ‘love’. Now that I think of it, he told me earlier in the week that he loved her”</i>
31 st January 2020	<i>“VALIDATION GROUP MEETING-Check-In suggested to reinforce and internalise the emotion words”</i>
11 th February 2020	<i>“ I can tell that some children are still reluctant to share and the children who say that they are sad do not elaborate at check in. But they seem to like it, and that same child will pick up on what others are saying with a “good for you” or a “poor you”.”</i>
12 th February 2020	<i>“The girl who said something akin to “not more feelings” brought in a book about friends that she felt had great feeling words in it.”</i>

25 th 2020	February	<i>“They reminded me to check in...I do feel that there is joy to be had in sitting together in a circle at the start of the day”</i>
28 th 2020	February	<i>“They are using more of the feeling words in school and in the yard. Envy and invisible really stuck.”</i>
24 th 2020	February	<i>“We checked in. I just thought, nearly everyone checks in now in the mornings”</i>
27 th 2020	February	<i>“Feelings wheel enhanced (colour)-Mabel told me multicolour might mean they don’t know what to use. And there I was delighted with the smooth activity!”</i>
6 th March 2020		<i>“ Such great words were given in check in that they kickstarted themselves with asking to add extra words on our display”</i>
6 th March 2020		<i>“There was a positive view to the story both on the computer and picturebook I really cannot tell which the prefer, I will say that they do ask for a retell of a story more after I have read it. I wonder if that is because it is a picturebook, teacher is reading it or if I can continuously read their reactions and be guided by it. Nevertheless, I had expected them to prefer the e-books and that is not the case.”</i>
6 th March 2020		<i>“Other children want the small check in too and I will let them know it is an option.”</i>
10 th March 2020		<i>Gave me a lot of words for the story today. Frustrated, nervous, cheeky, selfish, satisfying, lucky “</i>
12 th March 2020		<i>“Started and finished KEDS and TEC Final Test-Some children didn’t wait and just fired words at me and others gave me further insight, and a few I had time to draw out but time was running out. So disappointed not to have had time</i>

Appendix X Book Discussion Observations

1. Book Discussion: SCAREDY SQUIRREL AT NIGHT (VOOKS) AC2W1 WED 6/2/20		
Question Types	General Response Accuracy	TEC Component
4. How can you tell what the character is feeling?	SCARED FRIGHTENED AFRAID OF BAD DREAMS LOOKS NERVOUS - SITUATIONAL CONTEXT	(I)Recognition (II) External Cause
5. What does that character think is happening in this situation?	THAT THE MONSTERS THAT HE IS SCARED OF WILL COME ALIVE	(I)Recognition (IV)Belief
6. Is there something they don't know? <i>(someone/something may be in disguise/hiding/pretending)</i>	JUST DIFFERENT ANIMALS THAT DON'T MEAN TO SCARE HIM	(IV)Belief

2. Book Discussion: GIRAFFES CAN'T DANCE (VOOKS) AC2W1 FRI 7/2/20		
Question Types	General Response Accuracy	TEC Component
1. How can you tell what the character is feeling?	SAD TERRIFIED NERVOUS ANNOYED FUN HAPPY SMILE -MORE DESCRIPTIVE	(I)Recognition
2. What does that character think is happening in this situation?	HE WANTS TO DANCE- THINKS THAT HE CANNOT DANCE -ONE CHILD EMPATHISED	(II) External Cause (III)Desire (IV)Belief (VIII)Mixed
3. Is there something they don't know? <i>(someone/something may be in disguise/hiding/pretending)</i>	HE ACTUALLY CAN DANCE - VERY EMOTIONAL RESPONSE FROM THE CHILDREN	(III)Desire (IV)Belief

3.Book Discussion: SCHOOL'S FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL (VOOKS) AC2W2 MON 10/2/10		
Question Types	General Response Accuracy	TEC Component
1. How can you tell what the character is feeling?	UPSET/SAD MAKING A SAD FACE WITH ITS EYES. THE BOYS WERE BEING MEAN - USING THE CONTEXT AND THE VUSIAL CUES	(I)Recognition (II) External Cause
2. What does that character think is happening in this situation?	IT THOUGHT THAT THE LITTLE GIRL DIDN'T LIKE THE SCHOOL.-(Music adds to the emotion)	(I)Recognition (II) External Cause (III)Desire (IV)Belief
3. Is there something they don't know? <i>(someone/something may be in disguise/hiding/pretending)</i>	SHE WAS SCARED AND SHY. THERE WERE SO MANY KIDS IN THE SCHOOL - WE KNOW SHE LIKED THE SCHOOL BECAUSE SHE DREW A PICTURE OF IT.	(I)Recognition (II) External Cause (III)Desire (IV)Belief (VII)Hiding

4.Book Discussion: FROG AND THE VERY SPECIAL DAY (PICTUREBOOK) AC2W2 MON 10/2/20		
Question Types	General Response Accuracy	Comment
1. How can you tell what the character is feeling?	SAD ANGRY AND MOANY - WORDS ARE VERY ANGRY PICTURES	(I)Recognition (II) External Cause (III)Desire
2. What does that character think is happening in this situation?	HE THINKS THAT HARE HAS LIED	(I)Recognition (II) External Cause (III)Desire (IV)Belief
3. Is there something they don't know? <i>(someone/something may be in disguise/hiding/pretending)</i>	THEY HAD A SURPRISE BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR HIM	(I)Recognition (II) External Cause (III)Desire

5.Book Discussion: THINGS I LOVE ABOUT FRIENDS (PICTUREBOOK) Trace <i>Moroney five mile press AC2W2 WED 12/2/20</i>		
Question Types	General Response Accuracy	Comment
1. How can you tell what the character is feeling?	HAPPY SAD - WE CAN TELL BY THE WORDS	(D)Recognition
2. What does that character think is happening in this situation?	THEY ARE HAVING A SLEEPOVER	(I)Recognition (II) External Cause
3. Is there something they don't know? <i>(someone/something may be in disguise/hiding/pretending)</i>	HONEST NO	(D)Recognition

6.Book Discussion: EXTRA YARN (PICTUREBOOK) AC2W2 THURS 13/2/20		
Question Types	General Response Accuracy	Comment
1. How can you tell what the character is feeling?	HAPPY SERIOUS AND MOANY -SHE IS SMILING	(I)Recognition (III)Desire
2. What does that character think is happening in this situation?	THAT IT'S NOT MAGICAL	(I)Recognition (IV)Belief
3. Is there something they don't know? <i>(someone/something may be in disguise/hiding/pretending)</i>	IT STILL WORKS FOR HER - IT WON'T WORK FOR HIM BECAUSE HE'S MEAN	(II) External Cause (IX)Morality

7.Book Discussion: Fergus's Scary Night (<i>PICTUREBOOK</i>) AC2W3 MON 24/2/20 - WED 26/2/20		
Question Types	General Response Accuracy	Comment
1. How can you tell what the character is feeling?	Scared hands to their faces Hearts are beating very fast(not said in the story) - They are listening to a ghost story (context)	(I)Recognition (II) External Cause (IV)Belief
2. What does that character think is happening in this situation?	They think there are monsters, ghosts and skeletons	(I)Recognition (II) External Cause (IV)Belief
3. Is there something they don't know? <i>(someone/something may be in disguise/hiding/pretending)</i>	They are just the pigs, pots and potato sacks.- The terrible noise is coming from a set of bagpipes.	(I)Recognition (II) External Cause (IV)Belief

8.Book Discussion: The Dot (<i>PICTUREBOOK</i>) AC2W3 WED 26/2/20 - THURS 27/2/20		
Question Types	General Response Accuracy	Comment
1. How can you tell what the character is feeling?	Annoyed - Turning around. Frowning. Not looking at her.	(I)Recognition (II) External Cause (III)Desire (IV)Belief
2. What does that character think is happening in this situation?	Thought it was good work.	(I)Recognition (IV)Belief (VIII)Mixed
3. Is there something they don't know? <i>(someone/something may be in disguise/hiding/pretending)</i>	Teacher thought she could do more.	(III)Desire (IV)Belief

9.Book Discussion: The Green Sheep (<i>PICTUREBOOK</i>) AC2W3 THURS 27/2/20		
Question Types	General Response Accuracy	Comment
1. How can you tell what the character is feeling?	Not the right kind of book for this.	
2. What does that character think is happening in this situation?		
3. Is there something they don't know? <i>(someone/something may be in disguise/hiding/pretending)</i>		

10. Book Discussion: Please Baby, Please! (<i>PICTUREBOOK</i>) AC2W4 MON 2/3/20		
Question Types	General Response Accuracy	Comment
1. How can you tell what the character is feeling?	The way she is looking, her face and her hands. Lots of imitation	(I)Recognition (III)Desire
2. What does that character think is happening in this situation?	She wants to play in the sand and is angry that they are taking her away. Her parents need to go.	(I)Recognition (II) External Cause (III)Desire (IV)Belief
3. Is there something they don't know? <i>(someone/something may be in disguise/hiding/pretending)</i>	Her parents are only trying to get her to sleep.	(I)Recognition (II) External Cause (III)Desire (IV)Belief (VII)Hiding

11. Book Discussion: A Curious Case of Stripes (<i>STORYLINE ONLINE</i>) AC2W4 TUES 3/3/20		
Question Types	General Response Accuracy	Comment
1. How can you tell what the character is feeling?	She looks sick and sad. Nervous	(I)Recognition
2. What does that character think is happening in this situation?	She doesn't know.	(IV)Belief
3. Is there something they don't know? <i>(someone/something may be in disguise/hiding/pretending)</i>	I like lima beans no matter what people say (even if they make you fart) It is a little unclear how much of the message they got. I would like to revisit this story.	(III)Desire (IV)Belief (VII)Hiding (VIII)Mixed

12. Book Discussion: Five Minutes' Peace (<i>PICTUREBOOK</i>) AC2W4 WED 4/3/20		
Question Types	General Response Accuracy	Comment
1. How can you tell what the character is feeling?	Her eyebrows. Lots of imitation.	(I)Recognition (II) External Cause (III)Desire (IV)Belief (VI)Regulation
2. What does that character think is happening in this situation?	That she can get some peace. The baby wants the mammy to have toys in the bath. They want to show off to their mammy. The mammy doesn't want toys.	(I)Recognition (II) External Cause (III)Desire (IV)Belief (VI)Regulation (VII)Hiding (VIII)Mixed
3. Is there something they don't know? <i>(someone/something may be in disguise/hiding/pretending)</i>	That she wants some peace from them. The baby likes toys so he thinks mammy will like toys. It's very kind. Mammy does not want them.	(I)Recognition (II) External Cause (III)Desire (IV)Belief (V)Reminder (VI)Regulation (VII)Hiding (VIII)Mixed

13. Book Discussion: The Snowy Day (<i>PICTUREBOOK and VOOKS</i>) AC2W4 FRI 6/3/20		
Question Types	General Response Accuracy	Comment
1. How can you tell what the character is feeling?	Not the right kind of book but they really enjoyed it in both mediums Not one over the other.	
2. What does that character think is happening in this situation?		
3. Is there something they don't know? <i>(someone/something may be in disguise/hiding/pretending)</i>		

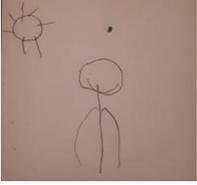
14. Book Discussion: I Love You (<i>PICTUREBOOK</i>) AC2W5 MON 9/3/20		
Question Types	General Response Accuracy	Comment
1. How can you tell what the character is feeling?	Because you can see their face.	(I)Recognition
2. What does that character think is happening in this situation?	Unsure. Thinking. The parents are confused. Their hand is on their face "like this". Lots of imitation.	(I)Recognition (II) External Cause
3. Is there something they don't know? <i>(someone/something may be in disguise/hiding/pretending)</i>	They're love each other. They are hugging. Imitation.	(I)Recognition (IV)Belief

Book Discussion: The Chickens Built a Wall (<i>PICTUREBOOK</i>) AC2W5 TUES 10/3/20		
Question Types	General Response Accuracy	Comment
1. How can you tell what the character is feeling?	Jealous, envy, terrified, curious, nervous	(I)Recognition (II) External Cause (III)Desire (IV)Belief
2. What does that character think is happening in this situation?	The hedgehog is scared. He is in a ball. The rooster is showing off. Scared food water sleep hibernate	(I)Recognition (II) External Cause (III)Desire (IV)Belief (VI)Regulation
3. Is there something they don't know? <i>(someone/something may be in disguise/hiding/pretending)</i>	The hedgehog doesn't mind anymore. He is hibernating.	(I)Recognition (II) External Cause (III)Desire (IV)Belief (VI)Regulation

Appendix Y Card used for non-verbal responses.



Appendix Z Work Samples-Drawings

		
Oscar – “angry”	Nan – “sad”	Terry – “happy”
		
Benjamin – “happy”	Earl – “happy”	Laura – “nervous”
		
Keith – “sad”	Edith – “fearless”	Debbie – “fearless”
		
Mabel – funny“	Barry – “happy”	Ula – happy“
		
Jackie – “love”	Hallie – “upset”	Felix – “happy”
		*Fay produced two images for the same setting. She named one “mad” and the other “grumpy because she has ice-cream”. I have included the image that contained the most information.
*Fay – “mad””grumpy”	*Fay – “She’s grumpy” because she has ice-cream”	