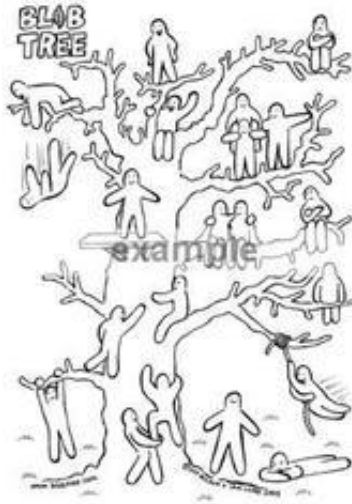


The Blob Tree (The Emotions Tree): Building Emotional Vocabulary and a Sense of Classroom Community

A cross-curricular grade one “Feelings” unit



Suggested Activities and Timeline

Lindsay Zebrowski

Lindsay.zebrowski@sd41.bc.ca

Employing cognitive tools of Mythic understanding (Oral Language Toolkit):

- *Puzzles and mystery: How could students explore some aspects of the mystery attached to the topic? What puzzles might they wonder about?*

How do people identify and communicate their emotional state? How can members of a community recognize the emotional state of another individual? What is the importance of care and empathy in a community?

Teaching Strategies:

- drawing connections between experience and emotions
- building in new vocabulary for expressing emotions
- recognizing social cues from body language, tone of voice, situational context
- increasing awareness of the emotional state of others and fostering care and empathy

Student activities:

- select and colour an individual figure on a large, group copy of *The Blob Tree* and tell their “story”, i.e. infer their emotional state from the position of their body, facial expression, location on the tree, and relate a background story to explain their current emotional state
- brainstorm "feeling" words to associate with each figure and accompanying story; contribute to an emotional “Word Wall” to display in the classroom for future reference
- select and colour an individual figure on small, individual copies of *The Blob Tree* each day for one week. Glue pictures into Journal and write about selection. Prompts may be provided such as: Which figure did you choose? How are they feeling today? What has happened to them today? What colour did you choose, and why?
- provide students with mirrors and ask students to examine their features – eyes, brows, nose, mouth, cheeks, forehead, etc. – while making facial expressions to represent different feelings. Ask students to draw faces for the different feelings displayed on the “Word Wall”
- use a tree with no facial expressions. Students will have to rely on clues from the figures bodies and their locations on the tree to infer emotional states. Additional activities could include comparing and contrasting interpretations of the figures with and without facial expressions.

- *Metaphor: How might students employ metaphor in deepening their understanding of the topic?*

Metaphors already employed in the selected narratives of this unit:

- “Fuzzyland” – bags of “warm fuzzies” and “cold pricklies” represent positive and negative emotional states

- *How Full is Your Bucket? For Kids* – everyone has an invisible “bucket” that may be empty or full in relation to the person’s current emotional state.

Teaching strategy:

- introduce common associations between colours and emotions

- explore and compare personal associations between colours and emotions

- use stories, role-playing activities, actions, and art selections to investigate the relationship between colours and emotions

Student activity:

- read *I Feel Orange Today* by Patricia Godwin. Discuss the colours chosen to represent each mood and the associated images. Compare and contrast the choices made in the book to the colours on the large, group version of the tree.

- investigate common associations with different colours, such as the use of colour in advertising¹. Identify three words that capture the most common associations with a particular colour. In small groups, create actions to represent the three words and share with the class.

- review the actions as a large group by calling out each colour and having students perform the three actions, or play charades by having volunteers perform the actions for a selected colour to be guessed by the group. Create reference cards for each colour with the three words and post them on the Word Wall².

- ask students to write journal entries with the prompt “I feel ____ (colour) today because (colour) makes me think of...”; paint/colour/collage scenes to represent a mood from a particular memory. Prepare an artist’s statement explaining the choice of colour and intended mood.

- explore similar associations with different sounds. Play clips of various sounds (e.g. thunder, crashing waves, screeching tires, rustling leaves, etc.) and have students colour, draw a picture, tell story, or act out a scene to convey the emotion associated with a particular sound.

¹ The *Heart Smart Kids* program from the B.C. Heart and Stroke Foundation has a section on Nutrition that includes activities investigating how junk food is marketed to children and the use of particular colours in advertising. Also visit sites such as <http://www.color-wheel-pro.com/color-meaning.html>

² See list of selected colour association words and sample description of actions created by students in Nov. 2013.

- *Jokes and humor: Could students learn – and create their own – jokes about the topic? How might they expand their understanding through play with what is humorous about it?*

Teaching strategy:

"I feel funny" - explore the double meaning of the word "funny"

Student activity:

- make clowns with clothing in a single colour palette and facial expressions exaggerated with make up to represent different feelings

- take pictures of each student posing and making a facial expression to convey "I feel funny".
Compose a class tree with the pictures.

- challenge students to make up their own "I feel funny" jokes. Visit <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/jokes/topics/doctor.shtml> for inspiration.

- *Rhyme, rhythm, and pattern: Are there patterns in the topic students could play with? What activities might draw attention to rhyme, rhythm, and pattern?*

Teaching strategy:

- explore songs, poems, rhymes about feelings and their associations with colours, sounds, smells, tastes, and other experiences

Student activity:

- rewrite the lyrics of "If You're Happy and You Know It" to include other feelings and choose a particular action to associate with each feeling, e.g. If you're grumpy and you know it, cross your arms.

- *Games, drama, and play: How can students engage in games, drama, and play in learning about the topic?*

Teaching strategy:

- develop ability to read body language and facial expressions

Student activity:

- play an adapted version of the board game *Moods* – players select a "mood" card and have to read a given phrase, using body language, facial expression, and tone of voice to convey the "mood" to the other players

- use the brainstormed set of emotions vocabulary from earlier activities on index cards and play charades using exaggerated facial expressions and body language

- *Introducing tools of Romantic understanding: (Literate toolkit)*

Consider ways to engage students with the heroic and human dimensions of the topic. What kinds of activities might reveal its extremes? How can these aspects draw students forward in their thinking about the topic?

Teaching Strategy:

Collections and Sets; Extremes and limits – group emotional vocabulary under headings (good/bad; happy/sad/mad); identify the most “powerful” words for conveying strong emotions

Student Activity:

- "rate" vocabulary for expressing feelings from weak to strong, e.g. mad, angry, furious

- make superheroes and villains to represent feelings on the word wall, e.g. Enthusiastic Man, Captain Cheerful, The Incredible Grump (hopefully the students create better examples!)

- *Drawing on previous kinds of understanding: (Embodied toolkit)*

How might students use some of the toolkit of Somatic Understanding in learning the topic? How might their senses, emotions, humor, musicality, and so on, be deployed?

Teaching Strategy:

- tap into the powerful connection between scents and memories

- prepare “mystery smell” canisters (vanilla, cinnamon, pine needles, baby powder, vinegar, etc.)³

Student Activity:

- write a journal entry about the smells at a favourite place

- draw a picture, colour, write, or share a response to the “mystery smells”. Prompts may include: What words would you use to describe each smell? What colour would you choose to match each smell? Did any of the smells remind you of a person, place, memory, or feeling? Which was your favourite smell?

³ Adapted from “Mindful Smelling” in *The Mind Up Curriculum: Brain-Focused Strategies for Learning – And Living* (Grades Pre K – 2 Version) from The Hawn Foundation, pp. 68 – 75.

Suggested Timeline

Week 1: Buddy Activities

- Read *Fuzzyland*, make warm fuzzies, OR
- Read *How Full is Your Bucket? For Kids*, decorate buckets

Week 2: Introduction of *The Blob Tree* - approximately 30 minutes daily.

- Distribute small, individual copies of the tree. Students select and colour one figure on the tree. Day 1 – also colour chosen figure on a large, group copy of the tree (students who selected the same figure divide the figure and colour portions).
- Invite students to share a small anecdote about their chosen figure (e.g. “He is sad because he is by himself”; or “I picked this person because I like climbing trees”) and their chosen colour. Students may or may not need prompts such as “why did you choose this person?”, “how do you think they feel?”, or “what does the colour ___ remind you of?”
- Ask students to record their shared anecdotes in their journal where they have glued their individual copies of the tree.

Week 3: Collecting known vocabulary & beginning colour association study

- Use the large, group copy of the tree from the first day. Ask students to share the words they might use to describe each of the figures on the tree: e.g. “He is feeling ___ because ____”. Also ask for a colour association: e.g. “Use yellow for happy because it’s like a sunny day which makes me happy”. Record the vocabulary in the recommended colour on index cards and begin a “Word Wall” around the large copy of the tree. Add to the word wall as new vocabulary is introduced during the activities
- Read *I Feel Orange Today* and ask students to share their own associations with different colours. Compare to the colour selections used on the vocabulary cards
- Select 3 words to associate with the primary and secondary colours (red, blue, yellow, orange, green, purple) and black and white. Small groups will come up with actions to represent the words associated with each colour (Kym’s suggested activity)
- Introduce Sound & Scent activities (one day each) – students can create collages or paint or draw a scene to represent the sound or scent through an association with colour, mood, and memory

Week 4: Play

- Explore “I feel funny” – puns and jokes, clown art – use exaggeration to draw students’ attention to facial expressions that give clues to a person’s emotional state

- Rewrite "If you're happy and you know it" to explore body language and social cues
- Play "Moods" - charades-type game to synthesize facial expressions and body language with the collected vocabulary on the Emotions Word Wall
- Re-organize the vocabulary on the word wall from "weak" to "strong" (e.g. mad - angry - furious) and create superheroes and villains to represent the "most powerful" vocabulary

Week 5: Wrap-up/Concluding activities

- Write reflective journal entries. Possible prompts: "Write about your favourite new "feelings" word from the word wall" "How can you tell if someone is feeling ___?" "What can you do if you notice someone is _____?" "Whose bucket did you fill today? How did you fill it? Who filled your bucket?"
- Make the class Emotions tree with students' pictures and display it on the word wall

Colour association activity – word list and sample actions created by grade one students in Nov. 2013

<i>Colour</i>	<i>Associated Words & Sample Actions</i>		
Red	Danger	Strength	Love
	Curl up in a ball on the floor, arms covering head	Stand up straight, flexing both arms, fists up and out to the side	Clasp hands together next to cheek and bat eyelashes
Orange	Energy	Fall	Creativity
	Run very fast on the spot, pumping arms back and forth	Droop arms and hang head, bending over like a tree that has lost its leaves	Make stirring motions like a witch brewing a potion in a cauldron
Green	Growth	Freshness	Money
	Crouch down then slowly stand up and reach to the sky like a tree growing	Inhale deeply through nose like you're breathing in fresh air	Swipe fingers over the other hand's palm as if rapidly passing out paper money
Yellow	Happy	Careful	Smart/Idea
	Make a huge toothy grin	Tiptoe slowly	Flick one finger above your head like a cartoon character with a "lightbulb" appearing above their head
Blue	Clean	Serious	Smart/Thoughtful
	Raise one arm and rub your side with the other hand like you're scrubbing in the shower	Stand very still and open your eyes extremely wide as if you are really paying attention	Hold your chin in one hand and tap your temple with one finger making a "hmmm" expression with your mouth

Purple	Royal Stand up very straight, chin up, and hold your fist up as if there is a scepter in your hand	Gloomy Wiggle the fingers on both hands, pulling your hands up and down in front of you as if you are drawing "fog" lines in the air	Magic Hold one hand around an invisible wand and twirl it as if casting a spell
Black	Power Clench both hands into fists and shoot one arm up in the air as if casting a lightning bolt	Mystery Hold one hand around an invisible magnifying glass and peer through it, bent over slightly, like a detective searching for clues	Evil Make both hands into creepy bent-fingered shapes up in front of your face, open mouth wide and scrunch face as if laughing maniacally
White	Light Use both hands and flex fingers in and out like a "flashing light" signal	Peace Give the peace sign	Safe Wipe back of one hand across forehead in relief "pewh!"

Resources:

Bang, M. (2004) *When Sophie Gets Angry. Really, Really Angry.* New York: Scholastic

B.C. Heart and Stroke Foundation. (1999) *HeartSmart Kids* – nutrition section includes activities on how junk foods are marketed to children, including the use of particular colours

Egan, K. (2006) *Teaching Literacy: Engaging the Imagination of New Readers and Writers.* Thousand Oaks, Calif: Corwin Press.

The Emotions Tree image (obtained from a google search on “trees” in March 2013, original author unknown)

*Edit/Update – Ian Long is the artist who created *The Blob Tree* which was redistributed under name “The Emotions Tree” by an unknown source. Please visit www.blobtree.com to view the catalogue of images available for purchase and digital download and to explore the work of Ian Long and Pip Wilson.

Gibbs, J. (2006) *Reaching All By Creating Tribes Learning Communities.* Windsor, Calif: CenterSource Systems, LLC. – “Fuzzyland” (full text below)

Godwin, P. & Macaulay, K. (1993). *I feel orange today.* Toronto: Annick Press

The Hawn Foundation (2011). *The MindUp curriculum: brain-focused strategies for learning-and living.* New York, N.Y: Scholastic.

Henkes, K. & Hamilton, L. (2001). *Wemberly worried.* Pine Plains, N.Y: Live Oak Media.

Rath, T. & Manning, M. (2009). *How full is your bucket? : for kids.* New York: Gallup Press.

Viorst, J. & Cruz, R. (1987). *Alexander and the terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day.* New York: Aladdin Books.