

The Ugly Duckling

An early enquiry for Foundation and KS1

(Disney 1939: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k3t5BmU3uYQ>)

1. Getting set

‘Odd one out’

Depending on the age of the children, this activity can be more, or less, sophisticated. For the youngest, you could start by asking what makes your thumb different from your fingers. Then describe the thumb as ‘the odd one out’, explaining that it is different from all the other fingers/digits on the hand. Then ask the children to pick three things in the room where two things are ‘the same’, but one is different – the ‘odd one out’.

For older children, you might choose three things, more or less at random, in the room, and see if they can find something that two of the things have ‘in common’ that the other one does not. (There are usually several different ways of pairing two items and excluding the third. Consider, for an example, lions, frogs and owls.)

For younger children, you let this activity run as long as they are interested. For older children, 5–10 minutes should be enough to get the value from the exercise.

2. Stimulus: Show the (wordless) Disney cartoon, as per heading above.

3. Thinking time (Finding the ‘big ideas’)

Experienced P4C classes will probably be able to come up with a range of big ideas after a minute or so of ‘private reflection’. But here is an activity for the less experienced.

Remind the children that there were no words telling the story, but say that you have found a few ‘important’ words that could help the whole class re-tell the story themselves. Display the table (on next page), read the words, and ask them to ‘tell a bit more’. (For older children, you could make copies, cut them into lines or individual boxes, and distribute for groups to put them in the right order.)

4. Question-making and enquiring

(i) Using the big ideas in the table, ask the children to discuss in threes or fours which two ‘bits’ of the story (*ie* which ‘big ideas’ from the table) they would be most interested in talking about with the whole class.

(ii) Take a tally of their choices, and see which ideas have captured the most interest.

(iii) **Either:** use one of the questions in the second table below to start an enquiry about the ‘leading’ idea(s), **or** begin a general conversation with the children, and see if they, or you, come up with one or more ‘natural’ questions to pursue, **or** (with more experienced groups) return the children to their threes or fours and ask them to make a question of their own using the big idea chosen.

(iv) Be ready to move on to a different idea/question if the first one runs out of steam!

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| WAITING PATIENTLY | NEW ARRIVALS | LATE ARRIVAL | ANGRY QUARREL |
| TURNING YOUR BACK | TRYING TO CATCH UP | GETTING RID OF SOMEONE | TRYING AGAIN |
| LOOKING AT YOUR REFLECTION | FEELING LEFT OUT | BEING INVITED | BEING CHASED OUT |
| PLAYING WITH TOYS | ALONE AGAIN | CRYING ALONE | FINDING SOMEONE LIKE YOU |
| PLAYMATES | BELONGING | FEELING PROUD | BEING CONFIDENT |

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| If you are waiting patiently does that mean you are bored ? | What is the difference between being a new arrival to a family and being a new arrival to a school ? | What sorts of problems does arriving late cause, and when might it not be a problem? | What could stop quarrels from being angry – or from happening at all? |
| Is turning you back on someone a sign of success or of defeat ? | Is trying to catch up with others always a good thing? | Is getting rid of someone very different from getting rid of some thing? | Do we admire someone who keeps trying even if we think they should try something else? |
| Would humans be better off if we were never able to see our reflections ? | Are there some times when it is okay to leave someone out ? | Is it possible to be welcome without being invited in? | If you are not welcome, should you go before you have to be chased out ? |
| What is the difference between playing with toys and playing with friends? | Is being alone quite a common thing, and can it be quite a good thing? | Which seems worse, an animal that is alone and miserable , or a human? | Isn't everybody like you in some way? If so, could you be friends with everyone? |
| Is being a friend different from being a playmate ? | Do you belong to your family and your school in different ways? | Does feeling proud of yourself mean that you think less well of others? | Can other people give you confidence , or do you have to find it yourself? |

5. Developing Enquiry

For the first, or an early, enquiry, a main aim is for the children to get the confidence to voice their own thoughts. So, by all means keep encouraging new contributions. For example:

- Does anyone else want to add to X?
- Has anyone else had a similar feeling/experience?
- What do we think of what Y has just said?
- Do we all agree/disagree?
- Has anyone got something new/different to say about this?

But even at this stage, one can use more probing, challenging invitations such as:

- What makes you say/think that?
- Are you saying that ...?
- Is what you are saying the same as what X said?
- Can you/anyone give an example of that?
- So, what does that tell us about Z?

6. Reviewing enquiry

For all enquiries the main criterion of success is 'Did it make us think?'

You could ask this question and invite children to put thumbs up or down (or in the middle) to self-assess on this.

But then you could extend the evaluation by using 'a star and a wish' – asking children to 'award' a star to anyone else who helped them think better; and to express a wish if they think the class could have been more helpful to each other (and how).

A variation on this form of evaluation is *www/ebi*: 'what went well, even better if' - but perhaps you could save that for when the children are getting used to the idea of 'thinking together'.

7. Planning for next session

See if the children have any ideas about what sort of stimulus ('something to think about') they might like next session. Another video? A read story? A song?

Also see if they have any suggestions about ways to improve the thinking together next time.