



St. Christopher's School Richmond, Virginia



Maker Learning Fosters Empathy

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Introduction

- St. Christopher's School is located in Richmond, Virginia
- Founded in 1911
- 1001 JK-12th grade students; 423 in JK-5, 242 in 6th-8th, and 336 in 9th-12th

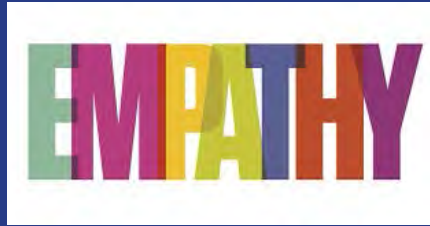


Research Question

Can participation in group maker projects enhance development of *empathy* in 7-year old boys?



Key Ingredients of Empathy

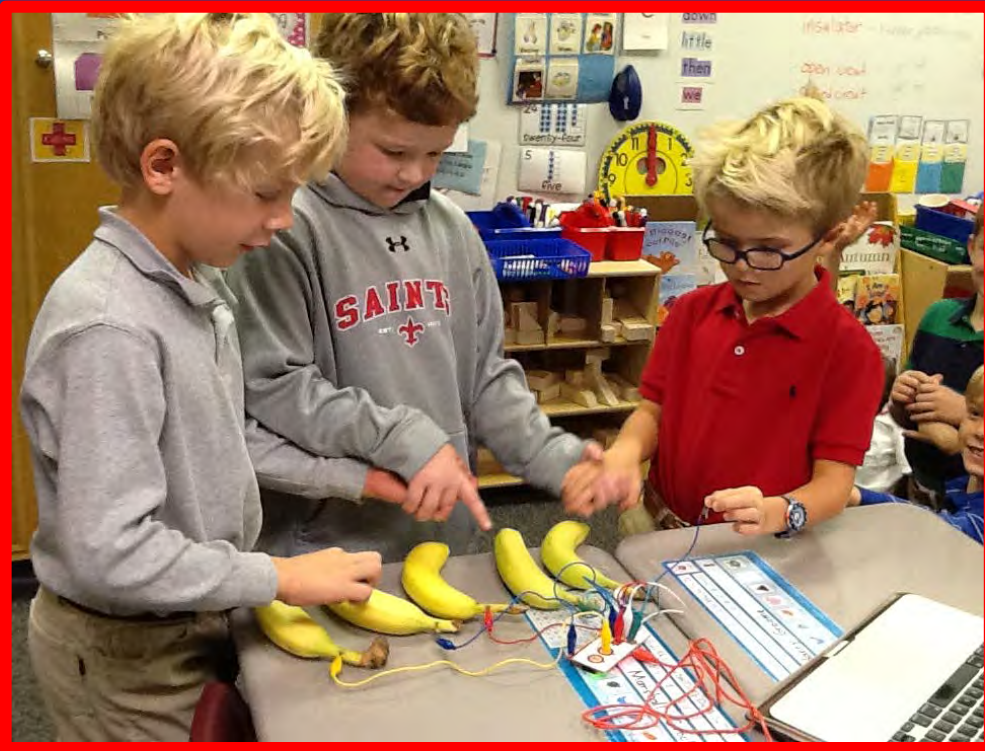


- Empathy is the ability to sense other people's emotions and imagine what someone else might be thinking or feeling. *(The Greater Good Science Center at the University of California, 2014).*
- “Cognitive empathy” is the ability to understand how another person feels but doesn't experience that same feeling.
- “Affective empathy” (or emotional empathy) refers to actually feeling the same feelings of another person. *Haynes and Avery (1979).*

The Action Research

16 boys participated in 3 maker projects over 2 months.

- 1st Maker Project: boys connect Makey Makey circuit boards to maker projects.



A Human Circuit with Makey Makeys



Makey Makey circuit boards used to create cheers and boos from football crowd



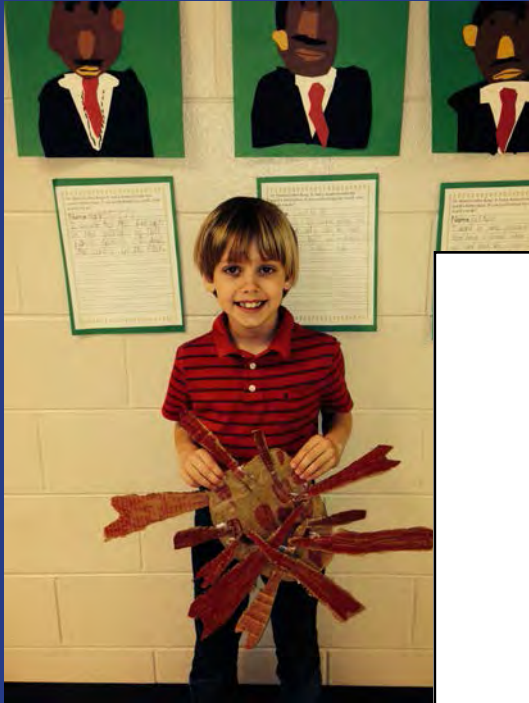
2nd Maker Projects

Finger puppets with light-up noses made with LEDs



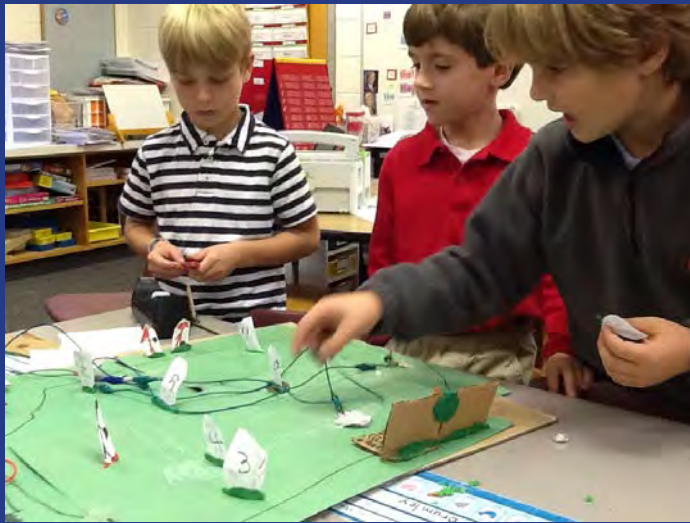
3rd Maker Projects

Martin Luther King, Jr. artifacts



Key Findings from the research

- Group maker projects enhance development of empathy



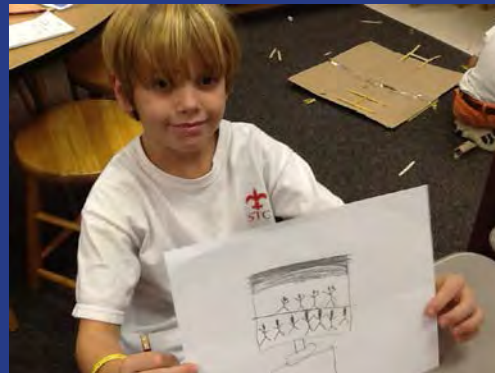
- Empathy can be developed when given instruction and practice

3 Recurring Themes on Empathy

“Empathy is understanding how others feel.”



“Empathy is listening to others.”



“Empathy is working together.”



Boys are able to articulate their understanding of empathy.



Implications for future practices to develop empathy



- Provide time for making and building in groups
- Teach boys how to recognize and identify different feelings
- Role play scenarios and brainstorm ways to respond
- Reflect on behavior during and after maker projects

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