The Research Question

How does sharing personal stories in a foreign language foster empathy in Grade 8 boys?

Our action was conducted in 5 phases ranging from distant stories to more personal and familiar stories of bullying.

**Phase 1:** Exposure to stories of bullying through books, TV, and news stories.

**Phase 2:** Exposure to a story of bullying to someone in our own community.

**Phase 3:** Writing of one's own personal narrative of bullying through scaffolding drafts to facilitate transportation.

**Phase 4:** Sharing of personal narratives with a partner in three iterations.

**Phase 5:** Students took time to process their partner’s story. Then they made videos, retelling the partner's story in the first person, as if it had happened to them.

**Data Collection**

Baseline Empathy Questionnaires

In order to avoid response burden, the baseline scale was only administered at the beginning and end of the project. It was a compilation of questions taken from the following validated measurement scales: The Toronto Empathy Questionnaire, Interpersonal Reactivity Index, and the Emotion Specific Empathy Questionnaire.

**Interviews**

Interviews were conducted in pairs and in small groups. We found that the most honest and deepest reflection happened when boys were asked to reflect in a collaborative setting. The opportunity to see one boy share in a vulnerable way gave permission to others to do the same.

**Data Analysis**

Meaning was extracted by transcribing interviews, recorded conversation classes, and looking at commonalities across student work samples and journals. Responses were categorized into themes aligning to the four attributes of empathy: perspective-taking, staying out of judgment, recognizing others’ emotions, and feeling with people.