
Title	The use of contemporary animated cartoon videos in groupwork to foster self-esteem
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The Use of Contemporary Animated Cartoon Videos in Groupwork to Foster Self-Esteem (Poster Session)

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Why animated cartoon videos? Besides being a contemporary medium, they're captivating, creatively designed and kids think they're 'cool'...and so you've got a captive audience! In any programme designed to develop self-esteem, the themes of 'self', 'self and family', 'self and friends', and 'self and the community' are core. These, too, are common themes addressed in stories. Today's animated versions of classic stories, like, Aladdin, Pocahontas, the Hunchback of Notre Dame, Beauty and the Beast, etc. are rich with relevant themes for reflection and discussion. The video can become the springboard for discussion about the self.

(Apologies for not having a set of detailed lesson plans as promised, but what I have to share are some ideas for using the 'Lion King' in dealing with some of issues related to self-esteem)

The 'Lion King' and issues related to self-esteem

The Lion King is the story of Simba, the lion cub's search for his place in the 'circle of life'--his search for who he is and what his place in life holds for him--his search for his 'identity'. This Disney coming-of-age saga tells of the love between a proud lion ruler, Mufasa, and his son, Simba--a naive and curious cub, who 'just can't wait to be king'. It also tells of the envy of Scar, Mufasa's brother, who kills Mufasa and makes Simba believe that Mufasa's fatal accident was a result of Simba's own doing. Guilt-ridden, the grieving Simba runs away into the wilderness, running away from his pain. The story also tells of his rescue by Pumbaa, the warthog and Timon, his meerkat friend who teach Simba the joys of living out the 'Hakuna Matata' philosophy of life which means, 'No Worries'. The story then becomes one about the three friends and their camaraderie which takes the runaway Simba through his adolescence. All this time, Simba abdicates his responsibility as heir of the Pride Land because of mistaken guilt coupled with his belief that he is just not good enough to be king. However, fate reunites him with his childhood friend, Nala, who nudges him into thinking about his father, whom he misses dearly, and about

his true place as the new king of the pride. Confused as to whether to return to the Pride Land or not, Simba withdraws again, not knowing what to do. He is helped along the way by Rafiki, a shaman, and the memory of his father, and finally decides to return home to claim his rightful position as king.

Many aspects of the 'Lion King' can be used to discuss issues related to self-esteem. For primary school children, the segment with the song, 'I just can't wait to be king' can be used to discuss children's aspirations. The issue of sibling rivalry can be discussed with reference to the relationship between Scar and Mufasa. The theme of disobedience is illustrated in the segment where the young Simba and Nala defy Mufasa's orders and decide to explore an 'elephant graveyard' where they encounter dangerous hyenas. The conversation which ensues

between Simba and his father after this incident is an excellent clip to show children and have them discuss their feelings regarding their experiences of being disobedient, and the consequences of being told off and/or punished. A caution here is that some (maybe, many) children may have painful memories of harsh punishment and severe scolding, and the teacher needs to be skilful in handling this. The theme of grief and guilt can be discussed with reference to the scene beginning with the wildebeest stampede, Mufasa's accident and Simba's mistaken belief that he is the cause of his father's death. The act of running away can also form a source of discussion. The hyenas can be considered a personification of bullies in school and hyena scenes can be used to talk about bullying and peer pressure and ways to be assertive.

For adolescents in the secondary school, the 'Lion King' can be used to examine the concept of self-identity--of finding one's place in the 'circle of life'. The theme of friendship can be discussed with respect to the story of Simba, Pumbaa and Timon. The carefree 'No Worries' philosophy of life can spark off lively debate about whether this attitude to life can be applied to students' own lives. The theme of peer pressure, and peer influence, both with negative and positive consequences can be debated too.

Conclusion

Opportunities to discuss issues related to self-esteem abound in contemporary animated cartoon videos. All it takes is interest, creativity and time. Good luck in thinking of how you would use Cinderella, The Little Mermaid, Fern Gully, 101 Dalmations and other animated cartoons in your teaching!

Lesson Plan

Level: Primary Five

Duration: Two 50 minute sessions

Objectives:

- To talk about the friendship between Pumbaa, Timon and Simba
- To identify the qualities of a good friend
- To identify their own personal qualities which make them a good friend
- Identify positive qualities of their friends

Procedure (50 minutes):

Ask how many have seen the movie, 'The Lion King', and ask for a volunteer to give a synopsis of the story.

Show the video clip 'Hakuna Matata' from 'The Lion King' which shows how Pumbaa and Timon rescue Simba and take him under their wing, living their life with carefree ease. Provide students with the lyrics of 'Hakuna Matata' so that they can follow along.

After the video clip (5 mins), ask some general questions about the clip, for example: Describe Simba's new friends; Would you describe them as good friends? Why? Why not? Would you have liked them to be your friends? Why? Why not?

Get your class into groups of four, and ask them to discuss the question, 'What qualities make for a good friend?' Ensure that groups are working 'knee to knee' and 'eye to eye', and that all have roles, for example, one to record what is being said, one to monitor the noise level, one to keep time, and one who will present the information to

the class later on.

Have groups present their lists of qualities and discuss these. Ask other questions like: Would you describe yourself as a good friend? Why? Why not? How can we become a better friend?

Follow-up activity (50 minutes)

Paper Bag activity:

Give each student a paper bag and ask them to 'draw' their name on it--give them time to decorate. Tell them that this bag will represent themselves.

On the outside, ask them to write (on shapes of paper given them) the qualities they see themselves having which make them a good friend. They are to stick these on the outside of the bag. If they are shy to display a quality (because of modesty) they may keep the shape inside the bag.

When done, each is to verbally share their qualities with their small

group.

Next, each student is to affirm their group members for one of the qualities mentioned on their bag, or to add another quality he/she thinks they have.

Lyrics of song

HAKUNA MATATA

Hakuna Matata!
What a wonderful phrase
Hakuna Matata!
Ain't no passing craze

It means no worries
For the rest of your days
It's our problem-free philosophy
Hakuna Matata!

When he was a young warthog
When I was a young warthog
He found his aroma lacked a certain appeal
He could clear the after ev'ry meal
I'm a sensitive soul though I seem thick-skinned
And it hurt that my friends never stood downwind

And, oh, the shame
Thoughta changin' my name
And I got downhearted
Everytime that I.....

Hakuna Matata!
What a wonderful phrase
Hakuna Matata!
Ain't no passing craze

It means no worries
For the rest of your days

It's our problem-free philosophy

Hakuna Matata!
(Repeat)

Hakuna.... it means no worries
For the rest of your days

It's our problem-free philosophy

Hakuna Matata!
(Repeat)

Lesson Plan

Level: Secondary Three

Duration: 50 minutes

Objectives:

To talk about Simba's search for his identity
To share about their 'path of winding' (their life line) using a coloured wire

Procedure:

Ask how many have seen the movie, 'The Lion King', and ask for a volunteer to give a synopsis of the story.

Show the video clip 'Circle of Life' from 'The Lion King' which shows all the animals of the Serengeti Plains converging on Pride Land to witness the initiation ceremony of baby Simba, the heir to the throne. Provide students with the lyrics of 'Circle of Life' so that they can follow along.

After the video clip (5 mins), ask general questions--whether anything about the scene moved them, etc.

Read the following from the lyrics of, 'The Circle of Life':

It's the circle of life
And it moves us all
Through despair and hope
Through faith and love
Till we find our place
On the path of winding
In the circle
The circle of life

Say: 'The Lion King' is the story of Simba's search for his place in the circle of life--his search for who he is and what this place in life holds for him--his search for his 'identity'. Have you ever been

in search of 'your place'? In which circle of life? In the circle of your family? In the circle of your friends? In the circle of your school? In the circle of Singapore society? Please share with your group a circle of life you have tried to find your place in, or a circle of life you are currently trying to find your place in right

now. Was/is it a 'winding path'? How did you get through the despair? Did you move through "despair and hope", "faith and love"? How did you get through?

To help you talk about your 'path of winding', take a piece of coloured wire and from it, fashion your 'path of winding' to describe significant events in your 'circle of life'. Use the wire to tell about happy and sad times and any other events in your life you'd like to share with your group.

Lyrics of song

CIRCLE OF LIFE

From the day we arrive on the planet
And blinking, step into the sun
There's more to see than can ever be seen
More to do than can ever be done
There is far too much to take in here
More to find than can ever be found
But the sun rolling high
Through the sapphire sky
Keeps great and small on the endless round

It's the circle of life
And it moves us all
Through despair and hope
Through faith and love
Till we find our place
On the path of winding
In the circle
The circle of life

It's the circle of life
And it moves us all
Through despair and hope
Through faith and love
Till we find our place
On the path of winding
In the circle

The circle of life

Source: Disney's The Lion King