Young Children's Role-Playing for Enhancing Personal Intelligences in Multiple Intelligences Theory

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Abstract

This article examines young children's role-play in an effort to develop methods with which teachers can enhance children's interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences. Examining how MI practice is applied in different cultural and social contexts is important because it can provide new insights on enriching and enhancing curricula and instructional methods to early childhood educators and practitioners all over the world. This research was conducted in South Korea at a university laboratory school where a curriculum based on the Multiple Intelligences theory was employed. In order to examine how role-playing was implemented and what aspects of social and emotional competences were promoted, this research using a qualitative research method focused on a pod class designed to enhance personal intelligences. The pod class was composed of nine, three to five year-old children who were identified as having strengths in interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences. Close examination of teacher-child and child-child interactions during role-playing enabled the researchers to identify the structure of the role-plays and specific content areas of personal intelligences addressed. Importance of using role-plays to enhance children's personal intelligences and strategies to guide children in improving their personal intelligences are discussed.

Key words: Multiple Intelligences, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, role-play, early childhood

Introduction

In the field of early childhood education, the notion of the whole child has often been emphasized for well-rounded development. However, in reality competences in academic subjects such as reading and math have been stressed over affective aspects of learning, including social and emotional competences. Social-emotional competences such as self-knowledge, self-regulation, and empathy have been considered as a hidden part of the academic curriculum (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009) and have rarely been promoted explicitly in the classroom. It was not until in 1983 when Gardner published *Frames of Mind* (Gardner, 1983) that the notion of Multiple Intelligences (MI) became popular. Challenging the standard view of a unitary notion of intelligence, Gardner (1983) proposed eight types of intelligence: verbal, mathematical-logical, spatial, kinesthetic, musical, naturalistic, interpersonal and intrapersonal. He asserted that each type of intelligence is equally important and should be promoted equally in an educational setting.

Multiple Intelligences challenged the traditional notion of intelligence. While the traditional notion of intelligence views that people are born with a fixed amount of intelligence, MI considers that all individuals possess each of the intelligences to some extent but with different degrees and combinations of skills (Gardner, 1983). Traditional IQ tests, such as Stanford-Binet test and Wechsler intelligence scale for children are not used in MI because these tests lack the ability to measure disciplinary mastery or deep understanding. Although MI theory has been criticized due to the lack of empirical confirmation and strong stance on belief of intelligence as a unitary trait (White, 2004; Willingham, 2004), the notion of MI has been a great appeal to educators, especially early childhood educators, who are concerned with the whole child. Many scholars believe that MI holds the power and potential for teachers to develop broad and flexible approaches to address diverse learners with differing skill sets or potentials (McFarlane, 2011).

An important outcome of Gardner's theory of MI to education has been curriculum efforts trying to capitalize on individual child's strengths (Armstrong, 2009). A growing number of educators have been paying attention to the environment where children's intelligences are developed. As a result, numerous countries all over the world have tried to apply MI theory according to their unique social and educational contexts and have created their own contextualized version of the practice (Chen, Moran, & Gardner, 2009). For instance, in the United States, Project Spectrum, designed to assess and identify distinctive areas of strengths of each child as an alternative approach to curriculum assessment and development, was initiated and implemented at Tufts University (Krechevsky, 1998). More recently, educators in South Korea have created Korean Project Spectrum (Shin & Kim, 2006; Yang, Shin, Lee, Hwang & Kim, 2004) in an effort to develop their own version of Project Spectrum. Examining how MI theory is applied and implemented in different cultural and social contexts can provide new insights on enriching and enhancing curricula and instructional methods, which can be beneficial for early childhood educators and practitioners all over the world. This research takes a close look at a unique MI theory-based curriculum for three to five year-old children implemented at a university laboratory school in South Korea.

Among eight types of intelligence that Gardner proposed, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences are particularly important for young children to build because early childhood period is a critical stage of developing social and emotional abilities (Sylva, 1997). Many scholars have confirmed a positive correlation between emotional competences and success in life (Welsh, Parke, Widaman, & O'Neil, 2001). Intrapersonal intelligence refers to self-knowledge and the ability to act adaptively on the basis of that knowledge. This intelligence includes having an accurate picture of one's strengths and limitations; awareness of inner moods, intentions, motivations, and desires; and the capacity for self-discipline, self-understanding, and self-esteem (Gardner & Hatch, 1989). Interpersonal intelligence refers to the ability to perceive and make distinctions in the moods, intentions, motivations, and feelings of other people. Gardner calls these two intelligences together as "personal intelligences" and highlights their connectivity: "I have always felt that the personal intelligences are most closely related to one another than any other two sets of intelligences (Boggeman, Hoerr, & Wallach, 1996, p. 36)." Knowing and understanding one's self enables one to better understand and relate to other people (Asendorpf & Aken, 1994; Denham et al., 2003; Henniger, 2009) exemplifying a positive correlation between interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences. Because of this important interrelation, this research considers these two intelligences together as personal intelligences.

Role-playing is considered as one of the best methods to help enhance children's cognitive, social, and emotional competences (Blatner, 1995). Defined as "shared pretend play between children in which they temporarily act out the part of someone else using pretend actions and utterances" (Harris, 2000, p. 30), a role-play begins with the teacher introducing the problem, selecting the players, setting the stage, preparing the observers, presenting the enactment, and finally discussing and evaluating the play with the entire class (Shaftel & Shaftel, 1967). Previous studies have shown that role-play enhances children's languages learning (Grant & Mistry, 2010; Liu & Ding, 2009), communication skills (Veraksa, 2011), and understanding of the attitude of a specific subject area, such as science, math, and history (Cakici & Bayir, 2012; Deaton & Cook, 2012; Williams, 2010; Yonamine, 2010) as a cognitive domain. Furthermore, role-playing promotes skills of interpersonal problem solving, self-awareness, understanding others' feelings, expressing their own feelings, being empathetic to others, and controlling their emotions (Kitson, 1997; Rogers & Evans, 2006; Tyce, 2002; Wood & Attfield, 1996) as a social and emotional competence. By bringing real life situations into the classroom, children are given the opportunity to step into and examine a situation and take part in a sequence of events, thereby gaining an understanding of the reality they may face outside the classroom (Vygotsky, 1978). Children can represent and act out their ideas and feelings in a safe environment and live through someone else's experience, which in turn helps them develop empathy (Tyce, 2002; Weinert & Kluwe, 1987). Through this process, children integrate emotion and thought. This integration proceeds from showing emotional and social behavior to increasing use of words and symbolic representation.

By putting oneself in the place of another and understanding another's role attributes, thoughts, and feelings (Mead,1934), role-play fosters decentering, which allows the ability to perceive, understand and consider simultaneously the varied or multiple aspects of objects, events and situations (Fenson & Ramsay, 1980). These skills promoted through role-play are the core components of Gardner's interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences. Furthermore, personal intelligences can be enhanced through various teaching strategies, such as group discussion, group process, small group tasks, and reflecting (Campbell, 1997; Gardner, 1991, 2000), which are all essential parts of role-playing. Prior theoretical and empirical data provide support for exploring the connection between role-play and young children's personal intelligences. While there have been studies examining application of MI to various areas, such as foreign language learning (Glick, Armstrong, & Marchese, 2010; Savas, 2012), creativity (Clarke & Cripps, 2012), and arts learning (Barry, 2012; Valenti, 2012), only limited empirical research exists on role-play and young children's personal intelligences. Therefore, this research examines teaching approaches and contents of role-plays in order to elucidate the relationship between role-plays and personal intelligences.

Methods
Setting
This research took place at the laboratory school of H University located in Seoul, South Korea. The educational philosophy of H school was to support individual children's potential to become a holistic human being and to enable them to contribute to creating future societal values. H school had applied the MI theory to its practice for young children since 2003 in order to diversify children's intelligence areas, fortify their areas of strength, and supplement weak ones. H school had six classrooms in total (two classrooms of each three, four and five year olds) and each classroom had one head teacher and one assistant teacher.

Pod Class

H school implemented pod classes, which were special learning groups that students individually selected based upon their interests. Pods offered students opportunities to explore and experiment their strengths and interests in depth by working together with the teachers and other children, aiming to help children internalize their strength and succeed in their daily lives (Armstrong, 2009). In addition to the regular early childhood curriculum, H school ran seven pod classes in total, including logical-mathematical, linguistic, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, naturalistic, interpersonal/intrapersonal, and spatial intelligence pods. According to his or her strengths and interests, each child participated in a pod class once a week, every Friday, for an hour from 3:30 to 4:30 pm. This research focused only on interpersonal/intrapersonal pod classes. Topics and situations, which children may have difficulties or problems in, were discussed and selected for role-plays by the pod class teachers in advance.

For personal intelligence pod classes, the researchers developed a total of nine role-play activities where the topics were chosen based on input from the teachers about the children's experiences and interests. Table 1 below shows a series of role-play activities for promoting children's personal intelligences.

Table 1: Title, Purpose and Content of Role-Play Activities

Title	Purpose	Content
My Mind	Understand thoughts/feelings of others' and my own. Think about how to make others happy.	Open an imaginary shop where you can buy any mind. Draw or sculpt with play dough what kind of mind you bought. Share your work and talk about how you want to use the mind you purchased.
Between Friends	Understand friends' minds and react accordingly.	Discuss characters in the flannel board story and come up with a solution of the problem faced by the characters. Discuss how you felt after participating in this role play and share whether or not a similar event happened to you.
I Like You	Express my affection to others appropriately.	Imagine a situation having occurred and try out a solution that they created. Discuss what you came up with in the role play and share appropriate ways to show the affection to your friends.
I Hate My Baby Brother	Understand that a sibling is not the competitor for parental love, but the one whom I need to care for and love.	Play a role of the Bear's mom and dad. Write a letter to the Bear. After the role-play, share the lessons you've learned, and promise to yourself that you will love your parents and siblings more.
Let's Praise	Praise my friends' and my own strengths.	Praise and encourage your friends. Hide one of the children behind the flannel board and have the rest of the children give encouraging remarks to the child who hides. Share how it feels when you hear praises.
To My Friends	Think about why I like someone and express my feelings toward the friend.	Draw who you think those friends are, and talk to them about why you like/dislike them. Discuss how it is like to confess your honest feelings toward your friends, and think about how you can get along with them.
Hard-to-Keep	Think about and express what kind of promise is	Draw and write what is the most difficult promise to keep. Then share it with each other. Discuss your

Promise	hard to keep, and why it is important to keep that promise.	feelings about this activity.
What I Want to Become	Discuss what kinds of job I'd like to have in future and what are required to do for the job.	Create a headband that reads "future me" and introduce future self. Think about what kind of work your parents do and what kind of work you'd like to do in future and discuss with the class.
Free Hug	Experience how loving and consoling it is to hug each other.	Read the book "Free Hug" and do as the main character does, hold a "Free Hug" banner and hug people on the street. Share how you felt when you hugged to people.

Participants

Participants of this research were nine three to five year-old children and two teachers. For this study, purposeful sampling was used. In order to identify children's strengths, the Korean Project Spectrum (KPS) and Multiple Intelligence Developmental Assessment Scales-My Young Children (MIDAS-MYC) were used.

KPS originated from the Project Spectrum evaluation. It is a Korean evaluation tool for four and five year old children based on the Multiple Intelligences theory, which was translated, revised and developed by Kim, Shin, and Joo (2001). Among the seven intelligence areas and 22 activities of original Project Spectrum (Krechevsky, 1999), seven intelligence areas and fifteen activities, which were considered possible to apply to Korean educational context, were adopted. Each of the seven intelligence areas has its corresponding activity and evaluation rubric (Kim et al., 2006). Performance based evaluation rubrics assess children's abilities by observing their play procedures or analyzing their artworks. Table 2 describes KPS's specific activities of each intelligence area.

Table 2: Activities of each intelligence area in KPS

Intelligence	Activities and subcategories
Bodily-Kinesthetic	Creative movement activities: popcorn, animal pretending, scarf dancing (sensitivity to rhythm, expressivity, physical control, creation of ideas about movements, responsiveness to music)
Linguistic	Storyboard (structure of story, consistency of story, use of storytelling voice, use of conversation, use of tense, effective expression, vocabulary, sentence structure)
Logical-Mathematical	Turtle board game (direction of movement, counting, selection of dice, selection of movement, selection of number dice)
Scientific	Ant hunting game (decoding, meaning of blue, verbal expression of rules, appropriate move of sorting box)
Interpersonal/ Intrapersonal	Classroom model (understanding of self, understanding of others, understanding of social role) Peer interaction checklist (evaluation of children's position by peer group)
Art	Animal drawing, person drawing, imaginary animal drawing (level of expression, exploration, artistic level)
Musical	Song singing (rhythm, melody)

MIDAS-MYC (Yang, Shin, Lee, Hwang & Kim, 2004) revised and supplemented MIDAS, which provides an efficient method of obtaining a descriptive assessment of a child's multiple intelligence profile. MIDAS is a self-report measure of intellectual disposition and may be completed by either the child or the parent. MIDAS-MYC includes 94 items over eight intelligence areas (linguistic, logical-mathematical, intrapersonal, interpersonal, kinesthetic, musical, spatial, and naturalistic). The six-Likert scale is used: never, seldom, sometimes, often, frequently, and all the time. Questions evaluating interpersonal intelligences are thirteen items, including "does the child initiate play among peers?" and "does the child understand other's feelings?"

Each child was identified by his/her strongest area and assigned to the corresponding pod class. For interpersonal and intrapersonal pod class, nine children whose strongest area was personal intelligences were selected. The participating children were two three-year-olds (one boy and one girl), five four-year-olds (one boy and four girls), and two five-year-olds (two girls).

Two personal intelligence pod teachers (Ms. H and Ms. K) participated in the research. Ms. H received her Bachelor's and Master's degree in early childhood education and had been working at H school for five years. Ms. K's Bachelor's degree was in early childhood and this was her third year at H school. These two teachers had been team-teaching role-play in personal pod classes for three years and both had shown strength in these intelligence areas. They planned role-play activities together guided by the researchers. Most of the times, Ms. H led role-plays with the children in the pod class while Ms. K provided the materials and videotaped the activities.

Data Collection
Qualitative research methods were used for this research to explore how role-plays were implemented to enhance young children's personal intelligences and what specific competences were promoted through role-plays. Data were collected through participatory observations, in-depth interviews with the participants, and analysis of relevant documents.

All role-play activities in the pod class were observed once a week for five months. Field notes were taken and all activities were videotaped and transcribed. Formal 30-minute interviews with Ms. H and Ms. K, once each, were conducted focusing on the teacher's opinions about children's interactions and ideas/responses during the activities and their learning and progress/development of personal intelligences. Specific interview questions included "Why do you think role-play is important to young children?" "What do you think relationship between role-plays and interpersonal/intrapersonal intelligence is?" "How do you think the children have changed through role-plays over the course of the pod class?" and so on. Informal interviews were frequently conducted with the teachers and participating children when the researchers had questions about the activities and teacher-children interactions. Lastly, children's portfolios were collected and analyzed. Immediately after the role-plays, the teachers often asked the children to draw or write their experiences or discussions related to the topic. All the drawings and writings were collected in each child's portfolio and analyzed in order to better understand children's ideas, process of change, and work style.

Data Analysis
Following Miles and Huberman's (1984) conceptualization of qualitative analysis, which involves data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing in an "interactive cyclical process" (p. 24), the researchers coded all transcribed role-play activities. The interactive model can provide continuous, iterative processes of analysis for better qualitative validity and credibility compared with a single,

linear analysis process (Huberman & Miles, 1994). While the inquiry was in progress, contact summary forms consisting of main issues/themes, summary of information on each of the target questions, anything salient, interesting, or important, and new/remaining target questions (Stake, 2006) were filled out. These summary forms allowed the key points to be summarized and emerging themes to be recognized to guide planning for the next observation.

In this process, initial data deduction was conducted by generating a conceptual level of coding system derived from the literature review (Erickson, 2004), for example, understanding self, understanding others, self-control, and empathy. Later on, the data were re-sorted and re-arranged according to different themes (e.g., self-discipline, understanding self and inner mood) and new categories (e.g., awareness of others and positive self-concept) were added as patterns and themes emerged. Classifying and reviewing processes were repeated multiple times with the transcribed data and literature review by each researcher until agreement was reached. Data display and conclusions included follow-ups with the participating teachers, emphasizing their interpretations of the data collected and the triangulation of information.

For investigator triangulation (Stake, 1995), multiple interim reports were made to identify and develop issues and audit what is known and to substantiate it with data collected. Belonging to a research group at a University, the researchers presented/shared each interim paper with the group members who worked, studied or were interested in early childhood education and received their feedback and suggestions during peer debriefings. These feedback and suggestions were selectively incorporated to enhance the trustworthiness of this research (Taylor & Bodgan, 1998). Member checking was carried out by sharing interview transcriptions with the interviewees. The interviewees were asked to look through the transcriptions and were invited to comment and clarify any unclear points. Revisions were made based upon the interviewees' written comments and revised drafts were shared with them again to ensure that they communicated what they intended to express.

Findings

Contents and implementation of role-plays to strengthen children's personal intelligences are discussed in this section. With respect to how role-play was taught, there was a clearly defined lesson structure and the teachers had several strategies. With regards to the contents, four themes related to personal intelligences were identified.

How Role-play Was Taught: Lesson Structure and Teachers' Strategies
Each role-play session composed of warm-up, main role-play lesson, and reflection. Role-play always began with a warm-up activity, specifics of which varied according to the topic of the week. Warm-up usually lasted about seven-ten minutes out of an hour-long session. Warm-up was composed of various activities, including telling a story using puppets or flannel board, singing songs, doing finger plays, and making body movements. For example, in the *"Let's Praise"* activity, which was designed to find their peers' and their own strengths, the teachers started with a puppet crocodile saying "I look ugly and my friends tease me and don't like me. Please give me some courage." Children were excited about praising the crocodile, for example, by saying "You are not ugly. You have nice green skin. It looks really cool," and "Don't be sad. You are not ugly. Your friends like you. They didn't mean it. They're just joking." Through this process, the topic of praising friends was naturally introduced. Warm-up also played a crucial role as an ice-breaker for children who were shy and hesitant. After the short and eye-catching warm-up activity, children

were ready for the main role-play lesson. Warm-up activities attracted students' attention and provided a smooth transition to the main role-play activity.

The main role-play lessons were largely composed of discussions or acting out a topic chosen by the teachers in advance based on the children's experiences and interests, such as relations with their friends and conflicts with their family members. The children were able to relate to the topics of the activities and therefore were more engaged. Open-ended situations enabled the children to approach the activity at their own pace and level of understanding, which led to individualized instruction. The teachers guided the children in a variety of ways. Teachers encouraged the children to use their own dialogue and helped them engage in discussions through asking various questions and giving positive feedback. Each child not only expressed his/her ideas but also listened to other children's thoughts and opinions. This process helped children expand their understanding that people have different ideas and experiences, which in turn can help them escape from egocentric ways of thinking. Diverse strategies employed by the teachers and different forms of activities through spoken, written, and kinesthetic expressions stimulated the children to participate and kept them interested. To facilitate discussions, the teachers asked questions, shared their own stories, pretended to be someone else, or manipulated flannel board characters and puppets. Other times they had the children draw or write their experiences and ideas and then share their drawings/writings. Props were often offered to help children's thinking process. Children expressed their ideas verbally as well as through body movements. Sometimes, field trips were taken to interact with people in the community.

During the last five minutes of the session, children had a reflection time. Guided by the teacher's questions, children reflected on what they did, what they liked the most, or what was the most interesting to them during the activities in an open format. Although the connection between experiences and expressions of personal opinions or emotions were scarce for the most part, verbalization of what they did helped the children consolidate their experiences as well as transform their kinesthetic experiences into concrete verbal ones. Reflection time helped the children engage in the evaluation process both individually and collectively, which in turn promoted children's intrapersonal intelligence.

Contents of Personal Intelligences
Over the five months of role-play pod class sessions, four important themes were found regarding both intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences. This section presents each of these themes in depth and what it meant to young children.

Understanding of Self and Awareness of Inner Mood
Understanding one's own feelings is an essential characteristic of Gardner's intrapersonal intelligence. It includes knowledge of the internal aspects of self, such as knowledge of feelings and range of emotional responses and understanding of one's strengths and limitations (Armstrong, 1994; Gardner, 1983, 1991). By acknowledging and experiencing a variety of feelings, children develop a strong emotional foundation that enriches their lives (Campbell, 1996). One of the activities that promoted children's understanding of themselves and their feelings was "*My Mind.*" The teacher introduced different emotions that children can have, including being happy, sad, angry, or scared, and asked them when they had these feelings. Following the teacher's instruction, the children identified different feelings and explained appropriately when they had these feelings. One three-year-old boy (Jio) initially had a hard time discerning that other people can have different feelings from him but by hearing about various feelings expressed by other children even

in the same situation, Jio finally accepted that his friends could have different feelings from his own. Thus, the sharing process enabled the children to identify different feelings as well as to compare and contrast their own feelings with others', leading away from egocentric ways of thinking. Although they were not asked to, all children referred to their own feelings associated with their friends and family members, suggesting that children's understanding of self emerges from people close to them.

Another activity related to understanding their feelings was *"Don't Hold a Grudge."* This activity purported to help children learn how to deal with their own negative feelings and conflicts with others. Thus this activity deals with both types of personal intelligences. The activity intended to have children think about why they were frustrated and let out their hard feelings and frustrations. When asked to articulate their frustrations, most of the children failed to answer directly to when they were frustrated and what caused these feelings. They usually gave vague suggestions to solve their problems, for example, by saying "Juyeon, play with me," and "let's be nice to each other." Children may have difficulties in identifying the source of their frustrations. When children were not able to articulate what their frustrations were or where these frustrations came from, the teachers asked additional questions, such as "What made you feel frustrated/angry?" and "What would you like your friend(s) to do to make you feel better?" The teachers' questions and guidelines helped children elaborate their thinking and solve the problems on their own. Developmentally, three to five year-olds have not reached the stage where they can engage in active self-reflection (Miller, 2010). However, appropriate support and guidance from teachers can help them reflect on their feelings in different situations.

In the "*What I want to Become When I Grow Up*" activity, children explained what they wanted to become based on their interests and inclinations. Some children had difficulties thinking about their future profession, expressing only vague ideas of what they wanted to become or simply stating their parents' current occupations. Others, on the other hand, had very specific ideas of their future professions and what they needed to do to get their dream jobs. For example, Heeseo explained "I want to become an actress. I'm acting in musicals and theatre and I play various roles. In order to become an actress, you should not be shy!" This activity promoted children to think about what they were good at (i.e., part of defining self-concept) and what they would like to pursue to make use of their strengths. At the same time, this activity provided opportunities for the children to think about people around them from their parents and relatives to community helpers (i.e., provoking interpersonal intelligence). It can be challenging for young children to think about their future jobs because it's difficult for them to understand the concept of time, especially future-oriented perspective (Nelson, 2001). However, if the approach starts from occupations of people around them, including their parents and relatives, and addresses what children like to do and how they can make use of their strength and fondness through well-guided questions, children can gradually connect the self in different times (Neisser, 1988).

Positive Self-Concept and Attitude toward Others

Having positive attitude toward others can be an important basic social interaction skill. As children grow up, they develop attitudes, beliefs, and awareness of self and others (Berk, 2006). Self-concept involves a combination of physical and psychological attributes, abilities, behaviors, attitudes, and values that defines a person and makes one unique (Shaffer, 2009). The "*Let's Praise*" activity addressed both positive self-concept and positive attitude toward others by having children find their friends' strengths and extend compliments to them. The person receiving the praise listened while hiding behind a flannel board, allowing the children who were making the

compliments not to be self-conscious due to his/her presence. The following vignette from the "*Let's Praise*" activity shows how role-play helped children form a positive attitude toward others and self-concept.

> After the warm-up activity where the puppet Crocodile shared his story of being teased by his friends, the teacher announces that they will praise Hyejin today. The teacher asks Hyejin to sit behind the flannel board, very close to where the rest of the children are sitting.
>
> **Teacher:** Let's praise our friend, Hyejin. What do you like about Hyejin?
>
> **Kyungmin:** She is good at origami and plays well at the movement center. She is also good in the language center.
>
> **Kyunghee:** Hyejin is not only good at origami but also poops, pees, and farts well.
>
> There is a general laughter. Then Kyunghee continues
>
> **Kyunghee:** She takes care of younger friends well and hugs them when they are sad.
>
> **Teacher:** Okay. Hyejin goes to the toilet regularly and takes care of younger friends
>
> when they are sad.
>
> **Jio:** Hyejin plays piano well and is good at origami (Observation, July 27, 2007).

The children pointed out Hyejin's positive behaviors and strengths based on what they have experienced. Having been in an all–day program for a year, all children in the role-play pod class knew each other and understood each one's characteristics fairly well. While some praises were vague and merely descriptive, the children tried to find positive aspects of Hyejin. Although "being good at peeing or pooping" is commonly not something to be praised, the teacher later found out through a teacher-parent conference that the child who made the comment (Kyunghee) had suffered from a severe constipation and her statement about her friend's ability to go regularly to the bathroom was a sincere compliment from her perspective, not for making fun of Hyejin. It is also important to note that the teacher accepted the child's statement positively without intervening to correct the answer, which helped the children maintain serious attitudes toward the topic.

By listening to her peers' compliments, Hyejin learned about herself that she might not have been aware of and may have heightened her self-esteem. After the activity, the children, including Hyejin, were asked to draw what they did in the role-play. The children drew what they said during the activity, for example, Hyejin playing with her younger friends or playing the piano, and so on. Hyejin drew herself with a big smile. When asked what she drew, Hyejin answered "I am so happy today because all my friends said good things about me and I learned that they like me. I like my friends, too. I will continue to be nice to everybody and continue to play with my friends nicely." This activity provided an opportunity for the children to get to know themselves through other's

eyes and to examine their own feelings in a positive way. Thus, it raised Hyejin's self-esteem and reinforced her positive behaviors. Having children listen to and find out their strengths and positive behaviors through clearly stated compliments by their peers can play an important role in promoting not only intrapersonal intelligence but also interpersonal intelligence.

Understanding Others' Perspectives and Feelings

Role-play can provide opportunities for children to realize that different people can have different ideas or feelings from their own by encouraging them to see things or situations from viewpoint of others. Noticing distinctions among others, including moods, temperaments, motivations, and intentions is one of the key characteristics of interpersonal intelligence (Armstrong, 1994, 2009). Interpersonal intelligence allows one to understand other's perspective, to be flexible, to solve problems and to resolve conflicts. The *"I Hate My Baby Brother"* activity was specifically designed to put the children into their mothers' shoes in order to understand why mothers behave in certain ways about their baby brothers/sisters.

> The teacher brings a chair and puts it in front of the children who are sitting on the carpeted floor. She introduces an empty chair to the children for the role-play.
>
> **Teacher:** There is an empty chair in front of us. Do you know who is sitting on the chair? Chulsoo (a random name of a boy) is sitting here. Chulsoo is very sad because of his baby brother. Chulsoo thinks his mom only loves his baby brother and she doesn't love Chulsoo anymore. Now I want you to become Chulsoo's mom and talk to Chulsoo, whatever you want to say to him. Who wants to be Chulsoo's mom first?
>
> (Jungmin walks to the empty chair and says)
>
> **Jungmin:** Chulsoo, Mommy loves you and your brother equally.
>
> (The teacher pretends to become Chulsoo and speaks)
>
> **Teacher:** Then why are you always holding only the baby?
>
> **Jungmin:** Because he is too young and if he is left alone, he will pick up dirt from the floor.
>
> (Jungmin goes back to his seat)
>
> (Other children walk up to the front one by one and say to Chulsoo)
>
> **Child one:** I hold him because he cannot walk yet.
>
> **Child two:** Because the baby was just born.
>
> **Child three:** The baby can fall down, and the baby can't eat by himself.
>
> **Child four:** Mommy holds the baby, because if mommy doesn't hold him, the baby would cry.

> **Chulsoo (teacher):** Ah-ha! Mommy holds the baby because he cannot walk. Then
> why do you keep saying that I should yield to him?
>
> **Jinhee:** Because the baby is too young and he cannot think well. Mommy loves
> both of you equally.
>
> **Chulsoo:** Do you really love both of us the same?
>
> **Jinhee:** Yes, mommy loves you and the baby equally! (Observation, October 5,
> 2007).

Since children's emotional turbulence due to a new sibling can often lead to behavioral problems, this is a very important topic to be addressed in early childhood. Dealing with the common situation of having a baby brother/sister, role-play was used to prompt children to take mom's perspective and to think about why she had to care about the baby brother. This temporary "as-if" environment led some children to see the situation objectively, to put themselves in the mother's position, and to generate answers which showed their empathy to the mother. Empathy is based on an understanding of others' feelings. The children's answers with their own good reasons were the results of their logical thinking about why the mother had to care for the baby brother.

It would be developmentally challenging for young children to see a situation from others' perspectives because children's thinking at this stage is self-centered (Gordon & Browne, 1996; Piaget, 1929). However, repeated practice with concrete situations and positive reinforcement enables them to gradually go beyond the egocentric way of thinking, leading to more flexible thinking. The teacher (Ms. K) shared her observation of the children's developing understanding of how others feel and think through the role-plays.

> **Ms. K:** In the beginning of the semester, although the children in the role-play pod
> were the ones who showed strong interpersonal/intrapersonal intelligences, they
> frequently did not care about others or showed inappropriate interactions with
> others. As time proceeded, the children were observed to understand others'
> viewpoint and care about others. For example, the "*Free Hug*" activity requires not
> only the children's confidence and courage but also their understanding of what they
> can do for others to help others feel better. As time went by, more children were
> more courageous in hugging people without hesitation and said "I'm happy to make
> people feel better" or "It was good to hug more people." Role-play activities enabled
> the children to understand themselves and care about others around them.

Children volunteered to express their caring and affection toward others and experienced that helping others feel good in turn made them feel good, which can lead to their heightened self-esteem. With a strong sense of self, children are ready to learn to live within a group. Goleman says "Empathy builds on self-awareness; the more open we are to our own emotions, the more

skilled we will be in reading feelings" (1995, p. 96). Understanding others' feelings and perspectives were demonstrated when the children were prompted to put themselves into a situation where others were in and come up with reasons as to why others behaved in certain ways. It is critical to ask children to imagine how someone else who is close to them might feel and to help children connect their own feelings with a particular situation or events that they have been involved in.

Self-Discipline

Although no single standard of behavior is universal, all societies have behavior codes to keep people safe and to help them get along (Berns, 2009). Persons skilled in intrapersonal intelligence are known to have better capacity for self-discipline (Armstrong, 1994). Self-discipline is the voluntary control of one's behavior (Calkins & Williford, 2009). Children who regulate their own behavior judge what is right or wrong based on reasoning, concern for others, and an understanding of acceptable and unacceptable conduct. The "*Hard-to-Keep Promise*" activity was designed to foster introspective self-reflection and self-discipline by encouraging young children to reflect on the promise that they did not keep.

> The teacher asks the children to think about promises they need to keep and draw their ideas. After about 15 minutes, children are asked to show their drawing and introduce their promises that are difficult to keep.
>
> **YoungHan:** It's hard not to knock down what friends made with blocks and to rebuild it.
>
> **Minwoo:** We should not fight with friends, but we do. It's hard to draw this!
>
> **Soojee:** (looking at her drawing and pointing to what she drew one by one) This is a playground and one friend dropped the soccer ball by accident and he felt bad because other friends laughed at him. I know we shouldn't laugh at others' mistakes.
>
> **Jinhee:** Everyone in my class follows the rules really well except Junhoon. He doesn't listen to the teacher. He cuts in line.
>
> **Heeseo:** Donghyun runs in the hallway. It's really hard not to run in the hallway. I do not have any promises that are hard to keep, though.
>
> **Youn Jin:** (Pointing at people in her drawing one by one) This is Jooyoun and she doesn't take care of her baby sister, and this is Jooyoun's sister and she always follows Jooyoun. This is Taeik and he runs. And this is me and I shout at friends who are far from me. I should not do that but it's hard not to. This is SungYoun and she yells at me (Observation, September 28, 2007).

In this activity, the children described and expressed their awareness of the rules that they were expected to follow and represented their ideas in their drawings. They confessed to the rules that

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they felt and experienced as difficult to observe. They showed that they were aware of how to interact with their friends positively and reflected which behaviors were acceptable and which were not. Some chose incidents they regretted or where they made mistakes. Most of the children talked about promises other people did not keep instead of what they themselves did. Some of them recognized that it is difficult to observe the rules all the time but showed their efforts in trying to control their desires in order not to break the rules. These observations show that the children did not reach internal regulation but were at the stage of identification/shared regulation (DeVries & Zan, 2003; Kalish & Cornelius, 2006), which refers to children imitating conduct, attitudes, and values of important people in their lives. Thus, this reflective process can help to reinforce the rules to young children by helping them monitor and control their behaviors. Children are better able to understand expectations and rules when these are accompanied by reason (Denno, Carr, & Bell, 2011; Helwig & Truriel, 2002). Hence, it may have been more effective if the teacher had asked the children why some promises were more difficult to keep than others and why keeping those promises is important. In addition, providing time to think about how they felt when they saw other people break the rules can facilitate children's recognition of other's feelings and their reflective processes. Adults have the primary responsibility for teaching children how to act in ways that are acceptable to the community and the culture they belong to. Children can become self-disciplined by practicing to delay gratification and to regulate their own behaviors. These qualities cannot be achieved through coercive discipline.

Discussion and Conclusion

This research explored contents and implementation of role-plays to develop personal intelligences. Role-play played a significant role in enhancing personal intelligences in a number of ways. The role-plays were particularly useful when children were encouraged to think from others' perspectives. Without following a pre-planned script, children made a connection with their own experiences with the topics, which helps children to empathize with and understand/respect others more easily (Upright, 2002). Furthermore, role-play allowed children to express their ideas and emotions in multiple ways – verbally, kinesthetically, and through drawings. Going beyond the simple recognition of the issues, the children were encouraged to find how to cope with problems and to solve them independently, which led them to recognize their own skills and abilities and to heighten their self-esteem (Seefeldt, 2005).

The role-play sessions became more effective in influencing children's experiences by consistently including warm-up and reflection times. Having structure in lessons helps make experiences systematic and organized (Stinson, 2002) as well as helping children predict the flow of the lesson. That is, the fixed structure becomes a routine for children and helps them feel secure in the learning environment and organize their experiences systematically. Furthermore, each component has its independent role and, at the same time, interacts with each other as a whole. Warm-up activities helped to ready the children for the main role-play lessons and created a comfortable environment, which helped them to be more engaged. Naturally introducing the topic of the day, the warm-ups contributed to making a smooth transition to the main role-play lesson. Main lessons closely dealt with children themselves and people around them to facilitate improving personal intelligences. These lessons also provided chances for the children to verbalize, act out, and represent their feelings, experiences, and ideas. Reflection helped the children consolidate their experiences during the role-play and evaluate their own and others' performances and ideas. According to Dewey (1938), only when they are able to reflect on an experience, children are truly engaged in learning. Reflections on their feelings and other's ideas are essential in developing personal intelligences (Hoerr, 2000). Interconnectivity among these three components – warm-up,

main lesson, and reflection, contributed to maximizing the children's understanding of the topic and engagement in the activities, making their experiences comprehensive and holistic.

Not only the components of role-play sessions, but also were interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences interconnected in the activities. For example, the "*Let's Praise*" activity dealt with both positive attitude toward others and positive self-concept by identifying others' strengths and by being praised of their own strengths. The "*Don't Hold a Grudge*" activity gave the children an opportunity to hear what other people thought about them as well as a chance to articulate their own frustrations and negative feelings toward their friends. In the "*My Minds*" activity, children reflected on their feelings and identified who they were, associating with their family members and friends. Gardner (2000) maintains that the personal intelligences are inextricably linked and that under ordinary circumstances neither can develop without the other. Children had a chance to see themselves through other people and, at the same time, understand others based on their own experiences and feelings. Exploring and discovering why people behave in certain ways can help to reflect on their own behavior (Wagner, 1999). That is, one gains knowledge of the self through relationship with others (Campbell, 1996). Children who are strong in intrapersonal intelligence are aware of how others perceive them and are continually monitoring how they are received (Hoerr, 2000). Ultimately, one's sense of self results from a fusion of one's interpersonal and intrapersonal knowledge (Gardner, 2000). Therefore, it is more effective when these two personal intelligences are taught together and children are encouraged to see themselves through others and understand others based on their own experiences and feelings as observed in this research.

Role-playing activities examined here did not go without caveats, which prompt several implications for early childhood educators who are considering using role-plays. First, children's ideas during activities need to be represented in a variety of ways, not only through verbal expressions but also through kinesthetic and artistic expressions. Verbal expressions sometimes can limit children's communication of their genuine feelings for various reasons, such as being self-conscious of someone's presence or being shy in expressing their honest feelings. Next, teachers are recommended to observe the intended outcomes of the activities in multiple contexts over time. For example, in the "*I Hate My Baby Brother*" activity, children may not have been able to verbalize their understanding but were able to internalize the lesson and change their behavior. It is important that educators recognize and teach to a broad range of talents and skills. Educators should also consider different social, cultural, and educational contexts to implement role-plays for personal intelligences. Although most of the activities implemented here could be applied to different social and cultural settings, some activities may require a closer attention to cultural values. For example, "*My Mind*" and "*To My Friends*" activities required children to explicitly express their feelings toward themselves and their friends. However, unlike Western cultures, talking about one's feelings and thoughts is often seen as irrelevant, inappropriate, and disagreeable in East Asian contexts (Kim & Markus, 1999), which could have affected children's expressions of their feelings and opinions in this research. Finally, teachers should remember that there are numerous ways to strengthen children's interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences in addition to role-plays. Not only at the individual teacher level but also at the school level, continued efforts and supports, such as providing trainings and professional development workshops for in-service teachers to develop different instructional methods and strategies, are essential.

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