



## Early Years 2 IPC Unit: What Is Safe And What Is Not In The Pool

(Submitted by **Dania Maria Hernandez Perdices**, 2018, while serving as Early Years Teacher at International School of Havana, Cuba)

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| <b>Tool(s) used:</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systems Mapping</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Purpose of using tool:</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guiding Discussion</li> </ul> <p><b>Overview:</b><br/>The Systems Mapping was used to teach students from Early Years (EY) about “Safety”, one of the values encompassed in the <i>ISH Nines</i>. Every month a different value is presented and dealt with through related reading sessions, reflection time, and hands-on activities, among others. Evidence of the work done is displayed in the Values bulletin board from the EY Learning Centre.</p> <p>It is quite challenging to explain four years old students what a value is about. However, Safety is a concept they would find familiar if placed in the appropriate context. We then connected it to the unit being studied at that moment, which was “Sand &amp; Water” and adjust the task to their experience of being safe when using the swimming pool. Active learning was present as students decided how they wanted to learn about Safety. Some chose interviewing other kids, others preferred drawing their ideas, while others searched for, selected, and cut topic-related pictures. All different tasks were assembled in an oval diagram and students with some guidance worked together to connect ideas about being safe in the swimming pool.</p> |
| <b>Context of lesson/case study:</b>   | Early Years (EY) 2 classroom   |
| <b>Participants (# and description):</b>   | 12 students from EY2   |
| <b>Topic, Theme, or Key Understanding of unit/project:</b>   | IPC unit “Sand & Water”. Project topic: What is safe and what is not in the pool?  |
| <b>Length of unit/project:</b>   | <p>It was a two-day long project divided in four sessions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction and brainstorming</li> <li>• Hands on! (Interviews, Drawing your ideas and thoughts, researching and collecting evidence)</li> <li>• Discussing and connecting ideas!</li> <li>• Sharing our project with the community</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Resources/materials &amp; setting required:</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slideshow (Introduction)</li> <li>• Clipboards, script for interviews, pencils</li> <li>• Camera</li> <li>• Paper sheets, color pencils</li> <li>• Magazines, scissors</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Lesson Plan/Description of the Project:</b>   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The introduction and brainstorming session was planned to last 20 minutes. First, we watched and</li> </ul> |  |





discussed a PPT slideshow with different examples of individuals, kids mainly, who were swimming in the pool or getting ready for it. In using these prompts, students were able to put themselves in a similar situation and reflect on, for instance, what they would need to bring to the pool or what they would need to bear in mind before swimming in order to be safe. After discussing the main aspects of the topic of Safety, our learners were invited to choose how they wanted to enhance their knowledge of the targeted topic and work together as group to fulfil the assigned task (Active and Collaborative learning).

- Hands on! Some learners chose interviewing other students from other classes. This first group was suggested to pretend being reporters in search of information. They were given a script to follow. However, as the group became more confident during the interviews, they decided to improvise and posed amazing questions! The second group preferred selecting pictures from printed materials and sorting them out according to ideas discussed previously. They focused on two main aspects, how people act safely in the pool and what items keep you safe. The third group decided to create their own drawings to share what they have learnt about Safety. They based their work on their own experiences and included their opinions and advice as well.
- Connecting ideas! Once all group tasks were completed, we gathered round to interconnect the amassed data. The Systems Mapping tool was first explained by asking students to hold hands with other students who have found similar answers or have addressed the topic in the same direction. This physical action was very useful in demonstrating that information collected from different sources i.e. interviews, magazines and students' drawings was interconnected. In other words, it somehow shows how students' ideas are rephrased in the opinions given by other students and can be found then in magazines as well. Three to four years old students are still self-centred and are in the process of understanding they belong to a larger group of individuals. By practicing this tool, which was adjusted this time to a small scale scenario, these youngsters will eventually grasp the concept of connecting systems.
- A giant construction sheet of paper was then placed in the centre of the circle of students to create connections by using the classic ball of yarn. The teacher served as a facilitator in the process of looking for connections of different nature. The facilitator used inquiry-based questions (21 century skills) to provoke students' participation. As students connected ideas by passing the string, they were asked to notice how some statements were connected by a cause-effect relation, others were a validation to what had just been said, while the others provided a solution to the problem.
- Safety is the value of the Month! It was time then for sharing our Systems Mapping tool with the ISH community as Safety was the value been promoted that month of June. The oval diagram was displayed on a large bulletin board located by the entrance of the EYLC (Early Year Learning Centre) building. Any member of our community would be able to take a look at the work done by the EY 2 class. Other classes made their contributions to the Values board in order to celebrate the value of the month. That was also a good opportunity to share our experience in carrying out this project. At the moment we were assembling our piece of work, the EY coordinator was passing by and she stopped to share a few words of congrats for all reflections and pro-activeness demonstrated.

## Reflection

### Plusses:

- Connecting their own ideas and work with others was highly beneficial for these young students who are getting to understand what is to be part of a community such as the school.
- Listening to similar ideas from a different perspective or source helped to reinforce the knowledge and concepts introduced or revisited. It elicited more input from the students during discussions.
- In order to allow for assorted connections to take place, the project was planned including a broad range of perspectives, kids from older grades viewpoints, magazines and related publications and the learners' comments on the topic.
- The project was connected to the value of the month. It was an excellent opportunity to address Safety as a value for the ISH community and share the final product with the entire EY Learning Centre.





**Challenges:**

In the future when this project is repeated, I feel some changes need to be made in order to cater for different learning styles and preferences. When I was planning the different lessons included in the project, I took into account that there were many verbal and visual learners in this class. This data was used to create assorted tasks based on students' preferences to allow them to choose how they wanted to learn about the addressed topic (Active learning).

**Suggestions for other practitioners and educators:**

After using this tool with my four years old students I would like to recommend it as it has been extremely valuable to teach at this age level, particularly to connect subtopics to BIG topics and make sense of it. It has also been essential for students, especially very young students, to learn how to connect their own ideas to others' and consequently to general concepts.

**Evidence and Resources:**



Interviewing other students to learn about Safety



Examples of students' drawings to illustrate Safety and Systems Mapping



Connecting ideas





Sharing the project with the school community

