



# Community Kids

A constructionist, participatory action research (PAR) paradigm for promoting social understanding and exploring social justice with first and second graders.

# Theoretical Framework

Youth Participatory Action Research (PAR):

Kids and adults collaborating to research phenomena that influence them and their communities



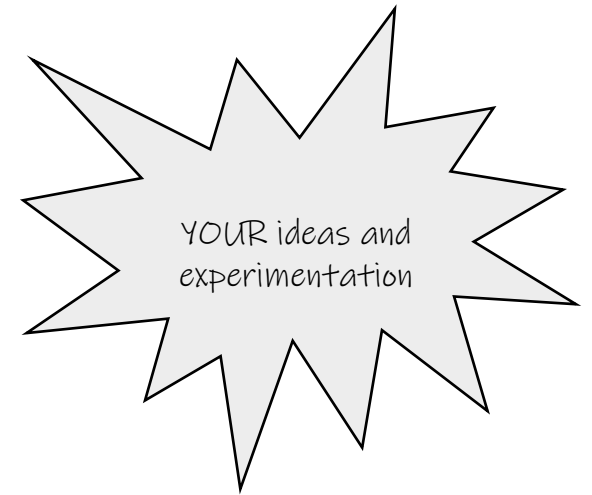
Constructionism:

A way of learning in which students "construct" knowledge through active, physical making



Perspective-taking:

Imagining or considering the thoughts and feelings of others as a way to understand and navigate the social world



Community Kids

# Learning goals

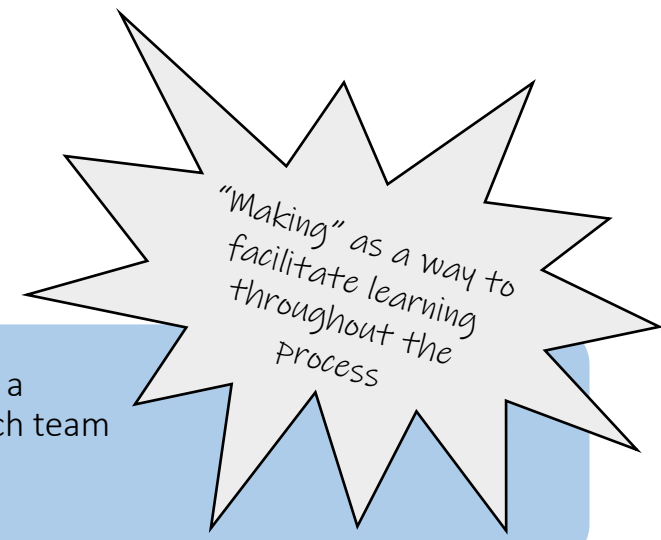
## For teachers



- Learn about how to facilitate PAR-style projects with elementary schoolers, and develop or iterate a framework for those projects that makes sense to YOU (using this resource as a starting place).

## For students

- Develop a sense of **community** and a feeling of agency *within* the research team and project framework.



- Test the hypothesis that **perspective-taking** can serve as a foundation and a unifying thread for:
  - a. understanding others' knowledge
  - b. understanding the imperative for addressing others' needs within a community).

- Practice **perspective-taking** as a foundation for:
  - a. understanding others' knowledge
  - b. understanding the imperative for addressing others' needs within a community).



- Learn more about kids' capacity for understanding social ideas, especially social **equity**, and how that capacity can be supported.

- Build a deep and personal understanding understanding of social ideas, especially social **equity**.



- Learn more about kids' capacity for understanding **knowledge** and it's construction and how that capacity can be supported

- Build a deep and personal understanding of **knowledge** and how it is constructed.

# Week 1: Introduction

## *Suggested weekly agenda*

- Introduce the structure and purpose of the project
- Set goals and norms collaboratively
- Get to know each other through community-building games and activities
- Introduce individual “learning journals” – binders for each participant to hold making projects and document individual growth throughout the project
- Introduce “idea board” – a bulletin board for displaying *our* definitions of important ideas

## **Week 1 central concept**

**community**, n. a group of people who have something in common, like where they live, where they go to school or work, or what they like to do. (e.g., a research team!)



# Week 1 - Session 1

## Suggested Session Agenda

- Introductions game
- *What is a community?*
  - Brainstorm some of the communities we belong to
  - Write our own definition of community/make community pages for our “idea board”
  - *Why do communities matter?*
- The “Community Kids” team as a community
  - Setting norms for working together collaboratively
  - Coming up with ideas to get to know each other better and have fun together
- Distribute and start to decorate “learning journals”

## Questions for teachers

- What goals and expectations do kids have for their shared spaces? What ideas do they have for building community within the research team?
- (Ongoinglly,) what activities “work” for your context, and what might you change in a future iteration?



How do kids respond to the idea of “learning journals”? What does that say about their intuitions about metacognition?



How do kids understand the meaning of “community”? Does the idea of social equality or equity show up in kids’ understanding of community?



### Making + materials

decorating learning journals: binders, stickers (including blank ones to draw on), foam shapes, letter stickers

creating our own definition of community

# Week 1 - Session 2

## Suggested Session Agenda

- Introductory games
- Review our definition of community
- What is a community we all belong to?
- The community of our city
  - Map and photo activities
  - Brainstorming what we know about our city
- Introduce the steps of the Y-PAR process
  - Why are we doing this?
    - Learning about communities matters
    - Kids' ideas matter
    - Sharing what we learn with the city!
  - My goals + your goals
- Outdoor games
  - Take an outdoor photo of something that matters to you

## Questions for teachers

- What engages and excites children in talking about the communities they belong to?
- How do kids respond to the idea of PAR? What is exciting and what is confusing to them?
- What activities “work” for your context, and what might you change in a future iteration?



How do kids understand the meaning of “community”? Do the ideas of social equality or equity show up in kids’ understanding of their own city?



### Making + materials

taking photos outdoors to help us brainstorm/connect to our community:  
polaroid cameras

# Week 1 - Session 3

## Suggested Session Agenda

- Introductory game
- What did we do/talk about last time?
  - What we're doing together
  - The community of our city
  - What are things you're confused about or have questions about?
- Do WE all see the city the same way?
- Reading a book about perspectives like "Voices in the Park"
  - What if we each described what it's like to live in our city? Would we end up with different "voices"?
- Setting up our own "voices" maps of the city
  - What is the point of a personal map?
  - What do personal maps look like?
  - What should go on a personal map?
    - Things we like and things that could be better worksheets
- Drawing time

## Questions for teachers

What "sticks" with kids about YPAR after a break? What do they need reminders about?



How, if at all, are kids' understandings of community changing? What role do social ideas (equality, inclusivity, neighborliness) play in children's "voices" maps of the city?



How do kids understand the idea of "voices" and the notion that there are differences in our experiences of the world? What is confusing to them about that idea?



**Making + materials**  
drawing maps of the city:  
paper, drawing supplies,  
example maps, rulers

# Week 2: Reflecting

## *Suggested weekly agenda*

- Continue to build community within the research team
- Determine issues in the community we care about both individually and as a group
- Go out into the community to explore places we know/take pictures/collect natural materials to make models

## Week 2 central concept

*perspectives*, n. the way one person sees something, which depends on who they are, what they like, what they've done before, what they think, how they feel, etc.





# Week 2 - Session 1

## Suggested Session Agenda

- Introductory game
- What did we do/talk about last time?
  - What are things you're confused about or have questions about?
- Finish working on our maps
- Revisit the book we read last time (i.e., "Voices in the Park")
  - What can we tell about the speaker from each page?
- Sharing our maps
  - What can we tell about you from what you drew?
  - Introduction to "perspectives" and "perspective glasses"
- Starting to brainstorm things we each care about in the city (with maps)
  - What are the things we thought could be better?

## Questions for teachers

So far, how are various activities engaging students? What are they most excited about at this point?



- What is important to kids in their own city?
- Are social ideas like equality, inclusivity, diversity, access, on their minds? What *other* ideas are they thinking about?



- How are kids' understandings of "voices" developing?
- How does shifting to the word "perspectives" shift their thinking? Do they have specific questions or misunderstandings?



Making + materials  
finishing our personal maps

creating our own definition of  
perspectives

# Week 2 - Session 2

## Suggested Session Agenda

- Warmup: exploring diorama materials!
  - What's something interesting you found?
  - What's an idea for what you could do with it?
- What did we do/talk about last time?
  - What are things you're confused about or have questions about?
- Reviewing the issues we brainstormed last time (especially the things we thought could be better)
- How could you build a model to represent one of those things?
  - Go through an example with the class
    - Why did we think it could be better?
    - How would we show that in a model?
    - What would people know about the view through our perspective "glasses" by looking at these?
- Working on individual (or group) dioramas

## Questions for teachers

- How do students engage with the diorama materials? Are they excited by the freedom? Intimidated? What kinds of supports can you give them?
- Do they connect this activity to the conversations you've been having as a group?



How do students connect previous conversations about "perspectives" to our dioramas?



**Making + materials**  
working on our dioramas:  
cardboard boxes, any and all  
kinds of 3D materials!

# Week 2 - Session 3

## Suggested Session Agenda

- Warmup
  - What is the idea behind your diorama?
  - What's something cool you did last time?
  - What's something you want to add/change this time?
- Working on dioramas
- Sharing our dioramas with the group + taking pictures for our learning journals.
  - What does this show about the city?
  - How could we use it as a starting place for making the city better?
  - What would people know about the view through our perspective "glasses" by looking at this?

## Questions for teachers

- How do students engage with the diorama materials? Are they excited by the freedom? Intimidated? What kinds of supports can you give them?
- Do they connect this activity to the conversations you've been having as a group?



How do students connect previous conversations about "perspectives" to our dioramas?



**Making + materials**  
finishing our dioramas:  
cardboard boxes, any and all  
kinds of 3D materials!

# Week 3: Talking to others

## *Suggested weekly agenda*

- Choose method(s) to collect data
- Create data-collection materials and collect data
- Check-in (half-way through the project) about our goals, norms, and new ideas

## Week 3 central concept

*equity*, n. the idea that everyone should get the things they need, even if those things are different (which means listening to everyone!)



# Week 3 - Session 1

## Suggested Session Agenda

- Introductory game
- What did we do last time?
  - Dioramas!
  - Things we care about in the city
- Check-in about why this matters + how we feel things are going
  - What do you have questions about?
  - What would you want to change?
- Equity picture activity
  - What would equity look like for the local issues we modeled?
  - Drawing our own equity pictures in our learning journals
  - Writing a definition of equity for our "idea board"
- Set up for next time: what would it take to be equitable in learning about our city?
  - Considering the needs of other people
  - *Listening to* the needs of other people
  - Who in the city could WE learn from?

## Questions for teachers

- What did students take away from the diorama activity?
- How are they feeling about the project in general at this point? What do they want to change going forward?



- How do kids respond to the idea of equity? Are they familiar with it already?
- How do they navigate the connection between equity and the work we're doing/the need to listen to other people in the city? Who do they want to hear from?



### Making + materials

drawing our own equity pictures:  
paper, drawing supplies

creating our own definition of  
equity

# Week 3 - Session 2

## Suggested Session Agenda

- Introductory game
- What did we do/talk about last time?
  - What is equity?
  - How does equity relate to learning about the city?
- Intro to “data collection”
- Who (else) would we need to talk to?
- What kinds of questions would we want to ask?
  - Brainstorming questions together and writing/drawing them on paper to add to a giant display board
  - Two kinds of questions: questions that look the same through our glasses and questions that look different through our glasses
    - Sorting the questions we brainstormed
    - Discussing what we learned

## Questions for teachers

What helps kids stay engaged in abstract conversations (e.g. about perspectives and knowledge?) How can you support them in those conversations?



Do kids naturally distinguish between objective and subjective questions when brainstorming for the survey? If not, does the idea “click” with teaching?



What do kids remember about equity and how it relates to our project of learning about the city?



Are perspectives and “glasses” useful for helping kids understand the difference between objective and subjective questions?



*Making + materials  
creating and visually  
representing/connecting our questions  
about the city*

# Week 3 - Session 3

## Suggested Session Agenda

- Introductory game
- What did we do/talk about last time?
  - What are things you're confused about or have questions about?
- Finalizing our questions
- Getting ready for special guest(s)
  - What is an interview?
  - How do you lead an interview?
- Interview with a special guests(s)
- Debrief about the interview
  - What did we learn about the ideas we've been discussing so far?
  - What is familiar and new about the perspective of our guest?
- Make a plan for data collection during the week

## Questions for teachers

What does a guest/visitor bring to the project? Is the experience engaging for students? Is it nerve-wracking?



What did students learn from the guest about the ideas we've been discussing so far?



### Possible special guests:

a parent, a city official, a city worker, a local business owner, a cab driver, a service worker, a religious leader...

# Week 4: Making connections

## *Suggested weekly agenda*

- Analyze our data
- Synthesize our findings with our own reflections as city community members
- Enact changes based on our half-way point check in

## Week 4 central concept

*knowledge*, n. things we know, sometimes things we can all know, and sometimes things only some of us can know





# Week 4 - Session 1

## Suggested Session Agenda

- Introductory game
- What did we do/talk about last time?
  - What are things you're confused about or have questions about?
- Looking at our "data" together
  - Why don't people agree?
    - Review the two types of questions
- Introduction to "data analysis"
  - What is knowledge?
    - Knowledge as something useful
    - Writing our own definition of knowledge
  - Two kinds of "knowledge" for two kinds of questions
    - What are examples of these things?
    - Discussion time
- Game break!

## Questions for teachers

- How are kids managing all the new ideas being presented each week?
- What supports do they need, whether intellectual, social, or emotional?



- How do kids respond to the idea of "knowledge"? How do they already think about knowledge?
- How does the idea of knowledge expand our understanding of the "two kinds of questions"?



*Making + materials  
creating knowledge definition  
for idea board*

# Week 4 - Session 2

## Suggested Session Agenda

- Introductory game
- What did we do/talk about last time?
  - What is knowledge, and what does it have to do with our project?
  - The data from our survey
  - What are things you have question about?
- How can we organize and make sense of the data we have?
  - Group discussion and brainstorming strategies
  - Scaffolding activities (TBD)
- Physically sorting printed-out versions of our survey responses, based on our previous discussion
- Beginning to imagine how we could make collages to show our findings in a way that makes sense
  - Exploring collage pictures

## Questions for teachers

- When are the kids most engaged and excited? When are they the least engaged and excited?
- What facilitates good discussion and group brainstorming or problem solving?



- What do kids remember about knowledge? How are their understandings developing?
- What strategies for making sense of ambiguous knowledge are intuitive to kids? What strategies occur to them with discussion and scaffolding?



Making + materials  
starting data analysis  
collages:  
paper, city pictures, survey  
response quotes

# Week 4 - Session 2

## Suggested Session Agenda

- Introductory game
- Working more on our collages
  - What is an image you found or an idea you had last time?
  - How could you build on that image or idea this time?
  - Making the collages
- Sharing collages
  - What can we learn from these?
- What do we know at this point?
  - What other data/learning do we want to consider?
    - Reviewing our interview recording/transcript
    - Reviewing documentation of our conversations together
    - Reviewing our learning journals
- Now, what can we *DO* with what we know?

## Questions for teachers

- What are the opportunities and challenges of data collection through collage? What other strategies for making sense of data could you (or your students) imagine?
- What source(s) of data are students' most concerned with? How could you focus more on that data?



- How do students respond to their learning journals now, toward the end of the project?
- How do they navigate the different forms of data available to them (the survey responses, their reflective data, the interview...)?



Making + materials  
working on data analysis  
collages:  
paper, city pictures, survey  
response quotes

# Week 5: Planning an action

## *Suggested weekly agenda*

- Learn about actions others kids and adults have done
- Brainstorm actions we might want to do
- Plan the steps it will take to DO our action
- Figure out ways we share our findings (and our action) with others

## Week 5 central concept

***community (take II)***, n. a group of people who listen to each other's perspectives and knowledge so that they can treat each other equitably



# Week 5 - Session 1

## Suggested Session Agenda

- Introductory game
- What did we do/talk about last time?
- Why action?
  - Action and equity
  - Action and knowledge
  - Action and perspectives (OUR perspectives)
- Writing a *new* definition of “community” based on the other ideas we have learned
- Reading stories of kids who have done community-based actions before
- Brainstorming actions WE could do
  - What are different categories of actions?
  - What would make an action exciting to us?
- Exploring materials for signs/stickers/posters, etc.

## Questions for teachers

- Which motivations for action are most inspiring for students? What role do stories of other kids play?
- What kinds of actions appeal to students initially? Why?



How do students integrate the concepts we have learned so far?



**Making + materials**  
exploring the materials we might  
use for an action:  
paper, poster board,  
drawing/decorating supplies,  
stickers, polaroid camera, etc.

# Week 5 - Session 2

## Suggested Session Agenda

- Introductory game
- What did we do/talk about last time?
  - Why action?
  - Revisiting the different kinds of actions we talked about
- Choosing one or more actions to do individually OR as a team/group of teams
- Making a plan for our action(s)
  - Action plan timelines
    - Is there anything we need to do before next time?



# Week 6: Doing an action

## *Suggested weekly agenda*

- Enact our action plan
- Share our findings and action and celebrate the work we have done!

## **Week 6 central concept(s)**

*review all the concepts we've learned so far!*



# Week 6 – Sessions 1 + 2

## *Suggested Session Agenda 1*

- Introductory game
- Reviewing the first half of our class dictionaries (community and perspectives)
- What did we do/talk about last time?
  - Action timelines – where are we?
- Making things necessary for our actions

## ***Suggested Session Agenda***

- Introductory game
- Reviewing the second half of our class dictionaries (equity and knowledge)
- Continuing our action timelines
- Celebrate!

## Questions for teachers

What do you want to try differently next time you facilitate a PAR project?



What would your own “learning journal” look like after this project?



How can you build on this project to promote more equity and inclusivity in your teaching, in your community, in the other communities you inhabit...

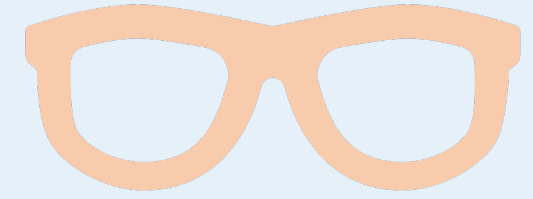


Did anything change in your perspective after spending this time listening to 6 and 7 year olds?

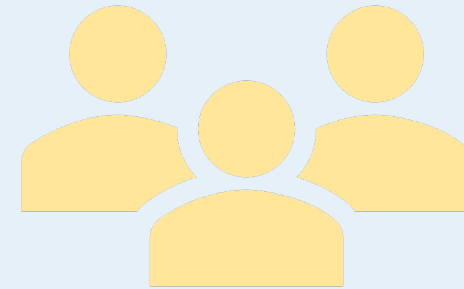


*Making + materials  
making whatever is necessary  
for our actions!*





*Additional resources*



# Week X - Session X

Session Agenda

## Questions for teachers



Making + materials