

Circle of Viewpoints Routine

This routine was trialled with year 3 boys while reading the novel “How to Eat Fried Worms”.

The novel has a simple structure and four main characters – Billy, Alan, Tom and Joe. Alan has bet Billy \$50 that he can't eat 15 worms in 15 days. Joe becomes Alan's 'second' and Tom becomes Billy's 'second'.

At one stage in the story Tom seems to desert Billy. At this point the boys were asked to think about Tom's actions from the viewpoint of one of the other characters. The boys brainstormed various viewpoints and these were scribed on the board and discussed.

Ideally the boys should have had the opportunity to 'become' the character whose viewpoint they were taking, but time always gets in the way. We also did not fully explore the final step in the routine which is “A question I have from this viewpoint is . . .”. Also, another Circle of Viewpoints routine should have occurred at the end of the story (after Tom has redeemed himself). Unfortunately the end of term intervened.

To be honest, the boys responded better than I expected. Rather than describe the physical point of view (i.e. where the action is taking place) which is what I thought might happen, they got right into it straight away. For those who find it difficult to infer, the exercise gave them food for thought. The classes seemed to enjoy it and I think the boys could relate, as the ups and downs of friendships is very much part of their everyday experience.

This proved to be an excellent routine for exploring character, even though we really only scratched the surface. It is something I would feel very happy about repeating, extending and fine-tuning.

(Brainstorm results below)

3SL

I am thinking about Tom from . . .

Billy's point of view	Joe's point of view	Alan's point of view
Tom is deceitful. Tom is annoying. Where has Tom gone? I feel betrayed. Tom is a fussy eater. How does his mother handle him?	Just what I always thought, Tom can't do it. Where has Tom gone? Tom is stubborn and smart. Tom is a fussy eater. How does his mother handle with him?	Tom is not being a good friend. Good. Tom has deserted Billy so now he's alone and won't be able to win the bet. Tom is a coward. I'm surprised Tom ran away and left his friend. Billy might give up now. Tom is a fussy eater. How does his mother cope with him?

3RR

I am thinking about Tom from . . .

Billy's point of view	Joe's point of view	Alan's point of view
If he's not going to help me then I won't give him turns on my mini-bike. Tom's not being a true friend. Is Tom changing sides? I can do this on my own. I don't need Tom.	I'm annoyed with Tom for interfering with my plans. Is Tom running away part of a plan Billy and Tom have made up. What is Tom up to?	I'm cross with Tom for running away. I might win this bet now that Billy is alone. Tom is a chicken. What could Tom be doing while we are not watching him?

Circle of Viewpoints after finishing the story

3RR

Billy's point of view	Joe's point of view	Alan's point of view	Tom's point of view
<p>Tom saved me.</p> <p>I'm so glad Tom is my friend.</p> <p>I'm so happy that Tom and Pete rescued me and got me the last worm.</p> <p>I'm happy that Alan lost and has to pay up.</p>	<p>I'm cross with you Tom because you spoiled our plans.</p> <p>I wish I was like Tom and on Billy's side.</p>	<p>I've lost - bother.</p> <p>I'm cross with you Tom because you spoiled our plans.</p> <p>I was so stupid to make this bet.</p> <p>I wish I'd had Tom on my side and not Joe.</p> <p>I'm really cross I lost.</p> <p>I'm never going to do that ever again.</p>	<p>You're welcome Billy.</p> <p>I bet Billy gives me lots of turns on the mini-bike because I helped him.</p>

3SL - no time to do above at end of term