<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Putting yourself into others' shoes: role-play benefits preschoolers' social understanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Shen, Pinxiu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citation</td>
<td>Shen, P. (2011, March). Putting yourself into others' shoes: role-play benefits preschoolers' social understanding. Presented at Discover URECA @ NTU poster exhibition and competition, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URL</td>
<td><a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10220/8995">http://hdl.handle.net/10220/8995</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rights</td>
<td>© 2011 The Author(s).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

Theory of Mind (ToM) is the ability to ascribe mental states such as beliefs, desires, and intentions to oneself and others (Premack & Woodruff, 1978). It is closely related to preschoolers' behavioral control (e.g., Carlson, Moses, & Breton, 2002; Frye, Zelazo, & Palfai, 1995), academic competence (Blair and Razza, 2007), and social competence (Tan-Niam, Wood, & O'Malley, 2000). Past research has shown that Singaporean preschoolers had a slower ToM development as compared to Chinese, Korean, and North American children (Qu et. al, 2009; Qu et al., 2010, Shen & Qu, 2010). A training program to improve false belief understanding amongst Singaporean preschoolers is thus necessary. Although role-play has been positively associated with ToM development (e.g., Jenkins & Astington, 2000), none of the previous ToM training studies have employed role-play as a training methodology. This study examined the effectiveness of a role-play intervention program in improving preschoolers' ToM ability.

Hypothesis: Preschoolers who underwent the role-play intervention will show more advanced ToM development as compared to similar-aged preschoolers who did not undergo the intervention.

Method

Participants

35 preschoolers (Range= 48-71 months, M age = 60.79 months, SD = 6.40)

Measurement

Verbal ability
• Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Fourth Edition (PPVT-IV; Dunn & Dunn, 2006)
Theory of Mind (Wellman & Liu, 2004)
• Knowledge-access task (KA)
• Content false belief task (CFB)
• Explicit false belief task (EFB)
• Belief-emotion task (BE)

Procedure

Pre-intervention Test (50mins)
• All measurements administered
• All participants failed at least one of the false belief tasks hence were included in the next stages

Control condition
Coloring activities

Training condition
• Acted according to respective characters' mental states
• Asked to report own and others' false beliefs
• Explanations provided

At least 1 week later

Intervention (3 X 50mins across 2 weeks)

Post-intervention Test (50mins)
• ToM tasks administered

Results

Pre-intervention scores
• No significant differences between conditions in verbal ability and ToM understanding

Post-intervention ToM scores

Discussion and Conclusion

Role-play can improve the development of ToM in preschoolers and language is essential for the understanding of mental states. Future research may investigate whether role-play alone improves preschoolers' ToM ability.

Acknowledgement

This project is funded by a grant from the MCYS Family Research Fund. We would like to express our gratitude to the daycare centre, children, and parents participated in this study. We would also like to thank the research assistants, Evangeline Wai and Yee Yingjia for their diligence and hard work.

Selected References