

Compassionate Comprehension with the Common Core

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**DRAFT: Instructional Recommendations for using
Alice's Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll to help students**

*** expand feelings words vocabularies**

*** examine feelings and what caused them**

*** reflect on harm done**

*** identify attempts to demonstrate compassion and to heal the harm**

Recommended for Grades 4-5 (on the CA Common Core State Standard list of Texts
Illustrating the Complexity, Quality, and Range of Student Reading K5)

Offered below is one example in this text which lends itself well to a "Think aloud" lesson, and also to having students answer questions on their Written Response assignments (provided below).

This portion of the text is found near the end of Chapter II, "The Pool of Tears," where Alice shows compassion for a distressed mouse, and tries to calm him... repeatedly, after she continues to inadvertently say a number of things which frighten him.

Of special interest is Alice's telling the mouse, "Don't be angry..." This could be the springboard for an important discussion about respecting the feelings of others, and especially the need to acknowledge and deal appropriately with anger, rather than denying it. This lesson could be followed up with singing the song "If You're Angry and you Know It"

<https://betterworld.bandcamp.com/track/if-youre-angry-and-you-know-it>, having students illustrate the verses (formats provided), and create verses of their own for positive anger management strategies.

For your convenience, pertinent portions of the text are provided below:

"... the mouse looked at her rather inquisitively..."

"...she [Alice] began again: 'Où est ma chatte?,' [Where is my cat?]. The Mouse gave a sudden leap out of the water, and seemed to quiver all over with fright. 'Oh, I beg your pardon!' cried Alice hastily, afraid that she had hurt the poor animal's feelings. 'I quite forgot you didn't like cats.' 'Not like cats!' cried the Mouse, in a shrill, passionate voice. 'Would *you* like cats, if you were me?'"

"'Well, perhaps not,' said Alice in a soothing tone: 'don't be angry about it. And yet I wish I could show you our cat Dinah. ... and she's such a capital one for catching mice --- oh, I beg your pardon!' cried Alice again, for this time the Mouse was bristling all over, and she felt certain it must be really offended. 'We won't talk about her any more if you'd rather not.'"

"'We, indeed!' cried the Mouse, who was trembling down to the end of its tail. 'As if *I* would talk on such a subject! ... Don't let me hear the name again!'"

"'I won't indeed!' said Alice, in a great hurry to change the subject of conversations. 'Are you --- are you fond --- of --- of dogs?' The Mouse did not answer, so Alice went on eagerly: 'There is such a nice little dog near our house I should like to show you! ... it kills all the rats and --- oh dear!' cried Alice in a sorrowful tone, 'I'm afraid I've offended it again!' For the Mouse was swimming away from her as hard as it could go ... So she called softly after it. 'Mouse dear! Do come back again, and we won't talk about cats or dogs either, if you don't like them!'"

Please make sure you answer all questions using complete sentences!

I How do you think the character in the text is feeling, and why is the character feeling that way? (For example, please write on the lines, IN YOUR OWN WORDS, "_____ is feeling _____ because _____.")

_____ Please provide proof or evidence from the text in the boxes below.

| Feeling (or feelings) | Quote from the text which shows my proof or evidence, from page/s _____ |
|-----------------------|--|
| | |

II While the Character in the text was feeling the emotion(s) that you identified above in Question 1, did the character say or do anything that caused harm? Was anybody hurt?

A. Yes____ No____

B. If harm was caused, what was the harm? Be sure to provide the quote that is your evidence from the text, and tell the page number.

D If harm was caused, what did someone say or do to show compassion or to repair the harm and make things as right as possible? What did anyone do to help?

Be sure to provide the quote that is your evidence from the text, and the page number. If no one helped, tell that in a complete sentence.

Ñ If harm was done but compassion was not shown in the text, and if nothing was done to heal the harm --- if Restorative Justice was not put into action --- what would YOU have said and/or done? What could you do to help?

Ò What do you think were the character's **unmet needs** that resulted with the feeling or feelings? That is, what was it that they valued greatly, but were not getting or experiencing? What were they wanting, or what were they going for with their words or actions?

| | | |
|---|---------------|-------------------|
| " Acceptance | " Empathy | " Recreation/ fun |
| " Appreciation | " Harmony | " Respect |
| " Autonomy: Choosing our own dreams and plans | " Honesty | " Rest |
| " Calm | " Love | " Safety |
| " Closeness | " Peace | " Self-Worth |
| " Compassion | " Protection | " Support |
| " Creativity | " Reassurance | " Understanding |

Did the character have any other unmet needs or values that are not listed above?

What part of the text led you to that conclusion? (Give the page number and quote.)
