Summer Explorations Program – 2015
STEP & Sunnyvale School District

Summary Report – Elementary

PRESENTED BY: RUTH ANN COSTANZO, IRA LIT, DEY ROSE

The sixth year of the STEP/ Sunnyvale School District summer program of 2015 held at Bishop Elementary School in Sunnyvale was a successful partnership. The planning for the Summer Explorations program began in January of 2015. The district administrative team and the STEP summer team reviewed the successes and challenges of the previous summer and identified ways to enhance the 2015 program. Together we co-interviewed summer school teachers and selected thirteen teachers committed to mentoring STEP’s beginning teachers as well as teaching students. The summer school Principal Cecilia Mendoza-Torres, and the Director of Curriculum and Instruction Dorothy Abreu-Coito supported the teachers to identify a GLAD unit to implement during the Summer Explorations Program. STEP Clinical Associate Dey Rose shared numerous oral language development ideas to add to the GLAD units prior to the start of the Summer Explorations program, and provided theatre integration activities during the summer for each classroom. This mutual collaboration and professional development was an excellent model for the STEP teacher candidates to learn about how a district and university work together to support student learning.

Goals for the STEP/Sunnyvale District Summer Explorations Program - Elementary

About 321 students entering grades 1-5, 13 cooperating teachers, and 22 STEP teacher candidates participated in the joint STEP-Sunnyvale Explorations program.

The teaching goals for the elementary school students were to: develop students’ confidence in themselves as learners; improve literacy and numeracy skills; strengthen problem solving and critical thinking skills; provide opportunities for students to experience a variety of instructional strategies; and provide multiple experiences for students in reading (literature, poems, plays), writing, speaking, acting, singing, dancing and solving problems.

The goals for the STEP teacher candidates were to: observe ways to develop classroom community, get to know and to work closely with elementary school students and teachers, collaborate with experienced teachers and begin learning how to address the California Standards for the Teaching Profession, and document and assess students’ growth and development in literacy and numeracy.

Structure of the Summer Explorations Program

The Sunnyvale/STEP Summer Explorations at Bishop Elementary School was organized into two project based learning blocks:

1. A concentrated focus on literacy development, including oral language for all learners with a target for second language learners; and
2. A concentrated focus on numeracy development and problem solving.
The focus of the summer program was to foster a love of learning by developing students’ confidence in themselves as learners. Students strengthened their problem solving and critical thinking skills through a curriculum in literacy, math, oral language development and the arts using a modified GLAD approach. The summer program began classes on Monday, June 29th and concluded on Friday, July 24th. Classes met Monday – Friday from 8:00am-12:15 pm. STEP teacher candidates planned every morning before school from 7:45-8:00 am, and on Thursday afternoons from 12:30-2:00 with their cooperating teachers.

All Bishop Students had two large blocks of class time each day focusing on literacy, numeracy and oral language development. One or two STEP candidates were assigned to each teacher for both blocks. The STEP candidates were expected to help with supervisory duties during snack/break time from 10:00 to 10:30 am. Specific duties were assigned by Cecilia Mendoza-Torres, Bishop Elementary School summer Principal. The time schedule for the summer program is provided below:

- 7:45am Arrival of teachers
- 7:45 – 8:00am Prep Time/Yard Duty
- 8:00 - 10:00am Block A
- 10:00 - 10:30am Brunch (staggered by grade)
- 10:30 - 12:15pm Block B

In the Summer Explorations program, the partnership strategized to place two STEP candidates to a given class with one Cooperating Teacher. Part of the configuration resulted in three classes where only one teacher candidate was placed. Daily experiences in the classroom, debriefs and Thursday planning sessions provided many of the STEP students with their first experiences as teachers.

**Role of the STEP Teacher Candidates during Summer Explorations Program**

During the summer program teacher candidates contributed to student growth and development by:

- Working intensively with individuals and small groups of students.
- Focusing on literacy, math, and oral language strategies.
- Getting to know their students as individuals.
- Supporting the cooperating teacher in planning, implementing, and assessing learning.
- Reflecting together with the cooperating teacher.

In addition, there were opportunities for the STEP students to observe or visit other classrooms during the Summer Explorations program. STEP candidates were pre-assigned classrooms to visit during weeks two and three of the program. This provided the teachers advance notice of the observations and balanced the number of teacher candidates visiting each classroom.

**Role of the Cooperating Teachers during Summer Explorations Program**

Cooperating teachers supported the growth and development of teacher candidates by:

- Making their thinking visible. Many included the teacher candidates in daily conversations about goals for students, lesson plans & activities, and debriefs to assess how the class was progressing.
- Providing timely and specific feedback to the teacher candidates.
- Including the teacher candidates in morning discussions as daily and weekly plans and goals were considered and crafted.
- Modeling effective teaching strategies and positive interactions with students.
- Examining student work together and working as a team in providing oral and written feedback to the students.
The STEP Director of Clinical Work, Ruth Ann Costanzo, and the Summer Explorations clinical associates, Dey Rose and Laura Hill-Bonnet met with the cooperating teachers four times during the four-week program to debrief their experience, support the cooperating teachers in providing graduated responsibilities to the STEP students, and provide mentoring support. In addition, the cooperating teachers provided STEP with feedback about the STEP teacher candidates and the program. The STEP staff also checked in weekly with the principal, Cecilia Mendoza-Torres, who also attended the meetings with the Cooperating Teachers. Dey, Laura and Judy Hicks-Paulick were also on campus during the week to help support both the teacher candidates and cooperating teachers.

**Assessment of the STEP Teacher Candidates and the Summer Program**

STEP teacher candidates benefited from frequent feedback on their performances. Cooperating teachers, STEP staff, and peers observed interactions in the classrooms and debriefed with STEP teacher candidates on a routine basis. At the end of the program, cooperating teachers were asked to complete an Assessment of Field Placement Experience and Participation for each student teacher (Appendix B). This assessment served as documentation for student teachers’ clinical placement for the summer quarter and was organized around the California Standards for the Teaching Profession. It emphasizes conceptions of teaching and learning that underlie the pedagogical stance of STEP. Teacher Candidates also filled out a self-assessment using the same document. In addition to the self-assessment, the candidates were asked to provide feedback about their perception of the summer school experience (Appendix A). *Both Cooperating Teacher and Teacher Candidate feedback are included in the appendices.*

**Summary of the STEP 2015 Teacher Candidate and Cooperating Teacher Exit Surveys:**

77% of the STEP candidates said they had the opportunity to observe ways to develop classroom community either very well (4) or extremely well (5) on a scale of 1-5. 96% said they got to work closely with elementary students and teachers, 86% were able to build connection between theory and practice and 86% said they had an opportunity to collaborate with experienced teachers. When asked to what extent they had contributed to student academic growth and development by working with individuals and small groups of students, 82% chose a (4) or a (5) as a response (on a scale of 1-5), while 77% felt they had an opportunity to contribute to student social/interpersonal growth at a level (4) or (5).

**Recommendations for the Summer Explorations Program 2016:**

- Continue to partner in the selection and hiring process of administration.
- Continue to include mentor teachers who may be from outside the district.
- Continue to explore implementing project based learning units.
- Continue to identify ways to make the planning time more effective.
- Continue the weekly cooperating teacher mentoring meetings to better support the teacher candidates’ and cooperating teachers’ understanding of graduated responsibility in the program, as well as to improve strategies for giving feedback.
- Revisit district assessment tools for students.

The partnership between STEP and the Sunnyvale School District continues to be an excellent model of collaboration between a district and university. We are grateful for the commitment and support of the administration, the teachers and staff. Dey Rose, the STEP coordinator of the STEP elementary Summer Explorations program, and clinical associates Laura Hill-Bonnet and Judy Hicks Paulick supported the teacher candidates, the cooperating teachers, and the principal whenever an issue arose. Weekly debrief meetings with the principal helped the program run smoothly. The leadership of Dorothy Abreu-Coito and Cecilia Mendoza-Torres during the planning and implementation of the Summer Explorations program was outstanding.

We look forward to Summer 2016!
## APPENDIX A – TEACHER CANDIDATE SUMMER EXPLORATIONS PROGRAM
### SURVEY & FEEDBACK

1. To what extent were you able to meet the goals for the Sunnyvale/STEP Summer Explorations Program experience?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1 - Not at all</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 - Extremely well</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To observe ways to develop classroom community</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To get to know and to work closely with elementary school students and teachers</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
<td>31.82%</td>
<td>63.64%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To collaborate with experienced teachers</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>40.91%</td>
<td>45.45%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To build connections between theory and practice and/or make connections between coursework and field placements</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
<td>36.36%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4.36</td>
</tr>
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</table>

2. Another goal of the Sunnyvale/STEP Summer Explorations Program experience was to give you the opportunity to observe teaching and learning in classrooms other than your own.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1 - Not at all useful</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 - Extremely useful</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
<th>Mean</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How useful were these observations?</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
<td>45.45%</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.86</td>
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</table>
3. To what extent did you have the opportunity to contribute to the following by working with individuals and small groups of students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1 - Not at all</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 - To a large extent</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>student academic growth and development?</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>45.45%</td>
<td>36.36%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student social/interpersonal growth and development?</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
<td>45.45%</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. To what extent did you have the opportunity to contribute to student growth and development by supporting the cooperating teacher in:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1 - Not at all</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 - To a large extent</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>planning lessons?</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>implementing lessons?</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
<td>54.55%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assessing learning?</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. To what extent did you have the opportunity to contribute to student growth and development by reflecting with members of your teaching team?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1 - Not at all</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 - To a large extent</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please choose:</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>36.36%</td>
<td>45.45%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.82</td>
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## Teacher Candidate Highlights of the Sunnyvale/STEP Summer Explorations Program

- I was grateful to have the opportunity to dive into my teaching practice and to observe the myriad ways that my CT developed community. I was grateful for the opportunity to think on my feet and hone my classroom management skills.

- The students were lovely and there is clearly a strong sense of school culture built throughout the district.

- The people (my students and CT, the staff)
  - I absolutely loved my CT and the experience I had! I loved being able to put what we were doing in our Stanford classes into practice in a real classroom (BLIS especially did a great job of this). I also just loved getting to connect with the students and be in a school. I also thought it was really useful to be able to observe other teachers on Fridays!
  - Working with the students and learning with them - Working with my CT and seeing a teaching style that seems quite different from my personality. I learned a lot! - Graduated responsibility - teaching small groups or lessons with a build up of responsibility
  - building relationships with students, still being able to see their progress in such a short amount of time.

- Getting to know my elementary students
  - My CT was truly exceptional. (My CT) was so kind, willing to help, and I learned a lot from (my CT). Definitely having a good placement was the highlight of summer school.
  - I just really really loved learning from/working with my CT and other STEP partner. Our conversations about students and their learning were always so positive, so aimed at acknowledging/celebrating where students were and thinking about what we could do as teachers to further their academic development. I got to nerd out about/analyze why subtraction was so much more difficult for students than addition (and learned some valuable things in my personal research), and had many opportunities to get excited about rain forest animals with the students. My CT did a lot of voice-overs/telecasting to help us pick up on things (my CT) was doing in (my CT's) instruction, which I found very helpful.
  - My CT was excellent and the coursework was extremely well paired with my Summer School experiences. I enjoyed being paired with another STEPpie, it helped us stay on track of the coursework and the schedule, strengthened community, and facilitated some great discussions.
  - My CT was transparent in talking about (my CT’s) practice and the reasons behind each decision he made. (My CT) valued our opinions and we felt comfortable sharing them. (My CT) always checked in with us and I feel grateful for that. (My CT) took interest in bringing out our strengths and talking to us about areas of improvement. (My CT's) communication was clear and well thought out.
  - I enjoyed learning about project based learning and GLAD. Also, it was nice working in grade level teams. I also enjoyed working with my CT.

- I enjoyed working with a community of students that was very different from communities I with which I had previously worked. My CT provided me with many opportunities to lead lessons beginning the first day. I felt able to take the lead and engage with students throughout the entire session.

- The children and the opportunity to see a student-centered community develop...

- I absolutely loved working with my CT and fellow TC. I think that together we made a great team and I felt so comfortable trying out some of the things that we learned in class. Beyond having a
great team of teachers, my highlights all involve the connections that I was able to make with the students in such a short period of time.

- Interacting with the students and getting my feet wet with student teaching.
- Received many opportunities to lead lessons. CT was very supportive in many aspects.
- I loved my experience at the Sunnyvale/STEP Summer School. Both my CT and the students were wonderful and so excited to learn! I think some of my favorite moments were planning with my CT and partner STEP student and then watching as the lesson unfolded successfully the next day. I also learned a lot from my CT about how to use the GLAD method and teach with an emphasis on graphics and gestures to help support students who are English language learners.
- Some of the highlights were getting to know students on an individual basis and seeing the friendships that were developing within the classroom.
- Working with a CT who was flexible and willing to let me take on small group work and whole group lessons
- Putting theory into practice with the GLAD strategies and the Words their Way activities - Collaborating with other teachers - Getting to know my students and contribute to their academic and social growth
- I really appreciate the connection I made with my CT. Not only was I able to observe (my CT) teaching, (my CT) also shared a lot of resources with us that are extremely helpful to my own teaching career. I appreciate how planning/debrief time was built into our schedule. So I really get to work alongside the teacher to develop lesson plans and contribute to it. Having another STEPpie in the classroom is also extremely helpful, especially at the beginning of our student teaching experiences. We collaborated a lot, which was very good experience for me.
### Teacher Candidate Challenges

- Sometimes the classroom environment was stressful because my CT didn't give much warning about what to expect. I also went through an adjustment process as I discovered how to keep my energy up with such early mornings and limited breaks.

- I would have liked to see more groups. My CT mostly only led whole class activities.

- The quick turn around from summer school to Stanford classes each day. Similarly, not having as much time as I would have liked to collaborate with my CT after school.

- Although there were times when it was really great to have another STEPpie with me, I felt that it was easy to get worried about little things that he/she does better than you. For instance, I was always worried if it looked bad that my other STEPpie got there before me in the morning, or got do something that I didn't, etc. My CT was amazing at making sure we both got to do the same things and have the same experiences, but it seemed like a lot of people were worried about the natural sense to get sucked into being competitive about it.

- Not meeting some of the students' needs because of language barriers - I wanted to see how a teacher builds classroom community but given the limited timeframe of summer school (4 weeks), I felt it wasn't accomplished well with the restraints

- working with the CT (had differing values).

- I did not feel it was a good fit with my CT. We had very different teaching styles, and I feel that I saw a lot of what I would not like to do in my own classroom. This was a challenge for me, because I felt the teaching I observed in my placement often contradicted with the theories and methods we were learning about in our Stanford classes. However, the CT made a very positive and effective effort in making some teaching changes that really benefitted my experience. I really appreciated (my CT's) effort.

- I struggled some with the time limitations of summer school (which is simply the nature of it). There were several instances where I wanted to see how the teacher would work with parents to resolve the issue. However, the short time and the propensity for parents to pull their children out rather than work through difficulties impeded me from seeing how the problem would have gotten resolved in a normal school year.

- -the short (19-day!) duration of the program was a challenge--there was so much to learn, so much for the kids to learn, and so little time -watching kids throw away unopened cartons of milk/fruit/etc was a challenge--I observed so much waste every day, and it was very hard to watch...I wish there could've been a way to collaborate or give that food to one of the many local hunger-fighting organizations (could also be a valuable way to engage kids in thinking about the social power of individual actions) -getting all the kids to the right bus...every single time

- Missing some classroom time on Fridays was strange, even though it was necessary logistically. It was challenging to come to terms with teachers not being able to suggest extra school support for those who needed it.

- It was challenging to observe other classrooms-- I took notes furiously, but couldn't see anything but difference. I think more guided observation sheets for those Friday's would be helpful. Some teachers seemed a little taken aback by my presence and did not introduce me. It was hard for me to gauge what I should do while observing. If teachers had a short preference list on what they would like observers to do, and whether or not they would introduce us. It just felt a little awkward and I did not want to step on toes.

- One challenge was constantly having to work on observations and notes. In the end, they were helpful but it was challenging to have to observe so much. Also, finding the time to do them was
challenging as well.

- My CT expressed to me early on that (my CT) did not enjoy summer school and did not want to be there. It made me feel uncomfortable that (my CT) did not have a desire to be working there. (My CT) had a very negative attitude and did not see the students as able beings capable of success.
- My CT expressed to me early on that (my CT) did not enjoy summer school and did not want to be there. It made me feel uncomfortable that (my CT) did not have a desire to be working there. (My CT) had a very negative attitude and did not see the students as able beings capable of success.
- I think that finding a balance between observing and trying some things out was difficult at some points. Eventually I realized that I didn't have to be doing the exact same things as my fellow TC and I took a step back and did some more observing, but I think it would have been good to go in with the mindset that we all move at different paces.
- The short duration of the program led to a feeling of rushed lessons and personal stress. I understand that it is the nature of summer school, however, some tips on managing the fast paced nature of summer school would have been helpful.
- The length of the summer school program was very short and my CT seemed frustrated often by it.
- One challenge was figuring out my role in the classroom and how much I should be doing/how much authority I had. However, my CT was extremely explicit about what (my CT) expected in the classroom of (my CT), myself and the other STEP student, and the summer school students, and this was very helpful when figuring out my role.
- The biggest challenge was classroom management. I think we had more squirming and active students than the average class.
- My CT did not provide much feedback - it would have been helpful to have more constructive feedback after my lessons and interactions with students. I appreciated my CT's respect for letting me reflect on my own practice rather than "telling me what I was doing wrong" but it still would have been nice to get more input.
- Short time frame (only 4 weeks)
- Time. In summer school, days were usually short. I felt I didn't have enough time to cover all the materials we wanted to cover.
## Suggestions for Improvement

- I would have also like to observe other teachers more often.
- Provide more structured time for CT and student teacher collaboration - even though we had a long time on Thursday, it would have been nice to have smaller chunks of time every day.
- Some STEPpies didn't feel comfortable voicing their concerns about the classroom. I understand needing to view things with a forgiving and understanding tone, but some of their issues really concerned me. Maybe there's a way for STEPpies to be more comfortable talking to others about their concerns even while keeping a forgiving outlook.
- I loved summer school! And carpooling really helped me quickly find a community within STEP. I know there were others who weren't that happy with their placements though, so perhaps having a more rigorous selection process for CTs would help. But I don't know much about what goes on behind the scenes with this - and I'm sure there are limitations.
- the observations in classrooms other than our own didn't feel very useful for me, especially because my observations were only a half hour long during "morning meetings"--perhaps changing the time of day or extending the amount of time in someone else's classroom could make them more helpful.
- I would have like to see more classrooms and more CTs.
- I would hope that all CTs are enthusiastic participants in summer school.
- When we have classroom observations it would be very helpful for the teachers to also have a schedule.
- I loved getting to see the other teachers and I also think it would have been good to see the other teachers at that same grade level. I am having an opportunity to do this in my placement now, but at the time, I was wishing that I could have seen the other third grade teachers in action.
- Offer a way for CT's to involve student teachers in the planning process rather than just observing the CT's plan. I feel like it would get the student teachers more familiar with problem solving with a lesson or creating one themselves in the future.
- Less academic requirements/standards for the CTs to meet during the summer school program to relieve pressure on CTs and allow them to work more freely--not sure if the requirements are enforced by State and Gov or STEP.
- Perhaps even more time could be given to observing other classrooms. I know it was such a short period of time, and it was important for the STEP students to be in their given classrooms, but it was really interesting and useful to see other classrooms as well, and I had wished I had more than half an hour in each room I observed.
- I wish we had more chances to visit other classrooms.
- Maybe creating a guide or template for teachers who are less comfortable or likely to provide constructive feedback. I know that some STEPpie's CT's were all about giving feedback, so this might have just been the case with my particular CT.
- I would have liked more time observing other classes. Instead of switching for only a little bit on Friday, we could switch for the entire Friday.
- I wished we had longer segments of time to observe other classrooms. I wished we would have more chance to get to know other CTs. Maybe organizing a social event for all CTs and STEPpies in the middle of the summer school schedule would be helpful.
**Additional Comments**

- Thanks for a great summer!
- STEP is wonderful! I am learning a lot. I really enjoyed my Stanford Summer classes, and I enjoyed the chance to work with another steppie during summer placement. My summer supervisor also did a wonderful job supporting me when I was not feeling comfortable in my summer placement. Thank you!
- Supervisory was excellent!
- Summer school was great!
- Summer school was a great experience! I am glad that we had a chance to work with kids so quickly, really made the classwork much more meaningful for me.
- It was a wonderful experience! Thank you!
- I thought Ceci was a great principal. She really helped us a lot when we had classroom management issues.
COOPERATING TEACHER HIGHLIGHTS

- Weekly check-ins at staff meetings
- Stanford staff being so visible and present in the classroom
- Motivated, competent student teachers 😊
- Calendars, schedules to help me keep up with all of the deadlines
- Great yummy snacks!
- Being purposeful with my best practice, my best foot forward, reflecting on my own best practices.
- Teacher Candidates energy and positive outlook

COOPERATING TEACHER CHALLENGES & SUGGESTIONS

- The assessments were not tied to curriculum
- STAR testing for summer school does not make sense
- Provide more time for teacher candidates/cooperating teachers for collaboration and reflection time to dig deeper
- Not enough time with STEPpies, it always seemed rushed.
- Not enough time with the STEPpies to discuss the day’s lesson and reflect with them