

WHAT IS EMPATHY?



Grades 4-7 What is Empathy? Arts Education & Career Education

Purpose of the Lesson:

Empathy builds understanding and can break down barriers that divide us. This lesson provides students with the opportunity to explore the concept of empathy and how powerful it can be to put ourselves in someone else's shoes. Students will be introduced to what empathy really means and how it can be utilized in our everyday lives. Then they will engage in a drama activity to ground this concept. The closure of this lesson informs students of the impactful ways empathy can positively impact the world.

Curriculum Competencies:

Arts Education

- Create artistic works collaboratively and as an individual using ideas inspired by imagination, inquiry, experimentation, and purposeful play (Grade 4/5/6)
- Explore identity, place, culture, and belonging through arts experiences (Grade 4/5/6)
- Explore relationships between identity, place, culture, society, and belonging through the arts (Grade 7)
- Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of personal, social, cultural, historical, and environmental contexts in relation to the arts (Grade 7)
- Examine relationships between the arts and the wider world (Grade 4/5/6/7)
- Interpret and communicate ideas using symbols and elements to express meaning through the arts (Grade 4/5)
- Express, feelings, ideas, and experiences in creative ways (Grade 4/5/6/7)
- Take creative risks to express feelings, ideas, and experiences (Grade 6/7)

Career Education

- Identify and appreciate their personal attributes, skills, interests, and accomplishments and their growth over time (Grade 4/5)
- Recognize the need for others who can support their learning and personal growth (Grade 4/5)
- Demonstrate respect for differences in the classroom (Grade 4/5)
- Make connections between effective work habits and success (Grade 4/5)

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Career Education

- Demonstrate safe behaviours in a variety of environments (Grade 4/5)
- Appreciate the influence of peer relationships, family, and community on personal choices and goals (Grade 4/5)
- Appreciate the importance of respect, inclusivity, and other positive behaviours in diverse, collaborative learning, and work environments (Grade 6/7)
- Question self and others about the reciprocal relationship between self and community (Grade 6/7)

First Peoples Principles of Learning

- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).
- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.

Video

[What is Empathy? - Start Empathy](#)

Guiding Questions:

- What does empathy mean to you?
- How can empathy support positive relationships?
- How can we practice empathy in our everyday lives?
- What is an example of empathy you have seen?

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Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

Preparation: Queue up video/set up projector

- 1. Have the students watch the video “What is Empathy?”** This can be found [HERE](#).
- 2. Pause the video and use the Guiding Questions to spark discussion.**
- 3. Discuss what empathy is with your students.** Get them to really reflect on what empathy means. Have them work in pairs to come up with a definition of empathy that they can then share with the class. Write these definitions on the board as an anchor for the remainder of the lesson.
- 4. Have your class brainstorm examples of empathy.** Ask your students when they have seen empathy in action. These can be real examples or ones that they create that exemplify the concept of empathy.
- 5. Explain the curriculum connections to your students.** Have your students work with a partner to come up with a dramatic scene that connects to the concept of empathy. Explain to them that working through these examples can help create empathy, as they are putting themselves into another’s shoes just by taking on their role in these scenes. Inform them that acting and drama are great ways that we learn how to empathize with others. When we pretend to be someone else and act out a scenario as them, we can see how they might move about the world and respond to different situations. This is all empathy is!
- 6. Have your students present their dramatic scenes to the class.** Once they have written and rehearsed their scenes, have the students perform them for the class. At the end of each scene, have the students explain how their scene exemplified a scenario that involves empathy.
- 7. Lesson Closure.** Discuss with your class how empathy is a powerful tool within our relationships as well as for social change. When we foster empathy for others, we are creating space for other people’s needs and feelings based on their experiences. This is something that can create stronger relationships in our lives as well as for the world at large. This can greatly impact the mental health of the people that we interact with by showing them that we see them and respect their needs.