

A Toolkit for Promoting Empathy in Schools



The Ashoka Story:

Ashoka is known for its relentless insistence on finding people with a fundamentally new vision of what is possible in the world.

Since 1981, we've been finding and supporting leading social entrepreneurs around the world: men and women with powerful new solutions to today's most difficult challenges, who possess the skills and the drive to create entirely new patterns in their fields—from education to health to the environment.

To date, we've supported more than 3,000 of them in 70 countries. But a few years ago, we realized that wasn't enough: we needed more than a few lone heroes working in isolation. We needed all of us, working together to solve problems in our homes, our workplaces, our neighborhoods and our communities. We had seen again and again what happens when you unleash agency in people of every age—whether 12 or 70—by creating opportunities for them to problem-solve. So we set our sights on a new mission: shaping what we call an Everyone a Changemaker world.

Since then, we've helped thousands of young people launch their own social ventures, proving you don't have to wait to grow up to change the world. We've opened the door to anyone with a good idea for solving serious challenges through online competitions on changemakers.com. We've teamed up with colleges and universities to grow the next generation of leaders, tearing down the walls between today's leading thinkers and doers.

Along the way we couldn't help but notice a central ingredient that fueled people's motivation and imagination, and that determined how effective they were as problem-solvers, team players, and leaders. That ingredient? Empathy. So we've launched an initiative to elevate empathy as a key 21st century skill in our schools, our homes, and our communities. **We hope you'll join us.**

Why Empathy?

Empathy gives you the power to:

Equip Students

Empathy means more than treating others better—it means *doing better*. In a time characterized by connectivity and change, students who learn to forge and navigate relationships in the classroom will thrive in tomorrow’s workroom and boardroom. Empathizing with the feelings and perspectives of others is the foundation for good communication, teamwork, and strong leadership—no matter what path they take, or what jobs they undertake, in the future.

Transform Schools

Practicing empathy leads to improved classroom management and more time for learning. Students arrive each day ready to learn, and teachers are better equipped to deal with the social and emotional needs of their students. Schools that are committed to empathetic teaching and practices enjoy improved teacher efficacy and retention, because teachers are treated with the trust, resources and understanding they deserve.

Change the World

Our world is full of complex challenges, where the decision of one person can have ripple effects through communities and cultures. **Empathy gives us the will and the tools to be effective changemakers.** Today’s complex challenges cannot be solved by one person or one organization. Empathy motivates us to build something better together and helps us do so with imagination and respect—guided by a deep understanding for the people and the world around us.

For more information on the power of empathy, including facts, figures, academic research and application case studies, please visit us online: www.startempathy.org.

About This Toolkit:

Equip your students. Transform our schools.
Change the world. Start Empathy.

How We Got Here:

Over the last year, we set out to discover the key principles and how-to practices needed to cultivate empathy. We interviewed more than 60 educators and leading social entrepreneurs, and asked, quite simply, “What works?”

We wanted to know what it would take to create a classroom where kids’ social and emotional needs are met and how to cultivate the kinds of skills that are critical for success in today’s (and tomorrow’s) world.

The result is not a prescription or a formula, or a silver-bullet fix. Consider this a living set of tools: tools that will grow and evolve over time, as each of us adds our own.

We encourage you to think beyond your classroom walls to what it takes to mobilize your entire school community. Together, let’s creatively reimagine what changemaking education can look like.

How to Use the Tool Cards:

The cards share the combined wisdom of dozens of teachers, organizations, and people who live this everyday: tips and tools, lesson plans and examples, and, most importantly, insights that can help inform everything from how you design your classroom to your daily interactions with students and colleagues.

Some exercises can be done in as little as two minutes, while others can take the form of months-long class projects, applied to a range of subjects. Others simply offer a strategy you can adapt to your existing lesson plans, and tips that are proven to improve teacher and student performance alike. Some you may be familiar with, and others may be new.

We invite you to test these in your classroom, and use them to generate ideas of your own.

Start here. And keep going.

The Empathy Roadmap

Prepare. Engage. Reflect & Act.



A Roadmap for Promoting Empathy in Schools:

Step 1. Prepare

- Create a Safe Space
- Develop Emotional Competency
- Lead by Example

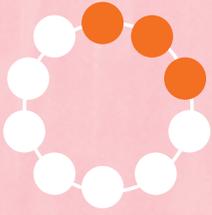
Step 2. Engage

- Group Play
- Storytelling
- Immersion
- Collective Problem-Solving

Step 3. Reflect & Act

- Identify Shared Values and Differences
- Instill Courage
- Enable Action





Prepare: Empathy is not developed in a vacuum.

The environment—including the people in it and the values, rules and rituals that define it—matters. Before we can develop empathy in any meaningful sense, we must first create the conditions in which empathy can thrive.

Create a Safe Space

Creating a trust-based environment is core to unlocking empathy. In this environment, vulnerability is a learning asset, emotional expression is encouraged, and the line that separates what's happening at school from what's happening at home is transcended.

Develop Emotional Competency

Before we can identify and interpret emotions in others, we must first understand and manage our own. That type of self-understanding, in turn, requires a basic vocabulary to describe feelings and emotions: what is commonly termed “emotional literacy.” That can take different forms at different ages: for example, by teaching young children to label emotions in themselves and others, and by creating opportunities for on-going self-reflection among teachers and adults.

Lead by Example

Empathy cannot be learned in isolation; it must be modeled by teachers, principals, parents and friends. A teacher's behavior can have an inordinate impact on a child's sense of safety, thanks simply to the way children learn and their tendency to practice modeled behaviors.



Prepare | Emotional Competency
Ashoka Fellow Spotlight



Spotlight

Mary Gordon, Learning from Infants

Children cannot simply be told about behaviors like kindness and sharing; they must meaningfully experience them. Helping children grasp empathy is the fundamental idea behind Roots of Empathy, a program begun in Canada in 1996, and now operating in eight countries around the world.

Over the course of a year, an infant and parent, together with a Roots of Empathy instructor, participate in a series of activities for children ages 3–13, designed to deepen children’s emotional vocabulary and enhance their perspective-taking skills. Treating the baby as “teacher,” students observe the baby’s development and learn to label the baby’s feelings. They learn to look beyond language and words to identify underlying emotions, whether joy, fear, frustration, or curiosity. In turn, they learn to identify and reflect on their own feelings, naming times in which they, too, have experienced similar emotions. It is through this process that children can then learn

to take on new perspectives, and to understand others’ thoughts and feelings. Only then can they discuss those feelings with others, and act on that newfound understanding.

Mary’s work has resulted in a lasting reduction in childhood aggression and an increase in helpful behavior: changes that persist a decade after the program. Today, Roots of Empathy serves more than 450,000 students in Canada alone. It has been adopted by every council area across all of Scotland, reaching a total of eight countries. Within the US, Roots of Empathy is active in Washington, California, and New York.

For more information, please visit: www.rootsofempathy.org

DIY

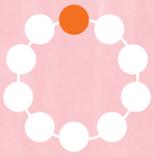


The Emotional Intelligence Charter

When students design a classroom charter based on how they want to feel in school, they're both revealing what matters to them and acknowledging that they have obligations for one another as a community. The charter sets forth the expectations for the year and helps students take ownership over those expectations.

Source: RULER, The Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, www.therulerapproach.org





The Emotional Intelligence Charter

When:

Beginning of the year

Time:

30–45 Minutes

Grade:

K–5

Materials:

- Sharpie™
- Flip Chart Paper

What:

Co-create a joint mission statement for the learning and working environment your students will pledge to develop and maintain. Design it around how your students want to feel in class each day.

How:

1. Setup: Give your students the lead in agreeing upon and designing their classroom charter. Explain the purpose of the charter and the value of a democratic process.

2. Choose words: Break your students into small groups of 3 or 4 to brainstorm and decide upon a set of words that answer this question: How do you want to feel in the classroom each day? Collect the words from each group, listing them on the board. Discuss as a whole class which words are the most common and give students the opportunity to advocate for a particular word. Students vote on their favorite three words, and the five words (or more) with the most votes will form the foundation of the charter.

3. Discuss daily practice: Now that you have a set of important feelings, work with your students to turn feelings into rules and expectations. For example, what does “respect” look like in everyday practice? Be as specific as possible: Rather than landing on “being nice,” encourage them to identify specific behaviors that they can track and hold themselves accountable for. For example, taking turns speaking, making eye contact, sitting up, etc.

4. Determine reminders and guidelines: Mistakes happen. Encourage students to come up with reminders and guidelines for “authentic apologies” to help their peers and teachers get back on track.

Tip:

Think of a charter as a living document, like a constitution, that can be modified or updated throughout the year.

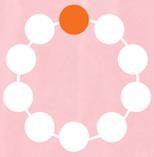


Morning Meeting

Morning meeting is a forum that shapes the daily tone and content of your classroom. Researchers are confirming what you've known all along: Social skills like good listening, perspective taking, and posing good questions go hand-in-hand with cognitive growth. This daily ritual creates the space to model, practice, and refine those skills in the context of social interaction.

Source: Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc.,
www.responsiveclassroom.org





Prepare | Safe Space

Morning Meeting

When:

Morning

Time:

30 Minutes

Grade:

K–5

Materials:

- Flip Chart (optional)

What:

Morning meeting creates an opportunity for your class to begin each day as a community of caring learners as students practice the skills of greeting, listening and responding, group problem-solving, and noticing/anticipating the needs of others. Having daily morning meetings helps weave a web that binds the class together.

How:

- 1. Greet one another:** Gather in a circle. Have children greet each other by name. As a group, take notice of who is present and who is absent; whether it is raining or not; who is smiling and who is having a hard time smiling. Invite students to share whatever is on their minds.
- 2. Promote sharing:** Students share some news of interest to the class and respond to each other, articulating their thoughts and feelings and ideas in a positive manner.
- 3. Lead group activity:** The class does a short activity together, building class cohesion through active participation.
- 4. Share news and announcements:** Students develop language skills and learn about events in the day ahead by reading and discussing a daily message post for them.

(Sample activities have been included on the following cards.)



Secret Handshake

Creating secret handshakes taps students' creativity and builds community.

How:

1. Students pair up and take a few minutes to create and practice a secret handshake and a greeting that includes each other's names.
2. On your signal, all students begin doing their secret handshakes and greetings with their partners.
3. On your signal, students find new partners and teach each other their handshakes.
4. Repeat once or twice.

Tips:

- Create your own safe and friendly handshake for the class and perform it with a volunteer before asking students to create their own.
- Reinforce positive behaviors. For example: "I saw and heard lots of cooperation as you worked with your partners to create secret handshakes."

Variations:

- Invite partners to do their handshake in the center of the circle one pair at a time.
- Challenge students to create their biggest, smallest, fastest, slowest, or most complicated handshake.

Source: Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc., www.responsiveclassroom.org/blog/greeting-idea-secret-handshake



My Favorite Season

Challenges students to articulate a reason for liking something.

How:

1. Tell children they will be telling the class what their favorite season is and why. Then ask them to name the four seasons. Briefly discuss the characteristics of each and list them.
2. Give students time to think. Have them show the thumbs-up sign when they're ready.
3. Be the first sharer. Use a complete sentence and keep your "why" brief. For example: "My favorite season is summer because I love to go outside when it's warm."
4. Go around the circle. Each child shares, following your example of using a complete sentence.

Tips:

- Do this sharing once students feel more confident speaking to a group.
- Help students with the "why" explanation. For example: "What might be challenging about explaining why you like a certain season? What can you do to help yourself do that well?"

Variation:

- Instead of favorites, focus on predictions or another skill. For example: "What do you think will happen to the caterpillar and why? Let's share our predictions."

Source: Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc., www.responsiveclassroom.org/blog/my-favorite-season-and-heres-why



Encore!

Students team up to connect vocabulary words with favorite songs.

How:

1. Place students into small groups of four or five.
2. Call out a word or topic related to a unit of study (for example, a weather or science term, historical event or person, number or math term, or adjectives and adverbs).
3. Give groups a few minutes to brainstorm songs they know that contain that word or connect to the topic.
4. Have each group sing or chant a line or verse from one or two songs from their brainstorming.

Tips:

- Before starting, ask students, "What will it look and sound like to work together in your group?" Model these behaviors (taking turns listening and talking, accepting others' ideas, and so on).
- Reinforce positive behaviors. For example: "I noticed everyone in the group sharing ideas and listening to their classmates. That made it fun for everyone!"

Variations:

- List all the songs the class came up with. Then choose a few favorites to sing later.
- After groups sing a line or verse, see if the other students can "Name That Tune!"

Source: Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc., www.responsiveclassroom.org/blog/morning-message-idea-favorite-numbers

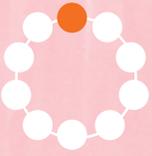


Afternoon Check-in

It is common knowledge that a child who's distracted by concerns inside and outside the classroom is less able to absorb new information and connect meaningfully with others. Allowing kids space to share what's on their mind builds their communication skills, reinforces the feeling of classroom community, and signals that their thoughts and concerns matter. By discussing solutions, students learn to resolve challenges proactively, and can focus their attention on learning.

Source: Urban Montessori, www.urbanmontessori.org





Prepare | Safe Space

Afternoon Check-in

When:

Afternoon

Time:

20 Minutes

Grade:

K–5

Materials:

None

What:

Afternoon check-in is a daily ritual designed to create an emotionally safe learning environment and to offer students a space to hear and be heard.

How:

- 1. Setup:** Before introducing the practice, you'll want to set aside space in the classroom where students can write down concerns they wish to discuss with their peers. (We've found a corner of the whiteboard works well, but you can also use a flip-chart or a simple sheet of notebook paper in a specified place on your desk.)
- 2. Gather class:** As you approach the end of the day, convene students as a group, preferably in a circle just as you do for morning meetings. Invite students to share one of three things: 1) something positive, whether about their peers or what happened during the day, 2) something they learned over the course of the day that their peers might be interested in, or 3) a classroom concern. Students should write each concern on the whiteboard on their own time. Concerns may relate to something that happened on the playground, to the state of the classroom, or whatever is on students' minds.
- 3. Discuss daily challenges:** Address concerns as a group, and together, brainstorm what you all can do together to resolve each challenge.



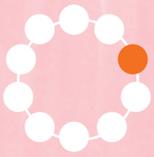
Stop. Breathe. Listen. Respond.

Understanding another's thoughts and feelings requires that we be truly present, setting aside distractions in order to deeply listen. Teaching kids to pause before reacting, whether listening to a friend or in a fight with a classmate, is key to emotional regulation and empathy.

Source: Girls on the Run, www.girlsontherun.org*

*Founded by Ashoka Fellow Molly Barker





Prepare | Emotional Competency

Stop. Breathe. Listen. Respond.

When:

Any time

Time:

30 Minutes

Grade:

K–5

Materials:

None

What:

This can be done as an activity during or after-school, or as a conflict mediation tool.

How:

1. Introduce the method: Say the following to your class...

Today we are going to learn a method called “SBLR.” SBLR actually stands for Stop. Breathe. Listen. Respond.

Being empathetic requires us to be really present “with someone” when they are in a time of need. This means we aren’t distracted by other things and we really slow down to listen to them. That’s where SBLR comes in.

Stop...*means we stop what we are doing (if we can) when our friend has something they want to share with us that may be upsetting or that they want to talk about. This means we don’t text or listen to music or stay on the computer.*

Breathe...*means that we slow down, find a place to be quiet with our friend and really concentrate on being with them. We may turn off our computers or move to a spot away from our friends so we can hear them. Breathing helps the body relax so that we can truly focus.*

Listen...*means that we allow our friends to share whatever is on their mind. Sometimes we want to give advice or try to fix their problem for them, but what is most helpful when we are in the “listening” phase is to really just listen. You might say something like “tell me more” to get your friend to really talk a lot about whatever is upsetting him or her.*

Respond...*means we then respond in a kind and compassionate way. One great question to ask is: “How do you feel about what is going on?” or “What can I do to help you?” or “What do you think you should do?” (...continued)*



Prepare | Emotional Competency

Stop. Breathe. Listen. Respond.

(Continued)

How (continued):

Let's practice this. In your pairs, I want one of you to share with the other person something that has upset you (now or maybe in the past). Let's practice: Stop. Breathe. Listen. Respond. Give the pairs plenty of time to share their situations.

Okay...now let's switch people. If you were sharing before, now be the listener. Give the group plenty of time to share. When they are done have them come back into a circle.

2. Reflect: Ask your class the following:

Can anybody tell me what just happened? How did you feel doing this activity? What would you do differently?

Let's go around the circle and have each person share what they believe the other person might have been feeling about what was upsetting them.

3. Finish up: Ask your class the following:

- *Why do you think empathy is important to being a good leader?*
- *Why do you think empathy is important to being an effective parent?*
- *What do you like about environments/spaces where empathy is part of the way people are?*
- *How are you feeling right now?*



Prepare | Emotional Competency

Stop. Breathe. Listen. Respond.

How (continued):

Let's practice this. In your pairs, I want one of you to share with the other person something that has upset you (now or maybe in the past). Let's practice: Stop. Breathe. Listen. Respond. Give the pairs plenty of time to share their situations.

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- *How are you feeling right now?*

Tip:

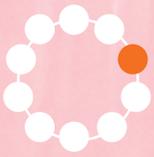
Stop. Breathe. Listen. Respond. can also be a great technique when dealing with a conflict between two students. Take the two aside and explain that you're going to practice a technique called "SBLR", or Stop. Breathe. Listen. Respond. Introduce the four-step process and the importance of pausing before we react. Have the first student explain what he or she is feeling, and why (s)he's upset. Allow plenty of time for the student to share. Ask the first student, "What do you think we could do to help?" and ask both students, "What do you think you should do?" Next, ask the other student to share a time in which he or she has been upset, and repeat the process. Conclude by having the students reflect on what it would feel like to be in the other's shoes, and ask each person share what they believe the other person might have been feeling about what was upsetting them.



Breathing Exercises

Research in cognitive neuroscience has shown a strong correlation between mindfulness and our ability to empathize. Stress, meanwhile, activates our less social, more primitive survival instincts, which impedes our ability to empathize and be compassionate—and even makes it harder to absorb new information. Regaining mindfulness creates the mental space (quite literally) for students to both connect with one another and to learn.

Source: MindUp™, www.thehawnfoundation.org/mindup



Prepare | Emotional Competency

Breathing Exercises

When:

Transitions

Time:

2 Minutes

Grade:

K–5

Materials:

Chime

What:

The following exercise is a means of improving transitions, restoring students' focus, and enhancing their ability to connect with one another. We recommend performing this exercise three times each day, ideally during morning meetings, after lunch, and before dismissal.

How:

- 1. Setup:** The following breathing exercise can be done in 30 seconds, or take up to two minutes. To kick off, have students close their eyes and walk them through the following steps:
- 2. Sit tall:** Have all students sit up straight. (It helps to use a visual: “Imagine there’s a cord pulling at the top of your heads.”) Remind the students that you can’t get your breath deep into your belly if you’re slumped over.
- 3. Close your eyes:** Students may be tempted to squint or force their eyes close, so you’ll want to remind them to relax.
- 4. Sit still:** Students may be tempted to wiggle.
- 5. Ring chime:** To kick off, ring a chime, and instruct students to listen to it as long as they can, focusing on their breathing. Ring the chime a second time, and listen again for as long as they can, breathing slowly in and out. Instruct the students to slowly open their eyes. As you practice more and more, extend the length of time between the first and second chime.

Tip:

For younger students, you’ll want to first teach them to concentrate on their breath. This could mean blowing bubbles or using a pinwheel, and having students breathe with varying force. A favorite of ours is “belly breathing”: To demonstrate the practice, lie down on the floor and place a small object on your stomach. Show the students how to make the object go up and down with your breath, as though it’s riding a wave. Then, let the children try it themselves.



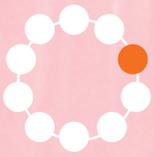
Pass the Face

Children must first learn to read facial expressions before they can correctly interpret others' emotions. Plus, the more feeling words kids know, the better able they are to express their own needs and emotions.

Source: Peace First, www.peacefirst.org*

*Founded by Ashoka Fellow Eric Dawson





Prepare | Emotional Competency

Pass the Face

When:

Any time

Time:

10–15 Minutes

Grade:

K–5

Materials:

None

What:

The following exercise is a great way to boost kids’ “empathic accuracy” and ability to respond to social cues.

How:

1. Circle up: Gather the group into a circle so everyone can see each other.

2. Instruct: Explain that one person will begin the game by choosing a feeling that they can express with their face. Students will only see the face once (when it is “passed” to them). Their turn to “pass the face” will be indicated by a gentle tap on the shoulder, at which point they should look up at the face and then pass it on to the next person. As each person “passes the face”, they should try to guess which feeling is being expressed—without saying it aloud.

3. Choose the first expression: Have all the participants close their eyes or look down so they cannot see you make the original facial expression. Choose the first feeling, make the face, and tap the person beside you on the shoulder to show them your facial expression. Quietly instruct them to mimic the face and “pass” it to the next person.

4. Name the expression: Once the last person has “received” the face, allow the group to guess which feeling was being portrayed. Play as many rounds as people want.

5. Debrief: What happened during the game? What skills did you use to play the game successfully? How can we use these skills in situations outside of the game?

Tip:

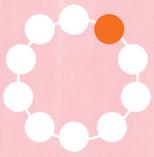
Spend time before playing the game to brainstorm a long list of “feeling words” that can be reinforced during the game.



Meeting the ABCDE Needs

Unwanted behaviors nearly always stem from unmet needs. To improve classroom management, educators must first identify the underlying cause behind a child's behavior, and address whatever social and emotional needs are inhibiting students' own learning and that of their peers.

Source: Center for Inspired Teaching, inspiredteaching.org*
*Founded by Ashoka Fellow Aleta Margolis



Prepare | Lead by Example

Meeting the ABCDE Needs

When:

Professional development

Time:

30–45 Minutes

Grade:

Teachers

Materials:

Copies of “The ABCDE of Learners’ Needs”

What:

Center for Inspired Teaching uses a matrix (see Worksheet 2 on accompanying card) to identify the unmet needs behind student behavior and to creatively brainstorm other ways to address those needs. The message? “I accept you and your needs, but not the behavior you are using to satisfy your needs.”

How:

- 1. Review the five key psychological needs:** Autonomy, Belonging, Competence, Developmental appropriateness, and Engagement.
- 2. How can you tell:** In pairs or small groups, discuss which behaviors might signal a particular need on the list. Consider specific instances of student misbehavior. What were the circumstances that led the student to act out, and what did you notice about that behavior?
- 3. Brainstorm solutions:** As a team, fill in the rest of the chart (on accompanying worksheet). Reflect on what’s worked in your own practice, and what else you can do to help a child meet that need.



ABCDE of Learners' Needs

Powerful and effective learning experiences meet five basic psychological needs:

Autonomy:

"I want to have a say in what happens to me."

Autonomy is the need for independence and self-determination; the ability to make choices, to create, to explore, and to express oneself freely; to have sufficient space, to move around, and to feel unrestricted in determining choices and free will.

To achieve this, students need independence, options, choices, autonomy, and liberty in both physical and psychological aspects. Freedom in a school setting can be as basic as getting a drink when you need it, walking down the hall at your own pace, or choosing partners for an activity.

Belonging:

"I want to feel connected to and valued by those around me."

Belonging is our psychological need to love and care for others and to believe that we are loved and cared for in family relationships, friendships, and working relationships. To belong, we must connect with people by cooperating, caring, sharing, and being involved. In school settings, students need to feel accepted by classmates and adults, know they are making a worthwhile contribution, and feel their presence is valuable to the people in this setting who are important to them. To achieve this, students need to have a role that is relevant and important to them as an individual student, as well as to a group. Students who feel they do not belong are experiencing an unmet need that can extend to behavior, learning, and academic difficulties.



Prepare | Lead by Example

Worksheet 1

Competence:

“I want to feel a sense of significance, worth, and accomplishment.”

Competence is defined by the need to be able, to be capable. For students to feel self-worth, they need a sense of empowerment, worthiness, self-efficacy, and achievement. It is an inner sense of achievement, accomplishment, pride, importance, and self-esteem and an outer sense of being heard and respected and feeling competent and attaining recognition. Competence in a school setting may be defined by the student’s ability to make choices and be an equal contributor in learning.

Developmental appropriateness:

“I can only do what my brain and body are ready to do.”

Human development research indicates that there are universal, predictable sequences of growth and change that occur throughout the human lifespan. These predictable changes occur in all domains of development – physical, emotional, social, and cognitive. Knowledge of typical development of learners within the age span served by the program provides a framework from which teachers prepare the learning environment and plan appropriate experiences.

Engagement:

“I want to have fun and be actively involved.”

Fun is a basic need that all humans seek to meet daily, and it is “evolution’s reward for learning.” Fun can happen through play and laughter, but humans also derive pleasure from active cognitive processes such as creating, problem-solving, reasoning, decision-making, and evaluation. To meet the need for engagement in schools, students must be meaningfully engaged in learning activities through interaction with others and worthwhile tasks.

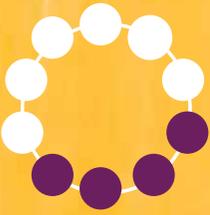


Prepare | Lead by Example
Worksheet 2

ABCDE of Learners' Needs

When students experience an unmet need for...	you might observe students...	...so try this to help them meet the need in a more productive way.
Autonomy	Being oppositional, argumentative, contrary, stubborn, unwilling to participate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give a voice about where to work, what materials to use, how to represent what has been learned, etc.• Ask students to lead the class in a game.• Let student demonstrate a procedure or skill.
Belonging	Clowning, showing off, making jokes, talking off-task, stealing, lying, antagonistic behaviors toward peers	
Competence	Giving up, avoiding work, putting self down, withdrawing and asking to be left alone	
Developmental appropriateness	Fidgeting	
Engagement	Talking off-task, making mischief, fidgeting	





Engage: Throughout most of human history, a person could expect to live in one place and hold one job, interacting primarily with others of the same religious and cultural practices. Today's world demands that each of us practice an increasingly sophisticated level of cognitive empathy: the ability not simply to feel what another is feeling, but to understand another's feelings. That's not something you have or you don't have, and it's not something that can be learned in an hour and memorized henceforth; much like yoga or piano-playing, it's part of a daily practice. While there is no one way to cultivate empathy, there are numerous steps you can take to develop it over time.

Storytelling

Stories challenge our preconceptions, enabling us to wear the shoes of those whose experiences are different from our own. It is through stories that children first step into an imagined world, and encounter characters, circumstances, and events they would never otherwise experience.

Group Play

Ours is a world in which play and learning are inextricably linked: where the skills students learn on the playground or at home with their toys are the very same skills they will need to thrive in the classroom, in the workplace, and as global citizens. Empathy begins on the playground, where imagination is allowed to run free; where kids learn to solve their own conflicts and enforce their own rules.

Immersion

By immersing ourselves in others' experiences, we learn to look beyond labels and stereotypes, and shift from projection to deep understanding. Whether cultivating cross-generational relationships between the young and the old, or stepping into the shoes of someone living nearby but worlds apart, immersive experiences allow us to understand the many interrelated forces that make up our local and global communities.

Collective Problem-Solving

The act of collaboration itself builds empathy in ways that dialogue alone cannot: through shared challenges and shared victories, we come to appreciate what we have in common, and break down preconceptions in favor of more nuanced understanding.



Engage | Group Play
Ashoka Fellow Spotlight



Spotlight

Jill Violet, The Recess Revolution

Jill Violet is bringing back recess to ensure that every child has the opportunity to engage in safe, fun, and inclusive group play. In the process, she's helping kids hone their empathy muscles, by learning to resolve their own conflicts, lift up their classmates when they're down, and play for a team. Beginning before the first bell rings and continuing long after the school day has ended, trained coaches play the role that older kids in a neighborhood once played: establishing the rules, modeling how to resolve conflicts, and generally supporting a culture of play where everyone gets a chance to get in the game.

Beyond recess, Playworks coaches support teachers with classroom game time, oversee a deputized group of junior coaches, and coach after-school interscholastic leagues, engaging families and introducing competition in a healthy way.

A randomized control trial conducted in 2012 found a significant decrease in bullying in Playworks schools: one of the largest documented impacts ever recorded. The reason? As Jill sees it, "Playworks—or more importantly the

values it teaches: empathy, teamwork, leadership and inclusion—creates an environment on the playground that is the equivalent of ensuring that there are seat belts in the car." It's a primary prevention strategy: rather than raise awareness about the impact of bullying, or attempt to reward kids for good behavior and punish them for bad, Playworks helps kids develop the critical skills that prevent bullying in the first place—skills they can then apply on and off the field.

For more information, please visit: www.playworks.org

DIY



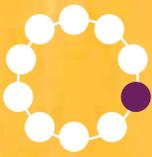
I Love My Neighbor

Empathy demands that we look beyond first impressions and superficial labels, and replace projections and expectations with real understanding. “I Love My Neighbor” is a fun and easy activity for creating the kind of culture in which students feel valued and connected to one another.

Source: Playworks, www.playworks.org*

*Founded by Ashoka Fellow Jill VIALET





Engage | Group Play

I Love My Neighbor

When:

Any time

Time:

15 Minutes

Grade:

K–5

Materials:

None

What:

The following game is a great way to uncover shared experiences among students, to deepen understanding of one another's background and interests, and to reinforce a sense of community.

How:

1. Setup: Before starting the game, set up chairs in a circle facing each other. Make sure students understand that everyone will get a turn and that they need to be careful in racing for the seats. Invite all participants to sit in the chairs around the circle.

2. Play game: Play begins when the designated player, standing in the middle of the circle, makes a statement that is true about him or herself. For example: "I love my neighbor who has a little brother." Everyone seated for whom this statement is true must stand and move to a chair not directly next to them. The person in the middle is also looking for a chair, thus leaving one participant without a chair. That person moves to the middle and continues the game by making a statement that is true about him or herself. For example, "I love my neighbor who speaks Spanish" or "I love my neighbor who loves to play basketball." The game continues so that everyone gets at least one turn to make a statement.

3. Lead group discussion: Conclude the exercise with a group discussion. Suggested questions:

- What did you learn about your classmates? Were you surprised when people jumped up for certain prompts?
- How did it feel to be up there alone? How did it feel when you discovered others shared your experience?

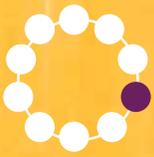


Empathy and Active-Listening Group Choreography

Sports and the creative arts have long been touted for their ability to forge connection and collaboration skills, as well as enhance creative expression. So why not combine the two? The team behind Move This World uses dance to nurture social and emotional competencies and reduce conflict. The proven curriculum empowers students to express emotion; value differences; understand and manage anger; and practice conflict prevention techniques.

Source: Sara Potler, Move This World, www.movethisworld.org





Engage | Group Play

I Love My Neighbor

When:

After-lunch, to keep students energized

Time:

30 Minutes

Grade:

K–8

Materials:

Dance Music

What:

Looking for a fun way to get kids up and moving and boost their ability to work together at the same time? Try this.

How:

1. Find your move: Divide the class into groups of three to five students, and assign each student a number between one and five. Play a song that everyone can dance to and have each student create one or two “moves” to teach to their group. If students are struggling to think of a move, encourage them to consider gestures they use in their everyday life (playing sports, brushing teeth, preparing food, etc.). Have each student then teach the “moves” to the others in the group.

2. Perform: Tie the moves together in one dance, using the numbers previously assigned to each student (Student “ones” move first, followed by Student “twos”, etc.) Have each group present their dance to the class.

3. Debrief: Instruct students to walk around the classroom in various directions without looking at anyone else. Ask them to:

(a) Make a face that expresses how you feel when no one in your group is listening to you.

(b) Make a face that expresses how you feel when your peers are actively listening to you.

(c) Yell a word that describes how you feel when someone in your group is not cooperating with others.

Bring everyone back together to reflect as a class. Did your group have any disagreements while learning each others’ “moves”? How did you overcome those disagreements, and how did it feel to cooperate even when you disagreed? What did you have to pay attention to in order to learn another student’s “moves,” and what were you able to learn through your peers’ body language and nonverbal cues? How did it feel when your group did your move, and when you performed together as a team?



Forget the What. It's All About the Why: Tips for Making the Most of Books & Film

Stories enable children to step into an imagined world and encounter characters, circumstances, and events they would never otherwise experience. Through stories, we can step into the shoes of those whose experiences are dramatically different from our own and take on new perspectives. Researchers have found that in the process, we overcome preconceptions and arrive at a new appreciation of our common humanity.

Additional Reading: Paul, Annie Murphy. "Your Brain on Fiction." New York Times 17 March 2012: SR6.





Engage | Storytelling

Forget the What. It's All About the Why

When:

Lesson

Time:

15 Minutes

Grade:

K–5

Materials:

None

What:

Tips you can use for any story, any time, to cultivate perspective-taking and empathy.

How:

Reflect after reading: When reading literature or discussing a film, we often focus more on what happened than on why it happened, relaying facts, rather than exploring the thoughts and feelings that compelled certain individuals or characters to respond the way they did. So whether you're reading young children a story, watching a documentary, or discussing a chapter of a history book or an article in the newspaper, take time to reflect on what you read and heard, and how those narratives relate back to your own lives.

Here are a few of our favorite questions:

- How would you feel if you were [person/character]?
- How do you think [person/character] might be feeling? How do you know?
- Can you think of a time when you felt the same way?
- What led him/her to make that (pick one) choice?
- What would you have done differently in that situation?
- Which character in the story do you relate to most and why?

Tip:

Consider how this could be applied for any age group and across different subjects: In a history course, for instance, open a discussion on why particular figures made the decisions they did, and what it might have felt like to live in a certain time period under a specific set of conditions.

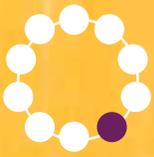


This Student's Life

This Student's Life allows students to explore their shared identity and differences through storytelling. In addition to fostering communication skills, listening skills, and self-reflection, *This Student's Life* builds community and helps students realize they're not alone.

Source: Britt Anderson, Director of Diversity and Inclusion, Prospect Sierra School, www.prospectsierra.org





Engage | Storytelling

This Student's Life

When:

Lunch

Time:

30 Minutes

Grade:

K–5

Materials:

None

What:

Modeled on National Public Radio's *This American Life*, This Student's Life challenges students to explore a topic or characteristic that they share with some, but not all, of their classmates (for instance, being the oldest sibling). Students who share this characteristic discuss with each other what they like about having this characteristic, what they don't like about this characteristic, and what they would like other people to know.

How:

- 1. Select topic:** Discuss as a group which topics you'd like to explore, seeking suggestions from students. For example, Prospect Sierra School in El Cerrito, Calif., has used birth order, wearing glasses, and speaking another language at home. Other students may want to form their own group among peers who are vegetarian or have divorced parents.
- 2. Lead group discussion:** Break students into groups based on the chosen characteristic(s). Ask them to discuss what they like about having this characteristic, what they don't like about having this characteristic, and what they would like other people to know.
- 3. Share stories:** If time allows, have students record their conversations and turn them into podcasts. Otherwise, create space for each group to share their reflections with the other groups.



Uncovering the Hidden You and the Hidden Me

When done in a safe environment, sharing stories of struggle and failure can be a powerful means of transcending labels and discovering the shared threads that connect individuals from different backgrounds. The following exercise is a great way to uncover hidden resilience and is ideal for adolescents and adults who either wish to have or already have a strong relationship (for example, through mentorship programs, peer coaching, or professional development settings).

Source: Incentive Mentoring Program,
www.incentivementoringprogram.org*
*Founded by Ashoka Fellow Sarah Hemminger





Engage | Storytelling

Uncovering the Hidden You and the Hidden Me

When:

Lesson

Time:

60–90 Minutes

Grade:

9–12 + Adults

Materials:

- Pens
- Paper

What:

This exercise asks you to share deeply personal experiences and decision points in your life, with the goal of expanding your understanding of and connection with others.

How:

1. Setup: Divide the large group into twos or threes.

2. Write about experience: Give each individual two sheets of paper, each folded in half. Each sheet will have “best” and “worst” written at the top, one on each side of the fold. On the first sheet, have each person create two lists of the best and worst things that have happened to the individual in his or her lifetime. On the second, list the best and worst decisions the individual has made in his or her lifetime. Have each individual sit alone in a quiet place without computers or phones for a period of 20 to 30 minutes to complete their list.

3. Listen to partners: Once ready, each pair or trio will find a quiet place for them to sit as a group. Each person will take turns reading his or her list aloud to the other group members, listening for similarities, differences and themes.

4. Reflect: As a large group, discuss the similarities that emerged. The following questions can help to further discussion:

- What’s something you learned about your peer or colleague that you admire?
- What did you learn that was unexpected?
- How will this change your interactions with your group in the future?



Teaching Kids About Race

Talking about race and racism can be challenging at any age. Parents may avoid talking about race in an effort to develop a sense of “colorblindness,” thinking that a “colorblind” child is a more inclusive child. Yet young children notice difference all the time, learning to put like with like. When told that pointing out differences is not OK, they begin to think there must be something wrong or bad about these differences. Helping children to understand race is thus an essential part of teaching them language that will combat lasting patterns of bias and prejudice.

Source: Madeleine Rogin, Kindergarten Co-Lead Teacher, Prospect Sierra School, www.prospectsierra.org

Additional Reading:

- *All the Colors We Are* – Katie Kissinger & Wernher Krutien
- *The Story of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, – Johnny Ray Moore
- *The Lorax* – Dr. Seuss
- www.pbs.org/parents/experts/archive/2013/02/how-to-teach-kids-about-race.html





Engage | Storytelling

Teaching Kids About Race

When:

Black History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, or throughout the school-year

Time:

Varies

Grade:

K–5

Materials:

Various Readings
(see reverse)

What:

When teaching students about Martin Luther King, Jr., kindergarten teacher Madeleine Rogin wanted a way to support her African-American students in the conversation, and to teach five- and six-year-olds about what he stood for. So she developed a multi-part curriculum, ensuring that the lessons of MLK aren't kept to just one day.

How:

1. Equip kids with the language they need to talk about race and difference: Before embarking on a discussion about MLK or the civil rights movement, begin by introducing kids to the concept of skin color. Our favorite book on the subject is *All the Colors We Are*, which explains melanin and where skin color comes from. When given the opportunity to talk openly about skin color, children are full of questions and eager to gain new understandings.

2. Name and celebrate changemakers: Changemakers use peaceful means to bring about changes big and small. Show students what this means by reading, for instance, *The Lorax*, and follow up with a study of Dr. Wangari Maathai, a Kenyan woman who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004 for her work replanting trees. Ask students to consider the following questions: What was the problem he/she was trying to solve? Who was involved or affected? Why was it hard to solve the problem? To make changemaking personal and relevant, ask families to honor their own changemakers, and invite parents and grandparents in to present them to the class. Create “wall of changemakers” in your classroom, showcasing faces and stories of people you’ve studied, as well as individuals from their own communities. Finally, take students into the community to practice changemaking firsthand: for instance, have them plant trees themselves. (...continued)



Engage | Storytelling

Teaching Kids About Race

How *(continued)*:

(Continued)

3. Connect themes: Now that students are well-versed in concepts of social change, peace, and courage, they're ready to have a meaningful conversation about Martin Luther King, Jr., and the history of the civil rights movement. By focusing on the injustices he sought to address and the methods he used to solve them, students avoid singling each other out in conversation or fixating on a single part of the story. What's more, teachers need not fear the subject of Dr. King's death: while you may or may not wish to address this in class, if the subject comes up, you can point students to the wall of changemakers and remind them that Dr. King did not act alone, and that his work continues through each of us.



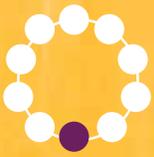
Appreciating Those Behind the Scenes

You cannot teach a child “global competency”—the ability to move seamlessly between cultures and geographies—by simply reading about another country in a textbook. It requires deep experiential learning, and meaningful dialogue with those of different backgrounds from our own. In the process, we come to understand new perspectives and to appreciate the invisible contributions we rely upon each day. The following project is a great way to cultivate students’ listening abilities and to deepen their understanding and appreciation of those around them.

Source: Elizabeth Travelslight, Media & Arts Program Associate, World Savvy, and Jane Slater, Kate Sheehan, and Kelley O’Hern, World Savvy MAP Educators, Sequoia High School, Redwood City, CA, www.worldsavvy.org*

*Founded by Ashoka Fellow Dana Mortenson





Engage | Immersion

Appreciating Those Behind the Scenes

When:

In Class

Time:

Varies

Grade:

K–5

Materials:

- Thank-You Cards (included with this deck)
- Voice Recorder (optional)

What:

The following exercise helps us build our imaginative capacities and practice gratitude. It can be done within the span of an hour or turned into a class project that can be done over the course of several days or weeks.

How:

1. Lead group discussion: For this exercise, explain that you're going to imagine what it would be like without a custodial staff. Begin with a discussion about the invisible forces at work that make our days better. You may want to kick off with a conversation on appreciation: "What happens when you stop expressing gratitude for the good people and good things in your life? What happens when you express gratitude?" Explain that what we value grows because we tend to invest more in it, and that the same is true for people: When we feel valued, we're willing to work harder and stick with things.

2. Determine activity: Consider activities that your students can do to understand the role custodians play in maintaining the school building and improving the learning environment. These may include interviews with the custodial staff, having students shadow a staff member, or having them take responsibility for a particular task—say, maintaining a part of the grounds—for a week. Depending on students' age level and the length of time available, have them closely examine the labor issues that emerge: the impact of custodial work on student health, issues of worker safety and injury, immigration, fair compensation, education, and the like.

3. Reflect after experience: Conclude by having students write a thank-you to staff using the template included in this deck.



Engage | Immersion
Exercise

Thank-You

Exercise: Appreciating Those Behind the Scenes

I am thankful for _____ (*name what or who you are thankful for*) because _____ (*describe the difference it makes in my life. Be specific!*). Without _____ (*name what or who you are thankful for*) _____ (*then describe what things would be like with it or them*).

So thank you for _____ (*describe what they do and how it impacts your life and name at least two things that you can do to support them or it.*)



Tackling Wicked Problems

Tackling a shared challenge—the kind that affects many people at once, such as a broken swingset, or the kind that many people have experienced personally, like bullying—requires that we get input from many different stakeholders, who often possess many different points of view. Group problem-solving enables us to develop empathy through two means: First, by listening to those perspectives, and second, by learning to work together with peers and classmates, and in the process gaining appreciation for the unique strengths and perspectives that each brings to the table.

Source: Xanthe Matychak, Founder, Make Better Stuff, <http://failure-is-impossible.blogspot.com/>





Engage | Collective Problem-Solving

Tackling Wicked Problems

When:

Any time

Time:

This process may be applied to an existing class project, or used as a standalone assignment. It can be done in a week, or spread out over several.

Grade:

4–12

Materials:

- Pencils and notebooks
- Flip-chart paper
- Markers

What:

Unlike a lot of the problems we're given in school, many problems in life are so complex that they can be approached from many different perspectives (designers call them "wicked" problems). And design educators believe we can train ourselves to gain these multiple points of view. This exercise uses techniques from design research to help you do just that.

How:

1. Understanding Wicked Problems: Break students into random groups of four, doing whatever you can to avoid existing cliques.

(Day 1) Observations in the Field:

Each group should begin by observing students in a social environment (the cafeteria, recess, PE, etc.). Make sure that each of you has a pen and a notebook. As you observe, watch for social problems: You may, for instance, see students who seem lonely, or those who need to be the center of attention. Write down your observations and talk about them with your teammates: What are the commonalities and differences in what you all observed? Remember, all points of view are valuable, so write everything down in your notebook! Think about how your own perspective might influence how you observe social environments. For example, do the outgoing students stand out to you because you yourself are very outgoing? Do the shy students intrigue you because you yourself are shy? Notice what you paid attention to and why. And, more importantly, what you didn't pay attention to and what you may have missed. Write it all down.

(Day 2) Informal Interviews:

As a group, return to whatever place you observed earlier and ask your peers open-ended questions about social environments at school. What do they like about them most? What would they fix if they had all of the money and support to fix them? Why? How would their lives be better as a result of fixing something in their environment? (...continued)



Engage | Collective Problem-Solving Tackling Wicked Problems

How *(continued)*:

(Continued)

(Day 3) Make a Map of Your Data:

With your team, compare the notes from your observations from Day 1 with the notes from the informal interviews from Day 2. What are the similarities and what are the differences? Did you find things that the students you observed couldn't see because they were too close to it? Did the students you talked to say something that surprised you? What unique insights did they share? Are there themes that emerged from your research? Make a map of all of the insights and points of view that you discovered in the social environments that you studied. Make sure the map is not too "slick" or "finished" because you'll be sharing it with the students you observed and talked to and you want to give them "permission" to suggest changes. Also, make sure your map is portable (rollable or foldable).

(Day 4) Co-Create:

Share the map that you made with the students you observed and talked to. Give them a pen and let them write on your map to suggest additions or changes to it.

(Day 5) Find a Solution:

Explain the concept of "divergent thinking" – generating many ideas to increase our chances of finding a good one – versus "convergent thinking" – analyzing ideas to find the best one. Walk students through the following process:

1. Brainstorm Problems:

(Diverge) In teams, pick a problem that you identified earlier. Then brainstorm on a hundred ideas for toys or games you could create to address the problem. Just as professional photographers take hundreds of pictures of the same subject to increase their chance of landing the perfect shot, your job is to generate as many ideas as you can. Write every idea down, even the crazy ones.



Engage | Collective Problem-Solving **Tackling Wicked Problems**

How (continued):

2. Analyze Ideas:

(Converge) In teams, create two sets of criteria to analyze the one hundred ideas for games or toys that you generated. These sets of criteria can be something like “crazy ideas & safe ideas,” “expensive ideas and cheap ideas,” “high-tech ideas and low-tech ideas.” Plot all one hundred ideas on a 2X2 matrix. Then choose the most interesting idea from two of the quadrants on the matrix. Try to combine aspects from each of the two ideas to create an innovative toy or game that addresses the problem you identified in part one of the exercise.

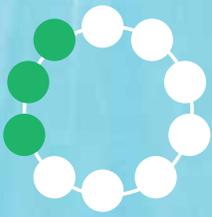
3. Prototype:

(Diverge) Build a quick prototype out of simple materials, like paper, and test out your solution in the environment where you observed the problem. For prototyping, you need to engage in divergent thinking again. For example, once you’ve settled on an idea for a toy or game, you will find that it’s hard to decide on each little detail. This is good. The best thing to do when this happens is to make several variations of the toy or game. This way you can test them out to find out which parts are working and which parts aren’t.

4. Test prototypes:

(Converge) Now it’s time to test your prototypes. Remember, you built prototypes to see which parts work and, more importantly, which parts don’t. Many professional software engineers test their prototypes to find out where they will break! Because for them, it’s much better to find out where something breaks in a test than once it’s on the market. Be sure to take notes on what works and what doesn’t. Then go back to the classroom and build the next version and test it again. Each time you revise your toy or game, you will find that you get closer and closer to solving the problem you set out to address.





Reflect & Act: Our ability to empathize with and understand others is only as good as how we act based on that understanding. We know that it's possible to understand another's suffering and not be compelled to act. And we know that cognitive empathy on its own can be used just as easily for manipulation as it can for improving another person's state. That's why it's empathy in action that truly counts.

Empathy can help us identify and relate to injustice, but it is most powerful when it compels us to stand up and intervene. As teachers and parents, what can we do to ensure kids feel that they both should and can take action?

Identify Shared Values + Differences:

Empathy means recognizing the shared humanity in others but also naming and appreciating differences. This is how we move from projection, where we imagine what we would do in someone else's shoes, to empathy, where we understand and respect the decisions of another.

Instill Courage:

Decades of research in social psychology have shown us that it's not enough to simply cultivate prosocial behaviors and attitudes: you have to intentionally counteract the forces that stand in their way.

Enable Action:

The final step to cultivating empathy involves creating opportunities through which children can put empathy into action, exercising prosocial behavior intended to benefit others.



Reflect & Act | Enable Action
Ashoka Fellow Spotlight



Spotlight

Eric Dawson, Peace First Prize

Every day, young people are taking steps big and small to improve their schools and communities. Peace First founder Eric Dawson thinks it's high time we celebrated that. Having launched Peace First in response to the sky-rocketing youth homicide rates in the early 1990s, Eric is working to equip children as problem-solvers, rather than witnesses or victims of their surroundings.

Take sixth-grader Shannon Mountford, who launched The Blue Crew to raise awareness about autism among her peers and to help her twin brother and others like him gain acceptance within their community; or 14-year-old Aidan Benavides, who, after years of taunts and repeated abuse, launched Aidan's Voice, offering peer counseling and support to students experiencing bullying.

Eric Dawson, founder of Peace First, launched the Peace First Prize to find and support young people who are working to create a more just and peaceful world. Billing it as the Nobel Peace Prize for young people, Eric and his team are offering up \$50,000 to five out-

standing young people ages 8–22, providing mentoring and coaching to help them take their peacemaking to the next level of action and impact. Along the way, they're working to tell a different kind of story about the power of young people to confront injustice and create lasting change, and to inspire hundreds of thousands of kids to join the ranks of the next generation of peacemakers.

For more information, please visit: www.peacefirst.org/prize

DIY



Empathy Exit Ticket

Writing down takeaways can help students internalize what they've learned. What's more, by embedding feeling-related questions into academic lessons, teachers can help broaden students' ability to recognize and name their emotions and to communicate those feelings with others.

Source: Carrie Craven, Social and Emotional Interventionist, Dibert Community School, www.startempathy.org/blog/2012/11/interview-and-tip-changemaker-educator





Reflect & Act | Shared Values & Differences

Empathy Exit Ticket

When:

End of Lesson

Time:

5 Minutes

Grade:

K–12

Materials:

- Paper slips
- Pencils

What:

Exit tickets are commonly used by teachers as a way to summarize the big ideas. By adding a feelings scale at the bottom of the exit ticket or tailored questions related to social and emotional competencies, teachers can gather valuable insights into their students' stress levels and their ability to apply the lessons beyond the classroom.

How:

1. Reflect after lesson: An exit ticket is a question or prompt that helps students reflect and helps you assess what students learned from your lesson. At the end of the lesson, hand out slips of paper or ask students to take out a piece of paper and a pencil. Ask them to write down one thing that they learned from the exercise.

2. Get creative: Ask students what they are going to do differently in their everyday lives now, or what part of the lesson made them feel the happiest. Try to create another question more customized to your lesson goals, whether related to students' ability to take work collaboratively, to communicate effectively, or to understand themselves and their classmates better.

3. Share tickets: You might want to ask some students to share their exit tickets with the class, but collect all exit tickets as the lesson ends. This will provide you with valuable data on how your students experienced your lesson.

4. Analyze tickets: Analyze your empathy exit tickets on a weekly basis. What trends do you see? What will you do differently as a result?



What If It's Not Me?

Empathy requires more than just perspective-taking ability; it includes strong moral identity. It's possible, after all, to understand what someone is going through, but not value them enough to stand up on their behalf. Deciding when and how to intervene presents a series of tough decisions:

- Do you talk to the teacher?
- Do you confront the bully?
- Do you comfort the victim?

Assessing each situation requires a combination of knowledge and tools to be able to intervene safely, and a willingness to face social ridicule or discomfort when you choose to stand up to peer pressure.

Source: GLSEN (Gay Lesbian & Straight Education Network) and NAESP (National Association of Elementary School Principals), Copyright 2007, www.glsen.org | www.naesp.org





Reflect & Act | Instill Courage

What If It's Not Me?

When:

Any time

Time:

45–60 Minutes

Grade:

K–8

Materials:

- Chart Paper
- Markers
- Response Cards
- Scissors

What:

The following exercise introduces students to the concept of “The Bystander Effect” and to strategies that they can use to safely respond to bullying. By reinforcing the idea that students are a part of a community in which everyone has each other’s back, teachers can nurture the kind of maturity and encouragement that kids need to act on empathy.

How:

1. Make human chain: (15–20 minutes) Begin by asking students, “Have you ever seen or heard someone being bullied or called a name? If so, how did it feel?”

Start them off by sharing your own experience. Then ask students to share their answers one at a time, when they’re ready. Instruct them to stand up as they share, linking arms with the person who shared before them, so that we’re left with a human chain of stories about seeing or hearing name-calling and bullying.

When every student has shared an experience, encourage the class to close up the chain to form a linked circle. Then pose the following questions and allow time for students to respond:

- How did it feel when you were the only one who saw or heard someone being bullied?
- How does it feel now that you know everyone here has seen or heard something similar?

Introduce the terms “witness” and “bystander” to students, or, if working with older students, have them share their own ideas. Point out to students that one witness or bystander might feel powerless to help, but that linked together with other witnesses or bystanders it is easier to “take a stand” against bullying and name-calling. (...continued)



Reflect & Act | Instill Courage

What If It's Not Me?

How *(continued)*:

(Continued)

2. Brainstorm solutions: (10–15 minutes) As a class, brainstorm what students can say or do when they witness name-calling or bullying, recording each suggestion on chart paper. Introduce the concept of a SAFE response, and have the class assess whether each suggestion will prevent people from getting hurt, both physically and emotionally:

- Say what you feel
- Ask for help
- Find a friend
- Exit the area

Explain that the SAFE options for what to do often fall into one of three categories:

- “Taking a stand” by using words or phrases that interrupt or end the name-calling
- Asking for help from an adult
- Ignoring the situation

Using three different colored markers, ask students to help identify which of the three categories each of the ideas they brainstormed falls into, and color-code them accordingly.

Ask students, “What happens when a witness or bystander ignores name-calling or bullying? Why might someone ignore bullying or name-calling when they see or hear it?”

Discuss with students that although ignoring it is sometimes the easiest way to deal with being a witness to name-calling, there are usually other options that are SAFE and don't allow the teasing to continue. Emphasize that when you say or do nothing about name-calling or bullying, it allows one or more people to continue to put another person down.



Reflect & Act | Instill Courage

What If It's Not Me?

How (continued):

3. Write response cards (20–30 minutes) Have each student cut out the three Response Cards options, discussing the meaning of each with the group:

- Take a Stand
- Ask for Help
- Not Sure

Read one of the scenarios (scenario cards are included in this deck) from the scenario cards, instructing students to decide how they might act if they were the bystander in the situation. If students have an idea for how they might interrupt the incident, they should raise the “Take a Stand” card. If they feel they might need help in order to stay SAFE in the situation, they should raise the “Ask for Help” card. And if they are not sure what to do, but do not want to just ignore the incident, they should raise the “Not Sure” card.

When everyone has raised a card, direct students to look around and form a group with those who raised the same card. Spend a few minutes discussing why they chose the card they did, and what courses of action are available. Students who chose the “Not Sure” option can talk about why the scenario seems difficult, and what the pros and cons of each of the other two actions (taking a stand or asking for help) might be.

Give each group a chance to speak about why they chose the response they did, helping the class flesh out very specific action steps (i.e. tell the person calling names that you don't like the words they are using, go to a playground aide for help, etc.).

Continue with the subsequent scenarios, emphasizing that there are always multiple ways to deal with any situation involving bullying or name-calling. Remind them that calling names back or hurting the person doing the teasing is never a SAFE option, and that there are always other things that can be done instead.



Reflect & Act | Instill Courage Worksheet

Scenarios

Exercise: What If It's Not Me?

Scenario #1

Isabelle notices that Jose is sitting by himself in the cafeteria. As she walks by him to find a seat for herself, she hears two other students seated nearby laughing and saying that Jose's lunch is "gross" and that his mom must only know how to cook "stinky food" for her family. Jose keeps on eating, but his head is down. What can Isabelle do?

Scenario #2

Darnell and Samuel are both trying to use one of the only open swings on the playground. Both students have one hand on the swing and as Lee walks by he hears Darnell say, "You're too fat for the swing Samuel! It will break if you get on it." Samuel answers by saying he was there first, and Darnell begins to kick sand up and tug at the swing. What can Lee do?

Scenario #3

Shelly brings her two dads to parent night to show them around her classroom and to meet her friends and teacher. The next day, Rachel turns to Masha and says she doesn't want to be Shelly's friend anymore because her family is "weird." Shelly comes over to color with Rachel and Masha, and Rachel says "Eew, we don't want any weirdos over here. Go sit somewhere else." What can Masha do?

(...continued)

Scenario #4

Raj notices that Lila has been staying behind after school to get help on her math homework. One day Raj stays late too to volunteer in the library, and sees Lila standing outside the school waiting to be picked up. As Raj watches, two older students approach Lila and begin grabbing her homework papers and laughing at the mistakes they see there. One student begins ripping Lila's paper. What can Raj do?

Scenario #5

Antonio and Sabine are good friends, and sit together every day on the bus to and from school. Shomi sometimes sits near them, but has stopped recently because a group of students who also ride the bus have started sitting behind Antonio and Sabine and throwing balls of paper and other garbage at them for the whole ride. Shomi also hears the group calling Antonio gay and saying Sabine must really be a boy because otherwise she would have friends who are girls. What can Shomi do?



Feel, Imagine, Do, Share

“Design thinking is a user-centered process,” writes the team behind Design for Change, the world’s largest school-based design thinking challenge. “The empathy that comes from observing users enables design thinkers to uncover deep and meaningful needs (both overt and latent). The process requires the reframing of the idea being scrutinized and encourages a systemic view of the field before you jump to solutions.”

Source: Design for Change, www.dfcworld.com*

*Founded by Ashoka Fellow Kiran Bir Sethi





Reflect & Act | Enable Action

Feel, Imagine, Do, Share

When:

Lesson

Time:

Varies

Grade:

4–12

Materials:

- Post-it Notes
- Sound Recorders (optional)

What:

The following process helps students translate increased empathy into changemaking by introducing students to design thinking. In addition to fostering a variety of critical-thinking skills, the approach helps kids discover their own inner agency and ability to change their school and community.

How:

1. Feel: Start by helping students identify a problem they wish to address, beginning with an observation phase. Have students list the situations and behaviors that bother them within the school building. Once they've identified a shared challenge, have them record those situations over a period of time (whether a single day or a month). What seems to be the problem? What recurring patterns do you see: How is this problem surfacing, and when?

Next, work with students to understand the problem by asking why again and again. Ask those affected by the issue why they do or say things, even when you think you know the answer. What's revealed by this person's body language and emotions, and other nonverbal cues?

2. Imagine: Next comes the ideation phase. Taking what they've learned through interviews and observation, have students answer questions about users:

- Who did you see as the people involved in the experience?
- What stands out to you? Why?
- Why do we think they are doing that?



Reflect & Act | Enable Action

Feel, Imagine, Do, Share

How *(continued)*:

(Continued)

Now it's time to generate ideas. Explain to students that we're going to defer judgment: the wild ideas are just as important as more obvious ones, and we'll have plenty of time to refine and choose the best ideas later. Have them build on others' ideas, and go for volume, saying that the best way to have a good idea is to have lots of ideas. What are different ways we can combine certain ideas and rephrase them to make them even better? On a whiteboard, list all of the various ideas, leaving enough space around each to allow for voting. Give everyone four Post-its, and have them place the post-its next to their favorite ideas. Clustering of stickers indicates possible strong design directions.

Review the most voted ideas as a class, and talk about the specific ideas or directions the students like and why. Once you've selected the most promising idea, have everyone define ways to implement it.

3. Do: Now you're ready to prototype. Here you're aiming for speed, rather than perfectionism: Quick testing allows you to bridge the gap between ideas and solutions and helps us stay focused on the user, rather than the product. There are three types of prototypes: 1) "Looks like" (think "quick" instead of "detailed"), 2) "Feels like" (think "touch" and "experience," from the user's perspective), and 3) "Works like" (think "function" instead of "form"). If time allows, have students refine and implement: Remind students not to get attached to an idea, but rather to look hard at what's working and what's not, and improve.



Reflect & Act | Enable Action

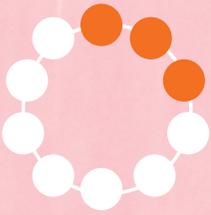
Feel, Imagine, Do, Share

How *(continued)*:

4. Share: Finally, have students document what they've learned: in addition to being a great tool for reflection, documentation helps to inspire others, and demonstrates rigor and student learning. "Sharing the story," writes Design for Change founder and renowned educator Kiran Bir Sethi, "helps let others know that 'change is possible'—thereby helping more people get infected by the 'I can' bug." As you reflect on key takeaways, revisit the problem students identified and what they learned that surprised them. Did the solution deliver the intended impact? What would you continue to refine?



**START
EMPATHY**



When:

Why? (Describe the classroom value)

Time:

Grade:

What? (Write a brief overview)

Materials:

Tips:

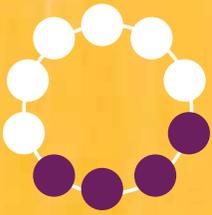
How? (List the actions steps)

Use additional sheets of paper as necessary.

Source:

Join us! We want to hear your great ideas and share your stories with other teachers. Email tips and tools to: empathy@ashoka.org.





When:

Why? (Describe the classroom value)

Time:

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Materials:

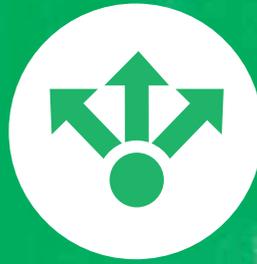
Tips:

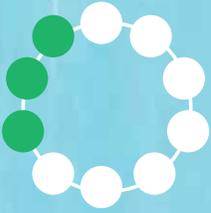
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How? (List the actions steps)

Use additional sheets of paper as necessary.

Source:

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We wish to thank to the following team-of-teams for the insights you shared and the examples you set:

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(unless otherwise noted)

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Megan Deal

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Center for Inspired Teaching
Design for Change
Girls on the Run
GLSEN
makebetterstuff.org
Playworks
Peace First
Prospect Sierra School
Responsive Classroom
Roots of Empathy
New Teacher Center
MindUp™
Move This World
RULER, The Yale Center for
Emotional Intelligence
Urban Montessori

Aleta Margolis	Kathy Clunis D'Andrea
Andreas Heinecke	Kiran Bir Sethi
Britt Anderson	Laura White
Caleb Ludwick	Madeleine Rogin
Cindy Blackstock	Mary Gordon
Clint Wilkins	Molly Barker
Danielle Goldstone	Paula Recart
Dana Mortenson	Peter Bonanno
David Lubell	Prospect Sierra School
Dina Buchbinder	Rick Weissbourd
Eboo Patel	Ron Chisom
Edgar Cahn	Sam Chaltain
Einhorn Family	Sara Potler
Charitable Trust	Sarah Hemminger
Ellen Moir	Scott Hartl
enso collaborative	Scott Nine
Eric Dawson	Sonali Ohja
Erik Stangvik	Stephanie Jones
Insight Labs	Vicky Colbert
Jill Vialet	Vishal Talreja
Jim Thompson	Xanthe Matychak
Joey Katona	

And we thank the of hundreds of leading social entrepreneurs and educators from around the world who opened our eyes to education as it could be.

Those who can, do. Those who can teach, change the world.

I am a teacher. I look at my classroom and I see the next generation of astronauts and inventors, healers and artists, mothers and fathers, thinkers and dreamers. My students will make discoveries, both big and small.

They will shape the marketplace, influence culture, improve lives.

And I will help them.

I will help them know themselves, other people, and the world around them.

I will help them become kind, collaborative, and selfless changemakers.

I will help them, because I am their teacher.

**My students will change the world.
Because I will change theirs.**



