A PLAN FOR UPPER ELEMENTARY TEACHERS TO IMPLEMENT
BEST PRACTICES OF EMPATHY DEVELOPMENT
IN THE CLASSROOM

A Project
Presented
to the Faculty of
California State University, Chico

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Master of Arts
in
Education:
Curriculum and Instruction Option

by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my enduring inspirations in education and life; my mother Sharon K. Ferrett who gave me constant optimism, my father Sam Pennisi for his reassurance to do my best, my sister Jennifer for her support and motivation, and my niece Emily for her energy and unconditional love through it all. The encouragement from my family helped me achieve my goals, as they are persistent in supporting my educational success.

This project is dedicated to my elementary, junior high, and high school teachers who have contributed to my love of learning. My favorite elementary school teacher was Elena Pettit who taught fourth grade, encouraging playfulness and care in education. Another reason this class was so memorable to me was because of the fun and engaging fieldtrips we went on and the friendships that were made. This project is also dedicated to my best friend from my fourth grade class, Lindsay Hosbach, who is now a teacher herself. She has taught me patience, thoughtfulness and devotion in life and in teaching.

Further dedications extend to all of my family and friends for constant support through kind words, thoughtful letters, and long-distance phone conversations. They remind me that we are all teachers and learners in life and there are opportunities for growth just about everywhere we look. They remind me that I have the potential to fulfill even the wildest of dreams.
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Thank you Yoko, a fellow student and my friend who helped immensely during the final few weeks of compiling my project and preparing for the oral defense presentation. Yoko supported me by offering support for my defense. During the group conversation at the end of her defense, Cris and Lynne reminded us that this is not the end; it is important to follow-up with our project and to keep them up to date with our adventures in education. So, in the words of Cris, “But wait—there’s more…!”
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ABSTRACT

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Elementary students begin each school year with a new teacher and new classmates. Not everything is expected to run smoothly and not all children start out as best friends. It is important that teachers create an environment that will benefit each student and create a positive, caring atmosphere in which each child can learn effectively. Providing a healthy learning environment for the students optimizes their creativity, motivation and overall enjoyment of learning. Children are learning in a social setting, among peers and teachers, and this setting requires communication, thinking, and problem solving.

Past research on children’s development and growth in education focused on their interpersonal intelligence; the ability to understand and relate to others. Empathy is
significant as skill or perhaps innate ability to understand emotions, develop self-awareness, and read the feelings of others. Teachers can integrate empathic awareness into classroom instruction through lesson plans and various activities. By demonstrating the importance of empathy, students gain awareness and control of thoughts and emotions, self-confidence, and creative problem solving with peers.

The project is made up of a plan for elementary teachers to implement empathy into classroom instruction. It includes information about children’s needs and how teachers can plan for a successful year at school. Parents are included in this project as an important part of the educational process. A series of detailed lesson plans are included. The lessons are based on the topics of individual character building, socialization with peers, and family and community concern. Each topic within these categories branch off of empathic values and build on empathic understanding. Each school year and each semester are important for students to start off right. It is intended that the information in this project will be helpful to teachers and parents in the preparation of school to ensure children’s academic and social growth and enjoyment.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Empathy is a foundation for leading a healthy and full life and though it is presumed to be instilled in each of us; it is often buried under negativity, harmful thoughts and bad habitual thinking in general. However, it can be taught and integrated into the curriculum for students to learn as an advantageous tool for success in life and education. One memorable course at CSU, Chico was on the subject of creativity in the classroom in which the text included ideas of exploring the mind and developing empathy. Incorporated in the text were exercises for creativity, including creative dramatics in which students could search their mind and bodies to create new ideas and new ways of thinking. "These exercises can be valuable for developing concentration, sensory awareness, self-control, empathetic understanding, and a sense of humor" (Starko, 2005, p. 241). According to Starko (2005), required for the enhancement of creative growth as well as establishing a warm and supportive classroom environment are values such as acceptance of the individual and external evaluation.

Empathy requires two factors: the ability to be aware of our own emotions and the ability to read and understand the emotions of others. "Empathy builds on self-awareness: the more open we are to our own emotions the more skilled we are in reading other’s emotions" (Goleman, 1994, p. 96). It is the belief of the author that empathy is instilled in each of us as the ability to identify with others and create a self-awareness of
our emotional state as well as the state of others. This innate ability can be encouraged and taught in the classroom. Training of this skill is possible and thus advocated in this project. Some people are better able to pick up on the tone of voice, the gestures, the shift in posture, facial expressions, the eye contact and seemingly insignificant words, non-verbal messages and actions. The ability to read feelings from nonverbal cues has many benefits that tend to develop a more outgoing personality, better-adjusted emotional state, higher self-assurance among peers at school and higher sensitivity (Goleman, 1994).

In the late 1960's, psychologist, Albert Ellis, who earned a Ph.D. from Columbia University, listened acutely to his patients and saw the connection between thoughts and feelings. Ellis urged his patients to observe and dispute their irrational thoughts and beliefs and replace them with right and positive thinking (Ellis & Harper, 1975). Surprisingly, most of his depressed patients healed (Ellis & Harper, 1975). Aaron T. Beck, M.D., a psychiatrist and colleague of Ellis, also found that people who had an internal locus of control and were able to manage their thoughts, were less depressed and better able to control the course of their lives. When people learn to be optimistic and take control of their thoughts and emotions, they are usually better able to relate to others. Beck, Rush, Shaw, and Emery (1979) argued that depressed people persistently thought self-defeating, awful thoughts. He argued that people of all ages could be taught to dispute irrational thoughts and replace them with positive, rational thinking (Beck et al., 1979).

Ellis and Beck were pioneers in bringing a common sense approach to rational living through self-management. More research followed and an increasing number of adherents drew the same conclusion that depression results from lifelong habits of
negative conscious thought. Martin Seligman, Ph.D. and author of *Learned Optimism* and *Authentic Happiness* became known as the father of positive psychology. He outlined a simple, common sense approach to being more successful by changing your thoughts. Seligman claimed that the way we explain a situation determines our perceptions of how we will react to it. Rather than become depressed and give up easily it is a choice or learned skill to use rational, positive thinking to be optimistic and resilient, as well as develop healing emotions such as empathy (Seligman, 2006).

Daniel Goleman (1994) argues that IQ test scores may be a determiner of intelligence as an indicator for how well someone will do in his or her career, though very limited, whereas emotional intelligences including empathy are predictors of success in life as well as work and the social sphere. According to Goleman (1994), when people can successfully read others’ nonverbal feelings and cues, they found to be more popular in school and more emotionally stable overall. Emotional intelligence is a base for emotional well-being and, thus healthy relationships and job satisfaction, promoting healthier life choices. Without the virtue of empathy and other healthy emotions and optimistic thoughts, people are deficient in that healthy emotional state. Goleman (1994) points out a serious consideration that the lack of empathy is seen in rapists, child molesters, psychopaths, criminals and bullies of all ages.

Teachers and administrators focus on standards and, more specifically reading and math, and oftentimes the character is lost in the process. Character must be the root of what is built in education, not only for achievement in school but also for life’s successes. The root of all caring, according to Carter (1996), stems from being able to be emotionally attuned – the capacity for empathy. That capacity to know how another feels
is critical in all areas of life from building successful romantic relationships, being an involved parent, understanding values required for healthy relationships, and understanding what it takes to make it in a career. Educating the whole child is the region that encompasses empathy among other values such as forgiveness, gratitude and resiliency, and must be considered and integrated into the system. Nel Noddings has contributed to education in many ways, and she has invested in specifics such as the ethics and care of education. Noddings (2005) believes in providing education that produces graduates who exhibit sound character and have a social conscious. "Children are moral beings; therefore, we must provide character education programs…" (Noddings, 2005, p. 12). We cannot continue to limit our children with opportunities for knowledge, nor can we continue to limit our definition of intelligence. By integrating empathic models of teaching in the curriculum, educators will be recognizing the value of teaching the whole child. Elementary students can learn empathy, which is one of the five key elements that make up emotional intelligence, according to Goleman (1998). The first step is to help students identify thoughts, feelings and behaviors and distinguish among them and recognize the cause and effect and interrelationship. Once this distinction is made, students need to see how thoughts feelings and behaviors interact and then learn how to direct them to improve their self-management and reach their goals through empathic education (Goleman, 1998). Children can learn empathy, optimism and self-management. They can learn to tune in and understand and manage their thoughts and feelings and understand and manage others. They can learn to observe, dispute and challenge irrational thinking and beliefs in order to diminish negative reactions. Best of all, children can learn about the effects of resiliency and the influence of empathy,
something they are gifted at if given the right tools, thus creating an atmosphere in which children can become educated holistically.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to create a semester curriculum plan that consists of eight comprehensive integrated lessons dealing with empathy and supporting educational subjects for upper elementary teachers to implement best practices for teaching empathy in the classroom. This curriculum plan is intended for elementary school teachers in the form that meets California standards. Various developmental strategies for teaching empathy will be readily available and easy to implement with this curriculum. Teachers will be able to use this curriculum plan to teach their students how to look for the best motives in others, to be authentic and clear about boundaries and their feelings and they can learn to have empathy for the shortcomings of human beings. Instruction of empathy in upper elementary grades will provide a basic understanding of how to manage your feelings, thoughts, and consequent outward behaviors. All too often, bullying is a barrier in education, overshadowing the heart of education, which is learning morals, building character, and gaining knowledge and life skills in a safe environment. Empathic exercises and modeling will contribute to a safe learning environment in which students can exercise their minds creatively, optimistically, and realize the value of understanding others’ emotions and how students can work that into their advantage academically. This plan will engage the current curriculum in California schools while weaving best practices of teaching empathy into the plan, whether it’s interwoven into class meetings, reading groups, role-playing or other areas of academia.
Scope of the Project

This project certainly reaches out to the majority of the schools in the United States. Public schools across the country are in need of character education, and all children could use a lesson on empathy. This project will be carried out to upper elementary teachers and students as a plan for teaching empathy, providing examples of empathic modeling, lesson plans, and strategies for best practices of teaching empathy to students. There are various empathic training lessons available for secondary education and higher education that can also be relevant and useful for the teaching of empathy to all ages, but this project is designed for upper elementary level education.

This project will be a useful tool for elementary teachers to use in the classroom. Teachers can collaborate to expand ideas on integrating this notion of empathy in education with this semester plan consisting of lessons and exercises for teaching and modeling empathy. This project is intended to guide teachers in demonstrating emotional intelligences in their elementary level classrooms; this project supports current standards of teaching reading and math. Furthermore, reading will certainly be involved in the process of learning empathic values, and instruction of empathy will include group work, communication/interaction, role-playing and service learning. This project is aimed to help students work independently to identify their thoughts, feelings and behaviors, then to work with others to observe how others think and how perceptions of the same situation or event might change from student to student. Perspective-taking plays a huge role in understanding others’ thoughts and how this results in their subsequent actions. The foremost objective of this project is to determine best practices and strategies for teaching empathy and developing a practical and valuable
plan for teachers to implement in order to create a healthier and more caring environment in which students can learn important values. Therefore, students will acquire higher motivation to learn, obtain higher grades, develop improved relationships, have increased energy and overall better health, and become focused in addition to be able to manage and make best use of time. Students will gain a sense of ownership in their education and learn what it takes to be successful in school and outside of the classroom.

Significance of the Project

The notion of empathy is relevant to education and there is a need for its involvement in the curriculum because of the ongoing bullying problem in schools and the reality of diminishing health in our children. Ken Rigby (2007) stated that bullying has been prevalent for over a century, and was noted by Thomas Hughes in 1857 as something that was happening frequently in schools. "Now, 150 years later, the problem of bullying stays very much where it was: it goes on, with little sign of abating, despite generations of preaching" (Rigby, 2007, p. 211). Obviously, it is a key concern for educators that bullying be taken seriously to end victimization and vow to create an optimal learning environment. Poor health is not solely based on one’s emotional state, and it has not been confirmed that peer victimization causes health problems, but according to Ken Rigby "…they do enable us to see whether there is a relationship between poor health and exposure to victimization by peers and, possibly, a causal connection" (Juvonen & Graham, 2001, p. 310-311).

There is a core importance for our students to learn empathy and that it is to be taught wholly; we must teach the whole child. "The benefits of a more holistic
perspective can also extend beyond the academic curriculum and apply to the school climate and the issue of safety and security” (Noddings, 2005, p. 12). Safety and comfort in the school community is an educational aim crucial for academic achievement. It is important to learn empathy in life, and it is far more important that children are taught how to have emotional awareness in recognizing their emotions and feelings because it is directly linked to how children will succeed in life. People who are capable of self-awareness are also emotionally competent, which is a learned capability stemming from emotional intelligence and involves two principal abilities: "empathy, which involves reading the feelings of others, and social skills, which allow handling those feelings artfully" (Goleman, 1998, p. 24).

With a skill such as empathy, optimism and hopefulness are possible, drowning out negative thoughts and pessimistic views. Because pessimism and negative self-talk can essentially overbear a child, his or her education can also take a toll. (Seligman, 2006) If you are optimistic, empowered and hopeful, you have an internal locus of control. You believe that you are master of your own ship and captain of your life. You believe that you are responsible and in control of your thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Although situations occur beyond your control, you alone choose how to react and respond to the situation. (Ellis & Harper, 1975). The curriculum shall be inclusive of these elements in order to reach the goal of educating the whole child; giving the child an absolute educational experience that stimulates different intelligences, including emotional intelligence, and more specifically, the value of empathy.
Limitations

The broad subject of teaching empathy will be narrowed to elementary school teachers in the form of a plan for them to utilize that will incorporate various developmental strategies for teaching empathy. Teachers can follow this plan to teach their students how to look for the best motives in others, to be authentic and clear about boundaries and their feelings and they can learn to have empathy for the shortcomings of human beings. The goal for making this plan available for teachers is to help children learn a valuable lifelong skill and improve health and the educational environment in which our students are learning. A limitation of this project is that it has not been tested in the classroom for effectiveness. However, the plan follows repetitive recommendations and suggestions from colleagues and professionals in the field. There are many contributions to building character in education and though this project includes several contributing factors, it is not all encompassing of what makes a good, well-rounded, healthy student and young citizen of this country. Empathy, however, is a chief feature that plays an enormous role in developing character in our students, which in turn takes effect on the world around us.

Definition of Terms

Character Education

"An education for character would provide educational experiences that would produce certain kinds of desired habits or attitudes and repress others." (Lapsley & Power, 2005, p. 168)
Empathy

“The capacity to share in the affective life of another” (Kohn, 1990, p. 99).

EQ

Emotional Intelligence: "…abilities such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one’s moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathize and to hope" (Goleman, 1994, p. 34).

Forgiveness

"Intraindividual, prosocial change toward a perceived transgressor that is situated within a specific interpersonal context" (McCullough, Thoresen, & Pargament, 2001, p. 9).

Nondirective Teaching Model

"When operating nondirectively, the teacher attempts to see the world as the student sees it, creating an atmosphere of empathic communication in which the student’s self-direction can be nurtured and developed" (Joyce, Weil, & Calhoun, 2004, p. 271).

Resiliency

"The ability to survive, never give up, and prevail in times of defeat" (Seligman, 2006, p. 30).
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Moral imagination is the capacity to empathize with others, i.e., not just to feel for oneself, but to feel with and for others. This is something that education ought to cultivate and that citizens ought to bring to politics.

– McCollough, 1992

Introduction

Empathy is a foundation for living a healthy and holistic life. Empathy entails a developmentally positive mode of insight and comprehension, and it is significant for understanding at all stages of life, principally childhood. A review of the literature provides a secure basis for the comprehension of empathy, importance of empathy, factors that influence empathy development, consequences of lacking empathic understanding, and empathy in the classroom. The four sections of the literature review offer an establishment of empathy as it endures in a world that needs more closeness, more understanding of the "other" and more focus on education for the whole child. It is also clear that in reviewing the literature, one learns that empathy exists, can be taught, can be used to gain understanding of the world in which we live, and to live it better, together. "Empathy is a rich, puzzling, and intriguing phenomenon" (Katz, 1963, vii). Though it is not perfect in its value and carries the weight of limitations, empathy is a positive attribute that can be developed, along with other positive modes of learning to create a more rounded, healthy person in a democratic society. There are many
definitions of empathy but the words that follow provide a clear understanding about the underlining meaning of empathy: "It has been said that ‘to empathize is to see with the eye of another, to hear with the ears of another, and to feel with the heart of another’ (Anonymous English author as quoted by Alfred Adler) " (Katz, 1963, p. 1). All definitions of empathy have in common the root of caring and the stem of emotional development, providing a deeper sense of self and a keener awareness for others. This section provides a basis for understanding the realm of empathy, its multifaceted developmental domains and contributing factors, pitfalls and how pedagogy can create a sense of empathic awareness and understanding. The literature offers a view of the comprehensive meaning of truly understanding oneself as well as others, how we fit into this social world in which we live, and how to live more fully by educating children on the value of empathy.

**Importance of Empathy Development**

"For me, empathy is the spark of human concern for others, the glue that makes social life possible" (Hoffman, 2000, p. 3). According to Hoffman (2000), empathy and moral development are key factors in the process of learning the formula for healthy social behavior and prosocial motive development. Children must learn how to communicate their thoughts and feelings in terms of developing moral internalization and reasoning and moral judgment. By developing empathic values such as rational thoughts and good moral judgment, "people can live the most self-fulfilling, creative, and emotionally satisfying lives by disciplining their thinking" (Ellis & Harper, 1975, p. 12). Rational-emotive therapy is something that Ellis and Harper (1975) developed that
encompasses the theory of appropriate and inappropriate, rational and irrational, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. In essence, it teaches one to differentiate what you choose to value and encourages appropriate behaving and emoting (Ellis & Harper, 1975).

Empathy and moral judgment are values that we deem essential for human growth and development in a democratic society. "Finally, empathy, alone or embedded in a moral principle, can play an important role in moral judgment" (Hoffman, 2000, p.16). Emotional development, though seemingly far from a central role in education, is crucial to success in school because it is a social environment in which children are learning. Therefore, according to Goleman (1994) when people can successfully read others’ nonverbal cues and tune in on the feelings of others, they are found to be more popular in school and more emotionally stable among schoolmates. Self-awareness and intuition are important factors in understanding the roots of empathy. "Empathy builds on self-awareness; the more open we are to our own emotions, the more skilled we will be in reading feelings" (p. 96).

A recent study presented an action research project on the subject of developing character education through the use of current curriculum. The authors, Heavey, Meyers, Mozdren and Warneke (2002) noted that President Clinton made a Call to Action for American Education in 1997 by proposing the instruction of democratic values and good citizenship in schools, all part of character education which is inclusive of improving social skills and promoting kindness and respect. There is an increasing interest in the values education movement because of the growing number of states, over 30, receiving state grants from the Department of Education character education (Heavey,
Meyers, Mozdren & Warneke, 2002). In essence, empathy development is the first step in creating caring communities within the school arena. When teachers can learn how to help build individual character in their students and authentically meet student’s needs, the structure of education will mold into one in which students care about each other (Heavey, et al., 2002).

With increased media exposure to children, mixed messages are entering the minds of the nation’s students and inhibiting the value of good character. According to Brannon (2008) including character education in the school curriculum is important because children are often confused about how to behave in a group setting and often act inappropriately. Benefits of character education imply that "…positive behaviors have improved, increasing their time on task and enjoyment of academics. Children are more accepting and respectful of one another. They learn to develop compassion and a sense of responsibility for their choices and actions" (Brannon, 2008, p. 57). These characteristics are all encompassing of the notion of empathy. Keim (1995) illustrated the importance of building character and developing ethics: "Becoming a person of character and integrity means narrowing the distance between what you say and what you do and increasing the amount you care for yourself and for others" (p. 57).

"Whether or not empathy is seen as natural—or more natural than its absence—a case can be made that it is a human capacity that will flourish unless some force interferes with its development and actualization" (Hoffman, 2000, p. 163). Though it may be debated whether empathy is innate, it certainly exists in this world and varies with age and gender as well as life experiences. Lack of empathy is a precursor for cruelty, according to Hoffman (2000), and improving empathic responsiveness "…so that
one can imagine, feel, and help someone even without having personally been in his or her predicament" can be constructive to the overcoming of meanness (p.163). "Although many children are resilient, and manage to survive in spite of the challenges, they most frequently lack the skills necessary to behave in socially appropriate ways, and frequently grow into angry adults who perpetuate the cycle of violence" (Johnson, Templeton, Rosalyn, & Wan, 2000, p.5).

Hoffman (2000) proposed that empathy, in a certain way, exists at birth, and is shown by facial expressions and affective actions (p.118). Goleman (1994) extended that the roots of empathy can be traced to infancy – apparent in a study on infants as observed by their mothers. Goleman (1994) illustrated that baby Hope at nine months of age saw another baby fall and she cried and was as emotionally devastated as if she had taken the same fall and hurt herself. This small yet obvious act of sympathy and caring indicated that infants show clear traces of empathic emotions, evident by the infant’s distress over the pain of another (Goleman, 1994). This suggested that empathy is instilled in us, though it is encouraged in some children more than others and taught in the process of caring for other children and siblings. "If empathy is ‘natural and unconscious’ it may derive from innate capabilities in man and represent a more primitive and instinctive form of understanding" (Katz, 1963, p. 53). It is there, we just have to be willing to accept it and learn from empathic understanding. "It may be fragile but it has, arguably, endured throughout evolutionary times and may continue as long as humans exist" (Hoffman, 2000, p. 3). Hoffman (2000) extended that moral judgment is assumed to exist in educational curricula, and moral development, internalization, and reasoning are heightened by learning empathic values as early as possible in life.
Empathy is a positively-toned emotion, as described by Lazarus (1999), and exists in the realm of other empathic emotions that are considered positive. "These emotions include gratitude and compassion, both of which require the capacity for empathy, which means to place ourselves emotionally in the shoes of a suffering person" (Lazarus, 1999, p. 244). Gratitude, Lazarus (1999) extended, depends on empathy because of the sensitivity involved and the understanding of the other when recognizing and responding to a thoughtful act of giving. Compassion, Lazarus described as a uniquely human emotion, is also based on empathy in that we must be well-attuned to other people’s emotions and it is usually associated with negative situations or unhappy conditions encountered in life (Lazarus, 1999). Empathy and other positive emotions do not entail selflessness, and it is important that "we must learn how to distance ourselves emotionally from the emotional significance of their suffering, so it does not overwhelm us. Yet in doing so we must not turn away too far from our humanitarian instincts, lest we appear cold and unsympathetic" (Lazarus, 1999, p. 246).

It is for numerous health reasons that empathy development is crucial to wellness and emotional health. When we can learn to tune in on our emotions, we can then learn to tune in to others’ emotions, therefore expanding on empathy. "Learning to be aware, both of what is around us and what is in us, is one of life’s great challenges, and results in the ability to freely and responsibly express our emotions" (Ryan & Travis, 1981, p. 133). Developing awareness is a huge part of working with one’s feelings in order to understand feelings and become more emotionally aware. Ryan and Travis (1981) suggested that it is okay to feel a variety of emotions, even negative emotions that include fear, anxiety, and anger. Though it is important not to avoid these painful
emotions, it is also imperative to seek help in learning how to be aware of these feelings and release any uncomfortable feelings in healthy ways. "What you can do is practice more direct means of expressing them, and establishing a support system to help track them down and deal with them" (Ryan & Travis, 1981, p. 134).

According to Emmons (2006), empathy is one of many feelings and emotions that exist in the moral domain that also includes gratitude, sympathy, guilt, and shame. Emmons (2006) noted "…empathy, like sympathy, operates when people have the opportunity to respond to the plight of another person…gratitude operates typically when people acknowledge that they are the recipients of prosocial behavior" (p. 3). Hoffman (2000) agreed that empathy is the key to developing prosocial motive development because children can be encouraged to imagine how they would feel in the place of someone who has been injured (emotionally or physically) and moreover, children can learn to understand how someone close to them, who they care about, would feel in the victim’s place. Altruism is another term that applies to empathic traits in the social-cognitive sense, and "two especially important contributors are children’s level of prosocial moral reasoning and their empathic reactions to the distress of other people" (Shaffer & Kipp, 2007, p. 561). Shaffer and Kipp (2007) suggest that a child’s level of prosocial moral reasoning predicts his or her altruistic behavior, which is obvious in studies with preschoolers; as their level of prosocial moral reasoning progresses, so does their probability to lend a hand and share with peers).

Empathy development requires the social field and learning with other people, which is why school is the ideal location to integrate training. Though it is a considerable individual mindset that one must develop, it entails the cooperation of others, as well as
communication skills. During a conflict, which is bound to arise in social settings such as school or after school programs, one must attempt to resolve the conflict by negotiating a resolution of some sort. Potter (1996) agreed that one of the key factors in successful communication is showing empathy. "When communicating understanding you demonstrate that you grasp how your adversary views the situation; when showing empathy, you demonstrate that you understand how he or she feels about it" (Potter, 1996, p. 158). What it comes down to when considering education for the whole child and living a meaningful life is that empathy, along with other values including gratitude and forgiveness, are stepping stones for living a moral, constructive life. Goleman, Kaufman and Ray (1992) outlined the seven intelligences as they relate to creativity, one of which is interpersonal intelligence. Knowledge does not only have to do with the mind, but also with other people, and intelligence is not complete without the knowledge of persons in this world (Goleman, Kaufman, & Ray, 1992). "In fact, however, the ability to understand other people –what motivates them, how to work effectively with them, how to lead or follow or take care of them – is crucial for surviving and thriving in any human environment" (Goleman, et al., 1992, p. 76). Interpersonal intelligence is a gift in school and in work, in disputes and in understanding others – peers and adults. Creativity incorporates passion and motivation for learning and living, and interpersonal intelligence involves being a natural leader, and an ability to work well with others, creatively. "A child gifted in this area might show an unusual ability to empathize with another child who had fallen and hurt herself, or failed a test" (Goleman, et al., 1992, p. 78).
Daniel Goleman is the author of *Emotional Intelligence* (1994) and *Social Intelligence: The New Science on Human Relationships* (2006) and has dedicated his time to the study of academic, social and emotional learning as well as further research on emotional intelligence. Goleman (1994) asserted that empathy is independent from academic intelligence and IQ scores in that emotional intelligence does not define how smart someone is; however, when people can successfully read other’s nonverbal feelings and cues, they are found to be more popular in school and more emotionally stable than other classmates. Goleman (1994) also suggested that it is important in education because it is about mastering this "empathic ability" in order to succeed in the classroom, which goes along with forming positive relationships with the teacher and other students. More importantly, according to Goleman (1994), is the consideration that a lack of empathy indicates the absence of self-awareness and the ability to identify with other’s emotions. "This failure to register another’s feelings is a major deficit in emotional intelligence, and a tragic failing in what it means to be human" (Goleman, 1994, p. 96).

Developing empathy in schools is important because school is where children spend the majority of their day, learning and growing with peers. It seems to be the ideal place to teach children essential values of kindness. Kathleen Cotton (2001) asked, "Is it the business of the schools to seek to develop in young people the character traits we associate with goodness—traits such as kindness, generosity, compassion, and helpfulness? " (p. 1). Cotton (2001) continued to answer the question, and concluded that the quality of empathy, one aspect of goodness, is a trait that contributes to a capable, successful learner who is self-determined and knowledgeable, and one who can communicate effectively and relate with others. It is within these human relationships
that we learn the meaning and value of empathy. According to Alfie Kohn (1990), human relationship is a notion of interest to philosophers and social scientists and obviously a huge part of our existence; it’s how we go about our human relationships- create them, build on them, and maintain them- that is crucial to our mental health and understanding of otherness and, overall, humanness. Kohn (1990) defined empathy as "the capacity to share in the affective life of another" (p. 99). Kohn (1990) presented the idea that we are better equipped for moving out of selfishness than we think; we already, innately, have capabilities and values required for empathic responses because "we are human and we have each other" (p. 268). Therefore, empathy development is essential for how we build relationships and correspond with others in our life; empathy development is vital for our successes in life and all we have to do is learn how to bring it out in each of us, especially children. Why is empathy development important? The development of empathy and related traits is crucial to the maturation of prosocial moral reasoning, altruistic behavior, and genuine concern for others. All of these factors are values that teachers should be integrating into their lessons for elementary school students to learn early on in education. In elementary school, conflicts are inevitable, communication is essential, and relationships are the source of comfort for many children; empathy is at large an essential value that will contribute to kindness and promote healthy behaviors, therefore increasing educational aims and producing more engaged learners.

Factors that Influence Empathy Development

Goleman (1994) suggested that awareness and intuition play a large role in the attribute of empathy because of the internal nature and the notion of reading nonverbal
channels; this results in a well-adjusted mental and emotional state. People who have the ability to read others’ non-verbal cues also tend to be more popular and outgoing; they tend to fit in socially and be more sensitive in their relations with peers. When people can identify their own feelings, they can learn to identify and understand others’ emotions (Goleman, 1994).

In order to obtain empathy development, one must be emotionally aware, or emotionally "in tune." Developing awareness is a huge part of working with one’s feelings so that it is possible to understand feelings and become more emotionally aware. (Ryan & Travis, 1981) "Learning to be aware, both of what is around us and what is in us, is one of life’s great challenges, and results in the ability to freely and responsibly express our emotions" (Ryan & Travis, 1981, p. 133). Kramer (2005) maintained that a lack of self-awareness and an inability to manage one’s thoughts are two factors commonly associated with people who are depressed. People who are depressed are less aware of the positive things in their lives at the present and might be lacking in attachment to their feelings and values and other things that bring them fully to life (Kramer, 2005). Fortunately, according to Ellis and Harper (1975), "Once you clearly see, understand, and begin to dispute the irrational beliefs that create your inappropriate feelings, your ‘unconscious’ thoughts will rise to consciousness, greatly enhancing your power of emotional self-control" (p. 21). Rational thinking is about learning to set valuable goals, those that will lead to the road of happiness, and when on the right path we are using appropriate feelings as well as identifying those feelings with productive emotions. Learning how to productively emote and rationally think are part of the process of empathic training and emotional education (Ellis & Harper, 1975).
Forgiveness is a contributor to empathy because it is part of the moral spectrum in living a whole life. "One reason forgiveness is interesting is that it is part of a set of concerns centering on the role of feelings in the moral life" (Haber, 1991, p. 1). Forgiveness is a letting go of harmful, unnecessary thoughts and toxic stress we, as human beings tend to bear on our bodies when we’ve been emotionally hurt.

"Forgiveness is…in a nutshell, your response to an injustice—a turning to the ‘good’ in the face of something bad" (Altshul, 2007, p. 306). Revenge is another option to consider when someone is hurt, and though it is usually desirable at the onset of pain, revenge will only bring more pain and cause anger to intensify. Forgiveness is the option that provides an emotional intimacy with others, improving the health of those who learn to forgive, and highly reduce needless stress. The favor of forgiveness is on the one who is forgiving, because in the long run it is the benefit of that person who has let go that can move on and live an emotionally and physically healthy life (Altshul, 2007). In relating forgiveness to empathy, both are learned skills that anyone is able to acquire, and forgiveness is a significant part of letting go of negative thoughts, and focusing on what makes for a healthy, vital life. "Forgiveness also deepens your capacity to feel close to people" (Altshul, 2007, p. 306).

Human relationships are the key to moving forward in this life. Frederic Luskin, author of *Forgive For Good* (2003), discussed forgiveness as crucial to personal growth as well as in our relationships with others, "I define forgiveness as the experience of peace and understanding that can be felt in the present moment" (Luskin, 2003, p. xii). Empathy and understanding, including reflection, support this notion of forgiveness. The two go hand in hand, seeing as empathy is the ability to understand another’s feelings and
forgiveness involves understanding those feelings and letting them go in order to maintain a healthy perspective on life. Alfie Kohn (1990) illustrated that human relationship is a notion of interest to philosophers and social scientists and obviously a huge part of our existence. It is how we go about our human relationships – create them, build on them, and maintain them – that is crucial to our mental health and understanding of otherness, and, overall, humanness. "...an encounter with another person offers something that can never be equaled by solitary reflection" (Kohn, 1990, p. 100). Kohn (1990) described the concept of shared humanness, an idea that requires empathic responses and consideration of otherness. Children learn that there is a connection with others and that we can better understand ourselves by our relationships with others as defined by the Eigenwelt, the realm of self-relatedness (Kohn, 1990). In understanding that we are all similar beings, hopefully we can forgive others when we are mistreated, and direct anger into positive energy. Luskin (2003) concludes, "I have seen that forgiveness helps people control their emotions so they maintain good judgment. They do not waste precious energy trapped in anger and hurt over things they can do nothing about" (p. viii). Children can learn to choose to forgive, end grievances, and let go of any pain to live a healthy life without resentment.

Edith Stein (1964), a pioneer on the research and implications of empathy, extended the concept of oneness and understanding the significance of connecting with other human beings as it is closely integrated into the realm of empathy. There is a complete unity formed with the experience of empathy and a oneness that is created by taking away the "other" and the "I" and realizing that, in fact, they are one (Stein, 1964). However, Stein (1964) explained, empathy is not the feeling of oneness, but the feeling
of oneness and the experience of others is greatly enhanced by experiencing the essence of empathy. "The feeling of oneness and the enrichment of our own experience become possible through empathy" (Stein, 1964, p. 17). What Stein (1964) believed extended other psychologists’ formulations of empathy as she considered empathic fulfillment to be possible in all things living, including people, animals, and even plants. This is what Stein refers to as "the phenomena of life" in which there is a filling of a living body and soul with the experiences and general feelings in our individual lives as they relate to others (Stein, 1964, p. 63-64). Stein (1964) demonstrated clearly that she was passionate on the subject of empathy and its complete deconstruction, evident by her in-depth research and comprehensive investigation on the essence of empathy. Empathy was defined by Stein (1964) as an act of perceiving, an experience of external consciousness and acknowledgment of the other person, or perception of the other. The concept of human oneness if further identified by Hoffman (2000) as a key to moral education in an effort to recognize and reduce empathic bias, therefore connecting to other's life experiences and building relationships. In an effort to create a sense of oneness, Hoffman (2000) agreed that it is important how one perceives the concerns of another; it is especially important to realize how alike we are and relinquish empathy cross-culturally.

Robert Katz (1963) further stressed that empathy entails a complete involvement with another being, physical and emotional, because we are feeling with them, responding to those feelings, understanding or analyzing them and projecting ourselves into the other person. Human tendency includes the putting up of barriers in the time of hurt and oftentimes misjudgments on those who are different, "…but in the moments of empathy he experiences the keenest and most vivid sense of closeness or
sameness with the other person" (Katz, 1963, p. 4). For the majority of the day, children are surrounded by people—peers, teachers, parents—and these relationships are closer the more involved we become in them just the same as education is more beneficial the more engaged we are in the classroom. According to Keim (1995), "You spend a lifetime making ethical decisions, living in community, and developing a sense of purpose and self-worth that helps others discover the goodness in themselves" (p. 15). It is important to become educated for growing as a person, investing in the self, and developing character that is unique (Keim, 1995). Closeness in relationships helps provide a sense of comfort and encouragement as well as a keener sense of who we are, especially in time of need.

Resiliency is a topic of interest to many professionals in the field of education, and the ability to withstand hardships or pain is a triumph in life. Resiliency is found in many areas of life, not only in the classroom, and relates to having an optimistic perspective on life. "Because of his resilience, the optimist achieves more at work, at school, and on the playing field" (Seligman, 2006, p. 207). Defeat is a challenge for optimists, but for those who are in the helpless category, depression may last for a long period; clearly resilience has not been evident in these cases. Seligman (2006) illustrated, "The optimist bounces back from defeat, and, with his life somewhat poorer, he picks up and starts again" (p. 207). When we are able to return to a healthy state and look at life with an optimistic view, we can also understand that other people have been through difficult times and we can better understand our human relationships, letting down our guard. Katz (1963) agrees, "When we empathize, we permit spontaneous activities to emerge" (p. 24). Because empathy is natural, it opens up our minds to exert imagination.
and playfulness, sometimes involuntary, but a regression that "ultimately gives us a more accurate understanding of reality" (Katz, 1963, p. 24). Human beings experience pain; that is life. Sadness and painful experiences are all a part of living, but it is what we do with this pain that can lead us down different paths. How do we change that path? How do we carry on in these times of pain? Carrying on and continuing to fully live is resiliency, and Keim (1995) suggested, "It is about the power we have to change our lives and our perceptions of ourselves and others" (p. 7). It is acceptable to feel pain and grief, even depression, in living; however, change the course you are on if you continue feeling pain. "Love of yourself and others will ‘ease the pain’ and give you hope" (Keim, 1995, p. 8). Because we all feel pain, Ryan and Travis (1981) suggested that it is okay to feel even negative emotions, not avoid them, yet seek help in learning to be aware of these feelings and releasing any uncomfortable emotions in healthy ways.

Human beings tend to, when in the face of stress or discomfort, place a guard up or shield with self-control, but empathy allows for full engagement and feelings to become involved. Katz (1963) acknowledged that we have been trained to have self-control over emotions, repress feelings, and aim for a logical understanding when trying to solve problems. There are usually multiple solutions to problems that arise (Katz, 1963). Keim (1995) agreed, "We smile when we are hurting. Posing and posturing, we stand frozen with fear" (p. 13). Learning self-control and how to be more resilient and optimistic starts with encouragement. Seligman (2006) included, "...becoming an optimist consists not of learning to be more selfish and self-assertive, and to present yourself to others in overbearing ways, but simply of learning a set of skills about how to talk to yourself when you suffer a personal defeat" (p. 207). Optimism does not mean saying
positive things or thinking positive thoughts, though these are helpful as well, optimism means changing bad habits of negativity and learning to think constructively and hopefully at times of failure and despair (Seligman, 2006). Positive thinking and optimism help define who you are – being real and authentic, being able to reach out to others and knowing the goodness in your heart. There is true wisdom in knowing yourself and discovering the realistic view of you that is not superficial (Keim, 1995).

Emotional intelligence and emotional competence are faculties that contribute to and derive from the capacity to empathize. Emotional intelligence is a concept that is at the focal point of Daniel Goleman’s work as an important tool for success in education, work, and life. Goleman (1994) illustrated that emotional intelligence includes the ability to empathize, be optimistic, manage thoughts and feelings, and motivate oneself.

Yet, even though a high IQ is no guarantee of prosperity, prestige, or happiness in life, our schools and our culture fixate on academic abilities, ignoring emotional intelligence, a set of traits – some might call it character – that also matters immensely for our personal destiny. (Goleman, 1994, p. 36)

Emotional competence is a learned capability stemming from emotional intelligence that involves two abilities: "empathy, which involves reading the feelings of others, and social skills, which allow handling those feelings artfully" (Goleman, 1994, p. 24). Social competence, therefore, falls into the area of empathic understanding and being able to read nonverbal cues from other people. The knack for being socially competent and emotionally intelligent is a stepping-stone to understanding other people, interpersonal relationships, and learning how to come to reasonable solutions when problems arise (Goleman, 1994). Howard Gardner (2004) proposed that the ability to relate to others is a great gift in life, heightening self-image, sensitivity and personal intelligence. In
preadolescence, children are able to extend their multiple intelligences, becoming invested in friendships, as they are "continuing trends toward greater social sensitivity, toward a keener sense of another’s motivations, and toward a fuller sense of one’s own competences" (Gardner, 2004, p. 249). The root of emotional competence is relating to others, even unfamiliar individuals, and the capacity to place oneself into the mindset of another being; this in turn reflects on oneself, making it possible to understand the power of the mind and of the heart. Empathy requires sensitivity and willingness to learn the motivations of other people (Gardner, 2004).

Consequences Due to a Lack of Empathic Understanding

Goleman (1994) described misattunement as the lack of emotional attunement that is a cause of missing the train for understanding how to read other people. This is true lack of empathic understanding because empathy involves knowing oneself and the motives of others – of having insight into how to manage one’s thoughts. Goleman (1994) extended emotional neglect in children is a key trigger for criminal acts later in life because of the lack of opportunity for learning emotional attunement and connection to other people. Infants are capable of catching moods of those around them, and can pick up on depressed feelings of others. "When a parent consistently fails to show any empathy with a particular range of emotion in the child – joys, tears, needing to cuddle – the child begins to avoid expressing, and perhaps even feeling, those same emotions" (Goleman, 1994, p. 101). Teachers and parents must help provide emotional support and be aware of their own attitudes while around children, because it will affect children if
their mentors are emotionally shut down and unconscious of their behavior (Goleman, 1994).

The American Psychiatric Association (2008) recognized, "Bouts of sadness in childhood are normal, but up to a quarter of children will experience depression before they finish high school, and clinical depression in children seems to be on the rise" (p. 1). Depression is a serious issue and may be the result of emotional misattunement, lack of support and encouragement, and lost optimism (Kramer, 2005). Chances are, we all will fail at something or another at some point in our lives. Seligman (2006) offered suggestions for these sorts of times of defeat, "When we fail at something, we all become helpless and depressed at least momentarily" (p. 137). There are many challenges in education and in getting through the school day; optimism is the key to finding the light. Optimism, Seligman (2006) concurred, is essential for overcoming struggles and difficult obstacles that get in our way because without it we would become depressed. Defeat is a challenge for optimists, but for those who are in the helpless category, depression may last for a long period. Helpless people and those suffering from depression have not learned optimism or resiliency and cannot as easily bounce back from defeat. Seligman (2006) believed that depression is just as important when regarding children and education because "School age children have the same rate and intensity of depression as adults" (p. 235). Encouragement might be lacking in the presence of depression, and if there is no social support or emotional stability it becomes more difficult to have a positive outlook and therefore good health. Seligman (2006) extended, "The connection between lack of social support and illness provides a fourth reason to believe that optimistic explanatory style is likely to produce good health" (p. 174). Optimism is
connected to good health; researchers examined several studies of helpless rats and they experienced a weakened immune system. "These findings show that learned helplessness doesn’t just affect the behavior; it also reaches down to the cellular level and makes the immune system more passive" (Seligman, 2006, p. 173). Because pessimism and negative self-talk can essentially overbear a child, his or her education can also take a toll (Seligman, 2006). The school environment ought to reach toward the goal of creating optimism.

Moreover, because pessimism is what typically is the result of repeated painful experiences and negative thoughts, it outweighs any reassurance that might come. Consequently, pessimism and negative self-talk can defeat a child’s optimistic views and his or her education could be negatively affected (Seligman, 2006). When referring to empathy and creating values that assist in educating the whole child, being well rounded is a key contributor to being happy and successful. Peter Kramer in his book Against Depression (2005) supported the bold claim, "The depressed lack roundedness" to imply that depressed people are unaware of themselves and unattached to their feelings (p. 13). Peter Kramer is a therapist who employs empathy in therapy for his depressed patients as one of the most basic elements. Among those core elements are tentative interpretation and the search for meaning, all which aid in the effort to uplift a depressive being – to bring the absent patient into the present and lift a heavy weight (Kramer, 2005). "Empathy is a tool of psychotherapy" and Kramer uses this in the treatment of his patients who are depressed (Kramer, 2005, p. 23). In treating depressed patients, it is often helpful to encourage one to reattach his or her feelings and values, those things in our lives that drive us to live happily, those elements that provide emotional investment
and motivation to create a fulfilling life. Furthermore, depression might be congruent with a lack of authentic self-awareness and an inability to manage one’s thoughts, and often depressives tend to be highly sensitive to emotionality, resulting in fragility in the occurrence of disappointment, dependency and desperation (Kramer, 2005).

Intense states of empathic understanding can have a negative affect on the body and mind. Katz (1963) reviewed excessive empathy is seen in people who have mentally shifted beyond themselves and have completely merged with their environment; they have lost the sense of reality and come to a state of relatedness where there is no separation between themselves and the outside world, and there is no concept of the individual. This type of empathizer cannot see himself objectively (that is, see himself as others see him) and this person has an obstructed view of reality with little to no insight, low self-esteem, and an inability to experience or feel what he or she understands (Katz, 1963). It could be that an over-empathizer suffers from a deficiency in awareness or inhibits excessive empathic abilities, both barriers in reaching healthy states of self and other identification. It is possible that a lack of or excess of empathic understanding can lead to distortions of feeling, low self-respect, and ultimately a drifting from one identity to another (Katz, 1963).

Kramer (2005) agreed that traits of depressives tend to include a desperation to please others and exquisite awareness of the needs of others, typical especially in the unfortunate occurrence of children raised by depressives (p. 66). Excessive empathy might be dangerous, but it is not exclusively a perilous channel. "Empathy is not depression. There are emotionally intense people who never suffer mood disorders" (Kramer, 2005, p.66). However, Katz (1963) emphasized an idea of "psychotic empathy,"
which is experienced by some severely depressed patients who have a distorted view of reality and self-worth. Though empathy is not the sole requirement for living a purpose-driven, fulfilling life, Goleman (1994) observed that the absence of empathy is obvious in rapists, criminal psychopaths, child molesters, and even sociopaths. Emotional neglect early in life is a trigger for criminal acts to follow into adulthood as a result of misattunement and not having formed an emotional connection to others, Goleman (1994) maintained. Just as multiple intelligences provide rich potentials for success, deficient and incomplete areas of intelligence, especially interpersonal intelligence, result in an inability to maintain healthy relationships, successfully problem-solve and manage negative thought patterns (Goleman, 1994). "The inability to relate to others may be felt as a distinct failing, one that lowers one’s image of oneself" (Gardner, 2004, p. 250). Oftentimes, when people are experiencing emotions such as anger and anxiety, people tend to develop negative, distorted thoughts; this is the time to challenge your thoughts. Seligman (2006) concluded that when people are depressed and overcome with distorted beliefs it is most important to learn the skill of optimism, especially at a young age. "It might be said that teaching optimism to your children is as important as teaching them to work hard or be truthful, for it can have just as profound an impact on their later lives" (Seligman, 2006, p. 235). Children's emotional growth depends on what they are taught, who they spend time with, and what values bring them the most happiness and success. Therefore, teaching empathy and optimism can help beat depression and instill values of positive thinking and the significance of being in tune with oneself and with others.

Hoffman (2000) discussed the topic of empathic over-arousal as he described limitations to moral development. One might shift, in distressed circumstances, from
empathic motivation that builds on prosocial moral action, to over-arousal that creates intense intrapersonal grief. "This empathic over-arousal can move observers out of the empathic mode, cause them to be preoccupied with their own personal distress, and turn their attention away from the victim" (Hoffman, 2000, p. 13). Empathy draws on feeling for others and extends a willingness to help others in times of distress; when that motivation to help others vanishes and painful feelings are turned inward, then there has been no positive result in the relationship. Hoffman (2000) offered another limitation to empathy and that is the bias that people tend to respond empathically to familiar people such as family members and close friends as well as victims who are in the "here-and-now" present situation. However, Hoffman (2000) considered the limitations to be of little concern because, "Seen in this light, empathic bias and over-arousal may be empathy’s ultimate self-regulating, self-preserving mechanisms, which fits with the increasing evidence that the ability to regulate one’s emotions correlates positively with empathy and helping behavior" (p. 14). Though these limitations shine on empathy’s vulnerability, embedding empathy into a moral principle in order to expand its structure can lessen problems and place emphasis on justice and caring (Hoffman, 2000).

Empathy in the Classroom

The author of this project came across several strategies for teaching empathy in the classroom as well as models for teaching the whole child in this style of moral education. Schertz (2007) recommended that inquiry, engagement, and dialogue are all crucial for empathic pedagogy. Dialogue is important for moral development in education because it is by verbal communication that children are able to understand other persons
and learn about other positions. "Dialogue provides the pedagogical vehicle by which intersubjective empathic development reaches its full potential" (Schertz, 2007, p. 9). This is done correctly when there is a mutual acceptance and children approach opposing viewpoints reasonably (Shertz, 2007). Hoffman (2000) extended that verbal communication is key to empathic arousal. "Language might produce an empathic response because of the physical properties of words which have become conditioned stimuli…" (Hoffman, 2000, p. 49). The semantic meaning of language is what provides significance to dialogue during mediation or in an otherwise distressed situation and the verbal messages are decoded as are visual and auditory images that all contribute to people responding empathically, according to Hoffman (2000). Schertz (2007) agreed that intersubjective mediation takes place during dialogical pedagogy and empathic engagement because of the process of shared inquiry and fully open communication. "In addition to allowing students access to the perspectives of others, engaging in dialogue gives them practice in negotiating with these various perspectives or roles" (Schertz, 2007, p. 11).

Role-taking is an important mode for learning empathy, and Hoffman (2000) concluded that situating oneself in another’s position evokes similar feelings because we are human and have similar life experiences. This process of role-taking can be viewed as an advanced cognitive mode of processing, though it is really just "putting oneself in the other’s place and imagining how he or she feels" (Hoffman, 2000, p. 52). This can easily be applied in the classroom with various activities. Hoffman (2000) suggested, "By 6 or 7 years, some children begin showing rather sophisticated understanding of the connections between their own feelings and the feelings of others" (p. 74). Schertz (2007) illustrated
empathy as an important development in moral education, in the intersubjective experience, and in systemic communication processes. Children are able to feel and display emotional expressions, process emotions received by others, and then feel accordingly and therefore enhance their affective development. "An empathic episode can involve a variety of processes, from mimicry to role taking, depending on the interpersonal context and the developmental capabilities of the subjects" (Schertz, 2007, p. 8). Dramatic play and role play foster healthy relationships among children, heighten children’s social and language development, and create overall friendlier children who are more willing to cooperate and communicate with classmates (Hohmann & Weikart, 2002, p. 324).

Cotton (2001) concluded that role-taking and role-playing are both activities that help increase affective and cognitive empathy because they allow children to assume the role of another person, understanding his or her views and feelings. During role-taking, it is important to initially focus on one’s own feelings, but then direct attention to the similarities between oneself and the other. Interestingly, Cotton (2001) extended that empathy in children increases even when they can imagine the perspective of a plant, animal or inanimate object; this process is useful also in identifying with physically handicapped students in order to gain an understanding and appreciation of those who are different. There are many activities for learning empathy with use of objects in the classroom, partnering with other people, and studying famous empathetic persons. Of course, both parents and teachers can help teach children empathy by modeling empathic behavior (Cotton, 2001). Self-awareness and empathy are involved in learning to take the role of another. Story telling is an activity teachers can do to encourage children to
identify with characters in the story, understand that they have uncomfortable feelings, and realize such feelings are universal, although there are always ways to cope (McCabe-Tyron & Latour-Elefante, 2006). Imagining oneself in the role of another can develop positive coping and problem-solving skills.

If schools sincerely strive to promote learning in a safer environment, then, according to Johnson, Templeton and Wan (2000) encouraging assessments such as the Second Step Curriculum, for example, students will learn methods for improving social skills development and reducing violent aggressive acts. The Second Step Curriculum was used in a study as part of a violence prevention curriculum in "dealing with violence through empathy training, impulse control, and anger management while focusing on language skill development" (Johnson, et al., 2000, p. 8). The teachers in the study recognized many benefits and noticed that many of the students were better able to identify their feelings and deal with anger by calmly discussing their feelings with others, thus resolving problems in a peaceful manner. When students are able to understand their feelings and how others perceive them, they can have fun expressing themselves in a positive way. This sort of empathic training is extremely advantageous to the entire school and community (Johnson, et al., 2000).

In order to become socially intelligent and obtain self-definition and form an identity, it is important that children learn to identify and then develop goals. "Goals represent a fundamental means by which we develop, solidify, maintain, and protect our sense of identity and self" (Bar-On & Parker, 2000, p. 15). By setting goals, we learn to work towards a purpose, which helps us define who we are and where we belong in this world. We, in turn, become motivated to learn and grow, constantly moving forward to
establish our identity and strive toward some cognitively composed ideal. (Bar-On & Parker, 2000). Social intelligence entails the ability for people to "manage their emotions and direct their behavior toward desired outcomes" (Bar-On & Parker, 2000). Planning and becoming verbal about intentions and goals is a great way to work on social competence and supporting language in school. Hohmann and Weikart (2002) suggested that "encouraging children to talk about their plans and leading verbal games are important ways of gaining verbal skills and the capacity for planning and recalling narratives" (p. 355). Independence and self-awareness are important factors in promoting self-esteem and therefore the ability to develop personal goals. Activities that include praise and self-esteem can help children identify positive aspects of self and become more aware of self by using expression and positive behaviors (McCabe-Tyron & Latour-Elefante, 2006).

Service learning is another type of activity as well as a tool for community improvement that can be applied to education for children. Cathryn Berger Kaye (2004) developed a blueprint for service learning with this focus: "Service learning advances and enhances student learning when teachers plan ahead to establish authentic curricular connections" (p. 19). Kaye (2004) identified service learning as a collaborative, integrated way of learning, a process in which a community need is recognized and then actively applied to improve the quality of life of the community as a whole. Barshay (1964) described that leadership and community involvement are important steps children can take in contributing to helping others and learning differences among other people. "Too often the home and the school do not provide enough opportunities for leadership. Where there is emotional and motivational involvement in community participation,
enthusiasm grows for the good will of others, and there is improvement in social objectives" (Barshay, 1964, p. 131). In order for children to learn effectively, they must be enthusiastic, energetic, and motivated to obtain knowledge and reach empathic awareness. Barshay (1964) concluded that an attitude of empathy is acquired by becoming emotionally mature, thinking freely and creatively, and the willingness to help others do the same. Empathy cannot sustain if one is imprisoned by his or her emotional conflicts and self-criticism because it is a socially learned ability that is not solely internal (Barshay, 1964). Empathy, according to Barshay (1964), "At its highest flow, you are in the ideal position to help others to see themselves and be themselves" (p. 20). There is a quote by Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has" which highlights the importance of a collaborative experience of heightening awareness and contributing to the community (Kaye, 2004, p. 21). The message here is come together to create positive change for all.

Expressing gratitude and writing in journals are helpful for developing empathy and understanding ones feelings, according to Froh, Sefick and Emmons (2008). Gratitude helps develop a child’s cognitive and emotional system, contributing to their maturity over the years. Gratitude correlates with well-being in that happy people generally tend to be thankful for people (and things) in life, and learning how to develop gratitude therefore enhances well-being. It is especially effective to use words to express gratitude and appreciation when one is thankful; writing down thankful comments or thinking about what one is thankful for is also helpful in developing gratitude (Froh et al., 2008). Reflection is important to consider when realizing gratitude and other positive behaviors because it gives students the opportunity to reflect on the learning process both
intellectually and emotionally so that the experience is deepened and fully appreciated (Kaye, 2004). Students will gain a better sense of their experiences and those of others by reflecting, whether mentally or physically recording thoughts on a gratifying experience. Gratitude, along with resiliency and forgiveness all compliment empathy and together they build on what is important in this world: educating children to be kind and caring as social beings. The review of literature on empathy reveals that though it is not flawless and perfect in form, the highlights of its moral and essential components are significant to the education of children.

Elementary education is satiated with positive and novel experiences, stimulating activities, and developing relationships. Children at this age, however, face the occurrence of bullying at school. Ken Rigby (2008) described the nature of bullying as oppressive behavior created by power differences and usually involves threats, manipulation, and hurtful actions towards a distressed individual. "It is well known that bullying is reported as occurring much more frequently in the earlier years of schooling" (Rigby, 2008, p. 33). Name-calling, hitting and excluding are typical forms of bullying found among younger school children, according to Rigby (2008). There are many reasons that indicate why children bully. "Some have pointed to personality or character deficiencies on the part of those who frequently bully, for instance, a lack of empathy or an inability to feel a sense of shame when they act in an antisocial manner" (Rigby, 2008, p. 45). The essence of being a good bystander, Rigby (2008) highlighted as a positive diffusion of bullying, is to have a genuine concern for others and willingness to help others along with thoughtful encouragement by teachers and peers. "With young children especially, levels of empathy towards others can be raised by good classroom teachers"
(Rigby, 2008, p. 89). Teachers can start by promoting the desire to help others in their classroom in order for children to develop a sense of empathic understanding and continuing encouragement for kindness and respect of others (Rigby, 2008). Those who bully do not realize the significance of understanding others and of realizing oneness, and they are sadly blinded by lack of self-confidence and concern for others. When empathy is understood and utilized, children can experience oneness with others and enrichment of shared experiences, moving towards empathic fulfillment (Stein, 1964). Bullying prevention in school is not an easy task for educators; however, there are approaches to the problem of bullying that can be handled by the collaboration of those who are truly concerned.

Specific to elementary education is the notion of empathy as a factor of creativity in the classroom. Alane Starko (2005) described creativity as involving multiple perspectives of theories and intelligences, goal-oriented learning, and communicating novel ideas and original thinking. Fluency, flexibility, and elaboration are also key ingredients in developing creative minds, and Starko (2005) suggested that teachers could encourage these modes of thinking in daily classroom activities by the types of questioning posed (p. 190-191). Creative dramatics, according to Starko (2005) is an activity similar to role-play that involves problem solving and learning how to act as someone or something else by taking an alternative perspective while searching for new ideas and explanations. "These exercises can be valuable for developing concentration, sensory awareness, self-control, empathetic understanding, and a sense of humor" (Starko, 2005, p. 241). Awareness and openness contribute to empathic understanding and it helps to have a supportive environment in the classroom (Starko, 2005). Self-
awareness, self-acceptance, and acceptance of others are qualities that Starko (2005) noted to describe creative environments, and they all aid in human growth and reaching set goals (p. 359). Starko (2005) outlined the significance of psychological safety and the various aspects that support a safe environment: acceptance of the individual, risk taking, and exploration in learning, which are all contributing factors of empathic understanding and comprehension of alternative points of view. In addition, these concepts are important for expanding creative thinking in elementary school students; creativity and interest in seeing the world from another angle deals directly with empathy (Starko, 2005). Another way to expand on creativity is to build on your imaginative abilities and what inspires you. "...I saw that creative expression--particularly in the arts--is perhaps the most familiar way educators think of nourishing the spirit in school" (Kessler, 2000, p. 91). Passionate engagement, enthusiasm, and a soul connection are all linked to creative expression (Kessler, 2000). It is assumed that there are always opportunities for creativity, but it helps to have supportive environments, caring people, and engaging activities to spark creativity.

Role-playing is an activity that ties into pretending and imagination, fostering creativity and empathic understanding. According to Hohmann and Weikart (2002), "pretending is an intentional process that engages curiosity, thinking, and play" (p. 323). Role play is anything that involves the opportunity to look at something from another perspective, being open to take on a different role. The concept of taking a different role, Michael Michalko (2001) suggested, is supported by taking a look at different perspectives. "You can't grow corn indefinitely on the same field; at some point, to refresh the soil, you must plant hay. Similarly, to grow a different perspective, you will
find it helpful to adopt a different role” (Michalko, 2001, p. 44). Imagining oneself in another role or in another's shoes makes possible a shift in perspective, which is helpful for learning how someone else would feel in a given situation. Hohmann and Weikart (2002) suggested that during role-play children are thinking about previous life experience, imagining being in the place of someone or something else, and imitating the actions of someone or something else. "Through such make-believe play, children gain mastery and control over events they have witnessed, experienced, or imagined" (Hohmann and Weikart, 2002, p. 323). Empathy is key for elementary students and allows for understanding others in relating to the self. Hohmann and Weikart (2002) described empathy as "the capacity to develop a concern for others in reference to understanding one’s own feelings and learning how to be emotionally expressive" (p. 46).

Conclusion

Elementary students are at the precise age of developing trust and self-confidence, learning respect for others, understanding goals and accomplishing goals, and taking initiative, all of which empathy entails (Hohmann & Weikart, 2002). Human relationships, Hohmann and Weikart (2002) concluded, are built by the capacities mentioned previously and are possible by developing a sense of self in order to further enhance children’s social and emotional health as well as the growth of children’s positive human relationships. It is important that adults and teachers create an environment that is full of support and encouragement. According to Hohmann and Weikart (2002) classroom activities must include interaction, shared control between
adults and children, opportunities for discussion of personal goals and autonomy, and taking initiative. Elementary teachers, as examined by Hohmann and Weikart (2002), in a caring and supportive school climate, are expected to form authentic relationships with children in order to foster trust and develop trust and respect for the learner. "Since teaching and learning are socially interactive processes, it is imperative that adults share their best, most genuine selves so their effect on children is positive and sustaining" (Hohmann & Weikart, 2002, p. 57). Interactive experiences in the classroom can be greatly enhanced by authentic teaching and sharing key concepts of empathy. A positive attitude goes a long way; teaching the fundamentals of empathy supported by genuine caring modes of interaction will lead to further acts of kindness and overall educational growth.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Elementary students have many reasons to be excited to go to school, but also some fears and anxiety associated with school. Children face challenges dealing with bullies, low self-esteem, and fitting in with classmates. Empathic understanding provides a route for awareness of self and others, heightening self-confidence and social acceptance so that children treat others as they would like to be treated. This project is aimed at constructing a plan that will aid in the development of empathy in elementary children. Teachers will use this curriculum to teach various developmental strategies for empathy in the classroom. With the use of this curriculum plan and the included lessons and strategies, students will gain an understanding of other perspectives and develop a sense of empathy in role-taking, setting goals, identifying their feelings and managing their emotions. During this process, students will be able to learn the importance of viewing a situation from another’s perspective and understand differences as well as similarities in viewpoints.

The concept of empathy in young children was brought to the author’s attention first by a psychology of children course where she learned about the importance of empathy in socialization and developing healthy relationships. The author was then reintroduced to empathy in a health education course in which she learned about the
multiple benefits of empathy and the potential harm that a lack of empathy can endure. She became increasingly interested in the topic of empathy as it related to her own life, self-realization and how it coincided with her social life and family relationships. College courses in education repeatedly highlighted issues of bullying and problems with current educational policies. The author gained a perception of empathic understanding playing a huge role in minimizing the acts of bullying and became able to see the correlation between knowing yourself and the willingness to know and understand others. The author has researched extensively to study the current strategies while reviewing literature and has discovered various strategies for developing empathy and heightening empathic understanding in elementary students. Research of the topic of empathy for this project included review of undergraduate and graduate level coursework, articles from educational journals and professionals in education and library research. Cross-referencing was an important tool in researching; the author found that many issues overlapped and that provided sufficient information. On-line research was helpful in finding sources that were not available in the library and offered significant collections of facts and data. There were several opportunities to discuss the project with practicing teachers and other professionals who found the topic interesting and valuable to education. The author discussed progress of the project in her seminar course in which collaboration and sharing of project ideas and research links occurred. Assistance came from all angles as the project design developed and the author was directed to professors at Chico State and Humboldt State to gain knowledge on topics closely related to empathy. Empathy remains the focus of the project, but through these linking resources it was important to
include associated subjects to the project only to enhance empathic understanding and build on educational values and goals.

The preceding methods coalesced to lead to the development of the project, which came into the form of a curriculum plan. This project includes methods for teaching children how to gain empathic understanding and awareness. Elementary teachers around the area have suggested strategies and lessons, as well as other professionals in the field, making this project a compilation of useful lessons and techniques for teaching empathy.

The curriculum plan consists of exercises that involve creativity and various learning styles for teaching the whole child. Though empathy is considered as instilled in humankind, it is undoubtedly diminishing or otherwise shrugged off in many people and can therefore be taught to children in order to rekindle kindness and caring in the classroom. The classroom is only the beginning of a foundation for fostering empathic capabilities and living a full life, taking along positive attributes into adulthood.

The review of the literature has influenced the design of the project because of the useful information derived from studying professionals in the field of education who are highly experienced in the area of empathy or similar and parallel positive emotions that contribute to empathic understanding and appreciation. It is important for the project to include suggestions from current teachers dealing with instruction of moral education, specifically empathy. The plan is designed to embrace multiple creative strategies as well as playful and hopefully enjoyable ways of learning how to progress in empathic awareness for the well-being of oneself and for others. This project will consist of eight lessons, complete with a set of clear instructions on delivery, content standards, and
comprehensible objectives. The lessons are complete with discussions, role-playing, writing activities, and the purpose is directly tied to empathic understanding as children need to learn moral and character education in order to develop the importance of educating the whole child while realizing multiple intelligences.

The eight lessons are divided into sections of focus areas: individual character building, socialization with peers, and family concern/community commitment. The focus areas will be aimed at empathic training and each will focus on empathy in relation to another positive attribute. The lessons are divided into inquiry, resilience, optimism, gratitude, forgiveness, acceptance, service learning and health. These characteristics were chosen because of their connection and contribution to empathic understanding; they convey positive methods of building character in children and work their way perfectly into a lesson plan. Each of the eight lessons incorporates an activity that fits neatly into the character building of children, the social competence required for healthy communication and effective leadership training needed for community involvement and family support.

The lessons that make up this project will each contain clear purposes anchored with performance-based objectives that are assessed by rubrics. The rubrics will provide the students with a clear understanding of the expectations and the steps required to excel in the lesson. The assessments will be used to determine the student’s understanding of the concepts in each lesson and many will be written reflections of the lesson in the form of a mini journal. The lessons that involve visual representations of a concept will include a visual and/or presentation assessment. Some of the lessons will include assessments that students share with their peers, whether it is a journal or a visual
representation, because it is important to take ownership of an activity and discuss the learning process with other students.

Conclusion

There is not one way to teach empathy, nor are there only eight ways in which empathy is learned. However, empathic understanding is the aim of this project and the eight lessons are encompassing of a variety of creative and comprehensive strategies that contribute to the awareness of individual character and the connection to the other. Empathic understanding is, in essence, a significant part of the necessary education for the whole child. Empathy and its acceptance is a process that develops in the context of education, in a democracy of openness and multifaceted values, in a melting pot of persons. This project reaches out to all who are willing to develop positive morals and genuine kindness in the spirit of empathy.

"Empathy is vital to achieve this free acceptance of all" (Morrell, 2003, p. 10).
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Upper elementary school is the time and place for students to learn and grow together, shaping their values and learning to learn collectively. There are many factors significant to the affective learning outcomes and behaviors of each student, but empathy is a skill and emotional capability that students must learn in order to develop social skills required for emotional growth in the social realm of life.

The beginning of the school year or start of a new semester typically brings excitement, anxiety, hope, and some fear. Students can expect to feel a mixture of emotions, but learn to gradually see that they are not alone in feeling unnerved or out of place; generally, most of the students have similar uneasy feelings and it helps to discuss the fact that students relate to each other in more ways than they originally thought. With a teacher as their guide, students can practice viewing situations from alternate perspectives and come to an understanding of why others feel and do certain things. Empathy involves an understanding of the self, an inside look at our own feelings, core beliefs and values, and the ability to then identify those in others.

Communication is inevitable in a school setting, and it is important to develop good communication skills to increase social learning and reduce instances such as
bullying that diminish educational growth. Empathy is one of many capabilities important for becoming well educated and learning about who you are. Among the multiple characteristics for educational well roundedness are inquiry, resiliency, optimism, gratitude, forgiveness, acceptance, willingness to help others, and good health. These attributes are crucial to individual character building, socialization with peers, and concern for the community— which all combine to attain wholeness.

The purpose of this project was to investigate empathy and develop a curricular plan consisting of eight lessons dealing with empathy and coinciding values for upper elementary students. There are specific standards required to teach and the lessons that were designed recognized those standards and added to content in order to integrate empathic awareness. Upper elementary school is a prime place to teach empathy and moral judgement because children will gain support in imagining how they would feel in another person's place, encouraging prosocial motive development in the early years (Hoffman, 2000). Students at the upper elementary level are dealing with stress concerning school, peers, and/or family and they could gain from learning how to manage their feelings, thoughts, and, moreover, their actions. Students spend the majority of their day at school, and when they can learn the values of respect and kindness along with the realization of how behaviors and actions affect others, they can understand to be responsible for their actions and continue to grow with other students in a safe learning environment.

There are many strategies for teaching empathy in the classroom, and many areas in which empathic training extends. Empathy is important for increasing cognitive awareness, social and emotional growth, physical attunement, and creative abilities. All
of these factors were included in the lessons because it is not only important to gain understanding in one area, but to realize the potential in all areas to come full circle and attain balance and wholeness. Nurturing teachers are those who are proactive in creating an environment where students are becoming educated in academia as well as surrounding areas such as health and social development. Empathy can be taught in upper elementary grades to ensure understanding of how students relate to each other, how human relationships are essential to our existence, and how to learn to develop positive thinking to build on self-confidence and respect for others. Katz (1963) noted, "In beginning a detailed examination of the empathic skill, we must keep in mind the principle that empathy is based on a feeling of similarity" (p. 56). Empathy, whether perceived as a skill or innate ability, builds upon self-awareness, self-respect, and the willingness to develop awareness and care for other people, keeping in mind the similarities shared.

Conclusions

There is much evidence to illuminate the significance of teaching empathy in the classroom. There are multiple benefits associated with empathic training for upper elementary students. Empathy is a skill that can be taught by willing and proactive teachers with a goal in mind to nurture students and model a caring environment. Teachers are learners, too, and we all learn from each other, which is why it is important to give students ownership of their schoolwork, recognize student efforts and applaud student achievement. If students are to learn empathic awareness and subjects closely
associated with empathy, teachers must advocate and authentically facilitate lessons that promote success in those key areas.

Developing a curriculum plan for the school year is important for creating a successful first day and first impressions. Students and families notice when teachers are prepared and have put time and care into planning lessons and activities that will support student growth. The project provides easy to apply ideas for activities to use in the classroom that closely relate to the concept of empathy. The integrated lessons link to the importance of developing empathic understanding and instilling care and kindness in the hearts of the children.

The author concludes that the importance of empathic understanding should not be taken lightly. Empathy proves to be an important skill for developing awareness, managing emotions, understanding and relating to others, and provides a foundation of genuine care for others. The teacher, parents, and students should put their energy into recognizing that they are all learning together and that the educational experience will be much more effective if they can respect and support each other in the learning process.

Recommendations

The author focuses mostly on the significance of integrating empathic awareness into the curriculum as an integral part of the learning process in a social setting. There are far more areas in which to include empathic awareness and stress empathic training, and the author only touched on a small portion of its benefits. Empathy can be integrated into other levels of education, though upper elementary school was thought to be the best foundation for rooting its core purpose in the heart of school life.
Empathic awareness is only the start of a bright and healthy future in education. Further recommendations stem from limitations the author came across while researching the topic of empathy:

1. While this study focused on the importance of teaching empathy to upper elementary students, instruction of empathic awareness and corresponding values may be useful for middle grade students, high school students, and all the way to the university level. At each time in our lives, we learn to place emphasis on different values and come across a variety of people that teach us a lesson in life. No matter our age, we are continuing to learn and grow. Higher grade level students experience different needs and require an appropriate set of instructional materials for teaching empathy.

2. The author of this project recommends that teachers specifically apply empathic training to students with special needs in further studies. There are students who need special attention and nurturing teachers that can help. Further research on teaching empathy to students who have challenges might improve the social, emotional, and even physical domains of their lives. Parents could become involved in supporting empathic training and promoting nurturing relationships at home and in school. Teachers could help to facilitate programs involving parents or caregivers in which students with health challenges or other special needs are encouraged by exercises and activities encompassing empathy.

3. The area of this study was not specific to rural or urban environments, though it could certainly be narrowed to a low-performing, poorly funded, compacted school in which empathic values can benefit the school environment and student performance.
Determining an alternate geographical area could be done by researching area-specific information on the topic of empathy and aligning lessons to fit the needs of those areas.

4. Lesson plan extensions could certainly be a focus for further studies. The author provided eight lessons that entail empathy and corresponding characteristics that provide students with necessary tools for learning to gain self-understanding and acquainting with others. Lessons could be carried out to full units, each with physical activities, art activities, and research activities. Lessons could include a student workshop or student-produced play at the end of the year that incorporates empathic understanding and an array of core concepts for education.

5. This study provided upper elementary teachers with information and lessons to use in their classrooms, but could extend to teacher workshops. The author decided it was most important to emphasize instruction of empathy in the classroom; however, teachers could gain a holistic understanding of how empathy covers a wide area across grade levels and subjects. Teachers could collaborate ideas on empathic training to create further lessons and activities for teaching the benefits of empathic awareness. It is especially important for new teachers to continually approach new ideas and suggestions with open arms. New or novice teachers have the great opportunity to learn from experienced teachers and colleagues to gain understanding of best practices for teaching empathy in the classroom. Teacher workshops or conferences provide a community of active minds in discovering novel ideas and tackling problems. Preparation and planning go a long way for new teachers, or for any teacher at the start of a new year or semester, which is why regular meetings can be useful for planning techniques and suggestions or any questions teachers may want to ask. This project could extend to working with other
teachers to form more creative and useful activities to teach empathy and appreciate sharing of ideas.

6. The author did not include distinctions for empathic training of genders, preschool education, or influences of media. Further research could include these variables along with information for bringing empathic training into the home and placing more focus on the role of parents in providing a model for empathy.

7. Further research could involve study of ELL (English Language Learner) students and how empathic training could improve their education. Teachers in ELL classrooms could develop specific plans for using empathy to enhance learning and better identify with other students and subjects in school.

8. The author did not test the lesson plans in the classroom and would eventually like to see the lessons carried out by herself or other teachers. Further studies would include implementations of the lessons in upper elementary classrooms and collecting data to investigate effectiveness. Testing the value of empathic training could further support the notion of empathy as a significant inclusion in classroom instruction.
REFERENCES


PLAN FOR UPPER ELEMENTARY TEACHERS: IMPLEMENTING

EMPATHY INTO CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

by

Sarah Angela Pennisi 2009
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**Teacher Information**

**Introduction**

There are many strategies and tips that teachers can utilize to make the school semester successful and to ensure that students are receiving the best possible education. Ideally, teachers would have a classroom of curious students, willing to inquire and learn about the surrounding world. Children in this ideal vision would be structured and managed by the teacher. Children in this ideal environment would know exactly what is expected of them and strive to excel in academic work. Students would be supported to learn and grow with other students, cooperating and understanding the significance of group discovery, multiple intelligences, and listening to others. Empathy would be consciously developed and applied to activities in the classroom, and students would gain a concrete conception of empathic attunement, realizing its moral value.

Not all classrooms are ideal, nor are the teachers always prepared for any situation. However, teachers can do their best to plan for the unexpected, be prepared to teach a diverse population of learners, and strive to instill empathic values in education. Teachers can be supportive of inquiring minds, using positive reinforcement and always acting with kindness and care. It is important for teachers to involve parents in the education process so that they are clear on what is expected of the children and feel encouraged to provide support for the students and insight for teachers.

It is important for teachers to plan well for the beginning of the school year or semester so that students settle into their academic learning environment smoothly. The purpose of planning and learning to manage the classroom is to ensure a comfortable and enjoyable learning atmosphere. While planning ahead and developing effective classroom
management, teachers must keep in mind that assessments are important in the process of developing activities and lessons. Objectives for each lesson plan must align with the assessments for that lesson plan because the purpose of the assessments are for teachers to evaluate the work of the students. Assessment is designed for both teachers and students; assessment allows for teachers to readily see the impact of their instruction and allows for students to thoughtfully reflect on and critique their work. Tips for designing the classroom, welcoming children and families to school, introducing yourself as the teacher, integrating empathy into student introductions and realizing importance of inquiry in learning are included in this section. Teaching tips are available to help teachers to improve instruction and reach their teaching potential.

**Classroom Management**

Inclusion of management tips is important for those who plan to pursue their career in education and promote a healthy and effective learning environment for students. Management creates a connotation that might seem negative, a tool for delegating tasks and constructing rules and regulations. However, management in the classroom, like any other profession, is required for creating a learning environment that is accepting of creative ideas yet restrictive of behavior that obstructs others' learning. When students walk into the classroom on the first day of school, they want to know where to sit and how to behave. It helps to have read over the list of student names several times to become familiar with them, then place name tags or note cards with students' names on each desk so that they know where they will be situated. Planning ahead for learning names and designating sitting areas is a sign to the students that the
teacher is organized and serious about teaching. Teachers must go over the school rules clearly, and after some introduction, the teacher can ask students to form a list of classroom rules together. When students are involved in the decision making process, they feel a sense of empowerment and confidence. Classroom rules are significant for maintaining classroom management, and students should always be aware of the rules, which means that they should be known as well as visibly written on posters.

Classroom management is aligned with effective communication, valuable educational instruction, and maintenance of productivity. It is important for teachers to use a combination of their expertise and knowledge of teaching with school and classroom rules, and creative ways to keep students engaged. Hall, Quinn and Gollnick (2008) extended that good management involves disposition, skills, and knowledge of the teacher, incorporating fairness, interaction, clear expectations, thoughtfulness and reflectiveness (p. 443). In addition to previously mentioned performance skills, planning is something that teachers must value as a key to successful classroom management; without planning and looking ahead to form best teaching practices for each lesson, the effort is wasted in the process. "Remember, if you fail to plan, you plan to fail" (Hall, Quinn, & Gollnick, 2008, p. 442).

Planning

The philosophy of a teacher should be to plan on creating the most productive and stimulating educational experience for each and every student; this takes into account the fact that all students learn differently, students learn best with freedom and choice, and students gain understanding best when teachers know the content and deliver it in an
organized manner (Hall, et al., p. 442). It takes time and planning in order to expect a smooth delivery of content that is meaningful to the students. When new teachers are learning how to teach, it takes a shift in perspective to move from the student seat to the teacher position (Hall, et al. p. 442). The transition from student to teacher involves empathic awareness, or an understanding of others and how we relate. As both students and teachers, however, we take on an active role of learning with others, forming relationships as we go. Classroom management envelopes the idea of teaching with purpose. With careful and deliberate planning, the classroom becomes a place where there are constant opportunities to learn. Of course problems will occur and mistakes will be made, but successful classroom management ensures that the teacher has a goal and is implementing objectives that will ultimately be reached.

Assessments

An important part of planning for upper elementary teachers is developing assessments. When used correctly, assessments provide means for determining effectiveness of instruction. Assessing students can be as simple as observation, as long as teachers are looking for the right things. For example, make sure that students are on-task, engaged, contributing to classroom activities, and most importantly that they understand content. Experienced teachers will notice individual student patterns of learning, and teachers can more efficiently observe the environment so that each student remains focused and receives help when needed. Assessment also comes in the form of formal essays and standardized tests. Whether assessments are in simple or complex forms, the function is to ensure student understanding and plan for future lessons to
increase student learning. Hall, Quinn and Gollnick (2008) defined assessing as the process of testing students to determine how much the students are able to do and the value of the content they are being evaluated on, and then following through with a plan of action (p. 402).

Checking for understanding is something that teachers should regularly use as a means of determining what level students are at and how much they really understand. The more experienced teachers will be able to continually check for student understanding, developing strategies to more efficiently determine the level of student understanding, whereas novice teachers tend to be more focused on instruction and teaching standards. The purpose of assessments, essentially, is to figure out what students know, which involves gathering data (observation or testing) and developing plans for further enhancing student understanding. Assessments are meant to assess someone else or yourself, and to benefit who is undergoing assessment. Empathy should be taken into consideration when creating assessments so that they are carefully designed to aid children in instruction and help teachers discover what works best during instruction.
**Tips For Starting The New Year/Semester**

With each new year or semester comes the opportunity of a fresh start, new faces, and novel ideas. Teachers can take this time to plan out the first day of school. Teachers might ask themselves these questions: What will my introduction to my students be? How will I structure the classroom to best fit the needs of the students? How can I make this classroom a place where students look forward to coming to class, excited to learn? How will I welcome the students and their families to school? What do I want them to learn? How can I integrate learning styles so students are engaged? It is important to address these questions upon a new school year or semester to stay up to date and to reflect on what works best for each teacher.

**Classroom Design**

The classroom should be carefully designed by focusing on the optimal environment for best learning outcomes. An optimal environment varies with individual learning styles and grade levels, but typically consists of an environment that corresponds to students' developmental levels and educational needs. Joyce, Weil, and Calhoun (2004) suggested that students typically fall into one of four stages that determines their optimal environment by the characteristics of developmental levels (p. 18). For example, if students tend to see things in evaluative ways, as first grade students often do, the optimal environment needs to be well structured; however, upper elementary students usually exhibit resistance from rules and patterns and challenge authority, often needing an environment that promotes interpersonal relations and group discussions (Joyce, Weil, Calhoun, 2004, p. 19). An optimal learning environment must ultimately be determined...
by the teacher because of his or her knowledge and preconceived notions of the most effective and appropriate learning styles. Upper elementary students can prosper in classrooms that allow for cooperation, inquiry, and flexibility. Cooperative learning in upper elementary students is important for learning to work towards group goals by sharing ideas and listening to alternative perspectives. Starko (2005) extended that in cooperative learning, the group of students must accomplish a goal or complete a task together, but it still depends on each individual contributing his or her skills and creative ideas. For group and cooperative learning, it would make sense to structure the classroom with desks in groups of three or four, so that each desk can also see the teacher's desk or station. It is important to alternate between models of teaching; relying heavily on one style of teaching is monotonous and fails to stimulate student aspiration. "Involving students in a balance of individual and group activities that can support such skills and attitudes will help them develop motivation and autonomy while learning the skills necessary for cooperation" (Starko, 2005, p. 399). Some tasks are designed to complete individually and it is important that students feel like they can accomplish something independently. However, other tasks involve problem solving and group brainstorming, which is helpful for developing a sense of collaboration and learning with other students. Almost all lessons can use activities to help students be engaged and active.

**Welcoming Children and Families to School**

Students and their families are an integral part of the school, and teachers can help welcome families into the new year with enthusiasm and positive reinforcement. When students are excited to learn and start something new, they are motivated to become
involved in class activities and long-term projects. This is clearly why planning is a stepping-stone for starting out the new year smoothly. A clear picture of the year or semester plan will help lessen tension during the beginning of the year, and students and parents will know if you are not prepared. Parents, too, like to feel confident about the education their children will receive and the students like to know what the year will bring. Plan a project that you as a teacher wish to accomplish in your classroom, large or small, as a goal and something for the students to look forward to from the get-go. When students are excited for something new, they will be more likely to become engaged in the project, especially if they feel like they are making a personal contribution.

It is helpful for teachers who might think of the first day of school or first parent-teacher conference as stressful and feel anxious to use visualization. Visualize being confident to ease nerves and heighten self-esteem in order to become more approachable and self-assured in speaking to large groups or difficult parents. Teachers can also give students the same tips for visualizing during presentations or performances. Ask them to imagine the outcome they want and smile as they see themselves succeeding. Ask them to not just think or see their goals, but to feel the excitement of feeling successful. Encourage them to feel calm, focused, confident and happy.

Visualization is imagining or seeing one achieve a goal. Steps to follow:

1. Describe a situation where you want to have confidence. For example, you have to get up and speak to the parents as an introduction to the year. Use all your senses to see the situation, smell the flowers outside the window, the chalk on the board and the sound of shuffling feet or the clicking of the clock. Who will be there? Use as much detail as possible.
2. Write down how you want the situation to unfold. See yourself in your favorite outfit, feeling confident, the parents and students are responding in a positive way. They are smiling and encouraging.

3. Relax and practice the scene over and over again so that it becomes real to you.

Why is it important for teachers to start off on the right foot with families? The students' families provide encouragement and support, in hopes for a fulfilling school experience in which students gain knowledge, have better self-esteem, and maintain good grades. Hall, Quinn and Gollnick (2008) extended that in welcoming and involving families, which can sometimes be a challenge, student learning and student experiences at school are supported and more successful (p. 113). Communication is probably the most important factor in continuing positive partnerships with parents, and collaboration with parents will only boost student learning outcomes. "The focus of communications should be their child's learning" (Hall, et al., p. 116). It is important for teachers to communicate with parents and make an effort to maintain that communication especially when the students are exhibiting signs of difficulties or lack of understanding in school. Ultimately, the more support and positive reinforcement students receive, the more likely students are to reach academic goals and maintain motivation to gain an education. Encourage parents to see themselves as part of the learning team.

"By striving to understand and respect each child's family, we encourage children to view themselves and others as valued, contributing members of society" (Hohmann & Weikart, 2002, p. 69). As a teacher, it is crucial to incorporate the family of the students into planning to understand students and how they will develop as active learners in your classroom, continuing to be active in the community.
**Getting to Know the Children**

Teachers will find it much easier to teach if they get to know their students. Behavior patterns, strengths and weaknesses all contribute to a child's role as a student. Teachers must learn how to be supportive of each individual student, and this requires acute awareness of student needs. It is helpful to provide an active learning environment that involves collaboration of teacher with students. In these learning environments, the teacher can form partnerships with students, encouraging them to reach academic goals. Hohmann and Weikart (2002) illustrated that adults and children work together to solve problems, talk about experiences, brainstorm, actively give-and-take, and build on one another's suggestions (p. 35). It takes patience to sit in the teacher's seat. Oftentimes, teachers do not allow time for students to respond to questions or solve problems on their own. It is crucial for teachers to encourage students to feel confident that they can solve their own problems or discover ideas without depending on others. Teachers can help instill positive and useful skills for developing self-esteem and self-confidence in their students.

Sometimes small acts such as an encouraging smile, direct eye contact, and being attentive to changing moods of students can make a big difference. A simple technique is to use a note card for each student to jot down personality traits, strengths and patterns of learning. Each day quietly focus on one child and get to know that one child better. This should not be obvious, but a subtle attempt to be more attentive, listen and perhaps talk with the child before or after recess. Ask the child what they enjoy and if anything new is happening such as starting a new sport or having grandma come to live with the family.
Diversity is a significant factor that teachers and students must acknowledge and embrace when getting to know each other. A full classroom usually includes students from families with a different socioeconomic status, at least one student with a disability, and students from a different culture. Typically, there exists a range of abilities as well as gender differences in a classroom. It is the teacher's role to recognize differences and ways to use instruction to reach to the variety of students. Teachers should shed light on how it is important to embrace student differences and acceptance of the dissimilarities. Though we may tend to identify with others similar to us, we must learn to respect and understand those who are different. Respect and care are key words to emphasize in any classroom, especially at an upper elementary age when students are introduced to a broadening scope of peers. To help highlight the importance of caring, the teacher has to demonstrate authentic care for the students, their lives, and their education.

"One of the keys to being a successful teacher is to care about the students in your classroom" (Hall, Quinn, & Gollnick, 2008, p. 47). Caring means taking time to get to know the students; when they know the teacher cares, they care more about learning, which is why they are all in the classroom to begin with.

**Introducing Yourself as the Teacher**

How do you plan on introducing yourself as the teacher to a classroom of students? A great start would be a warm welcome at the entrance of the classroom itself. Welcome the students with a friendly smile. Think of something creative to plan for your introduction- this could be a game that the teacher starts out by revealing a silly or fun event that essentially describes his or her character. There are many ways to deliver a
positive introduction to the class; it begins with showing enthusiasm and interest in learning. Teachers can choose how much personal information they reveal, but it is important to include in your introduction the fact that you have been a student for many years and that you can relate to them because you have been there. A teacher's introduction could include an inspiring story that took place at school or some activity or project the teacher learned a great lesson from. Introducing yourself is a way for students to feel more comfortable so that they can absorb new information that will benefit their education. Another suggestion is to give the students something tangible such as a welcome note or a place on the wall where they can write their favorite quote or nickname; students will gain a sense of personal belonging and feel they are a part of a whole.

_Empathic Attunement Aligning with Getting to Know Classmates_

Teachers can integrate empathy when children are getting to know each other. Class introductions are important for learning to feel comfortable with students who will be spending much of the year together. Take time to ask students to write down a success list, which they will write on a note card. The purpose of this list is for students to acknowledge themselves and their abilities. Ask students to make a list of what they can do successfully. These include abilities in and out of the classroom. For example, a note card might look like this:

1. I am good at riding my bike.
2. I am able to describe what I am feeling.
3. I am a good runner.
4. I am able to listen to others without interrupting.

5. I am good at writing essays and journal entries.

Next, ask students to take a new card to make a success list for others. Students form small groups and pick a partner in each group. The students may or may not know each other well, but they can always ask other students in the group or their partner about successes. Maintain a positive tone for the activity and allow time for students to come up with a complete list. For example, a success list for others might include:

1. You are good at soccer.
2. You are a good singer.
3. You are caring and kind.
4. You are good at solving math problems.
5. You are fun to be around.

Activities that can be used to get to know classmates while keeping empathy in mind involve group participation, self-reflection, and communication. They get a chance to learn about self-interests and what they have in common with peers. In listening to groups and partners, students will gain a sense of awareness of other’s abilities and admirable qualities. Understanding that other students have different interests and abilities creates diversity and provides opportunities for developing relationships when they are encouraged to talk about differences and similarities among each other.

Another activity is to divide students in half and have them form two circles of about ten each with one circle inside the other circle. Ask a series of questions such as: If you have siblings, take a step forward. If you were a little anxious about starting a new school year, take a step back. If you like sports, take a step forward. If you have ever felt
embarrassed take a step back. If you have had to overcome the loss such as a friend who moved or the loss of a loved one take a step forward. If you have ever struggled with learning something new such as a language, riding a bike, swimming or adjusting to a new school, take a step backward. If you have ever had someone forgive you, take a step forward. If you have ever felt excluded from a group or hurt when others won't play with you, take a step backwards. The purpose of this exercise is to acknowledge what you have experienced and to see what others have experienced, recognizing similarities and accepting differences. It is important to include both positive and negative questions, preferably alternating. Some students might be alone in stepping forward or backward, but that is important for learning to accept individuality and courage to stand alone. Some students might find themselves stepping forward or backward with the majority of the others, and that is good to illustrate relatedness and the fact that many of us share similar experiences, interests and feelings. These supporting exercises help students determine their successes, what makes them happy, and learning about other people including their qualities and abilities. Students are encouraged to discover what they have in common with others. Caring for other people means caring how they feel and learning what makes them happy. "If you want to feel happy, loved, or successful, think about the things that give you happiness, make you feel loved, or help you achieve success" (Vitale, 1986, p. 42).

**Inquiry as a Significant Tool for Student Understanding**

*Why* is it important to ask questions? Critical thinking is an important skill to learn, and easiest to gain an understanding about at a young age in school. Empathy is an
ability and a skill that involves understanding one’s own feelings. "Empathy is the
capacity that allows children to understand the feelings of others by relating them to
feelings that they themselves have had" (Hohmann & Weikart, 2002, p. 46). In order for
children to understand what they are feeling, they must ask questions about what makes
them feel the way they do. This is also the age in which children are learning to express
their feelings with words. Inquiry is necessary for self-confidence and the capacity for
empathy because interest in discovering oneself is at the core of children’s education.
Inquiry is the willingness to learn more about yourself by asking questions and digging
deep to find answers. Elementary school can be a great place for this to happen; the
process of inquiry and questioning is at the root of learning. There are four different
levels of questioning based on J.P. Guilford’s "Levels of Intellect" that the author learned
from a graduate course in democratic education. Harms, Woolever and Brice (1989)
discussed J.P. Guilford’s structure of intellect as being a questioning strategy that
promotes student achievement. Guilford’s levels of intellect include low level
questioning categorized by cognitive-memory and convergent thinking, and higher level
questioning broken into divergent and evaluative thinking (Harms, Woolever, & Brice,
1989).

Classroom questions, Harms, Woolever and Brice (1989) claimed, do make a
difference and the higher-order thinking has a positive effect on student performance,
though many teachers succumb to low-level, memory and recall types of questioning
(1989). The incentive for training teachers to use higher levels of thinking includes
providing students with necessary tools to practice critical thinking and establish
effectiveness in learning core concepts in education (Harms et al., 1989). Inquiry and
critical thinking is linked back to constructivism and the nature of knowledge of the learner. Professor George Hein (1991) of Lesley College extended that constructivism means that meaning is actually constructed by the individual learner; knowledge is acquired through experience of the individual, whether or not it involves other people. "We have to focus on the learner in thinking about learning... There is no knowledge independent of the meaning attributed to experience (constructed) by the learner, or community of learners" (Hein, 1991, p. 1). Experience is, ultimately, the root of what makes us grow, our seed for knowledge. When we are willing to ask questions, learn, and reflect, we are open to constructing our own knowledge. Inquiry is the key to knowledge and the path for how each of us constructs and understands the world in which we live.

...as we look at the various (and, on the surface, quite different) models of teaching, we find that all of them, if in different ways, depend on teaching the students to improve their capacity both to generate knowledge and to work together with their peers to create productive social and intellectual relationships—constructing knowledge in the academic, social and personal domains simultaneously. (Joyce, Weil & Calhoun, p. 12)

Inquiry and constructivism relate to the concept of students as learners constructing knowledge and not just students absorbing information. Children learn in a variety of ways, which is why it is important to provide a variety of models of teaching. Inquiry is created by the offering multiple models of learning, students gain integrative ways of understanding how to learn about and react to others, reconstructing ideas (Joyce, Weil, & Calhoun, 2004). Moreover, communication, collaboration and dialogue in student learning support comprehension to questions. Students want to essentially guide their own inquiry, but they must develop skills including awareness and management to improve understanding and continue to inquire (Joyce, Weil, & Calhoun,
2004). Ultimately, teachers can strive to develop a classroom of curious learners, learning how to learn each day.

“To teach well is to embrace the adventure of limitless learning about how ideas and emotions interact with environments and become transformed” (Joyce, Weil, & Calhoun, 2004).
Focus Area – Individual Character Building

Background Information

It is important for people to be willing to improve their character and strive to be their best possible self. Teachers can help promote character building in schools. There is already a familiar topic called character education that integrates values across the curriculum. Though character education and the concept of developing good character is not new, it is relative to the multitude of instructional models and educational programs offered today in an effort to educate the whole child. "Teaching good character has been at the heart of educational philosophies since the times of Plato, who wondered whether virtue could be taught at all" (Salls, 2007, p. 1). Holly Salls (2007) illustrated self-esteem as such a significant factor of character education that it formed a movement in the 1990's, highlighting its linkage to good character, academic and social achievement (all important to children's success and happiness in life) (p. 21-22).

Another concept fundamental to character and moral education is care. Nel Noddings built her work passionately around the notion of care as it applies to the self, others, and everything around us (Simon, 2001). Simon (2001) agreed "...that fundamental change in basic school structures is essential to building intellectually vibrant and morally sound educational programs" (p. 28). Nel Noddings (2005) supported that education ought to provide moral and character education, emphasizing the ethics of care. Character building involves focus on individual consciousness because "Children are moral beings; therefore, we must provide character education programs..." (Noddings, 2005, p. 12). Sometimes what children crave is a deep, caring connection of some sort, a connection to make them feel alive and nourish their soul.
Whether it is a relationship to one's own self, to others, or to the world, the experience of deep connections arises when there is a profound respect, a deep caring, and a quality of 'being with' that honors the truth of each participant in the relationship. (Kessler, 2000, p. 18)

Learning to love and respect yourself is the first step to forming healthy relationships, a prerequisite for loving others. Those with connected souls do more than relate to others, these are the type of people who are resilient and who are able to find their purpose in life. Developing a connection with yourself and a caring and respectful relationship with others is all part of character building and, hopefully, integrated into the curriculum. We can ask ourselves: How can I improve my characteristics and build on my strengths? How can I be more positive and optimistic? What will help me learn how to bounce back from painful events or change? What we must first do is identify character strengths, because we all have some.
Lesson 1 – What can I do to be less selfish?

Time Frame: 1 hour
Topic: Inquiry

Rationale: This lesson addresses inquiry as an important factor of character building. Learning to ask questions and understand your thoughts and consequent actions is a part of enhancing your individual character. By developing critical thinking skills and how to ask constructive questions, self-knowledge can be effectively accomplished, and is the root for understanding others. Character building provides the framework for growing as an individual, willingness to inquire and engage in educational activities that develop personal morale and investigating a value system that fits and will embrace the quality of life for all. Sometimes it is useful to develop questions for students to answer, but it can be very effective to allow students to ask their own constructed questions then come to creative solutions.

Objectives:
1. Students will demonstrate the process of inquiry by asking themselves three questions aligned with the book to provide a better understanding of the self.
2. Students will utilize speaking and listening skills as they discuss the questions and communicate two further questions in pairs and small groups.
3. Students will write down four questions about being selfish.
4. Students will construct four questions that align with the four levels of inquiry and contribute to character development based on the characters in the book and themselves.

Standards: Reading/Language Arts provides basis for curriculum and instruction standards for grade level two. It is an essential discipline for students Kindergarten through grade twelve to develop reading, writing, listening and speaking communicative forms. They will learn vocabulary and practice with asking questions, using critical thinking and listening. 1.0 word analysis, fluency, and systematic vocabulary development. 2.0 reading comprehension. 3.0 literary response and analysis. 1.0 listening and speaking strategies.

Strategies: Partners in learning, think-pair-share, direct instruction, small group-work.

Vocabulary:
Inquiry: using critical thinking to construct questions and search for answers.
Selfishness: caring more about yourself than others.

Materials:
2. Paper and pencils for writing.
Procedures:
Introduction: Ask the children what they like to do with their friends. Consider asking if they like to play on the playground together, eat lunch together, and play with toys together. What makes playing with other children fun? Discuss reasons for spending time with other people and ask what they like to talk about. Do you ask your friends questions? What types of questions do you ask each other? Does asking questions help get to know each other and build trust? Today the children are going to explore questioning and how it helps build relationships and gain understanding. Activity builds on prior knowledge about reading and communicative skills. Introduce the levels of questioning and the basics of developing questions to make the lesson clear and inviting.

1. Divide students into small groups of four.
2. Introduce *Being Selfish* children’s book to the class, tell students there will be an activity about the book with questions to follow today.
3. Describe that inquiry is the process of developing questions and having a keen interest in learning more about yourself and the world around you, which includes other people and living things.
4. Share the book with the students together as a class, asking students to read along and ask questions when necessary.
5. Take time to answer the questions from the book and allow for group communication. Think of three questions aligned with the book that relate to you.
6. Ask if students have had similar scenarios occur. Has one of your friends or siblings acted selfishly? What did you do? What can you do when others are being selfish so that there are no hurt feelings? What are two more incidents that could happen in this book? Describe two pages that could be included and add a question on each page. Discuss in groups.
7. Describe the four levels of questioning – cognitive-memory, convergent, divergent, and evaluative. Ask students to develop four individual questions about being selfish as it relates to their own life from each level of questioning. [Example: Cognitive-memory: *Have you asked a friend to share their lunch and your friend said “no!”?* Convergent: *How did it make you feel when your friend did not share his or her lunch?* Divergent: *What if you were to ask your friend nicely to share his or her lunch and offer some of your cookies?* Evaluative: *Do you think it matters how you ask a friend to share something and offer something (selfless) in return?*
8. Offer help to students with questioning and brainstorming individually to provoke students’ thinking.
9. Ask students to pair up with a partner to answer the questions and discuss comparisons along with mental and written notes so they can identify which questions and answers are most creative and unique.
10. Come together as a class to share the questions and answers with groups of four (two pairs) so they can discuss multiple examples of questioning.
11. Come together as a class to communicate questions and answers the students came up with. This will provide students with opportunities for sharing ideas and listening to others. Ask students in a round-robin fashion, call on each pair or ask for volunteers to
describe the questions they came up with and respond to how the process of questioning as an activity helped gain understanding.

12. Discuss how this activity fit into the principle of inquiry and that different levels of questioning are important for critical thinking, independent thinking, and group thinking to arrive at answers or solutions to a problem. Direct students to write down their definition of inquiry and how/if it has helped students learn about themselves. Then ask how it can help learn about other people in their life (friends, family, schoolmates…).

13. Check students’ work and answer any questions students may have.

Closure: Summarize key points covered. Students will hand in work so teacher can give written and oral feedback on the assignment. There will be time for comments, questions, and suggestions.

Assessment: The students will be assessed on ability to ask themselves three questions involving the book, communicating two further questions with a group, asking four questions about being selfish, and constructing four questions that align with the levels of inquiry. They will turn in their work and credit will be given to work that is appropriately completed and meets expectations of the rubric that are outlined in the rubric attached. See rubric below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Needs Work 0-1 points</th>
<th>Satisfactory 2-3 points</th>
<th>Strong 4-5 points</th>
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<td>Questions do not align with book</td>
<td>Three questions</td>
<td>More than three questions align to provide better self-understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate questions</td>
<td>Lacking further questions to discuss</td>
<td>Communicate two further questions</td>
<td>More than two questions that add to comprehension of selfishness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selfish questions</td>
<td>Less than four questions</td>
<td>Four questions</td>
<td>More than four questions intimately related to being selfish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels of inquiry</td>
<td>Missing one or more levels of inquiry</td>
<td>Four levels of inquiry</td>
<td>Complete four levels of questions with provided answers that show critical thinking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Lesson 2: Resilient Journal

Time Frame: 2 hours
Topic: Resiliency

Rationale: Resiliency is a significant factor in character building because it is about learning how to cope with difficult circumstances or painful events. Becoming familiar with a valuable skill and mindset called resilience makes possible the opportunity for negating pain and learning to overcome hardships in life. Resiliency fits into the individual role of character building in that it addresses the way in which the individual decides to bounce back and learn from setbacks in life. We all have the capacity to be resilient, but as individuals we must learn the importance of resiliency as it applies to our lives, with the help of models of how it has helped other people bounce back from stress, difficulty, or some other major hindrance in strengthening their character.

Objectives:
1. Students will listen to stories and draw parallels to something challenging in their life, noting their feelings, thoughts, and level of support from another person.
2. Students will interview a relative or someone they know about a defeat or loss in their life that they met with a challenge, asking that person how he or she focused on the positive and maintained confident to get through the challenge.
3. Students will identify three scenarios that involve resiliency.
4. Students will create a two-page journal of resilient experiences and times of challenge that includes positive and/or negative self-talk, fears, and personal triumphs.

Strategies: Nondirective teaching and collaborative learning.

Vocabulary:
Resiliency: The ability to pick yourself up after a defeat or loss that leaves your life somewhat poorer, and the courage to continue and rebuild your life (Seligman, 2006, p. 30).

Materials:
1. Construction paper and pens
2. Stapler

Procedures:
Introduction: Resiliency is that wonderful quality that allows people to bounce back from setbacks including even tragic losses, child abuse or repetitive violence. Resilient people are able to focus on love and goodness even though they have experienced hate and disappointments. Children today face many challenges including divorce, drugs, financial uncertainty, isolation, and violence. It is important that they learn resiliency. Resilient people know that despite a temporary setback, life is worth living and hope for the future remains. They focus on important issues and are able to put inconsequential ones into perspective and laugh at them. They have the self-confidence and positive mental attitude.
to see problems as opportunities for learning and growth. They take responsibility for mistakes rather than see themselves as victims. They tend to be flexible, creative, open to new ideas and cooperative in working with others and finding the resources to solve problems.

1. Discuss with the class the fact that everybody experiences difficulties in life and there are many challenges that will come unexpected. Think of something that was difficult for you to overcome. Share with students an example of challenge in your life.

Example:

I was leaving on vacation for Mexico and had to stop in a foreign airport in Guadalajara first. We were very late in arriving there and I was feeling very scared and stressed out. I had to find a way to my gate in a very short amount of time and I had to figure out how to ask for help. Hurriedly, I ran to the list of departures and did not see my flight so I asked the man next to me to help me find it. He helped lead me to someone that could locate my gate but he couldn’t help either. I was scared that I would now miss my flight, but I decided to run to the gate that they said I might have a shot with. The attendant was not sure about my flight either but he said he would stick with me and find out where I needed to go. He got me to my flight and I barely made it to my destination. As I sat in the plane finally feeling comfortable, I was very grateful that I had not given up, asked for help, and did everything I could to get where I was going.

- Ask students to think of something challenging that they have overcome.

2. Instruct students to use their Resilient Journal to write or draw about a memorable time that was of great challenge. Ask yourself these questions:

   - How did I feel?
   - What did I say to myself to get through it?
   - Was it so bad that I could not see the light at the end of the tunnel?
   - Was anybody there to support me or help me get through my challenge?
   - Was I able to see something positive in this situation, understanding that I could work it out and move on?

3. Get into small groups. Take turns discussing your experiences with challenge.

4. Read aloud passage from *Free Flight: Celebrating Your Right Brain*.

   I am often frustrated with a never-ending challenge of self-awareness. A few years ago I went for a job interview. I really wanted the job. I bought an expensive suit, had my hair done, and researched the background of the company. I even practiced my responses to questions in front of the mirror. I did not get the job. Instead of focusing on my feelings of inadequacy and rejection, I looked at the interview as a growing experience. I acknowledged that if I was supposed to have had that job, I would have gotten it. Instead of pushing, I let go. Two weeks later, I got the job of my dreams! (Vitale, 1986, p. 44)

5. Ask students how this story relates to resiliency. Everybody— little children, young adults, adults and even elderly people—faces challenges in life. Everybody experiences stress and wonders how they will bounce back and feel whole again. Ask students to
share with their group thoughts about resiliency. Allow time for them to discuss this and then write down thoughts in their journal.

6. Go around to each group and ask students: Identify your stressors. What makes you stressed?

7. Share the Serenity Prayer: "Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." This could be your heading for the next section in your journal.

8. Make a list in your journal of things that you find stressful. Next, divide the stressors into two groups: those you can change and those you cannot. In the first group, write down ways you can make changes. For example, if being rushed in the morning is causing you stress, you might lay out clothes, your backpack, homework, snacks, etc. the night before and put your backpack by the front door. If something is beyond your control, write down ways you can change your attitude to them. For example, you have to share your room with your sister, but she is messy. Try to develop a positive attitude and keep your portion of the room tidy. Think of ways to communicate problems instead of blowing up, or learn to think of differences in a more positive way; we all have them.

9. Wrap up the lesson by asking students to set up an interview with a relative or someone they know who has experienced pain or defeat and how they were resilient in challenging this defeat. This will be recorded in your Resilient Journal.

10. Keep this journal so you can monitor your progress. Record key events. What did you tell yourself? Describe your positive self-talk. Describe your negative self-talk. How could you interpret the situation with empathy and understanding? You can also use your journal to list the things for which you are grateful, how you face your fears, and how you overcome difficult situations. Explore how you react to major and minor events in your life - the first step in self-awareness.

**Closure:**

Remember, you are the only one who has to spend twenty-four hours a day with you. Make them count. If you are living in the moment, you don’t have time to worry about your past failure or what you might not succeed at in the future. Put all your energy towards doing the best you can now—then let go of the results. (Vitale, 1986, p. 45)

**Assessment:** Students will be assessed by listening and reflecting on three areas contributing to resilient experiences, completing an interview about someone resilient, ability to identify three scenarios that involve resiliency, and a two-page journal writing about resilient experiences. See rubric for criteria.

**Recommended Exercises:** * Have children develop a Vision Board. This should include not only material things that they would like such as a bike or traveling, but also college, travel and career possibilities. Talk about fantasies, dreams, and possibilities. Tell children to be imaginative, wishful and hopeful. Have them discuss their feelings now and what they would like to feel in the future. Talk about the talents, gifts, aptitudes, skills and resources they may need for their fantasies and dreams. Talk about attitudes,
behaviors and habits that limit their possibilities. What resources and contacts are available? Explore people who may be helpful supporters and advocates.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Needs Work 0-1 points</th>
<th>Satisfactory 2-3 points</th>
<th>Strong 4-5 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life’s challenges</td>
<td>Lacking connections of stories to personal life</td>
<td>Connect feelings, thoughts, and support during a time of challenge</td>
<td>Connect feelings, thoughts, and support for two challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Interview lacks connections</td>
<td>Includes connections to positive thinking and confidence</td>
<td>Connections to positive thinking and thoughtfully constructed to expand on challenges and other factors of resiliency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenarios</td>
<td>Less than three scenarios</td>
<td>Three scenarios involving resiliency</td>
<td>More than three scenarios involving resiliency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>Journal lacks one of three requirements</td>
<td>Includes positive/negative self-talk, fears, and personal triumphs</td>
<td>Complete to include self-talk, fears, triumphs, and includes how to interpret the situation with empathy and understanding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson 3: Positive thoughts on Optimism
Time Frame: 2 hours
Topic: Optimism

Rationale: Optimism is significant to character building and learning how to see through problems and the ability to grasp positive thinking. Even in times of struggle or stress, when there is a tendency to be overcome with a negative pattern of thoughts, optimistic people can counteract negative thoughts and integrate hope in developing their potential. Challenges are inevitable, and character building is about working through problems and not giving up. Developing positive thinking patterns and upholding optimistic behaviors is crucial for enhancing the quality of life and realizing the full potential of our individual character. Optimism is a positive, upbeat attitude about life. Optimistic people focus on the best in life and feel that things will turn out all right despite setbacks and challenges. They have a hopeful, positive attitude. They not only visualize success, but they also take steps to create success. They believe that their successes come from their own ability and effort and know if they work hard they can overcome challenges. They focus on mastery and not helplessness. Teaching children to be optimistic is very important. Optimistic children are more likely to be happy, healthy, achieve success at school, be involved in activities, be engaged in life and have many friends.

Objectives:
1. Students will engage in role-playing, learning how to take a different perspective of a situation by switching roles in a story of conflict.
2. Students will understand and utilize positive thinking habits by reflecting on two positive outcomes of an event they have experienced.
3. Students will dismiss negative thoughts while communicating two concerns and problem solving in groups.
4. Students will recall five effects of positive thinking and optimism.

Strategies: Role-play, collaborative learning, and nondirective teaching.

Vocabulary:
Optimism: Tendency to look at life with hopefulness, recognizing defeat as a temporary setback and a challenge to overcome (Seligman, 2006).

Materials:
2. Paper and pencils.

Procedure:
Introduction: Have you heard the story of the three little pigs? Have you heard the story told by the wolf? It’s the same story and line of events, but in the perspective of the wolf instead of the pigs so it changes how you feel about the story and characters. It is fun to take a step into someone else's shoes for a minute and see from another perspective, through another's eyes. We all have memorable stories, some that make us smile or laugh,
and some that are not so pleasant to remember, some that caused pain. However, all of our stories are crucial to our lives because they make up our life experiences. Try to look at each story as a learning process, an opportunity for growth.

1. Do you know what it means to be "optimistic"? Allow time for answers.
2. Optimistic people tend to look at setbacks and conflicts as challenges, not necessarily negative events in life. These challenges are seen as something to be solved in a positive manner, and to be regarded as occasions that have the potential to change our path, possibly to allow us to see things with a positive outlook, even to see the pain we experienced as something that we can grow and learn from.
3. Think about your most recent or memorable conflict with somebody- a friend, sibling or parent- then write down the highlights.
4. Consider these questions: What was the cause of the disagreement? Did your feelings get hurt? What could you or the other person have said differently to lessen the dispute?
5. Find a partner and take turns telling your story of conflict.
6. Choose one story out of the two to role play.
7. If it was your story chosen first, you cannot play your original character in the role play, you must switch roles.
8. Ask students during role-play: How does it feel to be in a different role?
9. Continue with the conflict as it happened with your partner.
10. When finished, discuss how you felt during the role-play and record your thoughts.
11. Next, start the role-play over again, this time taking your original role in the conflict.
12. Reflect on the first role play and plan on what you can do as your original character to make the conflict less problematic or hurtful. What are two concerns you have? Discuss in groups.
13. Did viewing the conflict from another perspective change things? How was the conflict shifted in the end?
14. Were you able to see the conflict optimistically, with positive thoughts? Name two positive outcomes.
15. Read the passage from *Learned Optimism* by Martin Seligman.
16. Notice how changing your thoughts to imagine the positive outcomes eases circumstances and views them as less threatening. The wife had more energy and was in better overall health. What are five effects of positive thinking and optimism?
17. Take this example as an effort to view conflicts or unpleasant situations as non-threatening and remain as calm as possible, saving energy for more useful occasions. Make more time to skip and dance, play with your friends!

Passage:
"The father is looking down into the crib at his sleeping newborn daughter, just home from the hospital. His heart is overflowing with awe and gratitude for the beauty of her, the perfection.

The baby opens her eyes and stares straight up.

The father calls her name, expecting that she will turn her head and look at him. Her eyes don't move."
He picks up a furry little toy attached to the rail of the bassinet and shakes it, ringing the bell it contains. The baby's eyes don't move. His heart has begun to beat rapidly. He finds his wife in the bedroom and tells her what just happened. "She doesn't seem to respond to noise at all," he says. "It's as if she can't hear."

"I'm sure she's all right," the wife says, pulling her dressing gown around her. Together they go into the nursery. She calls the baby's name, jingles the bell, claps her hands. Then she picks up the baby, who immediately perks up, wiggling and cooing.

"My God," the father says. "She's deaf."

"No she's not," the mother says. "I mean, it's too soon to say a thing like that. Look, she's brand-new. Her eyes don't even focus yet."

"But there wasn't the slightest movement, even when you clapped as hard as you could." The mother takes a book from the shelf. "Let's read what's in the baby book," she says. She looks up "hearing" and reads out loud: "Don't be alarmed if your newborn fails to startle at loud noises or fails to orient toward sound. The startle reflex and attention to sound often take some time to develop. Your pediatrician can test your child's hearing neurologically."

"There," the mother says. "Doesn't that make you feel better?"

"Not much," the father says. "It doesn't even mention the other possibility, that the baby is deaf. And all I know is that my baby doesn't hear a thing. I've got the worst feeling about this. Maybe it's because my grandfather was deaf. If that beautiful baby is deaf and it's all my fault, I'll never forgive myself."

"Hey, wait a minute," says the wife. "You're going off the deep end. We'll call the pediatrician first thing Monday. In the meantime, cheer up. Here, hold the baby while I fix her blanket. It's all pulled out."

The father takes the baby but gives her back as soon as he can. All weekend he finds himself unable to open his briefcase and prepare for next week's work. He follows his wife around the house, ruminating about the baby's hearing and about the way deafness would ruin her life. He imagines only the worst: no hearing, no development of language, his beautiful child cut off from the social world, locked in soundless isolation. By Sunday night he has sunk into despair.

The mother leaves a message with the pediatrician's answering service asking for an early appointment Monday. She spends the weekend doing her exercises, reading, and trying to calm her husband.

The pediatrician's tests are reassuring, but the father's spirits remain low. Not until a week later, when the baby shows her first startle, to the backfire of a passing truck, does he begin to recover and enjoy his new daughter again."


Closure: Summarize key points covered in lesson. Allow time for comments and questions, and then offer follow-up activities or books on the subject of optimism if students are interested. Read Happy Thoughts (2004) by Toby Reynolds, a fun book with illustrations of animals and positive, optimistic and happy thoughts end the lesson on a happy note.
Assessment: The students will be assessed by engagement in role playing with a partner, understanding of positive thinking habits by reflecting on two positive outcomes of an event, dismissing negative thoughts by communicating concerns with a group, and recalling five effects of positive thinking and optimism. See rubric for criteria.

Recommended Exercises: Self-talk
Have children put two small jars on their desk - one marked as positive and filled with small stones and one empty and labeled negative. Each time they have a negative thought, transfer a stone into the negative jar. At the end of the day count the stones - are their more stones in the negative-thought jar than the positive jar? Give each child six cards and have them write on each card something they are not good at. For example, I'm not good at using the computer". On the back of each card write a positive version of your negative statement. "I am learning to be good at the computer. I practice, ask for help and am taking a computer class.
This activity gives students the opportunity to be aware of their thoughts and determine how to shift from negative to positive thinking.
### Optimism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Needs Work 0-1 points</th>
<th>Satisfactory 2-3 points</th>
<th>Strong 4-5 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role playing/perspective taking</td>
<td>Student remains in one role</td>
<td>Student switches roles with partner</td>
<td>Switch roles and notes how it helps to take a different perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive thinking</td>
<td>Lacking one or more positive outcomes</td>
<td>Two positive outcomes</td>
<td>Elaboration of two or more positive outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating concerns</td>
<td>Lacking identification of concerns</td>
<td>Communicate two concerns</td>
<td>Communicate more than two concerns and identify how to solve problems or concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimistic thinking</td>
<td>Less than five effects</td>
<td>Five effects of positive thinking</td>
<td>Five effects of positive thinking employed by recalling how positive thinking was beneficial</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Focus Area: Socialization with Peers

Background Information

There are many ways in which we connect with others, and there are many reasons why we are inclined to do so. Just as we can better understand others by knowing ourselves, there is a reciprocal notion that we can better understand ourselves by our relationships with others. Human relationships are a huge part of our existence because, essentially, we survive with the help, support, and love of other people. Solitary reflection is useful for self-knowledge, but is not sufficient for understanding otherness or how to maintain and build on our human relationships (Kohn, 1990). Empathy deals with our relationships with others; empathy is derived from our capacity to not only understand others or relate ourselves to others, but as Alfie Kohn (1990) maintained, "the capacity to share in the affective life of another" (p. 99). If empathy is the authentic understanding of yourself and the capacity to share humanness with those around you, then empathic fulfillment is possible in all living things, we can create relationships with every living thing we encounter - Stein (1964) described this as the "phenomena of life" and our ability to, essentially, relate to other living things.

Social relationships provide the foundation for becoming whole and developing values. Daniel Goleman (1994) reflected on Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, which includes interpersonal intelligence, the ability to nurture and maintain friendships and problem-solving skills in relationships. Elementary students are constantly interacting with other students and simultaneously learning and growing, developing social skills and working through problems. Students are learning through play, classroom instruction, and inevitable interaction with peers. Children in elementary
school learn that they are different from others, and therefore have different strengths and capabilities. Some students may be more in tune with their emotional intelligence than others, developing social skills by recognizing emotions in others. Goleman (1994) indicated five domains for his theory of emotional intelligence, number five dealing with relationships. Goleman (1994) described handling relationships as interpersonal effectiveness, a skill in managing emotions in others stemming from the ability to manage one's own emotions (p. 43). Some emotions to consider when learning to develop relationships are gratitude, forgiveness and acceptance. Goleman (1998) outlined emotional competence as a learned capability stemming from emotional intelligence that involves two abilities: "empathy, which involves reading the feelings of others, and social skills, which allow handling those feelings artfully" (p. 24). Social skills are learned throughout our lives, but the earlier we can understand how to relate to other people and develop emotional competence the more healthy our relationships will be. The ability to develop healthy relationships makes life worthwhile; our potential is realized through our interaction with others, what we take away from those encounters, and our capacity to embrace kindness and love from others.
Lesson 4: Full of Thanks
Time Frame: 2 hours
Topic: Gratitude

Rationale: Gratitude, though largely deals with personal thanks and personal recognition, is developed also by societal and environmental factors. Gratitude is a significant factor in socialization with peers and understanding how to develop close friendships. It begins with being grateful for yourself, then recognizing all that you are grateful for outside of yourself. The gift of gratitude enables people to realize the sincerity of thanks and learn the importance of giving and receiving, enhancing feelings of kindness and love. It is intensity of feelings that motivates one to act; therefore, when thankful it is important to display gratitude.

Objectives:
1. Students will recall word associations by writing five ideas for the meaning of thanks.
2. Students will reflect and share two meanings of thanks they have in common.
3. Students will write a gratitude letter to themselves, consisting of ten things they are grateful for.
4. Students will construct a letter of gratitude to another person, giving thanks for four specific things that they have done.

Strategies: Nondirective teaching and cooperative learning.

Vocabulary:
Gratitude: the ability to be appreciative of things and/or people in your life by expressing thanks.

Materials:
1. Paper and pens.
3. Envelopes.

Procedures:
Introduction: Why do we celebrate Thanksgiving? I always liked to believe it was all about the delicious food. But there is more to it. Thanksgiving is all in the name: a time to give thanks. Thankfulness and gratitude are what makes up the national holiday. We surround ourselves with loved ones, comforting and warm food that will fill us up, and we spend the day together, giving thanks for the blessings we have. Think of a typical Thanksgiving and what words come to mind. Example: Family, friends, comfort food, stuffing, pie, laughing, grace. Write down your example on a poster in front of the class for the students.

1. Give each group of students a poster and pens for the activity. Students will each write down five words that arise with the term Thanksgiving.
2. Find at least two words the groups had in common. Maybe one thing is food, or family. Why should we be thankful for having food or family? Many people in this world are trying to survive without enough food. In the past there have been times of great struggle. For example there was the Great Depression and many families were broken apart because jobs were lost and food was scarce. Food and family are just two things that we can recognize as being grateful for.

- I’m thankful for me: What are some personal qualities that you are thankful for?
- For the things that I have: What are some things you have that you are thankful for?
- For the things that I do: What are you able to do that you are thankful for?
- I’m thankful for all the people that are special to me: my family… Who else are you thankful for? A friend? A neighbor? A teacher? A pet?
- I’m thankful I have a home and good food to eat: Are you?
- I’m thankful for the places where I play: Where do you like to play? Maybe you’re grateful for being able to play at the beach.
- I’m thankful there are birds, butterflies, flowers, and trees: What are some things that surround you are your grateful for? Maybe you’re grateful for the sunshine.
- I’m thankful for when I walk in the rain: Is the rain something you’re grateful for? Maybe you’re thankful for puddles to stomp in.
- I’m thankful for the moon: Are you thankful for the beauty of the moon that it brings nighttime and rest?
- I’m thankful for the morning, when it comes: Are you thankful for each new day? Do you awake with a smile?
- I’m thankful for the whole wide world: It’s important to give thanks for the world and all that bring us happiness and moves our souls.

4. Talk about how important it is to recognize and focus on the good things in our lives and how easy it is to take for granted our blessings. Ask students to discuss blessings with a small group.

5. Write a gratitude letter to yourself. In your letter, write down specific things that you have to be grateful for. Start with the basics such as food, a home, family, friends. Include recent positive events such as a birthday party, playing with a new friend, attending an art class or winning a sporting event. Use all your senses. Include music, favorite songs, smelling delicious meals, eating favorite foods, walking in nature, how warm your bed feels, getting a hug, petting your dog. It should not be difficult to come up with ten things you are grateful for.

6. Write down all the times that people have been helpful or kind. Now write a separate letter to someone you are thankful for, whether it is something they did or just having that person in your life. Include at least four things you are grateful for and share this with a partner.

7. Think of other ways you can show people that you are grateful for them. Write a note, draw a picture or tell them you love and appreciate them for all they do. Look for ways to show appreciation. Sometimes it’s as simple as a smile.
Closure: At the end of each day, review your list of blessings. Before you go to sleep, smile as you think of your blessings and your gratitude letter. Before you get out of bed each morning, take a moment to give thanks for getting to go to school, for being healthy, for being loved. When times are difficult, it is important to make a conscious decision to focus on the positive in life.

Assessment: Students will be assessed on word association by recalling five ideas for the meaning of thanks, reflection and sharing of two common ideas, writing a gratitude letter to themselves that includes ten things they are grateful for and writing a letter to someone they are thankful for that includes at least four specific things. See rubric for criteria.

Recommended Exercises: Comic Life
Comic Life is a computer program that students can use to have fun with a sequence of pictures set up like a comic strip. This is a fun technology exercise for students to experiment with, supervised by a teacher. This exercise requires a camera to take pictures and computers with Comic Life installed. Students take pictures of four to eight things that they are grateful for and form a comic, using thought bubbles and dialogue boxes to tell a short story about things they are grateful for. This exercise is hands-on, creative, and reflective, and students can keep their Comic Life as a part of their educational portfolio.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Needs Work (0-1 points)</th>
<th>Satisfactory (2-3 points)</th>
<th>Strong (4-5 points)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word associations</td>
<td>Incomplete list of ideas</td>
<td>Five ideas associated with meaning of thanks</td>
<td>Five ideas, meaning of thanks and adds examples of each idea</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thanks to others</td>
<td>Lacking willingness to share ideas with others</td>
<td>Shares two meanings of thanks with group</td>
<td>More than two ideas for meanings of thanks plus group participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gratefulness</td>
<td>Less than ten things identified</td>
<td>List of ten things</td>
<td>Thoughtful letter consisting of ten things and elaboration of at least one thing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gratitude letter</td>
<td>Missing specific things to be grateful for</td>
<td>Four specific things</td>
<td>Letter to another with more than four things grateful for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson 5: Feelings
Time Frame: 1 hour
Topic: Forgiveness

Rationale: Forgiveness involves the letting go of pain somebody inflicted upon you or pain caused by yourself. Anger and resentment are feelings often associated with painful or traumatic experiences and are usually directed outward but heavy upon our mind and body. It is a conscious choice we make to let go of negative feelings, stop feeling angry, and forgive. Forgive implies giving something to the person being forgiven, which might be yourself or a loved one. We owe it to ourselves to rid of anger, resentment, and any grudges we have held because in the end it just affects our own mind and body. In the social realm, we learn by our experiences with others, and there will be mistakes made, challenging problems to solve, and people that cause roadblocks in life. However, forgiveness is an action people must learn to take on his or her own, people cannot force forgiveness but they can ask for it. Forgiveness is powerful for it provides the opportunity to attain peace of mind.

Objectives:
1. Students will apply the meaning of forgiveness to their lives by reflecting on two forgiving experiences and sharing with a partner.
2. Students will recognize five feelings with positive associations.
3. Students will identify five feelings with negative connotations.
4. Students will distinguish destructive feelings by reflecting on a personal situation that caused such feelings, then recording on paper two feelings experienced.
5. Students will rewrite a positive story about forgiveness and focus on two benefits of the situation.

Strategies: Cooperative learning, partners in learning, direct instruction.

Vocabulary:
Forgiveness: the ability to let go of negative feelings caused by something hurtful that someone did (or self-inflicted pain).

Materials:
1. Paper and markers.
2. We Can Work It Out by Polland (2000).

Procedures:
Introduction: To forgive is to let go of the resentment and bitterness you feel each time you think about a painful event. Forgiveness can create peace of mind and help you enjoy the present moment, plan for the future instead of being stuck in the past. Holding grudges can hurt your health, create sad feelings, and disrupt your peace of mind. You don't have to diminish the event or the pain, nor do you have to turn the person into your best friend. Justice can occur if the other person must pay a penalty. To have peace of mind, however, you must give up the need to get even or take revenge. For example, the
boy who hit you on the playground has to be grounded and the principal is seeing to it that he is disciplined, but you don't have to take vengeance.

1. Why is forgiveness important? Ask yourself, "What will I gain from forgiving another person?" These are questions that should help gain a perspective on empathy and what it means to let go of negative feelings. To empathize during forgiveness allows for an alternate perspective and a look into the other side of things. Will I indulge in anger or humiliation for something beyond my control or will I choose to forgive and relieve tension, forming peace within myself? I choose peace.

2. Read from *We Can Work It Out: Conflict Resolution for Children* by Barbara K. Polland. The headings include:
   - Teasing, kindness, hitting, controlling fists, criticism, compliments, blaming, taking responsibility, excluding, including, time out, time in, lying, truthfulness, poor sport, good sport, selfishness, sharing, disposable friends, dependable friends, ignoring, respecting, swearing, self-control, jealousy, acceptance, arguments, discussions.

3. In small groups, break up the headings into two columns, one with positive associations and the other for negative associations, according to what your group believes. For example, criticism might belong in the negative category, unless your group associates criticism with positivism and constructivism. Come up with at least five positive feelings and five negative feelings to record in each column.

4. In groups, rate the most destructive of feelings or circumstances. Imagine one of the negative incidents happened to you and discuss how it would make you feel in your group. What if you had been lied to? Have you even lied to someone before? Is there a way you could look at the situation through a different lens and make an effort to forgive? How would you feel differently if you chose to forgive?

5. Create a forgiveness journal with your notebook.
   - Forgiveness Journal: Write clearly about a situation in which you have problems forgiving a person. What happened? How did they wrong you? How did you feel? Did you confront the person? Would you feel comfortable talking with this person now? When possible, take actions to resolve differences with other people rather than let bad feelings linger or escalate. Try to understand what the other person was feeling. Were they frustrated or angry? Did they lash out and say things they didn't mean? Can you see beyond this one action or situation? Is the other person more than this one action or event?

6. Rewrite the story. Instead of focusing on the bad aspects of past events, focus on the good that came from it. Perhaps you understand more about bullying, teasing or lying and how much it can hurt others. Think of a time when you did something to someone that caused him or her pain and the person forgave you. Describe how it felt to be forgiven. Can you give that gift to someone else who needs your forgiveness?

7. Quiet your mind by being engaged in each moment and activity instead of focusing on what went wrong in the past. Find stillness in nature and become engaged in what you are doing, whether it is chores such as doing the dishes, sweeping, or working on homework, reading, or playing outside.
Closure: Sometimes the hardest person to forgive is you. If you have hurt someone, say you are sorry. Try to repair the damage or atone for your actions. If you broke something, work to replace it. Do your best to make amends and then go on and learn from this mistake. But realize that you are human and we all make mistakes. Sometimes, in order to move on, we must learn how to forgive someone and let go of negative associations with something from the past.

Assessment: Students will be assessed on ability to apply the meaning of forgiveness to their lives by reflecting on two experiences and sharing them, recognize five feelings with both positive and negative associations, distinguish destructive feelings and reflect on personal experiences then recording two feelings, and rewrite a story using positive associations with forgiveness including two benefits. See attached rubric for outline of criteria for student expectations.

Recommended Exercises: Controlling Stress
Have a can of coke and a bottle of water. Illustrate that throughout the day, there are many stresses such as being late for school, forgetting your lunch, having a fight with your best friend, being bullied or pushed on the playground, or carrying the weight of bottled-up feelings. Shake both the coke and the water as you discuss daily triggers that can create stress. Now say, "Which would you like me to pop open?" Even though both have been shaken, the coke would explode, but the water remains still. You can either become upset by daily stresses or remain like the water---calm, still and quiet despite the upsets of life. Close your eyes and practice being calm instead of blowing up. You can express your anger with your words instead of lashing out or carrying it with you all day.
# Feelings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Needs Work 0-1 points</th>
<th>Satisfactory 2-3 points</th>
<th>Strong 4-5 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to apply meaning of forgiveness to life</td>
<td>Only one forgiving experience shared</td>
<td>Two forgiving experiences shared</td>
<td>More than two experiences shared and elaborated on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive &amp; negative feelings</td>
<td>Less than five feelings associated</td>
<td>Five feelings associated with both positive and negative feelings</td>
<td>Student identifies more than five unique positive and negative feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiences</td>
<td>Missing reflection of experience that caused destructive feelings</td>
<td>Recall experience and note two feelings experienced</td>
<td>Student recalls experiences and elaborates on more than two feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story</td>
<td>Story lacks two benefits</td>
<td>Story includes two benefits</td>
<td>Student adds more than two positive benefits to story</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson 6: Namaste

Time Frame: 1 hour
Topic: Acceptance

Acceptance begins with the self. It is important to first learn how to accept yourself. There might be things you like about yourself as well as things that you do not like. There are also some things that you do not like but you cannot change; those are the things you must learn to accept as part of you; the unique you. Once you have conquered acceptance of yourself, you can work on accepting others. Acceptance goes hand in hand with understanding yourself and accepting the differences in other people—understanding whom they are and where they come from. Yoga is somewhere to start, even at a young age, as a process of uniting. Lasater (2000) defined yoga as two things: "First, it is a state of being in which the individual practitioner experiences a cellular connection with that which is the Universe, the Source, or God" and "...the second aspect of yoga—the practices associated with that deeply connected state of being... " (p. xix). In other words, yoga is about the inner experience we have that comes through practicing, developing awareness, and reaching a deep connection that we consciously bring into our daily lives.

Rationale: Self-acceptance and acceptance of others create a significant foundation for being able to successfully develop relationships with other people and understanding how to fit into this life with other people. It is important to begin with acceptance of the self, then work on ways to accept other people. Acceptance does not mean allowing any sort of behavior as appropriate or accepting then repeating hurtful things you tend to do to others; acceptance means accepting the qualities you may not necessarily like but cannot change and changing the things you can in order to be your best self and accept others for their flaws or weaknesses. This world encompasses many different types of people and cultures and beliefs and it is not fair to deny or dismiss others for opposing beliefs. Acceptance in an inward look at one's values and uniqueness, and an outward understanding that others are different, which adds dimension to this world and makes our social encounters more interesting and meaningful.

Objectives:
1. Students will listen to and participate in practicing the beginning steps of yoga.
2. Students will create and record three mantras that stems from a goal.
3. Students will observe their breath during practice and reflect on how they felt by discussing two new techniques that help deepen breathing.
4. Students will complete the self-portrait questions on provided sheets by writing their answers.

Strategies: Cooperative learning and nondirective teaching.

Vocabulary:
Mantra: A saying that is repeated to help remind you what is important for daily living.
Namaste: A saying at the closing of yoga practice that represents giving thanks and full acceptance of each being involved.

Materials:
1. A large area to students to spread out.
2. Self-Portrait worksheets (provided in appendix).

Procedures:
Introduction: Yoga represents something different for everybody, but always consists of an affirmative, worthwhile exercise that stimulates the body and mind. Do you think of yoga as stretching or meditation? Do you think of yoga as challenging or something that everybody can do? In fact, there are many different types of yoga, some classes are very difficult, but some focus on the beginning aspects of the practice of breathing and letting go, which is at the heart of yoga and its practice throughout the world.

1. Yoga is an activity that you can do to practice looking within yourself. It is an internal evaluation of your body and soul- a way to take an inside look at yourself and accept what you find. Yoga is a good warm-up for the body and mind.
2. Think of a goal you have for your life. This could be something as simple as "I want to be strong," "I want to be confident" or "I want to feel whole." Write down three mantras, which come in the form of a statement, such as "I am strong" or "I desire wholeness" to fit a personal goal.
3. Yoga begins with becoming comfortable and breathing. Come to a seated position on the ground that is the most comfortable for you.
4. Close your eyes and imagine that you are tall, as if you are extending through the center of the top of your head to the clouds like a string is pulling you up.
5. Imagine your eyes now looking towards your heart, but your head still reaching up and your spine long.
6. Let go of tension in your face- scrunch up your muscles then totally relax your throat and jaw.
7. Observe your breathing pattern and try to breathe more slowly and deeply if it is comfortable, in and out through your nose, feeling your breath flow through your throat, letting your belly rise and inflate like a balloon with each inhale. Let go of thoughts as you breathe by focusing on four counts to inhale then four counts to exhale, feeling your breath travel up and down your body.
8. Use your mind and tell yourself your individual mantra, practicing letting go, relaxing, and instilling your positive mantra.
9. As you come out of this beginning practice, eyes still closed, stretch your arms above your head and take a deep breath in, then release it and open your mouth to fully exhale. I will say "Namaste," which means that I am giving thanks to you, the class, for your time here with me and your energy in this practice. Then you will say "Namaste" out loud, giving your thanks for the energy of your classmates and the learning experience.
10. Self-Portrait Activity [pages outlined by a thought bubble]
   • What do I look like to myself? - Answer the following questions in spaces provided on worksheets.
11. When these pages are finished with thoughtful answers, share a few answers with your neighbor.

**Closure:** Solitude activity.
Embrace solitude. Make a date with yourself weekly to spend time alone, even a few minutes. This time could be spent practicing yoga, listening to music, writing in a journal, walking in the park, or drawing. Think of a mantra that you can repeat to yourself to help in your personal growth, therefore reaching out to your environment and relationships with others.

"Whether we seek something called spirituality, holiness, or enlightenment, the route to it is through our humanness, complete with our strengths and our weaknesses, our successes and our failures" (Lasater, 2000, p. 4).

**Assessment:** Students will be assessed by their ability to listen to and participate in the beginning steps of yoga, create and record three personal mantras, observe breathing during yoga practice and reflect on two new techniques they learned and enjoyed, and write answers to self-portrait questions. See attached rubric for criteria that illuminates what is clearly expected of each student.

**Recommended Exercises:** Statues
Because movement is important in learning and maintaining health, students can be encouraged to use movement in play during class. "Statues" is a fun game to play that focuses on positions and usually makes children laugh. Any time of the day, a break from a lengthy assignment or during group activities, inside or outside, teachers instruct students to twirl around freely, jumping in the air or wiggling like a worm on the ground. Teachers then direct students to freeze at a specified signal. Children will find themselves in unusual, silly positions, frozen like a statue. This is a fun activity because it involves freedom of movement and results in unique positions and students will identify their body positioning, discussing how they feel and describing their positions to classmates.
"As children search to find words to describe their positions, they build body awareness and control" (Hohmann and Weikart, 2002, p. 413).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Needs Work 0-1 points</th>
<th>Satisfactory 2-3 points</th>
<th>Strong 4-5 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning yoga</td>
<td>Student does not listen to directions and distracts others during practice</td>
<td>Student listens to steps and participates</td>
<td>Student participates in yoga and recalls benefits, supporting a peaceful environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mantras</td>
<td>Mantras do not align with specific goal</td>
<td>Student creates three mantras and connects to specific goal</td>
<td>More than three mantras with well-defined goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoga breath</td>
<td>Practice yoga breath but does not participate in discussion of techniques</td>
<td>Practice yoga breath and discuss two techniques</td>
<td>Practice breath and student leads discussion, developing more than two new techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-portrait</td>
<td>Incomplete self-portrait responses</td>
<td>Complete written self-portrait responses</td>
<td>Complete responses and student elaborates on responses, adding insight to goals and drawing of self</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Self-Portrait

What do I look like?

What are my characteristics that stand out?

What would I like to change about myself?

What do I like to think about?

What are my biggest fears?

What are my interests/hobbies?

Picture of me!
If I were to ask a friend to describe me, what are some things they would most likely say?

If I had the day to do anything I wanted, how would I spend it? Who would I spend it with?

What dreams and goals do I want to reach someday?

What can I do now to start on my path to my dreams?
Focus Area – Family and Community Concern

Background

Classroom instruction provides the basis for student learning, which involves teamwork, individual creativity, and mastering problem-solving skills. By demonstrating authenticity and student understanding, it is important to apply studies to real problems and a real audience, reaching out to the community. The local community is a great place to share student efforts such as art exhibits, student-produced brochures or posters, or performances (Starko, 2005, p. 274). Teachers have the role of assisting students in finding and solving problems, but it is the activism of the students that takes solving real problems to a deeper level. "In these activities, students attempt to improve some aspect of the world around them" (Starko, 2005, p. 273). By addressing real problems in meaningful, creative ways, students learn the importance of involvement and activism. Starko (2005) confirmed that when students are motivated by a personal interest, a goal or a value, they are more likely to become involved in pursuing to solve real problems and enhance their education as well as the community.

Individuals must realize their full potential and all they have to offer by first coming to an understanding of the self. If you do not learn to develop self-knowledge, you will not be able to see the big picture of your life in relation to other living things and the vast realm of existence. Katz (1963) supported, "We must have some common ground of understanding or basis for mutual appreciation" (p. 56). Awareness of our being is the root of social action; from this internal center derives a growth of external and prosocial behavior. To "know thyself" is to incorporate a rational view of your nature, fully accepting and respecting yourself. It makes sense to think in terms of a circumference, a
whole that each of us is a part of. Being aware of the fact that we exist in this world with other people and other living things will help us learn the importance of personal growth, awareness or our surroundings, and resourcefulness.

To mention a center implies a circumference too. There is no center without a circumference and no circumference without a center. Metaphysical ignorance therefore implies lack of awareness of our total being, and lack of knowledge of our self’s relationship to the total scheme of existence. (Harris, 1974, p. 4)

Providing we have strived to develop a personal morale, we can reach outside of ourselves to make an effort to better the world around us.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."–Margaret Mead
Lesson 7: Recycling Ideas
Time Frame: 2 hours
Topic: Service Learning

Rationale: Each community of people is designed to work and function as a collaboration of the efforts of the people themselves. Successful communities are those that provide motivated members, sincere involvement and effort, and encouragement to make positive changes to enhance happiness for the whole. Service learning provides the basis for developing community care and concern for the greater good. People who are involved in service learning are displaying their efforts to contribute to society and receive much satisfaction as a result. There are many opportunities for service learning, but it is mostly about finding your niche and making a positive contribution. Depending on personal interests, options include volunteering at a local nursery home, homeless shelter, humane society, local park or beach (cleanup), or hospital. There are many more options to mention, but another important local service that needs help (that you can do from home or at school) is recycling. Recycling is important because it involves using the resources we have, looking it as something that has potential, and creating something new out of it. This is true for products such as clothes and containers, and also non-tangible things such as ideas. Though there are varying things and ways to recycle and contribute to the community, the concept remains the same: consciously apply your service to realize the potential of something important to you by contributing to others.

Objectives:
1. Students will comprise a written list of ten things that they can recycle.
2. Students will recollect an idea they have had recently and build on through discussion with classmates.
3. Students will combine their ideas to create novel ideas for creating recycled items.
4. In groups, students will construct a recycled item with a rationale for how it is "green".

Strategies: Cooperative learning and nondirective teaching.

Vocabulary:
Recycling: Taking something that exists and making it into something new and "green" to increase efficiency, moderating excess production of things, and reducing waste.

Materials:
1. Paper and pens.

Procedures:
Introduction: Service comes in many forms. When we decide to get a glass of water for a friend who is thirsty, that is giving service to others. When you go to a restaurant, the staff serves you. They are paying deliberate attention to you and serving your needs. Of course, this is the profession of some people, a way to make a living. "When we are engaging in social action or helping a friend move to a new apartment on a Saturday afternoon, we are all inspired to serve the needs of others" (Lasater, 2000, p. 111). Other
people serve voluntarily, for the pure desire to fill the needs of other people in an attempt to make the community a better place for all who are residing. For example, I went to Mexico during spring break one year to help rebuild an orphanage in a very poor area of the city. This experience was a contribution to others in need, and in turn was very rewarding because of the accomplishments fulfilled and gratitude received. It helps to have a combined effort of many people in order to make a positive change in the community, but it always starts out with one idea and genuine interest for change. There is a concept of recycling that Michalko (2001) describes as reusing existing ideas and subjects and making them into something else, sculpting them into something novel. We all know that recycling is good for the environment; recycling ideas are good for the creative minds (p. 234).

1. In small groups make two columns on a sheet of paper. The first column will be labeled "Things that we can recycle." Think of all the things that you can recycle and come up with at least ten. For example, can you recycle that sheet of paper you are using?
2. Next, think of a great idea you have had recently. Maybe you built something on your own, wrote a creative poem, or cooked up something tasty for a snack. Share an idea with your group and write down a list in the next column of "Ideas that we can recycle."
3. You have already begun the process of recycling ideas by sharing them with your group and thinking about them in a different context. How can you build on these ideas to expand the potential of your ideas? Can you combine any of your ideas to build new ones? Brainstorm possible combinations in discussion with your group.
4. Think about some of your favorite new technologies, maybe you have an iPod or cell phone. An iPod was derived from the idea to make music transportable; it started with the radio and stationary CD players then moved to portable CD players and MP3 players, and finally emerged to a tiny device called an iPod.
5. How can you take the idea of expanding ideas to helping you serve the community? Let’s try recycling. What are ways that you can contribute to using existing things to make other things? Think about things that you have with you now. Can you recycle your lunch sack? What will you do with your notebook when you are finished writing in it? Your pants when you outgrow them? The plastic bag you used to buy your notebook? Write down all the possible ways in which you can recycle or reuse the things you have and create a list with your group. Did you have a good idea for a science fair project or a talent show act? Find ways to build on those ideas.
6. In your groups, come up with ideas for recycling things and ideas to create something new that helps the environment or meets the need of someone else. Each group will bring something that has been recycled and made into something new. This could also be an idea that you have recycled. This recycled item or idea must have a rationale for why it was created and what purpose it serves. It should clearly be a "green" item or a fresh idea.

Closure: "Throughout history, geniuses have demonstrated the ability to recycle an idea and transform it into something else" (Michalko, 2001, p. 236). You all have genius abilities. You all have the potential to contribute to making this world a better place, sharing ideas and building new things, reaching our goals together.
Assessment: Students will be assessed by their ability to comprise a list of ten things they can recycle, recollect an idea to build on and combine ideas with other to create new ideas through discussion, and share and item or idea the group has created by recycling along with an appropriate rationale. See the attached rubric for specific criteria.

Recommended Exercises: Park Clean-up
As community member and usually fans of being outside, children can be encouraged to get into nature and make it more beautiful! Set up a day that everyone can meet to walk in a local park and pick up trash. Bring a camera to document event and create a Comic Life thank you for the students or build a scrapbook as a class.
## Recycling Ideas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Needs Work 0-1 points</th>
<th>Satisfactory 2-3 points</th>
<th>Strong 4-5 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of things/ideas to recycle</td>
<td>Less than ten things or ideas</td>
<td>List of ten things or ideas to recycle</td>
<td>List of more than ten things to recycle and elaborate on items/ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to discuss ideas to build on</td>
<td>Inability to participate in discussion</td>
<td>Each student shares at least one idea with classmates</td>
<td>Student shares ideas and discusses one or more ideas that build on classmates’ ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recycled item and rationale</td>
<td>Item chosen with no supported rationale</td>
<td>Recycled item or idea with supported rationale</td>
<td>Recycled item/idea with rationale and more ways item represents “green” efficiency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson 8: Health and Wellness
Time Frame: 2 hours
Topic: Health

Rationale: Health is a significant factor in family and community concern because it deals with making wellness a way of life, in many dimensions. Wellness is not just about being healthy or exercising—though those are contributing factors to wellness. Wellness encompasses a lifestyle that supports a healthy state of mind, physically fit body, and healthy behaviors for sustaining wellness in yourself and in your family and community. When we are willing to strive for optimal wellness, we are committed to increasing the quality of our lives and fulfilling our human potential.

Objectives:
1. Students will research and record the dimensions of wellness.
2. Students will choose a dimension in which they will make a personal healthy change and state why they made that choice.
3. Students will set three realistic expectations for reaching a specific goal.
4. Students will design posters in small groups that represent a dimension of health featuring two positive outcomes.
5. Students will assess other group presentations using note cards to give suggestions and comments, then self-assess their own group presentations.

Strategies: Think-Pair-Share, cooperative learning, inductive thinking and nondirective teaching.

Vocabulary:
Wellness: "...an integrated and dynamic level of functioning oriented toward maximizing potential, dependent upon self-responsibility" (Robbins, Powers and Burgess, 2002, p. 6).
Inductive thinking: "That model begins by presenting the students with a data set or having them build one, helping them study the items in the set, and classify those items" (Joyce, Weil, & Calhoun, 2004, p. 4).

Materials:
1. Highlighter
2. Paper
3. Poster boards for each group
4. Markers
5. Health magazines
6. Note cards

Procedures:
Introduction: There are different types of wellness, and many dimensions of health. The six dimensions of wellness include physical, intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual, and environmental. What do all of these dimensions have in common? Self-responsibility.
We are in charge of our own health and wellbeing. We have to be proactive in making conscious choices that affect our health. We also have to be motivated to make these healthy choices. It helps to have support of others, but it comes down to the changes we make and chances we take to become healthy and well.

1. Provide the students with a list of the dimensions of health:
   - Physical
   - Intellectual
   - Emotional
   - Social
   - Spiritual
   - Environmental

2. Research the dimensions of wellness. Choose one of personal significance but research all to be able to gain a broad understanding of how the dimensions fit together.

3. With a highlighter, mark the areas in which you feel the healthiest. What motivated you to be healthy in the highlighted areas?

4. Now choose an area that is not highlighted that will become an area in which you will make a healthy change. Why did you choose that area?

5. What are some ways that will motivate you to make a healthy change in this area? You might be motivated intrinsically or extrinsically. You will find that intrinsic motivation is more sustaining and gratifying in the long run. For example, do you pick up that piece of trash to receive a candy bar or do you pick it up because you value a clean environment?
   - Intrinsic motivation includes internal motivation stemming from your values and the personal pleasure reaching your goal will bring you.
   - Extrinsic motivation is externally derived, consisting of rewards or outside recognition that motivates you to accomplish something.

6. Think-pair-share: With a partner, discuss what dimension you intend to make healthier? Why? How will you be motivated to make changes? Will you take responsibility for yourself even though it might be challenging?

7. Set three realistic expectations so that you know what your goals are and that you can make healthy choices to reach them.

8. Form groups with another set of partners and share what your partner told you about his or her choice of healthy change.

9. Now that you have created a personal goal, assess your wellness by matching the following wellness tips (use separate worksheet provided):
   - Physical        I seek opportunities to learn new things.
   - Intellectual    I consciously conserve energy and recycle.
   - Emotional       My life is meaningful and I feel purpose in my life.
   - Social          I make an effort to improve my writing skills.
   - Spiritual       I see challenges and change as opportunities for growth.
   - Environmental   I eat fruits, vegetables and whole grains every day.

*Are these things true to your life?

10. In small groups, choose a dimension together that you wish to promote to the community. Design posters that will help encourage others to grow in wellness. Use your
creative minds to promote a dimension of wellness that will appeal to others in the community; use colors, recycled clippings and images, quotes and poems, and photos or drawings, whatever you can to get the message across. There will be a pile of magazines to search for clippings associated with health and wellness.

11. Share group posters with the class and present your representations of wellness. Discuss your dimension of wellness portrayed and how your group came up with the design. In what ways do you think people will appeal to your poster? Would it catch your eye? With note cards provided, assess each group as they present and then hand in your assessments to the appropriate groups when they are finished presenting. Return to your groups with the collection of assessments from classmates and take turns reading them, reflecting on the assignment.

Closure: Inspire people! Display posters around the room and invite other classrooms to view them. Give students the opportunity to expand the idea of the posters. Support them in taking ideas home and out to the community.

Assessment: Students will be assessed by their ability to research and record the dimensions of wellness, determine a personal dimension they wish to change and why, set three realistic expectations to meet a goal, and design posters with a group that feature two positive outcomes of a dimension. In addition to the rubric for assessing individual students, which is attached and provides criteria for the assignments in the lesson, students will assess other groups’ presentations with note cards then they will assess their groups’ presentation of posters with the self-assessment sheet provided. Students will learn the value of self-assessment, which allows students to assess their own work by looking at how they assessed peer work. Self-reflection takes place during self-assessment with the provided rubric.

Recommended Exercises: Bowl of Soul
On each rock write one priority: Health, school, sports/activities, family, friends, etc. Explain that we need to make time in life for what is really important. Fill the bowl with sand (which represents time) and then try and fit in the rocks. Demonstrate that you cannot just try and fit in important priorities into time. Dump the sand out and put in the rocks first starting with your top priorities. Stress that if you don't make health a top priority, time just fills up and it becomes an afterthought--something that you meant to do but you were too busy. Put in health first because without health, you cannot have the energy and well-being to succeed in any other area of life. Then add the other rocks. Next pour in the sand. This will illustrate that by setting priorities and creating healthy habits, you will do first things first and time will center around your top goals.

"The imperative consciousness of divine oneness, without any alternative except perhaps extinction, is now being impressed upon the human race" (Harris, 1974, p. 110).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Needs Work 0-1 points</th>
<th>Satisfactory 2-3 points</th>
<th>Strong 4-5 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions of wellness</td>
<td>Incomplete research of dimensions</td>
<td>Identify dimensions and research of one dimension</td>
<td>Identify all dimensions and elaborate research of more than one dimension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal dimension</td>
<td>Rationale is missing</td>
<td>Personal dimension and rationale included</td>
<td>State several reasons, including rationale, for personal dimension and provide references for support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic expectations</td>
<td>Missing one or two expectations</td>
<td>Three expectations included</td>
<td>More than three expectations and thoughtful/ significant goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posters</td>
<td>Missing one outcome</td>
<td>Two positive outcomes</td>
<td>Two positive outcomes plus a drawing or visual representation of positive outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Health & Wellness**
Wellness Matching

- Physical
  I seek opportunities to learn new things.

- Intellectual
  I consciously conserve energy and recycle.

- Emotional
  My life is meaningful and I feel purpose in my life.

- Social
  I make an effort to improve my writing skills.

- Spiritual
  I see challenges and change as opportunities for growth.

- Environmental
  I eat fruits, vegetables and whole grains every day.
Self-Assessment

Group Name:
Title/Dimension:
Date:

Sketch the work from your poster in the box below.

What are you saying with this artwork? What do you hope others will see? Use examples.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Conclusion

Teachers and parents want their students and children to be happy and enjoy their elementary school experience. Planning ahead, supporting student’s education, and instilling empathic understanding through exercises and lessons will help ensure student success academically and emotionally. Teacher information and tips for starting the new year or semester are included to assist parents and teachers in contributing to student growth.

Education is broad, and it does not solely deal with academic intelligence. Elementary education ought to focus on student growth in multiple areas of intelligence, including interpersonal and emotional intelligence. Students are learning in a collaborative environment, socializing simultaneously while dealing with problems and personal challenges either in school or at home. It is important that they learn the values associated with empathy and how to be more aware, focus on the positive, and contribute to the social learning environment.

It is important for teachers to learn about their students, develop effective classroom management, and plan for a successful school year. Assessments for lesson plans are crucial to determining effectiveness of instruction and promoting student engagement. Designing the classroom with the help of the students will help teachers create a desirable atmosphere for student success and responsiveness to learning. Once the teacher has welcomed the students and introduced himself or herself, he or she is ready to begin implementing empathic attunement during instruction.
References


Resources


