

WAYS TO CULTIVATE GREATER EMPATHY IN TEACHING

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Abstract. This article explores practical strategies for educators to cultivate greater empathy in their teaching practice. The article emphasizes the ongoing nature of cultivating empathy which helps to improve emotional wellbeing and academic performance of the students and encourages educators to continuously reflect, learn, and adapt their practices to create environment where every student feels valued and understood.

Key words: *strategies, empathy, emotional wellbeing, academic success.*

Аннотация. В данной статье исследуются практические стратегии для педагогов по развитию большего эмпатического понимания в их практике преподавания. В статье подчеркивается непрерывный характер развития эмпатии, что способствует улучшению эмоционального благополучия и академической успеваемости учеников, а также призывает педагогов к непрерывному самоанализу, обучению и адаптации своих практик для создания среды, где каждый ученик чувствует себя ценным и понятым.

Ключевые слова: *стратегии, эмпатия, эмоциональное благополучие, академический успех.*

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada o'qituvchilarga o'qish amaliyotiida ko'proq empatiyani qurganlikdan ko'rib chiqiladigan amaliy strategiyalar ko'rib chiqiladi. Maqolada empatiyani rivojlanishning davomiy harakti tugallikni yaxshilab o'quvchilarning emotsional ma'lumoti va akademik o'quv javobgarligini yaxshilashga yordam beradi, shuningdek, har bir talaba qimmat berilgan va tushunargan muhit yaratish uchun muallimlarni davomiy o'zlashtirish, o'rganish va o'zlarining amaliyalarini adaptatsiya qilishga tezlikka e'tibor qaratishga kutishga chaqiriladi.

Kalit so'zlar: *strategiyalar, empatiya, emotsional o'zbekcha ma'lumoti, akademik muvaffaqiyat.*

Introduction. In the realm of education, fostering empathy is not just a desirable trait but a fundamental necessity. Empathy serves as the cornerstone for building inclusive and supportive learning environments where every student feels understood, valued, and empowered to succeed. As educators, cultivating empathy in teaching is not only about imparting knowledge but also about nurturing understanding, compassion, and connection among students. In this article, we delve into ten practical strategies for educators to cultivate greater empathy in their teaching practice. From active listening to modeling

empathetic behavior, each approach aims to create classrooms where empathy flourishes, enhancing academic achievement and emotional well-being. By embracing these strategies, educators can play a pivotal role in shaping not only the minds but also the hearts of their students, fostering a culture of empathy that extends far beyond the walls of the classroom.

Definition of Empathy

In fact, the term empathy has been utilized in an assortment of ways. Particularly, it is a term used to depict a wide scope of perspective taking, sympathetic comprehension, sympathetic reaction, and the act of getting into the shoes of others. A significant part of the current writing on empathy mirrors this disarray in recommending that empathy is a solitary idea enveloping every one of these perspectives or a connected arrangement of ideas. This makes it hard to aggregate the entirety of the advantages and expenses of these practices as they identify with different results. Notwithstanding, for the motivations behind this paper, empathy will be depicted as a trainable, intellectual understanding dependent on an unmistakable however constrained information on another's circumstance combined with an enthusiastic venture into that individual's situation. This definition is firmly lined up with that of earlier creators who recommend that empathy includes both speculation and an affectionate feeling and understands that empathy can possibly prompt burnout if the specialist is overpowered by sensation. Furthermore, this impact situated definition gives the best bearings to instruction and preparing in promoting empathy. This idea can be operationalized in both clinical and nonclinical settings and all the more critically the constructive outcomes of empathy can be evaluated. Subsequently, the blend of empathy as an appraisal and a change in accordance with the help of another fits entirely with the essential clinical basic leadership structure as an exploration to-activity step starting from an evaluative result. This can be observed and trained in a controlled way that is a basic advance for the arrangement of material to clinical understudies, teaching empathy to doctors, and general backing to provoke more empathy in medication. Still this slim meaning of empathy doesn't mean to reject the more programmed, clashing, or vicarious sentiments of others clarified by contemporary works on empathy. Any preparation in empathy requires an organized establishment of understanding another's experience and the potential corresponding sentiments significant to compassionate reaction and vis-à-vis empathy in understanding are an optional objective for explicit techniques practice.

Importance of Empathy in Teaching

Empathy is vitally important for effective teaching. It is a prerequisite for the provision of psychosocial support for vulnerable students, and can increase the positive affect in student-teacher interaction, leading to better cognitive and affective student outcomes. It is a determinant of teacher immediacy, which has been shown to be an important predictor of student motivation and effective instruction. There is also some

evidence to show that teacher empathy is related to student achievement. In the current climate of evidence-based teaching practice, it is important to cultivate empathy in teaching, as it has been demonstrated that many teacher preparation programs and professional development initiatives are ineffective in enhancing the general quality of teaching. Wilczenski (2001), for example, has shown that beginning teachers who are disposed to empathize with their students are likely to be more open to learning about effective teaching strategies, and should they come to believe that understanding and helping students is a primary role for teachers, their commitment to teaching may heighten. These teachers are likely to be the most responsive to preparation and professional development which aims to improve the academic and psychosocial outcomes for students. In promoting student success and providing support for vulnerable students, it is crucial that teachers recognize and appreciate the personal and family circumstances of these students. Only with a deep understanding of the individual student can teachers provide the tailored and specific support these students need. Empathy is also important for school connectedness, a perceived bond between student and school, which has been identified as a leading factor for school retention. Students who feel connected to their school have higher levels of achievement and are less likely to drop out, and the quality of student-teacher relationships is the biggest influence on students' feeling of school connectedness. Success in any of these areas may result in increased teacher morale and a greater sense of efficacy in affecting student outcomes.

Active listening techniques

Active listening techniques are not only valuable skills for teachers, but for students to learn as well. There are simple instructions that can be given to students to help them improve their active listening skills. Teachers can advise students to ask questions if they do not understand something, and to not assume they know what the speaker is going to say. A student can be taught to gather all information before making a judgement and to listen for the feelings behind the words. These instructions can be beneficial for various forms of communication, including written.

The goal of active listening techniques is for the teacher to fully understand the speaker's meaning. Fortunato (1997) lists five ways a teacher can do this. The first is to pay full attention to the speaker. The second is to show genuine interest in what they are saying. The third is to let the speaker know you are listening through verbal and non-verbal responses. The fourth is to hold off on questions and comments, allowing the speaker to comfortably finish a thought. The fifth is to reflect on what the speaker said before responding to them. Humberto (1986), on the other hand, lists four general skills that will get the listener into the right frame of mind so that active listening will naturally occur. Those skills are: clear your mind of all other thoughts, assume a relaxed and open posture, make eye contact with the speaker and smile, and lastly do not think about what you will say in response while the speaker is still speaking.

Role-playing exercises

To develop empathy, teachers need to both help students understand others' feelings and needs, and to provide an active practice in this. Role-playing is a means to getting into the shoes of another, and looking at a situation through their eyes. Teachers can use a variety of role-playing exercises to help students see the perspectives of others. For any role-playing, emphasize that students are not mocking the other person; rather, they are trying to experience that person's feelings and perspective. Ask them to think about how that person would feel about a situation and what would be the best outcome for them. For example, if studying conflicts in history, each student could take the part of one protagonist and describe how they see the situation and what they would like to happen. Later they could exchange roles and try the same exercise. This could lead to re-enacting the situation with each person trying to act according to their roles. Another form of role-playing that can be a powerful learning experience is simulation of real life situations. This can be as simple as a spontaneous role-play in response to a student's question or an organised activity as suggested by Case (1990), for learning history through participating in a simulated trial. Simulations are most successful if students can experience the situation directly and it is relevant to their own lives. For example, if resolving a conflict between two groups, have them suggest a situation and then guide them to the role play. One student could play the peacemaker, trying to understand both sides and reach a fair compromise. This exercise provides insight to the feelings of others and the difficulties of reconciling different viewpoints. With any role-play, it is essential to have time for discussion. Consider the feelings and perspectives that the students were portraying and how this relates to understanding others in real situations.

Creating a safe and inclusive classroom environment

Before everything else, a teacher's responsibility is to provide an emotionally and physically safe environment for students. This might sound simple but is hard to execute. Safety, in this case, refers to being safe from physical and emotional attack. When a student, for example, gets embarrassed in front of a class, group, or by a teacher, this student will feel threatened and humiliated by the experience. In the future, the student might be afraid of going to school, afraid of dealing with teachers and superiors, afraid to do certain tasks in front of others, or even traumatized by the experience. This situation is a condition where, in the learning process, students build a 'psychological fortress' to defend themselves from further psychic attacks (Goleman, 2003). This is a condition where learning stops and students and teachers no longer have a conducive environment to learn. That's why it is important to create a classroom contract in which the teacher and students make an agreement about how all the people in the classroom are going to treat each other. This is a good way to start to create a safe classroom because it involves all the students and teachers to state what they need in order to feel safe and ready to learn. After establishing a contract, teachers need to protect and nurture students when they are mistreated by others and need to clearly state that negative behavior will not be tolerated in the classroom. Teachers may also remind misbehaving students of their contracts and what has been agreed upon at the beginning of the year. If the situation still occurs,

teachers need to take professional help for the students who violated the contract, and teachers also need to help the victim to overcome and heal from the experience. Teachers also must admit their mistakes, which is inevitable, and listen to student feedback towards the being of the teacher. By doing this, it adds value that the classroom is a common way to learn and teachers and students are alike. Another important thing is teachers should make an extra effort to be inclusive to all students in all classroom activities. Teachers need to know all of the students in their class well and respect and understand their differences. This can be done by developing cultural and linguistic knowledge and understanding about culturally different students. Teachers can also ask students about their culture or search for information from other resources. By having a deep understanding and respect for culture and eliminating any prejudgments, teachers can create positive and proactive interactions among students of different cultures. This condition will lead to the elimination of segregation between same race/culture students with different culture/race students. In doing this, teachers can develop a relevant curriculum for all types of students. The curriculum used should be neutral to all students and can be related to their everyday life, but never to the extent when teachers assume that certain race/culture students are having a problem with a particular curriculum so they need to lower or have a special curriculum for that particular student. A special curriculum will lead to the stigmatization of the certain student in the curriculum, and segregation will reoccur.

Encouraging perspective-taking activities

Comparing the two judgments has demonstrated that when the target's successful outcome was believed to be unstable, students ascribed the success to ability and effort, and made categorisation in terms of a repeated act, demonstrating a movement away from the stereotype of African American incompetence. This effect was not found when the two groups were compared by the researchers. Davis et al. casts this as a successful perspective taking activity that reduces prejudice, arguing that "when people consider the actions of others they come to understand the actors" (p. 1006).

Davis et al. (1996) integrated a perspective taking activity into a history class in an attempt to reduce the students' use of stereotypes. They had a class of white students read about an African American character achieving success, whilst half the students were told that the article presented evidence of stable success and the other half that the article presented evidence of unstable success. The students were asked to make a judgement on the intelligence of the character.

Typical perspective-taking activities require students to imagine what it is like to be someone else - to walk in their shoes. Perspective-taking can be an effective way of increasing understanding of another's situation, and is instrumental in the reduction of prejudice and stereotyping. There are many ways to encourage perspective taking in the classroom. It can be a formal activity based around a role-play, or writing, or might be integrated into class discussion or a reading. Research on perspective-taking has shown that in order to take another's perspective, one must be motivated to do so (Galinsky and

Moskowitz, 2000). This suggests that making activities relevant to students' own lives and motivations will be more effective.

Incorporating empathy in lesson plans

One of the most powerful exercises we can use to help students develop empathy is to have them step into the shoes of others. Vance and Case (2002) describe an exercise where students "represent marginalized groups by standing on a tarp during a salient event." Afterwards, the class discusses how it felt to be both physically separated from the dominant group and from the vantage point of being above or below the eye-level of others. Students can also be asked to listen to oral histories, read literature or diaries from people of a different time or place, or study photographs and artwork, then try to represent what they have learned to others through their own creative work. Simulation exercises are also effective in helping students to practice perspective-taking. For instance, Aronson and Osherow (1980) describe a simulation exercise where students role-play citizens of 13 colonies considering a revolution against British imperial rule.

Despite the plethora of obstacles to teaching empathy, implementing active and experiential learning exercises can help students uncover and understand their own assumptions and stereotypes, and begin to understand and appreciate the experiences of others. When students are engaged in active or interactive learning exercises, they are more likely to connect and identify with the people they are learning about.

Incorporating real-world examples and case studies

Real-world examples and case studies can provide a context in which to illuminate the experiences of others and allow students an opportunity to identify with others' situations. When selecting examples and case studies, it is important to consider the diversity of the student body and to choose material that is inclusive and non-discriminatory. While case studies are traditionally written and presented, it can also be effective to invite guest speakers from the community to tell their own case history. This provides a realistic situation to which the students can more easily empathize with and often can be a powerful learning experience. Care must be taken to prepare the guest as to the purpose of their visit and the specific aims of the session to ensure that it is a positive and worthwhile experience.

Engaging in service-learning projects

Service-learning has been defined as a teaching and learning method that connects meaningful community service with academic learning, personal growth, and civic responsibility. This form of experiential education also enables students to learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that is conducted in and meets the needs of a community. Start and Hatcher define service-learning as "a credit-bearing educational experience in which students (a) participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and (b) reflect on the service

activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility". This approach is almost tailor-made for the development of empathy, as it connects actions and learning to community need, and involves reflection on the experiences in a way that fosters understanding. High-quality service-learning has been touted as "a special form of experiential education. It is defined primarily in terms of its pedagogy – it is a teaching and learning process, designed to go beyond volunteerism and activism for the purpose of modifying the behavior of students, fostering their civic responsibility, and encouraging an ethic of service" (Eyler and Giles). By implementing service-learning activities into the curriculum, teachers give students the structured experiences necessary to build empathy. The key here is to ensure that students are given opportunities to reflect on these experiences in such a way that connects the service to underlying community needs and encourages them to think critically about the relationship between the service and their learning.

Fostering collaborative and inclusive learning experiences

The teacher who models empathic behavior in every aspect of her teaching also conveys high expectations for students' understanding and display of empathy. A pedagogy of understanding that goes beyond simple mastery of facts to asking students to apply learning in real-world cases, to think ethically about their actions and their consequences is a pedagogy that is supportive of empathy. We have found that when social justice issues are addressed, empathy is often a natural component of the ensuing discussions because such discussions typically require an understanding of others' perspectives and experiences. Concrete learning exercises that can enhance understanding of others' perspectives include role-taking activities and structured debates. In a role-taking activity, a student interacts with a person from a different age, ethnic, or social group and then writes a narrative about this interaction. Students can share and discuss these narratives as a way to better understand the experiences of others. In the structured debate, teams of students thoroughly research and then take opposing sides on a relevant issue or problem. The key to the debate is that each team must fully understand and be able to articulate the perspective of the other side. Finally, students come together to reflect as a whole on how their empathy for others has changed as a result of the activity.

Practicing mindfulness and self-reflection

Last but not least is the issue of how to measure empathy for research purposes.

Experiments show that people are poor at introspecting about the cognitive processes underlying their own empathic responses. This implies that while clinicians may be able to learn to empathize better, it will be difficult for them to identify what exactly they have learned without specific training and feedback. To some extent, training in empathy will simply be a part of becoming a better communicator or a better person, and it may be best promoted by creating organizational cultures that value and reward empathic behaviors.

One of the best ways to teach empathy or empathy-related constructs is via clinical experience with real or simulated patients. Unfortunately, there is much reason to believe that some current trends in medical education will lead to reduced opportunities for learning empathy. Simulation is a new approach to medical and nursing education with many advantages for technical skill acquisition, but it often involves isolating students from genuine interaction with patients. Similarly, new models of clinical practice are emphasizing the substitution of virtual visits or telephone consultations for face-to-face encounters.

A small but growing body of research illustrates that when clinicians think in more empathic or compassionate ways, patients' outcomes can be improved. Measures of chimpanzee and monkey helping show that other-regarding motivation can also be experimentally induced in primates. Increases can be brought about by exposing them to models of helping behavior, rendering them helpless in certain situations, and perhaps most effectively by rewarding for helping and making them dependent on the rewards, in other words, by making them practice the behavior in question. All these strategies have obvious parallels in caregiving education and could potentially be used to enhance caregiving and empathy in healthcare professionals.

Empathy and empathy-related behaviors seem to develop from largely unconscious motivational systems, often described as automatic, innate, and effortless. Of course, there are individual differences in the ability to take others' perspectives, and these differences can be magnified or minimized by situational factors. This can be specified by describing the relationship or lack of relationship between clinician cognition about patients and patient outcomes.

Developing empathy assessment tools involves creating reliable and valid measures to gauge empathy in educational settings. These tools may include self-report surveys, observational checklists, or scenario-based assessments. By designing assessment tools specifically tailored to the teaching context, educators can effectively evaluate their own empathy as well as that of their students, providing valuable insights for personalized development plans.

Incorporating empathy into evaluations involves considering empathic behaviors and attitudes alongside traditional performance metrics. By including empathy as a core component of evaluations, educators signal its importance and encourage its practice among students. This integration reinforces the idea that empathy is a fundamental aspect of effective teaching and learning, fostering a culture of compassion and understanding within educational institutions.

Tracking progress and growth in empathy skills requires ongoing assessment and reflection. Educators can monitor changes in empathy levels over time through periodic assessments and self-reflection exercises. By tracking progress and growth, teachers can celebrate successes, identify areas for further development, and adjust their approach as needed. This continuous feedback loop promotes a culture of continuous

improvement and empowers educators to cultivate their empathy skills throughout their careers.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, fostering empathy in education is paramount, transcending from a mere aspiration to an essential element in cultivating inclusive and supportive learning environments. Empathy not only nurtures academic success but also fosters emotional well-being among students. By embracing the practical strategies outlined in this article, educators can create classrooms where empathy thrives, enabling students to feel understood, valued, and empowered. As educators, our role extends beyond imparting knowledge; it encompasses nurturing understanding, compassion, and connection. By prioritizing empathy in teaching practices, educators become catalysts for positive change, shaping not only the minds but also the hearts of their students. Through these efforts, we can cultivate a culture of empathy that reverberates far beyond the confines of the classroom, ultimately enriching society as a whole.

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