

Tackling Empathy Deficit Template: Using Films for Teaching Empathy Lesson Plan

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Overview/Purpose

To deepen students' understanding of empathy and to clarify some common misconceptions about what empathy means

Learning Objectives

To reinforce the idea that empathy involves more than simply putting ourselves in someone else's shoes. Students will be able to identify that empathy also involves

- caring and genuine concern about how others feel
- wanting and trying to help others
- being able to remain calm yourself when someone else is upset in order to be able to understand and help them

Learning Activity

Show a movie (or selected clips) in which empathy is a key theme.

Suggested Movies

(For younger students) *Beauty and the Beast*, *Bridge to Terabithia*, *Charlotte's Web*, *Ice Age*, *The Incredibles*, *My Neighbour Totoro*, *Nanny McPhee*, *Ponyo*

(For older students) *The King's Speech*, *Les Misérables*, *Patch Adams*, *Simon Birch*, *Teen Wolf*

For more information about these movies, see the *Calm, Alert, and Learning* professional resource titled *Movies That Promote Prosocial Behaviour*.

Preparation

First watch the movie yourself to identify clips containing teachable moments and themes.

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Classroom Activity

1. Before showing the movie clip, alert your students to what themes, qualities, and aspects of empathy they should watch out for in the selected movie clip. For example
 - Watch for a situation where a character shows that he or she cares how someone else felt.
 - Find examples of a character helping someone due to feelings of empathy.
 - Watch for examples of someone remaining calm but sympathetic when someone else is upset.
2. Watch the movie clip together.
3. After the movie, have a class discussion about scenes that illustrate the three aspects of empathy:
 - caring and genuine concern about how others feel
 - wanting and trying to help others
 - being able to remain calm yourself when someone else is upset

Questions for Further Discussion

- Why is it important to care about how others feel?
- What can interfere with our ability to empathize with other?
- Why is it important to try to help others?
- What makes it hard to do that at times?
- Why is it important to remain calm when someone else is upset?
- What makes it hard to remain calm when someone else is upset?