

# Empathy

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## Abstract

This article is an inquiry into the nature of empathy and the importance of human beings engaging in empathetic behavior. Key behaviors and conditions that encourage empathy are described and suggestions made for teachers on how to integrate the practice of these behaviors into their regular classroom lessons.

Empathy is the ability to put oneself in another's place, imagine how the other person feels, estimate what the other person may be thinking, and take action based on this understanding of that other person. This involves the ability to be completely open to taking in the other person's words and behavior in the moment they occur without making a judgment, or letting one's past grievances or fear influence one. Empathy is of the utmost importance because without it, misunderstandings may arise to the degree that even one's best-intended efforts can produce damaging effects instead of benefits.

Disengagement or suppression of an empathetic response has led to much human suffering. Many investigations of such human behavior occurred, for example, in the aftermath of WWII, as the degree of human suffering created and carried out during the war by human beings upon other human beings became more generally known (see Bandura, 1990; Bettelheim, 1943<sup>1</sup>). The emphasis in these investigations

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1 The references in this article were specifically chosen for their high quality rather than year of publication. They also include information that is not being addressed in contemporary investigations.

was to explain under what conditions such behavior tended to occur, in order to prevent it from recurring in the future. Thus, these investigations further demonstrate how empathy is essential to human development, and perhaps even necessary for the survival of human beings on this earth.

Empathy is also of the utmost importance to teachers. If a teacher does not initially have students' attention or evokes in them emotions that distract them from the learning task at hand, their ability to learn efficiently will be impaired and the teacher's efforts wasted. Therefore, this article is an inquiry into the nature of empathy, the behaviors that can be important in developing our ability to respond with empathy, and suggestions as to how these behaviors might be practiced in a classroom setting.

Empathy is not sympathy, or feeling pity for the other person. It is not merely thinking how one—with all one's own experiences, successes and failures, conditioned fears and anxieties about life—would feel and would think in another's shoes. Instead, empathy is attempting to accurately understand how other people feel, and how those other persons, conditioned by their own individual upbringing, may think and react in different ways to the experiences they meet in life.

For example, during the past several years I have taught my students about Helen Keller (1880-1968), one of the first deafblind people to become educated. My students usually respond initially by saying that if they had been Keller, they would have been terribly frightened. That is not empathy. They are only imagining how they, who can see and hear, and have had that experience their whole lives, would feel if *they* suddenly became deaf and blind. Indeed, it probably would be very frightening for anyone to suddenly lose their sight and hearing at the age of 20. However, one of the emotions that Keller most often reported experiencing was not fear but frustration, which in turn brought on fits of anger (Keller, 2003a, 2003b). This was before she met her teacher, Anne Sullivan, when Keller was almost seven years old.

Keller had a quick mind but no language system available to her to help her organize and build her thinking skills as other children do.<sup>2</sup> She was blocked in her learning until her teacher arrived and gave her the tool she needed to continue developing. That tool was language. By means of spelling words using the manual

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<sup>2</sup> See Luria and Yudovich (1956/1971), for an example of developmental delay in a set of young twins due to delay in language acquisition and how it was overcome through language training.

alphabet into Keller's hand in place of speaking, Sullivan discovered a system of transmitting language to Keller in a way that she could readily distinguish from other actions, imitate quickly, and begin to use for herself (Black, 2008, 2009; Keller, 2003a, 2003b).

Sullivan probably would not have proceeded very far with Keller if she had not empathized with her, discovered what Keller was lacking and put her full, concentrated effort into compensating for those deficiencies. So, how are the skills involved with empathy developed? It appears that empathy may naturally arise when people are at the same time actively moving toward becoming more mature human beings mentally. Overstreet (1950), one early advocate for adult education, devotes an entire volume to explaining the importance of mental maturity and citing evidence of adults' capability for new learning. For the saying may be true that one cannot teach an old dog new tricks, but it is not true that a human being's capacity for certain kinds of learning is irrevocably lost as they age.

Physical maturity, however, does not automatically guarantee the maturing of one's mind or one's behavior. In fact, it is often adults who have not developed mature thinking, especially those who are in a position of power over others, who cause much of the mischief, hurt, and suffering in the world (Huxley, 1937; Sampson, 1965). Furthermore, moving toward becoming a mentally mature human being is a task that has no end, but instead something all people can be learning about and working toward throughout their lives.

Therefore, the purpose of this article is twofold. Readers are asked to consider the information from both the standpoint of themselves as learners, and also from the standpoint of themselves as teachers who design classroom activities to elicit these learning behaviors from students. At first glance, the references selected for use in this article may appear only loosely connected, but they are not. Indeed, they are taken from diverse fields of investigation such as psychology, sociology, philosophy, human physiology, education, semantics, and English literature. The reader may be unfamiliar with some of them. However, the inclusion of these key references in each field was done on purpose, in order to prompt readers to further develop their own habits of curiosity and exploration. To put it plainly, in addition to explaining about empathy's role in human development, this whole article is also an attempt to put forth some tempting tidbits of information to lure readers further into the exciting world of their

own learning.

In the following sections of this article three key behaviors that appear to be essential for developing both mental maturity and empathy are described. These are 1) not only “reacting,” but taking deliberate action, 2) developing flexibility of mind, and 3) forming, revising, and acting upon one’s own principles. Suggestions will also be given as to how these skills can be practiced in class with students regardless of the subject being taught. These suggestions can be followed primarily by adjusting the ways teachers interact with students, being continuously more selective in the materials teachers choose to give students, and by adjusting the manner in which teachers ask students to use these selected materials.

### **1. Not only “reacting,” but taking deliberate action**

It is part of human beings’ animal heritage that they are able to react very quickly to things that they perceive as dangerous or harmful. This is done reflexively (i.e. drawing a hand away from a hot stove) and also by making almost instantaneous appraisals of the immediate situation without overtly thinking about it. Lazarus (1966) carefully defines the concept of appraisal and presents many examples of it in human subjects drawn from experimental evidence in his fundamental work entitled, *Psychological Stress and the Coping Process*.

People are not usually even aware that they are making such appraisals. Here is just one example of such evidence reported by Lazarus (p. 77):

These experimenters trained subjects by pairing an electric shock with certain nonsense syllables projected on a screen. Whenever these syllables appeared, the subjects soon gave a reliable GSR<sup>3</sup> to them in contrast with stimulus syllables that were never paired with shock. The GSR indicated a conditioned shock expectation. Then both kinds of syllables were presented in random fashion by means of a tachistoscope at various exposure speeds which made accurate identification difficult. Often, especially at rapid speeds, the subjects reported incorrectly on which syllable had appeared. Presumably then they were unaware of the syllable that was actually flashed on the screen. It was found that

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<sup>3</sup> GSR is short for galvanic skin resistance measurement, one reliable physiological indicator of psychological stress.

even though these reports were incorrect, there was a significant tendency for subjects to give a larger GSR if the syllable presented had been a shock syllable in the training period than if it had not been paired with shock.

In other words, the subjects were often not able to recognize, and at times even misidentified the syllables, but at some level they were able to nearly instantaneously respond physiologically in a different way (as evidenced by the GSR data) to the syllables previously associated with shock than to the other ones. This evidence suggests how quickly and automatically our bodies can react to something that it has learned to perceive as harmful.

Our ability to deduce the reason for physiological symptoms of an emotional state (i.e. heart palpitations, increased pulse, or flushed face) is also frequently inexact or inaccurate. This is because we can experience these same symptoms in various contexts. For example, before a public performance we could wrongly attribute them to anxiety. However, they could also indicate that we are moving toward a performance high—a higher amount of adrenaline is being released in order to raise our level of alertness and performance capability. Furthermore, if no plausible reason for these physiological symptoms is recognized in the immediate context, people tend to take on the emotional state of those around them, for example, one of euphoria or anger. Schachter and Singer found strong evidence of this in their ground-breaking investigation, *Cognitive, Social, and Physiological Determinants of Emotional State* (1962).

In certain human activities, such as driving a car, this ability to react almost involuntarily to perceived danger, and do so instantaneously, is very helpful and does prevent people from harm. Other times, it may cause people to be unnecessarily in a heightened state of alertness, a readiness to take action, or even cause them to overreact when the situation is not immediately threatening at all. People instantaneously react based on their unique learning history. However, the reality is each situation is different than before. Therefore, this over-responding is often a waste of precious energy. In fact, neurosis itself could be described as acting to defend oneself when no one is attacking.

Though it is probably impossible to stop this automatic appraisal, human beings, unlike animals have the capability of developing a deeper awareness of

themselves and their own reactions. Humans are able to lessen the amount of subsequent unnecessary responding they do based on such appraisals in different ways. They can do this by recognizing when they are responding solely out of fear or defensiveness, judging better the actual degree of immediate danger, and identifying when taking further action is not necessary or would be unhelpful. To do this it can be useful to slow down and discover what in the surrounding circumstances, their current thoughts, and/or their physiological state might have triggered the response. Then, examine different courses of action, choose one, and follow through with that action. It may also be the case that the action decided upon is to take *no action* at all.

Slowing down to notice our initial response to our immediate appraisal can be likened to a driver who sees a warning sign for an intersection up ahead in the road. The driver may then moderate their speed. This enables the driver to see more clearly the available options, for example, turning, stopping, continuing on ahead, etc. At a reduced speed it is easier for them to then take safe action. If, however, the driver continues at full speed despite seeing the sign, options for safely altering their course, especially at the last minute, will be limited.

Some other beneficial effects of such a deeper understanding and an informed modification of one's behavior have been documented in several key investigations. Among them is one in which a disappearance of symptoms in people who had previously suffered from severely debilitating snake phobias was demonstrated (Bandura, 1968). In another, a significantly lower mortality rate was found in healthy patients deemed at risk for cancer who had received special psychological training when compared with a control group (Eysenck, 1996). The special training aimed to increase behavior related to certain personality traits that had been identified previously as correlating with survival. Furthermore, other similar studies on cancer "definitely suggest that psychological intervention does have a significant effect on survival (Eysenck, 1996, p. 205)."

Here is just one example of taking deliberate action from everyday life. I ride three different trains in and around Tokyo every day to and from work. I see all kinds of people and have had many experiences while riding the train. A few months ago I was sitting down and the train was rather empty. A young man entered the train car. This young man was very large and tall—built like a heavyweight wrestler. From his behavior, I also noticed immediately that he had some kind of mental disability. When

he entered, at the opposite end from where I was sitting, he quickly noticed me, the only non-Asian person in the car. He then walked over, stood in front of me and started shouting something.

In another mood or on another day I might have felt threatened, but instead that day I was quite interested. What was he saying? It didn't sound like Japanese. Then I realized he was trying to say, "Hello my name is \_\_\_\_\_. Nice to meet you," in *English*. When I realized that, I quickly smiled and replied, "Oh, nice to meet you, too!" After I said that, he immediately stopped shouting, turned, and hurried away into another car. The people sitting around me let out audible sighs of relief. In this situation I was able to recognize my first reaction of fear but instead of acting on it, tried to more deeply understand what the young man was saying, for I was not immediately being physically threatened. In this particular instance, by reserving judgment, I was able to successfully figure out his intention and take a useful course of action.

This example introduces another key point. Making judgments about people based solely on their physical appearance is very common and human beings from all ranks of life do it all the time all over the world. People's perception of a new person they meet is often influenced by whether the new person reminds them of someone they knew before and how they felt about that other person. Therefore, it is important to recognize how expectations from past experiences can influence people's appraisal and perception of a new situation (Lazarus, 1966).

F. C. Bartlett's volume of seminal studies on memory entitled, *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology* (1967) also provides evidence of this. In one of his series of investigations, adult subjects were briefly shown simply drawn figures that often resembled familiar objects in some ways, but additionally contained some unique features (Figure 1). The task was then to draw what they had seen for

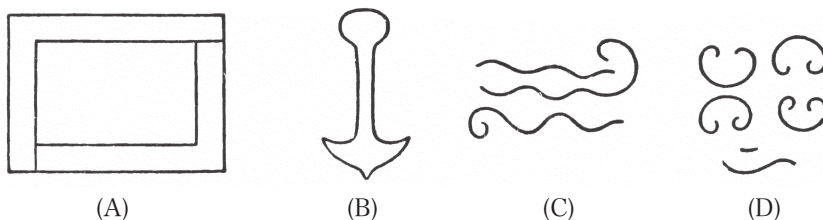


Figure 1: Some figures used in Bartlett's investigations of memory (1967, p. 19)

memory. He noticed that many subjects, without prompting, verbally responded while viewing the figures by labeling them. Furthermore, the label given was often different for different people. In one case the same drawing was called an anchor, a key, a pick-axe, a turf-cutter, or a shovel respectively by different subjects (Figure 1, B).

Later when drawing that figure, those people who had given it a verbal label tended to exaggerate or add characteristics of the object they had named, and omitted other features that did not fit their label. This was done despite instructing the subjects to draw exactly what they had seen. The verbal label they had attached to the figure influenced their recall of it, and in this case at times also distorted it. In addition, even though the subjects were repeatedly able to glimpse the figure, once they had labeled it, further viewing of the figure did not significantly change the way they recalled it or aid them in correcting their distortion. In other words, once they had decided what it was, they stopped looking for new information and ceased improving their responses.

Helping students become aware of the influence of their past experience when appraising new situations is something teachers can integrate into their lesson plans by indicating instances of when they, themselves, make such evaluations or when they notice students doing it. Awareness of this fact can also be raised through materials teachers specifically choose to use in class. For example, Jane Austen's novel, *Pride and Prejudice* immediately comes to mind as an example of just such classroom material where this fact could be brought to students' attention in an engaging way. Though originally published in 1813, nearly 200 years ago, the novel's insightful depiction of universal human tendencies toward certain behaviors under particular conditions is still true today. First impressions based on appearances, the categorizing and labeling of others based on those impressions, and the subsequent misunderstandings that arise from these behaviors in this novel take nearly 300 entertaining pages to resolve.

Furthermore, there is a connection between one's state of mind and overall physical state that can affect people's awareness and ability to make accurate evaluations of the situations they find themselves in. For example, people who are sleepy are usually not as aware of those around them as those who are alert. However, people who are over-alert may react to everything without discrimination. One way to get students to overtly think about this is to talk with them about the things they can



control in their lives and how they can regulate their lives to find and maintain their “best condition.” The things they can control include amount of sleep and exercise, the food they eat, and other things such as giving their minds breaks from studying to rest and consolidate information.

The ability to relax can also be crucial to their functioning efficiently (Jacobson, 1978). Contrary to what many people think, watching television, playing video games, and talking with one’s friends are by definition not relaxing. Neither is playing sports, cooking, or reading. Relaxation is when the muscles of the body are not contracted. No effort is put forth. Therefore, relaxation is being in a state of doing absolutely nothing. Jacobson was one of the first to experimentally demonstrate the benefits of total relaxation on one’s overall physical and mental states. However, most people today still do not know how to relax and need to be taught this skill. The fundamental, experimentally tested information contained in Jacobson’s classic, *You Must Relax: Practical Methods for Reducing the Tensions of Modern Living*, originally written in 1934, remains one of the most detailed guides available for teaching oneself this skill. We should not assume that students have an accurate understanding of how their behavior can affect their overall physical and mental states and thus also influence their ability to make decisions and react in certain ways. Nevertheless, this can be taught to them more explicitly.

One way to introduce students to this idea is through explaining to them the Yerkes-Dodson law (see Figure 2). First proposed in 1908, it simply describes a relationship between one’s level of motivation and one’s performance on tasks demanding coordination and concentration. With a low level of motivation,

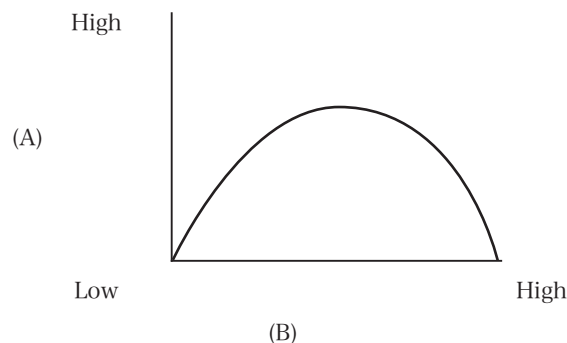


Figure 2: The U-shaped relationship between performance (A) and motivation (B). (K. Wigglesworth, personal communication, June, 2006)

performance level is also low. As motivation increases so does performance—but only to a certain point. After that point, performance level will actually drop off despite a continuing increase in motivation. When presenting this information in class, I ask students if they have experienced examples of this in their own lives, and ask them to experiment with amount of sleep, exercise, eating patterns, etc.—things they can control in their lives—to find their “best condition,” and their own optimal level of motivation and performance. Being in one’s “best condition” can increase the likelihood of a person’s being able to skillfully empathize with others and deal effectively with other challenges they may face in life.

## **2. Developing flexibility of mind**

A second skill to practice and develop in moving toward mental maturity and developing an ability to empathize with others is being able to look at facts and events and evaluate them from different viewpoints. By practicing this, a flexibility of mind is developed. No event or action is ever completely good or bad, beneficial or harmful. But if people only view events happening around them from a narrow perspective, and cling only to that, there can be less possibility for positive and creative change. Hayakawa (1972) gives many examples of this and how language, in particular, can limit people’s ability to view events from multiple perspectives. Habits in language use, formed without our explicit realization of them, can also perpetuate rigidity or distortion of thinking if not consciously examined. Furthermore, Huxley (1937, p. 329) argues:

What we think determines what we are and do, and conversely, what we are and do determines what we think. False ideas result in wrong action; and the man who makes a habit of wrong action thereby limits his field of consciousness and makes it impossible for himself to think certain thoughts.

There are usually many viable ways to solve a problem, and creative solutions more readily arise if one is open to seeing different possible solutions and is in the habit of actively seeking them.

A flexibility of mind enables people to have an increasingly deeper and broader understanding of the events surrounding and involving them. As human beings

develop this skill, they develop the habit of making connections between what they have learned before and new information. This includes the ability to constantly be readjusting their thinking based on such new information that they judge as important. Furthermore, the fact is, no one ever understands something in exactly the same way as another person. Each person will remember an experience uniquely, even an event they have simultaneously experienced with others. In addition, a person will not understand something in exactly the same way from one day to the next because of the new experiences they have and new information they take in every day.

Evidence of these individual differences in understanding and remembering can also be found in F. C. Bartlett's work (1967). In yet another series of investigations, subjects were asked to read a selected folk tale to themselves at their normal speed. Then they were asked at intervals to repeatedly recall it. Each subsequent recall of the story was recorded and compared with the original and with their previous attempts at remembering the story. Stories containing some ambiguity were purposely chosen. A few interesting observations were noted. For example, all subjects not only omitted but also at times transformed information when recalling it. In other words, each gave a unique version of the story. Secondly, there was a tendency to consolidate information and abbreviate it in places and in ways that made it more understandable and meaningful for each individual subject, based on their previous experiences and culture. It would appear from these and other of Bartlett's investigations that adults will not naturally, nor without any extra, self-directed effort, remember information verbatim. Instead people tend to adjust, condense, and make new information understandable to themselves in order to connect it with what they already know in remembering it.

Asking students to repeat exactly what teachers have told them or what they have read in the identical form in which it was presented goes contrary to the way human beings usually remember things. It also goes against strengthening flexibility of mind, which promotes mental development and perhaps people's capacity for empathy. In many of his novels, Charles Dickens (1812-1870) criticizes the practice of rote memorization of facts as used in the "modern" educational practices of his day, something which he felt had tragic consequences on children's developing minds and characters.

In his novel *Hard Times*, he describes a scene in a classroom, in which two

pupils are being examined by the directors of the school and their schoolteacher, Mr. M'Choakumchild. The first, "Girl number twenty" is asked to define a horse. She is alarmed and does not respond. She is assumed by her examiners to be, "possessed of no facts, in reference to one of the commonest of animals." Then another boy, Bitzer, is asked the same question and responds (1966, p. 5):

"Quadruped. Graminivorous. Forty teeth, namely twenty grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive. Sheds coat in the spring; in marshy countries, sheds hoofs, too. Hoofs hard, but requiring to be shod with iron. Age known by marks in mouth." Thus (and much more) Bitzer.

"Now girl number twenty," said Mr. Grandgrind, "you know what a horse is."

Ironically, the young girl in question has grown up with a traveling carnival and has been in intimate contact with horses her whole life. Bitzer has not had the privilege of such an experience. Yet, she is made to appear ignorant and becomes discouraged, feeling she will never be able to learn anything in school. While the boy, Bitzer, is praised for his display of apparent knowledge. Later in the novel, the practice of teaching students facts without understanding and never addressing their emotions is shown to lead those who had been some of the "best" students at the school down various paths to ruined lives.

Instead of asking students to repeat exactly what teachers tell them or what they read, they should be asked questions that challenge them to examine new information and situations from different viewpoints and connect them with their previous experiences. Then teachers should attempt to discover how they have put their ideas together. To do that, in English classes I often give students specific statements for debate, especially ones that challenge common assumptions and force them to examine issues from a viewpoint they might not have ever considered before. A few examples of such statements are:

- 1) Some people say 50% of talking really has nothing to do with communication, actually is mostly hurtful gossip, and therefore is a waste of time and energy (see Huxley, 1945, p. 102).

- 2) At times, it is not so important to put much time and effort into personal relationships.
- 3) Learning through one's life experience is more useful than a formal education.

Furthermore, in my English reading classes, I do not ask students questions about every detail of the reading passage I have assigned or to translate it into Japanese. Instead, I ask them to choose the most interesting parts of the reading and write about why they chose them. In class they share this work with other classmates. Students at first are surprised when they realize everyone has a slightly different answer. They also immediately see the benefit of being able to expand their understanding from hearing others' perspectives.

In class, I also ask students to write questions they have about information in the passage or point out the parts that they still do not understand. At first they usually protest and insist they have no questions, but gradually they become accustomed to thinking about the new information in a critical way. A further step is to have students take a guess at answering their own questions. As they do this in class, I am able to interact individually with students in English, and immediately explain what is of most importance to them. Later, I may write more detailed answers to their questions on their homework papers and thus, a dialogue between individual students and the teacher arises.

In addition to encouraging students to think about issues from different viewpoints, what they produce in their questions gives the teacher clues as to how they are thinking and what is of most interest to them. From this information I know better what I might emphasize in a future class and have a clearer idea of what materials will grab their interest and curiosity.

### **3. Forming, revising, and acting on one's own principles**

Over the last few years I have studied the lives of those who I consider to have, throughout their lives, worked without ceasing toward becoming mature in their thinking and actions. One characteristic of such people appears to be that from early on they were developing their own principles for life—their own sense of right action, fairness and sensitivity toward others. These principles developed in them over time

and through a careful examination of their own experiences and evaluation of their actions.

In order to do this, these people seem to have developed a habit of questioning everything, not taking someone else's word for it or relying on second-hand information. Though laws, religion, society's unwritten rules, and others' behavior at times can be taken as a guide, such people do not attempt to imitate others exactly nor do they follow rules blindly. Laws can be unjust. Society's rules can be discriminatory. Religion is often used to justify the use of violence (Huxley, 1937; Tolstoy, 1911, 1959). Others, whom people admire in some ways, may also act in ways with which those same people disagree. Instead, the human beings I have studied tend to seek what they feel are the basic truths underlying their idea of right action and to experiment with acting upon them.

Gandhi was one of these people. In his autobiography, actually subtitled, *The Story of my Experiments with Truth* (1957/1993), he outlines the path that his thinking and behavior took that caused him to be able to undertake action which ultimately led to great changes in South Africa and India through non-violent means. What most people do not realize is that even early on in his life he made decisions to act in certain ways that went against some of his family's religious practices, Indian society's strict caste system, and his family's expectations. In fact, he was the first of his particular Brahmin sub-caste to go away and study in England.

However, before he left for England, the caste leaders decided that he should not go because it was not certain whether he would be able to practice his Hindu religion there and maintain his vegetarian diet. They even threatened to declare him an outcast, so that in England and when he returned to India he would not be able to visit the houses of others of his caste—even relatives—or associate with them. This is a threat that was indeed later carried out and practiced by some members of his caste for a short while, especially upon his return to India after finishing his education in England. However, despite this threat of being declared an outcast and the possibility of receiving no help from those he had previously been dependent on, he sailed for England. Furthermore, he did so not out of anger, defiance or in blind reaction to the restrictions put on him, but simply because that was the thing he felt he needed to do.

To act of one's own initiative, to recognize and develop one's own inner sense of fairness, right action, and sensitivity toward others is crucial to people becoming

mentally mature human beings and developing empathy. Therefore, developing and drawing this out in students should be of first importance to teachers. Unfortunately, this is often not the case. Instead, priority is put on teaching students isolated bits of information. This type of instruction is often seen to be easier to evaluate, which may explain why teachers continue to teach primarily in this way. However, it is actually by helping students develop their own understanding of life and their place in it that our teaching will ultimately be of most use to them in the long run (Huxley, 1937; Krishnamutri, 1959; Neill, 1992). With a greater and actively developing understanding of themselves and others, students are equipped to make better choices on what to focus their time and effort. Furthermore, when they finally decide something is important for them, they will not be fully dependant on guidance from others, especially those who may not have their best interests in mind, and will more doggedly persist in the action they do take.

To instill this in students, a learning environment must be provided where they are allowed and encouraged to question and form their own opinions, and not be forced to take on the teacher's. The habit of being self-directed—finding out information to their own level of satisfaction, not the teacher's, should be encouraged in them. They should be led to explore original sources of information—not take someone else's word for it, and to compare second-hand information against their first-hand experience. An environment where students come to evaluate the quality of their own work and practice making self-initiated adjustments in their behavior should be provided. In 1921, A. S. Neill (1992) founded Summerhill School, an experimental educational environment where each individual child could become confident and capable of directing their own learning. Summerhill School is still in existence in England today and continues to be one of the few schools in the world whose main goal is to develop such skills in students.

It is also important that students recognize the self-satisfaction they directly receive from the work they do, and not be dependent on validation from a certain group, the teacher, or another authority. Emphasis is not on competing with others, or trying to be exactly the same as others that people may admire, but instead developing a realistic sense of one's own strong and weak points and taking positive action to address them. This can be influenced in part by giving students opportunities to develop a discerning mind, judge what is of a high standard by one's self and guide

them to keep raising that standard.

The teacher facilitates this by providing materials that are to the teacher's own current estimation of the highest standard. Teachers can also expose students to what they believe are helpful general guidelines for life. These guidelines may not necessarily be what society provides and reinforces, or the ideas to which they are most often exposed. For much information about human behavior and psychology that students see portrayed in movies, television programs, or read about in magazines—even in textbooks—simply is not accurate. This misinformation can be balanced by carefully choosing what is presented to students and by striving to introduce them to materials that are continuously of a higher standard and quality, particularly ones they might not have discovered on their own.

### **Conclusion**

A wise person once told me that to be a teacher it was important to know only two things: to know one's self and know one's students. This knowledge in turn facilitates the teacher's main task, which is to maintain students' curiosity and interest in learning. By doing this, the teacher also will be developing their own ability to empathize together with their students'. To teach with empathy as a main goal is neither a new or original idea in the field of education. People have been explaining this to educators for centuries, as evidenced by the references included in this article. Furthermore, teachers are well placed to provide conditions under which students may develop empathy, within whatever the educational context they currently work. Despite this, educational policies and the ways in which teachers are trained to go about their work have essentially changed very little since Dickens's time.

Self-development is one's life's work. Though the two-fold task of knowing one's self and one's students has no end, by working towards it teachers have the capability of improving not only the quality of the long-term impact they may have on students, but at the same time improve themselves. In sum, by merely adjusting the ways teachers interact with students, being more selective in the materials teachers choose to give to students, and by adjusting the manner in which teachers ask students to use these selected materials this can be done.



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# 感情移入

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## 要 旨

本稿は感情移入の特質と、その行為に従事する人間の重要性について考察したものである。具体的には、感情移入を助長する主な行動、条件といったものを取り上げ、それらの実践を通常授業の中で、どのように統合していけばよいのかに関し、教員向けの提案を試みている。