

EMPATHY EDUCATION

Why the Other Side of the Report Card Counts

By Michele Borba, Ed.D. micheleborba.com

“Empathy is seeing with the eyes of another.
Listening with the ears of another and feeling with the heart of another.”

Empathy Is Teachable and Comprised of 3 Distinct Types “Empathy ABCs”

Affective: Feeling what another person feels; **Behavioral:** Sensing what someone needs and responding compassionately; **Cognitive:** understanding another’s perspective or values but -not necessarily agreeing with them. And it lies on a spectrum from low to high.

Empathy Education Starts with Understanding the Empathy Advantage

Empathy is integral to education, mental health, promoting the moral virtues of kindness, compassion, justice, fairness, caring, it increases resilience, civic engagement, helps students become contributing citizens and creates more caring, inclusive, safe, trusting learning climates. And it reduces aggression, bullying, racism, violence, and hate.

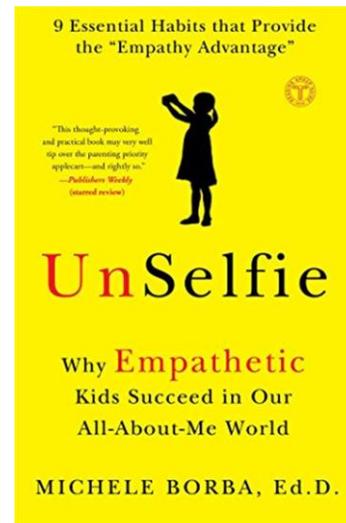
7 Principles of Effective Empathy Education

1. **Ongoing:** Not a one-time lesson but a continual focus
2. **Woven-in:** Integrated into content, not tacked on.
3. **Meaningful:** Real & authentic so it’s touches heart & mind.
4. **Internalized:** Goal is adopting empathy competencies as habits.
5. **Student-Centered:** Child’s needs, not curriculum, drives lessons.
6. **Relationships:** Empathy breeds in a culture of respect & caring.
7. **Empathic Leadership:** Modeling, expected and core to leader’s vision, purpose, style and interactions.



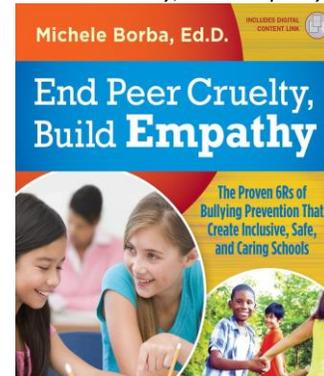
Points to Help Staff Recognize that Empathy Matters

- “The culture and parenting styles are changing and do not support empathy.”
- “Yes, we can because empathy is teachable, and comprised of nine competencies.”
- “The empathy demise is happening to OUR students, too!”
- “Students are hurting, afraid, and can’t learn if they don’t feel safe.”
- “We can think big, but we’ll start with small steps and keep going forward.”
- “Empathy education is woven in or integrated into lessons and not another program.”
- “Empathy has research-driven data to support the outcomes we seek for our students.”
- “Empathy aligns with our 5Ps: principles, procedures, practices, policies, people.”
- “It’s the best antidote to aggression, bullying and hate.”
- “The most memorable teachers and lessons are empathy driven.”
- “It prepares students for the 21st century, 4th industrial revolution, and global world.”
- “It helps kids develop empathetic mindsets so they see themselves as caring and want to make a positive difference on the world.”
- “It creates the kind of people we hope and want our students to become.”
- “It’s the right thing to do and a moral imperative that we help our students reach their full potential as just, caring, contributing citizens. If we don’t cultivate their empathetic capabilities then who will?”



Empathy Staff Resources

- *UnSelfie*, Michele Borba
- *The Road to Character*, Brooks
- *The Altruistic Personality*, Oliner
- *The Path to Purpose*, Damon
- *Generation Me*, Twenge
- *iGen*, Jean Twenge
- *The Trophy Kids Grow Up*, Alsop
- *Shadow a Student Challenge*
- *College of the Overwhelmed*, Kadison
- *The Nature of Prejudice*, Allport
- *Nobody Left to Hate*, Aronson
- *The Science of Evil*, Baron-Cohen
- *Savage Spawn*, Kellerman
- *Why They Kill*, Rhodes
- *Aggression Replacement Therapy*, Arnold Goldstein
- *Restorative Justice in Chicago Public Schools*
- *Made to Stick*, Heath
- *A Long Walk to Water*, Parks
- *The Empathetic Civilization*, Ruffin
- *End Peer Cruelty, Build Empathy*,



🦋 BRAVE STAFF CHATS: What behaviors are students catching from us? How can we model empathy to our students? What sort of people do we want our students to become?" What's our first step to success? How will we know when we are making an impact?

THE EDUCATIONAL LEADER'S ROLE IN EMPATHY EDUCATION

2 Crucial Questions an Educational Leader Should Ask

1. **Which empathy competencies are we already addressing?**
Educational leaders may fail to already existing practices and programs that support empathy such as social-emotional learning, service learning, character education, mindfulness, debate, theatre, cooperative learning, conflict resolution, and restorative justice. *Consider what you already have in place, align those practices with the nine competencies and then list which ones missing in teacher training or implementation.*
2. **Which competencies might benefit our students?**
Check behavior referrals, listen to staff and counselors and hear their concerns, ask parents what worries them about their children, but also hold student focus groups. Ask older students which habits do they need to succeed in school and life. *Choose skills that your students and culture needs. Empathy education is not a cookie-cutter approach.*

6 Quick Ways Educational Leaders Can Gauge Empathy Education

1. **Walk Your Halls.** Are you seeing laughter, conversation, smiles and inclusion? Empathy breeds in caring cultures.
2. **Do a School Map.** Each student marks hot spots "school safety concerns or where bullying, aggression happen" and cold spots: places you feel safe or would go to if there is a problem." How many hot spots do you have? Boost adult supervision.
3. **Discover Safety Nets.** Each student writes names of peer and/or adult they would go to if a problem on a 3x5 card; can be done anonymously. Empathy needs trust and caring. Make sure every student has support.
4. **Lunch Bunch Focus Groups.** Periodically dine with students can ask them their peers' perceptions about the school. "What suggestions could we do to make our school better, safer, more caring?" "What do we stand for in this school?"
5. **Conduct Student Surveys.** One Question: Students feel included-not ostracized or marginalized. (Test – look in cafeteria, playgrounds)
6. **Ask 1 Question.** "Who will you play with at recess?" or "Who will you sit with at lunch?" Now check to see which students are not on anyone's list. What will you do to help those students connect and fit it?

Why Empathy Education Is Crucial [See UnSelfie Introduction].

- U.S. teens are now 40% lower in empathy than three decades ago (Konrath, 2012).
- As empathy has dipped, narcissism rates increased 58% (Konrath, 2012).
- Empathy reduces aggression and boosts prosocial behaviors (Eisenberg, 2010) and may be our best antidote to bullying and racism (Santos, 2011).
- Empathetic students display more classroom engagement, higher academic achievement and better communication skills (Jones 2014).
- Empathy is the foundation of a safe, caring, inclusive learning climate (ASCD).
- Empathy boosts employability; named top for Global Economic Forum.: Forbes urges companies to adopt empathy & perspective-taking principles; Harvard Business Review says it is of the "essential ingredients for leadership success and excellent performance.

Courageous Conversations to Start Empathy Education Implementation

- How can we build empathy amongst one-another within our building or department? (Stressed adults who need empathy have a hard time nurturing empathy for kids).
- Change starts with WHY. Implementation is the HOW. Let's not reinvent the wheel. What are existing strategies, procedures, policies that support empathy building. List them.
- What existing policies, procedures, practice counter empathy building (for instance: shame-based discipline). Is there a way to implement more restorative practices?
- What are some of the best teaching practices or workplace habits we can take on this year that would increase achievement/productivity AND empathy?

9 Empathy Competencies



1. **Emotional Literacy**, so children can recognize and understanding the feelings and needs of themselves and others.
 2. **Moral Identity** so children will adopt caring values that guide their integrity and activate empathy to help others.
 3. **Perspective Taking** so children can step into others' shoes to understand other people's feelings, thoughts, and views.
 4. **Moral Imagination** so children can use literature, films and emotionally charged images as a source of inspiration to feel with others.
 5. **Self-Regulation** to help children learn to manage strong emotions and reduce personal distress so they can help others.
 6. **Practice Kindness** to increase children's concerns about the welfare and feelings of others.
 7. **Collaboration** to help children work with others to achieve shared goals for the benefit of all.
 8. **Moral Courage** to embolden children to speak out, step in and help others.
 9. **Altruistic Leadership** Abilities to motivate kids to make a difference for others, no matter how small it may be.
- © 2016 Michele Borba
UnSelfie: Why Empathetic Kids Succeed in Our All-About-Me World.



WHAT EMPATHY EDUCATION LOOKS LIKE



There is no one “right” approach to Empathy Education nor is it a cookie-cutter concept in which you borrow empathy strategies from another school to make it your own. Best approaches are always culture-driven and home-grown, but implementing proven empathy-building practices is always key. Here are things to look for that tell an educational leader that empathy is implemented based on the nine essential competencies of empathy from *UnSelfie: Why Empathetic Kids Succeed in Our All-About-Me World*

EMPATHY COMPETENCY 1: Emotional Literacy

Before students can empathize, they must be able to read emotions. Students able to recognize feelings are better adjusted emotionally, more popular, more outgoing, and more sensitive in general (Goleman, 1995). They also score higher academically and are more resilient (Gottman, 1997). But researchers warn that today’s digital world is reducing students’ abilities to recognize human emotions, and jeopardizing their empathetic capacities (Uhis, 2014). One-to-one computing makes teaching this first competency vital. Empathy breeds in caring cultures, requires face to face connection and opportunities to students to connect and learn to read and identify emotions. Look for:

- Activities that encourage face-to-face communication, help students’ identity and understand feelings in themselves and others, and nurture caring connections.
- Laughter, smiles and included students.
- Teacher nurturing a caring and respectful community: smiling, engaged, connected with students
- Furniture arranged to encourage communication.
- Students have opportunities to connect (paired sharing, cooperative learning, partnerships, dialogues, discussions).
- Teachers *with* students and engaged in caring relationships.
- Teachers using emotion vocabulary as natural parts of lessons (“How do you think Charlotte feels?”)
- Students learning to read and identify emotions (morning rituals to point how they feel on a chart or students identify their feelings before and after each recital or test, log their feelings).
- Teachers helping students identify how others feel such as peer “Emotion Check-Ins” by observing their partner, guessing the feeling and offering support if needed (“I’m here for you”).
- Paired sharing, discussions and class meetings to increase students’ sensitivity to emotion cues, nurture caring connections and learn emotional literacy.
- Programs like RULER, Roots of Empathy, SEL, Second Step, Mood Rooms that increase emotion literacy.

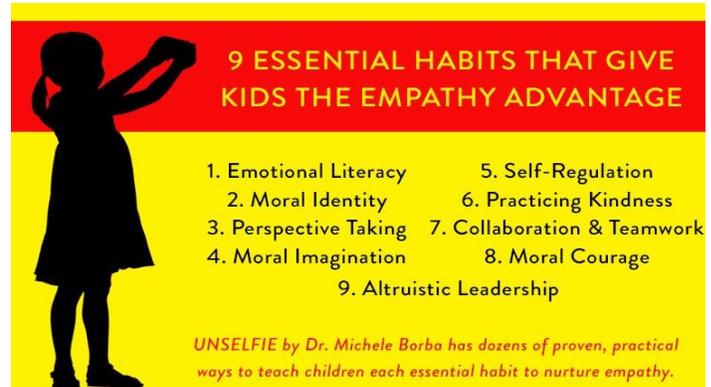
How is your staff helping students learn their Emotion ABCs?

EMPATHY COMPETENCY 2: Moral Identity

A child’s inner value system, or moral identity, can inspire empathy, shape character, and motivate compassion. The first step is helping students define themselves as people who value others. Kids are more likely to learn moral identity when adults model, instruct and expect them to care about others (Oliner, 1992). That poses a problem in our culture with an increasing void in moral role models, but educators are helping students develop ethical compasses. Look for:

- Clear behavior norms that address respect, caring, empathy, kindness, social responsibility
- Strategies to help students adopt caring values that guide integrity and activate empathy to help others.
- Students creating class mantras: “We help each other.”
- Assigned essays that help students define who they are and what they stand for such as the Capstone Project.
- Memorizing weekly kindness or character quotes, and then choosing one for their personal mantra.
- Journaling quotes that resonates with students. “It helps you discover what you stand for,” a teen told me.
- Teachers who praise students for character not just academic achievement to developing empathetic mindsets.
- Watch staff and your behavior. Are you modeling moral identity and what you hope students copy?

A quick assessment if students are taking your school’s mission to heart is asking random kids: “What do we stand for? How are you expected to behave?” Their answers speak volumes.



EMPATHY COMPETENCY 3: Perspective Taking

Perspective taking is the cognitive side of empathy and is crucial for 21st century students. Whether it's connecting students across the globe through technology, debating an issue from the other side, or seeing American Revolution from British point of view, perspective taking can stretch students' horizons and transform their views. Science also shows that the most memorable lessons are often based on this third empathy competency (Heath, 2008). Look for:

- Lessons that encourage students to experience another's feelings and see the world through others' eyes.
- Stepping into another's shoes (literally or cognitively) to help students understand others. (An English teacher's test for *Romeo and Juliet* uses paper shoe cutouts depicting each character. Students step onto each cutout and tell the character's views and feelings).
- Widening students' empathy zones to encourage them to do a 24-hour hunger strike (with parental blessings) to understand poverty. (Many now volunteer at a food bank).
- Using Restorative Practices to help student offenders develop empathy for their victims and strengthen perspective taking
- Discipline that requires students to describe their conflict from the other child's view.
- Teachers asking questions such as: "How would you feel if that happened to you?" can do wonders to stretch perspectives.
- Theatre, role playing or music opportunities where students can journey into other worlds.
- Field trips to immersive experiences such as museums where students can "see" and "feel" other worlds.

What ways are you seeing teachers help kids step into others' shoes?

EMPATHY COMPETENCY 4: Moral Imagination

Science proves that reading literary fiction like *Wonder* or *The Grapes of Wrath* can enhance empathy and help students to feel "with" the characters (Mar, 2009). Our brains even mirror their actions, so we "do" what the characters do. Emotionally charged films and images can also prompt empathetic feelings and even encourage charitable giving if they are moving and transformative (Barraza, 2015). Look for:

- Use of emotionally charged images and films, or books to help students journey into other worlds.
- Lessons that use books or film to help students grasp different views.
- Ensuring that news, books, film offer different views and diversity.
- Using riveting paintings to help students' grasp different artists' perspectives.
- Assigned reading that help students step out of their comfort zones to explore lives and beliefs different from their own and journey into new worlds.

Ask students: "Which books should be assigned reading and why?" Their answers can guide your school's literature choices.

EMPATHY COMPETENCY 5: Self-Regulation

Self-regulation allows kids to keep their emotions in check so they can recognize others' feelings, empathize and then calmly think of how to help, but it also boosts academics performance. Managing emotions is a better predictor of their academic achievement than IQ (Lehrer, 2009). And a 40-year study found that childhood self-control strongly predicts adult success, in people of high or low intelligence and rich or poor (Moffitt, 2011). Look for:

- Strategies that help students manage strong emotions and reduce personal distress so they can fight the empathy gap can help others.
- Teaching children how to recognize their stress triggers and signs before they're in overload.
- Strategies such as Calm Down Corners, Mood Rooms, and Stress Boxes to help children self-regulate.
- Teaching strategies such as belly breathing, meditation, yoga or mindfulness to reduce stress and nurture empathy.

What is your school doing to help kids self-regulate and adopt it as a habit? How can you help teachers learn science-backed methods and try empathy-building approaches? An unprecedented rise in youth depression, anxiety, trauma and concern for safety give urgency for teaching this fifth competency.

EMPATHY COMPETENCY 6: Practicing Kindness

Being kind is what helps children tune in to other people's feelings and needs, trust more, step out of their own skins to understand others, and become more "We," less "Me" oriented. Each kind act nudges kids to notice others ("I see how you feel"), care ("I'm concerned about you"), empathize ("I feel with you"), and help and comfort ("Let me ease your pain"). Practicing kindness can also change children's self-image and behavior. If a child sees herself as kind, she is more likely to act kindly and why educators must help students develop caring mindsets. Look for:

- Strategies that help students routinely develop and exercise compassion so as to increase their concern about the welfare and feelings of others.
- Teachers deliberating modeling or introducing kindness so students see, hear and practice kindness.

- Morning Greetings with smiles, handshakes and eye contact. Kindness Ambassadors meet peers at the school entrance with friendly greetings, “High Five Hallways” during passing time. Encourage simple kindness routines involving students.
- Encouraging students to do kind acts or encouraging them chart their kind acts.

“No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.” A leader’s job is ensuring that students take those words to heart,

EMPATHY COMPETENCY 7: Collaboration

Empathy is never a solitary act: it’s only when we let go of our self-centeredness and feel *with* others that our hearts open. Working together on common goals can help students make that crucial shift from “Me” to “We.” Those “us”-type experiences and sensitize them to those who may be different or have conflicting interests. This competency also broadens students’ social spheres, so it prepares them for diverse world. Look for:

- Opportunities where students work together on common goals, practice collaborative skills, shift “I, Me, Mine” thinking to “We, Our, Us,” and broaden their social-spheres.
- Promoting inclusion (Challenge Day, Lunch-Bunch Groups, Mix-It-Up Lunches, BASE Teams, Family Groups).
- Teaching social-emotional and empathy skills that promote teamwork skills such as how to encourage, reduce conflicts, and disagree respectfully.
- Ongoing social-skill skill-building lessons that help children develop social skills, friendship-making, include others. (Check behavior referrals and chat with teachers to determine which skills your students need and then create a school-wide implementation plan).
- Using ongoing collaborative practices like Cooperative Learning enhances achievement and polishes empathy skills like listening for feelings, resolving conflicts, and perspective taking.
- Stressing sportsmanship both on and off fields.
- Conflict Resolution to help students work together to solve problems.
- Jigsaw Learning strategies (Eliot Aaronson) to reduce racial conflict and help bitter kids learn to care about each other.

Hint: Choosing one cooperative structure a year as a professional learning focus and practicing it in staff meetings increases the likelihood of effective implementation and empathy growth.

EMPATHY COMPETENCY 8: Moral Courage

Moral courage is the inner strength that motivates children to act on their empathetic urges and help others despite the consequences. It’s not always easy, sometimes there are risks, but these children stick their necks out for justice and compassion. They are Upstanders-the empathic elite-and they stand up for others because they know deep down it’s the right and caring thing to do. Courage also increases students’ resilience, creativity, confidence, willpower and school engagement, and is teachable. Facing fear takes courage but each step helps kids discover inner strength, and starts with encouragement from empathetic educators.

- Strategies that help students understand moral courage, find inner strength, and learn to speak up for others.
- Opportunities for students to practice Upstander skills so they become habits such as role-playing, teaching younger kids, and presenting them to peers in assemblies.
- Debate, engaging class discussions, Socratic Dialogue, and Civic Discourse to help students find their voice and practice speaking out.
- Hero lessons that help kids recognize that even ordinary people like themselves can do extraordinary things (whether it’s in history like Gandhi or Mandela, in fiction: Dorothy Gale or Harry Potter; or in real life like veterans or first responders).

Ask your staff how they help students learn Upstander strategies to assist bullied peers or those treated unfairly.

EMPATHY COMPETENCY 9: Altruistic Leadership, Service and Stewardship

Encouraging students to help others can activate empathy as well as help them see themselves as Changemakers: individuals who make positive changes and inspire others to follow. Giving-not receiving-is what makes kids happier, healthier, less stressed, and feel better about themselves (Luks, 2010). When kids see the impact of their caring they realize they can make a difference. The best news is that every student has the potential to make the world a better place, that is *if* we provide the right experiences. Look for:

- Opportunities where students practice leadership so they learn to see themselves as contributing citizens.
- Leadership opportunities for students of all ages to take charge and identify their leadership style.
- Community service projects-whether bringing toys to a shelter or delivering books to a senior home-where kids see the world through other’s eyes and practice contribution.
- Design Thinking where students take on problems in manageable doses, stretch deeper personal understanding of the people involved and design empathy-based solutions.
- Project Based Learning to open students’ eyes to global issues, and then collaborate, identify, and solve real-world problem using 21st century tools.

What is your school doing to help *all* students realize they can make the world a better place? Which students are you overlooking?

HOW TO DEVELOP AN EMPATHY-CENTERED SCHOOL

8 Tenets Educational Leaders Use to Build Strong Empathy-Focused Schools

“A great leader has ‘compelling modesty’, is more we-centric, not I centric, is quiet, humble, calm and aims for the common good.” – Jim Collins, Good to Great

Creating an empathy-based school is not quick and often is years in the making, but empathy quest always is a key focus. Though each school varies, here are four tenets that strong educational leaders do to create strong empathy-centered schools.

TENET 1: Strong Educational Leaders Develop Safe, Caring, Inclusive, Equitable Learning Climates

Empathy breeds in a safe, trusting environment and is the foundation to the well-being of a school. Strong educational leaders make the school culture and climate a top priority.

- Continually assess staff, students, parents and the community as to their perceptions of school safety, caring and orderliness. Do all constituents perceive the school environment as safe, secure, caring and orderly?
- At least once a year collect data from students via focus groups, questionnaires and anonymous bullying surveys as to whether they feel safe, respected and cared about at school.
- Do quick periodic Walk-Throughs of the school to gauge if it is safe and orderly. Do students and staff appear happy, included and engaged?
- Hold quick conversations among staff, parents and students to assess their input and suggestions for improvement.
- Periodically examine Easy-to-Gather Quantitative Data to monitor your school climate including: discipline referrals, detentions, suspensions, expulsions, tardies, truancies, bullying incidents, parent or community communication regarding school safety concerns, and student interactions with counselors and guidance department related to school safety or comments and suggestions about safety submitted to your school’s website. Make efforts to address and remedy areas identified by students, parents and staff.
- At least once a year review student survey results on “happiness” or attitudinal survey results (for instance, Gallup Student Poll; Gallup, 2013).
- Identify your marginalized or more vulnerable students who may be feel excluded or targeted by bullies and create “safety nets.” Assign staff to monitor or “watch out” for them or allocate spaces/rooms as “safe zones” to seek comfort. Seek guidance of counselors or psychologist to help build their confidence, learn social skills or bullying prevention strategies. Hold ongoing staff conversations as to how to help all students (especially those identified as marginalized) fit in, feel cared about and safe.

TENET 2: Strong Educational Leaders Walk and Talk Empathy and Model Their Mission

“Simply paying attention allows us to build an emotional connection. Lacking attention, empathy hasn’t a chance.”

– Daniel Goleman, Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships

An empathy-centered school includes adult interactions. Tune up your empathetic leadership style. An empathetic leader...

- Promotes a positive empathic culture and makes each part of the school a safe haven built on trust.
- Engages in dialogues and debate, not coercion. Hold Brave Conversations with staff so they know listening is “two-way.”
- Leads with questions, not answers. Seeks to understand, not blame.
- Focuses on what we can be great at, not failings.
- Creates a team “we-centered” approach and equitable collaboration. (Empathy underlies collaboration).
- Is a deep listener who tries to understand; withholds judgments.
- Is people-centered and invests in the well-being of both students and staff; people and relationship.
- Models the nine empathy competencies so the staff and student recognize that you walk the talk.

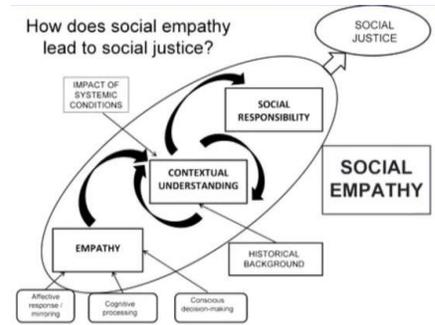
BRAVE REFLECTION

What are you doing to show your staff, students and parents that you walk and talk empathy?

🦋 TENET 3: Strong Educational Leaders Help the Staff Understand “Why” Empathy Matters So They Are Committed to Empathy Education

Empathy-centered schools are led by education leaders who help the staff recognize “WHY” empathy matters. The leader develops a sense of immediacy or a focused urgency about the need for empathy and helps move the staff to commit to embracing change. Teachers are more apt to embrace a concept and alter their habits when they understand the deep reason for change [McREL Insights: Schools that “Beat the Odds.” Aurora, CO. Bryan Goodwin, 2005].

- Start with a shared understanding of why empathy matters. Share your vision with staff so they are clear as to the “why.”
- Dispel empathy myths so staff recognizes that empathy is *not* soft, can be cultivated, and essential for student success.
- Provide a strong case: show evidence as to why *your* culture, students, staff will benefit from empathy education.
- Present the case that empathy is crucial for 21st century learning and a top employability skill.
- Offer a strong case for empathy with evidence and data from your school such as your behavior referrals (in particular incidents of student aggression, anti-social behavior, bullying, racism, student mental health needs, counselor and psychologist reports on students’ anxiety, stress, depression).
- Share informal data such as parental concerns on student stress and desire for education that addresses the “whole child,” teacher reports, and student/staff/parent surveys, focus group data.
- Show how empathy education is the foundation piece to what you may be implementing (or hope to) such as Inclusion, diversity training, bullying prevention, SEL, social justice, Upstander training, mindfulness, service learning, restorative practices, Capstone project, equity education. Stress that they are all under the umbrella of empathy education.
- Show the benefits and value for implementing empathy and the impact it has for students’ learning, mental health, behavior.
- Provide the benefits, but also discuss the outcomes for students and staff.
- Hold honest, brave conversations around the Empathy Dip to boost their buy-in.
- Listen to staff views and concerns about empathy-building without judgment and try to resolve the concerns.



Elizabeth Segal, University of Arizona

🦋 TENET 4: Strong Educational Leaders Build Collaborative Relationships for Their Staff to Work Collectively to Develop Empathy Education Based on Their Unique Culture, Beliefs and Population Needs

Creating an empathy-centered school depends on building relationships and developing deep, meaningful trust and common goals. Gaining staff perspective is crucial to how strong educational leaders direct the extent of empathy education implementation and determines their school focus. A key to culture transformation is for the staff to develop strong buy-in and commitment so they see empathy education as “their joint project” not merely the educational leader’s “new pet idea.” A common leader flaw is not allotting time for the staff to engage in collaborative experiences where they work together to find common ground and strengthen trust on one another. Ideas to consider:

- Create multiple teacher teams who remain together to learn and understand the importance of empathy.
- View and discuss short videos about the relevance of empathy education such as:
“Brene Brown on Empathy” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw>
“Empathy Is a Verb” Michele Borba TEDx Talk <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tVTiplEG91s>
“Understanding Empathy” with Simon Sinek TED Talk <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pi86Nr9Mdms>
“How to Activate Kids’ Empathy Michele Borba Character.org <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HqUgVH5jBml>
“The Importance of Empathy” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UzPMMSKfkZQ>
“The Empathic Civilization” Jeremy Rifkin TEDTalk https://www.ted.com/talks/jeremy_rifkin_on_the_empathic_civilization
- Send staff teams to view nearby schools who are implementing empathy education to view and discuss pros and cons of their approaches together.
- Do staff meeting Jigsaw Lessons about each of the nine habits as a staff to help staff work together to understand empathy research. Break the staff into groups and assignments into pieces that the group assembles to complete the (jigsaw) puzzle.
- Start a staff book club and read about empathy education [See the free *UnSelfie* Educator Book Guide micheleborba.com]
- Assign teacher grade level partners to work together to plan empathy.
- Create staff subject teams (history, English, science, health, etc.) to discuss ways to weave empathy into every subject area.
- Create a staff team to develop a school-wide discipline plan based on empathy-building practices such as restorative justice and replace aggression with prosocial behaviors and repair relationships

- Ask staff what empathy building resources they need and then bring in speakers or make available those resources.
- Offer ongoing professional development about empathy and social-emotional learning. Convince staff that this is a one-time staff development, but a sustained commitment in empathy education.
- Take on one best practice each year for your staff training that nurtures academic achievement and empathy (such as Cooperative Learning, Restorative Justice, Class Meetings, Conflict Resolution). Continue to work on that one practice throughout the year, run your staff meetings with the practice so educators feel competent to use the strategy with students.
- Hold two-way conversations: ask for and listen to staff concerns and suggestions prior to making major decisions on empathy education so it's "our" project/idea not "yours."
- Conduct brave, serious staff discussions about your existing School P's: Policies, Procedures, Practices, Principles (and even People). For instance: discipline policies, lunchroom sitting arrangements, school rules, vision statement, behavior referrals, advisory programs). Are they aligned with empathy-education? If not, why not? Which should be changed? Develop teams to study and align your P's with Empathy Education.

🦋 TENET 5: Strong Educational Leaders Recognize Their Staff Also Needs to Work on Their Own Empathy

An often-missed tenet in empathy education is that "in order to teach empathy, the educator must have empathy." Educational leaders recognize that many educators are suffering from stress/compassion fatigue and/or realize that teacher empathy is low. Empathy can be cultivated at any age and working on practices that instill empathy will also help educators use the same practices to teach their students. Here are few ideas:

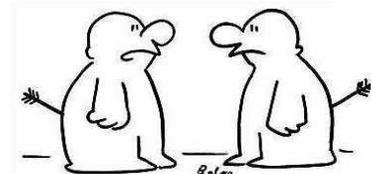
- Learn Mindfulness or Meditation: Train one staff member in the approach then hold daily morning, afternoon or afterschool 10-minute Staff Mindful Sessions
- Do staff book clubs using literary fiction: proven to heighten empathy: *Bel Canto*, *All the Light We Cannot See*, *Black Like Me*, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, *The Knife of Never Letting Go*, *The Nightingale*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*.
- Study empathy practices and choose a "stretch goal" to do as a staff, small team or individual: *Empathy: Why It Matters and How to Get It*, *Wired to Care*, *The Age of Empathy*, *Mindsight*
- Hold more informal staff get-togethers (retreats, luncheons, TGIFs) to develop collegiality
- Intentionally practice listening skills in staff meetings in pairs or triads
- Take on a community service project as a staff (food bank, homeless shelter, incarcerated youth, women's shelter).

🦋 TENET 6: Strong Educational Leaders Work to Help Educators Cultivate Caring Relationships and Empathize with Students

***"A high degree of empathy in a relationship is possibly the most potent factor in bringing about change and learning."*—Carl Rogers**

Research shows the importance of teacher empathy: the more positive interaction students have with their teachers the more likely students will learn effectively, care about school, demonstrate prosocial behaviors, be engaged in their learning.

- Read and discuss: "Teacher Empathy Reduces Student Suspensions, Stanford Research Shows" <https://news.stanford.edu/2016/04/26/teacher-empathy-reduces-student-suspensions-stanford-research-shows/>
- Hold discussions with teachers about the impact of empathy in teaching: "Think back to your own school days and your best learning experiences. What were you doing? What made it your best experience or memorable? What makes good teachers? What would be some characteristics of empathetic teachers?" What factors make it difficult to empathize with students?
- Help dispel educator resistance to empathy: "I am not a touchy-feeling person." "I'm not a therapist." "Empathy doesn't have anything to do with the subject I teach." "I don't have time."
- Discuss ways to build rapport and relationships with students: Call students by their name, meet them at the door, do surveys to find out their interests and talents, arrive early or stay late to just chat, be respectful, smile! <http://www.socialpsychology.org/rapport.htm>. Brainstorm lists of student rapport builders and keep them on the wall!
- Discuss: "When students see their actions and voices are not only valued but also empowered, they begin to turn from motivation-free to motivated: Jason Flom in *Education Week Teacher* "How can we help students feel valued?"
- Identify "invisible kids" or those who rarely open up, are excluded, you don't know much about and try to connect or find other staff members who can help you reach them.
- Hold brave conversations: "Am I genuine?" Since we empathize with those more like ourselves: "Do I step out of my comfort one to understand students who are different from me?" "How do my students describe me?" "How can I help my students feel safer and know *me* better?" "How can I get to know my students better?"



"I know exactly how you feel."

- Discuss ways to help teachers get into their students' shoes and understand where they're coming from. Ideas include:
Take a home visit for a conference
Survey students "Is there anything you'd like me to know about you that would help me teach you?"
Discuss students you are concerned about amongst staff to understand and empathize with their predicament (the list is endless but a few: deployment, parental incarceration, poverty, stress, depression, abuse, hunger, learning disabilities, race)
- Try the Shadow-a-Student Challenge <http://shadowastudent.org> or <https://dschool.stanford.edu/shadow-a-student-k12/>

🦋 Books to Help Staff Understand a Student's Perspective A few that address issues that today's youth face:

- *Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out*, by Susan Kuelin (Transgender)
- *This Is How It Always Is*, by Laurie Frankel (Joys and trials of parenting a transgender child)
- *Look Me in the Eye: My Life with Asperger's*, by John Elder Robinson
- *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, by Mark Haddon (Autism)
- *The Girl Who Smiled Beads* by Clementine Wamariya (Enduring severe trauma-genocide)
- *Educated: A Memoir*, by Tara Westover (Urban-rural divide, self-schooled, powerful)
- *Girl in Pieces*, by Kathleen Glasgow (Cutting disorder)
- *13 Reasons Why*, by Jay Asher (Depression, suicide)
- *Hillbilly Elegy*, by J.D. Vance (Poverty, family and culture in crisis)
- *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria*, by Beverly Daniel Tatum (Racism)
- *Everyone Makes Mistakes: Living with My Daddy in Jail*, by 11-year old Madison Strempeck (Incarceration)
- *The Language of Flowers*, by Vanessa Diffenbaugh (Foster care, trauma, no attachment)
- *There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom*, by Judy Barron and Sean Barron (Autism)
- *I Wish My Teacher Knew: How One Question Can Change Everything for Our Kids* by Kyle Schwartz
- *Between the World and ME*, by Ta-Nehisi Coates (Letter to his teen son, describes what it's like to be black)
- *#NeverAgain*, by David Hogg and Lauren Hogg (Parkland High teens survive school shooting)
- *Evicted*, by Matthew Desmond (Income inequality)

🦋 BRAVE STAFF CHATS

Set aside a few minutes for each staff meeting to discuss the need for empathy education. Use "Google Alert" to notify you as to late-breaking news and research on empathy and distribute those links are the articles to discuss as a staff or post them on a staff bulletin board: "Empathy in the News."

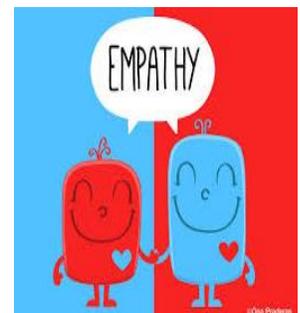
🦋 TENET 7: Strong Educational Leaders Involve Parents and Community in Empathy Education

Empathy education involves all stakeholders. How are you helping your parents adopt empathy-building practices? For instance: book clubs, make-and take sessions, speakers, Twitter feeds, parent helping in service projects, newsletters, parent coaches. How can we engage parents-we'd like to get off the 1950 model most schools still use?

🦋 TENET 8: Strong Educational Leaders Involve Students in Empathy Development

Empathy education empowers students to realize they can make a difference.

- What are you doing to help your students find their voice, develop empathic mindsets and realize they can better the world?
- Which SEL skills do your students need to develop the nine empathy competencies.
- Which SEL skills or empathy competencies are you teaching your students? How are you determining which habits, skills or competencies your students need? How are you assessing your successes?
- What type of strategies and best practices are you using to help your students recognize that they can make a difference in the world? How is service learning used at your school?
- How are your students learning leadership skills? Which students might you be overlooking? How can you involve them?

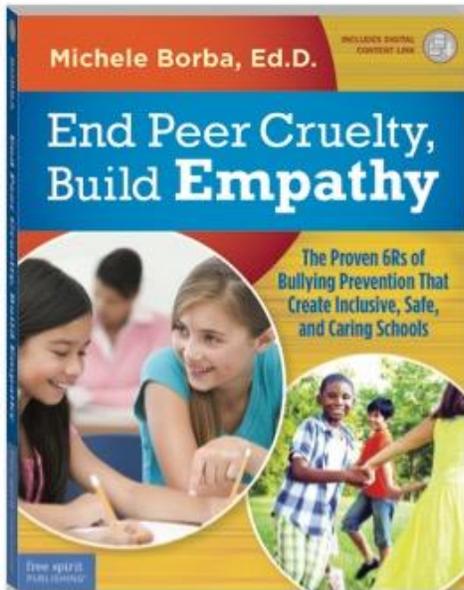


🦋 BRAVE EDUCATOR REFLECTION

Which of the eight educational leadership tenets do you consider your strengths? Which is your weakness? Would your staff agree? How do you think your parents, students and staff would describe your leadership style and your school? What about your school's strengths and weaknesses? If you are not sure, what ways would you get an accurate assessment?

🦋 MY TAKE AWAYS ON EMPATHY EDUCATION

Michele Borba, Ed.D. is an internationally renowned educator, former classroom teacher, and parenting, child and bullying expert recognized for her solution-based strategies to strengthen children’s empathy and social-emotional intelligence and character, and reduce peer cruelty. A sought-after motivational speaker, she has presented keynotes to over one million participants throughout North America, South America, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, South Pacific and served as a consultant to hundreds of schools and corporations including the Pentagon and 18 US Army bases in Europe and the Asian-Pacific. Her proposal: “Ending School Violence and Bullying” (SB1667) was signed into California law in 2002. Dr. Borba has appeared as an education and parent expert 140 times live on the TODAY show as well as Dateline, Dr. Phil, The View, NBC Nightly News, The Doctors, Dr. Oz, Anderson Cooper, Katie Couric, MSNBC, Fox & Friends, Countdown, Fox, The Early Show, CNN and others and featured in TIME, Washington Post, Newsweek, People, Boston Globe, U.S. News & World Report, New York Times. Speaking clients vary from the United States Military Academy, Sesame Street, Templeton Foundation, Learning and the Brain, Harvard University, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and a TEDx Talk entitled: “Empathy Is a Verb.” Her 24 books are translated into 18 languages including Nobody Likes Me, No More Misbehavin’, Don’t Give Me that Attitude!, Building Moral Intelligence, 12 Simple Secrets Real Moms Know, Parents Do Make A Difference, The Big Book of Parenting Solutions, End Peer Cruelty, Build Empathy, and UnSelfie: Why Empathetic Kids Succeed In Our All-About Me World. And served as World Goodwill Ambassador for M.I.T.’s One Laptop per Child project. She had a private practice with children with learning and emotional disabilities She received a Doctorate in Educational Psychology and Counseling from the University of San Francisco, an M.A. in Learning Disabilities and B.A. from the University of Santa Clara, and a Life Teaching Credential from San Jose State University.



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Michele Borba, Ed.D., is a globally recognized educational psychologist and an expert in character development and bullying prevention whose aim is to strengthen children's empathy and resilience and break the cycle of youth violence. She has delivered keynotes and workshops to over 1 million participants and has authored 24 books translated into 14 languages. Dr. Borba is an NBC contributor with frequent appearances on the *Today* show as well as on *Dateline*, *Anderson Cooper*, *Dr. Phil*, *Dr. Oz*, *The View*, *NBC Nightly News*, *CNN*, and others. She is an in-demand motivational speaker and former classroom teacher.

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