

Concept and Structure of Empathy

Assessing students level of empathy is best achieved by recognising that empathy is best understood as constituted of two dimensions:

1. **cognitive empathy**, is the ability to understand other's feelings and is a cognitive process in which a student mentally constructs the mental state of another.
2. **affective empathy**, is the tendency to have an emotional response to the affective state of another

The Basic Empathy Self-assessment report (BES)

Children are asked to complete the table below. This could be carried out in a group with the teacher or individually. Additional versions are translated into German, Slovenian and Italian and later back translated. The Basic Empathy Self-assessment report comprises a total of 20 statements that measure both cognitive and affective empathy. Children are required to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with each statement using a five-point Likert scale. Responses on cognitive and affective empathy scales are calculated by dividing the total score by the number of responded items included in each scale. This scoring strategy is suitable for managing answered items in the questionnaire

The Basic Empathy Teacher-assessment report (BET)

The Teacher assessment of children are taken from the BES and worded in third person, while including the original statements. For example, 'I find it hard to know when other children are frightened' is changed to: 'S/he finds it hard to know when other children are frightened' Teachers are required to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement using a Likert-type scale. An additional level of "Not Applicable" is provided so that teachers can indicate whether they were unable to observe the child's specific behaviour. Responses for the affective and cognitive scales are calculated in the same way.

The use of two information sources is necessary to assess both teachers' and students' perceptions so as to offer useful information for teachers to determine how to proceed, which interventions might best address specific issues while providing formative assessment data with which to monitor progress.

By using self-report questionnaires, we should be aware that some students may have expressing how they or another person feel. This could be especially true for younger children, who are still developing cognitive and verbal abilities can make the task of reporting on internal states difficult. In order to gain a more accurate measurement, a multi-informant or triangulated approach has been recommended. In this respect, parents could constitute a helpful supplementary source of information about their children's empathic behaviour.

	Affective Scale The tendency to have an emotional response to the affective state of another	Cognitive Scale the ability to understand other's feelings and is a cognitive process in which a student mentally constructs the mental state of another	Five-point Likert Scale				
			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	My teachers' or classmates' emotions affect me						
2	After being with a classmate or teacher who is sad, I feel sad						
3	I understand my family and friends' happiness when they have done well						
4	I can easily describe my emotions and how I feel to others						
5	I get easily involved in other people's feelings						
6	I find it hard to know when other children are frightened						
7	I become sad when I see other people crying						
8	Other people's feelings bother me						
9	When someone is feeling 'down' I try to help them						
10	I can work out when others are scared						
11	I become sad when watching sad things on TV or in films						
12	I can understand how people feel even before they tell me						
13	Seeing a person who has become angry has an effect on me						
14	I can work out when people are cheerful						
15	I feel scared when I am with friends or relatives who are afraid						
16	I can realise when either of my parents are angry						
17	I get involved with my family's or friend's feelings						
18	I don't feel anything when my family or friends are unhappy						
19	I find it difficult to recognise my friends and family's feelings						
20	I have trouble working out when other members of my family are happy						

To assess the effectiveness of the methodology as outlined in the E4C Toolkit, it is necessary to collect additional data regarding each student's social skills and disruptive behaviour. This should be reported by teachers using social skills and aggression scales taken from a version of Behaviour Assessment System for Children (BASC). This scale provides a measure of the frequency, ranging from 1 (never) to 4 (almost always), with which children are viewed to successfully interact with classmates and teachers in the contexts of the school (social skills), and the extent to which children show some tendencies to act in a hostile manner (verbally or physically) that threatens others (aggression). A composite score of social skills and aggression was formed respectively by standardizing and averaging the scores provided by parents and teachers.

FREQUENCY SCORES FOR BASC.

1. Never
2. Hardly ever
3. Sometimes
4. Usually
5. Almost always

PROBLEM BEHAVIOUR SCALES

1. Hyperactivity and impulsivity
2. Verbal and physical aggression
3. Excessive worry, fears and phobias, self-deprecation and nervousness
4. Dysphoric mood, suicidal ideas, withdrawal from others and self-reproach
5. Oversensitivity to, complaints about, or over reporting of minor physical problems
6. Tendency to act in odd ways
7. Tendency to avoid social interaction and to lack interest in social interaction
8. Easily distracted and inattentive

ADAPTIVE BEHAVIOUR SCALES

9. Lack of flexibility in changes to routines, shifting from one task to another, and sharing with other children
10. Poor interpersonal skills
11. Cautious behaviour, difficulty doing simple daily tasks, and organisation
12. Low communication abilities

Empathy for Children Toolkit Strategies

The BES, BET and BASC assessment tools provide us with a focus for implementing strategies from the toolkit which lend themselves to online teaching. These strategies should be taken from each of the five essential aspects and their effectiveness assessed in line with the assessment tools' criteria.

A third and final survey may be required to assess students' perceptions of the 12 outcomes as outlined in the Toolkit.

'With this toolkit, school teachers will be equipped to meet students with empathy to understand that emotional intelligence is a set of essential skills for effective learning and effective performance for all students in their school, family, community, home life, and all areas involving human interaction. More specifically, it means that teachers and students can benefit greatly as measured in the following way:'

1. **Joy** - when everyone feels welcome
2. **Compassion** - when everyone shows care and kindness to each other
3. **Participation** - when everyone contributes and takes part in the community
4. **Cohesion** - when fewer conflicts arise
5. **Tranquillity** - when everyone can better find an inner and outer balance.
6. **Patience** - when everyone understands the motivations of others' actions
7. **Concentration** - when not everyone has to struggle with insecurity and unrest
8. **Independence** - when everyone contributes and participates in the teaching
9. **Self-regulation** - when everyone recognises emotional signals
10. **Respect** - when everyone understands that everyone is equal
11. **Greater academic benefit** - when the focus is only on learning
12. **Happiness** - when professionalism and well-being go hand in hand

Activities which could be adjusted so as to be carried out online

The main focus for improving empathy during the lockdown period should be on those aspects of the 5 essentials which improve students understanding of feelings, their reasons for actions and the language required to express needs. Teachers should approach the project through the lens of needs-based communication. This will enable students to make meaningful connections between their feelings and actions and those of others.

Essential 1

Motivation: Your Motivation Leads the Way

E1 My Purpose

E2 Opening the Heart

E4 Diaphragmatic Breathing

E5 Lead by Example (adjusted) and E3 Let Your Motivation Guide You

This could be replaced with 'Non-violent Communication' strategies which lend themselves to online teaching while achieving the aims of improving each student's emotional literacy while improving their ability to resolve conflict. The students will learn to identify their behaviour and feelings in terms on unmet needs as described in E3

E5 Sitting Body Scan

E6 Movement Sitting and Breathing

E7 How Am I Doing?

Essential 2

Relationship: There is Nothing Without a Good Relation

E1 Let Your Students Know that You See Them

This activity should be linked to 'Eco-maps' so as to help students understand the place within the class dynamic.

E2 Let Students Inside Your World

This could involve an online tour of the teacher's home.

E3 Class Time

E4 Teamwork

E5 A Tree of Hearts

This could be carried out using digital tools.

E6 Are We Friends or Classmates?

This might work with the use of break-out rooms.

This activity should be linked to 'Eco-maps' so as to help students understand the place within the class dynamic.

Essential 3

Chaos Versus Harmony

E1 Morning Routines

Lesson opener routines

E2 Class Rules

E3 We are the Ones, Who...

E5 PYT-Button

This could be done using an audio signal

E6 The Cognitive Diamond

Essential 4

Creating a Safe Atmosphere

E2 Who Inspires

E3 All Emotions are Equally Valid

This could take place in break-out rooms and related to 'Non-violent Communication'.

E5 Body Language

This activity is designed for teachers but could be used with students and related to 'Non-violent Communication'.

Essential 5

A Good Support System Fosters Empathy

E1 Heart

E2 Breath

E3 Better and Worse

This activity could be linked to 'Non-violent Communication'.

E4 How is it Going?

This activity could be linked to 'Non-violent Communication'.

E6 How Parents Can Support Their Child at Home

E7 Parent-meetings

E8 Personal Letters

Parents could complete a version of the Basic Empathy Teacher-assessment report (BET)

E10 Joint Birthdays

Could be celebrated online

Extra exercises:

Sing, Sing, Sing

Connecting to the Heart

A Secret Friend

In Our Class, We...

This activity could relate to a survey based on Iben Sandahl's 12 outcomes.

Our Dream Room

This creative task could be carried out at home.

Role-play

12 Outcomes of Implementing the E4C Toolkit Methodology	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Joy					
I feel welcome at school					
I feel proud of my school					
I feel safe in the classroom					
Compassion					
My classmate shows care and kindness to each other					
I feel that I belong to a group of friends					
Classmates help each other when they have problems					
Participation					
My teacher and classmates work well together on tasks					
We work in groups during lessons					
I like to help improve my school and classroom environment					
Cohesion					
There are not many arguments or fights in school					
Arguments are settled with agreement and understanding					
Teachers do not get angry when students have arguments					
Tranquillity					
I can concentrate in lessons					
I feel calm and relaxed in class					
Teachers do not shout or show anger to students					
Patience					
There is at least one adult that I can talk to when I have problems					
I am comfortable asking my teachers for help					
Teachers take time to help me in lessons when I don't understand what is required of me					
Independence					
I am allowed to express my own ideas					
I am given opportunities to try new things					
I feel that I am noticed by the teacher					
Self-regulation					
I can recognise my own negative emotions					
I have ways of calming down or thinking things through before reacting to negative feelings					
I find it easy to express my feeling to others without getting angry or upset					
Respect					
Classmates are treated as equals in the class					
Students are not made fun of for having different views or opinions					
Teachers and classmates are polite and courteous to each other					

Greater academic benefit					
I want to do well in my lessons and improve my grades					
I complete the homework that is given to me					
I like to learn new things even when the lessons are difficult					