

How Can We Develop Empathy?

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Introduction and Background

As I look back, I remember the importance of empathy and collaboration through music. Music can affect the emotions people feel and understand, and from there we get our reconciliation, our healing, our development of empathy, our awareness, and our unity. Empathy and collaboration go hand-in-hand in guiding others towards unity and agendas whether it's to celebrate your nationality, cause war and violence, or even bridge between conflicting groups. In this project, these two concepts are the main component for my goals and objectives.

In my lessons, I have noticed that there were a few times where I could have given more freedom for creativity and critical thinking to my students and that there is more than one way to approach it. This time, I am connecting the activity into my objectives and guiding them through discussions and scaffolding. I also am including more engagement in discussion and interaction between students so that they are able to build connections with each other. Music through collaboration is about responding to each other, and as much as I would like to lead them, what's more important is for them is to respond to each other and listen to how we each interpret the music.

When it comes to music, it has a way of creating peace between groups, and unifying them. Speaking of peace, music has long since been used for activism and social movements in concepts such as the promotion of nonviolence. Despite being in conflict, opposing groups attack each other yet feel the same emotions and experiences. It could be said that if they were under different circumstances or identified each other as a brother or sister, then their treatment of each other and the values that they held from their homeland would be different. This is where

awareness and understanding come to play as it is essential in letting people know that their view of the world is narrow minded and that these people are human also, and then you start to think, I may not agree with them, but perhaps there are other methods to achieve peace other than the cruel violence and hatred that we have for each other. It's not healthy, and I wouldn't expect others to believe otherwise.

As aforementioned, if they were to unite under a different and bigger umbrella identity, could they see the similarities they have with opposing groups and possibly find fault in themselves as well through the biases we have been told and believe in. Through some personal reflection, I thought about how I could apply this to my own lesson. I decided to allow students to express their concerns whether it's personal, or school related, maybe it's their relationships or stress from work that concerns them. Nonetheless, through music can we grasp the concept of awareness and then think about where we go from there in the healing, the bonding, and the shared experiences. Not only is music making creative, but it's very expressive in our individuality and freedom.

Narrative

This workshop focuses on the aspect of peace building through creating empathy for all peoples and cultures. People tend to have a strong reaction to music where they are affected by emotions. It is intended for grade 9 because this is when they don't really know who they are and how to make new friends beyond their social group. In this lesson plan, I have two objectives. The first objective involves becoming aware and understanding of other cultures, or other people in what challenges they face. We might find differences, but we might also find many similarities with each other. We feel similar emotions, similar experiences, and similar origins. In order to gain more understanding, people must be less prone to judge others and disassociate themselves with

others who are different from them. My second objective is to unify them which music has been known to do exceedingly well. The desired outcome of this project is to unify them under a larger umbrella identity so that we can treat everyone with respect, create a safe space, celebrate diversity, and experience the warmth of inclusion.

Timetable

Time/Day	Workshop	Description	Why?
10 minutes (Day 1)	Opening	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) I start off introducing myself and ask the audience to use anything available to them or use their hand to hit any surface that we can use as percussion. 2) Through call and response, students copy my rhythm when I drum on the table. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes listening • Promotes attentiveness • Establishes me as the person they should be focusing on.

Time/Day	Workshop	Description	Why?
20 minutes (Day 1)	Opening Activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Students break into groups and go in a circle, where someone new becomes leader and decides what everyone has to do using nonverbal cues. 2) Next, in the same groups, person A sitting next to the leader has to respond to the leader by creating a variation of the original, and then the person B sitting adjacent to person A creates a variation of that. 3) Once everyone has gone in a circle, students come up with a final product, 4) Then, we can share the difference between the final product and initial rhythm to other groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes Leadership • Engagement through call and response • Emphasizes on communication through awareness • It's very individually based on the creativity of each student and combines their work into a final product • Improves collaboration

Time/Day	Workshop	Description	Why?
30 minutes (Day 2)	Acrostic Activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) I ask the audience what is peace to them? I give them some time to discuss with someone next to them. In their same groups, they are tasked to create acronyms for the word peace that relate well on the subject. Also, included in the PowerPoint is my example to be used for reference only. 2) In groups, share the acrostic activity with the class and have discussions about the differences and similarities of our ideas. 3) Consolidate our ideas into one big box written on the whiteboard and draw what they think about peace or symbolizes peace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduces the main topic of this project, peace • Students get to share their interpretation and ideas of peace • Requires cooperation • Builds values • Encourages discussion

Time/Day	Workshop	Description	Why?
10 minutes (Day 3)	Exploring Examples of Conflict	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) We explore video and audio examples from history and in modern times about groups in conflict with each other. Students learn about the hardships of both groups and how music was utilized in transforming and unifying others. 2) Show examples of how music is empowering, healing, and brings forth reconciliation between opposing groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaches history • Brings awareness to conflict both in the past and present • Sets up for next activity

Time/Day	Workshop	Description	Why?
20 minutes (Day 3)	Poster Activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Students plan to address any conflict or topic of concern in their same groups from yesterday, and create a poster to be hung on my walls when they are done. 2) The poster addresses issues of today or in school, and provide example or possibilities in how we could use music to resolve conflict through nonviolent communication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn how to research and use background knowledge • Engages students in collaboration and critical thinking to resolve conflict

Time/Day	Workshop	Description	Why?
30 minutes (Day 4)	Song Creation	1) In the same groups, students start to plan in creating a song based on the poster that they made prior. They can use any instrument or even garage band/band labs. There are no limits on the genre, or instrumental devices. However, the song has to be 5 minutes or less. I encourage them to meet outside of class if they need to finish it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes Creativity and musical experiences • Encourages collaboration

Time/Day	Workshop	Description	Why?
30 minutes (Day 5)	Presentation and Reflection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Students share with the class their songs. 2) After sharing, students are given time to write a reflection on what they liked about their project and what challenges they faced along the way. What would they keep and change the next time they create music. At the summary, they reflect on what liberties they took to demonstrate collaboration, respect, empathy, and awareness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relates activities from this lesson to objective • Promotes Personal Reflection

Activities at School and at Home

Opening Drum Activity:

[Version 1]

- 1) Find a group of 3+
- 2) Find any instrument available, any object with a physical surface, and a pencil or stick to create rhythm
- 3) Sit with your groups
- 4) Have person A play a solo,

- 5) Person B listens to Person A, and creates a variation of Person A's solo which must include elements of both A and B
- 6) Person C does the same thing with person B, and so on to find a finish product
- 7) You may go in a circle more than once, and as many as you need
- 8) Objects at home - pan, sticks from trees, utensils, table, and any flat surface
- 9) Example of drumming without instruments:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xWQuO3U3VaE>

[Version 2]

- 1) Instead of creating variation of solos, you can build upon each part
- 2) It starts out with person A drumming one measure, and then person B makes another measure, and so on
- 3) In the end, after a rotation or two, you can combine each of your measures into a finished product to present to others
- 4) In this way, you are continuing building upon the previous rhythm instead of combining elements like in Version 1

Acrostic:

- 1) Take out a piece of paper and pencil
- 2) Take our theme, PEACE, and write out an acrostic poem involving peace
- 3) Use the letters from the theme as a starting point of the sentence or phrase
- 4) Example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wNPDt-BSOs>

Research Poster:

- 1) Take out a poster or piece of paper
- 2) Write your names and title at the top of the poster

- 3) Choose a conflict in history or today where music could be used to end conflict and bring healing
- 4) Research these areas through books and the internet. Be ready to present in a way that is understandable and easy to connect.
- 5) Add artwork and color to your product to make it your own
- 6) Be prepared to explain how they relate to your topic
- 7) How to make a Research Poster: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AwMFhyH7_5g

Song Creation :

- 1) Rules - The song is 5 minutes or less and is not limited to any instrument or lyrics. In your reflections, write down what creative ideas you added in your song that connects to the theme.
- 2) You can use the table or any hard surface for percussion and everyone has a singing voice
- 3) The song has to relate to Peace
- 4) You can use home instruments from the drum activity, write your own lyrics and sing, use the music apps like Band Lab or MuseScore to create music electronically, and any recording device like your phone
- 5) Demonstration of teaching structure of songs in the classroom:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZfUkq1b07A>

Throughout this entire lesson and its activities, remember to keep in mind of the 5 principles of Musicians Without Borders (MWB, <http://mwb.ngo>), in which we strive to keep our lessons aligned with these principles to guide you as you attempt to try these at home, and have a sense of reason and direction.

Principles:

- **SAFETY:** This environment is a safe space for everyone to discuss whatever they want and make their voices count towards our sharing of ideas.
- **EQUALITY:** Everyone is treated with respect and dignity. We share our ideas and hear everyone out. We make music together and it's not one-sided.
- **INCLUSION:** Everyone is invited to join in no matter how different you may feel. In fact, most of this project heavily involves inclusion.
- **CREATIVITY:** Everyone has a chance to share their creative ideas as it's all necessary to complete most of the activities. We combine their individual works into their group so that they can share their ownership of music.
- **QUALITY:** Our job is to make sure we make quality time in discussion and music making. We produce quality work for all the effort we put in in our groups.

In this lesson, we created a safe environment where everyone is treated equally and has a voice in their activities as demonstrated with solos. It forces people to participate and share ideas which both challenges them and encourages inclusion. Through our songwriting and research posters, students express their creative ideas, and their ability to create quality work. Most of all, everyone gets to spend quality time with each other.

Conclusion

Many of the students are encouraged to participate and blend our ideas to create a finished musical performance. It strongly focuses on collaboration through unifying elements and the sharing of uniquely individual ideas. It matches with our theme in this lesson, which is PEACE, in regards to unifying each other through a larger umbrella identity. This is why I had them stay in their groups, as it is a bonding experience that is both engaging, creative, and fun. I

assure you that this would be a fun activity to do at home; it's simple and easy to replicate. Start spreading the love.

References

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Musicians Without Borders is a leader in using music for peacebuilding and social change. Musicians Without Borders. (n.d.). Retrieved July 5, 2022, <http://mwb.ngo>