Developing Empathy and Understanding Through World Music, Grades K-12

Developed by Fresno County Superintendent of Schools and San Diego County Office of Education

Section: **2**

Section Title: **Empathy and the Elements of Music**

A Professional Learning Module Designed for: **K-12 General Classroom Teachers & Single Subject Music Teachers**

CONTENT OUTLINE

Purpose:

To give an overview of empathy and connect empathy to the elements of music used throughout the units of instruction.

Time: 60 minutes

Grouping: Whole Group

Standards:

California Visual and Performing Arts Standards linked throughout

Slides: 14-20

Handouts:

Materials:

Slide presentation, audio capabilities, basic set of classroom instruments, book Good News, Bad News by Jeff Mack

Media Resources:

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PROCESS/ACTIVITY

1. Ask participants how they define the term empathy and have them share their definition with an elbow partner.
2. Share the Sesame Street Empathy video to help clarify empathy. (video link in slide)
3. After the video share the following:
    a. As Murray and Mark shared with us "Empathy is when you're able to **understand and care about** how someone else is feeling."
    b. Mark tells Murray about the time he lost his favorite teddy bear? Have you ever lost something? How did it make you feel?
    c. If you have never lost anything before, do you know someone who has lost something? How did they feel?
    d. Share your story with your elbow partner.
    e. Were you able to imagine how your partner was feeling when they told you their story?
4. You may be asking yourself "What does empathy have to do with music?"
    a. Educators already use many of the key elements for increasing empathy through music-making in their classroom activities.
    b. Educators can intentionally design an environment of positive acceptance as well as opportunities for students to solve both musical and social problems together.
    c. Educators can explicitly teach and model empathy through
        - Selecting musical repertoire relating to the theme of empathy and understanding others
        - Ask students to compose songs with lyrics about empathy, kindness or compassion
        - Provide opportunities for students to share things that are important to them and discuss their reasoning with one another
    d. Helping children understand and respect similarities and differences can help them understand who they are in the context of family traditions, clothing, language, religion, the arts, etc.
5. Empathy encourages connections between people.
    a. Share Brené Brown's video about empathy (video link in slide)
    b. Ask participants to reflect on the following questions and share their responses with an elbow partner.
        - What about the video stood out to you?
        - Did you learn anything new from the video?
        - What challenged or reinforced the definition of empathy you shared at the start of this section?
6. It is now time to begin connecting the Elements of Music with Empathy through the process of creating a soundscape.
7. Share the book Good News, Bad News
8. Ask participants to respond to the following questions:

PROCESS/ACTIVITY

a. Do you remember when Mouse found the worm in the apple during the picnic? How did Mouse feel when he saw the worm? How do you know?
b. Has something like this ever happened to you before? How did you feel?
c. What did Rabbit do every time something bad happened to Mouse?
d. What changed when Mouse saw Rabbit crying? (Mouse shared good news with Rabbit after seeing his friend was sad.)
e. Mouse understood and cared about how Rabbit felt when he saw Rabbit crying. This is

9. Talk through what is needed for soundscape depicting the sounds of nature found in the book Good News, Bad News with attendees
   a. We are going to create a soundscape to accompany the book.
   b. What sounds found in nature are in the story?
      - Wind, rain (slow, heavy, stopping), bees, lightning/thunder, bear
   c. Think about the Timbre, Tempo, Beat, Rhythm, Dynamics, Pitch for each of these sounds.
      - Allow participants to experiment with body percussion, voice, instruments, or other "found" instruments in the room to find possible sound sources they could use.
10. Participants will now improvise a soundscape with a second reading of the book.
   a. Read the book aloud again while participants create the nature sounds (using body percussion, voice, instruments, or other "found" instruments in the room).
      - Everyone will be the wind
      - Everyone will be the rain (left to right to left)
      - Volunteer for the single bee
      - Small group of volunteers for the group of bees
      - Volunteer for the bear
      - 1-2 Volunteers for the lightning/thunder