

Overview

What This Questionnaire Measures

In the context of education, empathy allows students to relate to the perspectives and feelings of peers. Students who are empathic are socially- and self-aware, including understanding their strengths and weaknesses (Baron-Cohen, 2011; Brent & Millgate-Smith, 2008). Empathy is part of social and emotional learning, which has been shown to improve students' academic performance and lifelong learning (Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, & Walberg, 2004). Researchers found that empathy together with social responsibility were leading predictors of student enrollment in college and graduation (Sparkman, Maulding, & Roberts, 2012).

The Empathy Questionnaire is designed to measure a student's proficiency in the two essential components of empathy, which are:

1. Make efforts to understand others: their contexts, feelings, and behaviors.
2. Communicate your understanding of someone's personal situation.

How This Questionnaire Is Accessed

Teachers can launch questionnaires and view both individual and aggregate student results by visiting <http://ResearchCollaborationSurveys.org>, creating an account, and following the instructions provided on the website. This website is free and available to all educators. Once students have completed the questionnaires, teachers can see graphed results for individual students as well as in aggregate. Teachers can also download a raw data file in MS Excel.

How This Questionnaire Is Completed

Teachers make the questionnaire available to students by providing the URL to the survey site and a survey code. Students then enter the survey code and a student number assigned by the teacher. Students complete the questionnaire by self-rating items on a 5-point, Likert-type scale. This scale ranges from 1 (*Not very like me*) to 5 (*Very like me*). The results are automatically graphed for students and available to them once they complete the questionnaire. This enables them to immediately reflect on results.

The following example items represent each of the two essential components:

- *I try to see things from other people's points of view.* (Understand Others)
- *I say things like, "I can see why you feel that way."* (Communicate Understanding)

The items on the questionnaire are written at a seventh grade reading level, per the Flesch-Kincaid¹ readability score. Accommodations should be provided when appropriate and can include reading the items aloud, explaining the items, and having a scribe fill in the response option.

¹ Kincaid, J.P., Fishburne, R.P., Rogers, R.L., & Chissom, B.S. (1975). Derivation of new readability formulas (automated readability index, fog count, and flesch reading ease formula) for Navy enlisted personnel. Research Branch Report 8-75. Chief of Naval Technical Training: Naval Air Station Memphis.

How to Use the Results

Empathy Questionnaire results can be used by both teachers and students. To ease interpretation, results are displayed on a 100-point scale. These scores can be interpreted similar to grades (e.g., 70-79 is a C). Results by essential component support reflection on relative strengths and areas for improvement.

Students can use the questionnaire results to see how well they understand the contexts, feelings, and perspectives of others. They can use their individual results to strengthen that awareness and communicate their understanding to others.

Teachers can enhance their instructional practices by helping their students explore other roles and perspectives, and then reinforcing the importance of empathy. After combining this targeted instruction with guided practice and independent practice, teachers can continually re-administer the Empathy Questionnaire and alter their instruction accordingly. This allows teachers to engage in a process of data-driven decision making in order to increase their students' fundamental ability to understand others and communicate that understanding. Numerous resources for teaching empathy are available at <http://CCCFramework.org/Resources.html>.

Technical Information

The Empathy Questionnaire was developed in 2015 by Research Collaboration (<http://ResearchCollaboration.org>). An extensive review of related research resulted in the identification of two components that are essential for successfully applying empathy. Following this literature review, it was determined that empathy requires individuals to understand the contexts, feelings, and perspectives of others, and then communicate that understanding.

The questionnaire is currently being beta-tested with high school and middle school students.

Empathy Questionnaire

Please **CHECK ONE** response that best describes you. Be honest, since the information will be used to help you in school and also help you become more prepared for college and careers. There are no right or wrong answers!

Student ID _____

Date _____

	Not very like me → Very like me				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. I try to see things from other people's points of view.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. When I don't understand someone's point of view, I ask questions to learn more.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. When I disagree with others, it's hard for me to understand their perspective.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I consider people's circumstances when I'm talking with them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I try to imagine how I would feel in someone else's situation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. When someone is upset, I try to remember a time when I felt the same way.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. When I'm reading a book or watching a movie, I think about how I would react if I was one of the characters.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Sometimes I wonder what it would feel like to be in my parents' situation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. When a friend is upset, I try to show them that I understand how they feel.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I say things like "I can see why you feel that way."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. I've been known to say "You are wrong" when someone is sharing their opinion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. When a friend or family member is sad, my actions let them know I understand (like a hug or a pat on the back).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. I say things like "Something like that happened to me once, I understand how you feel."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. I've told my friends things like, "You shouldn't be upset about that" or "Stop feeling that way."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. When I know one of my friends is upset, I try to talk to them about it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>