

Acrostic poem — Compassion

EXPLANATION:

Understanding and feeling compassion is essential for healthy relationships and contributes to reducing incidences of bullying in classrooms. Exploring what compassion means through creating acrostic poems will provide students the opportunities to explore a word and its meaning.

YEAR LEVELS: Years 4–6

STUDENT GROUPING: Group discussion and individual creations

ACTIVITY LENGTH: 40–60 mins

LINK TO CURRICULUM:

English: Sequence of content F-6

Strand: Literature

Language devices in literary texts, including figurative language — Language devices that authors use and how these creative meanings and effects in literary texts, especially devices in poetry

Learning Continuum of Personal and Social Capability

Social awareness

This element involves students recognising others' feelings and knowing how and when to assist others.

Students learn to show respect for and understand others' perspectives, emotional states and needs. They learn to participate in positive, safe and respectful relationships, defining and accepting individual and group roles and responsibilities. Students gain an understanding of the role of advocacy in contemporary society and build their capacity to critique societal constructs and forms of discrimination, such as racism and sexism. In developing and acting with personal and social capability, students:

- appreciate diverse perspectives
- contribute to civil society
- understand relationships.

Understand relationships

- describe factors that contribute to positive relationships, including with people at school and in their community
- identify the differences between positive and negative relationships and ways of managing these.

SCOPE OF TASK:

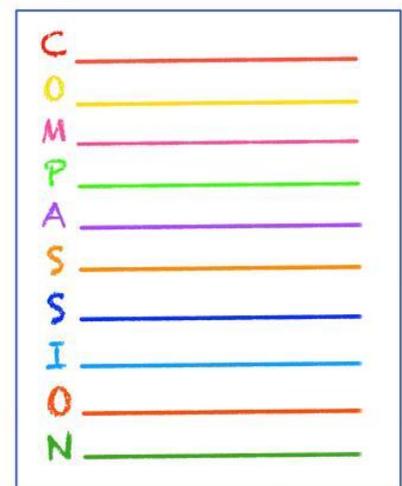
Department of Education and Training (2015) defines bullying as an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. Relationships Australia (March 2018) state that almost 25% of school students in Australia experience bullying at some stage during their school years.

Bullying can be physical (kicking, hitting, punching, hurting), verbal (teasing, derogatory remarks, name calling), social (excluding, embarrassing others in public, spreading untruths and rumours) and cyberbullying (using technology to degenerate others). Building students' understanding and practise of compassionate behaviours will support more empathetic behaviours.

1. Explore with the students the meaning of compassion. Ask students questions to elicit their understanding:
 - What is compassion?
 - What words also mean compassion? Examples might include empathy, kindness, supportive, understanding, fairness, care, consideration
 - Why is compassion important?

If students have limited understanding, ask them to find definitions in dictionaries and on the internet.

2. Record students' ideas and findings on the white board or make a word wall to store the associated vocabulary. This step in the activity will assist the students with words they can choose for their poems.
3. Explain to the students that they are going to make acrostic poems about compassion demonstrating all the ideas they have about compassion.
4. Provide instructions on how to make an acrostic poem (this detail will be dependent on the students' prior knowledge).
 - Write your word down vertically usually using capital letters
 - Brainstorm words or phrases that describe compassion
 - All lines of the poem should relate to compassion
 - Write the brainstormed words or phrases on the lines that begin with the same letters
 - Remember acrostics don't need to rhyme!
5. Once students have completed their acrostic poems, make time for students to share their poems with the group.



6. Make links with behaviours that compassion might reduce (for example bullying, teasing etc).
 - Ask the students why compassion is important in their classroom and the community.
7. Acrostic poems can be displayed on the classroom walls.
8. Share the activity in messages and newsletters to caregivers/parents who can reinforce ideas of compassion in the home environment.

RESOURCES:

- Poster paper
- Colourful pens
- Or alternatively the students can create their poems on computers.

Department of Education and Training. (2015). A review of literature (2010–2014) on student bullying by Australia's Safe and Supportive School Communities Working Group.
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