LENS Project
Empathy Monologues

Ages All Ages, some writing required

LENS Skill Empathy

Why? When I explore a past situation from multiple perspectives, I can build empathy skills to call upon when I experience a challenging situation in the future.

Materials Empathy Monologue Structure worksheet
Perspectives worksheet (if printing, print the perspectives worksheet back-to-back)
Writing utensils
Blank paper

Vocabulary Monologue: a speech presented by a single character, often to express their inner thoughts aloud, though sometimes also to directly address another character or the audience.
Tableau: a frozen stage picture or pose.

Summary
In this writing activity, participants will identify a challenging situation they have experienced and explore it from two perspectives, their own unique perspective and the perspective of the other person involved. By processing through the feelings, emotions, and points of view of both sides of the situation, participants can develop Empathy for the perspective of another person. Using physical tableau and a structured monologue, this process becomes an artistic experience!

Directions
1.) Establish Understanding
Take some time to discuss perspective and what it means. How do we consider another person’s point of view, and what exactly does that mean? Why is it important to take someone else’s feelings into account?

2.) Writing from Your Perspective
Using the worksheet provided or a separate piece of paper, have everyone think of a challenging situation or experience from their past which involved another person. Each person will reflect on how they view that situation (their own perspective). Make sure everyone knows they will be working with this situation in depth and sharing about it, so they should choose a situation they are comfortable talking about and in which they can also consider the other person’s perspective. Each person should outline the events of the situation from their own perspective and identify 3 emotions they felt at the time.

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3.) **The Other Perspective**
Next, on the other side of the worksheet or the back of the paper, everyone should consider that same situation from the other person’s perspective. Challenge everyone to let go of their own viewpoint and think about the other person’s position. How might the other person have felt? How might they have seen the situation differently? WHY might they see it differently? Ask everyone to write about the other person’s point of view and identify 3 emotions the other person may have felt in the same situation.

4.) **Creating Tableaux**
In their own open space, ask everyone to create a statue (“tableau” or frozen stage picture) to go with each of the emotions in each perspective - 6 statues total. Everyone can draw a picture of their statue or describe it on their worksheet in the space provided or on their own paper. Have everyone practice so these statues are strong, clear, and repeatable.

5.) **Tableaux Sharing**
Finally, everyone will share their 6 statues or tableaux with the group, 3 from their own perspective and 3 from the other person’s point of view. Don’t explain the situation or context just yet. Before sharing, make sure everyone agrees to honor each other’s work, keeping each other’s experiences safe, and appreciating everyone as fellow artists (or other statements of trust and safety). A safe space is where everyone feels comfortable working through challenging situations, with trust among participants.

6.) **Monologue Writing**
Everyone will now turn their thoughts into a monologue - a dramatic piece spoken by one person. The format provided is useful for all ages, but older students may choose to create their own format.

**Monologue structure (see worksheet)**
*(use sentence format for lines longer than one word)*

1 word from my perspective:
3 words from my perspective:
5 words from my perspective:
7 words from my perspective:

Scripted Line: "But then I thought about your perspective"

7 words from the other person’s perspective:
5 words from the other person’s perspective:
3 words from the other person’s perspective:
1 word from the other person’s perspective:

1 conclusion sentence of any length:
7.) Monologue Rehearsal and Sharing
After the monologues have been written the emotion statues or tableaux will be added. Working with a partner, each person will decide if they want to read their own monologue while their partner performs the related emotion statues, or if they want to perform their own statues while their partner reads the monologue. Give everyone ample rehearsal time with their partner to either teach the emotion statues or walk them through the monologue. Once everyone has practiced, the partners will share their own work and their partner’s work.

Additional tips to ensure the sharing time is successful:
- Make sure to speak loudly and clearly if you are reading the monologue.
- Rehearse the timing of each of the emotion statues/tableaux along with the monologue and create smooth transitions.
- Audience members should be attentive and respectful toward the performers.
- Be sure to honor and celebrate each pair, as this is vulnerable work.

8.) Reflect
Discuss or write your thoughts about the following reflection questions.
- What was it like exploring the situation from the other person’s perspective?
- What was it like embodying the emotions of both perspectives? Were any of the emotions at odds with each other?
- How did it feel to share what you created with your partner?
- How did it feel watching/listening to your partner help you share your work?
- What was it like helping your partner share their work?

Other ways to Play:
1. Consider working on this activity with a partner virtually, or performing for friends and/or family members virtually.
2. Try using different writing structures – limit or expand the amount of space you have to express your thoughts.
3. Add additional tableaux, or meld your tableaux/statues into movement and a dance to express the emotions.
Empathy Monologue Worksheet

*Use sentence format for lines longer than one word*

*Emotion statues/tableaux will be performed simultaneously as their corresponding perspective are spoken aloud*

1 word from my perspective: ______________________________________________________

3 words from my perspective: ____________________________________________________

5 words from my perspective: ____________________________________________________

7 words from my perspective: ____________________________________________________

**Scripted Line:** "But then I thought about your perspective"

7 words from the other person’s perspective: _______________________________________

5 words from the other person’s perspective: _______________________________________

3 words from the other person’s perspective: _______________________________________

1 word from the other person’s perspective: _______________________________________

1 conclusion sentence of any length: _______________________________________________

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My Perspective: ____________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

Emotion 1: ____________
(Draw or describe emotion statue below.)

Emotion 2: ____________
(Draw or describe emotion statue below.)

Emotion 3: ____________
(Draw or describe emotion statue below.)
**The Other Person’s Perspective:**

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

**Emotion 1:** ____________

(Draw or describe emotion statue below.)

**Emotion 2:** ________________

(Draw or describe emotion statue below.)

**Emotion 3:** ____________

(Draw or describe emotion statue below.)

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