



Roots of Empathy

Racines de l'empathie

Roots of Empathy

2010 Feedback Report

Alberta

"Be nice to everyone and do not be a bully."

- Grade 3 Student, Edmonton

Our mission is to build caring, peaceful, and civil societies through the development of empathy in children and adults.



Alberta Feedback Summary Report: 2009-2010

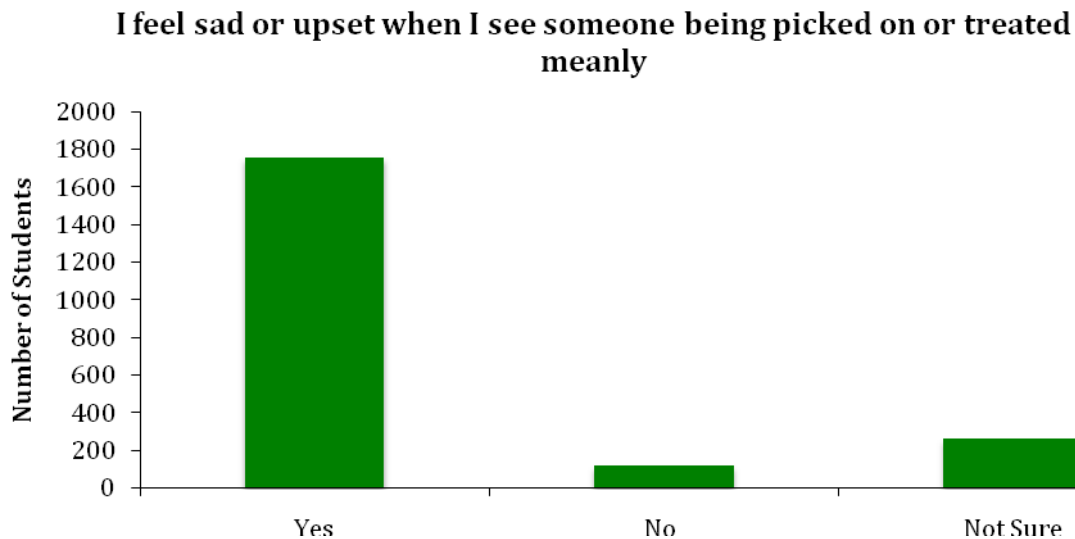
This report is a summary of the feedback data collected from students and teachers throughout Alberta for the 2009-2010 school year. Teachers were asked to provide their perceptions of any changes in behaviour in students who participated in the Roots of Empathy program. Unlike most school experiences, where students are asked to demonstrate what they know, Roots of Empathy invites metacognition. More specifically, students gained experience reflecting on what they learned in connection to the main goals of Roots of Empathy.

Goal #1: To Foster the Development of Empathy

The ability to take the perspective of another person (cognitive aspect of empathy) plays a key role in helping individuals resist aggressive behaviours by providing a buffer against antisocial and aggressive temptations. Empathy is regarded as one of the most desirable of personality traits due to its positive association with prosocial behaviours such as sharing, helping, and cooperating, and its crucial role in the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships.

Feedback Results: Students

- 83% of students reported feeling sad or upset when seeing someone being picked on or treated meanly



Feedback Results: Teachers

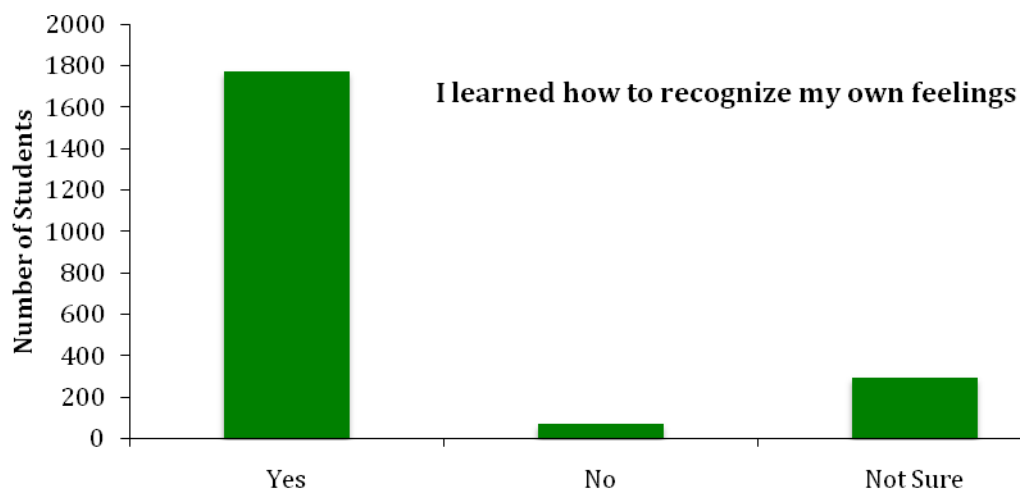
- 90% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of ROE, students are more empathic
- 86% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of ROE, students are more able to understand other people's points of view

Goal #2: To Develop Emotional Literacy

Emotional literacy, or social and emotional learning (SEL), includes developing the skills to recognize, manage, and express feelings. These skills are integral to the ability to regulate emotions. Children who can regulate their emotions are less likely to suffer from childhood psychological disorders, including anxiety and depression. Research also demonstrates that children with good SEL skills have better attitudes towards themselves and others, show more prosocial behaviours, and exhibit less aggression.

Feedback Results: Students

- 83% of students reported learning to recognize their own feelings
- 89% of students reported understanding how other people feel
- 96% of students reported learning that everybody has feelings



Feedback Results: Teachers

- 92% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of ROE, students talk about their feelings
- 93% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of ROE, students have an increased understanding of how others feel
- 93% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of ROE, students have increased their vocabulary of feeling words

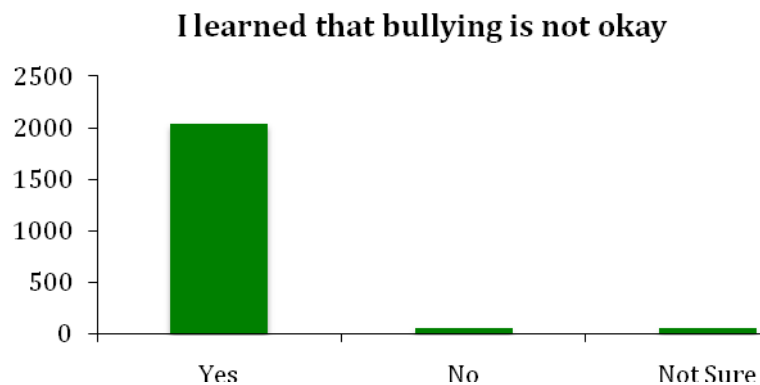
Goal #3: To Reduce Levels of Bullying and Aggression and Promote Children's Prosocial Behaviours

The presence of prosocial behaviours helps to promote positive development in children, improve the quality of their relationships, as well as the overall classroom atmosphere. Quality relationships and perceived social support greatly increase an individual's resilience and protect against negative and stressful experiences. Prosocial behaviour has also been linked to improved academic outcomes.

Aggressive children often have fewer cognitive, social, and emotional skills available to them and are therefore more likely to be rejected by other children, have deviant friends, and are less likely to get along with teachers. Children that display early aggressive behaviour are at highest risk for many negative outcomes, including depression, suicide attempts, alcohol and drug abuse, violent crimes, and neglectful and abusive parenting.

Feedback Results: Students

- 95% of students reported learning that it hurts other people's feelings when they are bullied
- 96% of students reported learning that bullying is not okay
- 93% of students reported learning that it is not okay to hurt someone's feelings just because they're feeling angry, sad, or scared



Feedback Results: Teachers

- 76% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of ROE, students are more supportive in resolving conflicts involving classmates
- 85% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of ROE, students showed more prosocial behaviour (e.g. sharing, helping, cooperating) by the end of the school year
- 84% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of ROE, students are more inclusive or accepting of others who are different from themselves (including culture, race, special needs, gender, etc...)

Goal #4: To Increase Knowledge of Human Development, Learning, and Infant Safety

Providing information about safe parenting can effectively increase parenting knowledge, increase an individual's confidence in their ability to parent, as well as prevent negative outcomes such as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, and Shaken Baby Syndrome.

Feedback Results: Students

- 96% of students reported learning that if a pregnant woman smokes or drinks, she can harm her baby
- 98% of students reported learning that it is dangerous to shake a baby

Goal #5: To Prepare Students for Responsible Citizenship and Responsive Parenting

Witnessing a caring parent-infant relationship as well as understanding how sensitive and responsive parenting in infancy and early childhood can protect against stress and negative influences will help to protect future generations and reduce vulnerability to future psychopathology.

Feedback Results: Students

- 90% of students reported learning babies' brains grow better when they are loved and cared for
- 93% of students reported learning that being a parent and caring for a baby is a lot of hard work

Additional Findings:

Curriculum Expectations

- 97% of teachers feel that the ROE program supports the school's curriculum

Program Enjoyment

- 85% of students reported thinking that other children would like to have ROE in their class
- 89% of teachers would like to have ROE in their class next year (10% were not sure)

When asked, “What can ROE teach the world?” students reported:

“That everything and everyone is important and everyone should be loved.”
- *Grade 4/5, Calgary*

“Never be mean to people just because their skin is darker than ours.”
- *Grade 5, St. Albert*

“I think ROE can teach the world love. xoxox”
- *Grade 3, Edmonton*

“That it is not ok to bully. People need love the same way babies need love!”
- *Grade 5, Fort Saskatchewan*

When asked about the impact of the program, teachers offered comments such as:

“ROE has brought understanding and acceptance into our classroom. That is something this class can take with them out into the community and to their family and for the rest of their lives.” - *Grade 4/5, Grande Prairie*

“An excellent program – Compliments our schools character education program – Supports social studies – Appreciate integration of great literature. Our Instructor does a wonderful job of facilitating and teaching the program.” - *Grade 1, Ponoka*

“I believe ROE is the single most important factor in creating an empathetic, caring environment in my classroom. Its impact is far-reaching and widespread for each student and their interactions with classmates and family. It helps to foster a climate of caring for and about others. This is the fourth year having ROE in my classroom. It is the most positive and popular program in the classroom. Children and parents are enthusiastic and supportive and continue to praise the program long after they leave grade 1.”
- *Grade 1, Kitscoty*

When asked about the impact of the program, Instructors offered comments such as:

“The children at this school are almost all newly-arrived, ESL families. Some are from war-torn areas and have been refugees. ROE gives these students a sense of hope, comfort and love. ROE gives these inner city kids a sense of connection and belonging as well as a literacy of emotions to use on dealing with some of the trauma they experienced prior to coming to Canada, and which they still encounter. I believe that ROE makes it easier for the school to adhere to and reinforce an anti-bullying strategy. Everyone who is touched by ROE is impacted positively.” - *Grade 1 & 2, Calgary*

“It makes the children more aware of their own feelings and the feelings of others – growing empathy – Empathy grows in the classroom which spills over to the whole school which spills over the whole community.” - *Grade 4, Spruce Grove*