



Roots of Empathy

Racines de l'empathie

Roots of Empathy
2010 Feedback Report
Manitoba

"It can eliminate bullying from the world if given the chance."

-Grade 6 Student, Winnipeg

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



Manitoba Feedback Summary Report: 2009-2010

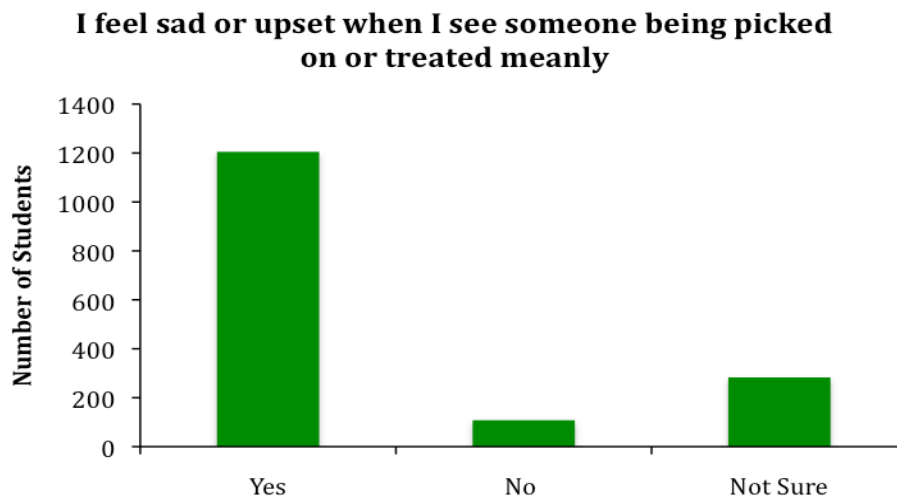
This report is a summary of the feedback data collected from students and teachers throughout Manitoba for the 2009-2010 school year. Teachers were asked to provide their perceptions of any changes in behaviour in students who participated in the Roots of Empathy program. Unlike most school experiences, 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

- 74% of students reported feeling sad or upset when seeing someone being picked on or treated meanly



Feedback Results: Teachers

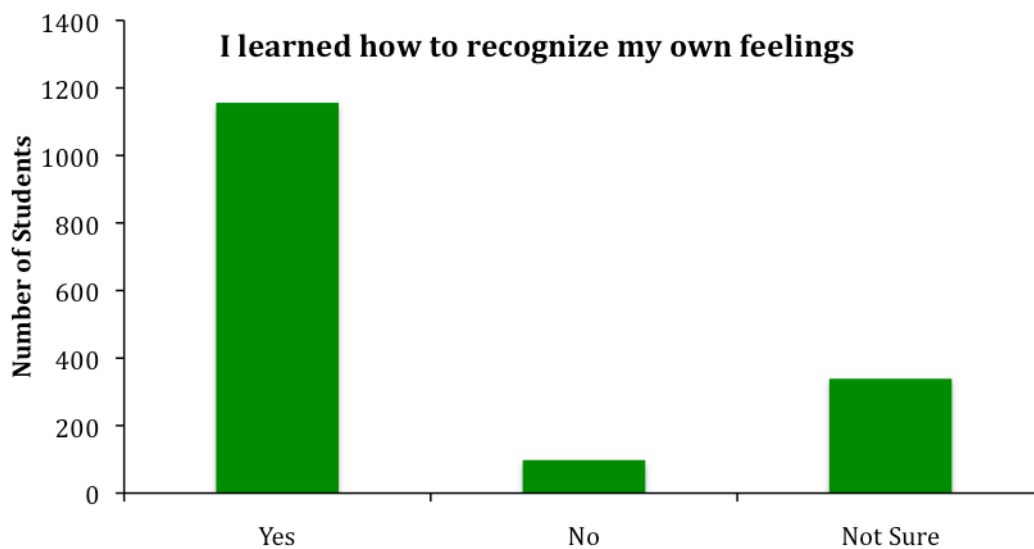
- 87% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of ROE, students are more empathic
- 81% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of ROE, students are more able to understand other people's points of view

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

- 71% of students reported learning to recognize their own feelings
- 82% of students reported understanding how other people feel
- 92% of students reported learning that everybody has feelings



Feedback Results: Teachers

- 90% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of ROE, students talk about their feelings
- 92% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of ROE, students have an increased understanding of how others feel
- 90% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of ROE, students have increased their vocabulary of feeling words

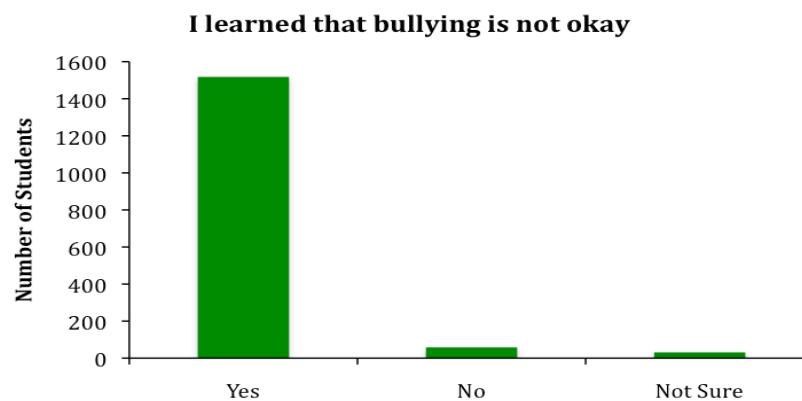
Goal #3: To Reduce Levels of Bullying and Aggression and Promote Children's Prosocial Behaviours

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

- 91% of students reported learning that it hurts other people's feelings when they are bullied
- 93% of students reported learning that bullying is not okay
- 83% of students reported learning that it is not okay to hurt someone's feelings just because I'm feeling angry, sad, or scared



Feedback Results: Teachers

- 80% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of ROE, students are more supportive in resolving conflicts involving classmates
- 89% 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
- 81% 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

- 94% of students reported learning that if a pregnant woman smokes or drinks, she can harm her baby
- 96% 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

- 84% of students reported learning babies' brains grow better when they are loved and cared for
- 89% 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

- 79% of students reported thinking that other children would like to have ROE in their class (16% were not sure)
- 92% of teachers would like to have ROE in their class next year (3% were not sure)

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

"ROE can teach the world that everybody has feelings and it's not their fault if there sensitive, or if something bad is happening in their lives it's not their fault either and you shouldn't make fun of them."

-Grade 8, Thompson

"That there isn't need for war/maltreatment because we all have feelings."

-Grade 5, Stonewall

"That no matter who you are and if you have disabilities you always deserve to be respected and you can't do everything but you can do something."

-Grade 4, La Broquerie

"That you should not be bullied at all ages!!!"

-Grade 5, Flin Flon

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

"This is the fifth year that I have had the pleasure of having ROE as an integral part of my program. Each year has had a profound impact on the learning (both academically and socially) of my students. It builds community, establishes social values and creates students that are independent, confident and respectful learners and citizens. I am so proud of their achievements!"

-Grade 1, Winnipeg

"The students are getting along better and bullying/teasing has decreased. Students have displayed empathy toward the baby and their classmates. Excellent program. [Our Instructor] is caring and enthusiastic!"

-Grade 8, Crosslake

"With a large class of 32 students all year it was amazing how I was able to go through an entire year with very few conflicts or major issues. ROE helped the students reduce the levels of bullying and aggression amongst themselves. Throughout the year we would refer to the topics discussed in ROE and that kept us focused. The students developed a great understanding of what empathy is and developed respect for one another. The students were always very interested and focused on the different ROE topics throughout the year. There were many wonderful discussions about their own emotions, feelings and the feelings of others. The discussions became very mature. The students now know about developmental milestones and got to witness a few with [the] baby. The students also got very good at observing and reading the cues of how the baby was feeling throughout the visits. I strongly recommend ROE program to any class. We truly enjoyed the program. We had a fabulous coach and a great teacher (baby)."

-Grade 4, Winnipeg

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

"The program has had a good impact on the students. I see empathy for others in the classroom and the playground. The children also love having the connection to babies in their community. Thank you for making a program that is a great teaching and learning tool for our school. The program teaches empathy through a fun learning experience."

-Grade 3, Flin Flon

"This program definitely creates an atmosphere where the children can feel "safe" with their emotions and feelings. Playground "incidents" can be dealt with on a more personal connection when you have been a ROE participant."

-Grade 4, Winnipeg

"I have witnessed the younger children using the information and skills we have taught them. I think they have a stronger sense of making others feel welcome and also included. If someone is sad, they go out of their way to help them feel better. They are more aware of caring for a baby, and safety issues."

-Kindergarten, Matheson Island