Supporting Student Success: Encouraging Empathy and Social-Emotional Learning

Dr. Kathy Perez
kperez@stmarys-ca.edu
Supporting Student Success: 
Encouraging Empathy and Social-Emotional Learning

Presented by: Dr Kathy Perez 
kperez@stmarys-ca.edu

The benefits of empathy in education include building positive classroom culture, strengthening community, and preparing students to be leaders in their own communities. Success does not happen by accident. What do you do to motivate your students to be the BEST they can be? We must teach, model, and practice the very skills that the world demands students master: confidence, perseverance, recognizing and controlling emotions, goal-setting, empathy, civility and building and nurturing relationships. Social and emotional learning is a powerful tool to make this happen. When students work together on project teams, they learn to collaborate, communicate, resolve conflicts and prepares them for success in the modern workplace.

Objectives and Outcomes: Participants will...
- Learn techniques to promote students' self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness and decision-making skills
- Discover activities and techniques that can be used immediately in your classroom to improve students' attitudes and beliefs about self, others, and school
- Empower students with strategies to build confidence, cooperation, curiosity and communication skills in the classroom

Books:
Framework of person-centered key SEL competencies

Self-Awareness
Identifying and recognizing emotions
Accurate self-perception
Recognizing strengths, needs, and values

Self-efficacy
Spirituality
Social Awareness
Perspective taking

Star
Empathy
Appreciating diversity
Respect for others

Responsible Decision Making
Problem identification and situation analysis

Problem solving
Evaluation and reflection
Personal, moral, and ethical responsibility

Self-Management
Impulse control and stress management

Self-motivation and discipline
Goal setting and organizational skills

Relationship Management
Communication, social engagement, and building relationships

Working cooperatively
Negotiation, refusal, and conflict management
Help seeking and providing

Researchers have found that prosocial behavior in the classroom is linked with positive intellectual outcomes (e.g., DiPerna & Elliott, 1999; Feshbach & Feshbach, 1987; Haynes, Ben-Avie, & Ensign, 2003; Pasi, 2001) and is predictive of performance on standardized achievement tests (e.g., Cobb, 1972; Malecki & Elliott, 2002; Welsh, Park, Widaman, & O’Neil, 2001; Wentzel, 1993).

Conversely, antisocial conduct often co-occurs with poor academic performance (Hawkins, Farrington, & Catalano, 1998). But, beyond such correlational findings, it is crucial to determine whether interventions can be designed to promote social and emotional learning, and if there is empirical evidence that these SEL efforts improve children’s success in school and life.
Empathy in the Classroom: Why Should I Care?

The benefits of empathy in education include building positive classroom culture, strengthening community, and preparing students to be leaders in their own communities.

By Lauren Owen

I vividly remember sitting in my classroom with my teaching coach, ready to begin my second year of teaching. We were strategizing my vision for the classroom and for my students. Over the past year, the school where I worked had grown increasingly obsessed with test scores, but the more I considered my students and their needs, the less test scores motivated me.

"Lauren, what do your students need?" my coach asked me.

I paused. They need... empathy, I thought before saying it out loud. Shortly after, I had constructed my entire classroom around the concept.

That year, empathy became a central component of my classroom instruction. Given that I taught history, empathy naturally lent itself to discussions of varying perspectives about and intentions of history's key players. The deeper our discussions went, though, the more convinced I became that empathy needed to be a central piece in every school setting.

3 Benefits of Empathy in Education

Empathyed.org quotes Tyler Colasante by defining empathy "as 'the intrapersonal realization of another's plight that illuminates the potential consequences of one's own actions on the lives of others' (as cited in Hollingsworth, 2003, p.146)." As educators, incorporating empathy into instruction can have positive results for your immediate classroom, as well as for the community outside of the school building. Here's why:

1. Empathy builds positive classroom culture.

With the diversity of students entering classrooms each day, paralleled by an increase in globalization, it's more necessary than ever for teachers to actively construct a positive classroom culture. In his article "Developing Empathy in the Classroom," Bob Sornson asserts: "Empathy is the heart of a great classroom culture." Through empathy, he explains, students learn to understand each other, which helps them to build friendships based on positive relationships of trust. Taking the time to demonstrate empathy can also develop student-teacher relationships, as described by Ernest Mendes in "What Empathy Can Do." On a more academic note, school programs that intentionally incorporate empathy into curriculum have also seen better test results, as described by John Converse Townsend in Forbes Magazine.

2. Empathy strengthens community.

Given that the definition of empathy involves understanding another's feelings without having experience, empathy sets students up to deepen relationships with their current classmates and
people that they know outside of school. In our increasingly globalized world, these people may be coming from different cultures and different socioeconomic backgrounds than before, thereby necessitating better developed empathy skills. Michaela W. Colombo writes in her article "Reflections From Teachers of Culturally Diverse Children" (PDF) that "approximately 40 percent of children in the U.S. public schools are from culturally diverse backgrounds (NCES 2003)."

As children learn empathy skills by communicating cross-culturally with their classmates, those skills will transfer to their lives in their community. The deeper relationships that result from strong empathy skills have the potential to strengthen a community and build trust. The effects of community extend far beyond the four walls of your classroom.

3. **Empathy prepares your students to be leaders in their community.**

Leaders must understand the people that they lead and be able to show that they care. Leadership articles emphasize human development as an essential leadership quality. A study conducted by the Center for Creative Leadership (PDF) found that "empathy is positively related to job performance" (Gentry, Weber, & Sadri, p.3). Jon Kolko describes in the *Harvard Business Review* how empathy is the key to a successful product. Our students must be able to empathize with those whom they lead in order to make them feel valued. This validation will strengthen trust between the leader and followers. As teachers, we must equip our students to be the future leaders of our communities and beyond.

**Resources for Teaching Empathy**

So now what? You're convinced that empathy is important to integrate in your curriculum, but where do you start?

Fortunately, other educators have wondered the same thing, and many already provide lesson plans and ideas for how to incorporate and increase empathy in the classroom. Here are a few:

- Miranda McKearney and Sarah Mears suggest incorporating reading in their article "Lost for words? How reading can teach children empathy."
- Empathyed.org offers lesson plans centered around empathy.
- Ashoka lists different strategies to incorporate empathy across different educational contexts, as well as a toolkit for increasing empathy within schools (PDF).
- Dr. Karyn Gordon provides some practical tips in *TEACH Magazine*’s article "Dr. Karyn Gordon: Creating Empathy and Gratitude in the Classroom."
- Teaching Tolerance describes a variety of strategies for helping to build a positive classroom culture that can include empathy.
List of Emotions

Happy
Scared
Bored
Angry
Sad
Surprised
Worried
Excited
Confused
Frustrated
Embarrassed
Joyful
Disgusted
Jealous

Other emotions: apathetic, grieving, dreading, horrified, uneasy, confident, hopeful, shy, annoyed, guilty, proud, inspired, calm, content, awestruck, grateful, relieved, anxious, nervous, vulnerable, ignored, rejected, neglected, ashamed

COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND EMPATHY – PARTICIPATION AND MAKING A DIFFERENCE

SHORT EXERCISES FOR UNDERSTANDING EMPATHY

Empathy is about using the available evidence and one's own imagination to put oneself in the place of another individual or group. Through empathy each person can have a positive influence on how any conflict is understood and solved. Empathy involves opening one's heart and mind to others, to understanding the world through another's eyes. An empathetic outlook can help each person to behave in ways that promote constructive and peaceful problem-solving, in all sorts of situations.

WHAT THE EXERCISE IS ABOUT

- Time: 15 minutes, plus time for discussion at the end
- The teacher asks students to complete statements related to success and failure at achieving goals
- The closing discussion could concentrate on the important of recognizing the role of emotions in conflict resolution

THE GOAL OF THE EXERCISE

The aim of the following exercise is to help the students understand the nature and importance of empathy. The exercise could be done as an informal discussion between the whole class. Or, if the students are brave enough to be very open, it could be done by asking them to write down their thoughts and experiences.

If choosing the latter option, it's a good idea for the teacher to consider whether the students should do the exercise in groups of two or three, or if each student should work independently. Alternatively, the students could make some notes first and then use these to support discussion within their own group, or in pairs. To conclude, the students could share their thoughts on the exercise in a discussion among the whole class.

HOW THE EXERCISE SHOULD PROCEED

The teacher could begin the exercise by talking to the class about how it feels when a person achieves some goal or other; for example, would he or she feel relieved, happy, safe, satisfied, interested, etc.

Exercise: I got what I wanted. Here the students complete the statement: "When _____ happened or when I finally got _____, I felt _____."
For example: “On my 12th birthday I got the new bike I’d been wanting for ages, and I was so happy”, or “When we finally went on holiday together, I felt excited”, etc.

The next exercise is about what a person might feel like if some hoped-for situation doesn’t come about; for example, he or she could feel disappointed, hurt, belittled, heartbroken, discouraged, pessimistic, etc.

Exercise: I didn’t get what I wanted. Here the students complete the statement: “When _____ didn’t happen of when I didn’t get _____, I felt ____.”

For example: “When I didn’t get a role in the school play, I felt sad”, or “When nobody would listen to what I had to say, I felt angry and frustrated,” etc.

Then the teacher might talk with the class about how one might feel when an argument or disagreement has been solved in a way that’s acceptable to all involved. What compromises were involved, and who had to compromise on what? What made these compromises acceptable? How did you feel once the conflict had been solved in this way (proud, relieved, optimistic, trustful, etc.)?

Exercise: We managed to agree. Ask the students to complete the statement: “When _____ and I had a disagreement about _____, we managed to sort it out (or reach a compromise). Once we had done so, I felt ____.”

For example: “When those of us in the Student’s Union had a disagreement about how the grant the union received should be used, we decided to make a shortlist of proposals and then to vote on these. So rather than buying new sofas or new bike stands, the majority voted to buy new speakers for the concert hall. Then everyone was happy.”

This exercise could be expanded by getting the students to discuss or make an admission about a physical response they had to some disagreement and to how it was solved. Here are some examples to help the students get started with this:

- When some hoped-for situation comes about, people can feel it physically. Their body might become more relaxed, they might feel “like a weight has been lifted from their shoulders”, they might smile or laugh, they might become more affectionate, etc.
- When some hoped-for situation doesn’t work out, this too can be experienced physically. The person might feel tense all over, or might frown or even cry, their breathing may become forced, etc.
- When two or more people succeed in achieving a common goal, they might feel more relaxed, “lighter”, more energetic, etc.
THINGS TO DISCUSS AFTER THE EXERCISE

In what ways do this knowledge and these experiences matter to conflict resolution? Think about some ongoing conflict (that’s been in the news, for instance). Try to be empathetic to some particular person or group involved in that conflict. What thoughts, feelings, and needs do you think they might be having?

Additional questions for the students:

- What is your reaction to the following statement: “It’s all or nothing – nothing is agreed upon until everything is agreed upon.”
- Ask each student to explain how he or she felt in the short exercise they just did. If they can find some fault with their own response to the situation, encourage them to think of how they might have been able to respond to the situation (e.g. to the disappointment of not getting a hoped-for role in a school play) more constructively.
- Ask the students to try to think actions or thoughts that might make it more likely that two or more people keep their promises to each other in a specific situation. For example, a conflict is more likely to be solved in a fair and lasting way if all those who are affected by the conflict are given a fair say in solving the problem. Also, a conflict is more likely to be solved in a fair and lasting way if all those affected by it can agree on the sort of solution that would be acceptable to all of them. (This may be a solution that’s not perfect for anybody, most achievable solutions to complicated problems involve some amount of compromise by those involved).
Building Social and Emotional Skills in Students: Empathy

By Randy Taran

This is part seven of the nine-part series from the Project Happiness curriculum. We are looking at important factors that influence the happiness and social and emotional learning of elementary school age children, helping students learn life skills, manage emotions, and increase empathy. Each blog post features one letter of the acronym HAPPINESS:

1. H = Happiness
2. A = Appreciation
3. P = Passions and Strengths
4. P = Perspective
5. I = Inner Meanie/Inner Friend
6. N = Ninja Mastery
7. E = Empathy
8. S = So Similar
9. S = Share Your Gifts

Why is it important to "walk in someone else's shoes?" According to a study by the Brookings Institution, "Higher curriculum standards don't correlate to higher student achievement; empathy does." Empathy is also gaining attention as an important component of emotional intelligence and as a way to reduce bullying. When a person learns to understand and share the feelings of another, the pro-social behavior that results shows up in better relationships, closer friendships and stronger communities -- it's that important!

Here are five steps to cultivate empathy:

1. Watch & Listen: What is the other person saying, and what is his or her body language?
2. Remember: When did you feel the same way?
3. Imagine: How does the other person feel? And how would you feel in that situation?
4. Ask: Ask what the person is feeling.
5. Show You Care: Let him or her know that you care through your words and actions.

(You can find lesson plans and additional resources about this at projecthappiness.org.)
How is Empathy Being Developed in Schools?

There are many approaches to teaching empathy. Here are ten interesting ways that aspects of empathy are being introduced:

1. **Start with Teachers**: At a recent EduCon Conference, an important issue came up. Teacher burnout increases when teachers are expected to be supportive but receive no emotional support at all. One teacher summarized it well: "How can I have empathy for my students when no one will have empathy for me?" The solution one school adopted was to have regular staff meetings in which everyone sat in a circle and shared how things were going. Teachers felt closer to one another in creating a more supportive environment where others cared about how everyone was feeling.

2. **Infants as Educators**: Roots of Empathy is a program that brings a neighborhood infant and parent to visit the classroom every three weeks over the school year. Students are taught to observe the baby's development and discuss his or her feelings, which opens the door to students identifying their own feelings and advocating kindness for the baby and for each other.

3. **Validation and Trust**: Making sure students have a voice -- and that all voices are heard -- is a building block for empathy. One teacher states:

   The students learn that I trust them to be kind, loving and intelligent. And they are learning to trust that I will think of them that way. We learn to trust each other... help each other if we fall... and use our voices to make change. When children first start to use their voices in the classroom, it provides for a test as to how they may be received. Will they be listened to? Will they be laughed at? Are they important?

4. **Power of Teamwork**: Working in teams to affect the greater good is a great way to creating a culture of empathy. At AXL Academy, each child is assigned to a "crew" for two years. Inspired by Outward Bound founder Kurt Hahn's quote, "We are not passengers in life, we are crew," students learn to work together and create close bonds with one another and their teacher.

5. **Grading on Character**: The school also grades students on character, with big questions like, "What makes a good friend?" broken down into learning outcomes; and with performance targets, which teachers and students use to collaboratively evaluate students' progress.

6. **Practice Emotional Literacy**: Having students learn what feelings are (including reading people's faces and body language) as well as how to name those feelings are necessary steps to empathy. If they can learn how to express their feelings and how to interpret when others express feelings, they have important tools for life.

7. **Befriending the "Other"**: To teach empathy, one school is helping students learn to initiate relationships by becoming friends with students who are different, have a disability, or are new. The motivation is friendship and better relationships.

8. **Students as "Changemakers"**: When teachers guided students to identify school problems and encouraged them to work together to come up with solutions, this caused a shift in the school culture. In one fourth grade class, the oldest grade in the school decided to create reminders for the younger grades about how to treat each other well. Because of the project, the older students began to see themselves as role models and empathetic leaders for the younger kids.

9. **Service-Learning**: In Georgetown Elementary Day School, students do grade-wide service-learning projects. In pre-school and first grade, for example, students made sandwiches for a local nonprofit's family support programs. By the fifth grade, students could choose their own service project culminating in four days of service and advocacy.
10. **Encourage Empathy at Home**: Empathy is reinforced at home when parents model it. When parents positively demonstrate sharing their feelings in authentic, engaged and non-judgmental ways, kids (influenced by mirror neurons) tend to imitate or mirror the intention and emotional state of what they see. Empathy is a family affair!

*Do you see this as an important issue? In what ways have you cultivated empathy in your classroom?*

Teachers must align their practices, interactions ... so that care and respect are established as the "air we breathe"
CLASSROOM CLIMATE

The climate of a group is created by the behavior and norms of its members. To develop classroom climate specific components need to be in place.

- Teacher as facilitator, guide, model, challenger, observer and learner. Be proactive not reactive.
- A classroom that is student centered and meaning centered
- Respects and encourages student voice (listens to what students have to say)
- Praise well and often, publicly and privately. Avoid praise that connects the child’s behavior to his/her worth and a dependance on approval.
- Provide structured choice. Offer 2-3 choices; to read or write, to use crayons or markers... Make sure all choices are acceptable.
- Build and model an atmosphere of trust and honesty. Focus on students' strengths and what they do "right" not "wrong".
- Create and maintain a sense of belonging and foster fairness and equity in participation
- Teach self-management and inclusion in the decision making process
- Kindness and encouragement from adults and peers
- A teacher's energy, morale, authenticity and non-judgemental attitude. In helping solve problems, ask--don't tell.
- Clear expectation, goals and learning outcomes

Stephanie Barrington
The 12 Tools
Tools for Learning • Tools for Life

Breathing Tool
I calm myself and check-in.

Quiet/Safe Place Tool
I remember my quiet/safe place.

Listening Tool
I listen with my ears, eyes, and heart.

Empathy Tool
I care for others. I care for myself.

Personal Space Tool
I have a right to my space and so do you.

Using Our Words Tool
I ask for what I want and need.

Garbage Can Tool
I let the little things go.

Taking Time Tool
I take time-in and time-away.

Please & Thank You Tool
I treat others with kindness and appreciation.

Apology & Forgiveness Tool
I admit my mistakes and work to forgive yours.

Patience Tool
I am strong enough to wait.

Courage Tool
I have the courage to do the “right” thing.
My Empathy Worksheet

Expect to have more than one answer.

1. You see on TV that a tornado has leveled a town in Kansas. Many people are homeless.
   a. How do you think they would feel? _______________________________________
   b. How would I feel if this happened to my family? ____________________________

2. Your best friend’s mother just died.
   a. How do you think she/he would feel? ______________________________________
   b. As a best friend, how would I feel about this? ____________________________

3. A classmate has worked very hard and won the spelling bee.
   a. How do you think she/he would feel? ______________________________________
   b. How would I feel if I won the spelling bee? ________________________________

4. A classmate has worked very hard and lost the spelling bee.
   a. How do you think she/he would feel? ______________________________________
   b. How would I feel if I lost the spelling bee? ________________________________

5. You see an animal being mistreated.
   a. How do you think the animal would feel? __________________________________
   b. How would I feel if I were mistreated? ________________________________

STOP Violence Coalition, Inc.
My Empathy Worksheet

6 Your friend has a new baby sister or brother.
   a. How do you think she/he would feel?
   b. How would I feel if I had a new baby brother or sister?

7 Your friend's parents are getting divorced.
   a. How do you think she/he would feel?
   b. How would I feel if my parents got divorced?

8 You see a classmate continually picked on by other classmates.
   a. How do you think she/he would feel?
   b. How would I feel if I were picked on?

9 There is a new student in your class.
   a. How do you think she/he would feel?
   b. How would I feel if I were a new student?

10 Another friend has been chosen to serve on the Student Council.
    a. How do you think she/he would feel?
    b. How would I feel if I were chosen?
    c. How would I feel if I lost the election?

STOP Violence Coalition, Inc.
Important Questions to Ask Your Students

Discovering your students’ answers to these questions can help you create positive conditions for learning. By Maurice J. Elias - July 30, 2018

Resilience and motivation come from having a sense of purpose, believing you have value to others, and engaging in acts of service that confirm that value. When these point in a positive direction, children gain momentum and positive accomplishment; when they don’t, we see downward spirals and increasing distance from college, career, community, and life success.

There are some things we should know about all of our students because knowing them will greatly influence our teaching (and parenting). They reflect the conditions necessary for students to learn, be happy, feel relevant, and be resilient.

Understanding who students are on a deep level also helps us be more understanding and supportive. In his article “Improving Teacher Empathy to Improve Student Behavior,” psychologist and school-climate expert Robert Brooks explains that teachers increase their empathy by asking themselves, “What words do I want my students to use to describe me?”

The following questions can and should be adapted for youth of all ages because they are as relevant to college students as they are to preschoolers. Knowing the answers tells us what we need to know to help create positive conditions for learning.
Questions to Ask Right Away. These start-of-school questions can be written out on index cards—ask children to write their answers on the other side, perhaps doing one per day during the first week of school.

- What helps you feel welcomed?
- How do you like to be greeted?
- What strengths do you bring to classrooms? The school?
- What do you like most about school so far? What would you like to see changed?

Another approach with these questions is to make a survey and have students provide responses; these can be anonymous or not. A more interactive approach is to use a morning meeting format and start the school day by having students discuss their responses to several of these questions in small groups and then share their group’s responses with the class.

Questions to Deepen Relationships. These settling-in questions can be addressed in similar ways as the start-of-school ones, during the second and third weeks of school.

- When do you feel competent? How often?
- When do you feel you are being listened to?
- When do you feel your voice is respected?
- When do you feel cared for and about?
- When do you get a chance to be a leader?
- When do you feel most safe/unsafe?
- When do you laugh at school?

Questions to Use Throughout the Year. Use these questions throughout the school year, followed by supportive discussions, to continue to get to know your students, build their reflection skills, and positively influence their resiliency.

- What is your contribution to the school?
- Who believes you can succeed?
- What happens in school that makes you afraid? Frustrated? Defeated?
- When do you feel challenged and supported?
- What inspires you in school?
- Who helps you bounce back from setbacks?
- Who is always happy to speak with you?
- When do you feel it’s OK to make a mistake, or show that you don’t know something or how to do something?

Growing Relationships and Trust It often takes a few weeks before students get a clear sense of their answers to the initial questions. By then, they will know who believes they can succeed, and who is happy to speak to them and help them bounce back. (And during those first weeks, students will notice you hard at work becoming one of those reliable and trustworthy adults in their lives.) The more we know about our students, the more we can help them find answers to these questions, which will allow their energies to be better directed toward building resilience and their growth as learners.
Random Acts of Kindness Board

Name: __________________ Teacher: __________________

Directions: After you complete one “Random Act of Kindness” activity, check off or color in the appropriate box. Challenge yourself and see if you can get all 16 done in one week!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Write a positive note to a classmate</th>
<th>Let someone go before you in line</th>
<th>Push in someone’s chair</th>
<th>Hold a door open for someone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Play with someone new during recess</td>
<td>Give a silent wave</td>
<td>Say “hi” to someone new</td>
<td>Thank an adult in the school for something they do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharpen someone’s pencils</td>
<td>Make a card for your favorite teacher</td>
<td>Give a compliment to someone</td>
<td>Help someone who has dropped something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help someone before they ask</td>
<td>Give a nice compliment</td>
<td>Clean up after yourself</td>
<td>Clean up after someone else</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10 CHILDREN’S PICTURE BOOKS THAT TEACH ACCEPTANCE AND EMPATHY

The Sneetches by DR. SEUSS

Chrysanthemum by KEVIN HENKES

The Butter Battle Book by Dr. Seuss

Amazing Grace by Mary Hoffman

One by Kathryn Otoshi
It's Okay To Be Different by Todd Parr

Horace and Morris but Mostly Dolores by James Howe

A Sick Day for Amos McGee by Phillip C. Stead

Hey, Little Ant by Phillip M. Hoose

Bear Feels Sick by Karma Wilson
30 Books To Teach Children Empathy

Out of My Mind  Melody is not like most people. She cannot walk or talk, but she has a photographic memory; she can remember every detail of everything she has ever experienced. She is smarter than most of the adults who try to diagnose her and smarter than her classmates in her integrated classroom—the very same classmates who dismiss her as mentally challenged, because she cannot tell them otherwise. But Melody refuses to be defined by cerebral palsy. And she’s determined to let everyone know it—somehow.

Wonder  August Pullman is a 10-year-old boy who likes Star Wars and Xbox, ordinary except for his jarring facial anomalies. Homeschooled all his life, August heads to public school for fifth grade and he is not the only one changed by the experience—something we learn about first-hand through the narratives of those who orbit his world. August’s internal dialogue and interactions with students and family ring true, and though remarkably courageous he comes across as a sweet, funny boy who wants the same things others want: friendship, understanding, and the freedom to be himself.

The One and Only Ivan  Having spent twenty-seven years behind the glass walls of his enclosure in a shopping mall, Ivan has grown accustomed to humans watching him. He hardly ever thinks about his life in the jungle. Instead, Ivan occupies himself with television, his friends Stella and Bob, and painting. But when he meets Ruby, a baby elephant taken from the wild, he is forced to see their home, and his art, through new eyes.

Brown Girl Dreaming  Raised in South Carolina and New York, Woodson always felt halfway home in each place. In vivid poems, she shares what it was like to grow up as an African American in the 1960s and 1970s, living with the remnants of Jim Crow and her growing awareness of the Civil Rights movement. Touching and powerful, each poem is both accessible and emotionally charged, each line a glimpse into a child’s soul as she searches for her place in the world.

Bridge to Terabithia  Jess Aarons has been practicing all summer so he can be the fastest runner in the fifth grade. And he almost is, until the new girl in school, Leslie Burke, outpaces him. The two become fast friends and spend most days in the woods behind Leslie’s house, where they invent an enchanted land called Terabithia. One morning, Leslie goes to Terabithia without Jess and a tragedy occurs. It will take the love of his family and the strength that Leslie has given him for Jess to be able to deal with his grief.

El Deafo  Going to school and making new friends can be tough. But going to school and making new friends while wearing a bulky hearing aid strapped to your chest? That requires superpowers! In this funny, poignant graphic novel memoir, author/illustrator Cece Bell chronicles her hearing loss at a young age and her subsequent experiences with the Phonic Ear, a very powerful—and very awkward—hearing aid.
**Inside Out and Back Again** Inside Out and Back Again is a New York Times bestseller, a Newbery Honor Book, and a winner of the National Book Award! Inspired by the author's childhood experience of fleeing Vietnam after the Fall of Saigon and immigrating to Alabama, this coming-of-age debut novel told in verse has been celebrated for its touching child's-eye view of family and immigration.

**Night** Night is Elie Wiesel's masterpiece, a candid, horrific, and deeply poignant autobiographical account of his survival as a teenager in the Nazi death camps. This new translation by Marion Wiesel, Elie's wife and frequent translator, presents this seminal memoir in the language and spirit truest to the author's original intent. And in a substantive new preface, Elie reflects on the enduring importance of Night and his lifelong, passionate dedication to ensuring that the world never forgets man's capacity for inhumanity to man.

**My Side of the Mountain** Terribly unhappy in his family's crowded New York City apartment, Sam Gribley runs away to the solitude-and danger-of the mountains, where he finds a side of himself he never knew.

**365 Days of Wonder: Mr. Browne's Precepts** In Wonder, readers were introduced to memorable English teacher Mr. Browne and his love of precepts. This companion book features conversations between Mr. Browne and Auggie, Julian, Summer, Jack Will, and others, giving readers a special peek at their lives after Wonder ends. Mr. Browne's essays and correspondence are rounded out by a precept for each day of the year—drawn from popular songs to children's books to inscriptions on Egyptian tombstones to fortune cookies.

**The Family Under the Bridge** This is the delightfully warm and enjoyable story of an old Parisian named Armand, who relished his solitary life. Children, he said, were like starlings, and one was better off without them. But the children who lived under the bridge recognized a true friend when they met one, even if the friend seemed a trifle unwilling at the start. And it did not take Armand very long to realize that he had gotten himself ready-made family; one that he loved with all his heart, and one for whom he would have to find a better home than the bridge.

**Island of the Blue Dolphins** 'Island of the Blue Dolphins' is an adventure of the spirit that will haunt the reader long after the book has been put down. Karana's quiet courage, her Indian self-reliance and acceptance of fate, transform what to many would have been a devastating ordeal into an uplifting experience. From loneliness and terror come strength and serenity in this Newbery Medal-winning classic.

**Where the Red Fern Grows** Billy has long dreamt of owning not one, but two, dogs. So when he’s finally able to save up enough money for two pups to call his own, he’s ecstatic. It doesn’t matter that times are tough; together they’ll roam the hills of the Ozarks. Soon Billy and his hounds become the finest hunting team in the valley. Stories of their great achievements spread throughout the region. But tragedy awaits these determined hunters—now
friends—and Billy learns that hope can grow out of despair, and that the seeds of the future can come from the scars of the past.

**I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This** Twelve-year-old Marie is a leader among the popular black girls in Chauncey, Ohio, a prosperous black suburb. She isn't looking for a friend when Lena Bright, a white girl, appears in school. Yet they are drawn to each other because both have lost their mothers. And they know how to keep a secret. For Lena has a secret that is terrifying, and she's desperate to protect herself and her younger sister from their father. Marie must decide whether she can help Lena by keeping her secret—or by telling it.

**Fish in a Tree** The author of the beloved One for the Murphys gives readers an emotionally-charged, uplifting novel that will speak to anyone who's ever thought there was something wrong with them because they didn't fit in. “Everybody is smart in different ways. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its life believing it is stupid.”

**Same Sun Here** With honesty and humor, the main characters bridge the miles between them, creating a friendship that inspires bravery and defeats cultural misconceptions. Narrated in two voices, each voice distinctly articulated by a separate gifted author, this chronicle of two lives powerfully conveys the great value of being and having a friend and the joys of opening our lives to others who live beneath the same sun.

**Sunborn Rising: Beneath** Cerulean is on the brink of collapse. The decay wasn't fast, it wasn’t obvious, but now the world stands on the precipice. Woven forests floating on an ocean around a star, Cerulean's once vibrant treescape has grown dim over generations of arboreal life, and the creatures of the forest have forgotten the light.

**Hannah Coulter** The story of a family about the Battle of Okinawa in the spring of 1945. Life carried on for the community of Port William, Kentucky, as some boys returned from the war and the lives of others were mourned. In her seventies, Nathan's wife, Hannah, has time now to tell of the years since the war. In Wendell Berry's unforgettable prose, we learn of the Coulter's children, of the Feltners and Branches, and how survivors "live right on."

**Jayber Crow** Jayber Crow, born in Goforth, Kentucky, orphaned at age ten, began his search as a "pre-ministerial student" at Pigeonville College. "You have been given questions to which you cannot be given answers. You will have to live them out—perhaps a little at a time."

**Paperboy** Little Man throws the meanest fastball in town. But talking is a whole different ball game. He can barely say a word without stuttering—not even his own name. So when he takes over his best friend's paper route for the month of July, he's not exactly looking forward to interacting with the customers. But it's the neighborhood junkman, a bully and thief, who stirs up real trouble in Little Man's life.

22.
The Boy on the Wooden Box: How the Impossible Became Possible
This, the only memoir published by a former Schindler’s list child, perfectly captures the innocence of a small boy who goes through the unthinkable. Leon Leyson (born Leib Lezjon) was only ten years old when the Nazis invaded Poland and his family was forced to relocate to the Krakow ghetto. With incredible luck, perseverance, and grit, Leyson was able to survive the sadism of the Nazis, including that of the demonic Amon Goeth, commandant of Plaszow, the concentration camp outside Krakow.

One Came Home
In the town of Placid, Wisconsin, in 1871, Georgie Burkhart is known for two things: her uncanny aim with a rifle and her habit of speaking her mind plainly. But when Georgie blurts out something she shouldn’t, her older sister Agatha flees, running off with a pack of “pigeoners” trailing the passenger pigeon migration. And when the sheriff returns to town with an unidentifiable body—wearing Agatha’s blue-green ball gown—everyone assumes the worst. Except Georgie.

Tasting the Sky: A Palestinian Childhood
In this groundbreaking memoir set in Ramallah during the aftermath of the 1967 Six-Day War, Ibtisam Barakat captures what it is like to be a child whose world is shattered by war. With candor and courage, she stitches together memories of her childhood: fear and confusion as bombs explode near her home and she is separated from her family; the harshness of life as a Palestinian refugee.

Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood
Wise, funny, and heartbreaking, Persepolis is Marjane Satrapi’s memoir of growing up in Iran during the Islamic Revolution. In powerful black-and-white comic strip images, Satrapi tells the story of her life in Tehran from ages six to fourteen, years that saw the overthrow of the Shah’s regime, the triumph of the Islamic Revolution, and the devastating effects of war with Iraq. The intelligent and outspoken only child of committed Marxists and the great-granddaughter of one of Iran’s last emperors, Marjane bears witness to a childhood uniquely entwined with the history of her country.
Dr. Kathy Perez

Dynamic presentations that are meaningful, memorable and motivational!

Dr. Kathy Perez, an international consultant, teacher, administrator and author has worked with students from preschoolers to university graduates. Dr. Kathy is currently a Professor Emerita at Saint Mary’s College of California. She has extensive teaching experience as a general and special educator, literacy/ESL coach, administrator, and curriculum/staff development coordinator.

Her innovative and interactive workshops are loaded with teacher-tested materials and activities you can use immediately and share with others. Kathy provides a lively and informative day of hands-on and minds-on learning.

Dr. Kathy has worked extensively with teachers, administrators and parents throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, Qatar, Brazil, Colombia, Caribbean, Africa, New Zealand, Australia, Thailand, Hong Kong and Singapore. Her best-selling books include: More Than 100+ Brain Friendly Tools and Strategies for Literacy! (Corwin Press), Co-Teaching Book of Lists: A Practical Guide for Teachers (Jossey-Bass); The New Inclusion: Differentiated Strategies to Engage ALL Students! (Teacher College Press, 2013) and her latest: 200+ Proven Strategies for Teaching Reading (Solution Tree, 2016).

Dr. Perez is the recipient of an International Rotary Fellowship and has been selected for The Reading Hall of Fame due to her commitment and passion for literacy and learning around the planet.

Dr. Kathy Perez – 1014 Ironwood Road – Alameda, CA 94502
(c)510.593.0473 (h)510.522.6248
kperez@stmarys-ca.edu
Twitter: @drkathyperez
DrKathyPerez.com