



## Co-Creating a Caring Community II

This lesson is designed to focus on co-creating a caring classroom community.

### Essential Question

How do we work together to create a fair and just classroom community where individual and collective learning is engaging, valued, and liberating for all?

### Guiding Questions

How can we use tools of empathy to see things with a “fresh set of eyes”?  
How can this help us co-create a caring community?

### Objectives

- Students will connect with a partner through empathy interviews.
- Students will understand empathy as part of the design thinking cycle.
- Students will discover their own inner agency as they re-imagine their classroom.

### Advance preparation

- Prepare student materials
- Prepare chart paper, a whiteboard, or a digital board and blank Collective Empathy Map
- Have space in classroom for a connection circle

### Materials/Resources

- PowerPoint slideshow 4.8 (adapt as needed)
- Talking piece
- Timer
- Blank Collective Empathy Map (chart paper, whiteboard, or a digital board)
- Board or chart paper for prototype criteria list

### Student Materials

- “Who Is Alberto Biasi?” reading (Do Now)
- Individual Empathy Map Grid
- (Optional) Personal Reflection sheet (homework)

**Vocabulary**

- Dynamic
- Phenomenon
- Design thinking

**Do Now**

3 min.

Slide 1: Students read about Alberto Biasi's art and highlight unfamiliar words.

**Introduction (Framing/Overview)**

8 min.

1. (Optional) Student Dedication: If you wish to include a student dedication, you can insert the slide from a previous lesson here.
2. Slide 3: Invite students to join in a circle. Briefly review the content of the reading and answer any questions about the vocabulary. Invite students to think quietly about the connection between Biasi's art and their creative work as they prepare to re-imagine a more caring classroom community. Ask, "How is Biasi's work similar to ours?" Ask for a volunteer to begin sharing; move the talking piece as needed.
3. Tell students that today's lesson will introduce them to design thinking, a process in which people use empathy, creativity, and collaboration to re-imagine situations and improve things for everyone. They will be using design thinking to re-imagine the classroom community. Briefly review the day's agenda (slide 4).
4. Introduce students to design thinking as a people-centered process to imagine new ways of doing things (slide 5). Tell students that design thinking has been used in industry to develop and improve products for many years. Recently, researchers at the d.school @ Stanford University have updated a version specifically to promote equity in human systems and organizations. Show students the components of the process (slide 6), and click to show the circle around the component "empathy." Tell students that they will be focusing particularly on this component of the process in today's lesson. Empathy (slide 7) comes from observing, interacting, and listening deeply to others. Listening to a variety of perspectives helps us learn to work with peers and adults, and in the process, gain appreciation for each person's unique strengths and contributions. The process will help us re-frame our ideas of the classroom and understand how different people experience it, before jumping to solutions.
5. Explain that empathy interviews help us understand how peoples' choices and behaviors indicate their needs, so we can think of ways to meet those needs. In an empathy interview, it's important to ask "why?" even when we think we know the

reason. We also pay close attention to nonverbal cues, body language and emotions. We listen with curiosity and respect, without judgment, with a beginner's eyes.

6. Show slide 8. Explain that in an empathy interview, we listen and watch for clues about what people **THINK** and **FEEL** so we can understand what they **NEED**. These clues are both verbal and non-verbal, in the things people **DO** and **SAY**. Capturing information in all four areas will lead us to deeper insights and innovative solutions. They can use the Individual Empathy Map grid for note-taking.

## Activity 1: Conducting Empathy Interviews

14 min.

7. Slide 9: Invite students to think about times when they felt like the person talking with them was really listening with an open mindset. Tell them that as they conduct empathy interviews, they are looking for stories, experiences, and feelings; they will ask “why” over and over. They should have a beginner's mindset—the mindset of those who are open to many possibilities, because they don't think they already know the answers. An empathy interview should feel less like an interview, and more like a conversation with a friend.

**Direct  
Instruction**

8. Show slide 10. Interviewers should use question prompts naturally; these questions are not intended as a script, but to help start the conversation. (Remember to take notes on the Empathy Map grid.)

**Partner  
Interaction  
and  
Interviews**

- Tell me about a memorable classroom experience.
- Could you explain what makes that experience remain in your mind?
- Could you tell me why that is important to you?
- As you recall the experience, what feelings/emotions do you have?
- Walk me through something that happened in your classroom that everyone could learn from.
- What were you thinking at that point?

9. Advise students that they have five minutes for each interview. They should decide who will go first and begin.
10. Set the timer and advise students to switch roles after 5 minutes, and advise again when time is up for the second interview.

**Activity 2: Building a Collective Empathy Map**

14 min.

11. Slide 11: Invite students to come back as a whole class. Tell students that they will be using a collective (group) empathy map to reflect on responses from the interviews. This will enable them to synthesize observations, identify needs, and capture important insights.

**Whole  
Class  
Discussion**

Like the individual empathy map, the collective empathy map is a 2x2 grid on poster paper, a whiteboard, or a digital board with the quadrants labeled Say, Think, Do, and Feel. Ask students to refer to their notes to provide responses for each of the four quadrants. Collect answers by reviewing each quadrant as follows, noting responses.

**Say:** What did you hear your partner say? What can you imagine him/her saying? Cite quotes or descriptions given by your interviewee.

**Do:** What actions and behaviors (for example, gestures, facial expressions) did you observe?

**Think:** What do you think your partner was thinking? How did your partner express thoughts or beliefs?

**Feel:** What feelings were expressed, verbally or non-verbally?

Slide 12: Using the results, work with students to identify needs that have surfaced and then co-create a list of criteria for what they agree should be incorporated into the first prototype of their ideal classroom community. Note agreed-upon criteria on the board or chart paper. Help students consider ways to address any needs identified.

12. Slide 13: Explain that during the next few weeks, you as a class will be testing your prototype. You will determine which parts work, and which will need further revision. Creative professionals, like software engineers, test their prototypes to learn which parts might break and then improve the next version.

Tell students that each time you revise and refine your prototype, you are getting closer to the classroom community you envision.

**Closure**

6 min.

13. Slide 14: Invite students to join in a circle and share one word that captures what they believe was accomplished in today's lesson. Have a volunteer begin sharing.

**Extensions**

If you wish to assign homework, have students complete the Personal Reflection sheet.

## “I am, You are... We are”: Who is Alberto Biasi?

Alberto Biasi (say bee-AH-see) is an Italian artist who creates something he calls an “environmental opera” or a “dynamic meditation.” What does that mean? An “environmental opera” means that the work is happening all around you—the public is immersed in the experience. A “dynamic meditation” calls people to reflect through movement and energy.

What does it feel like to participate in one of Biasi’s art environments? Moving beams of colored light play on a white surface as viewers move within the space. This creates a visual phenomenon of shifting multi-colored shadows of the audience. You see your own image, in different colors and at various angles, moving as you move, so that you yourself become an active, contributing participant in the art work.



<https://www.mutualart.com/Exhibition/Alberto-Biasi--The-Visibility-of-the-Inv/ABAB870434342462>



<https://www.arshake.com/en/the-op-spaces-of-alberto-biasi/>

Individual Empathy Map

In the grid below, take notes during your Empathy Interview on things that your partner says, does, thinks, or feels.

<div>SAY</div>	<div>THINK</div>
<div>DO</div>	<div>FEEL</div>

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Personal Reflection on Empathy Mapping and Design Process

Kiran Bir Sethi, a famous educator and a Design for Change founder, asserts, “Sharing the story helps let others know that change is possible—thereby helping more people get infected by the I Can bug.”

Write about what you learned today. Reflect on key takeaways; revisit the goal and results. What did you learn that surprised you? Did the process reach a satisfactory conclusion? What aspects of the classroom community would you continue to refine?

[illegible]