

Overview

Thanks to social media and an almost continuous news cycle (e.g. television, radio, newspapers, etc.), we are provided many glimpses into global events, both happy and tragic, on a daily basis.

Some suggest social media has made our society apathetic to the world around us. Others propose that we are merely sympathetic to tragedies in a superficial, short-term way because another tragedy is always being reported. Initiatives like *Fight Apathy* (Retrieved January 2016, <http://states.jsa.org/fightapathy/>) and *Me to We* (Retrieved January 2016, <http://www.metowe.com/>) attempt to mobilize youth to make a difference and move from apathy to sympathy to empathy.

Apathy typically refers to lacking passion or emotion or care for things that others might find engaging or important. When we talk about social or world issues, apathy is demonstrated by a lack of awareness of the issues or in statements like, “That problem is too big or taking place too far away,” and “Why should I care?” or “What could I do?”

Sympathy typically refers to the ability to feel an emotion about an issue, whether it be sadness, joy, compassion, etc. When we talk about social or world issues, sympathy may be demonstrated in statements like, “Those poor people, I wonder what I can attend to help?” Sympathetic activities include crowd funding efforts, charity events, and awareness raising.

Empathy typically refers to the ability to deeply understand and almost enter into another’s feelings. When we empathize, we move beyond sympathy and begin to engage with both the feelings and the cause of those feelings. When we talk about social or world issues, empathy can be demonstrated in statements like, “I wonder what is causing this situation or lack of emotion... how might we alleviate this person’s concerns and engage others through our actions?”

Examples of apathy, sympathy and empathy, positioned within the situation of homelessness might include:

- Apathy: Homelessness is terrible but it isn’t my problem. I don’t know anyone who is homeless.
- Sympathy: Homelessness must be terrible. Let’s organize a bottle drive and give the proceeds to our local homeless shelter.
- Empathy: Homelessness must be terrible. I’m going to volunteer to serve meals at our local homeless shelter and begin to learn more about the causes and issues of homelessness in our community.

It takes effort to create empathic newspaper headlines and social media tweets of human stories. That effort helps others to start caring for people and to comprehend empathetically. Classroom activities like Stanford’s d.School Empathy Mapping may help to understand this process (Retrieved May 2016, <http://dschool-old.stanford.edu/wp-content/themes/dschool/method-cards/empathy-map.pdf>).

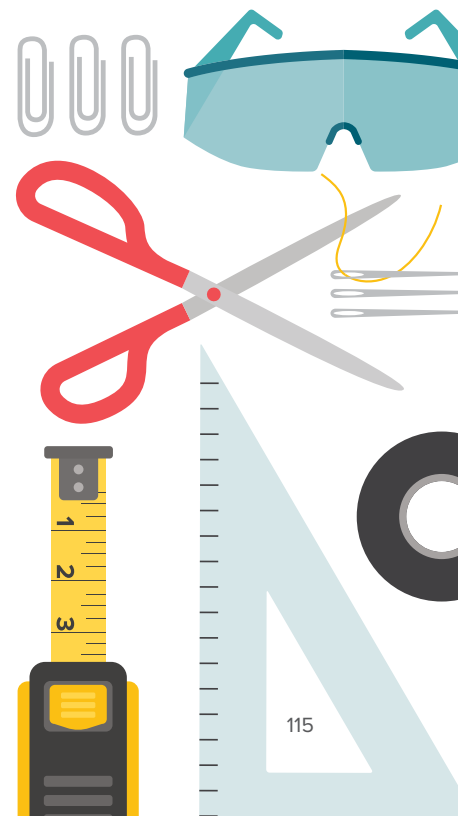


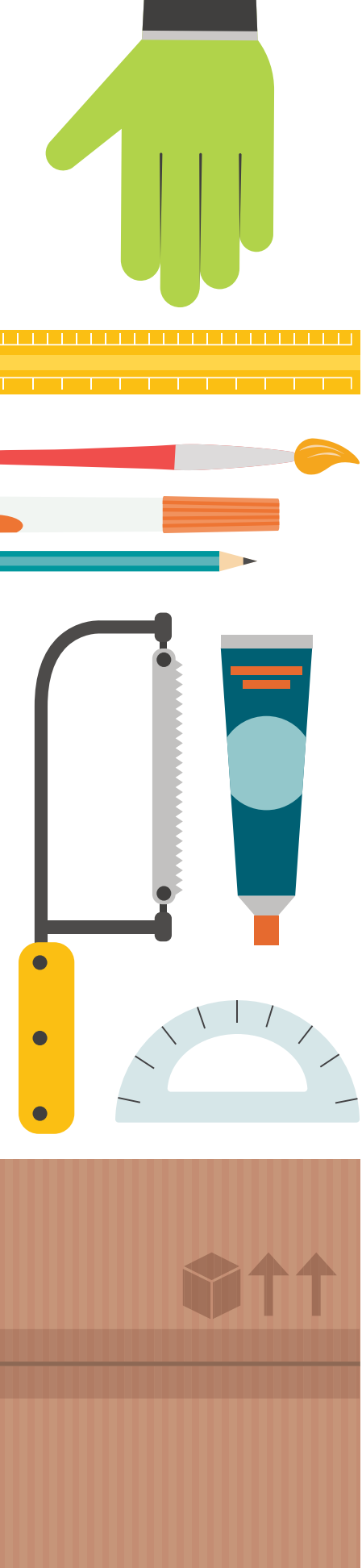
Suggested Grade Level

Middle school to secondary school

Suggested Subject Area

- ADST
- Economics
- Science
- Social Studies





Design Rationale

We live in a global community connected through various forms of media. The youth of today have many opportunities to become empathetic and to be aware of global issues. They bring their passion and energy to personally engage in global change. A key for developing responsible global awareness begins with moving from apathy or sympathy to empathy and action. Agencies and organizations may help us find ways to start being responsible for the well-being of others. A few examples include the United Nations (Retrieved May 2016, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>), Red Cross and Red Crescent (Retrieved January 2016, <https://www.icrc.org/en/who-we-are/movement>), Medecins sans Frontieres (Retrieved January 2016, <http://www.msf.org/>), Citizen Journalism (Retrieved January 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Citizen_journalism).

Problem Scenario

Your team has been selected to identify a global problem and create either a metaphor that helps others understand the origin/cause of the problem and represents a potential solution that is innovative and creative OR a prototype of an object that would help alleviate the problem. There is no shortage of global problems that your group of extremely energetic, committed, and aware young people could identify, discuss, and engage. The key is to find a global problem that ignites your team's passion. In order to affect change, everyone on your team needs to be personally invested and engaged in the outcome. In other words, you must begin to replace your apathy or sympathy with empathy.

Success Determinants

Success will be determined by:

- Alignment to design motto: "Make it smaller, stronger, do more, be easier to use, be cheaper, be clean, be greener."
- Degree to which your metaphor or object looks like your design sketch
- Development of a metaphor or object that will affect change
- Uniqueness of your metaphor or object and the degree to which it describes or solves an actual global problem
- Your team's ability to articulate the connections between your chosen global problem and your metaphor/object.
- Your team's ability to develop a meaningful connection between a global problem and your personal passion

Parameters

- Global issue must come from the ideas generated during class discussions.
- You may use items and tools in your classroom's pantry.
- You must prepare an appropriate social media or news presentation, which demonstrates your global issue, your passion, and how your solution/object will affect change.
- You must use something of everything in your participant group kit.