

The Empathy Algorithm: Decoding Bias

(Year 9 - Ages 14-15)

Lesson 2 of 9

Lesson Overview

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| Lesson Title: | The Empathy Algorithm: Decoding Bias |
| Year Level: | Year 9 (Ages 14-15) |
| Lesson Duration: | 60 minutes |
| Key Focus Areas: | Unconscious Bias, Cultural Diversity, Active Listening, Myths. |
| Curriculum Links: | <p>Australian Curriculum – Health and Physical Education (Foundation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>AC9HP10P04</u>: Analyze how... biases and stereotypes influence... relationships and health outcomes. (Focus on bias in healthcare)• <u>AC9HS9K02</u>: The influence of... social cohesion and cultural diversity on Australia's democracy.• <u>AC9E9LY01</u>: Use interaction skills... to interpret and evaluate others' perspectives and arguments. |

Learning Intentions

- Define Unconscious Bias and In-Group/Out-Group dynamics.
- Investigate how cultural and social bubbles affect our willingness to help "strangers."
- Analyze specific myths or misconceptions about donation that exist within different community groups.
- Develop communication strategies to bridge the gap between different perspectives.

Success Criteria

- Explain why humans naturally find it easier to help "people like us" (Evolutionary explanation).
- Identify one specific barrier to donation for a diverse group (e.g., religious uncertainty, mistrust of medical systems).
- Demonstrate Active Listening techniques (e.g., reflecting back, open questions) in a role-play scenario.
- Reframe a "myth" into a "question" to address it respectfully.



Teaching Sequence

Work through this lesson in the following sequence:

| Duration | Part | Focus |
|------------|-------------------------|--|
| 15 minutes | Part A: The Sorting Hat | Activity: Sticker simulation to demonstrate In-Group bias. |
| 15 minutes | Part B: The Glitch | Concept: Why brains are biased. Worksheet Part 1. |
| 20 minutes | Part C: The Error Log | Analyzing barriers (Religion, Trust, Dignity). Worksheet Part 2. |
| 10 minutes | Part D: The Patch | Scripting responses & Conclusion. |

Part A: The Sorting Hat (15 minutes)

Step 1. The Setup

- Action: Place colored dot stickers (Red, Blue, Green, Yellow) on students' foreheads. Do not let them see their own colour.
- Task: "Without talking, group yourselves with 'your people'."
- Observation: Watch the chaos. Watch who leads, who follows.

Step 2. The Debrief

- Ask: "How did you feel when you found your group? Safe? How did you feel about the 'Blue' group?"
- Concept: "This is In-Group Bias. Your brain instantly trusts people who are 'Same' and mistrusts 'Different'. This is the software we need to update."

Part B: The Glitch (15 minutes)

Step 1. The Celebrity Scenario

- Activity: Students complete Part 1 of the Student Worksheet (Celebrity vs. Homeless).
- Discuss: "Is one life actually worth more? No. But our Bias tells us it is."

Step 2. The Donation Link

- Explain: "Bias stops donation. People think 'Why should I help them?' or 'The system doesn't care about me.'"



Part C: The Error Log (20 minutes)

Step 1. Analyzing Myths

- Worksheet Part 2: Go through the table.
- Key Move: Don't call them "Stupid Myths." Call them "Valid Fears based on Values."
- Example: "The fear of doctors not saving you isn't stupid; it's a fear for Safety. We validate the safety concern, then correct the fact."

Step 2. The Diversity Gap

- Discussion: Discuss the "Matching Problem" (from Teacher Content). Why do we need donors from every background? (Because genetics matter in matching).

Part D: The Patch (10 minutes)

Step 1. Scripting

- Task: Students write their "Patch" (Response) in Part 3.
- Share: Ask 2 students to read their respectful response.

Step 2. Conclusion

- Say: "You have updated your internal software. You can now see past the 'Tribe' and see the Human. That is the Alchemist's way."

Differentiated Learning

- Extension:
 - Students research the "Tuskegee Syphilis Study" to understand why some groups mistrust medical systems (Historical context).
- Learning Support:
 - Provide the "Values" answers in a jumbled list for students to match to the "Myths."

Teacher Reflection

- Did the "Sticker Activity" effectively demonstrate exclusion/inclusion?
- Did the class navigate religious/cultural discussions with respect?
- Did students grasp the difference between "arguing" and "validating"?

Assessment

- Worksheet (Part 2): Assess ability to identify the value behind the myth (Empathy).
- Worksheet (Part 3): Assess communication skills (Validation + Correction).

Additional Notes:

This lesson deals with Identity Politics and Social Division. It is crucial to remain neutral and validating. The message isn't "Religion is wrong"; the message is "Religion supports life, let's find the text that says so." This builds bridges rather than walls.

