

**Australia - Secondary School Lesson Plan**

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| ***Classes 7 & 8 – Expressing empathy through writing*** |
| **Overview:**  Many children were directly affected by Nepal’s earthquakes. This experience and their response to the fear have changed over the time since the quakes. How can we express our empathy for their experiences? |
| **Objectives:**   * To explore how our responses to an event change over time. * To respond to someone’s traumatic experience with empathy. |
| **Australian Curriculum links**  EN4 - 1A - Responds to and composes texts for understanding, interpretation, critical analysis, imaginative expression and pleasure.  EN4 – 3B – Uses and describes language forms, features and structures of texts appropriate to a range of purposes, audiences and contexts.  EN4 – 8D – Identifies and considers and appreciates cultural expression in texts |
| **Prerequisites:**   * What is empathy? * What is a reflection? |
| **Hook:**  Show the students a photo of one of the students who contributed a reflection to the Heartquake website. Introduce the student with their name and class then read out their reflection. Ask the students how they would feel in this situation. |
| **Activities:**  *Time passes*  Give pairs of students a set of reflections about the earthquakes from the Heartquake website – one from 1 month after the quakes, 3 months and 6 months. Ask them to read them together and reflect on:   1. Who wrote the reflection? What class are they in? 2. What were they doing before the earthquake? What did they do when the earthquake came? What are they doing now? 3. How did the writer feel during the earthquake? And how are they feeling now? 4. What were they thinking about the earthquake immediately after it? And what are they thinking about earthquakes now? 5. What’s changed? Why do you think it has changed?   *Class discussion*  Get some students to read the reflection they studied to the class. Discuss the role of language – these students are ESL learners. How does that influence their writing?  *Expressing empathy through letters*  Ask the students to write a letter to the student who wrote the reflections. They can tell the writer how their reflection made them feel. They should also include a list of questions in their letters – things they’d like to know more about the earthquake experience or the person who wrote the reflections  *[Teachers – if you would like to take this a step further and send the letters to Nepal for response, please contact Bec (*[*bec@mitrataa.org*](mailto:bec@mitrataa.org)*) and this can be arranged.]* |
| **Resources:**  Heartquake website |
| **Assessment/home work:**  The students’ completed letters and questions |

**Teacher Notes**

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| **Duration of the Lesson:**  60 minutes | | |
| **Topic:**  Heartquake | **Lesson Heading:**  Does time make us forget? | |
| **Background of the importance of the topic:**  This lesson provides an opportunity for students to go beyond media reporting of international events and get to know how students overseas deal with trauma. They will have the opportunity to express compassion and empathy for their peers overseas. | | |
| **Things to think about when preparing your lesson:**  Some students can get emotional thinking about traumatic events and expressing empathy. Be gentle with them and encourage them to express their feelings. | | |
| **Challenges which may be faced and coping strategies:** | | |
| Potential Challenges:  When reading the reflections, some of the students might laugh at the level of English of the students. | | Coping Strategies:  You can remind them that English is their second language and ask them whether they could write a reflection in another language. I always tell my students, “Never laugh at someone’s English when they are an ESL speaker. It means they can speak more than one language!” |