



**GLOBAL EMPATHY EDUCATION  
CURRICULUM**

**Letter  
from The Lunch Project's Founder  
REBECCA WOFFORD**



In March 2011, I visited a primary school at the base of Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, East Africa. I learned that there were many similarities between this school and my children's elementary school in Charlotte, North Carolina. For example, the children attended school for the same amount of time as my children, learned many of the same subjects, and had a loving community supporting them. Yet, there were many differences. There were not many classroom books, chalk was so precious it was kept in a locked box, and there was no lunch program. The children in the Tanzanian school attended school all day with no food - no fuel to learn. We started The Lunch Project's first lunch program at this school, Lemanyata Primary School, in September, 2011.

Upon returning to the U.S. from Tanzania, my son's second grade teacher asked me to give a presentation to the second graders about what I had learned and observed. I did not want them to feel sad for the children in Tanzania - I wanted them to experience the joy and hope I had felt when I was embraced by the Lemanyata school community. The focus of the presentation became how this community was working together to solve a problem; i.e., how the community-sourced lunch program needed everyone's help, including the children's, to make sure lunch was served every day. I included some cute animal photos, with the animal names in Swahili, and showed photos of the beautiful geography of this region.

Our education director brought this simple presentation to another level by adding elements of the culture of the Maasai tribe while emphasizing similarities and differences between the culture of their tribe and our communities. She connected all aspects of the presentation together with the theme that different is not bad; different is just different. Differences are something to celebrate.

After reading several research studies from prestigious universities, we had a better understanding of why our presentations were having such an impact on local kids. We were using what the studies called a "zoomed out" approach to teaching empathy. We were connecting children here to children on the other side of the globe, helping them to better understand their world by cultivating a feeling of "walking in their shoes" without feeling sorry for them. Empathy is the counter to apathy, self-centeredness, and the desire to bully another. Studies also show that it is best to nurture empathy in children before middle school begins.

What started as a presentation in the classroom has grown into a Global Empathy Education Program. Our presentation along with this Empathy Education Curriculum has taken learning empathy to a new level. Thousands of children have experienced global empathy through The Lunch Project's Empathy Education program, and as a result, have expressed a desire to be a part of something bigger than themselves. And, to think, it all started from a simple lunch program.

# The Importance of Empathy

Empathy is increasingly being regarded as a critical skillset in school and in the workplace where diversity is becoming more commonplace in the growing global economy. Empathy is essential for collaboration, leadership, and relationships, as well as emotional and social wellbeing. The benefits of empathy education not only improve classroom culture, but also the culture of our communities.

The Lunch Project's Empathy Education Program uniquely fosters empathy and cultivates compassion in children by connecting them to their peers in Africa. The students learn about Tanzania, the Maasai culture, and The Lunch Project's Lunch Program through an engaging and interactive classroom presentation. The Lunch Project's literacy focused Global Empathy Education Curriculum takes learning empathy to a new level by integrating common-core subjects into lessons that foster empathy.

**“Empathy is the soul of democracy. It is an acknowledgment that each life is unique, unalienable, and deserving of equal consideration in the public square.”**

**Jeremy Rifkin, author of The Empathetic Civilization.**

**For additional reading on the benefits of Empathy Education, please see the following articles:**

- Empathy is the Future Trend in Education, <https://hundred.org/en/media/empathy-is-the-future-trend-in-education>
- How Empathy Affects Learning, And How To Cultivate It In Your Students, By Saga Briggs, <https://www.opencolleges.edu.au/informed/features/empathy-and-learning/>
- Empathy in the Classroom: Why Should I Care, by Lauren Owen, <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/empathy-classroom-why-should-i-care-lauren-owen>
- Building Empathy In Classrooms and Schools, By Brianna Crowley & Barry Saide, <https://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2016/01/20/building-empathy-in-classrooms-and-schools.html>

## GOAL 1: Increase Empathy

- 1A-Consider the perspective of others and share own perspective
- 1B-Demonstrate a concern for others locally and globally
- 1C-Acknowledge similarities and differences of other cultures and find connections
- 1D-Develop a curiosity about cultural differences by generating questions
- 1E-Participate in experiential empathy by interacting with cultural artifacts
- 1F-Define empathy in own words and give a relevant example

## GOAL 2: Understand The Benefits Of Sustainable Community Development

- 2A-Use compassion as a tool to build sustainable change
- 2B-Recognize the importance of cultural respect in the context of sustainable community development
- 2C-Explain how problem solving is most effective when members of the affected community find their own solutions
- 2D-Acknowledge and appreciate the importance and value of education
- 2E-Summarize the TLP approach to empowering communities

## GOAL 3: Develop Confidence In An Individual's Ability To Make Change

- 3A-Describe TLP's approach of ways that individuals can help make changes locally and globally
- 3B-Make a connection to TLP's approach to the classroom and community
- 3C-Demonstrate resilience in the face of challenges
- 3D-Express ways that individuals can change THEIR WORLD and THE WORLD
- 3E-Express ways that they feel personally empowered for making changes in their daily life

## GOAL 4: Develop Cultural Competence

- 4A-Share awareness of own culture, acknowledge and respect differences, and examine attitudes about differences
- 4B-Show increased knowledge of Maasai Culture
- 4C-Compare and contrast cultural differences in language (Swahili vs. English vs. Maa)
- 4D-Recognize and describe facts about: geography, biodiversity, climate, ecology and environmentalism in Tanzania

The Curriculum Design information was written by The Lunch Project's Global Empathy Education Curriculum Author, Tosha Arriola, M.Ed., Director of Teaching Fellows Program at Queen University.



## Curriculum Design

Universal Design for Learning, or UDL, and Differentiated Instruction give an engaging alternative to a standardized, “one size fits all” model of education. I created this empathy education curriculum using these methods so that the curriculum would be able to be used in a variety of educational settings. It is based on the premise that teachers need to “teach every student” where they are. UDL and differentiation encourage instructors to provide all learners with multiple pathways to success.

In the context of education, we define differentiation as a teacher's responsiveness to a learner's needs. When differentiating, teachers understand that a student's need to express themselves, sometimes work with a group and sometime on their own, and occasionally have additional teaching on a particular skill all play a role in their lesson planning. Differentiation provides a variety of activities, assessments, and strategies for meeting the diverse learning needs of the students rather than teaching the class as though all individuals in it were alike.

Students come from multiple cultures, have different strengths, interests, and learning preferences. Students with very advanced learning skills need a challenge while students who struggle need extra support. All these students have the right to expect teachers who are ready to meet the students as they are and I wrote this curriculum with this framework and methodology in mind. I wanted to give the teachers a variety of activities and integration ideas so that they can adapt the lessons to meet their students' needs and interests. I included activities that meet multiple intelligences, kinesthetic, visual and auditory learning styles, project based learning, and experiential learning activities throughout the curriculum. By designing the content of the curriculum to align with literacy and social studies, it gives teachers the flexibility to use the lessons during their literacy block or social studies class. When it was appropriate, I integrated the lessons into the other subject areas like math, science, and art.

Differentiation of the content, products, and processes were incorporated in the lessons so that teachers can select the activities that align with their learners' interests, skills, and learning styles. By giving students autonomy in selecting the activities that they do, it can increase their motivation and willingness to complete the activities with creativity and passion. It also allows teachers to scaffold their learning by assigning higher level thinking activities to students that may be identified as gifted or talented and easier activities for struggling students.

For more information:

<https://www.aacu.org/diversitydemocracy/2014/fall/kelly>

<http://www.edugains.ca/resourcesDI/Brochures/DIBrochureOct08.pdf>

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/100216/chapters/Understanding-Differentiated-Instruction@-Building-a-Foundation-for-Leadership.aspx>

em·pa·thy: (ˈempəTHē/) *noun*

The ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

## Instructional Implementation of The Lunch Project's Empathy Education Curriculum

Welcome to our innovative and impactful way to teach the important life-skill of empathy.

This curriculum was formulated to be used in conjunction with ***The Lunch Project's*** empathy education classroom presentation which is the catalyst for this work and will be used as an introductory "hook" to get the students excited about the curriculum. Teachers can use this curriculum as an interdisciplinary method to **integrate character and values** while interweaving them with **common core literacy standards and social studies content**.

Empathy education is a transformative tool that can be used in classrooms to not only improve the classroom climate and civility but to also incorporate cultural knowledge in the content areas. By learning about others and making global connections, we allow our students to read, write, learn, and work collaboratively across disciplinary boundaries.

This empathy education curriculum is literacy based which allows teachers the flexibility to use the read aloud book from each lesson in any part of their literacy block. Special care was taken to make sure that a **variety of learning styles and multiple intelligences** were addressed in the lessons so that teachers have multiple options to differentiate their instruction. This curriculum **also highlights 21<sup>st</sup> century skills including communication, collaboration, and critical thinking**. The **culminating project-based learning component** allows students to collaborate in small groups while solving a real-world problem with a service learning lens.

Some teachers teach one lesson a week for five weeks during their literacy block and allow the differentiation or multiple intelligence activities to expand the options during centers. Other teachers allow their students to choose which activities in the extension or connection portion of the lesson they would like to complete to add more depth and rigor to their learning. Many teachers wait until their social studies time to teach the cultural components of the social studies curriculum with these lessons. Some may choose to reserve this curriculum towards the end of the year after end of grade testing is complete to keep students engaged, attentive, and motivated to continue learning. Students feel empowered as they learn about how they can make a difference in the world through the activities presented in the lessons. This curriculum does not need to be taught in any specific order and each lesson can be a standalone lesson which allows teachers the flexibility to teach this when they have time.

We would love to hear about how you taught this curriculum and opened the minds and hearts of your students. We will send teacher and student surveys for you to complete and return to [education@thelunchproject.org](mailto:education@thelunchproject.org).

Sincerely,  
**The Lunch Project**

[www.thelunchproject.org](http://www.thelunchproject.org)

The Lunch Project's Global Empathy Education Curriculum ©  
Published by The Lunch Project  
North Carolina  
2018

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## Topic: Culture (3-5)

Students will develop cultural awareness by comparing and contrasting cultural differences between the United States and Tanzania, helping to facilitate inclusiveness and empathy within the classroom and beyond.



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## Essential Learning Targets:

### GOAL 1: Increase Empathy

- 1A-Consider the perspective of others and share own perspective
- 1C-Acknowledge similarities and differences of other cultures and find connections
- 1D-Develop a curiosity about cultural differences

### GOAL 3: Develop Confidence in an Individual's Ability to Make Change

- 3C-Demonstrate resilience in the face of challenges
- 3E-Express ways that they feel personally empowered for making changes in their daily life

### GOAL 4: Develop Cultural Competence

- 4A-Share awareness of own culture, acknowledge and respect differences, and examine attitudes about differences
- 4B-Show increased knowledge of Maasai Culture (Tanzania)

### Essential Question(s):

How is the way of life (culture) in the United States the same as in Tanzania? How is it different? How can I solve problems like the character did in the story? Make connections with the character's feelings and try to put yourself in her place (empathize with her).

### Materials:

#### Copies of the worksheets

**Book:** [Mama Elizabeti](#)

**Smart Notebook File** (if you have a Smart Board - if not, use matching game cards for group sort)

**Additional resources:** May need paper and markers or paint for a differentiation activity

## Standards:

### SOCIAL STUDIES:

3. C.1.1 Compare languages, foods, and traditions of various groups living in local and regional communities.

4. C.1.1 Explain how the settlement of people from various cultures affected the development of regions in North Carolina (languages, foods, and traditions).

5. C.1.4 Understand how cultural narratives (legends, songs, ballads, games, folk tales, and art forms) reflect the lifestyles, beliefs, and struggles of diverse ethnic groups.

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1

Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.3.B

Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1

Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2.B

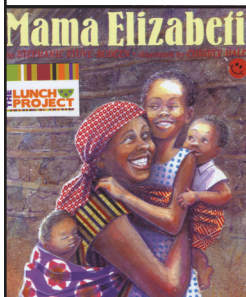
Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.6

Describe how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.D

Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.



### Synopsis

Elizabeti has a new baby sister, so now she has to help her mother by taking care of her younger brother, Obedi. She has been practicing by taking care of her rock doll named Eva, since Obedi was a baby. Her little brother gets into mischief as she tries to do her chores. Elizabeti faces a problem when her baby brother gets lost while she is supposed to be watching him. She uses problem-solving skills to figure out a solution of watching her brother and completing her chores and responsibilities.

### Mama Elizabeti

**Author:** Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen

**Illustrated by:** Christy Hale

**Themes:** Siblings, Identity/Self Esteem/Confidence, Responsibility, Families, Cultural diversity, African, Games/Toys, Home, Realistic Fiction

## Lesson Procedures: (45 minutes not including extension activities)

1. Look at the cover of the book. Make a prediction about what you think the book will be about and where you think the story takes place. We are going to read this story that takes place in Tanzania, which is where **The Lunch Project** supports students' by providing lunch to fuel their learning.

2. Read the book aloud stopping to ask for predictions or make connections.

On pgs. 5-6, ask students to use text and picture clues to determine the meaning of the word **kanga** (colorful wrap or piece of fabric). On pgs. 7-8, how do you think Elizabeti feels? Have you ever felt that way? Turn and talk to a neighbor about it. On pgs.11-12, look at the illustrations. Why do you think they have to go "get water" and what is unique about how they carry it? On page 17, make a prediction about what you think happened and how will she find Obedi? What could Elizabeti have done differently so that she could get water and keep a closer eye on her brother? Look carefully at the illustration on pgs. 19-20 to see if you can spot Obedi.

3. After reading the story, let the students draw a picture of their favorite part of the story and retell that part of the story including details from the story and embellishing it with details from the illustrations.

4. Answer the multiple choice questions (**Resource A**), and complete the Venn diagram. As a class, complete the T chart as a conclusion to the lesson to summarize the ways that we are alike and different. Students should note that we have many more similarities than differences. There should be a much longer list of how we are similar including: human, have families, wear clothes, need water, have friends, take care of brother & sisters, live in houses, have chores, play, etc.

5. The students that **The Lunch Project** helps provide lunches for in Tanzania are similar to Elizabeti. Think about how difficult it would be to go without lunch or snacks during the school day. As a class, think about how that would make you feel as students. How can we show responsibility by helping meet the needs of others? What do you do to show responsibility? (See Responsibility Activity **Resource B**)



### Heart of the Matter/ Presentation Tie-in

Culture describes the different ways people have of doing the same things. For instance, everyone eats, sleeps, wears clothes and makes homes, but how we do these things may look different depending on where we live. Name some things that are unique to the culture of your school.

The speaker from The Lunch Project introduced the Maasai culture of East Africa. Brainstorm what you remember from the presentation.

Even when our cultures are different, we can still find ways we are all the same. Help students remember ways that Le-manyata School is full of students just like themselves.

**In Mama Elizabeti we meet a girl in East Africa with a big responsibility. Look at listen for parts of the Maasai culture that you learned about in The Lunch Project presentation.**

### Empathy Development Discussion

A necessary part of empathy is developing the ability to identify your own feelings, and recognizing the feelings of others.

Ask students to take a quiet moment and "check in" with themselves. What are they feeling right now? Think about this morning before school. What **feelings** did you have. Help students differentiate their feelings from their actions.

Have students think of the person who drove them to school (or another adult all students see regularly). Have students think about the way that person was acting and guess what they were probably feeling. What clues did you use? Example: tone of voice, facial expressions, body language.

### Empathy Education Ex- ercise

Practice carrying something on your head like the Maasai do. Set up a "path" for students to walk around the classroom, hall or playground as they practice. Try several different items that are shaped or weigh differently.

Was it easy or hard for you? How did this activity make you feel and why? Was one shape easier than another? Would a container of water be different than the things you tried? Would it be easier or harder if you were born Maasai? What are some of the feelings the Maasai children might have if this were a part of their regular responsibilities?

## Differentiation/Multiple Intelligences:

Students can choose one of the following activities:

- Responsibility Activity (Resource B)
- Write a story about a time that they got lost or lost something that was important to you. Compare their story to Elizabeti's situation and compare the how you would feel to the character in the book.
- Think about **The Lunch Project Presentation**. Use a sheet of paper to draw a child who is just like you, but Maasai. Add details to what the Maasai peer is doing, wearing, feeling and seeing in their environment.
- Practice carrying something on your head. Think about carrying a jug of water on your head. Would carrying things on your head be easier for you if you were Maasai, why or why not?

## Assessments:

### Formative Assessment:

Students can accurately answer discussion questions and essential questions.

### Summative Assessments:

Vortex &  
Venn Diagram Sorts  
Multiple Choice  
Questions

Worksheet Answers:  
1-B, 2-D, 3-C, 4-A, 5-B

## Extensions/Connections:

Write a list of the chores or responsibilities that you have to do at home and compare and contrast them with Elizabeti's. (Resource C)

### Social Studies Integration:

Help students locate Tanzania on a globe or world map. Questions that students might answer based on the map include:

- On what continent is Tanzania? (Africa)
- On what part of this continent is Tanzania located? (southeastern)
- On what ocean is Tanzania? (Indian Ocean)
- What is the capital of Tanzania? (Dodoma)
- What large lake forms a border with Tanzania? (Lake Victoria)

From: <https://www.leeandlow.com/images/pdfs/elizabeti.pdf>

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

## Multiple Choice Questions

Choose the best answer for each question about Mama Elizabeti.

1. What did Obedi do while Elizabeti was sifting the rock out of the rice?
  - a. He ate the rice.
  - b. He slapped at the basket and made the rice fall on the ground.
  - c. He ran around.
  - d. He started making a lot of noise.
  
2. What does the word *kanga* mean on page 5?
  - a. Act like a kangaroo
  - b. A heavy jug
  - c. A bow for your hair
  - d. A colorful cloth used as a wrap or to carry things
  
3. What is the main idea of this story?
  - a. Elizabeti lives in a village.
  - b. Elizabeti does not have a mother.
  - c. Elizabeti helps her mom by doing chores and caring for her brother.
  - d. Elizabeti only wants to play with her doll.
  
4. Which explanation best describes how Obedi got lost?
  - a. Elizabeti had to set him down to get water and he wandered off.
  - b. He was throwing a fit so Elizabeti just left him.
  - c. Mama saw him and took him home without telling Elizabeti.
  - d. Obedi went off to play with his friends without telling her.
  
5. What was different about the way that Elizabeti carried water from the way that we carry heavy things in the United States?
  - a. She had a friend carry it with her by holding one of the handles.
  - b. She carried it on top of her head.
  - c. She pulled it in a wagon.
  - d. She pushed it in a cart.

# Responsibility Activity

## 3rd-5th Grade Culture Lesson

**Responsibility** - Taking charge of yourself or an activity & facing the consequences of your actions.

**Purpose:** By discussing the situation in Mama Elizabeti, the students are reminded how they can show responsibility in different parts of their life and feel empowered to help others.

**Materials:** Chart

### **Procedure:**

1. Ask students to turn and talk to a friend to come up with a definition of what they think responsibility is. Then share the above definition with them.
2. Discuss the story Mama Elizabeti and ask the following questions:
  - a. Was the main character in the story responsible in your opinion? Why or why not?
  - b. What could she have done differently so that her brother would not have wandered away?
3. Ask the students to think about what kinds of things they have to do in order to be responsible? (Do chores at home, complete school work on time, etc...) Fill out chart.
4. Describe the responsibilities that the Maasai students have in Lemanyata School. Students collect firewood and brush on the way to school. They carry water from the well up to the school to be used for making lunch. Without these chores, none of the students would have lunch.

### **Concluding Questions:**

1. How do you show responsibility in your school, in the community, and globally?
2. How do your responsibilities empower you to help others?
3. What is your opinion about people who do or do not show responsibility?

# Responsibility Chart

What does responsibility mean in your own words?	What are characteristics of responsibility?
Examples	Non-examples

**RESPONSIBLE**

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

A list of my chores and responsibilities:

My responsibilities if I were Maasai:

What did you learn from this story? Compare this story to **The Lunch Project Presentation**. What connections can you make?

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# Glossary

## Working Definitions for Empathy Education Curriculum

- **Empathy** – The ability to imagine and connect with what another person is experiencing and feeling.
- **Sustainable Community Development** - Empowering community groups to problem-solve within their own cultural context with long-term solutions as the end goal.
- **TLP Model for Sustainable Community Development**

The TLP model has 4 equal parts

Farmers selling locally grown food to <b>The Lunch Project</b>	Mamas earning a living wage to cook healthy, traditional lunches for students
Kids in Tanzania contributing wood and water for the kitchen and working to be successful students	Kids in America raising funds and awareness for their peers in Tanzania to have the fuel to learn

The Lunch Project recognizes that each of these parts is vital. Each person - children and adults alike - understanding their equal significance in the process develops empathy and empowers everyone involved to be culturally-sensitive change-makers.



# Acknowledgments

The Lunch Project's Global Empathy Education Curriculum was created thanks to numerous people including Tosha Arriola, Sarah Morgan, Lecia Shockley, and others.


**Tosha Arriola** is an instructor at the Cato School of Education at Queens University of Charlotte. She is also the Director of the Teaching Fellows Program, where she supervises leadership and community service projects to enrich the students' educational experiences.

Tosha taught for fifteen years in the Charlotte Mecklenburg School district and also served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Costa Rica early in her career. She received her B.A. in Spanish and Education from SUNY Cortland and her M. Ed. in Literacy from Queens University. She has a certificate in Executive Coaching and has recently completed a Master's in Science in Organization Development at Queens University of Charlotte.


Tosha's most recent awards include:

- Leadership in Education Award: Queens University of Charlotte, 2016
- Outstanding Female Faculty Award: Black Student Union, Queens University, 2016
- Excellence in Teaching Award: National Society of Leadership and Success, 2015
- MeckEd Teacher of Excellence: Charlotte Mecklenburg, 2014

We are so grateful for Tosha's contributions of time, expertise, and dedication to The Lunch Project's Empathy Education program.



**A special thank you to Sarah Morgan** whose experience and expertise with the initial experiential classroom presentation was the springboard and foundation for this curriculum. Her Heart of the Matter tie-ins are an integral part of bringing empathy into the classroom through this curriculum.



**We would also like to thank Lecia Shockley**, CMS Teacher of the Year, whose real-world approach to education at Selwyn Elementary School provided an invaluable perspective that ensured this curriculum would easily resonate with teachers and students and have a lasting effect.



The Lunch Project is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and could not exist without the generous support of donors. **We would especially like to thank the Reemprise Fund** for its contributions to the creation of this curriculum.

Have additional curriculum ideas?

We would love to hear from you. Please email [education@thelunchproject.org](mailto:education@thelunchproject.org)

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