

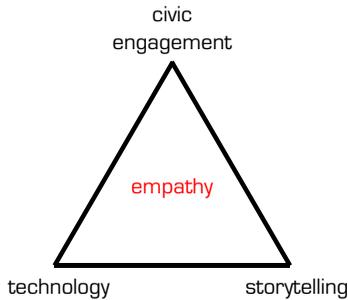
Utilizing Technology to Support the Development of Empathy

Anonymous MIT student | Karen Brennan

MIT Media Lab

How can technology-infused collaborative learning environments be used as authentic opportunities to learn about oneself, others, and to understand interpersonal dynamics?

Motivation and Framing



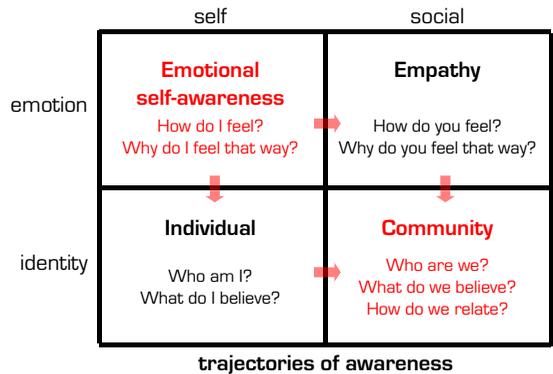
In order for community members to recognize injustice and work well together toward a solution, they must be able to empathize with others.

This project explores the ability of storytelling and technology to support the development of empathy and foster civic engagement. We use Scratch - a new programming language designed for young people - as a tool for self-expression.

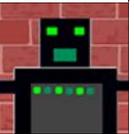
Approach

Throughout the workshop, students explore both emotion and identity, through trajectories of awareness.

We begin with projects related to emotional self-awareness and individual identity, and then, throughout the weeks, move toward awareness of the feelings of others and one's identity as a part of a community.



We worked with six male and four female Boston-area middle-school students for 14 weeks. The seven thematic sessions explored trajectories of awareness **directly** (through curriculum) and **indirectly** (through variations of collaborative groupings).

<p>Session 1 Introduction to Scratch Community building</p> 	<p>Session 2 Interactive collage My perspective</p> 	<p>Session 3 Shared experience story Your perspective</p> 	<p>Session 4 Three-part story Multiple perspectives</p> 	<p>Session 5 Things unseen Inattention blindness</p> 	<p>Session 6 30 years in the future Beliefs</p> 	<p>Session 7 Project</p> 
--	--	--	--	---	---	---

Preliminary Interpretations

Largest community (teachers, parents and students) participation as seen by school administrators.

"Scratch is a programming language that lets you express yourself."
- Participant

"Participating in this workshop has given my daughter a voice. She's a different person now."
- Participant's parent

References

Bers, M., & Chau, C. (2006). Fostering civic engagement by building a virtual city. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, (11)3.
 Resnick, M. (2007). Sowing the Seeds for a More Creative Society. *Learning and Leading with Technology*, December 2007.
 Zaff, J.F. (2002). Encouraging civic engagement: how teens are (or are not) becoming responsible citizens. Online.

MIT OpenCourseWare
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

MAS.714J / STS.445J Technologies for Creative Learning
Fall 2009

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.