Every educator has, at one point in time, been a student. However, the longer one teaches, the more difficult it is to remember what it was like to be unfamiliar with our subject matter.

Practicing empathy—the ability to understand and share the feelings of another—can help educators better understand their class, their students’ needs, and what drives student behaviors.

Overall, these insights can lead to greater learning experiences for students and a greater teaching experience for educators.

In addition, modeling this behavior for your students can serve as a learning tool, increasing their empathy for their future patients or students.

The Journey

One of the best exercises for embracing empathy is to create an empathy map.

Map your empathy journey by asking yourself:

- **WHO am I empathizing with?**
  Consider the situation students are in and their role within it.

- **What is their GOAL?**
  Put yourself in their shoes. Consider what students are trying to accomplish in this situation.

- **What do they SAY?**

- **What do they SEE?**
  Consider what students are trying to accomplish in this situation.

- **What do they HEAR?**

- **What do they THINK and FEEL?**
  Synthesize students’ pains and gains. What are their fears, frustrations, and anxieties? Conversely, what are their wants, needs, hopes, and dreams?

- **What do they DO?**

Once you can answer these questions in full, you have reached the final destination of the empathy map: understanding. This understanding will help you alleviate your students’ pains and elevate their gains to promote more effective learning.