



Inspiring Cultural Empathy in Early Learners Through Anthropology

How do we inspire empathy in our programming?

Annie Gentile, Arline Lee, Daniel Zeiger

What is Anthropology? □

Anthropology is commonly studied in a four-field discipline. One of these sub-fields is Cultural Anthropology. The three other disciplines are linguistics, archaeology, and biological anthropology. □

Cultural Anthropology is the study of people's culture. Anthropologists do this by watching, listening, and asking questions. □

How would you define culture?

What do we mean by empathy? □

We define empathy as being able to put yourself in the shoes of another and share the same feelings. By recognizing the commonalities children share with a variety of cultural groups, they build connections and the capacity to understand the variety of human experiences.

Empathy is a key skill required for effective Anthropological Research. By practicing it with our participants, we prepare them to engage more effectively in complex cultural studies later in life with an open mind and while avoiding moral judgement or "othering."

Considerations:

- Engaging empathy can start with what children know, but comparisons between cultures should not always be to the US. Western society. Be sure to compare other cultures between each other.
- We are not a culturally—specific institution.** As such, it is not our place to speak *for* these cultures. We focus instead on Anthropology as a science.
- Cultural Anthropology does not yield the same "take-home facts" that other science workshops do. The caregivers expectations have to be taken into account and addressed appropriately.
- Cultural Anthropology is not archaeology. All of these cultures live in the present and should be represented as such. Make sure what you are referencing are current practices.
- Participants arrive with inherent biases that be acknowledged and challenged where appropriate.

Museum Assets Used for Learning Anthropology:

- Cultural Collections Objects, games, and music
- Videos and Images
- Guest scientists
- Museum Halls
- Partners from Institutions that represent specific cultural groups.

Pedagogical Tools Used for Learning Anthropology:

- Imaginative or Dramatic Play
- Storytelling
- Utilization of culturally specific crafting techniques when appropriate.
- Allowing time for personal cultural expression

Children and Family Learning Programs:

A multitude of hands-on, science education programming for children and families at various levels of commitment and topic areas, all of which provide opportunity for learning anthropology

Drop-in

The Discovery Room is a public, drop-in space, that offers families and children an interactive gateway to the wonders of the Museum, and a hands-on, behind-the-scenes look at its science.

Every major field of Museum science and research is represented. Children, accompanied by adults, can explore an array of artifacts and specimens, puzzles, and scientific challenges.



A section of the Discovery Room is dedicated specifically to the science of Anthropology. **Rather than focus on any one culture**, the space is used to showcase a rotation of special exhibitions of **cross-cultural objects**. In featuring themes such as masks, dolls, and homes.

The Discovery Room's anthropology section looks to **expose young visitors to objects they are already familiar with across many cultural contexts**.



This space features anthropological objects that can be explored with an adult, such as this Northwest Coast Totem Pole

Types of Puppets

- Flager puppet:** A puppet featuring a flag, made primarily to amuse children.
- Claw puppet:** A puppet with long, thin fingers attached to various parts of the puppet's body.
- Marionette:** A puppet manipulated by strings attached to various parts of the puppet's body.
- Shadow puppet:** A red puppet manipulated behind a screen with illumination from behind.
- Stick or rod puppet:** A puppet attached to a stick or a rod, some with sticks attached to form a head or body.
- Water puppet:** A small marionette puppet, attached to a wire or rod that sticks to the water's surface. Puppets stand behind a bamboo screen to complete the illusion.

The current display of puppets has been particularly fun as visitors from all over the world have put on shows using the theater set up.

1-5 Days

Adventures in Science offers weeklong summer camps in Museum classrooms to children grades 1 through 5, as well as school year 1-3 day session workshops for children ages Pre-K through 5th grade.



Children can interact with and handle this replica of a blanket from the Haida Nation. The blanket is put into its cultural context through an interactive storybook written by member of the Haida Nation.

Through this exploration, the object is shown in its lived context and its importance defined by the stakeholding community.

All activities are guided by **implicit principles** focused on shaping (or in some cases reshaping) the mental framework that children bring with them when studying different cultures. These principles complement the **explicit learning goals**, which make up the content of the activities.

Different hopscotch patterns from around the world. Children play 3 different kinds, place 18 patterns on a map, and design their own!

Hall Guides ask the children to engage in some of the games from these other cultures and provide support for the adults to address some of the complexities of culture that are not represented in the hall.

One Year

The Early Adventures Program is school year, weekly classroom program for children and adults that nurtures and promotes shared science learning through inquiry and explorations.

As children return each week with an adult family member or caretaker, their interest and sense of discovery are nurtured through introductions to various fields of Museum science. Hall visits and behind-the-scenes access to the Museum's collection of specimens engage students and adults in every class.



Students in the Early Adventures Program often engage in dramatic play in order to familiarize themselves with cultures around the world, as well as build their own community in the classroom.

Here, students recreate heavy stone movement with boulders and pencils in order to better understand how the People of the Pacific created the Moai sculptures, featured on Easter Island.

In a study of types of homes throughout the world, Early Adventurers visit the Hall of Eastern Woodland Indians to observe and discuss the types of homes Native Americans built and lived in, and compare them to the homes they live in and know.



Multi-Year

The Science and Nature Program is a seven-year, weekly, classroom program for children and their families that uses a variety of scientific disciplines to promote and enhance understanding of the natural world.

Curiosity is key in this program, where students begin at 3 years-old, and continue through 10 years-old. Love of science is encouraged and harnessed in students and families through years of disciplines, including Anthropology, that build upon one another, live animal handling, and experiences with Museum researchers and scientists.

In the entry-level class of the Science and Nature Program, 3-year olds and their parents travel the Museum looking at different musical instruments throughout the world from many cultures.

After observing and comparing different musical instruments, students and families return to class to make an instrument of their own.



During a 1st grade unit entitled "Treasures of the Museum," students and parents explore celebrations and cross-cultural traditions through a private showing of masks from cultures across the world housed in the Museum's Education Teaching Collection.

Throughout the 6-week unit, students experience a wide variety of concepts from cultural anthropology through the objects on display and in its collections. This knowledge is then utilized for detailed study in later years.