This international symposium, presented by the Enjeu[x][1], program is a forum to share resources and techniques for promoting empathy through education. The symposium also provides an opportunity to collectively evaluate the effects of Empathy Education. This necessary re-examination of the theoretical foundations of Empathy Education will permit a greater understanding of why the concept has gained such popularity over the past twenty years and how it may respond to current pedagogical and societal questions.

Empathy has gained increasing attention in the field of education since the 1990s. In the UK, the development of emotional intelligence was integrated into the curriculum in 2005, and is taught according to the Goleman (1995) program model. In Canada, more than 200,000 students have participated in the *Roots of Empathy* program since its inception in 1995. The program is currently implemented in numerous countries.

Organizations such as Oxfam offer a range of pedagogical resources to support empathy education, which is considered to be the key to developing equitable global citizenship. Several UNESCO programs share the same program goals. Ashoka, the influential worldwide network of social entrepreneurs, has produced an empathy toolkit to support the teaching of this skill which is vital to any open, innovative and collaborative society.

In the French context, an examination of school curricula reveals that considerable emphasis is placed on the teaching of abstract concepts when advances in cognitive science have shown the fundamental role played by emotional and physical intelligence in the development of thought.
Although social, sensory and affective development constitute a significant component of the overall purpose of schooling, very little funding is allocated to this type of learning.
By targeting core subject areas almost exclusively, schools are effectively hindering the development of emotional literacy which is grounded in empathy. Proof of this is provided by the fact that the word *empathy* did not appear in the knowledge base of cultural competences for personal development and civic education prior to 2015. Teaching empathy requires the implementation of experienced-based and emotion-based strategies.

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[1] a clearinghouse for research and innovation related to well-being and quality of life for children and youth
http://enfance-jeunesse.fr/

Several factors contribute to the current popularity of the concept of empathy; these include:

a) Advances in neuroscience that reveal that our ability to understand and accept others is regulated not only by logical reasoning but also and predominantly by embodied mechanisms;

b) Global migration has led to many forms of cultural blending. Consequently, the beginning of this century is marked by the major challenge of embracing diversity and prioritizing the humanist values that are fundamental to our ability to act and live together in a world in which we have already reached our geographical limits.

### a) The evolution of cognitive science

Frequently confused with the concept of sympathy, the word empathy is a translation of the German word *Einfühlung*. Literally translated, the word means "to feel" (*fühlen*) "internally" (ein). The German psychologist and phenomenologist Robert Vischer proposed the concept of *Einfühlung* in his 1872 thesis. The concept is closely connected to aesthetics. At the beginning of the 20th century, Theodor Lipps (1924) adapted the concept of *Einfühlung* to the field of psychology and Edward Titchener used the term empathy for the first time to describe "a process … by which one perceives and feels the emotions of others". Sigmund Freud, Sandor Ferenczi, Heinz Hohut and Carl Rogers all contributed to the uptake of the term through their respective application in clinical practice. It is also very clear that the concept of empathy has influenced the works of George Herbert Mead, Gabriel Tarde, René Girard, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann despite the fact that they do not use the word per se. According to the psychologist Davis (1980, 1994), empathy is "the capacity to respond to, share and understand the lived experiences and mental states of others". Gregory Batson (1987) sees it as a decisive element of altruism. The discovery of mirror neurons (Rizzolatti et al., 2008) marks the fact that neurology followed the lead established by the field of psychology. This important discovery brought to light the existence of neural substrates of our ability to put ourselves in the place of others by means of kinesthetic and emotional mirroring. Alain Berthoz and Bérangère Thirioux define empathy as "adopting or experiencing the point of view of another person while being simultaneously conscious of remaining oneself". According to them, there is urgent need to study this phenomenon in classrooms. Other researchers are interested in the relationship between empathy mechanisms and altruism as well as the development of morals in education (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2009). Baron-Cohen (2011) on the other hand, has explored the social and biological factors that impact empathy.These advances have led to major epistemological turns such as the discovery of the role that emotions play in knowledge and the application of these effects in regulating social interaction (Berthoz, 2004; Decety, 2004).

Though there is growing theoretical understanding of the phylogenetic and ontogenetic development of empathy, transfer from theory to practice remains weak, particularly in the field of education (Hoffman, 2008; Decety, 2004; De Waal, 2010). The concept of empathy in education has led to a few projects, including the proposal of an enactive empathy-based paradigm addressing arts-based education (Aden, 2008, 2010, 2014, 2015), reduction of school-based violence (Favre, 1997, 2001; Tisseron, 2010), mentoring juvenile delinquents (Zanna, 2008, 2010) and the establishment of peaceful coexistence in classrooms (Zanna, 2015).

### b) The uncertainty of the future of the planet

Since 2010, the massive influx of migrants to Europe highlights the question of welcoming outsiders. Whereas Germany has opened its doors to 800,000 refugees since 2015, France's stonewalling on the issue is perplexing. Research shows that 56% of the French population, regardless of age or political

stance, opposes such policy. More recently, anti-immigrant sentiment has led to the UK decision to leave the European Union. The two most common reasons given to justify, though not legitimize, this rejection of migrants are: (a) the challenging economic climate; and (b) the substantial cultural gap between migrants and prevailing national identity. Such resistance to open our doors to the needy is at best antagonistic in a country that has historically held fraternity as a core value. Overall, the tendency of adults to withdraw and self-segregate is due not only to context but also largely to the result of education. In fact, from a very young age, children gain awareness of having concern for others. During the course of initial socialization, children's recognition of other people as possible versions of themselves extends from recognition of personal significant others, such as parents, to the recognition of others in general (Mead, 1963). This progression leads children to gradually understand that they share a common destiny in which their personal identity and actions depend on those of others. If we are first and foremost more sensitive to the people in our inner circle (i.e. family and friends), it is possible in democratic egalitarian societies to develop greater concern for strangers (in the sense of "people who are not familiar"). The earliest development of concern for others is dependent upon what Martin Hoffman (2008) calls "inductive discipline"[2]. This inductive discipline extends beyond simply transmitting norms and rules of behaviour to sensitizing children to the impact of their actions on their social environment.

Beyond the massive influx of migrants, international events such as armed conflicts and environmental protection policies that call for drastic lifestyle changes, have made it impossible for the world's wealthiest nations to persist in polarizing self-perception voiced in terms of "them" and "us". To do so might entail the radicalization of local reaction to the hyper-complexity of world issues. Competition is destructive and therefore no longer an option in this diverse environment. It needs to be replaced by collaboration (Rifkin, 2010).

Our societies and their education systems are now confronted by a heretofore unseen structural paradox. We must consider our differences both from internal and external perspectives and develop solutions to act together, relying on our common humanist values without falling into the cultural trap of universalism (Foucault). At one time, school was a place of national social conditioning in a world of non-porous borders. Today school has become a transitional and transnational melting-pot where we must learn to live together by negotiating our fluid identities (Baumann, 2007) and working to reduce indifference to our differences. Because it enables students to "learn how to live together in class" (Zanna, 2015) by instilling a sense of others as possible extensions of oneself, empathy education may become "the foundation of inter- and transcultural competence" (Aden, 2008).

Ultimately, through this international symposium we will provide a forum to debate the question of otherness and the development of empathy in order to promote dialogue and the exchange of ideas among teachers, educational stakeholders and researchers.

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[2] "Inductive discipline" implies educational programs that target the development of empathy in children and adolescents.

The various models of debate will include:

➢ Fifteen-minute testimonials from teachers and other educators in a variety of formats including posters, workshops, and culminating performances from student projects on the theme of empathy.
➢ Twenty-minute presentations on research and experiments addressing the development of empathy in school settings and in the voluntary sector.
➢ Scientific posters on research in progress.
➢ 2 to 3 minute video clips created with students to show how educators and educational stakeholders are integrating social competencies into their institutional structures.

Roundtable discussions and thematic discussion workshops will provide participants with the opportunity to exchange ideas and make connections.

**Timeline**

**Deadline to submit proposals:**    November 10, 2016

**Committee responses:**              December 30, 2016

Submit proposals in French or in English in the form of a WORD and PDF document to empathie2017@univ-lemans.fr using *EMPATHY CONFERENCE* in the subject line of your email. Proposals should also include the name(s) and affiliation(s) of the author(s).

- For submitting academic presentations, send a title and an abstract that must not exceed 500 words (including references).
- The Deadline to submit papers is April 15, 2017
- For submitting posters or testimonials, send a title and an abstract that must not exceed 250 words.