Microexpressions

Paul Ekman's book, Emotions revealed: Recognizing faces and feelings to improve communication and emotional life (2007) demonstrates the universality of emotional expression. Ekman's research found that people in the United States show the same emotional expression as those in Papa New Guinea, for example, and that those who have been blind since birth, never seeing a facial expression, show similar emotions. He designates seven emotional expressions as "microexpressions", brief involuntary facial expressions, which can be categorized as disgust, anger, fear, sadness, happiness, surprise, and contempt.

Being in tune with people's emotional states that manifest themselves in nonverbal cues can assist with empathy. Should we detect any of these emotional states, we can either share in their emotion or imagine how the person feels. Observing body language and nonverbal cues is a skill that can be practiced.

In this activity, students can measure their ability to identify microexpressions by firstly reviewing the attributes of the different expressions **https://www.scienceofpeople.com/microexpressions/** then secondly taking a quick test on the web **https://www.microexpressionstest.com/micro-expressions-test/.** Students are then encouraged to practice observing microexpressions with their classmates, friends, and family. Results can be reported back and discussed in the larger class.

Another implementation of this activity can be for all students to take the microexpressions test **https://www.microexpressionstest.com/micro-expressions-test/** or be shown photos from Ekman's book (such as the one on the next page), determine and record the microexpression privately, then tally all of the results to determine how well as a class students read microexpressions.