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## Abstract

Currently in American society, political and social polarization is driven by the media and even the White House, causing apathy and misunderstanding among multiple groups of people. We now face a crucial point in our history to focus on building empathy in our society, and the best way to spark change is through our youth. Empathy is an integral component of education for all teachers and students, but it seems to be emphasized only in elementary classrooms. In actuality, secondary English Language Arts (ELA) classrooms are the ideal space for students to build and practice their empathy after learning the basics in elementary school. Empathy can be a complex concept for students to grasp, so teaching it through young adult literature allows students to step into a character's world and helps them understand other people's perspectives. Video games, though frequently criticized for their violence and lack of academic value, can also help students understand and practice empathy if they are implemented properly in a classroom. In this paper, I describe multiple educators' approaches to teaching empathy and implement some of their ideas into a unit centered on monsters, using Walter Dean Myers' young adult novel *Monster* and Toby Fox's role-playing video game *Undertale*.

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