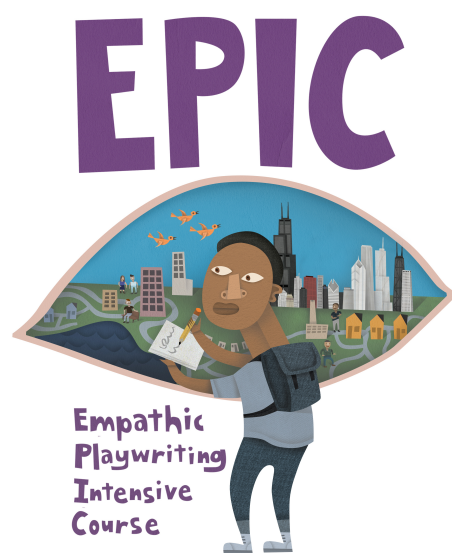


Empathy is one of the most important skills for students as they prepare for life and work in this globalized world. [View Online](#) Or [Forward](#) to a friend.



***Absent empathy, sincere kindness and unity,  
how useful are passing test scores  
for changing communities and an ailing world?***

—Homa Tavangar, Edutopia



Empathy is one of the most important skills for students to learn as they prepare for life and work in this globalized, 21st century, world.

It is crucial that students be equipped with an ability to perceive and appreciate personal and cultural differences across humankind.

If students fail to understand what motivates others, they fail to understand just how alike we all are in our motivations. This is a serious problem: one that breeds selfishness, promotes complacency and violence, and inhibits bridges of understanding from being built across the gulfs of race, culture, and class—bridges that ultimately lead to positive social change.

**[EPIC \(Empathic Playwriting Intensive Course\)](#)** is a 16-session arts learning program delivered by Silk Road Rising in the Chicago Public High School system. Students realize empathy by practicing the transformative power of playwriting. [Support EPIC by making a gift today.](#)

The EPIC residency begins when we partner a teaching artist with a CPS classroom teacher. The teaching artist begins by introducing students to the world of dramatic writing: its history and its role as a vehicle for civic engagement and social change. Then, students identify their own community issues to explore from the perspective of someone other than themselves. Twice a week, the teaching artist visits the classroom to deliver a lesson and assist students as they develop these issues into their unique play scripts. The program culminates in a staged reading of student plays by professional actors. The reading is video recorded and made available online allowing the students to share their creative accomplishments with family and friends, bridging their work from the island of the classroom to the mainland of their lives and communities.



Last year, 162 Chicago public high school students participated in EPIC. Funding arts education is a major challenge; we hope this holiday season you will choose to gift arts learning to Chicago's public school students. Your donation will support delivery of the EPIC program.

**Make a Gift**

**[In the midst of CPS budget cuts, your gift ensures that Chicago public high school students continue to benefit from our innovative arts learning program.](#)**

**CASE STUDY:  
Drama in the Drama Department**



Carissa is an enthusiastic, first-year teacher, hired to teach music and choir—a position that also required her to teach a drama class. Because she has experience directing musicals for youth programs, Carissa felt comfortable taking on this challenge. However, once the school year started, she quickly found herself in need of assistance.

Carissa was facing such challenges as an ill-defined curriculum, limited dramatic resources, and a classroom unconducive to theatre. On top of this, whenever students would drop out of other classes throughout the semester, they would often end up in her drama class. Facing these and multiple other challenges, Carissa invited Silk Road Rising to bring EPIC to her classroom.

How did EPIC help shape Carissa as a teacher and bring a well crafted curriculum that increased student participation and learning? [Download and read the full PDF case study of Carissa's teaching journey HERE >>](#)

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