Responding to students with empathy can help you better understand their behavior and find strategies to support them. These seven tips can help you practice empathy in your classroom.

1. **Follow the “Platinum Rule,” not the “Golden Rule.”**
   Treat students the way they want to be treated — not how you want to be treated.

2. **Ask open-ended questions.**
   Don’t assume you know how a student is feeling. Pose questions like, “Is there something about today that’s been hard for you?”

3. **Set aside your own reaction.**
   Instead, focus on understanding the student’s experience.

4. **Use “I” statements (not “you” statements) to avoid blame.**
   Start sentences with phrases like “I feel” and “I’m concerned.”

5. **Actively listen to what the student is saying.**
   Give your full attention to the student. Then state in your own words what you think you have heard.

6. **Don’t jump into “fix it” mode.**
   Sometimes students don’t want you to fix their problem; they just want to be heard.

7. **Validate students’ feelings.**
   Tell students they have the right to feel the way they feel. Their feelings aren’t right or wrong.