

Peace and Global Education begins with me...

Listen
to understand

“And before you finish eating breakfast in the morning, you’ve depended on more than half of the world.”

— Martin Luther King, Jr.



Peace and global education begins with me: Listen to understand

Committee for Action on Social Justice (Peace and Global Education Action Group)

Communication for community: connecting by “speaking peace”

To promote peace in today’s diverse communities, people need the capacity and the willingness to pair their speech and expression with open-hearted listening. When speech is paired with listening to understand, you have communication—an opportunity for connection, or “communion.” Together, these form the basis of true community. In fact, the words “communicate,” “communion,” and “community” are all etymologically related to “common,” which implies sharing and unification. Authentic communication, communion, and community can thus be seen as antidotes to the ignorance, misunderstanding, discrimination, oppression, and violence that often stems from disrespectful, inconsiderate speech and expression. This pairing can be seen on the walls of many elementary classrooms with posters that pair rights with responsibilities such as, “I have the right to express myself, and I have the responsibility to listen respectfully to my classmates.” This pairing results in dialogue that can become community building in action.

This kind of approach to community building can be seen in several communication models, including Marshall Rosenberg’s practical non-violent communication (NVC) and Jürgen Habermas’ more academic theory of communicative reason. Such an approach involves speakers and listeners working together to create a dialogue that:

- supports social justice and ecological sustainability.
- values respect, inclusion, participative democracy, joy, and celebration.
- increases mutual awareness (i.e., each works to be aware of their own motivations and intentions as well as the motivations and intentions of those they are listening to).
- enshrines the value of connection and community.

Peace and global education begins in your class: Lesson ideas

Listening and speaking deeply through dialogue is one key to global education. Teachers can practice and model this kind of speaking and listening. They can purposely create and cultivate structures in the classroom and plan teaching and learning activities that allow students to discover, develop, and practice the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for peace-oriented communication.

Teachers can provide opportunities for students to develop oral communication skills during co-operative learning strategies, when addressing subject and content areas. (For example, using strategies and techniques like “the jigsaw-method” and “think-pair-share” to structure the process for meeting learning outcomes in science.) It could also involve direct instruction in a formal model of communication like non-violent communication. (Lessons are provided in the classroom resource book: *The Compassionate Classroom: Relationship Based Teaching and Learning*.)

Most importantly, give students opportunities to listen to their classmates and other community members. Teach and encourage them to make meaning out of what they hear in ways that generate genuine understanding.

Check this out:

cnvc.org

tinyurl.com/dck5ts

tinyurl.com/dafoev

tinyurl.com/2wzu9e

Sura Hart and Victoria Kindle Hodson. (2004) *The Compassionate Classroom: Relationship Based Teaching and Learning*. Encinitas, CA: PuddleDancer Press.

“What I want in my life is compassion, a flow between myself and others based on a mutual giving from the heart.”
Marshall Rosenberg, NVC founder