

Communication Comic

This lesson helps students understand the difference between aggressive, passive, and assertive communication. They will discuss the differences and demonstrate their learning through the creation of a comic strip that conveys each mode of communication. Ultimately the lesson ties communication back to respect and caring, noting that how we communicate - both the manner in which we communicate and whether or not we use words - makes a difference in how our message is received and how others feel.

Caring Sub-Concept(s)

Compassion, Empathy, Kindness

Lesson Timeframe

35-40 minutes

Required Materials

- Paper for the comic strip
- Writing/coloring utensils
- Ruler (to draw squares for comic strip, if desired)

[The Four Basic Styles of Communication](#)

This page can help explain the three types of communication highlighted in this lesson; for advanced groups, you could discuss the fourth type: passive-aggressive.

Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.



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AS A RECOMMENDED PROGRAM
FOR SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING.**

See last page for details.

Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Identify different ways of communicating with others.
- Communicate assertively.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Helpfulness. The word alone can bring both positive and negative images to mind. Are you the type to help with everything? Or are you one that avoids helping because you can't seem to find the time? Finding a balance when it comes to helpfulness is vital for self preservation in this profession.

Establishing and maintaining clear boundaries with your team, your school, and yes, even your own family, will help you better organize your time, thus allowing you to either pair down on the help you are providing or find time to actually pitch in on more occasions. Helpfulness is a terrific character trait, but can often be over-expected with teachers. Speak up when you are taxed. No one likes a grumpy helper! Need ideas on HOW to say no?

Check out this resource:

<http://teacherhabits.com/effective-way-teachers-say-no/>

Tips for Diverse Learners

- Use a pie chart that visually represents how much of communication is verbal; vocal and body movements as described below.
- Share a driving analogy to better understand the difference between Passive, Aggressive, and Assertive (Healthy) Communication: When you're riding in a car, I bet you've seen all kinds of drivers. Passive drivers are those who hold back by driving too slowly as everyone zooms by. That can be unsafe because driving too slowly is not following the rules. Aggressive drivers sometimes make choices like cutting in front of other people or going too fast. Assertive drivers follow the rules, drive safely, and drive with a purpose in mind; they know where they are going and how to get there safely.
- Write lines on cards if they have difficulty remembering their parts.
- The comic strip is a good activity for visual learners, struggling readers and writers, and children with autism.



Share

3-5 minutes

Ask students to share some ways they can communicate with others without talking (i.e. using hand signals, rolling eyes, crossing arms, etc.).

Good! This is called non-verbal communication. Now, let's practice. I am going to ask for volunteers. You are going to draw an emotion out of a hat, and, without using any words - non-verbal communication only - you are going to convey the emotion to us and we are going to see if we can guess it.

For this quick activity, simply write down emotion words like happy, sad, surprised, angry, tired, disgusted, etc., and have students draw from a hat, bucket, or whatever is handy.



Inspire

7-10 minutes

Video Clip and Discussion

Today we are going to talk about different ways to communicate, both in how we speak and through our actions. We can communicate with our words or with our bodies. Like we just talked about, when we communicate without words it is called nonverbal communication or body language. According to experts, 7% of our communication is verbal, 38% is vocal (the way we say things), and 55% are body movements! That means most of the messages we send every day we send not through our words, but through our actions. Have you ever heard the phrase, "Actions speak louder than words?" Now you know why!

Now we are going to watch a clip that shows how much toddlers can communicate with sounds and gestures. While they are using their voices, they aren't articulating words, so this still shows a lot of fairly dominant non-verbal communication.

Play the video (2 mins.): Talking Twin Babies:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_JmA2CIUvUY

Then ask the following questions: (If you can't stream the clip, ask the last question only.)

- *How do the boys communicate verbally?*
- *What are some of the ways they "talk" without saying words (non-verbal communication)? (Moving their legs, gesturing with arms, laughing, bending over.)*
- *What are some ways that you talk without using words?*



Empower

20-25 minutes

We also can communicate in different ways, some that are healthy and some that are not. What do you think it means to communicate aggressively? Can you give some examples of this way of communicating? Do you think this is healthy? Why or why not?

Allow students to respond.

Aggressive communication is hurtful or unkind. It includes fighting, verbal or physical threats, or bullying as well as gossiping or spreading rumors. It does not show respect or caring. What are some non-verbal cues that might go along with aggressive communication?

What does it mean to communicate passively? Passive communication is communicating without directly addressing what you are trying to say. Can you give some examples? Do you think this is healthy? Why or why not?

Allow students to respond and write their responses.

Communicating passively means avoiding the problem and letting someone treat you disrespectfully. It includes ignoring people, not saying anything, and letting the other person get what he or she wants. It could include not standing up for yourself, doing things behind other people's backs, or being secretive. What are some non-verbal cues that might go along with passive communication?

What do you think it means to communicate assertively? Can you give some examples? Do you think this is healthy? Why or why not?

Allow students to respond.

Good! Assertive communication is how you can let others know about your needs and wants, and at the same time consider the needs and wants of other people. You stand up for your rights while respecting the rights of other people. It includes listening to others, asking questions, using positive body language, showing empathy, taking turns, using eye contact, not looking at your cell phone, etc.

Which of these three communication types has the potential to show respect and caring to others? Passive communication isn't always rude, so why isn't that a respectful, kind way to communicate? (It neglects self-care if you do not stand up for yourself. Remember that self-care is important when you communicate, too!)

How does our means of communicating affect how others receive or hear our message? (Example: If you are talking with your parent or guardian, and you are rolling your eyes and crossing your arms across your chest, how will your parent/guardian hear your message?)

Communication Comic

Give each student an 8.5" x 11" sheet of paper and have them fold it into 3 columns. Label each column: Aggressive, Passive, and Assertive. Have

students create a comic strip conversation that represents each type of communication.



Reflect

5 minutes

To gauge understanding of the material, choose from either the evaluation or reflection questions as discussion, writing, or journal prompts. Consider providing additional time for deeper evaluation and reflection as needed.

Evaluation Questions

- What are some examples of nonverbal communication?
- What is the difference between aggressive, passive, and assertive communication?
- How can you communicate respect and caring through your non-verbal communication? Through verbal?

Reflection Questions

- What way do you communicate most of the time?
- What are some steps that you can take to communicate in a more positive way?
- Do you think there are times when you should communicate in an aggressive or passive way? Why or why not?

Talking to someone else is not the only way we communicate. What our body language says can be just as, if not more, important! When we do communicate, we need to ensure we are not acting in an aggressive or passive manner. Being assertive can help us communicate effectively and show respect for others and ourselves. Acting respectfully is a way to show kindness to ourselves and others.



Extension Ideas

- Divide students into groups of three to five students and hand each group of students a role-play. Note how many students are needed for each role-play. Allow a few minutes for students to create their role-plays. Have each group perform their role-plays, and ask the questions noted on each role-play.



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The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has been reviewing evidence-based SEL programs since 2003. Kindness in the Classroom® meets CASEL's SElect Program and is included in the CASEL Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs.

Kindness in the Classroom® met or exceeded all of CASEL's criteria for high-quality SEL programming. Kindness in the Classroom® received CASEL's highest designation for high-quality SEL programming.

<https://casel.org/guide/kindness-in-the-classroom/>

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