

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

SOCIAL SKILLS LESSON PLAN

CASEL COMPETENCY: SELF-MANAGEMENT

SOCIAL SKILL: LISTENING

Created by: Robyn Orr

BOOK INFORMATION

Book title: The Other Way to Listen

Author: Byrd Baylor and Peter Parnall

Publisher and date of publication: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1978

ISBN: 978-0-689-81053-4

Number of pages: 27

Reading level: 1-2

Interest level: 2-6

BOOK SYNOPSIS

The narrator is a child who talks about an old man they knew who could hear corn singing. The child wants the man to teach them and would stay quiet while the man was listening. The man explains that it takes practice and you cannot be in a hurry. The man listened to many things in nature that most people cannot hear. The man would ask himself questions like how the lizard might feel about the rock it is on and how the rock feels about the lizard. He continues to give advice on how to listen and being willing to take advice from things around you. He says to start with something small to listen to. The child tries and tries but still cannot hear anything from the thing they chose. One day the child sang and all of a sudden the hills were also singing. Then the child listened. It was not loud or made of words, and it could not be explained. The sound came straight up from lava rocks humming. They listened and it was the most natural thing in the world.

The book could be used to help students understand the importance of listening. Students who often feel like being connected with technology or students who do not want to pay attention in school, despite having the capacity to do so, could benefit from this.

This book could be used in conjunction to social studies lessons on Native Americans or lessons on mindfulness.

LESSON OBJECTIVE

The goal of this lesson is for students to practice self-control through listening. Students should understand that unplugging and refraining from talking allows them to listen and better learn.

LESSON MATERIALS AND ADVANCE PREPARATION

Advance Preparation

- Be prepared to play a recording of Simon and Garfunkel's *The Sound of Silence*. If you want to listen to just part of it, start on "And in the naked light I saw".
- 3-6: Know beforehand where outside you can take the students during this activity

KEY VOCABULARY AND CONCEPTS

Personification: Attribution of a human characteristic to something nonhuman

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Ask students to close their eyes and listen. Play *The Sound of Silence* by Simon and Garfunkel. Afterwards, explain to the students that the book is about a child who wants to hear things that are very hard, if not impossible to hear. The child learns the value of listening.

READ THE BOOK

POST READING DISCUSSION

Ask the class why the old man could hear all the things the boy could not hear? What do you think he got from listening to them? The man asks, "I wonder how that lizard feels about the rock it is sitting on and how the rock feels about the lizard." How does listening help us come up with interesting questions?

The boy starts with listening to one thing and then can listen to more. What does this teach us about building the habit of listening? How can we make listening like the child describes it, the most natural thing in the world?

POST READING ACTIVITY

K-2: Play Simon Says with the students. Explain that sometimes when you give the direction you may say it quietly or even whisper it. Explain that if they do not hear it and then not do it, they are out. Help students who become Simon work on different volumes of giving directions.

3-6: Take the students outside of the building where they can be closer to nature. Ask them to take five minutes to find a spot and listen. Explain that they should just try to listen. Explain that they probably will not hear anything unexpected, like the child in the book eventually does, but they may learn something. After five minutes ask the students what they heard. Ask how hard it was to not talk. To not think. Ask them what they learned. Explain that sometimes we can learn more through simply listening.

CLOSURE

We can practice self-control through listening. When we take time to really listen to our teachers, parents, and our own thoughts, we can learn more about the world around us. This week, when you feel like talking, instead give listening a try. Pay attention to what you are being asked to do or learn. When you feel like connecting with technology, go outside and just listen.

"Even the wisest mind has something yet to learn"
- George Santayana

