

You can't just kind of throw on kids as an isolated technique or intervention. It has to be integrated in your classroom environment. So on, on day one, you know with the gangs, um, with the small group discussion, with the creating that emotional safety, right? So my class, when I was a classroom teacher, before I say anything about non-violent communication, on Fridays we circled up, and the kids had the opportunity just to vent. About just, about just personal problems, about school problems. That's building community. Also, in my classes, I had different roles and responsibilities. I don't care of you, before my class, you were the worst student in the school. When you came into my room, it was a new slate. I had kids they had, they become...they were like um, door managers. They manage the time because I'm crazy about time like I always get off track. They passed out supplies, they were the greeters. Like I had kids kind of feel involved from the beginning and you kind of work this in, progressively. You just don't drop it on them. Because it's going to seem like a demand. Does that makes sense? So I had the council on Fridays, I had classroom management physicians, I put kids in like a hot seat if they wanted to kind of debate something, it was called the Hot Seat. You kind of made it fun and meaningful, but it was also integrated in my curriculum, my social studies curriculum. You know so again, it has to be done in a skillful way where the kid is seeing value in themselves, is a sense of community, is a sense of camaraderie in the classroom, and then they have more buying. And again I had classes where the students that normally like never talked, through this, through non-violent communication, through some of the classroom physicians, they become alive. And they would say, up until this class like I never felt like I was a part of anything but I felt actually included. And then you give them these skills in listening context, so not only they have these skills and now we have classroom debates, oh we have town hall discussion about intercity

violence, about my social studies curriculum, about whatever happens in our personal lives, now was in context. Now they got the feelings and the needs, and now they kind of feel some sense of empowerment because it's just not an isolated thing I'm telling them to do. They can kind of fit. Now I remember when I was teaching in LA, and I had this girl man, she will come to class in, late. And not only she come late, she will come just being just loud, right and she will comment out as a drama from whatever happened to my lunch.

So basically being mindful and being in the space of wanting to connect but also wanting so that you can come into my class two minutes late and then just rub on the class. This is not about being nicey nice, this is about connecting, but it is about setting boundaries also. My classes were very, it was kind of like organized chaos, but everybody had a role, everybody had a goal and the class is very productive. But this one, she was in the seventh grade, she's about 6'2" oh my god, she was a mess, but it just kind of ... she like a mess to all the teachers. To make a long story short, we kind of talked about something that will help her and help the class.

Actually I had the feelings and needs around the room, I had these posted around the room because we had our Friday Councils. She was kind of like the drama specialist. So like she would come in and for like about five minutes, give and take for kids like if anybody had an issue about lunch she would do this, she would give them empathy and that little buy-in for her she was like puddy in my hand for the rest of the year. And teachers don't really think outside of the box, like we're so used to this power over, write all about ourselves this limited view that these kids are really thinking about, they're not thinking about us, they're trying to get their way, their needs met. And if kids don't have their basic needs met, they're not going to rest, they're not getting nurturing and connection, emotional safety, they're not getting shelter and have to worry about survival, like a satisfied need, okay no longer motivates. So if kids needs are not

satisfied like they're not motivated to do anything but satisfy those basic needs. So some of the population that I deal with, so you address those basic needs, then you won't make it to the higher level needs, like belonging, like creativity and self expression and cooperation. Any other ...?

Guest: We didn't do the last one.

We just got into it, thank you for bringing me back. Okay "man so this class stupid, we're not learning nothing in here.

Guest: Yeah, I heard what you were saying, what you're feeling, that we're not learning anything, that's stupid, that must have really frustrated you and really anger you and I'm here to listen.

Yeah. Any other comments or scenarios...

Guest: Could I push you farther to offer like a follow up, because no kid would take that, they would take that answer like, they want more than just that.

Well this is just a hard to hear message, we kind of like the first part, you're saying like what about the whole dialogue look like.

Guest: Oh just go one step further.

Man this class is stupid, now we're not learning anything in here.

Guest: Yeah, I understand that you feel like you're not learning anything in here and that must really frustrate you, I'm here to listen.

Whatever Man, I mean you ain't able to try, you only curb on me Man, you ain't able to try and hear what I got to say Man.

Guest: Yeah, you feel I'm not present with you right now and you feel like you're not even trying to have a conversation.

Yeah Man this class is Wack.

Guest: You feel the class is Wack?

You feel the class is Wack?

Guest: And that frustrates you?

It's kind of annoying.

Guest: It annoys you.

Now you see right there, if you're paying attention and I do this with kids all the time, it's a dance. Like I hitting with a wack, you stay present, okay you still frustrated and a kid that hit you, no Man I ain't frustrating, I'm just this, I'm just ... You know it takes one person to communicate like this. A lot of times adults always say you know teachers is about the kids, is about the administration. No it's not. It's about who you're being, like that you stand strong and what you believe in and if you have the tools and the confidence, it only takes one person to communicate like this and you can invite people to dance with you. Even if the kids don't have this language, you can invite people to dance with you. Does that make sense? And immediately after he goes, a couple of hours of feelings and needs, what do you need. You need to be included, you need to be considered, you need some space sometimes. Are you angry? And then we agree on some type of mutual strategy, that meets what? Both needs. Because this about win-win. This not about him just accommodating the kid because the kid had a hard life, no. And this is not about the teacher being just accommodative because he's authority figure. Your teaching kid is how to negotiate, how to create consensus and that's like the real meat of Nonviolent Communication.

I had a student who he was kind of like a thug, but he was in my class, he's like this tough kid and you know a lot of times in environments these kids like he is like hair thing, and

the saggy pants, I don't know if you guys have experienced that, but you know a lot of teachers and security guards, I've seen situation where he got maced by security because he didn't take his hat off and it just escalated, just escalated because the security guard comes, where you're supposed to be and he's grabbing on his ID and the kid's like, hey get off me and then it escalates, right. So working with security guards you know they need the training also. But this kid you know principal took his hat, he's in the principal's office and as soon as he sits down he says to the principal, you know I'm guessing in you authority position you look a bit frustrated because you keep having to tell me to take my hat off, would you like me to you know, when I come into the school, put my hat in my locker? And she was just like.... And he was also kind of can I hurry up and go to Mr. Ervin's class. She was like, What?! Who's teaching you this stuff? So he kind of used it in real time.

I had another student, she was going through a transition in her sexuality and her and her mother didn't get along. And she kind of used this communication, she brought home both packets and her and her mother had a two-hour conversation about her sexuality. So if you have a meaningful connection, it's not really... it is about the curriculum but it is about relationships and if you have a real meaningful connection the kid is like they will take this and they will use it.

I also had kids say when I was teaching in the school, and I have a documentary about the work that I did in 2006, had a lot hair...had a lot of dreadlocks, but they were, they kids were like, okay Mr. Ervin, we're learning all this good stuff, we're going back to our neighborhoods in our homes and our parents are still cursing us out like they don't get it. So we had a conversation, I could have ticked it here, but I want to understand what they needed and what we can come up with together. I think they needed some recognition and they needed, they wanted

their parents to be more involved. So we did like a, we called it like a premier night where when they shot the film and about three to four months later we invited like teachers, security guards, parents, superintendent, community members out to watch this DVD. And when I tell you I that the kids that I taught in my teaching career they were not like the higher learning kids, these kids were the bottom on the barrell, they were not the athletes, they were not student council, they were like basically trouble makers. But when I say they take so much pride in this, showing this DVD, they dressed up, there were ushers, they created poems- they took ownership because it was theirs, and also when I shared with the teachers at the teachers lounge we want to show this DVD and I'm excited because I want parents to come out and the teachers are like, they're not going to show up, they're not going to show up. Parents you know they don't show up in things like that. I could have took that right, move, move, move. And I just say you know guessing a little bit, they got a little bit frustrated and disappointed about the fact that you know you have a low turnover in terms of what you're doing in your profession. So what I did was I got creative and I did a robo-calls and I did some real crazy stuff over the robo-calls and I told the kids to really pump it up. The night of the premier, it was over 200 people there. So again, I work with educators across the country and a lot of educators are kind like defeated, like deflated, defeated, oppressed, disappointed, resigned, cynical, victimized, etc., etc., etc., right. So this type of communication really resurrected my profession, then it led me to other which eventually led me to mindfulness and I really realized in my practice that it is Nonviolent Communication, it is mindfulness. You guys ever heard about restorative practices? I'm also really coherent with restorative practices, it all integrates, because this is all about the thoughts and being in the present moment and being aware and really being able to connect and really resolve our differences, that's what it's all about.