

**Connect with Kindness:  
Child-Generated Teacher Friendly Curricula Materials  
*Executive Summary for School Leaders***

Kindness is the overarching concept that we use to teach social and emotional skills identified by research, such as the Easel Project, for developmental age-ranges of 4-10; 11-13; and 14-18 years of age. All the lessons leverage student voices; sparking authentic engagement, inquiry, and hands-on project-based learning that is equitable, culturally responsive, and transformative.

The beginnings of these kindness curricula materials came over a year ago, when two non-profit organizations, Action for Media Education and the Northwest Center for Excellence in Media Education based at the University of Washington College of Education teamed up to create a showcase for children, worldwide, to use as a forum to express kindness. With parent permission, children, schools, and families uploaded how they express kindness.

Using the children's entries into the showcase, seven themes emerged, all of which align with research but originated from the utterances of children. This is an important distinction as we did not change the verbiage, so the language itself aligns with the language of students which also allowed to compose Kindness Curricula. Each theme further develops concepts through four lesson formats ranging in instructional time from 10 minutes to 4 weeks, depending on the type of lesson and its complexity. Key vocabulary words are embedded into each theme's lesson which reinforce and connect the concepts to prior knowledge.

Teachers are given a choice for each lesson to either originate with an idea that is provided to them or to prompt students to formulate an idea through questions. This is where the students' voice, culture, and experience come into play. We learned from piloting these materials that children's ideas are enriching beyond measure and that they should be trusted to know how to proceed especially given prompts to do so.

Lessons begin with an example from one of the entries or one of a pilot classroom student, and since these are from all over the world, each student exposed to these curricula will have both mirrors of themselves and/or windows into other cultures as they learn what expressing kindness looks like to other kids their age. Higher order thinking questions to elicit deep thinking, sharing, and connecting after each class makes and implements their plan of action is included to reinforce and extend learning.

These lessons are simple, yet highly transformative. We heard from many of our pilot teachers that the culture of their classroom and in some cases the school, changed as a result of implementing these curricula. Please read the introduction for the grade levels you lead, to learn more about the research and outcomes of Connect with Kindness.

***Endorsement of impact*** from the deputy school principal Valentina Habunek Mrazović, III. Primary School, Varaždin, Croatia:

*"We are extremely glad to have been part of this project. In addition to improving our relationships with each other, the bonds between students and between students and school staff have strengthened. We connected more with the local community and achieved cooperation with a kindergarten and a retirement home. In this project, we*

*started to develop some ideas for the future and formed a new project to reduce food waste. We reminded the students of the importance of caring for others, making others happy, caring for the elderly, the environment, nature, and animals. We also raised awareness of the importance of national heroes, and we took care of people in crisis, especially children from Ukraine. We raised the level of humanity in our school, thank you for that."*