

#PassTheMicYouth: Celebrating Youth Voice

Overview:

This lesson is an opportunity for students to “take the mic” to demonstrate -- and celebrate -- the power of youth voice.

Duration: Varies according to the number of students presenting; allow at least two hours for students to prepare their pieces, either in class or for homework

Materials Needed: Internet access for research purposes and any resources students may need to facilitate self-expression (e.g., art supplies, an audio or video recorder, or a smartphone).

Directions:

Now is students’ turn to take the mic! In this two-part lesson, students will:

- 1) Identify and research (if necessary) a social issue that is foregrounded in youth leadership, social justice or activism, and connected to their own lived experiences. Students are then expected to produce a piece using the directions outlined below.
 - Submissions must relate to lived experiences, social justice, youth leadership, or activism. Formats include, but are not limited to: blog posts, audio recordings of personal essays or narratives, spoken word poetry, original music, paintings, or interviews featuring a young leader(s) or activist(s).
 - Ideas include, but are not limited to: sharing a personal experience, a think piece related to a social justice issue; shining a spotlight on the voices of an underrepresented group(s); and highlighting small-scale or large-scale, on-the-ground change.
 - Key concepts include, but are not limited to: power, sovereignty, legitimacy, interdependence, social movements, human rights, justice, liberty, equality, development, globalization, inequality, sustainability, peace, conflict, non-violence, critical self-reflection.
- 2) Showcase pieces in an open mic-like setting.
 - This should be an informal presentation and celebration of students’ work, experiences, ideas, and passions. As many of the themes involved with each piece may be personal, students should only present if they feel inclined.

Large Group Debrief:

- What was that experience like for you, both as a listener and a speaker?
- What does it mean to take the mic? What does it mean to pass the mic?
- How can we best listen after we have passed the mic?
- In what ways is passing the mic related to allyship? In what ways is it related to leadership?
- Celebration -- of progress, of resilience, of our own and others' willingness to take risks -- is an important though often overlooked part of social change efforts. Why do you think this is the case? Why is it important to celebrate ourselves and one another and to include resilience as part of the broader narrative of youth leadership and social change?

Facilitator Notes:

- Interested students are encouraged to submit their piece to the #PassTheMicYouth podcast and/or blog. All featured contributors will receive an inspirational gift aimed at nurturing continued leadership. All contributors will be required to sign a release form.
 - #PassTheMicYouth seeks to amplify the voices of young people by sharing their lived experiences and stories of activism through a podcast and blog. This platform aims to highlight youth-centered issues, demonstrate the necessity of youth leadership, and provide educators and youth-serving professionals with useful tools and resources for fostering youth leadership and strengthening youth/adult partnerships.
- If time and resources permit, invite other members of the broader school and community to attend this showcasing of lived experiences and youth leadership possibilities expressed through art, photography, spoken word, video, or other format. Allow time for students and participants to network and explore potential partnerships to extend the scope of their efforts.