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Instructional Design

**Classroom Conflict Resolution Skills For Teachers:**

**Instructional Design**

Rationale

Effective conflict resolution in the classroom is much more than a valuable management tool, it can be a useful way to transform conflict into learning, teach social and behavioral lessons, and protect and nurture positive relationships (Martin, 2009). Also, successful conflict resolution entails more than getting one party to back down or for both parties to forget the arguing point. It requires analysis of the situation, determining the needs and feelings of all involved, prioritizing desired outcomes and enacting a solution.

A strong background and training in conflict resolution is an important tool for any teacher not only for classroom peace and growth but for navigating their professional careers and personal lives (Association for Conflict Resolution, 2007). This course is designed to provide educators with the knowledge, understanding, and skills needed to handle conflict in a rational and productive way. With the ability to quickly identify the type of conflict, the teacher can reach a faster and more satisfying resolution, as well as steer the conflict away from destructive outcomes consequences to constructive ones with educational benefits.

The course is designed with a constructivist approach in which educators will attain a basic knowledge of conflict resolution and then build upon that knowledge so that they are able to apply what they have learned in real-life scenarios. Also, the instruction design will apply a group investigation model, so that, once basic concepts have been covered, educators can work in groups to assess and resolve various mock conflicts. The instructor should allow ample time in the beginning of the unit to discuss ways in which educators handle conflict as many people are able to resolve conflict through common sense means that closely resemble to methods taught in the unit. These instinctive methods merely need to be adjusted or supplemented and lets the educator realize that the ability to effectively resolve conflicts already lies within them.

Unit Outcomes

Subunit Outcomes: Subunit One – Define & Understand Conflict Resolution

* Educators will review and discuss the definition(s) of conflict, how to recognize conflict. (Bloom’s Analysis)
* Educators will discuss the types of conflict and possible consequences of conflict. (Bloom’s Analysis)
* Educators will envision possible conflicts and ways in which they may result in damage or knowledge. (Bloom’s Synthesis)
* Educators will discuss previous efforts at resolving conflict in the classroom and evaluate themselves on those efforts, with a focus on what knowledge or tools may have benefitted them. (Bloom’s Evaluation)

Pre-Assessment

Participants will be given a sheet with a conflict scenario at the top and asked to write a brief paragraph describing what they believe to be at the heart of the conflict and ways in which they would begin the resolution process. The scenario will be followed by a few general questions about classroom conflict.

Conflict Resolution for the Classroom – pre-assessment

Read the following conflict scenario, then write what you think may possibly be behind the conflict and ways in which you might try to begin work with the girls to resolve the problem.

Scenario: Juanita was upset because her best friend Sara walked by her this morning without saying a word. She didn't speak to Sara all day.

Have you ever been trained in conflict resolution before? If yes, in what context?

How often do you think you encounter conflict in your classroom?

How well equipped do you think you are to help resolve most classroom conflict?

Have you ever sought help in handling a classroom conflict?

Thank you.

Lesson Plans

Lesson One: Introduction to Conflict Resolution (40 minutes)

Content to be covered: Definitions, types, and possible outcomes of conflict

Introductory Activities (10 minutes)

Open-ended discussion on conflict: what it is, what causes it, what types, what are the consequences.

Students also discuss common types of conflict that they see in their classrooms and what they think are effective strategies for resolving them.

Developmental Activities (20 minutes)

Participants work in groups to compile a list of 1) instances in the school day where conflict may arise and 2)ways in which each conflict may be destructive or constructive.

Concluding Activities (10 minutes)

Class discussion of list results. Participants are given copy of Nick Martin’s article, *Transforming Conflict in the Classroom* to be discussed in next meeting.

Materials: Martin, N. (2009). *Transforming Conflict in the Classroom.* Retrieved from http://www.upeaceus.org/news/1163-transforming-conflict-in-the-classroom.html.

Lesson Two: Listening (40 minutes)

Introductory Activities (10 minutes)

Begins with a discussion of Martin article and the merits of transforming conflict into learning tool. Then a guided discussion of the importance of listening in conflict resolution.

Developmental Activities (20 minutes)

Using scenarios provided by participants, educators will discuss ways in which they can effectively listen to the competing voices in classroom conflict and how to ensure that each voice is given fair representation.

Working in groups, they will role-play conflict to discover how some voices are drowned out by loud personalities or needs are misconstrued. Each group will come up with a (hopefully) unique way of allowing each conflicting party to clearly state their position and their desired outcomes.

Concluding Activities (10 minutes)

Class will discuss the methods reached in the above exercise and which have the most merit. Participants are given Resolution Vocabulary handout for discussion in next session.

Lesson Three: Resolution (40 minutes)

Introductory Activities (10 minutes)

Resolution Vocabulary handout is discussed and related to personal experiences by participants. Have they used these methods before or similar methods?

Developmental Activities (20 minutes)

Group work on Identify the Resolution worksheet.

Concluding Activities (10 minutes)

Worksheet discussed and resolution methods explored further. Educators are asked to prepare three school-based scenarios, from either personal experience or imagination, for use in mock conflict resolution in subsequent sessions.

Materials: Resolution Vocabulary handout.

Post-Assessment

Following the completion of the unit, on the final session, educators will role-play conflict scenarios in which a fellow participant will intervene and facilitate a resolution. They will then peer critique each other’s effectiveness and give constructive feedback. Peer reviewers should focus on how well the type of conflict was recognized, how well different voices were heard, synthesis of desired outcomes, how well needs were prioritized, the appropriateness of resolution method chosen, overall ability.

**References**

Association for Conflict Resolution, Education Section. (2007). *Recommended Standards for School-Based Peer Mediation Programs 2007*. Washington, DC: Association for Conflict Resolution.

Martin, N. (2009). *Transforming Conflict in the Classroom.* Retrieved from http://www.upeaceus.org/news/1163-transforming-conflict-in-the-classroom.html.