



SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHERS

POSITIVE MODELING

The way a teacher talks with students; the teacher's body language; tone of voice; and the way a teacher handles conflict, can create a nurturing environment in the classroom where students' self-concepts can grow as they become competent in handling their conflicts. It is crucial that the teacher model positive, life-giving behaviors, self-management skills, and problem solving skills to the students thus reinforcing a positive role-model for conflict resolution.

RESOLUTION SKILLS

When a teacher gets in a conflict with a student, there are several techniques to deal with the situation positively and successfully:

1. Acknowledge feelings of anger, frustration, and hurt — both the students and yours.
2. Acknowledge what the student has said before responding - e.g., "So, you don't agree because...? Is that correct?"
3. Offer choices. "Cornering" a student makes him or her lose face in front of peers and leaves no choice but to attack, withdraw with unresolved hostility, or to get even.
4. Look for win-win situations when you can teach, and your student can learn your common goals/interests in an environment of trust and respect.
5. Use caring language. "Put downs" and threats cause conflicts to escalate and breed feelings of hostility and resentment.
6. Avoid asking: "Why did you?" Instead, have the student state what happened and how he or she



Office of Conciliation
Archdiocese of Chicago
Post Office Box 1979
Chicago, Illinois 60690-1979
312-751-8291

THE PEACEABLE CLASSROOM



RESOLVING CLASSROOM CONFLICTS THROUGH POSITIVE MODELS

Office of Conciliation
Archdiocese of Chicago
Post Office Box 1979
Chicago, Illinois 60690-1979
312-751-8291



THE PEACEABLE CLASSROOM — A CHECKLIST FOR TEACHERS



The Causes of Classroom Conflict

1. **Competitive Atmosphere:** Where there is a highly competitive atmosphere in a classroom, students learn to work against, rather than with each other.

Yes No An attitude of everyone for himself or herself.

Yes No Lack of skills for working in groups.

Yes No Students feeling compelled to win in interactions because losing results in loss of self-esteem.

Yes No Competition at inappropriate times and in inappropriate ways.

2. **Intolerant Atmosphere:** An intolerant classroom is an unfriendly and mistrustful one. It is often characterized by:

Yes No Formation of cliques and making other students scapegoats.

Yes No Intolerance of differences.

Yes No Lack of support from classmates leading to loneliness and isolation.

Yes No Resentment of the accomplishments, possessions, or qualities of others.

3. **Poor Communication:** Poor communication contributes to conflict when students:

Yes No Don't know how to express needs and wishes effectively.

Yes No Have no forum for expressing emotions and needs, or are afraid to do so.

Yes No Cannot listen to others.

Yes No Do not observe or pick up on the emotions of others. Lack of sensitivity and understanding of other's hurt feelings.

4. **Inappropriate Expressions of Emotions:** Conflicts can escalate when students:

Yes No Are out of touch with their feelings.

Yes No Suppress emotions.

Yes No Lack self-control.

Yes No Frequently uses aggressive behaviors to express anger and frustration.

5. **Lack of Conflict Resolution Skills:** In conflicting situations, children and adults usually respond in ways they have learned from others.

Yes No Classroom conflicts escalate because students and teachers don't know how to respond creatively to conflict.

Yes No Parents and peer groups often reward violent or very aggressive approaches to conflict and competition.

Yes No The classroom offers students opportunities to learn and practice problem-solving conflict resolution behaviors that they can integrate into their non-school life.

6. **Misuse of Power by Teacher:** Teachers contribute to classroom conflict whenever they:

Yes No Frustrate a student by placing irrational or impossible high expectations on him or her.

Yes No Manage a class with a multitude of inflexible rules.

Yes No Continually resort to the authoritarian use of power.

Yes No Establish an atmosphere of fear and mistrust.