

Exercise 8.2. – A structured approach to conflict resolution

Educational objective	The students learn a technique of conflict resolution. They understand that resolving conflicts depends to a certain degree on skills that can be learned.
Resources	Set of student handouts: “Resolution of conflicts in six stages”. Newspapers and magazines.

Procedure

1. The teacher describes a situation of conflict to which there is no defined solution (example: one student makes fun of another student who comes from a foreign country and speaks with a strong accent).

The situation may be presented by a role-play. The students discuss how to resolve the conflict. In doing so, they may anticipate parts of the model they will use in this lesson or ask questions that the model may provide an answer for.
2. The worksheet “Resolution of conflicts in six stages” is distributed to half the students, who study it in silence.

The other half of the class selects a report on a conflict from a newspaper or magazine. They may also draw on personal experience or first-hand knowledge.
3. The students form groups of four consisting of two students who have read the resolution of problems and two who have defined possible conflicts.
4. The students choose one conflict and test the ideas of conflict resolution.

Two are adversaries, the other two act as mediators, using the sheet to find a solution.
5. Follow-up plenary session:
 - Which conflicts did you try to solve?
 - How did you try to solve them?
 - (How) did the model of conflict resolution help you?

Variation

1. The students focus on a case study and compare their solutions.
2. Once students are familiar with the procedure it can be applied to conflicts actually occurring in class.

Materials

(see next page)

Student handout: resolution of conflicts in six stages

1. Identify needs. “What do you need (what exactly do you want?)”	Each person involved in the conflict should answer this question without accusing or blaming the other.
2. Define the problem. “What do you believe to be the problem in this case?”	The whole class can help to find an answer which meets the needs of those concerned. The adversaries must be able to accept the definition.
3. Seek a number of solutions. “Who can think of a possible way of solving the problem?”	All members of the class can contribute answers. These should be written down, without comment, judgment, or evaluation. The aim at this stage is to produce as many solutions as possible.
4. Evaluate solutions. “Would you be pleased with this solution?”	Each party in the conflict reviews the alternatives, explaining which are, or are not, acceptable.
5. Decide which solution is best. “Do you both accept this solution? Has the problem been solved?”	It must be clear that both parties accept the solution. Their efforts to find a solution should be appreciated.
6. See how the solution is applied. “Let us talk once more about this situation and make sure that the problem really has been solved.”	A plan should be set up to evaluate the solution. Depending on the nature of the conflict and the age of the adversaries, an evaluation may be carried out minutes or hours or a day later.