

CREATING A WIN-WIN SITUATION



AGENDA

- Starter
- Who Loses?
- Who Wins?
- Me First?
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will recognize the dynamics of win-lose and lose-lose situations.

Students will recognize the benefits of win-win situations.

Students will practice resolving conflicts.

Materials Needed

- Index cards (Part III)

Starter (3 minutes)

Ask students to define “conflict.” (Students should respond: conflict is the result of two or more opposing forces or ideas.) Ask students to analyze how a common conflict situation—a sporting event—gets resolved.

As students respond, prompt them to go beyond describing the sporting event, and express the understanding that the conflict, or game, ends when one side wins and the other side loses.

Write the words “Win-Lose” on the board. Explain that this same idea is often applied to other conflict situations in life—when someone wins, someone else generally loses. Explain to students that today they will discover that this is not the only, or the best, option when resolving conflicts.

Part I Who Loses? (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students recognize the dynamics of win-lose and lose-lose situations.

1. Students brainstorm win-lose situations.

Write the words “football” and “tennis” under the heading “Win-Lose” on the board. Invite volunteers to name and write a few other examples of win-lose situations. Your list might include the names of other sports, as well as board games, card games, computer games, races, spelling bees, contests, and so on.

Make the observation that most people enjoy playing games and competing in contests. Explain that because we have so much experience with games, a win-lose approach to a conflict is a familiar one.

Ask students if they think that personal conflicts should be handled in the same manner as a game or a contest. Affirm that they should not, and then cross out the win-lose column on the board.

2. Students consider lose-lose situations.

Begin another column on the board with the words “Lose-Lose” at the top. Ask what students think a lose-lose situation is. (Students should respond: nobody wins; both sides lose.)

Prompt students to think about situations in which everyone loses by offering the following example: “Suppose I borrowed your baseball glove and forgot to return it. You get angry and tell everyone that I stole your glove from you. Why would this be a lose-lose situation?”

Elicit from students the fact that now both the owner and the borrower of the glove are experiencing negative consequences—one person has lost something and the other is the victim of rumors. Point out that neither one is a “winner” here. Both have lost. Explain that in lose-lose situations, people can get so focused on making sure the other person doesn’t win that they don’t care if they themselves lose. All they care about is that the other person loses, too

Invite students to identify who wins and who loses in the situations below. As students respond, ask them to explain their thinking.

- Someone calls you a name, so you puncture that person's bicycle tire. A teacher sees you and reports you.
- You go to the same store every day to buy a snack after school. One day, the manager wrongly accuses you of shoplifting. You start yelling at the manager and knocking items off the shelves. The manager calls the police.

3. Students evaluate lose-lose situations.

Point out that each situation above resulted in negative consequences—and further conflict. Ask students to identify the behavior that prompted each lose-lose situation. Write their responses on the board under “Lose-Lose.” (Students should respond: getting angry, getting even, wanting someone else to lose, blaming someone else.)

Ask if anyone thinks that lose-lose situations are good solutions to problems. Cross out this column on the board. Explain that lose-lose situations are the easiest ones to avoid. Ask students if they can explain why. (Students should respond: because people can control their emotions and behaviors in these types of situations.)

Part II Who Wins? (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students recognize the benefits of win-win situations.

1. Students evaluate win-win situations.

Begin another column on the board with the words “Win-Win.” Ask what a win-win situation might be. (Students should respond: one in which nobody loses; both sides compromise.)

Remind students that it's common for people to look at conflicts from a win-lose point of view. Suggest that to resolve conflicts, we need to change the way we look at a situation and choose what's best for everyone, not only ourselves.

2. Students identify win-win solutions.

Outline each of the three lose-lose situations described in Part I again. After each one, ask students how these situations could be handled differently so that everyone involved wins. Ask questions to elicit the following suggestions from students:

- The student could ask you to return the baseball glove. Then, you could apologize for forgetting to return it, and the student would no longer be angry and would not spread rumors about you. Once the glove is returned, both parties will feel okay about it.
- Rather than puncturing the bicycle tire, you could deliver an I-message. Once your feelings have been expressed and the other person knows how you feel, you can talk about the situation without adding fuel to the fire.
- You could keep calm and explain to the manager that you have not stolen anything. You might respectfully ask the manager why they believe you are shoplifting. After that, you can empty your pockets and allow the manager to search your backpack.

Prompt students to conclude that when everybody wins and nobody loses, there will be no conflict; everybody involved will leave the situation feeling satisfied. Acknowledge that finding win-win solutions will not always be easy, but if students apply problem solving skills, use effective communication skills, and identify options and consequences, they will find them.

Remind students that taking the time to think through a problem and being responsible for their feelings, words, and actions will help them resolve—and even avoid—conflicts.

Part III Me First? (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students work in teams to solve a problem and reach a successful resolution.

1. Students participate in a game that requires a win-win resolution.

Divide students into two even teams. Have teammates sit together in a circle on opposite sides of the room. Give each student two index cards, and then tell the class to write in large letters “me first” on one card and “work together” on the other. Explain that in this game, students will earn points by choosing either to work together with their opposing team or to put their own interests first. Explain the point system to the class:

- If one team says “me first” and the other team says “work together,” the team that said “me first” gets three points and takes one point from the team that said “work together.”
- If both teams say “work together,” they both get two points.
- If both teams say “me first,” they both lose two points.

Appoint one person from each team to be that team’s speaker. Tell students that on your signal, they are to silently vote by holding up either their “me first” or “work together” cards. The speaker will count the votes. When both teams have finished, have the speakers say their teams’ choices.

Play several rounds of the game. After the first few rounds, encourage students to trust each other in order to find a win-win solution. Help them realize the need to find such a solution to the game.

2. Students discuss the activity.

Have students return to their seats, and then begin a discussion by asking them questions such as the following:

- What happened when both teams approached the problem from a win-lose perspective (i.e., by saying “me first”)? (Students should mention that they lost points.)
- How did it feel when you said “work together,” but the other team said “me first”?
- Were you afraid that the other team would say “me first” if you said “work together”?
- What happened when you decided to work toward a win-win solution (i.e., by saying “work together”)? (Students should mention that it was easier to earn points for their teams.)
- Why was trust important to finding a win-win solution to the game? (Students should respond that trust was important because each team had to believe that both teams were working toward the common good.)

Explain that the teams were most successful when they realized that they could both achieve their goals, and decided that they could easily divide the points instead of struggling in vain over them.

Ask students to describe how this activity relates to finding win-win solutions in real life. Tell students that the most ideal way to resolve a conflict is to find a win-win solution. Point out that, as in the game, win-win solutions often require that both parties involved lose a little in order for both to benefit.

Conclusion *(2 minutes)*

Urge students to look for win-win solutions when they are in a conflict. Ask students to summarize why this is the best approach to take. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Examine conflicts from a win-win perspective.
- Use problem solving skills to find win-win solutions to conflicts.
- In order to avoid or resolve conflicts, take the time to think through the problem and be responsible for your feelings, words, and actions.

Student Assessment

1. Define “win-lose,” “lose-lose,” and “win-win.” List an example of each type of resolution.
2. List three advantages of achieving a win-win resolution.
3. List three strategies for achieving a win-win resolution.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“Better bend than break.” –Scottish proverb

Have student pairs come to the front of the room and argue a topic of their own choosing that has no clear solution. Explain that compromise is often the way problems are solved. Ask students to describe how the argument would have ended if each person agreed to “bend.”

Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Provide students with paper and markers/crayons. Have them create comic strips in which superheroes and villains find win-win solutions to their conflicts (e.g., a superhero and a villain resolve their conflicts so they can combat a greater menace).

Display students’ comics around the classroom.

Writing in Your Journal

Have students write themselves an apology letter that they would like to receive from someone who hurt them. The letters should identify the conflict in detail.

As a class, discuss how this exercise helped students define the issues of the conflicts they wrote about.

Using Technology

Have students use PowerPoint, a video recorder, or an audio recorder to create brief public service announcements about ways to find win-win solutions to conflicts.

Present these public service announcements to the class.

Homework

Have students clip or print articles that involve conflict from news publications or magazines.

Have students create win-win resolutions to the conflicts.

Additional Resources

Have students read the “Can Schools Afford Disabled Students?” activity sheet.

Have students debate this issue and find win-win resolutions to it.

CAN SCHOOLS AFFORD DISABLED STUDENTS?

Garret Frey was only 4 when he slipped off his father’s motorcycle and severed his spinal cord. Since then Garret, now 16, has been paralyzed from the neck down. He needs round-the-clock care to help him eat and drink, change positions in his wheelchair, suction the tube in his throat and monitor the ventilator that helps him breathe.

Without someone with nursing skills to assist him, Garret could not attend Jefferson High School in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where he is a sophomore and a B student.

But it costs the Frey family nearly \$20,000 a year for the licensed practical nurse who helps Garret. For years, they have been trying, unsuccessfully, to persuade the Cedar Rapids school board to cover the cost. Last November, their dispute reached the U.S. Supreme Court.

“Disabled kids like me have a right to a free education,” Garret says, “without paying for extra care.”

But Cedar Rapids Superintendent Lew Finch insists that his school board doesn’t have the money to pay for the care Garret needs. He points out that the district already has hired a special teacher associate, purchased a special bus and adapted a computer to accommodate Garret. “You have to ask, where do you draw the line,” Finch says. “If the courts open this up, it

could be a bottomless pit.”

Garret’s case could decide just how far schools must go to aid students with disabilities. Federal law requires communities to offer disabled students full access to public education—and a full range of “special education related services.”

But there’s no agreement on how much extra care Garret and tens of thousands of other severely disabled students are entitled to. The Freys hope the Supreme Court will state that the law covers services like Garret’s nurse.

Garret’s insurance has been paying for his nurse. But he has nearly used up his policies, and his family can’t afford to pay for the services on their own. If he loses his case, he might have to finish high school from home.

Garret’s case has made headlines, but he says he’s not looking for any extra attention. “A couple of kids asked me if I thought I was a role model,” he says. “I don’t think of myself that way, but if my case can help change things, I think that would be good.”

The court is expected to issue its decision this spring, but it won’t be soon enough for Garret. “I wish it would all be over,” he says, “and I hope it will help other kids.”

—Susan Hansen

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