

ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION 1. COOPERATION AND COMPETITION

Objective: Students will be able to distinguish between cooperation and competition exchanging ideas about collaborative attitudes at home and at school.

WARM UP

Ask students if they have ever played *Tug-of-war*. Invite some volunteers to explain the rules of the game in front of the class. Explain that this game could be a competitive or a collaborative one. The participants struggle to win, but they also need the cooperation of others. The more participants there are, the greater the chance they have of winning. Cooperation is the key. You can emphasize the fact that if there are only two participants, then they are only competing.

STEP BY STEP

- 1 Make sure every student has the printed handout to work with.
- 2 Get students into groups. You may ask different volunteers to read the two definitions and reflect on the consequences of each attitude. Make sure they understand that if each student seeks only individual goals, it affects the whole class in a negative way. Tell them that in order to accomplish common goals, it is necessary to work as a team.
- 3 Invite students to read the situations on the table. Then ask them to decide individually whether each situation represents the idea of cooperation or competition and how they think each affects the class so that they complete the table.
- 4 Then invite groups to share and discuss their answers. Have them reflect on other situations that could be blocking cooperation in their class and reinforce the idea that collaborative work does not only imply reaching common goals, but also strengthening personal relationships.

- 5 Now, draw students' attention to the photos. Ask: *What do you think is happening in each picture?* and elicit different opinions. You can also ask them to mention the role that cooperation plays in individual and collective goals and to discuss the disadvantages of competition.

WRAP IT UP

- 6 *What goals can you and your classmates reach working together? What collaborative actions can you take? What are the advantages of cooperating in the classroom?*

Ask students to discuss the questions with the same groups they have been working. Give them some time and then ask them to discuss with another group. Guide them to recognize that collaborative work implies making an effort of our own, listening attentively, taking care of the people and the space we share, communicating effectively and respectfully, and sharing what we know to reach common goals. Remind them that, when we compete, we tend to seek only individual goals. You could finish by brainstorming ideas about why it is important to cooperate in the classroom (to make work easier, to have a good relationship with your classmates, to get good grades, etc.).

TEACHING TIP

Reinforce activities that promote collaborative work and attitudes that promote inclusion. Show students that teamwork is not only important among them, but also between teachers and students. Remember that your role as a teacher in a socio-emotional learning environment is to act as a model so your students can imitate your attitudes towards them. Through your behavior, show them that cooperation is necessary to achieve common goals.



ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION 2. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Objective: Students will be able to transcend conflicts through cooperation and negotiation in an environment of empathy.

WARM UP

Write on the board a sentence that explains ideas you want your students to discuss about *conflict resolution* for example: *Cooperation is the basis of conflict resolution. It is necessary to transcend conflicts in a constructive way.* Encourage them to read the sentence and brainstorm different ideas about what they think. Invite some volunteers to come to the board and write some of their ideas. Explain that every opinion is important to get a general conclusion.

STEP BY STEP

- 1 Make sure every student has the printed handout they need to work with or you may ask them to copy it in their notebooks. You can also project it over a suitable surface.
- 2 Ask students to work in groups. Tell them to remember a recent conflict they have faced as a class or working in teams. Try to elicit every possible detail so they can complete the organizer. Give students enough time to do so and if necessary, provide useful vocabulary words. Then ask different volunteers to read the Guide to Conflict Resolution out loud. Discuss with students their opinions about each of the points the guide provides and if there has been a time where they needed to apply it or if they just acted in the heat of the moment.
- 3 Once they have discussed, ask them to imagine what would happen if the same conflict happened again in the near future. You could say: *Now that you have analyzed the situation, what attitudes should you put into practice to solve the conflict in a fair manner?* Invite students to check the attitudes they believe are correct to solve conflicts smartly and effectively, showing respect in every case.

- 4 Based on what they know now and on their conclusions, ask them to come up with a collaborative resolution for the conflict mentioned in Step 2. When all groups have finished, ask them to share their answers with another group. Invite them to brainstorm other actions and / or attitudes that are useful to solve conflicts.

WRAP IT UP

- 5 *What are the possible consequences of a conflict? What are the best possible attitudes to solve a conflict? Think of a simple conflict in your everyday life and suggest ways to solve it based on the attitudes you have just mentioned.*

Ask students to discuss the questions in groups. Give them some time and then ask them to discuss with another group. Remind them that in the resolution of conflicts, both parties can take different positions that not necessarily imply well-being for everyone. Therefore, it is useful to have attitudes such as negotiation and cooperation—which seek to achieve the objectives of both parties—and also to recognize the importance of the relationship between the people involved. Finally, encourage students to practice conflict resolution (as a class and on a personal level) by always seeking tools to solve and transcend conflicts constructively and creatively.

TEACHING TIP

Remember that you are working with young adults and that they tend to be impulsive. They do not always favor fair confrontation styles to solve a conflict. Teaching students to be more conscious of their attitudes towards a problem will help you create a more respectful class environment. Provide them with opportunities so they can practice how to solve conflicts in a fair manner.

ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION 3. REACHING AN AGREEMENT

Objective: Students will be able to solve a problem and reach an agreement through a respectful dialogue based on respect and understanding.

WARM UP

Start the activity by narrating a short fictional anecdote about two neighbors who could not decide whose responsibility it was to pick up the leaves from a common tree on the sidewalk outside their homes. Tell students the neighbors almost started a fight about it, until one of them came up with an idea to reach an agreement. Then ask them: *What do you think the idea was?* Choose some volunteers to give their answers. Then elicit from students some common points they mentioned and ask why they think those points are important to reach an agreement.

STEP BY STEP

- 1 Make sure every student has the printed handout, or you can project it over a suitable area and ask them to work in their notebooks. Ask a volunteer to read the introduction and the Step by Step section out loud so they can know what is expected of them.
- 2 Ask students to work in groups and tell them to brainstorm the problems they face in class and to choose one to work with. Have them reflect on their behavior and emotions when they are facing a problem. Invite them to analyze their inner selves to know what makes them lose their temper and get angry, and how this impacts their ability to respond in an effective way.
- 3 Invite students to look at the attitudes in the handout and ask them if they can relate to any of them. Then invite them to color the volume bar according to what they consider should be present when having a constructive dialogue to reach an agreement. Once they finish, ask them to think of some strategies for having a respectful and constructive dialogue.

- 4 Ask them to brainstorm different solutions for the problem they chose so as to reach an agreement that benefits everyone, taking into account the attitudes they turned up. Ask students to share their answers as a class.

WRAP IT UP

- 5 *What strategies can you apply to reach an agreement in a respectful way? How can you transform a disagreement into a constructive dialogue? Which attitudes do you consider are most valuable to reach an agreement?*

Working in the same groups, ask students to discuss the questions. It would be a good idea to recall one or two recent problems they have experienced in the classroom, so they can have a starting point. One of the members of the group can write the answers on a piece of paper or a notebook. When all the groups have finished answering the questions, ask some volunteers to share their answers with the class. You could invite one or two students to come to the board and write some of the solutions they proposed, and the rest of the class can share more ideas so the solution can improve. Remind them that an agreement is an arrangement accepted by all the parties involved.

TEACHING TIP

When you teach socio-emotional skills, it is important that you demonstrate these skills yourself so you can act as a model, for example, reaching agreement in a respectful way with your colleagues at school. Before performing these activities, it is advisable to do them on your own, so you can share your experiences and put yourself in the students' shoes.



ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION 4. COLLABORATIVE ATTITUDES

Objective: Students will be able to identify which attitudes promote or obstruct collaborative work, and why this is important for a good coexistence in class.

WARM UP

Draw a happy face on the top left side of the board and a sad face on the top right side. Ask some volunteers to come to the front and write emotions and / or situations related to good or bad experiences when working in teams under each one. Once they have written at least eight words, ask the whole class to keep them in mind for the following activity.

STEP BY STEP

- 1 Make sure every student has the printed handout to work with. You can also project the handout and they can answer in their notebooks.
- 2 Ask students to remember the emotions written on the board. Then, in pairs, invite them to remember a recent teamwork they had to do in class, and to answer the following questions: *Did everyone participate? Who had a good disposition? What was the final outcome?* Invite them to read the attitudes in the handout and to decide if they are positive or negative for collaborative work. Guide them so they can give reasons for their answers. Walk around and provide help when needed.
- 3 Invite students to think of a time when things did not turn out right during teamwork and, as a result, they got a low grade. Then ask them to write four attitudes (or more, if they want) that contributed to that negative outcome. Remind them that attitudes and emotions are present in every human relationship and that identifying and controlling them helps promote collaborative work.

WRAP IT UP

- 4 *What kind of attitudes, from the ones you have learned, encourage cooperation and learning? How can an attitude favor or obstruct collaborative work? Why is it important to have a positive attitude when you work as a team?*

Ask students to answer the questions in pairs and then to discuss the answers in groups. Explain that, to make teamwork easier, every member needs to have a good attitude. If just one of the members has a negative one, the outcome can be bad. In collaborative work, it is very important to control emotions such as fear, insecurity, laziness, and indifference. Remind them that sharing with others in a peaceful environment is one of the key elements for cooperation. Finally, ask students to share their answers with other groups.

TEACHING TIP

Teaching how to recognize which attitudes aid collaboration and which ones block it will help students evaluate their performance on a personal level inside the teamwork and inside the classroom. This will help them assume a responsible attitude that encourages them to get involved and propose actions on behalf of their work group, classroom, and community. Knowing that a positive attitude is a valuable tool will create a cooperative atmosphere.