

**Kick the Cliques: Activities to Promote Positive Relationships Among Girls in the Classroom.**

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## **I. Background Information**

### ***A. Description of Teaching Context***

Over the past 9 months, I have had the unique opportunity to internship in a self-contained, 4<sup>th</sup> grade classroom at Gray's Woods Elementary School. My classroom consists of 26 fourth grade students who each bring his or her own dynamic personality to the setting. Among the 15 girls and the 11 boys, there is 1 African-American, 1 Russian, 1 Egyptian, and 23 Caucasian students. I currently have two students in learning support, 5 students who receive Title 1 Reading support, and 1 student who receives Title 1 Math support. One of my students has been diagnosed with Aspergers Syndrome, while another student demonstrates similar signs of Aspergers Syndrome but has never been officially diagnosed. We have 5 students who are new to this school this year, 2 who have transferred to my classroom halfway through the school year.

Gray's Woods Elementary School is located in a suburban area and is quickly growing with new housing developments. The majority of students in this area come from middle to upper class homes. I have 4 students whose parents are divorced, while the rest of the students in my classroom live with both of their parents. Twenty-three out of twenty-six of my students are involved in extra-curricular activities either within or outside of school. As for the school itself, there are three classrooms available for 4<sup>th</sup> grade. The average student/teacher ratio is 23:1. The school provides a strong Instructional Support Team that includes: an autistic support specialist, a speech and language pathologist, a learning support teacher, a school psychologist, and an emotional support teacher. Each teacher in the school is provided with his or her own personal computer within the classroom and there are also two additional computers in each of the rooms for the students to use. There is a highly-involved PTO that funds many educational field trips and materials/supplies for various unit related activities throughout the school year.

## **II. Rational**

### ***A. What Led Me to My Project***

Throughout my experiences working with first graders at a summer day camp, and fourth graders during my internship this school year, I observed that many of the girls form cliques and exclude friends from their group. As a result, I have witnessed girls screaming at each other, crying, refusing to talk to one another, and bringing other friends into the argument to talk about another girl behind her back. These incidents affect my students' ability to learn and their feeling of comfort and acceptance within my classroom. It disturbs me that these vicious behaviors among girls begin at such a young

age. It was apparent that these problems were not only interfering with girls' lives socially, but with their academic focus as well. There have been a few times when my students have come in from recess in tears and have put their heads down on their desks immediately upon entering the room. They have completely missed the lesson that I had planned for the class during that time. Other students are affected as well because they are concerned/distracted by the tension and conflict among the girls in the classroom. The purpose of my inquiry project is to study the effects that various community-building activities have on the relationships and feeling of community among the girls in my classroom. As I work to decrease the number of arguments among my students throughout the day, I also hope this project will give me more experience and a better understanding of how to respond to these conflicts that arise among my students.

### **B. *Why it is Important***

In order for students to perform at their academic peak, they must feel accepted and welcomed in the classroom. It is cruel how girls can use their own friendships as weapons to hurt each other. Conflict will always arise throughout these students' lives and they must learn how to appropriately handle conflict and be equipped with useful strategies for responding to it. If the students do not learn how to get along with others socially, they may never acquire these skills which are crucial in our society. Because I have seen this problem first-hand both with first graders and with fourth graders, I know it will be beneficial to better understand this issue because it will help to strengthen my own teaching skills. I realize that this issue will more than likely occur again and again throughout my teaching career. Developing a solid sense of classroom community is essential for cooperation and understanding. Once students are able to trust and rely on one another, they can become more confident, avid learners in the classroom.

### **C. *Literature/Experts/Research***

Are girls fighting now more than ever before, or is it that authorities are now simply taking the issue more seriously? Either way, educators and parents are concerned about this "mean girl" phenomenon. Girls bullying each other "results not only in low self-esteem, but poor grades, depression, self-mutilation, and in some cases, even suicide" (Mace, 2).

In the past, psychologists who studied aggression in young children only looked for the physical signs of it (Talbot, 3). In the early 90's, a Finnish professor name Kaj Bjorkqvist began interviewing 11-and-12-year old girls about their relationships with one another. The data indicated that girls did, in fact, have just as much aggression as boys, but they were releasing it in different ways. Instead of engaging in physical fights, they would use their social intelligence to begin complicated battles with other girls which focused

on damaging their relationships or reputations. “Girls can better understand how other girls feel,” Bjorkqvist says, “so they know better how to harm them” (Talbot, 3).

Researchers who followed in Bjorkqvist’s footsteps revealed that until the age of 4, girls tend to be aggressive at the same rates and in the same way as boys. However, as these girls grow older, social expectations force them to conceal their hostilities, and their assaults on one another become less physical and less visible to adults. Prominent researchers such as Laura Crothers, Julaine Field, and Jered Kolbert would agree with these claims as they have found that “traditional views of femininity place huge restrictions on how girls can express anger” (Varlas, 4). Girls often want to conform to the “nice girl” stereotype and must mask their anger and use more manipulative means to gain a sense of personal power. “Girls are doing what we’ve expected from them. They’re rewarded for not being disruptive, and so they do these things behind the scenes,” says Lyn Brown, author of *Girlfighting* and professor of education and women’s, gender, and sexuality studies at Colby College in Waterville, Main (Varlas, 4).

Various organizations are popping up across the country to confront this issue of relational aggression. In Austin, Texas, an organization called GENaustin sends counselors into schools to teach a course on relational aggression called Girls as Friends, Girls as Foes (Talbot, 4). A private Catholic school in Akron, Ohio, and a public school district near Portland, Oregon have introduced programs aimed at targeting girl meanness.

In my own classroom I held a “No Way RA” day for my 26 fourth graders. I modeled the day after a program I read about called Club Ophelia. Dr. Cheryl Dellasega, who is the author of *Girl Wars* and is a Penn State College of Medicine professor, founded the club just a few years ago (Gleiter, B9). Dr. Dellasega sends kits to schools upon requests. The kit that I received for our No Way RA day contained No Way RA keychains, pledges, a DVD entitled “Flip the Script and Stop the Drama,” quizzes, and lanyards.

The struggle to alleviate these problems among girls is an unending process. Experts recommend that girls need an outlet to share and discuss their thoughts and feelings (Varlas, 5). With the implementation of community building activities within the classroom, and the help of passionate guidance counselors, girls will be able to find a way to redirect their anger and interact with one another in more appropriate ways.

#### **D. *Wonderings/Questions***

How can I improve the relationships and feeling of community among the girls in my classroom?

### ***E. Sub-Questions***

As I began to take a deeper look at my main inquiry, several additional related questions emerged:

- Why do girls seem to form cliques more than boys?
- What is the main cause of the conflicts among the girls in my classroom?
- At what age do cliques start appearing?
- Is the problem of cliques becoming more and more prevalent as we move through the 21st century?
- As a teacher, how should I react when girls come up to me to complain about other girls in the classroom?
- Why are some girls more involved in cliques than others?
- At what times throughout the school day do these conflicts most commonly occur?

## **III. My Inquiry Plan**

### ***A. Inquiry vs. Project***

My project is inquiry-based because I am looking for ways to increase the positive relationships among the girls in my classroom. I have researched various strategies and activities and have implemented them in my classroom. I have collected and analyzed data in order to determine which steps work best for building a positive learning community in my classroom. My main question was more inquiry-based and not simply a project because at the beginning of my inquiry plan, I was uncertain of the effects my lesson would have on my students. I did not know how my students would respond to my activities and which activities would prove to be the most valuable. Although I knew what my purpose was for my inquiry, I could not predict the outcome.

### ***B. What I Did to Carry Out the Inquiry in My Classroom***

Before I started the community building activities, I distributed a survey to my students that asked them questions about how comfortable and welcomed they felt in the classroom (Appendix A). The series of community building activities that I implemented ran over a course of 3 weeks with 2 to 3 forty-five minute lessons each week. Some of the lessons were modified from Barbara Porro's Talk it Out (Porro, 109 & 135), and the other lessons I taught were designed by myself.

#### **1. Community Building Activity #1**

In the first community building activity, I split the class up and had all of the girls stay in the classroom with me while all of the boys went into another room with my mentor teacher. I explained to my 15 girls that I would be meeting with them three times a week for the next

three weeks in order to discuss issues dealing with friendship conflicts, bullying, and problem-solving strategies. We began the lesson with a discussion about Gandhi and the impact he had on the world.

Next, I introduced a poster I had made which included a picture of Gandhi on it (Appendix B). Below his picture I shared the following quote by him: “If we are to reach real peace in this world... we shall have to begin with the children” (Porro, 109). The girls decorated bookmarks and put the quote by Gandhi on them. We discussed how children could make a difference and what they could do to promote peace in the world.

As they worked on their bookmarks, I read the book The Sneetches, by Dr. Seuss. The story talked about Sneetches that excluded each other based on whether or not they had stars on their bellies. After the read aloud, my students explained that what was on the inside of a person was what really mattered. We discussed the problems with judging other people before getting to know them.

To wrap up the lesson, the students cut out three stars and wrote three different ways in which all the girls in the group had something in common. This activity was to help them focus on their similarities, unlike the Sneetches from the book who could only see each other’s differences. Each girl around the circle got a chance to explain what she put on her star and then the girls taped their stars onto a bright “World of Similarities” poster.

## 2. Community Building Activity #2

The second community building activity focused on appropriate strategies for handling conflicts when they occur in school. I created three scenarios (Appendix C) for student volunteers to act out. The first skit had student ignoring the conflict, the second skit had a student fighting out the conflict, and the third skit had a student calmly confronting the conflict. After each skit was acted out, the students were able to discuss the pros and cons of each scenario.

After the girls decided that talking out a problem was the best way to handle a conflict, the girls worked together to create a “Talk It Out” poster and discussed the 7 steps to dealing with conflict (Appendix D). (Porro, 135)

When the girls had finished the poster, I had the entire class come back together at their seats and we reviewed various options for cooling off in a conflict. I handed out a piece of paper to each student that had

guidelines on how to make an *Anger Catcher* (Appendix E). I gave them 10 minutes to color, cut, and assemble their own *Anger Catchers*.

### 3. Community Building Activity #3

This session was a little more relaxed. I planned 2 games that focused on teamwork and leadership skills. The first game required the entire group of girls to sit in a circle and hold hands. I tossed a balloon in the middle of the circle and they had to keep the balloon afloat 50 times without letting go of each other's hands. They needed to discuss and implement a strategy in order to work together and not let the balloon hit the ground.

After 15 minutes of working towards this goal, they finally completed 50 consecutive hits and I introduced the second game. I split the girls into two groups (due to the large number of girls) and I asked each of them to put their left hand in the center of the group. They had to grab on to another girl's left hand who was standing across from them.

After each girl was holding hands with another left hand, they proceeded to put their right hand in the center and grab on to another girl's right hand. They were not allowed to be holding the same girl's right and left hand; they had to be connected to two different people. Their task was to untangle the *human knot* that they had created. They had to use their listening skills and following each other's directions in order to accomplish this task.

### 4. Community Building Activity #4

For the fourth meeting, I introduced the *talking stick*. I explained that in our previous meetings, we were having trouble with people talking out and it was causing us to lose focus. I felt that a talking stick would help the group remember who should be talking and whom they should be giving all of their attention to. No one was allowed to speak unless they held the talking stick in their hand. Once the speaker finished talking, she could choose whom to pass the stick on to next.

We began the activity by opening it up so that students could say whether or not they had used strategies from the "Talk it Out" poster over the past week. Next, we moved the discussion to times throughout the past week when a conflict occurred where they *should* have used conflict resolution strategies but did not. Girls offered each other advice on how to handle those arguments more appropriately for the future.

Next, each student had to make a poster of a conflict they predicted might happen over the next week, and how they planned to respond to



that problem. After 10 minutes of drawing, I had them go around the circle and share their posters. During this time, some of the students also asked their fellow classmates for advice on how to respond to certain issues that were occurring within their group of friends.

#### 5. Community Building Activity #5

I began by asking the girls what the word *escalation* meant. We brainstormed ways in which problems could escalate within the classroom if they were not taken care of right away. A few of the students gave specific examples of times in the classroom when they responded to a problem in such a way that it prevented the conflict from escalating.

Next, I passed around the story “Not Our Problem” (Appendix F). I assigned different parts to the students and had them read through the short story out loud. Afterwards, I assigned 6 different scenes to 6 individual students to illustrate. For the remaining 6 students that were in the classroom, I assigned each of them a scene and I had them illustrate a way the problem could have been dealt with that would have prevented the story from escalating in that scene (Mitchell, 3). After 15 minutes of coloring, I gathered the girls back together and had them paste their drawings on a large poster to make an escalation ladder going up the left hand side, and a de-escalation ladder going down the right hand side (Appendix G). They discussed each scene and explained how the solution they created could have helped the problem in the story de-escalate.

#### 6. Community Building Activity #6

For this session, I began by having the students go around the circle and identify one nice thing that someone had done for them over the past week and how it had made them feel. I explained that for our next session, we would be having a “No Way RA” day. I asked students to brainstorm what RA stood for before I explained that RA was the abbreviation for *relational aggression*. I went on to say that relational aggression was different from bullying because relational aggression meant that someone was using their relationships/friendships to harm others. I explained that when we held our “No Way RA” day, we were all going to focus on doing kind thing for one another, just like what we had talked about at the beginning of the lesson.

I handed out brown paper lunch bags and asked the girls to create and write three specific acts of kindness that they would perform on the “No Way RA” day. I explained that they were not allowed to just

write “I will smile at someone.” They needed to say who they would smile at, or whose chair they would help put up at the end of the day, etc. They also drew a small box beside each statement that they wrote on their bag so that they could place a checkmark in that box once they had completed the act of kindness.

After the girls had finished working on their bags, I handed out a worksheet entitled the “Toolbox of Options” (Appendix H). On this paper there were 16 strategies listed that could be used for appropriately responding to conflict (Dellasega, 163-167). I had the girls go around the circle and read each strategy out loud. I checked if the girls had any questions about the strategies listed, then I handed them a worksheet with tools drawn it (Appendix I). The girls had to choose 5 strategies from the “Toolbox of Options” that were significant to them. They had to be strategies that the girls had used before and had found beneficial, or strategies that they would like to utilize and work on. After the girls had picked their 5 strategies, they had to write each one down onto a tool. They had the opportunity then to color and cut out their tools and place them in their brown paper bags that they labeled as their “Toolkit of Options.”

After 10 minutes of working on this project, the girls went around the circle and choose one strategy that they had placed in their bags to share with the rest of the group. They explained why they had chosen it and what made it significant to them.

## 7. Community Building Activity #7

During the last session, the students gathered in a circle on the carpet and shared the posters that they had created over the past few weeks. They reviewed the quote by Gandhi provided ideas of what that quote meant to them.

Once they returned to their seats, I informed them that they would be writing a letter to themselves. I wanted them to take it seriously and really think about the type of person they were at that point in their lives. I asked them to make the letter three paragraphs long. In the first paragraph, I had them write about the kind of person they were at that moment as a fourth grader. They were to describe their relationships with their friends, how they responded to conflict, etc. In the second paragraph, I asked them to write about what they hoped to be like going into 5<sup>th</sup> grade. What improvements were they hoping to make, what expectations did they have for the school year? And finally, in the last paragraph, I asked them to write about the type of person they wanted to be as an adult. How did they want others to perceive them? How did they want to treat others?

I explained that I really wanted them to put a lot of thought and honesty into their letters. I assured them that they would be the only ones to ever read their letter because I was going to hand them each an envelop for them to place their letter inside and seal it closed so that no one else would be able to read it. I gave them instructions to address the envelop to their houses so that I could mail it to them the week before 5<sup>th</sup> grade started.

As the students finished up their letters, I passed around nametag stickers and had them write “No Way RA” on it. They got to decorate their stickers and wear them for the rest of the day. I ended the session with a follow-up survey to gather results as to whether or not the feeling of community had increased among the students in my classroom.

### ***C. Data Collection***

#### **1. Field Notes/Observations-**

To begin my observations, I adapted an observation record sheet from a fellow intern (Appendix J). This helped me to record any problem behaviors that I noticed between the girls in my classroom over the span of one week. I recorded the time and activity, how the student was behaving, how I handled the situation, and how the student responded to my actions. I used this format the week before the community building activities began, and a week after the community building activities ended. The data I collected during this time period helped me to recognize the number of observable negative behaviors among my girls.

#### **2. PDA Evaluation Sheets-**

When my PDA came to observe my lessons, she made comments on her observation sheet about the students’ behavior and their interactions with one another. She was able to pick up on certain behaviors and made suggestions about how I could better manage their behavior in the future.

#### **3. Student Survey-**

I created a student survey that included 16 questions dealing with how comfortable and welcomed the students felt in the classroom. This survey was distributed at both the beginning and at the end of my inquiry activities. This allowed me to collect evidence of whether or

not my students felt more accepted at the end of the three-week community building lessons.

#### 4. Weekly Reflections/Journals-

After each lesson, and at the end of each week, I reflected back on the activities and wrote notes to myself about how the girls were interacting. I assessed whether or not my goals were met and if the girls were responding accordingly to my lessons. I used these reflections to determine what I wanted to accomplish for the upcoming lessons in the following week.

#### 5. Digital Video Camera-

On the day that I had planned community-building games for my girls, I used a digital video camera to record the activities so that I would be able to go back and review the comments spoken between the girls. I used this video to assess the girls' actions towards one another, and also to analyze how I was managing the lesson.

### **D. Data Analysis**

During and after my inquiry project, I worked on analyzing the notes and data that I had collected. I pulled my notes together collectively to determine if I noticed any patterns or changes in the behaviors of my students.

#### 1. Field Notes/Observations-

I looked over all the notes that I took during the week of March 20<sup>th</sup>, and I listed the various reasons that girls were fighting in the classroom. Every time a certain incident would reoccur, I would add another tally mark to that row. I realized that many of the conflicts occurred when one girl excluded another girl. This often happened outside at recess when the girls had 30 minutes of free time to interact. One specific behavior I noticed was that two or three girls would play a game together, and run away from any other friends who tried to approach them or join in their game. At other times, girls would form clubs and decide who could and could not become a member.

From my notes, I also noticed that there were 5 girls whose names I was continually recording down for their involvement in arguments. Regardless of whether or not they were the ones instigating the problem, the same 5 were always involved in some way or another. When I made a new seating chart for the classroom, I made sure those 5 girls were spread out across the room. However, then I noticed that I

was finding many notes being passed during class time as their way of continuing to communicate even after being split up.

When comparing my pre-inquiry lesson observation sheets to my post-inquiry lesson observations sheets, I realized that the number of arguments among the girls in my classroom had not decreased. The girls continued to fight out at recess and during lunch, however, the way they were responding to these conflicts was starting to improve. I observed girls walk away from conflicts out at recess instead of yelling back, I saw girls sit down at recess with each other in order to try and discuss how they were feeling, and I also had girls approach me and ask me if I could mediate their discussion as they tried to work out their argument. The arguments that I had seen the girls in before seemed to be more out of control and hurtful. However, even though those same problems were still occurring, the girls were responding to them in a much more appropriate manner.

## 2. PDA's Observation

After looking over my PDA's observations and discussing with her what she noticed during my lesson, we decided that there was one girl that was continually causing problems with other girls. If this particular girl did not do her homework, she would become angry at the other girls who had done their homework and who were desperately trying to help her finish hers to please her. Several times she would use a nasty tone and tell them to go away. It seemed as though this girl did not like when her friends did something that she had not done and she was quick to turn against them. Based on these discussions with my PDA, we decided that as a teacher, I would need to become more strict with this student. In a sense, I was allowing her to treat her friends badly and I needed to stop her negative behavior as soon as I saw it happening.

## 3. Student Survey

For the pre-inquiry survey and post-inquiry survey, I added up all the results to determine whether or not the feeling of community increased after the 7 community building activities were implemented. After comparing the results of the pre-community building survey to the results of the post-community building survey, the data showed me that the feelings among the students had generally stayed the same. I was surprised to discover that the answers stayed consistent almost the whole way across the board. In the post-survey, I added a question that asked the students what they liked most about the community building meetings. Some of the students' answers were:

- *We got to split into two groups and I liked this because girls understand girls and boys understand boys.*
- *We could express our feelings without being made fun of by boys.*
- *Teamwork!*
- *It helped me with my arguments.*
- *Us sitting down together.*
- *Making letters to ourselves.*
- *Working together!*

#### 4. Weekly Reflections/Journals

After gathering all of my journals together, I went through and highlighted the various comments that I observed from my students. The first community building activities started off a bit rocky and one of the girls ended up leaving the room in tears after a fellow classmate had hurt her feelings. I noticed that the girls were doing too much calling out and not enough listening to each other. Based on these observations, I implemented the talking stick which the girls adhered to very well. They reminded each other not to talk unless they were holding the talking stick.

During one of the last community building activities, I had girls comment on how much they liked being able to come together with only girls to talk to. They liked being able to get advice from their peers on how to handle situations. They all chimed in by saying things like, “yeah, that happens to me,” or “yeah I don’t know how to handle that situation either.”

Out of all the activities that I did with my students, they seemed to take the letter-writing activity the most seriously. They sat quietly for 20-25 minutes, and independently wrote letters to themselves. A few students asked for a second sheet of paper because they had so much to write about.

#### 5. Digital Video Camera

From the digital camera, I was able to go back and observe ways in which the girls communicated together and worked together to accomplish the tasks I had set before them. I analyzed the footage and realized that once they all stopped talking and actually listened to each other, they were able to accomplish their goal. At first they were all trying to do their separate thing with the balloon game and they were not achieving anything. After a little prompting, they were able to work together to devise an effective strategy. The girls seemed proud of their accomplishment and after each game, they immediately asked

if they could do it again. During this lesson, none of the girls argued over who should be the one giving directions. They all listened to each other and cooperated together. This data shows me that they can get along and work together if they are given a specific goal.

#### **IV. What I Learned**

- A. Claim 1:** Girls need time to sit down together and talk to each other about friendship issues they are all experiencing. This allows them to use each other as a support network and realize that they are all going through the same problems.

**Evidence:** After reading over the comments that my girls put on the post-survey, I realized that it meant a lot to them to be able to sit down with just a group of girls and talk about the issues that were going on in the classroom. They respected the person holding the talking stick and they were eager to give each other advice and reassure each other that they were going through the same problems.

- B. Claim 2:** Although the fighting may not actually come to an end completely, the way that the girls respond to conflicts can improve.

**Evidence:** My observation sheets indicate that there was still a significant amount of arguing occurring during the school day after my three weeks of community building activities. However, as I analyzed my data, I realized that the majority of the students were responding to conflicts using much more appropriate problem-solving strategies. I observed girls ignoring the problem in order to create time for themselves to cool off, I saw girls talking about their feelings during recess, and I had girls approach me and ask if I could help mediate their discussions.

- C. Claim 3:** Conflict among girls occurs most often during recess time.

**Evidence:** The data on my observation sheets indicate that many of the conflicts arise during recess time. For the most part, the conflict generally occurs when a girl feels excluded from a game that her friends are playing. Other times, as groups of girls are sitting around outside at recess not occupying themselves with any physical activity, they begin to gossip and talk about their friends behind their backs.

#### **V. Conclusion**

##### **A. Conclusion**

The community building activities did not have as big of an impact as I had hoped they would on the girls. I still observe them arguing but I feel as though their fights are not as dramatic as they used to be. They do fight, but

they are able to resolve their own conflicts shortly after their arguments and use appropriate problem-solving strategies. I believe community building activities will need to be a year long process in which the teacher is continually helping the students become aware of their actions and feelings towards one another. Conflict resolution strategies take practice and it is an ongoing process that can take place throughout the year both inside and outside of school. This is an issue that should be dealt with at an early age so that students can grow up to be kind, contributing, peaceful members of society.

## **B. Future Practice**

I plan on implementing these community building activities in my classroom during the next academic school year. Teaching problem-solving strategies proved to be beneficial but I would start teaching and modeling these strategies at the beginning of the year before the conflicts among the girls in the classroom got out of hand. I have learned that a teacher needs to do more than just teach academics in the classroom. How the student feels inside the classroom walls affects his/her learning experience and attitude. As a teacher, I hope to continue to improve my skills on dealing with these issues so that everyone in my classroom may feel appreciated, comfortable, and welcomed.

## **C. Future Wonderings**

Throughout my inquiry experiment, and afterwards as I analyzed my results, some additional questions occurred to me:

- What activities could be implemented during recess time that would reduce the number of arguments among the girls?
- What types of activities could be implemented into the daily schedule that would help build a sense of community but do not use up a great amount of class time?
- Would the number of arguments have decreased if I had continued the community-building lessons for a longer period of time?



## Appendix A

### Class Survey

Please check the box that best indicates your feelings towards the following statements.

Statements	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
1. I feel comfortable in this classroom with my peers.				
2. I yell at other students.				
3. If students who are my friends are arguing, I stay out of it.				
4. I talk about classmates behind their backs.				
5. When I am mad, I walk away to cool off.				
6. I feel well-liked in the classroom.				
7. I feel included by other students in group activities.				
8. I listen to the opinions of other people whether they are my close friends or not.				
9. When I go home at night, I worry about my relationships with my friends.				
10. I feel comfortable/safe making mistakes in the classroom.				
11. I exclude others from my group.				
12. I think about other people's feelings before I make decisions.				

13. In your opinion, what is usually a factor that contributes to classroom conflicts/troubles/ problems?

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14. Name one effective strategy you need to improve on when you are in the middle of a conflict with one of your peers.

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15. About how many students in this classroom do you consider to be your close friends?

16. About how many students in this classroom do you think would consider you to be their close friend?

Appendix B



“If we are to reach real peace in this world... we shall have to begin with the children.”  
-Gandhi

## Appendix C

### **Skit 1 –**

**Mary:** Bouncing a ball out on the playground.

**Tom:** "Hey Mary, I see you're bouncing the ball all by yourself, can I have it for a sec?"

**Narrator:** Mary does not want to play with Tom because he sometimes hogs the ball and no one else gets a turn. But instead of saying anything, she says:

**Mary:** "I guess so..." Hands Tom the ball.

**Tom:** Dribbles around with the ball and shoots it a few times. Then he kicks the ball off into the field and runs away after it.

**Mary:** Just shrugs her shoulders and goes to sit down now with nothing left to do.

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### **Skit 2 –**

**Narrator:** "Steve and Lauren are walking back from the library when Steve notices Lauren start to run back to the classroom. This upsets Steve because he knows this is against the school's rules."

**Steve:** "LAUREN! LAUREN'S RUNNING! LAUREN! STOP RUNNING!"

**Narrator:** "Lauren doesn't like that Steve is telling her what to do, so when she gets to the classroom she slams the door in his face."

**Teacher:** "Lauren, please don't slam the door."

**Steve:** "Comes in the room. *"Yeah Lauren, don't slam the door!"*

**Lauren:** "Don't tell me what to do, you think you're better than everyone else!"

**Steve:** Yells, "I do not, you liar!"

**Lauren:** "Whatever, you're just a teacher's pet!"

**Teacher:** Okay, that's enough. I don't tolerate name calling in this classroom, you will both lose 10 minutes of tomorrow's recess!"

### **Additional Skits-**

- Student A is building a tower at this desk. Student B walks by and accidentally bumps into his desk causing the entire building to crash.
- Jessie overhears Maggie and Erika talking about her new clothes.
- Every time the teacher asks Christy to do something, she hears Scott mutter, *"Yeah Christy."*
- The class is lining up for recess. Brad notices that John has cut in front of him for the third time in a row that week.

# Talk It Out

- 1) Stop. Cool Off.
- 2) Attack the problem, not the person.
- 3) Use I-messages.
- 4) Listen.
- 5) Brainstorm Solutions
- 6) Choose an idea.

Appendix  
E

**the anger catcher**

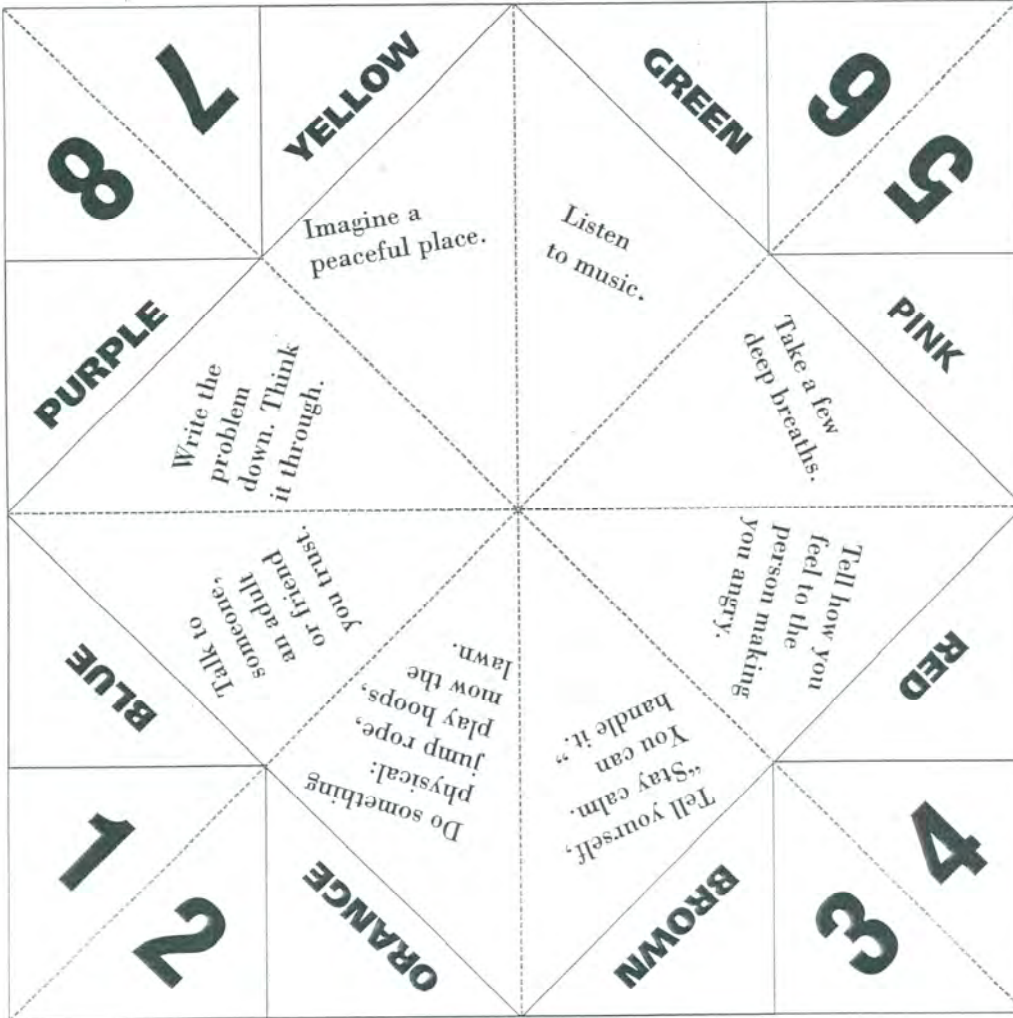
When you get angry and don't know what to do, ask the anger catcher.

1. Cut out the anger catcher.
2. Turn it face down.
3. Fold each corner into the center.
4. Turn it over and fold each corner into the center.
5. Fold it in half, with the numbers on the outside. Now, open and fold in half the other way.
6. Insert the thumb and first finger of each hand under the number flaps.
7. Close the anger catcher so only the numbers show.

**To Use:** Pick a number. Open and close the anger catcher this number of times. Pick a color. Spell out the color, opening and closing the anger catcher for each letter.  
(example: R-E-D—Open and close the anger catcher 3 times.) Pick a color. Open the color flap.

**This is the way to handle your anger!**

Use by yourself or to help a friend or someone in your family who is angry.



## Not Our Problem

The Queen sat one morning,  
with her husband the King,  
eating maple syrup and pancakes.  
As they ate they leaned from the castle window  
and watched the street below.  
They talked of many things.  
The King, not paying attention  
to what he was doing, let a drop of syrup  
fall unto the window sill.  
“Should we get someone to wipe that up?” offered the Queen  
“Never mind,” said the King, it’s not our problem.  
The servants will get it later.”  
(Scene 1)

As the two continued their breakfast, the drop of syrup  
slowly began to drip down the windowsill.  
At last it fell with a plop onto the street below.  
Soon a fly had landed on the drop of honey,  
and began his meal  
Immediately, a flycatcher who was flying by the castle landed  
and grabbed the insect in its’ beak and started to fly away,  
but a cat had seen the bird and pounced.  
Just then a dog sprang forward and attacked the cat!  
(Scene 2)

“Oh dear, there is a cat and dog fight in the street,” observed  
the Queen, “Should we call someone to stop it?”  
“Never mind,” said the King, “It’s not our problem.”  
So the two continued to eat their pancakes.

Meanwhile the cat’s owner had arrived and was beating the  
dog, the dog’s owner ran up and began to beat the cat.  
Soon the two owners were beating each other.  
(Scene 3)

“Oh my, there are two persons fighting in the street now.  
Should we send someone to break this up?”  
The king lazily looked from the window,  
“Never mind, it’s not our problem.”

The friends of the cat’s owner gathered  
and began to cheer him on.  
The neighbors of the dog’s owner began to  
cheer her on as well.  
Soon both groups entered the fight and attacked each other.  
(Scene 4)

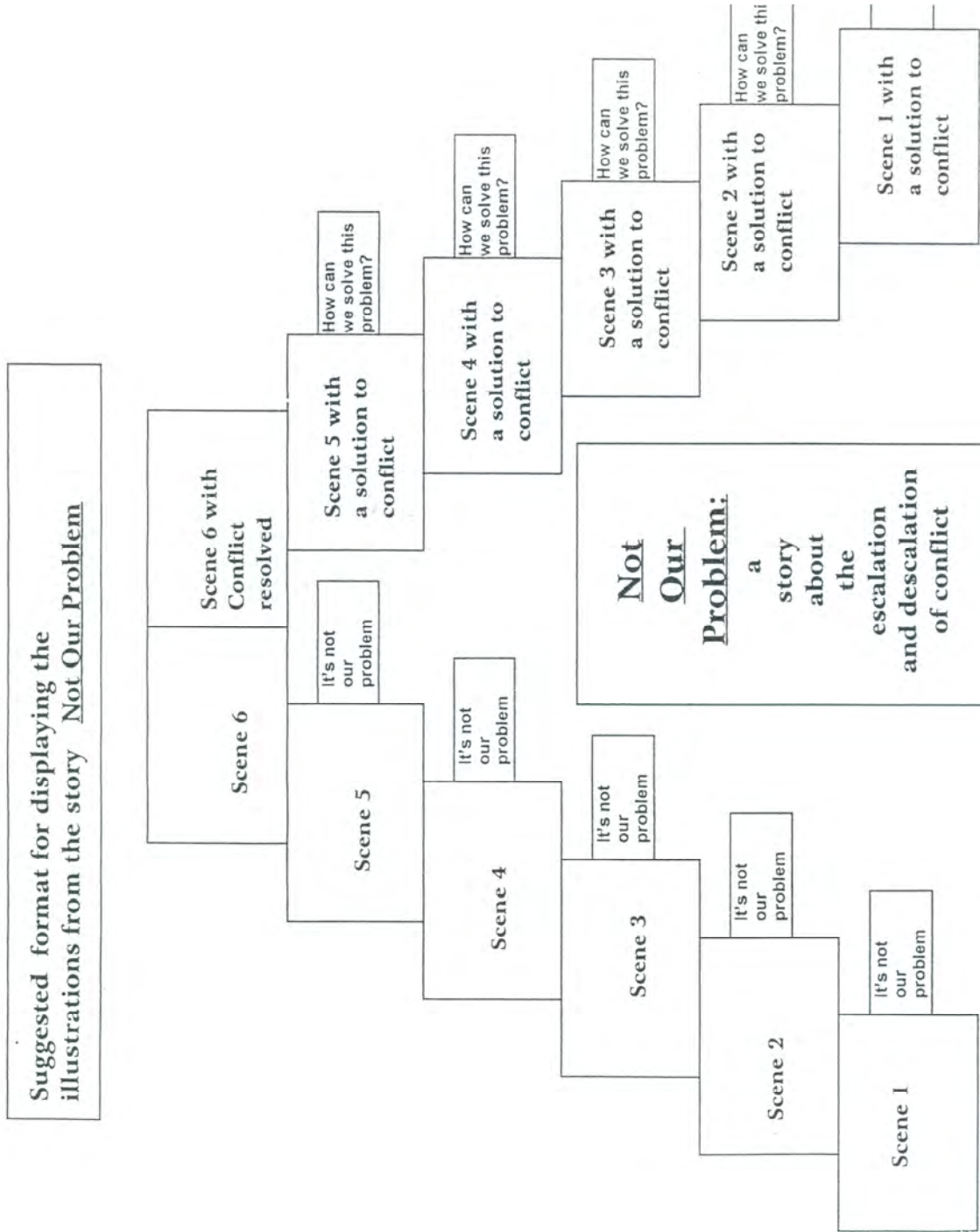
“My dear King, a number of people are fighting in the street  
now. Perhaps we should call someone.”  
The King was too lazy to even look.  
You can guess what he said,  
“Never mind. It’s not our problem.”

Now the King’s soldiers arrived on the scene.  
At first they tried to break up the fighting.  
But when they heard the cause of the fight some sided with  
the cat’s owner, others sided with the dog’s owner.  
Soon the soldiers too had joined the fight.  
(Scene 5)

With the soldiers involved, the fight erupted into civil war.  
Houses were burned down.  
People were harmed.  
And the castle itself was set afire and burned to the ground.  
The King and the Queen stood surveying the ruins.  
“Perhaps,” said the King, “I was wrong?  
Perhaps the drop of syrup WAS our problem.”  
(Scene 6)

*-adapted from a folktale told in Burma and Thailand found in Peace Tales*

Appendix G





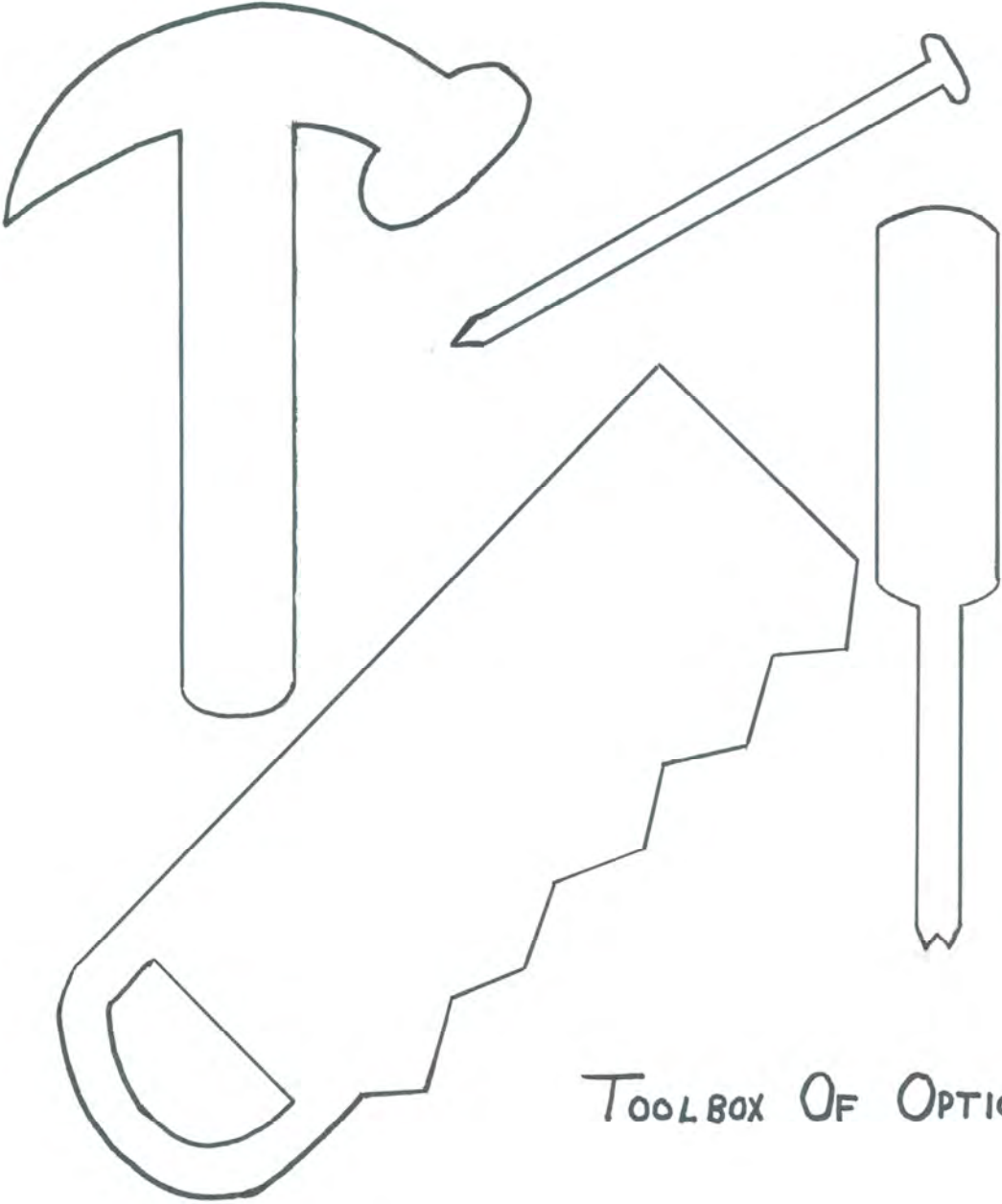
## Appendix H

### TOOL KIT OF OPTIONS

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1. Journal Writing
  - it is an effective way to express and gather your thoughts and feelings
2. Expanding Your Circle of Friends
  - make lots of friends in lots of different groups
3. Gain Insight into Why Others Act the Way They Do
  - maybe your friend is dealing with a problem that you are unaware of and it is making him/her act differently
4. Positive Gossip
  - if someone else is putting another person down, find something nice to say about that person instead
5. Ask Others to Stop
  - if you notice your friends gossiping, bullying, etc, tell them to stop
6. Walk Away
7. Appreciate the Friends You Have
  - let the friends you do have know how much you care about them
8. Help Someone Else
  - what really matters is being kind to other people and helping them out
9. Speak Up For Yourself
  - in a calm manner, say how you feel and what you think
10. Be a Leader
  - be the first person in your group to change what you talk about and do
11. Forgive and Forget
  - sometimes the best thing to do is just move on
12. Smile at Someone You Don't Usually Talk To
13. Think About What You Say
  - monitor your own behavior & reflect back on what you have said to others
14. Keep a Sense of Values, Do What You Love
  - don't let others convince you to do things you don't want to do
15. Perspective Taking
  - remember what is important in life, know that your family will always love you and that conflicts do not last forever

Appendix I



TOOLBOX OF OPTIONS

## Appendix J

### OBSERVATION RECORD SHEET

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Target Behaviors:**

- Using Kind Words – Cooperating – Including Others

**Problem Behaviors:**

- Gossiping - Mean Glances – Calling Names - Arguing - Yelling – Excluding Others

Record the student behavior, the teacher strategy and the student response. If this pattern continues more than once tally the instances. If a portion of the pattern changes add another entry.

Time/Activity	Student Behavior	Teacher Strategy	Student Response	Tally

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