

Five Ways to Facilitate Student Conflict Resolution



Need to Know

- Educators spend upwards of 30-80% of their time on student discipline, including addressing student conflict, detracting from valuable instructional and planning responsibilities.
- Conflict management and resolution skills are essential for success in school, work, and life.
- Through a combination of modeling, authentic practice, and real-world implementation, educators can help students internalize and effectively use conflict resolution strategies.

A Closer Look

It's been reported that educators can spend anywhere between 30-80% of their valuable time managing problem behaviors, with a primary source being interpersonal conflict between student peers. With the right strategies, language, and mindsets, however, educators can both support students in becoming effective problem-solvers *and* save themselves the persistent headache of yet another round of “he said, she said.”

Student Conflict Resolution Strategies

With context and student age being important considerations, these strategies are effective for elementary and middle school settings.

- 1. Position yourself as the “guide on the side.”** Depending on student age, familiarity with conflict resolution strategies, and the severity of the conflict, you will need to calibrate your level of involvement and guidance as you support students through conflict resolution. However, remain clear that the conflict is not yours and that you are merely there to facilitate dialogue and responsible decision-making. This looks like prompting students to use “I statements,” paraphrasing (“It sounds like ___ feels ___.”), and encouraging perspective-taking (“How might it make you feel if ___ happened to you?”). For more tips on guiding conflict resolution with students, check out [this short video](#) from [moozoom](#), the premiere well-being and PBIS video-based learning platform for K-6 education.
- 2. Check your mindset.** Rather than viewing student conflict as a nuisance or disruption (which it certainly can be), try framing it as a learning opportunity for you and for students. If you approach conflict with this mindset, your students catch onto this, which can alleviate some strong emotions and help everyone tap into their “thinking” brain. This also helps you regulate your own emotions and reactions so you can be a model of what you hope to see from your students.
- 3. Implement a consistent conflict resolution framework.** Through a combination of explicit instruction, authentic practice, and real-world application, students internalize academic and SEL content. Similarly, explicit teaching of a consistent conflict resolution framework, having students engage with that framework through guided practice, then coaching and reminding them to put it into action during real-world problems solidifies student understanding and mastery of conflict resolution techniques. For teachers tight on time, tools like moozoom provide ready-made, relatable, and culturally relevant [video series](#) that give students examples of ways to manage internal and external conflict. In only 30 minutes a week, moozoom provides a straightforward framework – 1) Zoom out and stop, 2) Zoom in and think, and 3) Go and act accordingly.

4. **Leverage the power of language.** Often, educators help students internalize habits of discussion using sentence frames that encourage productive academic dialogue. For example, stems like “I respectfully disagree because” or “I’m not sure I’m understanding you, can you please explain more” are powerful tools that support students during discussion or socratic seminars. Similarly, students need direction about effective language to use when managing conflict. Connect discussion and conflict management language where possible so students see the consistency and have a greater likelihood of internalizing it.
5. **Anticipate “hot spots” for conflict and strategize where you can get in front of them.** Typically, less structured time (recess, lunch, study hall) as well as group work allow for more student conflict to arise. Be proactive before these periods by setting clear expectations first, as well as reminding students of their conflict management strategies and language. In particular, use intentional group roles and feedback opportunities during collaborative work to keep this time productive. By giving every group member a clear role (notetaker, norms monitor, scribe, etc.) and leaving 5 to 10 minutes at the end of group work for students to give one another feedback, you are setting your students up for successful collaboration. [Listen](#) as this fourth grade teacher shares how [moozoom](#) content has helped her students manage conflict during these trickier times of day!

Resolve Your Conflict Resolution Woes

Whether you need clear language for conflict resolution among students or relevant, engaging videos that model effective conflict management, [moozoom](#) offers high-quality resources that save teachers time. Make recess, lunch, and group work your favorite times of day by equipping students with the essential conflict resolution strategies they need to be successful in school, work, and life. Check out an [overview](#) of all moozoom has to offer and [sign up for a free trial today!](#)

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