

NEGOTIATION EDUCATION ACTIVITY

Split Down the Middle

Created by

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Brief Description

This activity aims to teach students the benefits of using the tool of “ladder of inference” through role play in order to gain better understanding of the way we think, draw conclusions and perceive different issues in our lives and in the world. The activity focuses on the central conflict in the short story “The Split Cherry Tree” by Jesse Stuart; The conflict between two opposing worldviews: traditionalism and modernism. Each one of the main characters represents a different worldview. The conflict in the story resolves when one of the characters listens, understands, and uses persuasion skills while the other inquires, listens, and shows openness to understand and to change.

Learning Objectives

- Managing difficult conversation
- Using the Ladder of Inference
- Inquiring to gain a better understanding
- Demonstrating understanding and acknowledging the “other”

Lead-in / Preparation / Prerequisite Knowledge

Students first study the story and understand the main characters’ backgrounds, the conflicts, and the story’s resolution. One of the themes discussed in the split cherry tree is the conflict between two opposing worldviews: traditionalism and modernism. Each one of the main characters represents a different worldview. The conflict in the story resolves when one of the characters listens, uses negotiation and persuasion skills.

Estimated Class-Time Required

2-3 lessons (depends on the class level)



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Description of Activities

1- In the first lesson, students are exposed to the ladder of inference, which describes how we usually draw conclusions, and its concepts: Data, filters, lens, and conclusion. In addition, the importance of inquiring-asking questions - during a negotiation or a conflict - to understand the other's ladder of inference is taught.

2- Second, students are given an example, and this video is played to illustrate the point: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6deHZzV4vHM>. After that, students are given a worksheet that includes the sentence stems of the ladder of inference (attached). Important stems are highlighted and explained in first language (if necessary).

3- Students are asked to apply the ladder of inference to their own lives by analyzing a conflict they had with a friend or a parent and to suggest questions that could have been asked to help understand the other and resolve the conflict. The teacher checks students' application of the ladder of inference to ensure understanding.

4- In the second lesson, the teacher writes two conflicts on the board

Professor Herbert – Mr. Luster Sexton

Dave - Mr. Luster Sexton

The students are divided into four groups. Each group is assigned with a character and is asked to:

- (A) analyze the conflict their character is having. After analyzing the conflict
- (B) students are asked whether their character made an inquiry and asked questions to understand the other character's perspective or not.
- (C) write the ladder of inference of their characters.
- (D) choose a representative to role-play the character using related sentence stems and questions from the worksheet.

5- The four chosen students stand in front of their classmates and act out the scenes (Dave and his father- Professor Herbert and Mr. Sexton) of the conflict's climax.

Key Vocabulary / Phrases

Ladder of inference sentence stems and questions (attached)

Assessment



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- Students applied the ladder of inference to their own daily conflicts.
- Students analyzed the main conflict in the story using negotiation concepts.
- Students used the sentence stems and questions in the worksheet while role-playing their character.

Reflection

An oral discussion is held after the activity in which students are asked to reflect on the activity, the concepts learned, the importance of the ladder of inference, and how it can help us understand how we and others think, draw conclusions, and perceive different issues in life. In addition, students are asked whether this tool (ladder of inference) can be applied to other literary texts they have studied and explain their answers.

Attachments

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6deHZzV4vHM>

Pathways vocabulary sentence stems

