Position Paper

Taking conflict resolution this semester has really helped me relate to observations, discussions, and insights to what to do when a conflict arises in a classroom setting. I now feel that I can handle a conflict situation if/when it comes up, and I have learned a lot of different philosophies to fix a conflict catering to all children’s needs. It is important to know how to handle a situation in a proper way, so everyone gets the most benefit out of conflict resolution. Having good classroom management, and a good conflict resolution style in place, will help all students achieve.

When it comes to conflict resolution in my classroom, I want all my student to be involved in how things are solved. According to the handout “How Do I Respond to Conflict?” I am a compromiser. I want to pass this trait on to my students. I think it is important for students to compromise with one another to get the situation solved. Compromising in my idea means that students listen to each other’s side of the stories. This helps them understand how each person is feeling. When they have each told their story, then they have to agree on a solution together. This makes them collaborate with one another to understand. Seeing other’s viewpoints is really needed especially in an elementary setting, when you are solving problems.

Another great way to solve conflict without using compromising would be using I-messages. From the handout “Overview of Conflict Resolution Instruction”, I messages are a great tool to use in the classroom for children to solve issues. I would have the whole class practice these at the beginning of the year, so when a conflict arises, they are already trained on how to correct it using their I-messages. The style for I- messages are I feel ____________.
when I _____________________, I want _____________________. This is a good way for children to express their feelings through words, rather than actions. I have personally used this in a classroom setting. It has done wonders for children that use actions rather than words. It has taught them that using words is better because it does not hurt other people’s feelings. I-messages are created to let a student explain feelings, instead of blaming actions on other classmates. The way student’s can practice using these at the beginning of the year is by looking at children’s books. They can pick out a character with a problem, and explain to the other character how he/she is feeling. This is a good teaching and instructional model.

I have observed in many different classrooms throughout my years in college. I have seen many different classroom management styles, and conflict resolution styles. One classroom I was in had great classroom management style. The children were very well behaved and were always on task, thus the teacher did not have to scold and take time out of learning to correct the students. In another classroom I observed the students were out of hand, and the teacher spend most of the day pulling their sticks and telling her students what they were doing wrong. As a future teacher, this was unsettling for me, because so much time of the day was wasted on correcting the children rather than learning. I am going to have a plan in action, such as the first example. I want my students to be responsible for their actions, and when a conflict comes, they can take care of it, without having to disrupt the entire class. Classrooms and teacher’s, need to be focused on teaching with their student’s learning, rather than constantly correcting misbehavior. This will make the classroom environment more peaceful, as well as calming the students to be in control of themselves.

Having discussions with my peers, I have heard many great insights about different philosophies of correcting conflict in the classroom. One idea that was mentioned in class was to
have all students bring in a peaceful object that they can keep in their desk. This object would be used to calm a student or for them to remember what brings peace to their lives. This object would be used if the child was having a bad day, or if there was a conflict. The child could get the object out, go somewhere for a few minutes and just reflect on the situation. Giving students time to reflect usually alleviates some pressure.

Becoming a future teacher I have goals for myself. One goal that is suitable would be to have a peaceful classroom, where students collaborate to solve conflicts. I want to create a classroom where conflicts are corrected in the appropriate manner, and where students feel safe. It is important for students to know how to handle conflict, because it will make their lives a lot less stressful. Another goal I want for my students is to be able to talk to me, their teacher, or their peers if they are having a problem. When students feel safe, to where they can express their feelings, they enjoy coming to school.

I am going to teach my conflict resolution style of compromising from the beginning of the school year, so it can be effective for the entire year. It is my responsibility to have a classroom where little conflict takes place, and my students feel welcomed and safe. I have learned many philosophies through websites, handouts, discussion, and observations. All of these have helped me be where I am today. I am ready to take on the education world with impressive conflict resolution and classroom management skills. Teachers have one of the most rewarding jobs ever, and that is to make an impact in a child’s life.