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Conflict Res.

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Position Paper

Conflict resolutions skills and strategies are something I think that teachers must have in order to be a successful teacher and survive the rough days with students. One of the things that I have struggled with during my observations and field experiences is knowing what to do when students are having problems or I see a student bullying others. Being able to do modules and have discussion boards with the rest of my peers was helpful because we were able to share our thoughts with the rest of the group and present questions that they could try and answer for us. After talking about the modules and discussion boards in class I was curious to go into the elementary school again to look for the things that I had been learning. Conflict Resolution really opened my eyes and made me look into things that I may had previously passed by and not thought anything of it. Students' actions can have a very powerful impact on other students' feelings, so it is very important that teachers keep control of conflict between students and create a positive learning environment for all.

The very first module and conversation we had in the class was talking about bullying and the effects it can have on students. We watched a movie that talked to students and showed footage of students bullying others, which was very eye opening to me because I did not realize the types of things students were doing to others. Even though it was based in a middle school I'm sure that the same behaviors are happening in the elementary school but just on a different level. Learning about the bullying module hit me hard because I know that growing up I was

hard on other students and probably hurt their feelings by things I said and done even though I didn't mean to. The packet titled "Know What? Bullying hurts!" seemed to be a great resource to use in the classroom because it provides little activities for students to do that teaches them how to say no to bullying. The module also taught me that working with students and modeling good behavior is crucial to having students behave in ways the teacher is happy with. A lot of times students are not aware of the expectations set for them by the teacher so the teacher has a responsibility of teaching them the negative effects of bullying and how they want the students to behave.

Another thing I was very interested in was the little quiz that we took that took a look at how each one of us responds to conflict. Looking at my results didn't really surprise me a lot but it was kind of an awakening experience to see it on paper that I was forcing in 8 situations. That means for me that I need to remember that when I deal with conflict in the classroom because although I may deal with a scenario one way, some students may choose to deal with it in a different way which may be just as effective. Taking the quiz made me realize there are many ways that students may deal with conflict and as a teacher you have to be able to accommodate them and allow them to handle situations the way they want to as long as it is appropriate. Participating in observations this semester has allowed me to notice the different ways that first graders and fourth graders deal with their conflict. A lot of times in the first grade class, the students will have a conflict with another student and then they will come up to the teacher and start "tattling" on the student instead of trying to talk about it and figure out how they both feel. Where as in the fourth grade class, they are pretty independent and like to work through their conflicts on their own which can cause problems sometimes. Working with older students causes

the teacher to keep a closer eye on the students to make sure there is not bullying occurring and the one student is not trying to handle it by their self.

Conflict skills and strategies are important for students because as a teacher you want to have a learning environment in the classroom that all students feel comfortable to be in. The last thing you want is for students to not trust the teacher and have to keep all their feelings and problems bottled inside. If students learn how to deal with conflict then they are not only working on how to solve problems but they are learning communication skills and developing self-esteem. For the teacher that means that the students are taking responsibility in their behaviors and there should be fewer problems in the class and create more respect between the teacher and student. Using I-messages, learning how to talk it out with a mediator and using the anger elevator are all great ways for students to deal with their conflict. I believe that students need to be in charge of their behavior and actions, so demonstrating and modeling to them the proper behaviors at the beginning of the school year is imperative. They need to take responsibility and know the effects that their behavior can have on others even though they are not directly meaning it to.