CHAPTER 2

ANALYZING CONFLICT

By Carolyn Duffy

P eace has been defined as the absence of conflict. The theme of Chapter 2, *Analyzing Conflict,* provides learners with examples of situations in which conflict has occurred and a previously peaceful situation has become unpleasant, tense, or potentially violent. Chapter 2 expands on the photo series from Chapter 1 and builds on the students' previously established notions about each of the peaceful situations depicted in the photos. As students examine the situations for the sources of the conflict or misunderstanding, they develop the vocabulary that they need to discuss the concepts of peace and conflict and deepen their understanding of these issues. As students explore the concepts and discuss their own attitudes and values, they improve their social interaction skills as well as their language skills. Teachers can use the proposed lesson by itself or expand it by adding additional activities in related lessons. The Internet Resources Guide at the end of this journal offers many lesson plans related to the theme of identifying conflict.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Most people agree that conflict is a negative force that we should try to resolve in order to achieve more positive states, such as harmony, understanding, and peace, in our lives. Nevertheless, conflict exists at all levels of social interaction, from personal inner conflict to global wars and international violence. We cannot avoid conflict, but we can find ways to deal with it that will reduce its impact on our lives and even exploit positive effects related to conflict situations. For example, conflict resolution techniques provide us with ways to examine a situation and our responses to the situation that allow for more peaceful living.

Clarifying the elements within a situation that are sources of conflict is an important first step in resolving the conflict. Conflicts of resources, conflicts of needs, and conflicts of values or goals are the most common categories of conflicts, and it is often difficult to label the conflict precisely since resources, needs, and values are inter-related. Imagine that you are observing a group of children in a classroom or playground situation. What are the areas in which conflicts might occur?

Resources

- Someone takes your toy, book, etc. (personal property)
- Other children use all of the clay and none is left for you. (common resources)

Needs

- Someone calls you a name or insults you. (need for personal dignity and self-esteem)
- You were not asked to play the game. (need for inclusion and friendship)
- The teacher wants your paper now; you need more time to do it well. (need for achievement)

Values/Goals

- You are reading quietly and someone near you begins to talk or play a loud game. (The goal of reading quietly becomes a value conflict in this situation)
- Your friends are being mean to a classmate because he is Puerto Rican. You think this is wrong, but you do not want to lose your friends. (conflict of values)

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The distinction between needs and values is often difficult to make. For example, in the conflict between quiet reading and loud game playing, are the children contending for the limited resource of space, or is there a value conflict between quiet reading and noisy playing? Sometimes at first glance it seems a simple task to label a conflict, when in fact there are many issues to be considered. The issues that initiate conflict are not confined to conflicts among children, but are the basis of community, national, and international conflicts that often escalate into wars. Understanding what the conflict is about and identifying the elements within the conflict situation are the first steps in its resolution.

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CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS

The lesson plan that follows is similar to the one presented in Chapter 1, *Defining Peace*. This chapter builds on the concepts identified as leading to peaceful living by presenting similar situations from the perspective of conflict. Similar photos and many of the same activities are used as the students explore the parallel concepts of peace and conflict and the contrasting language that accompanies them. Teachers are encouraged to adapt this 50-minute lesson to the language and content needs of their students. Adjustments can easily be made so that the lesson matches the needs of low-or high-proficiency learners.

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PRELIMINARY LESSON PLANNING

Materials:

Select large photos that represent situations in which people work together at different levels of interaction (G = global, N = national, C = community, Fr = friends, Fa = family, and P = personal) in situations that show conflict, anger, **frustration**, or violence. These photos will be used in Activity 1 using the same procedure as outlined in Chapter 1 with photos of peaceful situations.

For the warm-up activity, you will create a Conflict Web with the class. A Glossary of conflict words and example sentences is given in Appendix A.

For the cool down activity, use the *Peace Word List* that you created for the Warm-up Activity in Chapter 1. To complete the vocabulary activities, students will need the lexical notebook and journal that they used in Chapter 1 in which to record the new words and phrases and to write their personal responses to the discussions. A model for a word form chart is given in Appendix B. Appendix C gives a list of pairs of contrasting words related to the topics of peace and conflict.

Time:

Depending on the size of your class, you may want to use one photo and activities as a model for the full class and give the other photos to smaller groups for outside preparation and later in-class presentation. This lesson can also be extended to include class work with each photo over a longer period of time.

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WARM UP ACTIVITY

(approximately 15 minutes)

Purpose:

To develop concept readiness for the lesson about conflict

Procedures:

1. Ask each member of the class to think of one word that they would associate with *conflict*. (See Appendix A for glossary.)

2. Ask students to share their word with the class. Record the words on the board during the discussion. Use a "web" with CONFLICT in the center; draw lines to the associated words that the students offer. Group words together that have similar associations and categorize them (e.g., fights, **arguments**, yelling = actions; anger, frustration, **hostility**, fear = feelings). Transfer the words to large chart paper and post the chart in the classroom for reference. Use this class-created *Conflict Word List* in the Cool Down Activity and in the suggested extension activities later in the lesson.

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ACTIVITY #1

(Approximately 15 minutes)

In this activity, students use a set of six photos that illustrate conflict within groups. The photos of different groups represent the same categories (Global, National, Community, Friends, Family and Personal) that were used in Chapter 1. The goal is to examine the conflict situations for the groups in each of the photos and to generate vocabulary related to the conflict. Semantic webs and word lists continue to be used in order to familiarize students with an effective procedure for working with new concepts and vocabulary.

Purpose:

- To establish a lexicon related to conflict situations
- To explore the students' personal attitudes and opinions

Materials needed:

- Large photos depicting "conflict situations" with different groups
- Student notebooks
- English learner dictionaries

Procedure:

This is the same procedure that was used in Chapter 1 for introducing the photo series about peace. The goal is to stimulate the background schema related to conflict.

1. Select photos of "conflict" scenes to show the class, one to illustrate each category (**G**,**N**,**C**,**Fr**,**Fa**, **P**). Examples of possible photos are:

   Global - The United Nations in session during a heated argument
   National - A strike showing angry workers demanding rights in a picket line
   Community - A classroom community with children involved in a controversy

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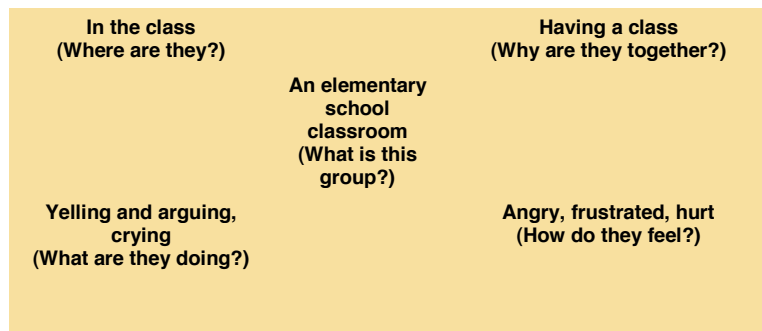**Fr**iends - A game in which a scuffle has broken out
Family - A family scene showing an angry exchange between a parent and child
Personal - A person alone, obviously troubled or frustrated

2. Introduce the photos to the class; ask the students to give each photo a "title" to designate the group in the picture (i.e., friends, family, etc.). Prompt students by asking *Wh* questions (e.g., who are they, where are they, what are they doing, and why? How do they feel?). Write the responses on the chalkboard as a semantic web, with the group title in the center. Six webs, one for each of the categories, should be put on the board. Ask students to use their dictionaries for new vocabulary related to the different scenes in the photos. The ideas and concepts that are generated in the discussion of the photos should not be hurried or perfunctory. The goal is to encourage students to explore their ideas and the language that is needed to express them.

Note: Depending on the time devoted to this activity and the level of vocabulary of the class, the teacher may choose to use one photo as a model and then have students work in groups to expand on another photo of their choice. Groups can then present their photo expansion with associated words to the class while the teacher records new vocabulary in word lists. Another option is to group Friends, Family and Personal for exploration on one day and Global, National, and Community on another. Beginning with photos of home, family and friends is especially useful with younger learners.

Example of expansion from prompts for a community photo:

In the class **(Where are they?)**	**Having a class** **(Why are they together?)**
An elementary school classroom (What is this group?)	
Yelling and arguing, crying **(What are they doing?)**	**Angry, frustrated, hurt** **(How do they feel?)**

Note: This photo could be of two children arguing over space to work in the classroom. For example, Tommy has a puzzle with many pieces that he is working on at the only classroom worktable. Gina has a large paper and markers and wants to make a mural. Gina has asked Tommy to move. Tommy has refused, and now they are arguing emotionally.

3. Working with the word webs created around the photos:
   a. Ask the class to choose from five to eight words from the "What are they doing?" and the "How do they feel?" question responses for each of the photos.
   b. Add these words to the *Conflict Word List* that was created in the Warm Up Activity. These lists should be displayed in the classroom while students work on subsequent "conflict" activities.
   c. Ask the students to record the words from the word list into their lexical notebooks. The Glossary in Appendix A provides commonly used words related to the topic of conflict and can be used as a reference or review for the students during the lesson.

Transition

Tell the students that now they will look at the situations in the photos to determine "why" the conflict arose.

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ACTIVITY #2

(approximately 20 minutes)

Purpose:

- To introduce the concept of analysis of a conflict situation
- To identify the elements that most often contribute to a conflict (conflicts of resources, needs, values or goals)

Materials needed:

- Photos from Activity # 1

Procedure:

1. Tell the students that conflicts most often arise because the participants in an interaction have a conflict over "resources", "needs", "values" or "goals". Put these categories on the chalkboard. Use a clear conflict situation to illustrate one of the categories for the class. For example, you might use those given in the Background Information for this chapter.

2. Ask the students to examine one of the photos from Activity #1 to identify the conflict and to categorize the conflict as either (a) a conflict of resources, (b) a conflict of needs, or (c) a conflict of values or goals. Put this photo and the word web that was created for it on the chalkboard. Make a list on the chalkboard to record the students' points during the discussion. Refer to the web chart as you analyze the conflict depicted by the photo in order to recycle the vocabulary and to review the components of the situation. For example, the elementary school classroom scene that is illustrated in Activity #1 could now be analyzed to determine that the conflict arose because both children wanted to use the same space - a conflict of resources.

3. After completing one full-class analysis of a photo, have students work with the other photos in small groups. Each group will present their photo to the class and talk about the type of conflict that they identified. Encourage further class discussion to elicit other perspectives on the type of conflict for each photo.

   Note: A goal of this stage of the activity is to help students to understand how complex the issue of conflict is, and that what initially may seem a straightforward issue, may involve more complex needs of the participants.

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COOL DOWN ACTIVITY

(Approximately 5 minutes)

Purpose:

- To review the parallels between the concepts and words related to peace and conflict.
- *Materials*: The *Word Lists* that you created in Warm-up Activities for Chapters 1 and 2.

Procedure:

1. Ask students to look at the two *Word Lists* for the Warm-up Activities (Chapters 1 and 2) and to match any of the terms that contrast. For example, the word *love* from the *Peace Word List* (Chapter 1) might be matched with the word *hate* in *Conflict Word List* (Chapter 2). Put several of the pairs of words on the chalkboard.

2. Tell the students to refer to the *Words Lists* in their lexical notebooks and to continue to find pairs of words that show contrast. Ask them to then work with a partner to compare the sets that each has found. 3. Ask the students to transfer the pairs of contrasting words to a separate section of their notebooks.

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EXTENSIONS

1. *Lexical Expansion Activity* for words in opposition. This activity gives students more practice in identifying conflicts and extending their vocabulary related to conflict situations.

- Use two parallel photos of friends interacting, one representing a peaceful situation and one a situation of conflict. Present these to the class. Ask the class to speculate on the reasons why the conflict arose and how the actions and feelings of the participants changed. Develop the vocabulary to show the words in opposition (e.g., agree - disagree; cheerful - angry; talking - arguing).
- Give pairs or small groups of students sets of parallel photos (e.g., the scenes at the global, national, community, family and personal levels). Ask the students to speculate on why a conflict might arise in the situation depicted in their photos. Ask students to use their dictionaries to find contrasting words to describe the situations in the two contrasting photos.

- Ask several of the pairs of students to present their photos and the reasons for the conflict and the lists of words in opposition to the class. Add these words and phrases to the *Peace and Conflict Word Lists* and ask students to record the sets of contrasting words and phrases in their lexical dictionaries. Variation: If class time is limited, students can submit their lists of words to the teacher, who compiles the lists of contrasting words and makes copies for each student to add to his or her lexical notebook.

2. *Lexical practice activities* can be done again as in Chapter 1. These include recording the new vocabulary in collocation frames, completing a word form chart for vocabulary related to the topic of conflict, and using their dictionaries to find words with similar meanings to be recorded in their lexical notebooks.

3. The *Journal* can be completed as was done in Chapter 1 to give students opportunities to use the new vocabulary to discuss the concept of *Identifying Conflict*. Ask the students to think of a personal experience that involved a conflict situation. Ask them to write about the situation in order to identify and categorize the conflict following the steps presented in this chapter.

Glossary of Important Terms

The Glossary has words and definitions that are often used to discuss the concept of conflict. As you explore the photos and activities in this chapter, check the Glossary for words that can be used to discuss and write about the conflict.

Argument - A discussion in which both participants have strong opposing views. A verbal **disagreement**. *The argument between the parents and the school board was about continuing a popular but expensive after-school program for children.*

Disagreement - An opposition of views. *The father and daughter were in disagreement about the time she had to be home after the party.*

Frustration - A feeling of anger or disappointment at not being able to achieve a goal or obtain something that you want. *After waiting five minutes for the light to change at the intersection, the drivers began honking their horns in frustration.*

Hostility - A feeling or attitude of intense opposition to a person, group, or an action. *After the strike, the hostility the workers felt toward management made the work place tense and unfriendly.*

Intolerance - The attitude of disregard or disdain for another person's opinions, manners, beliefs, race or religion. Lack of tolerance. *Many people left England for a new life in America because of religious intolerance and persecution.*

Incompatible - Not able to exist together or to come to agreement about something. *The two boys could not continue to be roommates because their sleep schedules were incompatible; John went to bed at 10 p.m. and got up early, while Sam went to bed at 2 a.m. and wanted to sleep until noon.* Common phrase: Incompatible differences. *The strike was called because of incompatible differences regarding salaries between the workers and the company.*

Threat - A perceived danger or risk to your security or well being. *The arrival of soldiers and tanks at the rally signaled the threat of violence to the protesters.*

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Word Form Chart for Identifying Conflict			
This is an example of a word form chart. Fill in the blank spaces with the correct word form and record other key words from the lesson in the chart. Keep the chart in your lexical notebook.			
Noun	**Verb**	**Adjective**	**Adverb**
anger	*(to be angry)*	*angry*	*angrily*
	threaten		
		hostile	
disagreement			
		frustrated	
intolerance			
		incompatible	
	argue		

(back to Classroom Applications)

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Words In Contrast	
Words in contrast from the topics Peace and Conflict	
happy	sad
relaxed	tense
rejoice	grieve
tranquil	disturbed
serene	distraught, anxious
calm	chaotic, upset
content	unhappy, discontent
composed	agitated
friendly	unfriendly
good-will	hostility
cooperation	opposition
agreement	disagreement, argument
harmony	discord
open	closed, wary
trusting	suspicious, untrusting
collaborate	compete
talk	listen

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