

HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO CONFLICT? (adult version)

The following exercises are designed to help you take a closer look at how you respond to classroom conflicts. There are no trick questions and no absolutely right or wrong answers. The purpose of the exercise is not to judge your behavior, but to make you more aware of it.

Read the statements below. If a statement describes a response you usually make to classroom/school conflict, write “3” in the appropriate answer blank below. If it is a response you occasionally make, write “2” in the appropriate blank. If you rarely or never make that response, write “1.”

When there is a classroom/school conflict, I:

1. Tell the students to knock it off _____
2. Try to make everyone feel at ease _____
3. Help the students understand one another’s point of view _____
4. Separate the students and keep them away from each other _____
5. Let the principal handle it _____
6. Decide who started it _____
7. Try to find out what the real problem is _____
8. Try to work out a compromise _____
9. Turn it into a joke _____
10. Tell them to stop making such a fuss over nothing _____
11. Make one kid give in and apologize _____
12. Encourage the students to find alternative solutions _____
13. Help them decide what they can give on _____
14. Try to divert attention from the conflict _____
15. Let the students fight it out, as long as no one gets hurt _____
16. Threaten to send the students to the principal _____
17. Present the students some alternatives from which to choose _____
18. Help everyone feel comfortable _____
19. Get everyone busy doing something else _____
20. Tell the students to settle it on their own time, after school _____

	I	II	III	IV	V
1	_____	2_____	3_____	4_____	5_____
6	_____	7_____	8_____	9_____	10_____
11	_____	12_____	13_____	14_____	15_____
16	_____	17_____	18_____	19_____	20_____
Totals	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Now add the numbers in each column. Each column reflects a particular approach and attitude toward conflict. In which column did you score highest? Find the appropriate number below and see if the description corresponds to your perception of your attitudes toward conflict.

- I. The no-nonsense approach. I don't give in. I try to be fair and honest with the students, but they need firm guidance in learning what's acceptable behavior and what isn't.
Competitive/Aggressive
- II. The problem-solving approach. If there's a conflict, there's a problem. Instead of battling the students, I try to set up a situation in which we can all solve the problem together. This produces creative ideas and stronger solutions.
Collaborative
- III. The compromising approach. I listen to the students and help them listen to each other. Then I help them give a little. We can't all have everything we want. Half a loaf is better than none.
Compromising
- IV. The smoothing approach. I like things to stay calm and peaceful whenever possible. Most conflicts are relatively unimportant, so I just direct their attention to other things.
Accommodating
- V. The ignoring approach. I point out the limits and let the students work things out for themselves. It's good for them, and they need to learn the consequences of their behavior. There's not a whole lot you can do about conflict situations anyway.
Avoiding/Ignoring



CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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