

Interpersonal Communication in Class: Class Conference

Objective:

As a group:

- Develop good communication skills among students.
- Understand the needs of all students in the classroom and learn how to act accordingly.

As an individual:

- Learn how to use "I" statements and assertiveness to express one's needs.
- Learn how to receive feedback from a friend and then repair or act upon it.

Setup and Materials:

For the class conference, it is preferable to have students sit in a circle, although it is not necessary. It can also be done with students seated at their desks. In either setup, students use a soft object to pass to the person who wants to talk. We use a soft object so it can be gently tossed around the circle or room, adding an element of fun to the class conference.

Choosing the right time of day is important, as more issues tend to surface after recess than first thing in the morning. A good time for the class conference is right after first recess or right after second recess.

How It Works:

A student with an issue will raise their hand and receive the soft object. Holding the object signals that they are the only one with the right to speak. *The student will then say: "[Name of the person who did not meet my need], I like it when you [something pleasant about that person], but I don't like it when you [state the problem that happened and did not meet my needs]."*

The student responsible for the action will simply say: "I hear you."

Example:

John played with Marcus at recess. They are in the same class. Today they played a game of "Tag." During the class conference, John raises his hand and says to the class: "Marcus, I like it when you play with me, but I don't like it when you tag me strongly. It feels as if I am being hit really hard." Marcus simply answers: "I hear you."

Then, the soft object is thrown to another student who is raising their hand.

The teacher needs to emphasize the importance of the "I hear you" response. It means that students (the entire class) will respect the needs of the student who brought up the problem. In this situation, everyone hears that John likes to play tag but needs to be tagged gently. Everyone in the class needs to respect that.

Using the names of friends in the class shows that we are a community and that we can openly talk to one another. Everyone gets called on one day or another for small or big things.

Students can also say only "I like it when you play with me." In that case, the other student replies, "Thank you."

In the previous situation, Marcus could also raise his hand and say when it is his turn: "John, I like it when you play tag with me, but I don't like it when you say I hurt you." John will reply: "I hear you."

Learning About Others' Perspectives:

In this process, students express their needs and learn to understand each other better. With the teacher's guidance and mini-lessons, they learn that everyone perceives the world differently. For example, a gentle tag for one friend might feel like a hard tag to another. These conversations help students understand and respect each other's differences in sensitivity and perception, building empathy.

With regular practice, these concepts become easier for everyone to understand. Therefore, it's important to hold classroom conferences daily. Students will come to value and look forward to these sessions!

To summarize this daily practice:

Request: "[Name], I like it when
.....I don't like it when ."

Answers: "I hear you."

Le vocabulaire en français

L'étudiant 1 : « J'aime quand tu, Je n'aime pas quand tu.... »

L'étudiant 2 répond : « Je t'entends. »

Vocabulaire

J'aime quand tu (I like it when you)	Je n'aime pas quand tu... (I don't like it when you)
joues à avec moi (<i>play...with me</i>)	me pousse dans la ligne (<i>push me from the line up</i>)
es dans la classe (<i>are in the class</i>)	prends tous les jouets (<i>take all the toys</i>)
m'aides (<i>help me</i>)	diriges le jeu (<i>boss me around- control the game</i>)
partages avec moi (<i>share with me</i>)	t'enfuis loin de moi à la récréation (<i>run away from me at recess</i>)
parles avec moi (<i>chat with me</i>)	mens (<i>lies</i>)
	ne me laisses pas avoir un tour (<i>don't give me a turn</i>)
	dépasse (<i>budge in front of me in the line</i>)

L'empathie = Empathy

La perception = perception

La perspective = perspective

BC Curriculum Connections

Core Competencies:

1. Communication:

- **Communication Skills:** Students practice active listening and clear articulation of their thoughts and feelings, which are key aspects of the Communication Core Competency.
- **Collaboration:** Through class conferences, students engage in collaborative dialogue, sharing ideas and addressing issues collectively.

2. Personal and Social:

- **Self-Regulation:** Students learn to express their emotions and needs assertively and appropriately, contributing to personal well-being.
- **Social Responsibility:** By understanding and respecting others' perspectives, students develop empathy and learn to act responsibly within the classroom community.

3. Thinking:

- **Critical Thinking:** Students analyze situations from multiple perspectives and think critically about how their actions affect others.
- **Reflective Thinking:** Receiving and acting on feedback encourages students to reflect on their behavior and improve interpersonal relationships.

Subject-Specific Curricula:

1. English Language Arts:

- **Oral Communication:** The class conference supports learning standards related to speaking and listening skills. Students practice expressing ideas and emotions clearly and listening to others with empathy and understanding.
- **Comprehension and Collaboration:** Students collaborate to solve problems and support each other, meeting learning outcomes related to collaborative communication.

2. Social Studies:

- **Identity, Society, and Culture:** The activity fosters understanding of diverse perspectives and cultural sensitivities, which aligns with learning outcomes related to understanding social dynamics and cultural differences.
- **Civics:** Students learn about the roles and responsibilities within a community, practicing democratic principles like respect, fairness, and conflict resolution.

3. Health and Physical Education:

- **Mental Well-being:** The class conference promotes mental well-being by providing a safe space for students to express their feelings and needs.
- **Healthy Relationships:** Students develop skills for building and maintaining healthy relationships through effective communication and empathy.

Implementation in the Classroom

1. Regular Practice:

- Schedule daily or regular class conferences to ensure consistent practice and reinforcement of communication and social skills.

2. Reflection and Journaling:

- Encourage students to reflect on their experiences during the class conference through journaling or discussions.

3. Integration with Lessons:

- Incorporate themes from the class conference into subject lessons. For example, in English Language Arts, students could write narratives or role-play scenarios based on recurrent themes of conversation.

4. Assessment:

- Use formative assessments to gauge students' progress in communication, empathy, and social responsibility. This could include peer assessments, self-assessments, and teacher observations.

By linking the class conference activity to these curriculum goals and competencies, you can ensure that it supports the holistic development of students in line with the BC curriculum.