

## Open Academy Workshop: “Revolution or Resolution”

Date, Time: Thursday, 25.03.2010, 14:15 -16:15

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### Workshop content/theme

The idea of this workshop focused on the tension that - deliberately or not - arises between junior and high school students. Every school seems to have certain “unwritten” rules, and the junior students must obey them if they want to be accepted.

### Aims

The main purpose was to realise if a group of students can solve their conflict without the help of adults or school authorities and if communication is enough to promote tolerance among them. Further aims: stimulating creative thinking and developing reflection skills

### Method(s)/Approach

1. Introduction of the topic: Gandhi quote: “Peace cannot be kept by force, it can only be achieved by understanding.” and a few warm-up questions, like:
  - How can we define conflict?
  - Are we always able to solve conflicts in a peaceful way?
  - Is there any difference between conflict in society and in schools?
  - What is conflict resolution?
  - Who has the most important role in conflict resolution?
  - What role do you think you have: Rebel or peacemaker? Are you a victim or a victimizer?
2. Presentation of the pinboard with real/unreal rules (some of them created based on a questionnaire in different schools)
  - Don't enter our territory!
  - Your food - definitely my food!
  - Don't talk without permission!
  - Carry our books/backpacks!
  - If we're in - you're out!
  - Make a fool out of yourself for our entertainment!
  - Do/copy the homework for us!
  - If we messed something up - it's your fault!
3. Roleplay - debate: 10 different characters - junior and senior students - have to decide which rules can be accepted by both groups, which must be eliminated or changed.  
Characters:
  - the negotiator-senior
  - the negotiator-junior
  - the aggressive senior
  - the frightened junior
  - the open-minded senior
  - gossipy junior girl
  - the trouble-seeker senior
  - the two-faced/ double-dealer junior
  - the teacher's pet junior
  - the stubborn senior

4. Short reflection and drawing conclusions
5. Distribution of extra material that can be used later for a classroom activity

### Further tips, sources, resource material or links

<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/classroom-management/activity/2922.html>  
[http://www.hrea.org/erc/Library/primary/Opening\\_the\\_Door/workshop13.html](http://www.hrea.org/erc/Library/primary/Opening_the_Door/workshop13.html)

### Questions for workshop reflection and a brief summary of answers

The most important question was if students are able to negotiate in case of emergency, if they are able to listen to each other and to communicate peacefully; being tolerant towards each other and having a sense of responsibility towards youngsters.

The first group consisted mainly of students, and their answer was that they are unable to do this; the only way to keep peace at school is having strict teachers and severe methods of punishment.

In the second group there were teachers, and they concluded that in any situation of conflict the presence of a mature teacher is essential. However, they should be peacemakers through communication, using dialogue and confrontation, which the group considered the only effective ways of solving conflicts. Punishment is not a good approach.

### Impressions, Outcomes of the workshop

It was a nice and challenging experience and good to see how people of different nationalities and age-groups can discuss common topics and try to offer solutions.

