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# WebSource

For the Classroom

## Overcoming Racial Stereotypes: Conflict Resolution

### Video Overview

At Artesia High School, just south of L.A., fighting occurred frequently and racial tensions were high. Violent problems from the community often spilled over into the school, and arrests and expulsions were commonplace. Then the school brought in special counselors to help address the problems. They created a program to get kids of different races to talk with one another and do things together. Marisol Rivera decided to “cross the line” when she asked a non-Hispanic girl she met in the process to have lunch with her in the Mexican part of the school courtyard. After some initial resistance, Marisol was able to break through the barriers of distrust and use cooperation as a tool to combat racial problems.

### Discussion and Self-Reflection Questions

- In the video, students from Artesia High School said they were both afraid and angry. Why?
- When there is a race riot or a race-based fight, how are schools affected in the aftermath?
- How does talking to others of a different race about what they all want for their school help solve a problem? How can doing things together help the situation?
- Marisol chose to “cross the line” during lunch. What was the initial reaction to a white girl eating in the “all Hispanic” lunch section? Do you think it is different for boys than girls?
- What else might students and staff at this school do to provide a more cooperative climate? Would that ensure a growing sense of trust at this school?

### Activity: Conflict Resolutions and Resolvers

Begin a discussion about fighting and cooperation, using the following questions as a guide:

- How many of you have been in an altercation where you wanted to fight? What were the factors that contributed to the conflict?
- Have you ever been in a physical fight? What was the outcome? Did fighting change anything? In retrospect, would you say the issues were worth the fight? Why or why not?
- What instigates fights among students at your school? Name some methods, besides fighting, that students could use to solve their problems.

Write the following three words on the white board: **negotiation, mediation and arbitration**. Ask students to predict the meanings of these words. Next, have students look up each of the words in the dictionary and write down the definitions.

Evidence-Based Multimedia Resources [www.connectwithkids.com](http://www.connectwithkids.com)

Then explain to students that they will identify someone in the community who is a negotiator, a mediator or an arbiter, and then they will interview that person. **Note:** *Some attorneys are skilled in all three of these areas. You might want to do some previous research to identify professionals in your community that students can reach out to.*

Instruct students to gather the following information from their interview subjects:

- Length of time he or she has practiced negotiation, mediation or arbitration
- Reasons why he or she chose the field
- Similarities and differences among negotiation, mediation and arbitration
- How the interview subject's methods have affected cooperation in the community
- Suggestions for using negotiation, mediation or arbitration to decrease fighting and increase cooperation in schools

When students complete all of their interviews, allow them to share what they learned with the class.

Assign students to answer the following questions for homework or discuss in an additional classroom session:

- Which method of conflict resolution appeals to you most? Why?
- Do you think your friends would respond positively to any of the methods you learned about in class? Why or why not?
- Would any of these conflict-resolution methods work to decrease fighting and increase cooperation in your school? Explain.
- What other strategies could you use to decrease fighting and increase cooperation in your school?

## Related College Board Advisory Guide Resources

<https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/CollegePlanning/media/pdf/CBSchools-Advisory-Guide-Grade-9.pdf>

### Privilege Walk: Understanding “isms”, page 100

This activity will work to raise students' awareness that there are various forms of identity, some of which may offer an advantage while others may result in discrimination in our society.