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## Using FIG in Social Studies

### OBJECTIVES

- To apply FIG and a decision-making approach to a current issue or historical event
- To identify critical points of decision making and problem solving in current events

### MATERIALS

Copies of "FIG TESPN: Thinking About Important Events" (Worksheet 3.28.1)

Copies of "Problem Solving in the News" Take-Home (Worksheet 3.28.2)

### INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

#### 1. Conduct a Sharing Circle during a social studies lesson.

Ask:

*Who has heard an interesting story in the news this week? Just describe in one sentence what the story is about.*

Explain to the students that today they will be using their social problem solving skills to think about important events in the news. Explain that some events that were once current news have such an impact that people study them far into the future. Ask for a show of hands on whether the story just shared might go down in history.

#### 2. Introduce the exercise.

Distribute the "FIG TESPN: Thinking About Important Events" worksheet.

Take up an existing reading in history or current events and proceed until you reach a critical point in a situation that the class is currently studying. Using the worksheet, help the children put the event into words. Help the students develop objective and clear problem statements for the individuals or groups that they are studying. Help them to take the perspective of these individuals or groups and then to identify the feelings and goal of each.

For example, if you are studying Martin Luther King Jr., introduce the issues that you will be discussing about Dr. King. For each issue, stop

to consider the problem he was trying to solve, the feelings he might have had, and what his goal was. Identify other individuals or groups involved to examine their perspective or point of view as well.

### **3. Conduct a practice activity.**

Have student groups share their answers on the worksheet and help them be clear about what they have read and how it relates to what they said.

Continue by brainstorming all of the different ways that the characters or groups could solve the problem.

Then proceed, stopping (or not) as desired at other critical points to engage students in problem solving.

### **4. Introduce a Reflective Summary.**

As outlined in the Introduction, ask students to reflect on the question "What did you learn from today's lesson?" Reinforce key themes, then go over any follow-up work.

### **5. Follow up.**

The following steps will help make sure that the students have a chance to continue working with the new concepts.

#### Take-Home

Distribute the "Problem Solving in the News" Take-Home, which provides parents and guardians with a series of questions that they can use to help children think critically about situations they see and hear in the news.

#### Plans to Promote Transfer and Generalization of Skill

Use FIG TESPAN discussion questions or the "Thinking About Important Events" worksheet when talking to students about discoveries in science or other subjects.

What is the event that we are thinking about? When and where did it happen?

#### **F: Feelings**

Ask students, "How do you think this person was FEELING? Think of as many feelings words as you can."

#### **I: Identify the problem**

Ask students, "What is the PROBLEM that \_\_\_\_\_ was trying to solve? We need to describe what was happening as clearly as we can."

**G: Goals**

Ask students, "What was \_\_\_\_\_'s goal? What did they want to have happen? What were they trying to achieve?"

Ask students, "What are some ways that \_\_\_\_\_ might have tried to solve this problem?"

Reinforce students for thinking about possible solutions before returning to the event of study to learn about what happened (or current status, if it is a part of something that is still in progress). Conclude by pointing out how discoveries in science or other fields often emerge from using FIG TESPN to solve important problems.

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**TIPS FOR TEACHERS**

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1. These activities are designed to be used throughout the year, integrated within academic subject areas repeatedly, with changing content.
2. Try to provide multiple opportunities for students to practice the FIG steps in both academic and social settings.

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

The person or group I am thinking about is \_\_\_\_\_.

**F: Feelings**

How is the person or group FEELING? Think of as many feelings words as you can.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**I: IDENTIFY the PROBLEM**

What is the PROBLEM that \_\_\_\_\_ faces? Describe what is happening as clearly as you can.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**G: GOALS**

What is \_\_\_\_\_ 's GOAL? What does \_\_\_\_\_ want to have happen?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Problem Solving in the News**

In class, your child is learning to practice problem-solving skills while thinking about characters we are studying in history or current events. One way that you can help your child practice problem solving is to discuss situations in the news.

After watching a segment on the news on television, listening to a news story on the radio, or reading an article in the newspaper, ask your child the following questions.

**Problem-Solving Questions**

1. How do the people in the story feel, and what makes them feel that way?
2. What do you think \_\_\_\_\_ is feeling?
3. What is the problem or decision \_\_\_\_\_ is facing? How would you put this problem into your own words?
4. What do you think \_\_\_\_\_'s goal is (or was)?
5. What ideas do you have about how \_\_\_\_\_ might solve (or have solved) this problem?
6. If you could say something to \_\_\_\_\_ or ask a question, what would you say or ask?

*Your child may be asked in class to share what happened when you practiced this activity.*

Thank you!

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Teacher signature)*

.....  
*(Please sign and return this bottom section.)*

**News 3.28.2**

**Student** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

We had a problem-solving discussion about something in the news.     Yes     No

Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Signature of parent or guardian)*