Segment: Problem Solving Styles

Lesson Title: Lesson 2: Problem Identification and Problem Solving

Grade Band: 6-12

Approximate Time to Complete: 30 minutes (plus additional time out of

class for research)

Objectives: Students will be able to identify conflicts relevant to their lives and brainstorm possible solutions.

Materials/Set up:

• Problem Solving Worksheet (one for each student)

Resources:

• Online Video Clip - <u>James Baker: The Man Who Made Washington Work</u> (Watch 21:40-26:10)

Overview

Many issues impact the lives of students. This exercise is designed to help students learn to identify the issues that impact their lives and explore things that they can do about them. This can empower students to be individual advocates for change.

This exercise involves the option of in-class or out-of-class assignments and choice of individual or group work. Before beginning this exercise make the following determinations:

- a) Will this be an in-class or out-of-class assignment?
- b) Will this be an individual, paired, or group assignment?
- c) Will you limit the problem identification to something in the school or community, do you want to integrate it into a lesson (for example genetically modified organisms or endangered species for science, access to healthy foods in schools for health, police-community relations for current events, etc.)?
- d) Will you provide information on the problem or ask students to do their own research?

e) Will the plans be presented to the class or only reviewed by the teacher?

The answers to the questions above may require adjustments to the lesson. This instructional plan below assumes in-class paired work based upon a situation identified by the students.

Instructional Plan

1. As a class, brainstorm some current issues impacting the school and the students' communities. Additionally, you can introduce a problem faced by James Baker.

Here's the problem:

Baker was running George H.W. Bush's campaign for the Republican nomination for President against Ronald Reagan. Bush was about to begin campaigning in California, but was low on money and Baker doubted that he would ultimately win.

If the campaign continued, and Bush lost, he would get nothing. If the campaign stopped, Baker thought that Reagan would choose Bush as his vice presidential running-mate.

2. If you used the Baker scenario, play Online Video Clip - <u>James Baker: The Man Who Made Washington Work</u> (Watch 21:40-26:10) to see Baker's solution. This segment covers Baker's unilateral decision to announce that George H.W. Bush had run out of money to campaign against Reagan. The decision ultimately led to Bush being chosen as Reagan's running mate.

After the video discuss:

What was the problem?

George Bush was behind in the polls during the presidential election and was losing money. The next state for the campaign was his opponent, Ronald Regan's home state of California. Baker knew that to continue would create more negativity between the two candidates and decrease Bush's chance to become vice-president.

What did James Baker see as the possible solutions?
Continue with the campaign and win
Continue with the campaign and lose
End the campaign and get selected to be Vice President
End the campaign and not get selected to be Vice President

What steps did he take to make sure George Bush's interests were protected? Unilaterally ended the campaign, citing lack of funding.

Begin discussions with Regan's staff

Attend the national convention

What was the final outcome? George Bush accepted the vice presidential nomination.

- 3. Divide the class into groups of two.
- 4. Distribute the Problem Solving Worksheet to each student.
- 5. Tell students, "Review the brainstorm list and select a current issue from the list."
- 6. Have students complete the Problem Solving Worksheet in class (or as an out-ofclass assignment). Remind the students that they worked through similar questions when analyzing the James Baker video. Inform the students that they may have to do some additional research on the topic to get a better understanding of the issue and the entities involved.
- 7. Clarify the instructions by stating. "Choose a solution and develop a plan to implement the solution. The plan should identify people and resources necessary as well as challenges that may arise."

Name:	Date:

PROBLEM SOLVING WORKSHEET

Names of Group Members_____

Describe The Problem: The description should be detailed enough so that other can understands it. You may need to conduct research in order to get more information on the problem. The description should include relevant information such as the people and organizations involved, the differing perspectives and values, the timeline of events, and the current status of the problem.

List All Possible Peaceful Solutions: Brainstorm and list as many possible solutions that you can identify. Do not eliminate a solution because you don't think it can be implemented. Include solutions that would be proposed by one of the people or organizations involved as well as solutions that would be agreeable to everyone involved.

Write The Best Problem-Solving Idea: Explore the brainstorming list and consider
the interests of all people and organizations involved. Identify the solution that you
think is the best idea to the issue.
List The Steps Needed To Make The Solution Work: Now that you have
identified the solution, explore what steps are necessary to make the solution work. Who
needs to be involved? What resources (time, money, materials) will be needed? What
barriers exist to its implementation? What is the order and time frame in which things
need to occur?

Date:_____

Name:_____