

Segment: Integrative v. Distributive Bargaining

Lesson Title: Lesson 1: I Win!

Grade Band: 6-12

Approximate Time to Complete: 30 minutes plus extension of variable duration

Objectives: Students will be able to identify “distributive bargaining” where there is a clear winner in a negotiation.

Materials/Set up:

- 11 dimes per pair of students
- Monopoly set (for additional learning activity)

Resource:

- Online Video Clip - [James Baker: The Man Who Made Washington Work: Political Tactician: 2000 Presidential Election](#) (Watch 0:33-4:55)

Overview

In this activity students experience the concept of distributive bargaining, where there is a clear winner in the negotiation. Students are paired and engage in a brief, competitive negotiation. Because the only interest is monetary, and the stated goal is to “win” the negotiation has limited parameters. In each pair there will be a clear “winner” and a clear “loser.” It is important to keep this activity light-hearted and fun.

Instructional Plan

1. Ask students if they remember the definition of negotiation from earlier lessons. (A negotiation is two or more people trying to allocate resources or make a decision toward an agreed upon outcome.) Ask students, “What do you negotiate about in your daily lives?”
2. Receive a few answers which will likely include: chores, where to go to dinner, what to watch on TV, when to drive the car, etc.

3. Ask students, “What skills or techniques do you use when you negotiate?” Receive a few responses. Provide some of the following answers if they are not provided by the students: arguing or explaining your case, listening, finding common ground, asserting your viewpoints, respecting other viewpoints.
4. Tell students, “You will get an opportunity to do some of your own negotiation.”
5. Pair the students and provide each pair with 11 dimes.
6. Tell the students that the 11 dimes need to be divided among the two people. The students must divide all of the dimes between them both. In other words, you cannot each take 5 and give the 11th to someone else. In the end all of the dimes must be distributed. Note: Teachers should resist providing any additional guidance about how the students “should” negotiate and allow the students to experience the discomfort of having a narrow definition of winning and a limited resource. The behaviors described in the discussion above will likely emerge: students will make up arguments as to why they “need” the dimes, some will listen, some will argue, some may just grab the dimes, some will give up quickly, and some may ignore the directions and seek or promise additional value.
7. Provide about 2 minutes for the negotiation.
8. Poll each pair for their results. Ask, “Who won? How many dimes did they win?”
9. Ask the “winners” what they said or did in the negotiation. Did they have a strategy?
10. Ask the “losers” what they said or did in the negotiation. Why did they give up more dimes?
11. Explain, “This type of negotiation is a distributive negotiation where two or more interests compete for a fixed resource, such as money. In distributive negotiations there is a win-lose outcome, in order for one person to gain something someone else has to lose something.”
12. Some of the students in the role play may have introduced other elements into the negotiation in order to get their partner to give up a dime—such as, “I’ll do X for you if you give me another dime”, or “I’ll buy X with the dimes and share it with you.” Strictly speaking, those negotiations went outside the parameters of the instructions because those promises added something of value in the negotiation. Acknowledge that this is one strategy in distributive bargaining because these are usually difficult negotiations.

Teacher note: Introduce the concept of “distributive bargaining” in a negotiation. Distributive bargaining is when two or more interests compete for a fixed resource, such as money. It may also be called zero-sum bargaining, or a win-lose negotiation. This negotiation involved distributive bargaining because there was a limited number of dimes, two people, and the only objective (the only interest or need) was to get more dimes.

13. Ask the following questions, “Those of you that ended with a fewer number of dimes, how do you feel? Those of you with the larger sum of dimes, how do you feel? Would you feel any differently if the exercise involved 11, \$100 bills?”
14. Introduce the idea of objective criteria as a method of reaching agreement over a fixed resource. Ask, “Did any group handle the 11th dime in a way which felt fair to both parties?” Teacher note: When one person gets 5 dimes and the other gets 6 dimes, the person with 5 dimes feels as if he or she lost. One way to minimize the feeling of loss is to insert objective criteria. This helps the outcome feel “fair” because the *process* used was a fair one, even though the outcome might not be equal. For example, giving each person 5 dimes and then flipping a coin to see who gets the last dime is an example of objective criteria because the final decision was left to an outside source: the randomness of a coin flip. Other examples of objective criteria in a negotiation may be: finding an agreeable way to “split the difference” (here, making arrangements to get two nickels) deciding who gets the dime by playing “rock, paper, scissors” (a popular choice for many young people, but not completely objective, as there is some small element of skill), or agreeing to follow a set of standards or rules in reaching a decision. In sports, for example, there are rules established in advance for deciding win/lose situations, *e.g.* when runner and the catcher reach home plate at the same time, the tie goes to the runner.
15. Play Online Video Clip - [James Baker: The Man Who Made Washington Work: Political Tactician: 2000 Presidential Election](#) (Watch 0:33-4:55). This segment is about the disputed 2000 Presidential Election. Baker was involved in “stage managing” George W. Bush’s response to the re-counting of votes in Florida. The two presidential candidates were competing for a limited resource: the presidency, and their competition led them to engage in aggressive tactics, like protests and court cases. Ask students to identify the fixed resource in this case and the ways in which Baker competed for that resource as they watch the video.
16. After the video have students brainstorm some other real-life examples of distributive bargaining negotiations. “What about the example requires distributive bargaining?” “What are some common outcomes of the real-life distributive bargaining negotiation?” Common examples include: a town with a

limited amount of money and many departments requesting money; a sports team with a salary cap; or an emergency distribution center with fewer emergency kits than people.

Additional Learning Opportunity

Provide the opportunity for students play a game of Monopoly in a group, while observing the game-playing behaviors of their fellow players. After playing have students answer the following questions:

Who was competitive? How did they show that behavior?

Who was more cooperative? What were the cooperative behaviors?

Have students read or listen to [What's your Monopoly token say about you?](#) a story produced by Marketplace concerning what the choice of Monopoly game pieces reveals about the player. Was the research born out in the game they played?

When are you more competitive? When are you more cooperative?

Alternatively, assign the Monopoly tasks to be completed outside class.

Additional Resources

Fisher, Roger, William Ury, and Bruce Patton. 1991. *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*. New York, N.Y.: Penguin Books. *Getting to Yes* is a seminal book on the concept of interest-based or integrative negotiation. This book explains the foundational aspects of integrative negotiation and can serve as an additional resource for educators wanting more information on the topic.