

Lesson Plan for Witness Video: “Partnerships in Peacebuilding”

Rationale: Testimonials provide first-hand accounts of experiences that can help clarify complex concepts. This witness video offers the testimonial of Lieutenant Colonel Zemp, a soldier in Iraq, who talks about his experience working with military and civilian partners to bring peace to an embattled region. The video introduces the importance of conflict resolution skills such as communication and conflict analysis, as well as processes such as dialogue and reconciliation. The lesson engages students in watching the video, and then in an exercise that invites them to explore in detail the various forms that reconciliation processes can take.

Objectives:

1. To understand the importance of viewing a situation from multiple perspectives.
2. To examine the value of forming partnerships in conflict situations.
3. To practice conflict management skills including conflict analysis.

Age: 15 and above (US high school grade 10 and above)

Time: Part 1: 30 minutes Part 2: Depends on how much time is given in class to complete the assignment.

Materials:

- “Partnerships in Peacebuilding” video:

<http://www.buildingpeace.org/teach-visit-us-and-learn/exhibits/witnesses-peacebuilding/lc-william-zemp-partnerships-peacebuildin>

- Handout: Background on Mahmoudiya
- Worksheet: Note-taking sheet
- Worksheet: Analyzing a Conflict
- Worksheet: Reconciliation Processes

PART 1: Viewing the “Partnerships in Peacebuilding” Video

Procedures:

1. Tell students that they are going to watch a video in a few minutes about the military working with non-military organizations to solve problems in conflict areas.

2. Tell students they are first going to do a simple exercise. Distribute one sheet of blank paper to each student. Ask them to stand somewhere in the room and to close their eyes during the exercise. Also, tell them they cannot ask any questions during the exercise.
3. Instruct the students to do the following steps:
 - a. Fold the paper in half.
 - b. Tear off the bottom right corner of the paper.
 - c. Fold the paper in half again.
 - d. Tear off the lower left hand corner.
4. Tell students to open their eyes and hold the paper over their head so everyone can see it.
5. Ask the students the discussion questions below:
 - a. What do you notice?
 - b. How did you feel when you saw what your paper looked like in comparison to everyone else's papers? Did anyone think they had done the exercise incorrectly when they saw others' papers?
 - c. How could there be so many interpretations when I gave everyone the same instructions? Was there one right way to do this exercise?
 - d. Let's consider that the paper represents your opinion or perspective, what does the exercise tell you about perspectives?
 - e. Why might it be useful to look at something in a different way or from a different perspective? What can we learn from looking at things differently?
6. Share with students that the video they are going to watch tells the story of the U.S. military in Iraq trying to address the violence in a particular area known as Mahmoudiya. To manage the conflict between various tribal leaders they worked with other organizations who were able to bring the conflicting parties together to form an agreement. Use the attached backgrounder to provide additional details, as needed.
7. Distribute the *Note-Taking Sheet* and review it with students. Ask students to listen for answers to the questions while watching the five-minute video and to take notes on the sheet.
8. After the video, have volunteers share their responses to the questions on the note-taking sheet.
9. Lead a discussion, using some or all of the questions below.

Debrief:

1. Toward the end of the video, Lieutenant Colonel Zemp says, “If we didn’t have people there to help guide us we would have just seen it through the prism of war and not looked for the opportunities that some of these resolutions could have helped with.” What do you think he means by the “prism of war?” Think back to the paper-folding exercise we did at the beginning of class. How does Zemp’s comment relate to the exercise?
2. Zemp talks about partnerships in the video, specifically civilian (non-military)-military partnerships. From what he says, what was the value of forming such a partnership to address the violence in Mahmoudiya? What was the military’s role in the region? What did the partners bring to the situation that the military was not prepared to do? What other examples can you think of in your life (even at home with siblings or parents, or at school) or in society, in which partnerships helped individuals to handle a conflict?

Background on Mahmoudiya

The war in Iraq began in 2003, when a U.S.-led coalition launched a military operation in that country. This followed the Iraqi government's failure to comply with United Nations (U.N.) Security Council Resolutions requiring it to surrender all weapons of mass destruction and allow verification by U.N. inspectors.

Even after the ground war ended in Iraq and elections led to the formation of a new transitional government in 2005, the security situation worsened as violent conflict flared between Iraqi groups.

The violence that wracked Mahmoudiya in 2007 was also occurring in other parts of Iraq. Working with Iraqi partners, the U.S. military helped to stabilize the environment and support opportunities for peacebuilding initiatives.

Lieutenant Colonel William Zemp saw firsthand the value of civilian and military organizations working together in Mahmoudiya. The reconciliation process in that district improved conditions for the local population and the U.S. military. When the U.S. Army withdrew the brigade in Mahmoudiya at the end of its tour, it was able to transition the area to an Iraqi security lead and replace the U.S. unit with an advisory force one-fifth of the size of the previous brigade.

The U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) has been at work on the ground in Iraq since 2003, and has maintained a permanent office in Baghdad since 2004. USIP works with Iraqi partners in some of the most violence-prone areas of that country, supporting their efforts to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts through peaceful means.

PART 2: Exploring Reconciliation Processes

Procedures:

1. Ask students what it means “to reconcile” with someone. In the video, Lieutenant Colonel Zemp refers to a reconciliation conference that brought tribal leaders together. Ask students what reconciliation means in this context.
2. Explain that there are many meanings and processes to describe reconciliation as a part of peacebuilding. Here is USIP’s definition:

Reconciliation is the long-term process by which the parties to a violent dispute build trust, learn to live cooperatively, and create a stable peace. It can happen at the individual level, the community level, and the national level. It may involve dialogue, admissions of guilt, judicial processes, truth commissions, ritual forgiveness, and *sulha* (a traditional Arabic form of ritual forgiveness and restitution).

Source: Peace Terms at <http://glossary.usip.org/>

3. Share with students that reconciliation is a process, not an event, and that its significance and implementation varies from culture to culture.
4. Divide students into groups of 2-4 and have each group research a reconciliation process. Assign each group one of the conflicts/countries below:
 - a. Guatemala
 - b. South Africa
 - c. Northern Ireland
 - d. Somalia
 - e. Nicaragua
 - f. Australia (between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians)
 - g. Liberia
 - h. Chile
 - i. Sierra Leone
5. Distribute to each group a copy of the *Worksheet: Analyzing a Conflict* and the *Worksheet: Reconciliation Processes* and review the content with students. Have students complete the analysis worksheet so they can understand the conflict before they explore

the reconciliation process. Allow students time to research their conflict and reconciliation process in class or at home.

6. Have each group develop a presentation of their reconciliation process for the class. They can do this with a power point presentation, a dramatization, a drawing or any other form that describes the reconciliation process.
7. After each group presents, lead a whole class discussion using the following questions:

Debrief:

1. What similarities did you notice in the different reconciliation processes?
2. What differences did you notice?
3. What accounts for these differences?
4. What does the range of processes tell you about the complexity of peacebuilding? How does it add to your understanding of the Mahmoudiya video and Lieutenant Colonel Zemp's testimony.
5. What have you learned from the video and your research that will influence how you think about or approach conflict?

Worksheet: Analyzing a Conflict

Conflict Country/ies: _____

1. Who was involved in the conflict?
2. What was the conflict about?
3. What was the relationship like between the parties during the conflict?
4. How long did the conflict go on?
5. How did the conflict finally come to an end?

Worksheet: Reconciliation Processes

Conflict Country/ies: _____

1. What was the goal of the reconciliation process(es) in your conflict?
2. Who organized and led the process(es)?
3. Who was a part of the process(es)?
4. What did the process or processes look like? What form did it/they take? A dialogue? A truth commission? Ritual forgiveness? A combination? Other?
5. At what level did the process or processes take place? Local? Communal? National?
6. What was the result of the process(es)?