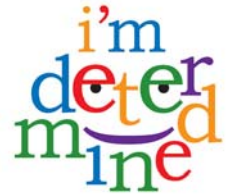


**Organizing Topic:** Problem-Solving (*The skill used when a solution not readily known; decision-making and choice-making are part of process.*)



**Title:** Problems We Face

**Target Level:** Middle School

**Sample Related Standards of Learning:**

Oral Language

- 6.1 The student will analyze oral participation in small-group activities.
  - a) Communicate as leader and contributor.
  - b) Evaluate own contributions to discussions.
  - c) Summarize and evaluate group activities.
  - d) Analyze the effectiveness of participant interactions.
  
- 6.2 The student will listen critically and express opinions in oral presentations.
  - a) Distinguish between fact and opinion.
  - b) Compare and contrast viewpoints.
  - c) Present a convincing argument.
  - d) Paraphrase what is heard.
  - e) Summarize what is heard.
  - f) Use grammatically correct language and vocabulary appropriate to audience, topic and purpose.

**Objectives:**

- Students will practice using a formal problem solving process (Four-Square) in class with teacher-generated and student-generated scenarios.
- Students will apply the Problem Solving process as they encounter life problems in school and at home.

**Prerequisite Understandings/Knowledge/Skills:**

- Problem solving vocabulary - values, goals, choices, positive consequences, negative consequences, solution.

**Materials Needed:**

- Problem Solving Four-Square template
- Teacher-produced scenarios

**Time Frame:** Three 45-minute class periods to teach the process and then ongoing application of process.

### **Lesson Procedure:**

1. Introduce vocabulary (values, goals, choices, positive consequences, negative consequences, solution) by having students define each word in their own words. Have one student look up the word in the dictionary and write on chalkboard, smart board or type in PowerPoint template. With the entire group, formulate a class definition as the word relates to the process of problem solving. Have students record the agreed-upon definition below the definition that was created in the beginning of this step (some students may wish to audibly record their responses throughout this lesson).
2. Identify specific examples of problems that students are currently facing related to self determination (knowing yourself, knowing your goals and knowing the supports that you need to reach your goals), and the teacher records these scenarios.
3. Introduce the Problem Solving Four-Square template to the whole group. Mention that most people consider their individual values and goals as they generate choices and consequences. Describe the steps, and then using a teacher-made scenario, demonstrate the process.
4. Divide class into small groups through a method such as counting off, distributing color markers, distributing different flavors of lollipops, etc. Distribute the student generated scenarios and ask each group to work through the above process.
5. Groups report back to the large group and present the steps that they went through to solve their problem. Repeat with another scenario. Presenting the steps could be done through story-boarding, role-playing, PowerPoint presentation or by creating and then playing a podcast.
6. After discussing scenario writing, have each group create a scenario entitled "Problems We Face" (use pictures, written stories or audio recorded situations).
7. Trade scenarios and have the groups solve one another's problems using the Problem Solving Four-Square template.
8. Report back to the large group for discussion and have entire class evaluate the solutions generated for effectiveness.
9. Have each student document one problem per week that they solve using the Problem Solving Four-Square template.

**Specific Options for Differentiating this Lesson:**

- ❑ Steps in parenthesis after the individual steps.

**Evaluation:**

- ❑ Teacher-created rubric for effective and viable solutions to scenario and individual problems students face.
- ❑ Student portfolio of problem solving notes, Four-Squares from weekly documentation and student-created products (snapshots, PowerPoint slides, storyboards, audiotapes, etc.)

**Extending Understanding:**

- ❑ Use the problem solving process to tackle classroom issues that are creating problems for the teacher and/or students.
- ❑ Use the problem solving process to tackle school-wide issues that are creating problems for the staff and/or students.

## Problem Solving Four Square

**Identified Problem:** \_\_\_\_\_

What are some possible solutions?	What are the positive consequences for each solution?
What are the negative consequences for each solution?	Which solution is the best choice for you? For others?

