

Theme: How a Giraffe says what happened

Materials Needed:

- ❑ Observations worksheet
- ❑ Observation – Detailed Description (for teacher reference)

Room Set-Up

- ❑ Open

Activities List:

- ❑ Introduce Giraffe observations
- ❑ Students work in partners to complete worksheet

Objective/s:

- ❑ Students learn how to talk about a problem in a way that doesn't escalate conflict

Key Instructions:

Observations

Projected time: 15 minutes

- ❑ We are going to continue to learn Giraffe language.
- ❑ In giraffe language it is important to be able to tell the difference between an observation, an interpretation, and a judgment.
- ❑ First of all, let's make sure we know what each of these means.
- ❑ Do you remember what we said an observation is?
- ❑ Yes, an observation is a description of what actually happened, just the facts.
- ❑ A camera can only make observations.
- ❑ An observation includes something you heard or saw.
- ❑ Right now in your table groups I want you to make an observation of anything in the room and write it down.
- ❑ *Give them a couple of minutes. Walk around to offer guidance and see where they are at with the concept.*
- ❑ Let's hear some of the observations you came up with.
- ❑ *Listen for judgments and interpretations so you can teach to these as they come up.*
- ❑ **Judgments** are statements that tell our opinion about what someone or something is or whether we think something or someone is good or bad, nice or mean, appropriate or inappropriate, etc. For example, saying "Sara has a messy desk," is a judgment. Saying, "Sara has five wadded pieces of paper sticking out of her desk," is an observation.
- ❑ Any time I am saying what I think someone is or giving my opinion, I am judging.
- ❑ Why do you think judgments could be harmful even if we make what we call positive judgments?
 - ❑ For example, if we say "Katherine you are such a friendly person", Katherine might begin to think that she has to be friendly all the time. Katherine might feel ashamed about having a day when she is not feeling friendly.
 - ❑ The fact is there is no such thing as a friendly person. What do I mean when I say that?
 - ❑ People may behave in friendly ways most of the time or some of the time, but as people our feelings and behaviors are always changing. We are never one thing.
- ❑ **Interpretations** are statements that give our idea about the reason why something happens or why someone does something.
- ❑ For example, if someone comes in the room stomping and kicking and yelling I might make the interpretation that they are having a temper tantrum.

- ❑ Another example might be if someone tells me to shut up in a loud voice when I ask them to scoot over, I might interpret that they are a sensitive person because they get bossed around at home a lot.
- ❑ Any time we try to say why someone does what they do we are interpreting.
- ❑ So why do you think it is helpful to know the difference between an observation, interpretation, and a judgment?
- ❑ *Give them a couple of minutes to guess. If they don't know provide the following example.*
- ❑ Let's say you were trying to resolve a conflict with somebody.
 - ❑ The first step in mediation is to tell what happened.
 - ❑ If you make an interpretation and say, "you were being rude", what might the other person's reaction be?
 - ❑ If you say, "When I was talking to my friend, you came and started talking to her at the same time", what might the other person's reaction be?
- ❑ Telling someone what I think they are – judging or why they do what they do – interpretation, doesn't help us to get along and understand each other's feelings and needs.

Worksheet

Projected time: 15-20 minutes

- ❑ I have here a list of statements that are judgments, interpretations, observations, or a mixture of all three.
- ❑ I want you to get with a partner and decide for each statement whether it is a judgment, interpretation, or observation.
- ❑ We will come back together in ten minutes to see what you came up with.
- ❑ *After they finish the worksheet take about 10 minutes to go over a few statements as a whole group. Help them to make further distinctions.*

Closing Points:

- ❑ Start to notice your own judgments when you are frustrated or angry with someone. See if you can separate your judgment from the observation.