

CLASSROOM TEASING

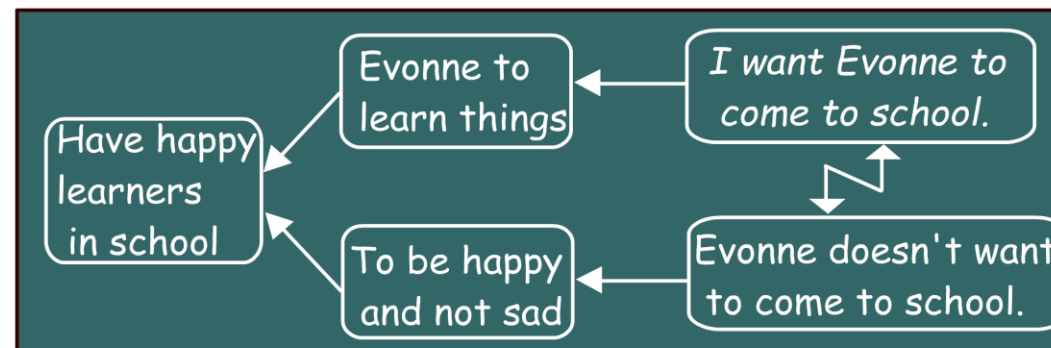
Evonne was a child with serious attendance problems. She was a second grader and her mother said she didn't want to go to school because the children teased her and called her names. As an administrative assistant, I was asked to go and talk to the class about this. I went to Evonne's classroom to talk to the students. Evonne, as usual, stayed at home. I told the students I had a problem.

On the board, I wrote:

I want Evonne to come to school.

Evonne doesn't want to come to school.

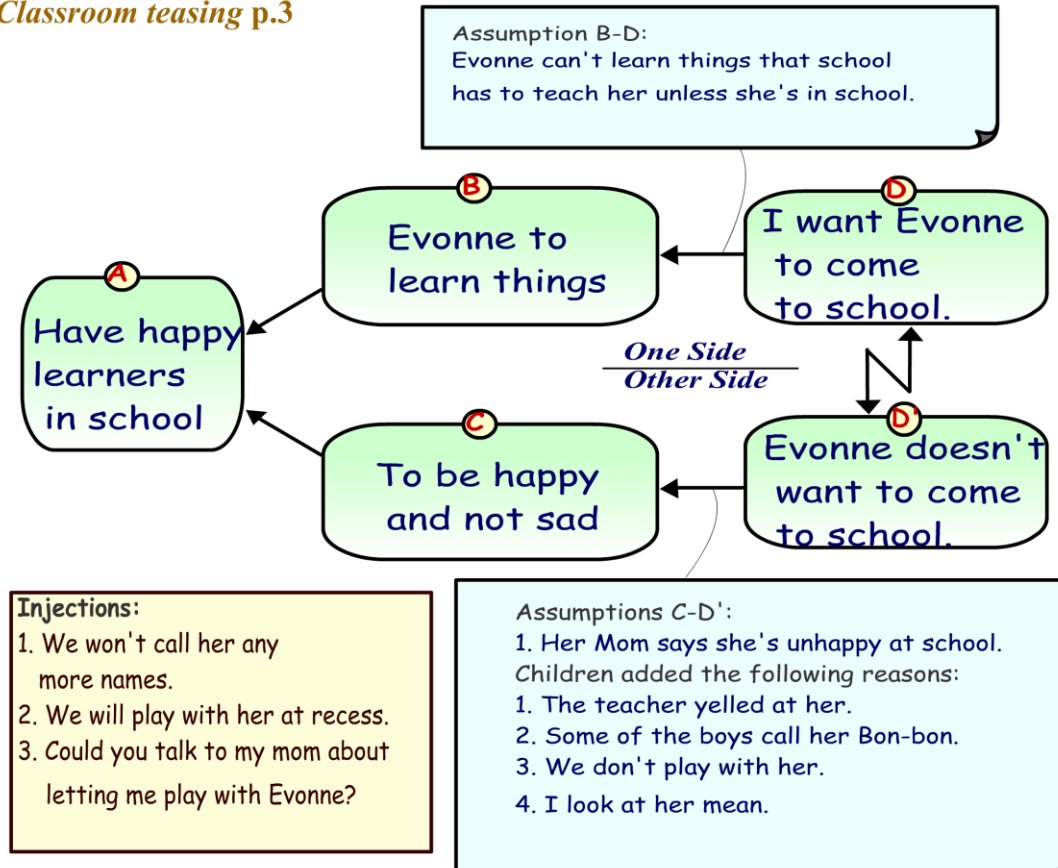
I asked them whether they knew why I want her to come to school. They were not long in saying, "You want her to learn stuff". I then told them that she wasn't coming because she needed to feel happy. I added an objective of I wanted everyone in school to be happy and learning. The cloud read:



Then I explained that this is where I really needed their help.
Why did they think she wasn't happy when she came to school?
I listed their reasons:

- the teacher yelled at her
- the boys call her bon-bon
- we don't play with her at recess
- I give her mean looks

I listened non-judgmentally. I asked if there were some way they could help me. They simply said, "We shouldn't call her bon-bon anymore. We should ask her if she wants to play with us at recess." At this point one of the girls, who was somewhat of a mischievous class leader, asked if I could talk to her mom because her mom said she couldn't talk to Evonne. I talked to her after class and she told me the reason she couldn't play with Evonne was that her mom and Evonne's mom were fighting. I said I would call her mom. I tried but couldn't reach her that day. The next day, the child came to me and said, "My mom said I can play with Evonne." She had taken care of it herself.



The power of this example is evident if you consider the difference between someone saying to the children, "I heard you were calling Evonne names and won't play with her. I want that behavior to stop! You must stop calling her names and include her in your games." Because the children came up with the same solution all by themselves, they were willing to follow through.