

"TOC BRINGS OUT THE TRUTH"

As headteacher at a nursery school, I was having problems with children who were misbehaving and, on being confronted with their actions and the consequences, were denying all liability.

Even though the children had been observed misbehaving by staff, this was becoming a habit for some of them. A 'whole school approach' was called for. So, I gathered all 200+ children (7 years and under) and we looked at the issue through a story.

"Peter" in my story was tidying the classroom at break time at the teacher's request and accidentally knocked a plant pot off the cupboard. He panicked and went out to play with everyone else. At the end of break he came back in and the teacher found the broken pot. She asked if anyone knew anything about it and Peter found himself in a dilemma.

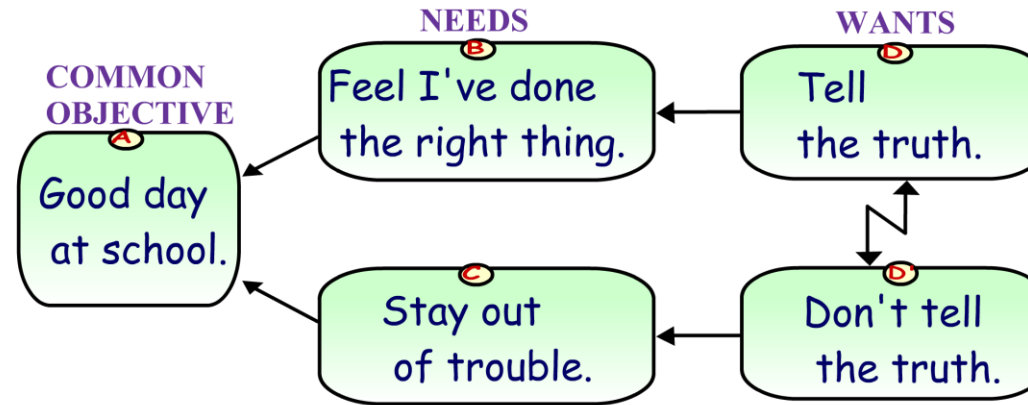
At this point I asked the children: "What should he do?"

Someone said, "A cloud."

"Bless you!" I thought.

The word dilemma is synonymous with cloud in our school!

The children came up with the following cloud:



Interestingly, the children didn't see NOT telling the truth as telling a lie! WE discussed a way of getting both needs met and decided a lot depended on the reaction they would get if they told the truth. I then explained that all our teachers would want them to tell the truth as it saves us time. I agreed to speak to all the teachers to get them to respond in a positive way to anyone owning up to the truth! Did it work? Oh yes! We have an outbreak of honesty that would shame George Washington! The children still get admonished, but in a calm manner that respects their honesty. Two of my "regular" visitors to my office actually admitted spitting at each other without any hesitation the other day. I had to stop myself from being too congratulatory. Now I just have to do the cloud on spit/don't spit.