

Planning

3.2

Intent and Impact: Do We Understand Each Other?

SEL COMPETENCY

Social Awareness

SKILLS empathy, respect for others, perspective-taking, appreciating diversity, communication, resolving conflicts

MATERIALS

- ✓ Discovering Projectable 3.2.1
- ✓ Connecting Projectable 3.2.2
- ✓ Student Journals
- ✓ Family Connection take-home worksheet

CLASSROOM CONFIGURATION

- ① whole class ② whole class
- ③ pairs ④ individuals

OBJECTIVES

Students will

- ✓ describe how what one person intends to communicate may not be what the other person hears and that intent and impact must be explored in relationships.

★ COMMON CORE CONNECTION

This lesson addresses the following Common Core Standards:

SPEAKING AND LISTENING:
COMPREHENSION AND COLLABORATION

- ✓ SL.8.1

SKILLS Progression

LAST YEAR, students distinguished between put-downs and buildups.

THIS YEAR, students practice examining intent and impact of communication by doing the multiple meanings activity.

NEXT YEAR, students will communicate their feelings and needs clearly and effectively.

Because what a person intends to communicate is not always what the receiver hears, it is important to learn strategies for unpacking the intent and impact of words and actions in order to develop social awareness and the resulting respect for other people.

1

DISCOVERING

10 MINUTES

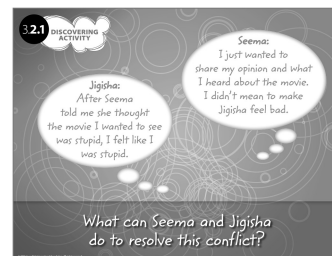
Lesson Link

ACTIVITY 1

Show **Discovering Projectable 3.2.1**. Have two volunteers read the dialogue while the rest of the class follows along silently. Ask volunteers to respond to the question on the projectable. Then ask students to think about a time when they said something to a friend or family member that the other person “took the wrong way.”

ASK: *How do you think the other person felt because he or she took your words the wrong way? How did it feel to be misunderstood?*

Acknowledge that it is sometimes easy for misunderstandings to happen and for bad feelings to result. Make sure that students understand that misunderstandings are often the result of nonverbal communication and that when people use body language and vocal intonation to communicate, the receiver of the message sometimes takes the message the wrong way. Be sure to explain that nonverbal communication is not the only reason the message can be misinterpreted. Other reasons might be a difference in interpretation of the meaning of a word or phrase, past experience, misunderstood words, and timing of when it was said.



2

CONNECTING

10 MINUTES

INSTRUCTION

Ask students to identify actions that show healthy communication for others, and ask volunteers to share their thoughts with the class.

ASK: *How can communication become unsuccessful? How do you think actions are sometimes misunderstood?*

Introduce intent vs. impact

Explain to students that misunderstandings can lead to bad feelings, even between people who care about each other. While the listener hears the intent as negative, contradictory, insensitive or simply wrong the speaker may think he or she is being clear, positive and has no negative intent. Display the Intent vs. Impact projectable (**Connecting Projectable 3.2.2**) and explain to students that situations such as these indicate a conflict between intent and impact.

Refer again to **Projectable 3.2.1** and point out that Seema's intent did not match what Jigisha heard. Explain that Seema and Jigisha had a misunderstanding because Seema meant to communicate one message, but Jigisha understood her to mean something different. Emphasize that the misunderstanding resulted in a negative impact on Jigisha because she was hurt by the message she thought Seema intended.



Community Connection

Explain to students that misunderstandings occur in all jobs and relationships, even in those that community members look to for reliable safety information, such as the community leaders. Have students read or watch the local news for stories about conflicts in the community as a way to recognize the various opportunities for misunderstandings. Have them choose one conflict; for example, a misunderstanding at a restaurant about an order or a clerk at a retail store and explain how the parties might unpack the conflict using the intent versus impact model. For example, students might unpack the misunderstanding that took place at the town hall meeting about the cost of putting in traffic cameras on stoplights. Encourage students to listen with an open mind when considering all sides of the issue. Invite volunteers to share what they learned with the class.

Family Connection

Have students identify a family member whom they can trust to give caring feedback. Then have them ask that family member if he or she would like to learn how to unpack a conversation to uncover the intent and impact in it. Have students ask the family member to present a statement that could be interpreted in more than one way; for example, “Are you going to wear that jacket today?” Have students use the unpacking strategies to uncover the intent and impact of the family member’s statement. Send home the Family Connection take-home worksheet called **Is That What You Meant to Say?**

Applying Across the Curriculum

SOCIAL STUDIES Have students search the library or the Internet for news stories of famous people who have made public statements that have had negative impacts. Have students write a short report explaining the event and describing the impact of the statement or action. Ask students to discuss how opposers of the statement might have felt and why. Invite students to try to identify the person’s intentions.

LITERATURE Have students search for quotations about the importance of clear communication and the consequences of communication that is not clear. Have students create a bulletin board display using the quotations they find. Invite students to explain their interpretations of the intent of the quotations.

Explain to students that unpacking is a process for analyzing a misunderstanding.

SAY: *Similar to unpacking a suitcase, this process organizes otherwise disorderly items, such as intents and impacts, and organizes them so that they can be understood. The result of this process is that both people involved in the misunderstanding identify and understand the other person’s point of view.*

Tell students that unpacking includes the following strategies:

- asking questions
- allowing the sender to explain his or her intent
- listening with an open mind
- admitting your own mistakes
- apologizing if you are wrong

Model ways to unpack a misunderstanding

Model how to unpack a misunderstanding by describing a scenario. Point to an empty chair and say that Kevin thought you said you didn’t want to eat at his house. You had said that you really wanted to go out to eat. Tell them you are going to unpack the misunderstanding by playing both roles using the unpacking strategies.

- Ask questions. Listener: “Did I do something to upset you?” Speaker: Did you mean to make me feel badly by telling me I can’t sit next to you?
- Allow the sender to explain his or her intent, and then explain your intent. Speaker: “I meant to say that I wanted to eat at that new restaurant, not that I didn’t want to eat at your house.” Listener: I thought that you meant you didn’t want to come over to my house because you were upset about something.
- Listen with an open mind. Remember, the other person may also be right: Speaker: “I see what you mean. I didn’t mean to say that, but I can see how you might have thought it.” Listener: I thought I heard a mean tone in your voice but I can see now that it was not meant to be mean.

The point of the unpacking skills is to attempt to make the intent and the impact match.

Check for understanding by asking the following questions:

ASK: *How do you think unpacking a misunderstanding can improve communication between two people? How do you think unpacking a misunderstanding shows respect?*

PRACTICING 15–20 MINUTES

ACTIVITY 2

Explain the multiple meanings activity

Explain to students that they will practice examining intent and impact with a partner. Tell pairs they will discuss and record on paper the potential negative impact that the statement they were given could have on a person receiving that message. Then have the pairs discuss how the intent of the speaker could have been different without meaning to offend the receiver of the message.

Students practice examining intent and impact

Use a creative grouping strategy to divide students into pairs. Have pairs choose easily misunderstood questions such as the following:

- Who was that I saw you hanging out with at lunch?
- Do you do anything besides play computer games?
- Let one of the girls take notes.

Have volunteers share their work with the class.

Reflecting

Students use their journals to reflect individually and as a class on what they learned in this lesson.

What?	What is the definition of intent and impact? Name some unpacking strategies.
So what?	What have you learned about communication from studying intent and impact?
Now what?	How will you use what you learned today to become more aware of your own intentions and their impact? How will you unpack misunderstandings in school and at home?

4 APPLYING 5 MINUTES

Have students complete the Applying page in their Student Journal. Explain to students that the scenario is one involving a student who might be from a different culture. Explain that different cultures experience intent and impact differently. For example, certain hand gestures and vocal tones might be inviting in one culture, but potentially rude in another. Ask students to pay attention to intent and impact of people of a different culture for the next 24 hours. Invite students to practice the skills they learned in this lesson with friends, family, or staff, paying extra attention to how culture might influence people's responses.

ASSESSING

PRACTICING (INFORMAL FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT) Monitor students as they practice; take note of how well they understand the distinction between intent and impact.

APPLYING (FORMAL FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT) Review Applying in the Student Journals to assess how well students apply their understanding of intent and impact to situations outside the classroom.

Reflecting Resource: Student Journal p. 32

Applying Resource: Student Journal p. 33

BUILDING SKILLS BEYOND THE LESSON

Picture It!

PRACTICING Reinforce the concept of unpacking by having students divide a piece of paper into quarters and at the top write a sentence or phrase they used recently that was not received well because the impact did not match the intent. In each of the four sections, have students draw a picture of the person they were talking to and in a thought bubble, have students write what the three different impacts could have been. In the fourth section, students draw the person, but who is now feeling the correct impact. Have student put the "correct" drawing in any of the quadrants and have students share and try to figure out which quadrant matches the intent of the sentence at the top of the page.

Interact!

APPLYING Reinforce the impact of cultural differences in conflict by offering opportunities for students to interact with people from other cultures (consider the elderly, the deaf community, etc.). Explain to students that these cultural or generational gaps might lead to misunderstandings. Through unpacking the misunderstandings, they will notice there are not many major differences.

REINFORCEMENT

Write It!

PRACTICING Have students write a short story (fiction or nonfiction) about an experience they had when their good intentions had negative impacts. Students may write about a time when they tried saving the last piece of pizza for a friend but instead angered others. Explain to students that the conflict does not have to be a major event but should demonstrate how the good intentions were negatively viewed by others. Have students explain how the parties resolved the conflict.

Write It!

APPLYING Have students watch a scene from a science fiction film or television program. Have them write a brief essay describing a misunderstanding between two or more characters in the program and explain how unpacking could have been used to resolve the situation.

ENRICHMENT