

Harvey & Daniels (2009). *Comprehension & Collaboration*.
Heinemann, Portsmouth NH

Home Court Advantage: Showing Friendliness and Support



See this lesson in action on pages 227, 247.

TIP: This lesson was originally developed in high school, where put-downs are a special concern. Yes, it sounds corny—but it works. And even the little ones comprehend the metaphor of this lesson—so many of them are on soccer teams! In place of showing the newspaper article, you can simply question them about their experiences playing at home versus away.

WHEN and WHY: We use this lesson for group-building early in the year or at times when bickering or disunity have occurred. Thanks to Nancy Steineke for introducing us to this powerful lesson.

INITIATE: From the sports pages of the newspaper, clip out the standings for a local baseball, football, or soccer team—the ones that include home and away game outcomes. Make copies for kids or project them on a screen.

TEACH/MODEL: “OK, guys, take a look at these standings from today’s paper. What do you notice about home games versus away games? Turn and talk with a partner for a minute.”

Kids will report back that teams generally win more home games than away games.

“Why do you think that is? What would be some reasons? Get back together and jot down a few ideas you have.”

Kids typically will return with ideas like these:

Fans cheer you.

Nobody boos

Same place we practice

No distracting fans

You know the field/court

Feel comfortable

Your friends are watching

As a whole group, prioritize the suggestions and make a consensus list. If kids don’t bring it up along the way, be sure to highlight the issue of put-downs.

“Is anyone in here on a team? What do you do when one of your teammates makes a mistake?”

Students may offer ideas like, “We say, ‘Nice try Bob’ ” or “We don’t laugh or boo.”

“Exactly. And in the classroom we are a team also, we are all on the same side. You never put down a teammate. If you hear a put-down in here, you can just quietly say ‘home court’ to remind people we are a team. OK?”

INDEPENDENT PRACTICE: Invite kids to make posters that depict the idea of home court advantage. They can place the term at the center and elaborate around it with drawings and specific sayings people can use with teammates (“Good effort, Janie” or “No put-downs”). Hang posters around the room and refer to them periodically.