

the Fourth R

SPRING 2007

A Publication of the
Association for Conflict Resolution
a Professional Organization Dedicated to Enhancing
the Practice of Public Understanding of Conflict Resolution



THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE EDUCATION SECTION



Welcome Back to *The Fourth R*

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- Deri Joy Ronis, Ph.D.
- Anne Smiley
- Ana Tettner, M.S.
- Robert T. Whipple, Ed.D.

I read *The Fourth R* faithfully through NAME, CREnet, and now ACR. I think I saved every issue. It has always been an enjoyable way to read up on some of the latest innovative conflict resolution programs as well as hear what other colleagues in the field of conflict resolution are thinking and doing.

As to the state of the field, I am so glad this first re-issue is focusing on this broad topic. I have been wondering... Although there has been a huge explosion of ADR programs throughout the country, I don't have this same sense about conflict resolution programs in education. As far as I know, ACR is the only national organization that has a place for education among its members. Therefore, I am grateful that perhaps now *The Fourth R* can give me a sense about what

is happening on a national level.

Here in Michigan, ever since 9-11, we have seen reductions in education funds that could be used for conflict resolution programs as part of "at-risk" discretionary programs. We in the urban districts have seen funds greatly diminished for support programs for students who have a hard time focusing on learning when they have basic needs that aren't being met.

So, please tell me that other conflict resolution programs around the county are flourishing. I'd like to find a way to track this information so that my assumptions and pre-suppositions could be proven wrong!

I welcome back the *The Fourth R* and look forward to savoring every issue.

Announcing www.creducation.org

Trisha S. Jones, Ph.D.

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Conflict Resolution Education Connection (www.creducation.org) is a web site devoted to the promotion of conflict resolution education throughout the world. The web site will be launched at the Inter-American Summit for Conflict Resolution Education and Peace Education to be held in March 2007 in Cleveland, Ohio. Following the launch, the site construction will continue through June 2007 at which time the entire site will be available for use. For more information on the site please contact Dr. Tricia S. Jones (tsjones@temple.edu).



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The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the various authors for the purpose of encouraging discussion. Unless expressly noted, they do not reflect the formal policy, nor necessarily the views, of the Association for Conflict Resolution.

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The State of CRE

Robert Whipple, Ed.D.
Co-Editor of *The Fourth R*

The state of Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) has significantly advanced during the three year sabbatical of *The Fourth R*. CRE has advanced in Internet presence, empirical research studies, and in the scope of professional conferences.

The revival of *The Fourth R* includes articles from an attorney, a special education teacher, a school counselor, a Rotary Goodwill Ambassador, a Fulbright Scholar, and several authors and professors. The diversity of practitioners submitting articles to a newsletter that has been dormant for three years clearly demonstrates a revived interest in CRE.

A few short years ago, I would type the words "conflict resolution education" in a web browser and be able to read all of the hits. In 2007, the same search yields over 60,000 results. Dr. Bill Waters and Dr. Trisha S. Jones are generating www.creeducation.com which will provide a new level of accessible resources to CRE practitioners. Furthermore, Dr. Jones has authored several comprehensive meta-analytical studies of empirical CRE research in the 2004 Fall-Winter Edition of *The Conflict Resolution Quarterly* and *The Sage Handbook on Conflict Communication* (2006). Another indicator of the healthy state of CRE is the international scope of the First Inter-American Summit on Conflict Resolution Education coordinated by Jennifer Batton at the Global Issues Resource Center at Cuyahoga Community College in Cleveland, Ohio. Furthermore, CRE is slowly creeping into college textbooks for teachers and

administrators, special education laws, and a breadth of educational policies. Please enjoy reading the indicators of a healthy state of CRE contained in this edition of *The Fourth R*.

Dr. Robert Whipple is a lecturer for the online graduate program in Negotiation Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding at California State University, Dominguez Hills. He also serves as a board director and mediation practicum supervisor at Peninsula Dispute Resolution Center in Port Angeles, Washington.

CRE Connection (Continued from p. 1)

Among the goals for Conflict Resolution Education Connection are the following:

- Promote best practices in the field of CRE by defining the field, its components, and accomplishments
- Serve as a clearinghouse of information on state-of-the-art developments in the CRE field including policy and legislation, current research, service delivery initiatives and organizations, and developments in related fields
- Provide CRE instructional materials to formal and informal educators working in K-16 learning
- Provide a comprehensive network linking CRE-related organizations, professionals, policy makers, and educators working with CRE
- Develop global interest in CRE and promote global developments in CRE

To achieve these goals, we have designed the web site to serve a variety of audiences:

- Teachers (K-16, classroom teachers)
- Policy Makers (school administrators, school boards, legislators)
- Students (youth leaders, peer mediators)
- Researchers (academicians, CRE researchers, researchers in related fields)

- NGOs/CSOs (service delivery in CRE and related fields)

The Conflict Resolution Education Connection Advisory Committee consists of representatives from the following organizations:

- United States Department of Justice; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
- United States Department of Justice; OJP/CCDO
- United States Department of Education; Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education
- United States Department of Education; Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools
- Organization of American States
- United States Institute of Peace
- American Association of Health Educators (AAHE)
- American Bar Association; Dispute Resolution Section (ABADR)
- American Psychological Association (APA)
- Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR)
- Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL)

- Consortium for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education (CADRE)
- International Peace Research Association (IPRA)
- National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)
- Psychologists for Social Responsibility (PSR)
- North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; Center for the Prevention of School Violence
- Ohio Commission for Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management
- University of Maryland; Maryland Schools Conflict Resolution Grants Program
- Washington State Department of Corrections
- Cleveland State University
- Temple University
- American Friends Service Committee; Helping Increase the Peace Program (HIPP)
- Campus-ADR; Wayne State University
- Creative Response to Conflict (CRC)
- CRU Institute

CREentials for Student Success: Conflict Resolution Education

By Roberta Anna Heydenberk, Ed.D., Warren R. Heydenberk, Ed.D., and Alexandra L. Haynes, M.Ed.

Early conflict resolution education programs were designed for obvious reasons—to help students resolve conflict and to reduce school disruptions and violence. All of these goals are noble, and conflict resolution education programs will always be essential to achieving them. Empowered with new cognitive skills, students are able to successfully resist peer pressure when necessary, avoiding destructive, and sometimes deadly, choices (Heydenberk & Heydenberk 2005; Heydenberk, Heydenberk & Bailey 2003).

However, a decade later we understand the potential power of conflict resolution education extends far beyond the original purpose of reacting to violence. For over a decade, we have watched as students in comprehensive conflict resolution education classrooms begin to internalize the essential lessons of conflict resolution education: they begin to reflect before they react and consider alternative perspectives and approaches to problem solving in the classroom and beyond (Heydenberk & Heydenberk, 2005).

Years of experience and research have revealed the effects of conflict resolution education as a powerful proactive force. Conflict resolution education provides the foundation for creating effective character education programs and constructivist learning environments. As well, conflict resolution education provides the skills students need to engage in productive cooperative learning, increasing critical thinking and comprehension while improving the classroom climate (Heydenberk & Heydenberk 2000; 2007 in press; Heydenberk, Heydenberk & Bochnowicz, 2006).

How does conflict resolution education impact such a wide array of educational outcomes? First, conflict resolution education empowers students to resolve their own conflicts rather than relying on the external control from administrators or teachers. Second, students who are competent in conflict resolution skills are more confident and feel a greater sense of psychological and physical safety in the school environment. Then, as the upward cycle continues, students are more likely to think in broad, integrative (win-win) ways and take the academic risks necessary to become self motivated learners (Heydenberk & Heydenberk 2000; Heydenberk & Heydenberk 2005).

This increased reflection impacts students' metacognitive competence (Heydenberk & Heydenberk 2005). "Meta" is a

Greek term which means to stand above. Increased metacognition allows students to stand above or reflect on their thinking and their choices. Meta analysis of educational research has shown that this increased reflection or metacognition is significantly correlated to positive educational outcomes and success (Wang 1992). Simply stated, increased reflection increases students' choices, academic and social.

In contrast, students who are less competent socially are more likely to feel threatened, engaging the brain's amygdala in a fight or flight response (Goleman 1995 & 2006). This



Dr. Roberta Anna Heydenberk &
Dr. Warren R. Heydenberk

limits access to working memory and the higher thinking areas of the brain, a devastating limitation in the classroom.

Students in a comprehensive conflict resolution education environment feel more confident, safer and have related increases in levels of school attachment. Attachment, or sense of belonging, is another significant correlate of student success (Hawkins, 1995). When students feel safer and have an increased sense of attachment, they experience significant shifts in meaningful cooperative interaction. Decades of research and over 120 studies reveal that cooperative learning enhances comprehension and retention of content learning for all students (Johnson, Maruyama, Johnson, Nelson & Skon 1981; Goleman, 2006).

Furthermore, this active social

learning provides the foundation for successful constructivist learning environments. Without conflict resolution education skills and competencies such as improved reflection, cooperation, respectful communication and a sense of attachment, efforts to create constructivist learning environments are reduced to simply placing students in groups where they often create conflict or at best, distract each other while attempting to complete their individual cognitive tasks.

When students in a conflict resolution education classroom communicate and cooperate, they actively seek alternative perspectives of classmates and create a deeper understanding of content. They discuss academic tasks and challenges with each other in a way that constructs meaningful memories.

Furthermore, academic standards are increasingly being developed within most state departments of education. These

standards focus on both content area competencies along with thinking and communication competencies. Because conflict resolution education fosters independent critical thinking and communication skills, students are better able to meet these emerging content area standards.

Perhaps the most profound gift from the conflict resolution education classroom is the resulting empathy and reduction of prejudice. Countless studies have shown that cooperative interaction increases empathy and reduces bias and prejudice (Fishbein, 1996; Goleman, 2006). Students in a conflict resolution education classroom show all of those benefits as well as the significant increases in moral and ethical reasoning—the penultimate goal of all character education efforts. This increased moral reasoning extends beyond mere rule orientation and obedience (Heydenberk, Heydenberk & Bailey 2003). Conflict resolution education students are less likely to create destructive conflict and, at the same time, students in a comprehensive conflict resolution education classroom are less likely to go along with peers when they believe those peers are doing something wrong (Heydenberk, Heydenberk, and

Bailey 2003). Increased reflection, confidence and communication skills give students choices and the ability to navigate the pitfalls of peer pressure and prejudice—a gift to our students, our schools, and our society.

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The Heydenberks are faculty within the College of Education, Lehigh University, Bethlehem, PA. Roberta is Research Director of the Peace Center (www.thepeacecenter.org), a nonprofit organization in suburban Philadelphia. The Heydenberks have published a related textbook, *A Powerful Peace: The Integrative Thinking Classroom*, Allyn & Bacon, 2000, along with related research articles. (www.heydenberk.com).

Alexandra Haynes holds degrees in special education and elementary education. Alexandra has three years experience teaching exceptional students and she has special training in conflict management for working with students diagnosed with severe mental and emotional disorders.

The Fourth R is back in education action and waiting to hear from you!

Feature Articles for the June edition should present stories or research on the use of diverse models and approaches in conflict resolution education (e.g. training high school students in a transformative peer mediation model), and range between 800-1500 words.

Other Contributions Welcome: Critical book/curriculum reviews, student reflections, media highlights, and other artistic pieces.

Deadline for Submissions: May 15, 2007.

Please E-mail all Submissions to the4thr@gmail.com along with an author bio, current affiliation, and full contact information.

CHILDREN TEACH WHAT THEY LEARN: WHY PEACE EDUCATION IS CRUCIAL

By Deri Joy Ronis, Ph.D.

At conferences in the past, the issue of preparing children to live in the 21st century always emerges. If you attend conferences or workshops, chances are you walk away with skills to use and you receive what you came for. When relating to children, it is not only in being able to nurture our own inner child that we grow, but simultaneously we become more sensitive to the needs of the children that are placed in our care, be they students, friends, relatives or our own children. This subject is not only timely, it is also necessary that we work as a community to create a culture of peace.

The United Nations theme for the next decade is "Creating A Culture Of Peace." This is also the theme of the Men's International Peace Exchange (MIPE), which is an organization of men and women whose primary goal is to render men less violent by working with them to become more peaceful. Women are also involved in these efforts, since it has been the behavior of both sexes which has created many of the problems we have faced individually and collectively. This is why we now face a critical juncture which calls us to impart a greater wisdom to our offspring. The New Thought movement has contributed greatly to this conscious creation of a more peaceful culture for over a century, and has accomplished this through the science of thought.

In 1932, the late, great Emmet Fox eloquently spoke of this in his lecture on [The Historical Destiny of the United States](#):

The question we have to ask ourselves is what qualities we should wish to select.... We need a willingness to break with the old tradition, and a readiness to assume the new outlook.... Almost all the old precedents and traditions

have been successfully broken through, and a new method, and a new angle of approach to life have been successfully established.... The one great challenging, striking, outstanding thing is the sense (sic) of youth everywhere.

Consequently, when we speak or write about modeling behavior for our future generation, we must take a serious look at all the violence which has come out of the last hundred years, and wonder at Teilhard de Chardin's idea of the evolution of consciousness. How can we help to model nonviolent behavior if we were never taught how to do so? The biblical admonition that the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children changes now. We know that behavior can be changed. If adults learn how to practice healthy behavior, especially in their interpersonal relationships, then children can model that behavior rather than the violence they see



around them. To create this culture of peace requires that we also resolve our problems without resorting to emotional or verbal abuse. Allowing children to express what they are angry about provides a safe, emotional outlet for them, and there is no need to repress feelings.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has wonderful age-appropriate videos and pamphlets on the healthy expression of anger and discipline. It's important to recognize that anger is a normal human emotion. The gift of anger is that it lets us know **something needs to be changed**. While we can't change others, we can create safe boundaries for ourselves by not engaging in verbal and psychological struggles. It's all a matter of asking for what we need. If someone is not willing to cooperate, take a break

from each other for a mutually agreed upon period of time. Then, when you have cooled down, be willing to negotiate a good time for both of you to be able to dialogue. Can you imagine what the world would look like if children modeled this healthy behavior to their caregivers?

Obviously, this new behavior is a reciprocal process between two or more individuals. All it takes is one person to practice new behavior in order for the old behavior to change. While this requires diligent persistence on our part, we can't go back to business as usual, simply because of the violence that has heretofore damaged so many innocent lives. Studies have shown that even though pre-verbal children can't express how they feel via words, they do understand everything that is being said to them. Equally important is that you let a child know that you understand how they feel, even if you don't agree with it. Very often, we have seen teachers and parents do just the opposite. We have all witnessed adults out of control, screaming at a child, saying "No, you can't do that," and even hitting or slapping the child. This sends a message to the child that it is OK for them to scream and hit. Consequently, we cannot tell children one thing and do another. As children get older, some experts have suggested that, in certain cases, it is a good idea to mimic or imitate their misbehavior so they can see how ludicrous it is.

If we truly hope to be a more enlightened species, what we do from now on will create the climate for positive change. One component of constructive anger is to let other people know what it is about their behavior that makes you angry. Since we know that behavior is learned, we can attack the problem and not the person by stating "*It hurts me when you....*" "*It bothers me when you....*" Or "*I'm really not comfortable when you....*" And "*I need to let you know that I am angry about....*" Using phrases such as these set up non-abusive communications. I bring out the aspect of verbal abuse, because it is an area that has not been given enough attention. Why do we assume it is ok to say any-

thing we want to another person? Don't we all wish to be respected? Don't children deserve the opportunity to give and receive respect as well?

Children like to be involved in making their own decisions and not always being told what to do. When you offer them a choice, you are giving them an opportunity to make decisions for themselves and to accept the responsibility and consequences that go along with their choices. By doing this, both children and adults are capable of achieving a greater self-awareness. As a rule of thumb, it is a good idea to set flexible parameters when dealing with issues of conflict. In addition, voice tone reveals how you feel. I am reminded of the story of a person who tried to fool his dog by telling the dog in a nice way that he was very bad. Of course, the dog didn't know the difference because the voice quality and pitch were associated with good behavior. We can't use these behaviors with children.

One avenue of exploration in peace education with children that has seen some success is teaching them the benefits of meditation and dream work. By helping them to develop their psycho-spiritual nature, they are given another opportunity to view conflicts in a positive light. For example,

“Children like to be involved in making their own decisions and not always being told what to do.”

sixth grade children kept a dream journal for a one-week period. During this week, part of their class time was devoted to sharing their dreams and interpretations. This work has also been very successful with adults in Jungian psychology, as in intervention method for severe conflict. When both

children and adults become aware of alternative ways to solve problems, new perceptions are created. Thus, a glass of water can be seen as half-full or half-empty, and it would be ok to have both views. You can agree to disagree. After awhile, you will notice that you get tired of arguing. The sheer drain of energy it takes to maintain conflict makes you want to get over it and move on. Eventually, your repertoire of problem-solving skills will be creative and productive. You will be generating helpful solutions that can be passed on to others.

In closing, my advice is to be cognizant of how you interact with everyone, especially children since they are so impressionable, and they will continue leading us into the new century.

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*The richer of us must feed the poorer of us.*

*The faster of us must run for the slower of us.*

*The stronger of us must defend the weaker of us.*

*The smarter of us must teach those not as smart as us.*

*For if the best of us continue to look out for the rest of us,*

*Then in time, the rest of us shall become like the best of us.*

*And when the rest of us become like the best of us,*

*Then, and only then, will all of us become world class citizens...*

*In a world class world.*

~~~

Dr. Deri Joy Ronis holds a Doctorate in International Peace Studies and Conflict Management from the Union Institute in Cincinnati, Ohio. Dr. Ronis is a Florida State Certified Family and County Mediator, providing mediation in many settings including schools, families and business. She is currently serving as a Rotary Scholar Professor and Goodwill Ambassador at Galen University in San Ignacio, Belize.

Future Fourth R Issues for 2007

By Jared Ordway, Co-Editor of The Fourth R

Are you a scholar, practitioner, educator, or researcher currently working or interested in conflict resolution education? Don't miss out on this opportunity to share your work with the world! The Fourth R, a quarterly newsletter of the Education Section of ACR, invites submissions its remaining issues of 2007! Themes and deadlines for "the 007":

May 2007: Spotlight on Diverse Models and Approaches in Conflict Resolution Education

August 2007: Addressing Special Education Needs for Students in Conflict Resolution Education

November 2007: We want your input! In the face of so many potential topics, it's truly difficult to choose the final 2007 year edition theme for The Fourth R. With that in mind, your kind-hearted editors have decided to turn it back over to you, the readership, to help us out. As we wrap up the year (not quite yet, but soon) we'd like you to send us your ideas regarding a final thematic issue of this year's newsletter.

Possible topics to date include: 1) International CRE voices issue, 2) CRE education partnerships between schools and the wider community, 3) Funding and sustainability advice for practitioners and educators implementing CRE programs in new schools, or 4) An issue dedicated to all student perspectives!

Have an idea, let us know! Email the4thr@gmail.com

Facilitative Mediation as A Model for Classroom Management

Nancy Erbe, J.D., L.L.M.

Fifteen years ago I was asked to design an intervention program for juvenile offenders, ten to eighteen years old, with long-term histories of violent and defiant behavior. I had taught in and out of school community education, to students, ages six to fifteen, from a poor community facing myriad problems, most commonly, absent and addicted parents.

I had otherwise primarily used an evaluative and authoritative approach to violence and other disciplinary problems in public schools. Those involved with an evaluative approach to conflict and negotiation have “asked the evaluator...to decide the issue or resolve the conflict” (Erbe, 2004). (As an attorney-mediator, I served as counsel for public schools in the late 1980s). An outsider might have easily drawn one of two conclusions, depending on their perspective of lawyers: that I was ill-suited for working with violent and disruptive special education students, or that I would proceed with the authoritative, evaluative approach of law. Fortunately, I defied expectations. As a facilitative mediator of two years, I responded to my directive with enthusiasm for exploring mediation’s potential. “The facilitator’s main task is to help the group increase effectiveness by improving its process” (Erbe, 2004). Violent and defiant behavior decreased by more than 50% in less than six months.

My current classrooms are much different, teaching conflict resolution in a graduate program for peace building. Students, however, attempt the same process, using facilitative mediation as a model for classroom management through creating and committing to a culture of peace.

We start with negotiating detailed ground rules. With the special education students, a day long planning retreat invited all stakeholders, including counselors, students and teachers, to thoroughly brainstorm problem behaviors and use the mediation process to negotiate and reach consensus regarding what should happen in response to each problem.

The result was a group agreement that scrupulously spelled out the community’s ground rules and enforcement process. Likewise, graduate students identify all behaviors that they see as problematic or, contrary to a culture of peace. They then negotiate and agree to responsive class ground rules.

As in the best of facilitative mediation, all concerns and interests are valid. All present are encouraged to speak. The majority cannot overrule the minority. Students, for example, cannot gang up against their teacher and agree to talk during class.

As a result of power balancing occurs. All must be satisfied with their agreement. A teacher, by virtue of their authority, cannot impose their will or dominate.

New mediators, like new teachers, may assume a more evaluative or directive approach to ground rules, introducing and trying to enforce their own expectations or demands. When parties agree to and choose an evaluative style, no problems arise. Similarly, subservient students will not challenge their teacher.

Seasoned practitioners, however, both mediators and teachers, have likely faced the party, student or parent who questions and challenges their authority. In such moments, persistence with imposing one’s “way”, can be a recipe for disaster — inciting an escalating and even entrenched power struggle. In contrast, facilitative mediation as a model for classroom management is optimally effective when teachers, like mediators, are skilled in careful listening, facilitating inclusive discussion towards problem-solving (active learning) and otherwise modeling the best of mediator skills. Of course, even in the face of such skill, persistent behavior problems will arise.

Negotiating ground rules by consensus is only the first step. In my experience, the most effective teachers and mediators also do the following. They quickly, gently but firmly, and, most important, respectfully, name the breach of the agreed rule.

They do not erode their credibility and strength as leaders, in an attempt to garner popularity, through ignoring, tolerating, minimizing, or laughing off, disrespect for group boundaries. Instead, they consciously separate the people from the problem by asserting the relevant rule without shaming, attacking or attempting to control and punish the perceived offender. They initially appeal to the power of group consensus. If thorough, the class has already decided what the teacher will do in the face of repeated defiance or disrespect.

Special education students may also require frequent private mini-mediations. While additional problem-solving sessions are labor intensive, such proactive “parenting” can

“...facilitative mediation as a model for classroom management is optimally effective when teachers, like mediators, are skilled in careful listening, facilitating inclusive discussion towards problem solving (active learning) and otherwise modeling the best of mediator skills.”

reap invaluable information, insight and rapport to strengthen long-term classroom management. Teachers do not need to be the mediators in these special sessions. In the special education case beginning this article, staff with high school diplomas and less, proved gifted listeners, mentors and mediators once they received necessary training.

Researchers Rackham and Carlisle (1994), in studying labor-management negotiations, discovered that the best negotiators: (a) gather quality information through skillful questioning

and active listening, (b) zealously search for common ground, and (c) strongly commit to creating mutually satisfactory and beneficial solutions. Based on classroom and special education success, I encourage teachers to prioritize mastery of these skills. They form the heart of facilitative mediation and can dramatically enhance classroom management and effectiveness, when exercised skillfully, with strength.



Nancy Erbe, J.D. & LLM

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CRE Book in Spanish: A Review of *La violencia va a la escuela*

Jared Ordway

Language barriers aside, Ana Tettner's *La violencia va a la escuela* or *Violence Goes to School*, makes a wonderful addition to anyone's CRE collection. Drawing from her research and practice in the US and Venezuela, Tettner's book is a socially responsible statement that bridges the cross-cultural gap between conflict resolution education theory and the tolerated, yet reversible behaviors of bullying and violence in school systems today. Although written as testimonial to her Venezuelan counterparts, Tettner's book is a universal resource for parents, educators, students, and practitioners anywhere.

The strength of *La violencia va a la escuela* is not only its call to no longer exonerate the behaviors of bullying and exclusion, but the tangible offerings for how teachers and parents can work to prevent and reverse the lasting impacts that school violence has on individuals' development in social, emotional, and academic terms.

Fishing in the rich Latin American tradition of storytelling, Tettner reels readers in by introducing each chapter with a proverb or anecdote to deftly describe new ways of counteracting abuse and bullying in schools. Unique to this book is Tettner's look at the challenges faced by all: the abuser, abused, bystander, and the families and teachers who must proactively integrate conflict resolution education into curricula and interpersonal relationships at the home.

This reads-like-a-handbook resource is packed full with successful CRE program descriptions, and provides examples from mainstream entertainment, music, and movies that can help children and adults alike understand complex concepts of violence in schools, as well as reflect upon their actions to undo them.

This writer's suggestion to you: dust off those old Spanish tapes- the rewards of Tettner's book are worth every minute.



Jared L. Ordway is a Program Specialist for the National Association for Community Mediation and co-chair of the community section at ACR.

His current research focuses on building appropriate mediation and conflict resolution training models and CRE curriculum within the Hispanic/Latino community in the Washington, DC metropolitan area.

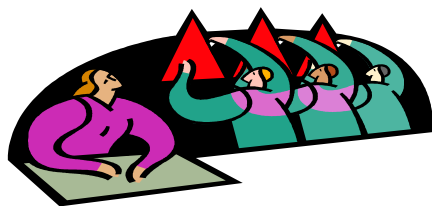
WORKPLACE CONFLICT IN SCHOOLS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS: EMPOWERING THE STAFF BEFORE EMPOWERING THE STUDENTS

Marquez Equalibria, M.A.

Late last year, a K-6 California school principal contacted the Western Justice Center Foundation (WJCF) about establishing a conflict resolution program at his school. Being proactive the principal sought outside assistance to provide a conflict resolution education program targeted at faculty, staff, students and parents affiliated with the school. The WJCF defined as a priority designing an informal conflict resolution system with common vocabulary and common methods for dealing with staff, student, and parent conflicts. Our design implementation objectives were to be achieved over three years through the replication of a previously successful elementary school program. This program improved the school climate, increased student performance, and measured a severe decrease in school tardiness, discipline problems, detentions, absences, bullying, truancy, and school violence. However, in light of the assessment process we conducted at the school, we learned that workplace-related conflict would present itself as a common concern among the staff, thus requiring us to take that area of conflict into account when designing the program for the school.

Students with disabilities comprise about 30% of the school population. Some students with mild disabilities are integrated into the regular classes. In these classes, the students are unaware of who has and does not have a disability. Only the teacher knows and adapts to meet the needs of each student. Due to the special needs of the school, they have a high staff-to-student ratio comprised of administrators, teachers, aides, and

other support staff. For example, a classroom with nine to eleven students might have a teacher, and three aides in a class of severely disabled students. While the teacher executes the lesson plan, the three aides closely watch the students to make



Empowering Staff to Empower Students

sure they don't fall, wander away, hurt themselves, and help make sure the children are engaged in the lesson. Teaching students with moderate to severe disabilities is no easy work as it can involve protecting them from hurting themselves, but can also mean physically assisting them after they relieve themselves. Changing the diaper of a student can involve a lot of teamwork and communication in order to safely hoist the student on to a changing platform. With such critical duties on a day-to-day basis, the communication and trust between the numerous teachers, aides, and the support personnel are key to the health and well-being of the school.

The initial needs assessment of the school in January was conducted onsite with the principal, teachers, and aides to have interesting and different points of view on the school. In the privacy of these interviews, workplace related issues were a common concern. Consequently, we now have to make sure that our system design carefully takes into account and is sensitive to the workplace dy-

namics we have encountered.

In February, we did a training for teachers, aides, support personnel and the principal. The goal of the training was to introduce them to the partnership the school and the WJCF had embarked upon, to introduce them to the needs identified during the needs assessment, to talk about conflict and the different ways of addressing it, and to empower them with conflict resolution education tools to address conflict themselves. Some of the challenges presented during the training included the participant's strong desires to address their exact complaints and concerns, and have them resolved during the training.

This is where we currently stand in our partnership with the school. Based on our understanding of the past input from the needs assessment, brainstorming during the training, and on the evaluations from the training, we find ourselves working in collaboration with the school to move forward. We have a three year long partnership, which leaves us plenty of opportunities to design a system that

“...the principal sought outside assistance to provide a conflict resolution education program targeted at faculty, staff, students and parents affiliated with the school.”

works for the school, and gives us the time needed to perfect it. One of the greatest reminders from this experience has been

that no organization is immune to the phenomenon of conflict in the workplace. In order to establish a program of conflict resolution education and empower school staff, students, and their parents, there first needs to be peace in the workplace.

Marquez Equalibria holds a Master of Arts degree in International Peace and Conflict Resolution from American University, Washington, DC. His responsibilities include management of the Healthy Families Cooperative, the Partnership for Families, the Peer Mediation Invitational, and conflict resolution training. His Master's thesis focused on workplace conflict resolution.

Peace Begins With You!!

Marianne Baldwin, M.A.

As a first year teacher in Washington D.C., I struggled to help my students through what proved to be a very difficult time. Death and violence hit our school community hard that year. A popular student was murdered on New Year's Eve and students were struggling to make sense of the loss. Just a month later, another student was shot — luckily, he survived. Many students came to me to talk about what they were feeling. A close friend of the first victim explained that he had been to four friends' funerals in the past six months. Others exhibited a type of numbness that told me that had been through this many times before. I had been trained in conflict resolution education, but struggled with my students' questions and discussions of revenge, justice, and breaking the cycle of violence.

At the same time many of my students were getting into trouble for graffiti. They had talent, but no outlet for expression (at least not one that would that would keep them out of trouble). I suggested a mural arts



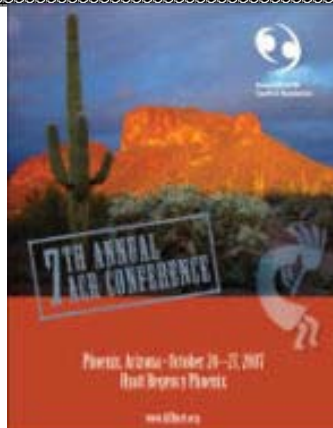
project. I was familiar with the Philadelphia Mural Arts Project, an organization created to combat graffiti in that city. After finding interested students, we held a meeting. Immediately, students told me they wanted to create a mural that would respond to the violence they were experiencing.

Initial discussions surrounded ideas like "Live by the Gun, Die by the Gun." I encouraged students to go deeper with their ideas. I encouraged them to think constructively on what they could do to break the cycle of violence. After much discussion, students approached me with a concept, and asked for my approval. They wanted to use the words "Peace Be-

gins With You." They then suggested a cityscape with a night sky. In the sky they wanted to have a star to represent each DC youth murdered that year.

The 8' x 16' mural was unveiled with 11 stars; by year's end we would have to add 13 more. The mural has never been vandalized; on the contrary it has been received very positively by students, staff, parents and the community. The group grew and has since created a second mural celebrating the diversity of our school. Most of the original student painters have moved on from school, some to college, some to work, others are still struggling to find their way. But they all look back on the work that they created with pride and a sense of accomplishment, as do I. My students taught me a great deal that year about conflict resolution education. I learned that it comes in many forms. Additionally, I realized that I certainly don't have all the answers. We helped each other through an incredibly difficult time. Together we managed to create a beautiful, positive response to the cycle of violence gripping our community.

Marianne Baldwin is a Social Studies teacher in the DC public school system, teaching World History, Peer Mediation and Latin American Studies. She also runs the Diversity Workshop program, Peer Mediation program and the Wilson Mural Arts Project. However, she is currently in Barranquilla, Colombia on a Fulbright Teacher Exchange



Recommended Standards for School-Based Peer Mediation Programs

Leigh Jones-Bamman, Chair of the ACR Peer Mediation Standards Committee

Those in the field of conflict resolution education are continually seeking to improve their knowledge and practice of CRE in order to help others manage conflict more productively. In 1996, the Standards Committee of the National Association for Mediation in Education (a forerunner of ACR) published "Recommended Standards for School-Based Peer Mediation Programs." This responded to the growing number of peer mediation programs in schools and the need for leadership from experts in order to ensure quality. Ten years later, to reflect developments in the field and current research, the Education Section of ACR convened the Peer Mediation Standards Committee to update and significantly expand the original version in order to create more rigorous standards.

The committee is nearing the completion of its task and will ask the ACR Board of Directors to approve the final version at its next meeting. The standards will be available on the Education Section page of the ACR website. The committee encourages the use of these standards to improve the way peer mediation programs are developed and managed. We improve the state of CRE as we improve our practices.

Leigh Jones-Bamman is a Senior Prevention Specialist for The Governor's Prevention Partnership in Hartford, CT. In that capacity, she provides training and technical assistance to schools and community-based organizations, manages grants and projects, develops new initiatives and strengthens partnerships with statewide organizations and agencies.



The 2005-2007 Peer Mediation Standards Committee (left to right): Marsha S. Blakeway, Gina L. Buckley, Antonio Sanford, Madeleine G. Trichel, Marge Bleiweis, Leigh Jones-Bamman, Melinda Rivas, Jill Smith, Priscilla Prutzman, and Dr. Robert T. Whipple



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