

TOM RODERICK

Children and Violence

Johnny Can Learn to Negotiate

More and more schools are teaching young people how to resolve their differences peacefully in an increasingly violent world.



Breakthrough efforts in Chicago, San Francisco, and New York are bringing conflict resolution processes into the everyday lives of students.

A significant new movement in education aims to bring creative conflict resolution into the schools. For example, all students in Chicago's 67 public high schools now take a course in dispute resolution as part of their ninth- or tenth-grade work in social studies. Staff members of the San Francisco-based School Initiatives Program, which has pioneered in developing student mediation programs, estimate that within the next three years, 75 percent of the city's public schools will have student mediators. And in New York City's Community School District 15, more than 75 teachers and thousands of children participate in the Model Peace Education Program, which focuses on creative conflict resolution.

The Roots of Conflict Resolution

Although conflict is as old as life itself, the field of conflict resolution is relatively new. It has its roots in the business world, where it started about 70 years ago as part of "management."

One of the field's pioneers was Mary Follett, also one of the first modern business consultants. In 1924, she wrote *Creative Experience*, telling business managers how to deal more effectively with interpersonal conflicts in the workplace (and thus make more money). Follett was the first to articulate the idea of the "win-win solution,"

although she didn't call it that. She had the insight that many conflicts can be solved in mutually satisfactory (win-win) ways, if the parties can avoid bickering over positions and can instead focus on finding creative ways to fulfill their underlying needs or interests.

Follett's insight lies at the core of contemporary approaches to negotiation, popularized in books such as Roger Fisher and William Ury's 1981 best-seller, *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*. And it raises a host of questions which the field has addressed: What styles of communication encourage cooperative (win-win) problem solving? How can we create a climate in which underlying needs are likely to be revealed? What strategies are useful if the parties to a conflict hold unequal power?

A Growing Movement

Over the years scholars and practitioners have gained insight into conflict and developed useful conflict resolution strategies; but until about two decades ago, applications of their work were largely confined to business management problems. Since then the field has been enriched and stretched by developments in a number of other areas, including law, social action, international relations, and education.

" 'The real joy,' says Einstein-Gordon, 'is going into a school [in Chicago] and seeing hundreds of kids walking through the hallway carrying their dispute resolution books and overhearing them talk about negotiation.' "

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For example, starting in the late '60s, frustration with the legal system pushed conflict resolution into communities. Seeing the courts clogged with cases that really did not need to be there, lawyers and community activists set up community mediation programs so that neighbors could talk out their differences instead of going to court. Consequently, over 350 dispute resolution programs are in operation around the country, dealing with landlord-tenant matters, environmental issues, family and divorce cases, and a variety of community problems.

In addition, Mahatma Gandhi's "experiments with nonviolence" and the use of nonviolent protest in the American Civil Rights Movement showed that conflict could be a creative force and that nonviolent approaches could be effective in struggles against oppression.

The development of nuclear weapons also convinced many people to enter the field of conflict resolution, committed to finding creative, nonviolent ways to solve disputes among nations. One outcome of their work was the Camp David Agreement between Egypt and Israel, a win-win solution on the international scene.

The Quakers were first to make a serious effort to introduce conflict resolution into the schools. The Children's Creative Response to Conflict (CCRC) Program began in 1972 as a project of the New York Friends Meeting. Working with inner-city children in New York City, CCRC developed an approach that used puppetry, games,

For More Information

Tom Roderick and Charlotte Keys

Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School's Student Mediation Program. This successful student mediation program is located in an inner-city high school whose student population includes 70 different nationalities.

Write John Silva, Coordinator, Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School, 459 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02141. Or call (617) 498-9209.

Chatam County Dispute Settlement Center. The center has established student mediation programs in four schools in a rural area of North Carolina.

Write Alice Phalan, Director, Chatam County Dispute Settlement Center, P.O. Box 1151, Pittsboro, NC 27312.

Children of War, by Roger Rosenblatt. The author has traveled the world to discover what children in war-torn countries think and feel about the violence around them. The children he interviews shine through as champions of order in the midst of chaos, quietly resistant to adult attempts to use their tragedies as tools of ideology or instruments of revenge.

New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1983.

Children's Creative Response to Conflict (CCRC). CCRC offers workshops in creative conflict resolution for children and people who work with children, emphasizing the themes of cooperation, communication, affirmation (building self-esteem), and conflict resolution. They also publish a sourcebook of activities, *The Friendly Classroom for a Small Planet*.

Write CCRC, Box 271, Nyack, NY 10960.

Creative Conflict Resolution: More Than 200 Activities for Keeping Peace in the Classroom K-6, by William J. Kreidler. This practical curriculum guide for administrators and teachers contains activities that focus on improving communication skills, on developing skills to handle anger and frustration, and on teaching cooperation and tolerance of diversity. Implementation and evaluation procedures, student worksheets, and a brief but comprehensive bibliography close this positive approach to conflict resolution in schools.

Glensview, Ill.: Scott Foresman, 1984.

Dispute Resolution Curriculum in the Chicago Public Schools. Developed by Vivian Einstein-Gordon, a law professor, the six-week unit introduces students to negotiation, mediation, and arbitration. A student book, a teacher's guide, an implementation manual, and videotapes are available. Through the publisher you can also arrange for a visit by Einstein-Gordon.

Write West Publishing Company, P.O. Box 64526, 50 W. Kellogg St., St. Paul, MN 55102-1611.

Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR). ESR is a membership organization of educators who believe that the nuclear age demands new approaches to education. The New York chapter is one of the sponsors of the Model Peace Education Program in Community School District 15.

Write ESR, 23 Garden St., Cambridge, MA 02138, or New York ESR, 490 Riverside Dr., Room 27, New York, NY 10027.

music, and discussion to improve children's skills in cooperation and conflict resolution. CCRC has also trained thousands of teachers around the country in the past 15 years.

Two developments in 1982 broadened the work begun by CCRC. The Community Board Center for Policy and Training in San Francisco, a com-

munity mediation program, started its School Initiatives Program, which introduced a model for student mediation programs that could be replicated around the country. And, second, Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR) was founded. Although the original impulse behind ESR was awareness of the danger of nuclear war, many ESR

members, seeing the connection between conflict resolution and their concerns, threw their energies into the growing movement.

Another important step came in 1984 with the publication of William Kreidler's *Creative Conflict Resolution: More than 200 Activities for Keeping Peace in the Classroom K-6*. Kreidler gathered the best work of others (including CCRC), added many activities from his own classroom experience, and provided concise rationales for the activities, based on the latest research in the field. Now into its second printing, the book has sold 7,000 copies.

Conflict Resolution: The Fourth R

In the past three years, advocates can point to several major breakthroughs in making conflict resolution an integral part of the school curriculum. The programs in Chicago, San Francisco, and New York are leading the way.

Chicago. In 1985, Vivian Einstein-Gordon, a law professor, developed a dispute resolution curriculum for high school students because she wanted youngsters to understand how the le-

"Human Relations Education: Teaching Non-Violent Solutions to Human Problems." Ruth Gudinas. *Forum*, newsletter of Educators for Social Responsibility (Summer 1987).

Gudinas addresses both how educators can teach about human conflicts and how the process should expand as children become young adults. She presents a straightforward case for the practicality of peace education for increasing students' awareness of the alternatives available to them for resolving conflicts of all kinds.

Model Peace Education Program in New York City's Community School District 15. This districtwide conflict resolution program for elementary and junior high students is sponsored by District 15, the New York City Board of Education Division of Curriculum and Supervision, and Educators for Social Responsibility.

Write Eileen Jones, Community School District 15, 360 Smith St., Brooklyn, NY 11231.

National Association for Mediation in Education (NAME). This is a membership organization and clearinghouse for information about conflict resolution programs in schools.

Write Ann Gibson, Executive Director, NAME, 139 Whitmore St., Amherst, MA 01003. Or call (413) 545-2462.

Perspectives: A Teaching Guide to Concepts of Peace. by Shelly Berman. This compendium of suggestions, teaching activities, and resource lists is intended for use with students K-12. The wide-ranging subject matter deals with developing in students an active concept and sense of peace independent of its relation to war. A bibliography accompanies each section of the curriculum.

New York: Educators for Social Responsibility, 1983.

Project S.M.A.R.T. This successful student mediation program operates in seven New York City high schools.

Write c/o Victim Services Agency, 2 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10007. Or call (212) 577-7700.

School Initiatives Program. Based in San Francisco, the program offers training at various locations around the country for educators who want to start student mediation programs. Training and implementation manuals are available.

Write c/o Community Board Center for Policy and Training, 149 Ninth St., San Francisco, CA 94103.

Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents. This new ten-lesson curriculum, designed to fit into high school health curriculums, was developed by Deborah Prothrow-Stith with help from William Kreidler.

Write the Educational Development Center (EDC), 55 Chapel St., Newton, MA 02160.

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"[In San Francisco] at the elementary level, mediators wear brightly colored Conflict Manager T-shirts while they settle disputes on the playground. High school mediators have a special room where disputants come for mediation sessions."

gal system really works. It was not difficult to sell the Chicago Board of Education on the idea. Einstein-Gordon had a good track record in introducing law-related educational programs into the Chicago schools, and her approach fit in with the growing emphasis on critical thinking and problem solving in social studies.

During the spring of 1987, after two years of development, piloting, and evaluation, the curriculum went into effect in all of the city's high schools. During the six-week unit, students examine a series of ten problems ranging from the interpersonal (You ask your father for the keys to the family car, and he says no) to the global (Two nations are quarreling over fishing rights). Through role-plays, discussion, and work sheets, students learn how to use the dispute resolution processes of negotiation, mediation, and arbitration to tackle these problems.

Evaluations conducted by the Chicago Board of Education's testing unit show that as a result of the program, children's attitudes about how to cope with conflict changed dramatically in positive ways. "But the real joy," says Einstein-Gordon, "is going into a school and seeing hundreds of kids walking through the hallway carrying their dispute resolution books and overhearing them talk about negotiation."

San Francisco. The Community Board Center in San Francisco had five years of experience in community mediation before introducing its school-based "Conflict Manager" programs about six years ago. Conflict Managers are students selected by their peers and teachers to receive 16 hours of training, which emphasizes active listening, teamwork (student mediators work in pairs), and learning the steps of the mediation process. Role-playing enables the students to practice before serving as mediators in their schools.

At the elementary level, mediators wear brightly colored Conflict Manager T-shirts while they settle disputes on the playground. High school mediators have a special room where disputants come for mediation sessions.

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It's up to the disputants to decide if they want the mediator's help. The mediator does not play the role of police officer, judge, or counselor, but facilitates communication so that the disputants themselves can find a solution.

Over 300 schools around the country have established student mediation programs. Many of them report that student mediators help solve large numbers of disputes, that the agreements remain intact in the vast majority of the cases, and that the numbers of suspensions drop dramatically. "The programs show kids that they have options," says Marcy May, who was trained by the School Initiatives Project and now coordinates a student mediation program in the Bronx. "All they knew before was to fight. Now they have choices."

The School Initiatives Program provides training at sites in various regions of the country for those interested in starting student mediation programs in their schools. Training and implementation manuals are available.

New York City. "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." That quote from the Book of Isaiah is engraved in stone in a plaza in front of the United Nations building in New York City; and Jerrold Glassman, Superintendent of Community School

District 15 in Brooklyn, likes to use it in explaining the purpose of his district's Model Peace Education Program. The program is a collaborative effort of District 15, the New York City Board of Education Division of Curriculum and Instruction, and Educators for Social Responsibility.

Because the program serves elementary school children, the focus is conflict resolution on the interpersonal level. Drawing heavily on the work of the CCRC and William Kreidler, the curriculum has units on communication, cooperative learning, dealing appropriately with anger, and dispute resolution techniques.

But since world peace is the Model Peace Education Program's long-range goal, interpersonal conflict resolution is placed in a larger context. Thus, the curriculum also includes units entitled "Peacemakers," "Preventing Prejudice and Celebrating Differences," and "Equality." And the schools are involved in cultural exchange programs with the Philippines, India, and the Soviet Union.

Participating teachers attend a ten-session training course and follow-up meetings in their schools. Staff developers who are experts in the field of teaching conflict resolution to children visit classrooms regularly throughout the year to help teachers implement the program. Teachers are currently piloting *Resolving Conflict Creatively*, a ten-unit draft teaching guide.

About Choices

With all their variety, school-based conflict resolution programs share a common goal: to show young people that they have many choices besides passivity or aggression for dealing with conflict and to give them the skills to make those choices real in their own lives. At a time when human survival depends on finding alternatives to violence for resolving differences, there is no more compelling mission for educators. □

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