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An examination of mediation

from the perspective of high school students

in the role of disputants:

An initial exploration

by

Douglas Bruce Krochak

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
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AN EXAMINATION OF MEDIATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF HIGH

SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE ROLE OF DISPUTANTS:

AN INITIAL EXPLORATION

BY

DOUGLAS BRUCE KROCHAK

A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University

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of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

Douglas Bruce Krochak   1997 (c)

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to:

my mother and father, Anne and Brownie, who taught me the value of an education,

my brother, Walter, who provided a strong and guiding hand during my formative years,

my sisters, Barbara and Kardene, ho both went on to further education,

my wife, Cindy, who sacrificed far more than me in the production of this thesis,

and to my children, Kahleigh and Craig, who over the past three years have taught me the value of conflict resolution.

Abstract

Over the past twenty five years schools across North America have initiated conflict resolution programs. These programs were based upon the perception that students lacked the skills required to resolve conflict effectively and that the deverlopment of these skills would: improve the way students resolve interpersonal conflict and reduce the amount of violence present in schools. It was also believed that as students become more capable in resolving their own conflict and as violence in schools is reduced, teachers would spend less time refereeing student disputes and more time teaching and this increased focus on teaching would enhance learning.

While this relationship has yet to be proven it has become the basis of over 5000 conflict resolution programs across North America. For the most part these conflict resolution programs fall into four categories: conflict manager programs, mediation programs, student training and education, and comprehensive programs (combining mediation and student training and education).

The focus of this study was the mediation program that was instituted as part of the Kildonan East Collegiate Conflict Resolution Initiative. The purpose of this thesis was to collect and analyze the experiences of students who have had their conflicts resolved through mediation. These experiences were collected through a process of detailed interviews. This area of research, the disputants' perceptions and understandinngs of their expereinces in the mediation process, and the method of collecting data, detailed interviews, were selected because of the little attention this area has

garnered in previous research and that most of the data that was collected in this area was done by survey that failed to capture the richness adn fullness of the disputants' experiences.

The results of these interviews tend to indicate that mediation offers the school administration an effective option in resolving student conflict and that mediation may haave the potential to impact on how students resolve subsequent conflicts.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Schools have long been the site of conflict amongst students, but the formal teaching of conflict resolution to students within Canadian schools is a relatively new. Driven by the awareness that students of all ages appear to lack the skills and strategies for resolving conflict effectively and by the testimonial evidence from American conflict resolution projects that the training of students may develop these skills and strategies, many Canadian schools have embarked upon conflict resolution projects.

One of these projects, The Kildonan East Collegiate Conflict Resolution Initiative (KECCRI), was launched in January 1993 with funding from the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation. The Initiative, though being involved in various efforts (classroom management and pedagogical methods training for teachers, workshops for students on conflict related issues-racism, hate crimes, and the Holocaust) has focused most of its efforts in three areas: research into students' attitudes toward conflict, teaching of negotiation skills to students, and the development of a mediation program to resolve student/student conflicts.

KECCRI research into students' attitudes toward conflict has mainly consisted of surveys administered to over 1500 students between 1993 and 1995. Each year the sample was composed of approximately one third of the population of KEC

(with a fairly equal distribution by grade-10, 11, and 12- and area of study - vocational and academic; the gender split was 60% male and 40% female which is representative of the population of the school), as well as the entire grade nine class of two local feeder junior high schools. The results of these surveys have been analyzed and are summarized later in this thesis.

The teaching of negotiation skills to students has been done through a series of three day workshops with selected groups of students. The groups involved in the workshops have included: the Natural Helpers (KEC version of peer support), young parents (students attending KEC who have children of their own), volunteers (students who have chosen to attend the workshop for various reasons), and students who have been identified by the school administration or support services as needing this type of skill training. Each workshop has been followed by an externally administered focus group. Participant responses provided through these focus groups have generally been quite positive.

Mediation of student/student conflict is currently the most active component of the initiative. Through the first three years of the Initiative mediation of student/student conflicts have been co-mediated by teams of two teachers. At the end of third year of the Initiative students were trained in the skills of mediation. These students will be paired with an experienced teacher mediator to co-mediate disputes, with the

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long term plan of having teams of students working to co-mediate student/student disputes.

It is the third component of the KECCRI, the resolution of student/student conflict through mediation. that is the focus of this thesis. The aim of this thesis is to capture students' experiences within the process of conflict resolution. The capturing of students' experiences included the students explaining the cause, the course, and the consequence of their involvement in the process. By gathering these explanations the students' motivations for going to mediation, their evaluation of the process, and their perceived effects of the experience were made explicit.

These experiences are collected through a series of structured interviews with students who have had their disputes resolved through mediation. To date only limited research has been done in this area of conflict resolution.

Most of the research that has examined conflict resolution programs in schools, in general, has either pertained to the process of implementing the program or to the quantitative measuring of the effectiveness of the program. It is not surprising that the early research done in conjunction with the establishment of some of the first in school conflict resolution programs, whose practical and immediate goal was the equipping of students to resolve conflict effectively, focused on implementation. This early research (Davis, 1985b) was limited, for the most part, to summative conclusions about the rationale for starting a program, and about the mechanics of

the program (selection and training of teachers and students and the administration of the program).

Many of the early attempts to assess the impact of school based conflict resolution projects have been criticized for being anecdotal, lacking objectivity, and containing numerous methodological weaknesses, thus making any conclusions about program effectiveness very tentative (Lam, 1989).

Later attempts to measure the impact of school based conflict resolution initiatives (Johnson and Johnson, 1992 & 1995; Wheeler, Stephens, Kaufman, Carlson, 1996) have been more rigorously designed, utilizing control groups, outside evaluators, and more reliable test measures to generate data that appears to be more supportive of the potential of teaching conflict resolution within schools. But due to the unique nature of the schools involved and the variety of conflict resolution programs that were implemented, it remains difficult to make a comprehensive and conclusive statement about the effectiveness of conflict resolution programs in school.

Within these broad attempts to evaluate and assess conflict resolution programs in school there have been scattered attempts to examine specifically the effects of mediation processes. These scattered, almost random, attempts to examine the mediation process have been generally limited to: determining the effectiveness of mediation by measuring the number of mediated disputes which hold up over a specified period of time; assessing the effects of mediation training on the communication skills and attitudes of the student

mediators; correlating the number of disciplinary actions with the number of mediations (Lam, 1989); and evaluating disputant satisfaction with the process (Wheeler, Stephens, Kaufman, and Carlson, 1996). It is only this last factor that, at a minimal level, tries to gain insight into the mediation process from the perspective of the students who have been involved in the process in the role of a disputant. This thesis is an attempt to increase the base of knowledge in this area.

Essentially, this thesis is an examination of the process of mediation from the perspective of students who have had their conflict resolved through mediation. The aim is to let the students talk about their experiences and to learn from the students who have actually experienced the process. Asking these students about their experiences is a respectful thing to do. It also makes sense as a way to learn about the process of mediation and its impact on the lives of these students. This process should yield data which reflects the richness and complexity of this human experience.

This thesis will attempt to answer five specific questions:
1) What are the disputants' understandings of the mediation process?
2) Did the disputants feel empowered by the process?
3) Did the disputants perceive a change in their role or psychological mind set during the process?
4) What were the effects of the mediation on the relationship with the other disputant?

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5) How has being involved in mediation affected the way the disputants resolve conflict?

Students who have experienced the process may provide unique insights which may be used in the formulation of new strategies and programs of conflict resolution.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW: NATURE OF CONFLICT

Defining conflict:

There appears to be no agreed upon definition of the term conflict amongst researchers or practitioners. An extensive review of the literature (Fink, 1968) found vast differences in the application of the term conflict. Deutsch's (1973, p.156) definition:

> ...conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur... An action which is incompatible with another action prevents, obstructs, interferes, with or in some way makes it less likely or less effective.

views conflict as an action that impedes an individual or group in its attempts to obtain a desired goal, state, feeling, or objective. This definition does not distinguish whether these actions are intentional or accidental.

The notion of intent is addressed by Coser (1967, p. 8) who defines conflict as:

> A struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power, and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure, or eliminate the rivals.

This definition labels the parties to a conflict as antagonists and assumes that one party is attempting to obtain a scarce commodity or fulfill a desire through an action that reduces or eliminates another party's opportunity of obtaining the same scarce commodity or fulfilling the same desire. Coser's

definition views conflict as a win/lose proposition, in that, one party can only gain at the expense of the another party.

In both definitions action is required or implied, but conflict may involve perceptions of behavior or of potential behavior. Rather than an overt act:

> Conflict is the process which begins when one party perceives that the other has frustrated, or is about to frustrate, some concern of his (Thomas, 1975, p. 891).

An individual or group may enter into a conflict intentionally through the performance of incompatible actions, or unintentionally through another individual or group perceiving the first party's intent or action to be that of limiting the second party's opportunity to obtain a desired goal, state, feeling, or objective. The perception of conflict is rooted in the parties' sense of competing and incompatible goals.

The concepts of perception and action are linked by Laue (1990, p. 257) who defines conflict:

> ... as escalated natural competition between two or more parties about scarce resources, power, and prestige. Parties in conflict believe they have incompatible goals and their aim is to neutralize, gain advantage, injure or destroy another.

To summarize, conflict may manifest itself based upon an individual or group who acts to infringe upon the ability of another individual or group to successfully achieve their goals or through the belief or perception of an individual or group that another individual or group is acting or is going to act in such as way as to limit their ability to successfully achieve

their goals. Whether the source of the conflict lies in a series of incompatible actions or in the perceptions of the actions the end result is usually an increase in conflictual behaviors and a re-enforcing of conflictual beliefs.

These four definitions all view the cause of conflict to be a frustrating, restricting, and/or limiting of the ability and/or the opportunity of an individual or group to address a concern, obtain a scarce commodity, or fulfill a human desire. Roy (1990) views these causes to be rooted in the desire to fulfill basic human needs and the inability of an individual or group to fulfill these needs. "Conflicts arise because certain basic individual needs are systematically frustrated or prevented from becoming manifest" (p. 126). Roy explains that it is this inability to fulfill basic human needs which creates perceptions and actions which result in conflict. "Suppression or frustration of needs leads to attitudinal and behavioral distortions which, in turn, create conditions for conflicts" (p. 126). Further Roy explains that the source of this inability to fulfill basic human needs may lay in the structure of the society:

> On this view, social institutional arrangements may be such that they either frustrate needs satisfaction, only unsatisfactorily fulfill them, or create alienating needs. As a result, distortions in individual development produce personality imbalances and disturb and disrupt social harmony (p. 126-127).

Roy believes conflict is rooted in the inability of a society to create equal opportunities for individuals to fulfill their basic needs.

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While a definition, universally accepted by practitioners and researchers, is yet to be found, the above sampling of definitions provide sufficient information to create an adequate description of conflict for the purposes of this thesis. Conflict tends to exist whenever incompatible activities occur or there is a perception of incompatible activities. Incompatible activities, intentional or accidental, are actions which prevent the obtaining of a goal, frustrate the addressing of a concern, restrict the acquiring of a scarce resource, or limit the ability for the fulfilling of a human desire or need by an individual or group. The perception of the activities as incompatible may be the based upon the individuals or groups viewing each other as the opposition or antagonists. This view of the other party as the opposition or antagonist lies in the attitude that conflict is a win/lose or zero sum proposition, that the only way for one party to obtain its goal is at the expense of the other party. The development of these attitudes may be founded in the individual's or group's inability to satisfy its basic human needs and this inability to satisfy these basic human needs may be rooted in the social structure and institutional arrangements within a society.

This win/lose perception and the negative connotation associated with conflict may largely be a function of social context. In a social context where competition is revered, individuality is rewarded, and worth is ranked, conflict will most likely be perceived as described above (Deutsch, 1982). A competitive orientation: stimulates the view that a solution to

conflict must be imposed by one side on the other, fosters expansion of the scope of issues, intensifies the parties' emotional involvement, and ultimately escalates the conflict (Deutsch 1949 and 1982). But an alternative view of conflict is emerging from the field of conflict resolution. A cooperative orientation to the resolution of conflict tends to: enhance communication, legitimize the interests of the parties, lead to a more coordinated and efficient effort in the resolution of the conflict, and create positive feelings (friendliness and helpfulness) amongst the parties. In this context conflict need not be painful, difficult, destructive, nor a win/lose proposition. Conflict can be a win/win proposition with positive outcomes for both parties. Conflict can create an energy that enhances achievement, increases motivation, and facilitates learning, as well as being a catalyst for change. Through conflict individual beliefs and goals can be clarified, relationships may be strengthened, and personal integrity tested (Johnson and Johnson, 1995). This alternative view of conflict can only be derived in a social context where cooperation is expected, group performance is exemplified, and human virtue is extolled (Deutsch, 1982).

Altering the social context as a means to more effectively deal with conflict has become the focus on many school conflict resolution programs.

Conflict as a field of study:

The examination of conflict, as a generic phenomenon within Western Civilization, is a relatively new and evolving field of

study. Prior to World War II conflict, violence, and war were treated as separate phenomena. Conflict and violence were perceived as deviant, pathological, and/or sick behaviour per se "to be controlled by authorities at the relevant social level-the family, industry, the community, the nation" while war was an international event "widely tolerated as inevitable" (Burton, 1990, p. 1). In Western Civilization, conflict, violence, and war were viewed as an unusual occurrence in a social system, a state of disequilibrium that needed to be corrected and the system returned to order (Laue, 1990).

As a formal field of study in universities, conflict had its origins in the post-war attention paid to the failure of the League of Nations and the future of the United Nations, with the bulk of the early literature focusing on conflict from a international perspective. Possibly encouraged by Cold War politics (the U.S. policy of containment of Communist expansion and the Soviet Union's posture of protectionism from Capitalist encirclement) and technology (the advent of nuclear weapons with the power for mass destruction), the notion of the inevitability of war was challenged. This challenge gave rise to a new approach to the study of conflict, strategic studies. The area of strategic studies relied heavily upon the principles of international relations, international law, and diplomatic history and focused primarily on the maintenance of peace through compromise and coercion by the use of effective institutions of power negotiation techniques and/ or the technology of mutual destruction (Burton, 1990).

In the 1960's, largely as a reaction to the Viet Nam War (Boulding, 1990), the tenets of strategic studies were fused with the theories from psychology, sociology, anthropology, and biology to create an interdisciplinary approach to the study of conflict described as conflict and peace studies. This holistic analysis initiated the process by which conflict could be studied as a generic phenomenon. From this fusion of the concepts of strategic studies and the theories of social/natural sciences developed two fairly distinct areas of interest- peace studies and conflict research.

The area of inquiry for peace studies is clearly articulated in Galtung's theoretical construct of "structural violence" (Burton, 1990, p.6). Galtung developed the idea that the source of conflict may be inherent in the political and economic structures of a society rather than the behaviour of individuals within the society. "Structural violence connotes a situation in which overt violence is absent but in which structural forces have virtually the same compelling control over behaviour as the overt threat or use of force (Groom, 1990, p.92). Peace researchers believe that the political and economic institutions of a society take on a life of their own, and it is these structures that determine the future behaviour of individuals and states by creating systemic constraints that make it difficult for individuals or states to escape the rhetoric of these structures or to think creatively so as to create new structures (Groom, 1990). Conflict is seen as inherent in a world based upon a class

system, which builds political and economic structures that serve incompatible interests.

Meanwhile, the approach of conflict researchers moved attention from the understanding of relationships amongst nations to an examination of the fundamental features of cooperative and competitive relationships and the consequences of these different relationships in a way that would be generally applicable to the relationships between individuals, groups, and nations (Deutsch, 1982). During this period, there was a marked shift in the literature from the examination of strategies, techniques, and the assignments of blame to an examination of individual behaviour, social organization, and the processes of human interaction.

Paradigms of conflict:

Groom (1990) categorizes the study of conflict as having three distinct areas of study:

i) strategic studies- concerned with arms control, international relations, and maintenance of world peace.

ii) peace research- interested in the development of a just society through the elimination of structural violence and the failure of the present political and economic structures in providing for the poor.

iii) conflict research- focused on the analysis of human behaviour as a means to deduce a general theory of conflict (Fink, 1967) and its causes, process, and resolution.

It is important to note at this time, that these three areas of study and their corresponding paradigms are amalgams of

similar ideas, and are composite in nature. Individuals, their understandings, motives, and actions, in the real world can not be so simply categorized, but the justification for doing so is to provide a starting point from which to explore the differing views of conflict found in contemporary society.

i) **Strategic studies**- is largely based upon the realist paradigm. The realist paradigm asserts that "states are the dominant actors and they are conceived to be well integrated internally and to act externally as clearly defined units" (Groom, 1990, p.72), and "that "international politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power. Whatever the ultimate aims of international politics, power is always the immediate aim" (Morgenthau, 1959, p.8). Conflict is viewed as inherent in peoples' instinctual drive for power. Strategic studies focuses on military capabilities, hardware, and tactics, with its goal being order and stability based upon a balance of forces (Groom, 1990).

International politics is seen as an ongoing process of the dominators seeking to maintain the status quo, while the dominated will seize any and every opportunity to reverse the relationship. In this struggle to dominate, peace (or the settlement of a conflict) is perceived as a temporary absence of war achieved through a balance of power. The settlement is based upon a balance of power that is predicated upon the manipulation and application of threats. Bercovitch (1984) describes this static state, the absence of war, violence, or

conflict as passive peace. This is opposed to idea of active peace which is a dynamic process of addressing and solving conflict.

The primary focus of strategic studies is the establishment of temporary states of peace, by controlling peoples' inherent drive to dominate, through a balance of power based upon military threats and political coercion.

ii) Peace research- draws heavily from the structuralist paradigm of the world, which is based upon the economic and political analysis of Hegel and Marx. Here the unit of analysis is seen to be the class structure, since this structure has even a greater impact on human behaviour than the individual social institutions it creates. The structure is seen as significant in the determining the thoughts and actions of the individuals living within the structure. Human behaviour is said to be socially constructed (Groom, 1990).

Many peace researchers postulate that human motivation and behaviour cannot be separated from class structure, because when human behaviour is aggregated it creates structures of which the individual may not be aware, and it is these structures that affect future motivations and behaviours of individuals, in ways which make it difficult to escape the social structure or to conceive of new or different structures (Groom, 1990). Richard Little (1985, P. 76) provides an analogy:

> ...when people walk across a field, they may unintentionally create a path. Others subsequently follow the path and in doing so 'reproduce' the path. The process of

reproduction, however, is neither conscious or intentional.

A significant component of this process of reproduction is structural violence- the reproduction of social structures which subtly control behaviour with the same effectiveness as overt threats or acts of violence. These structures tend to prevent individuals from fully developing their talents or interests, or even more insidiously from even being aware that such realizations are possible (Groom, 1990). "Structural violence exists when conditions such as slavery, or any injustice or inequality- racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, ageism, etc. preclude the attaining of peace" (Mastellone, 1993, p.7). Reardon (1988), like Bercovitch (1984), describes such a state as negative peace- the absence of tension, turmoil, conflict, or war at the expense of social justice.

For peace researchers conflict is inherent in the incompatible interests built into the social structure. The goal of peace researchers is the mangement of these incompatible interests and the formation of positive peace- "a condition of good management, orderly resolution of conflict, and harmony associated" (Reardon, 1988, p.12) with the promotion of social justice.

iii) **Conflict research**- bases much of its work on the world society paradigm, which views conflict as a distinct area of study. Within this area of study conflict is seen as having a coherence which allows for the explanation of conflict at the intrapersonal, interpersonal, intragroup, intergroup,

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international, or international levels. This coherence is built upon the assumptions of human needs theory (Groom, 1990). The basic unit of analysis is the transaction- a highly patterned set of actions and stages eventually leading to some form of termination (Laue, 1990). The transactions may be classified based upon a continuum of acceptability (by the actors involved in the conflict) ranging from power/coercion to legitimate/cooperation with the definition of a legitimate transaction being "one in which the behaviour of the actor is based on criteria fully and freely acceptable to it without coercion either overt, latent, or structural" (Groom, 1990, p.78). By viewing the transaction as the basic unit of analysis there is a subtle, but important, shift of focus from the conflict (or the differences that separate the actors) to the process of problem solving (or the common ground that unites the actors). "In order to resolve conflict so that they will not reoccur, we need to take a problem solving attitude so that the root causes of conflict can be looked at and solved, creating a true 'win/win' solution in which the needs of both parties are met" (Mastellone, 1993, p.3). The emphasis of the world society paradigm is placed on the study of human transactions, as a problem solving process, in a cross disciplinary format at any level.

Conflictual behaviour is thought, by conflict researchers, to be a subjective/rational response to the environment. It is subjective in the sense, that it is based upon an actors' perceptions of the environment. In the minds of the actors,

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either consciously or unconsciously, there is a desire to fulfill a need or needs and actions are adopted which they believe will fulfill the need or needs (Laue, 1990). Rational, in this case, does not relate to a normative system of appropriate behaviour, but rather to a sense of purposefulness in the actions of the actors. Conflictual behaviour is seen as functional in that it is intended to serve a purpose, and often the purpose or motivation of the behaviour can be traced back to a desire for the satisfactory fulfillment of the basic human needs (Groom, 1990).

Conflictual behaviour is not seen as deviant or pathological in nature (Laue, 1990), nor are people seen to be driven by an instinct to dominate (Groom,1990). Conflictual behaviour is viewed as a learned response triggered by the actors' perception of certain environmental conditions. Bandura and Walters (cited in Schulman and Meckler, 1985) state that aggressive children are the result of being exposed to an environment that models and rewards aggressive behaviour. The negative effects of conflict are due to the absence of learned "acceptable conflict handling mechanisms" (Groom, 1990, p.87). Conflict researchers believe that acceptable conflict handling mechanisms can be elicited by altering the environment and the perception of the actors of the environment.

Through the development of these acceptable conflict handling mechanisms conflict starts to be resolved more effectively. The goal of conflict researchers is not merely the

development and application of these skills, but the development of relationships that foster a new level of understanding amongst the actors. The resolution of each conflict episode creates a new plateau or relationship against which the next conflict episode is played (Laue, 1990). Ultimate resolution is meant to be (Groom, 1990, p.89):

> a situation in which relationships between parties are legitimized and self-sustaining without the intervention of third parties and without the imposition of behaviour patterns. There are, in addition, long-term expectations that the relationship will continue on that basis. With resolution the parties to a dispute accept the relationships between them and base their behaviour on criteria fully acceptable to them and to the other actors in the system.

Resolution, in this sense of being more than the mere absence of conflict (overt or latent), is the development of a self-regulating process by which to sustain long term relationships.

All three paradigms bring with them three distinct views of conflict. An understanding of these differing perspectives is critical because each views the cause and course of conflict uniquely, and therefore each has a unique view about what can be done to resolve conflict. The realist paradigm, based upon deterrence theory, sees peace or the settlement of conflict as a temporary state brought about by a balance of military and political power. Peace researchers, based upon the structuralist paradigm, see conflict as inherent in an unjust social structure and the only resolution to be the destruction of the structure and its replacement with one based upon social justice. Finally,

the world society paradigm, based upon the assumptions of the theory of human needs, see conflictual behaviour as the result of social learning, and that the resolution of conflict is an on going process of self-regulating problem solving. Simply stated what we think about conflict determines what we think we can do about conflict.

Conflict resolution- a theoretical perspective:

The study and practice of conflict resolution sits most comfortably in the world society paradigm with its optimistic view that conflict episodes can be resolved and legitimate relationships built and maintained through the development of self-regulated transactions. It is from this perspective that conflict resolution theory will be examined. Even though my focus will be the world society paradigm, it would be remiss for conflict researchers and practitioners to neglect valid assertions developed in the other two paradigms and not to respond to them.

The realist paradigm asserts that conflict often has to do with power, that often the power is distributed asymmetrically and that this imbalance of power must be addressed before the process of resolution is begun. Conflict researchers assume that in the long run this power imbalance will become irrelevant and that the:

> ... more powerful party will be prepared, despite its position of relative power, indeed will have no rational option, but to give up its power advantage. This is because it will find when deep rooted frustrations have been articulated by the weaker party that the

conflict will be protracted, despite relative weakness, and that the longer-term costs will be unacceptable in the absence of an agreement (Burton, 1990. p. 330).

Regrettably, the more powerful often lack a long term view of the costs of the conflict and is only willing to give up its power base when the costs of the conflict become unacceptable. Examples of this were the US involvement in Viet Nam and the dismantling of the system of Apartheid in South Africa. Sadly, this may also be the course that Quebec and the rest of Canada may also be on.

The structuralist paradigm emphasizes the importance of examining the effect of structural factors when considering questions of conflict and change. Conflict researchers agree with this notion that if conflict resolution is narrowly defined within the context of a particular conflict and does not address the root causes of the conflict it is less than useful (Burton, 1990). An example of this would be the present situation with youth street gangs in Winnipeg. Much of what is labeled conflict can only be resolved through structural change. A conflict is resolved when the solution and its resulting structures are legitimate, that is the authority within the relationship is derived from those over whom it is exercised (Burton, 1990).

The world society paradigm provides a basis from which a unified theory of conflict may be developed.

Conflict resolution and needs theory:

As the field of conflict resolution evolves there is a steady movement from theories of deterrence and practices of conflict settlement to theories of conflict management and practices of conflict resolution. Within this evolution has also developed a series of tenuous theories about conflict, but what is required is a unified theory of behaviour that will provide a basis for understanding the causes of conflict, analyzing the escalation and de-escalation in the course of conflict, and ultimately a guide for the prediction, resolution, and prevention of conflict. The theory which has garnered the most support among scholars as well as practitioners is Human Needs Theory. Human Needs theory is put forth as the unifying theory of human behaviour linking the causes, course, and consequences of conflict. The purpose of this section of the literature review is to outline the role of Human Needs Theory in:

- the prediction of the causes and course of conflict,
- the process of facilitated problem solving to conflict resolution, and
- the development of self-regulating, legitimate relationships as a resolution to conflict.

The quest for knowledge about the nature of conflict as a generic human problem and for techniques and initiatives that might be applied productively has a long and complex history. For almost twenty years the debate raged about the need, possibility, or viability of a comprehensive, cohesive and concise theory on which to base the study of conflict and its resolution (Fink, 1967). But over the past two decades, a small

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group of international scholars have provided direction to the quest by basing their work on the following four assumptions:

1. The knowledge field for the study of conflict and its resolution is the totality of decision making (Burton, 1990, p.3).

2. Is that no one existing social science, by itself contains sufficient knowledge to adequately explain the phenomena of conflict, therefore a multidisciplinary approach is necessary (Fink, 1976, p.412)

3. Regardless of societal level we require some organized body of knowledge of human behaviours, relationships, and responses to the environment that does not exclude anything that may be relevant (Burton, 1990, p.3).

4. An adequate theory of behaviour is required to provide a basis for the analysis and resolution of conflict, and particularly for prediction of conflict and a guide to conflict provention (Burton, 1990, p.xi).

Following this line of research, Human Needs Theory can be described as a unifying theory because it is comprehensive, in that it is applicable to all levels of conflict- individual, group, and intergroup, cohesive in that it addresses causes, processes and outcomes of conflict, and concise in that in provides constraints on the range of options of human behaviour, while allowing for varying degrees of those behaviours dependent upon a series of specified variables within the theory.

The Human Needs approach to the study of conflict rests upon the basic assumption that human needs are a key motivational factor in human behaviour. Rosati, Carroll and Coate (1990, p.156) state:

> According to this perspective, there exists specific and relatively enduring human needs which individuals will inevitability strive to satisfy, even at the cost of personal disorientation and social disruption.

Human Needs theorists locate the foundation of conflict, its causes, processes and outcomes, in the interaction of individuals and groups striving to satisfy their needs within their social contexts.

Human Needs advocates point to increasing support for this assertion in a developing body of literature in the social sciences. Due to numerous epistemological problems, such as proving the existence of human needs and linking these needs directly to human behaviour, much of the research has been of a deductive nature rather than a inductive nature (Rosati, Carroll, and Coate, 1990). Another reason for the dominance of deductive research has been the rapid growth in the applied field of conflict resolution. People working in the field (schools, courts, and communities) haven't time to wait for the development of a theory of conflict resolution based upon inductive research. These people who have pushed ahead in the absence of a validated theory have created a rich experimental environment for deductive research. Through observation of various techniques and practices, researchers have had plenty of opportunity to test their fundamental assumptions about human behaviour and conflict. "The unique advantage of this type of research is that it provides us the opportunity to make rich, detailed observations of on-going

processes of conflict and conflict resolution, which would not be accessible to us unless we were engaged in an action program" (Kelman, 1990, p.202). Examples of this are found in the action research of de Reuck (1990) at the Centre for the Analysis of Conflict and Kelman's (1990) work in the Middle East with Israeli and Palestinian participants. This approach allows researchers to develop key insights to the human needs perspective deductively and empirically. Finally, supporters of the Human Needs approach state, that their development of a theory of conflict based upon human needs is at least as secure as the theories of strategic studies based upon the notion of peoples' inherent drive for power.

The concept of Human Needs Theory has it roots in the philosophy of humanism and its related disciplines of humanistic psychology and applied social psychology. From these three areas are derived the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of conflict resolution (Fisher, 1990,):

- ...humanism calls for individuals to exercise freedom with responsibility in order to develop their full potential and to use their competence in the pursuit of human welfare (p. 90).
- ...humanistic psychology prescribes an open, collaborative approach for dealing with differences, as opposed to the typical strategies of dominance, suppression, or avoidance (p.90).
- Applied social psychology thus assumes that individuals and social groups have undeniable needs and rights for dignity, respect, security, and a 'place in the sun' in both physical and psychological terms- that is, identity,

participation and adequate control over their
own destiny (p. 93).
• Underlying rationale is that all human
problems have social components and that in
fact the most serious human problems are
primarily social (p. 94).

It is within these parameters of humanism, humanistic
psychology, and applied social psychology that the
conceptualizations of Human Needs Theory have been
developed.

The most often cited conceptualization of Human Needs
approach is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1954), which
attempts to outline a categorization of the basic positive
motives that affect human behaviour. Maslow provides a
theory of human motivation based upon a hierarchy of needs,
in which needs at the lowest level of the hierarchy must be
fully satisfied before the individual can attend to the
satisfactory attainment of higher order needs. The hierarchy as
identified by Maslow (1970), is:

- Self-actualization needs: the ultimate motivation, involving
  the need to fulfill one's unique potential.
- Esteem needs: the need for achievement, competence and
  mastery, as well as motives for recognition, prestige, and
  status.
- Aesthetic needs: the craving for beauty, symmetry, and
  order
- Cognitive needs: the desire to know, to understand, and to
  satisfy one's curiosity.

•Belongingness and Love needs: needs that are satisfied by social relationships

•Safety needs: needs that must be met to protect the individual from danger.

•Physiological needs: basic internal deficit conditions that must be satisfied to maintain bodily processes.

Maslow's conceptualization of Human Needs theory is not without criticism- primarily directed at the hierarchical nature of his theory (Fisher, 1990). Maslow, himself, recognized the difficulty in the hierarchical structure of his model and the prerequisite of fulfilling lower level needs prior to attaining higher level needs by stating: "people who are normal are partially satisfied in all their basic needs and partially unsatisfied in all their basic needs at the same time" (1954, p.54). Removing the hierarchical structure of Maslow's model would satisfy the bulk of the criticism and create a list of human needs that would resemble those lists of other Human Needs theorists, such as Klineberg, Murray, and Cantril (Fisher, 1990). Though the specifics of the lists might vary slightly, this may not be as significant as the supposition that human needs represent the basic requirements of human survival and development, both physically and socially, and that these needs are key motivation factors in human behaviour. How can this supposition be linked to the study of conflict and conflict resolution?

Fisher (1990) proposes "the concept of identity, in particular social identity , has the potential of providing the key linkage

between needs theory and intergroup and international conflict resolution" (p.94). Based upon this proposition, Fisher derives a model of conflict, "The Eclectic Model of Conflict as a Context for Needs Theory" and an ancillary model, "The System States of the Eclectic Model". These models will be examined later, but first it is important to understand Fisher's rationale for using the concept of identity as the link between needs theory and conflict.

A summary of Fisher's thought would start with the notion that the individual's behaviour is motivated by a series of human needs, of which the need for identification is the most fundamental. The need for identification is fulfilled through social interaction by membership in a group. Membership in a group is seen as an important contributor to an individual's self-esteem or positive self-concept, a quality that it is assumed individuals are motivated to increase or maintain in an attempt to fulfill the need of self-actualization. The striving to satisfactorily fulfill the need for identity, while enhancing the individual's self-esteem and self-concept leads to a process of group comparison, which favours the in-group at the expense of the out-group. Stated broadly, an individual's need for identity is fulfilled by membership in a group, whose positive characteristics may be expressed by negatively defining the characteristics of other groups.

The striving to acquire and maintain a positive social identity through intergroup interaction may have positive and negative effects on intergroup relations. Whether the effects

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will be positive or negative largely depends upon the existing facilitative conditions between the groups. Fisher (1990, p.97) summarizes the conditions which promote positive group interaction as:

> 1. High acquaintance potential which allows for members of different groups to come to know each other as persons and to break down stereotypes and barriers to interaction.
> 2. Equal status of participants or higher status of minority group members so that mutual respect is likely.
> 3. Supportive social norms and institutional expectations that influence participants toward positive qualities of interaction including friendliness, openness, and trust.
> 4. A cooperation-operative task and reward structure that involves participants in functionally important activities directed toward common goals.

These conditions facilitate the satisfactory fulfillment of the need of identity at the individual and group level, as well as fostering effective intergroup relations and conflict resolution. When the positive characteristics of the in-group are defined by group security, rather than negative comparisons to the out-group, it appears positive intergroup relations are likely.

Fisher (1990) provides an explanation of how individual and group desire to fulfill the need of social identity may lead to negative intergroup relations in his "Eclectic Model of Conflict as a Context for Needs Theory". This dynamic and process oriented model has been constructed upon a foundation of social psychological theory following the classic process of

theory building proposed by Dubin (1969). The model is seen to be applicable to the practitioner as well as the scholar.

The model can be said to be comprehensive in that it takes into account the variable of interest by level of analysis (individual, group, and intergroup), as well as cohesive in that it addresses the causes, processes and outcomes of conflict. The model summarizes the variables involved in conflict as:

- antecedents

i) at the individual level- self esteem

ii) at the group level- cohesion and identity

iii) at the intergroup level- cultural differences and history of antagonism

iv) the basis for the conflict- interest, values, needs, or power

- orientations

i) at the individual level- the desire for achievement, affiliation, and dominance

ii) at the group level- trust, ethnocentrism based upon in-group solidarity and out-group derogation

iii) at the intergroup level- perceived threat and competitive orientation

- processes

i) at the individual level- personal style, leadership style, perceptual/cognitive biases

ii) at the group level- constituent pressure, communication, and interaction amongst group members

iii) at the intergroup level- the means of dispute resolution

• outcomes

i) at the individual level- self esteem

ii) at the group level- cohesion, satisfaction with the outcome, the group and/or the leader

iii) at the intergroup level- mutual payoff, increased antagonism, escalation of the conflict

Fisher describes the interaction between these variables in seven principles, which I will summarize. The major sources of conflict between groups are interests, values, needs, or power. This conflict leads to mutually competitive orientation and competitive actions. The conflict will be escalated by the development of these competitive orientations and actions, as well as cultural differences, and a history of antagonism. These variables will in turn heighten the perception of threat, and this perception causes ethnocentrism, which in turn escalates conflict through processes of ineffective communication, co-ordination, contentious tactics and reduced productivity. This development of ethnocentrism results in an increase in group identity and cohesion. The enhancement of the self-esteem of the individuals within the group is positively related to this increased group identity and cohesion, which are positively related to the rise in ethnocentrism. Fisher concludes:

> Group identity is seen as supportive of self-esteem in that the group is threatened, the members are threatened in a personal sense. Threat toward the fundamental need for identity is thus seen to be operative at both the individual and group level, thereby increasing the power of this dynamic in situations of intergroup conflict (1990 p.104).

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Thus, the need for identity which is seen as a fundamental aspect of human survival and development may operate as a negative driver in the causation and escalation of conflict.

Fisher's (1990) ancillary model, "System States of the Model in Relation to Needs Theory" attempts to capture the dynamic ebb and flow of conflict in the real world. The model attempts to explain the processes of de-escalation, the moving from a state of high intensity conflict to low intensity conflict, and escalation, the moving from a state of low intensity conflict to high intensity conflict. Low intensity conflicts are defined as "over significant interests and values, but the parties do not see their fundamental needs for identity or security threatened, nor do they approach the conflict as a power struggle for their very existence" (p.106), while high intensity conflicts are defined as "the denial and frustration of basic needs and the struggle for power: both groups perceive that their inexorable needs for identity, recognition, security, and self-determination are being threatened or thwarted by the other" (p.108). In relation to needs theory the difference between low level of intensity and high level of intensity is the degree to which the groups perceive the threat to their ability to fulfill their needs of identity and security.

Indicators of a lower level system state of conflict would be a low to moderate perception of threat, ethnocentrism, and mistrust, with the bulk of the conflict centring upon issues that do not threaten the groups' needs for identity, recognition, or security. The low level system state of conflict can be readily

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escalated by a history of antagonism and cultural differences between the groups, or the failure of traditional settlement techniques (bargaining, negotiations, avoidance, or compromise) which may lead to further distrust or antagonism between the groups. The results of escalation would be a high intensity system state of conflict, characterized by increasing perceptions of threat, ethnocentrism, and mistrust, fueled by an increasing competitive orientation between the groups and an increasing sense of group cohesion within each group. A high level system state of conflict may be de-escalated through a process of problem solving that employs third party consultation and emphasizes the groups' developing a set of superordinate goals. As noted by Burton (1987) only through a full analysis of conflict with such a problem solving approach is true conflict resolution of high intensity conflict possible, and with it a return to a low level system state of conflict.

Fisher (1990) provides two models that explain the generic phenomena of conflict from the approach of needs theory. The models are valuable tools in understanding conflict in that they explain the process of escalation and de-escalation of conflict at the individual, group, and intergroup level, as well as explaining the interplay between the three levels:

> Moreover, the notion of human needs can serve to guide the development of empirical theory at the macro level. That is, by generating a set of deduced assumptions regarding micro-level human needs, the human needs approach builds a foundation upon which social scientists can formulate more powerful macro-level theoretical

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explanation (Rosati, Carroll, and Coate, 1990, p.159).

The models also provide a cognitive map for the understanding of the course of conflict from its causes (antecedents, and orientations), the processes (escalation, and de-escalation) and its outcomes (settlement or resolution). Most importantly the models provide a theoretical basis for conflict resolution and a starting point for empirical research.

> If the human needs approach can be validated, it will provide, subject always to some new discovery, a unifying theme or focus that makes order out of decision making complexities. Around it, knowledge can be selected and organized, thus providing us with a conflict resolution literature (Burton, 1990, P.4).

Problem solving approach to conflict resolution:

Until it can be validated, Human Needs Theory provides the practitioner a model upon which to design conflict resolution interventions, specifically the use of a problem solving approach in the de-escalation of conflict.

> The analysis has clear implications for the strong support of problem-solving approaches to conflict resolution as a means of establishing viable intergroup and multicultural relations in which the fundamental needs of individuals and groups are effectively addressed (Fisher, 1990, p.109).

The problem-solving approach to conflict resolution is rooted firmly in the same humanistic and applied social psychological, philosophical and theoretical underpinnings as the Human Needs approach. Specifically, this is a recognition of

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individuals having control over their own destiny, a belief that an individual will exercise freedom with responsibility, and a process of open collaboration in addressing differences and conflicts. The general thesis of "analytical problem solving facilitated conflict resolution" (Burton, 1990, p.324) is that individuals involved in a conflict, working through a complete analysis of their problems will be able to reach a resolution or an agreement upon a process for resolution.

It may appear trite, or simply common sensical, to suggest that problems may be resolved by having the disputants sit down and discuss the issues. The analytical problem-solving facilitated approach is more than having the two disputants talk about their problems in the presence of a moderator. It provides a structure that will induce interaction between the disputants that focuses on the analysis of the conflict, facilitates mutual understandings, explores solutions, and generates a resolution. "Creative problem-solving in this context searches for ways of redefining, fractionating, and transcending the conflict so that positive-sum, or win/win solutions, which leave both parties better off, can be discovered" (Kelman, 1990, p.201). The goal or the purpose of the process is not merely a settlement of the conflict episode, which may reduce the current level of intensity of conflictual behaviour or actually in the long run escalate the hostilities among the disputants. Rather the goal is a resolution, which implies a solution mutually acceptable to the disputants, that does not ask either party to compromise on important values, nor reduce their

ability to fully satisfy their human needs, and which neither party will want to repudiate when they recover their strength to do so (Burton, 1972). Ultimately, the resolution is legitimate, self-regulating, the basis of a new relationship between the parties and a template for future negotiations between the parties. "A true resolution- as distinct from a compromise or an imposed settlement- implies eliminating or transforming the grounds of dispute and reaching an outcome that is self-supporting in the sense that is positively advantageous to all the parties involved" (de Reuck, 1990, p.185).

The analysis of conflict based upon human needs theory, and Fisher's resultant models, lend strong support for the analytical, problem-solving, facilitated approach to conflict resolution at the individual, group, and intergroup levels. The problem-solving process fosters a full analysis of the conflict, an understanding of shared goals, and an appreciation of the environmental constraints, through which the parties will be able to resolve the conflict, while addressing the fundamental human needs of the disputants (de Reuck, 1990). The process is based upon a theoretical assumption:

> that parties to conflicts have shared goals-
> that is the pursuit of human needs common to
> all, and that it is the means or satisfiers that
> are in dispute. The shared goals, such as
> identity and recognition, are not in   short
> supply. There is, therefore, no call for
> compromise in their pursuit. The problem is
> to find appropriate means, for it is they which
> are in short supply. Security is a goal for
> everyone, and the more one person has the
> more security others will enjoy. But the

means to security limit the possibilities of it being shared (Burton, 1990, p.328).

The drive for the satisfaction of human needs is seen as the motivator for conflictual behaviour, as well as the foundation upon which conflicts may be resolved.

The facilitative problem-solving model is based upon an interactive approach, which attempts to reverse the escalating processes and put into motion a de-escalating dynamic (Kelman, 1990). The essence of the problem-solving model is that it is confidential, collaborative, non-judgmental, highly participative, and committed to the mutual exploration for the resolution to the conflict. This face-to-face communication, under the guidance of a third party is a process involving rigorous analysis of the structure of the conflict and ultimately the development of a realistic means to resolve the conflict (Burton, 1990). The procedure for the development of resolutions is not a zero-sum bargaining mode, where a gain or loss is either experienced as a loss or gain by the other (Morley and Stephenson, 1979), but it is a process to:

> help the parties to redefine their situation so that they both perceive it as a shared predicament to be solved jointly, and to equip them with a common language for communication: it is, in short, to enable the parties to create for themselves a common frame or universe of discourse in order to cooperate (de Reuck, 1990, p.186).

The basis of the resolution of conflict is altering the disputants' perception of conflict as a win/lose situation and of the other party to the dispute as the enemy.

The difficulty in changing the disputants' frame of reference from opponent and antagonism to partner and cooperation is the major obstacle to the process of problem-solving, and the one which the facilitative problem-solving process is designed to overcome. This frame of reference arises from a cognitive mind set which predisposes the disputants to a zero-sum attitude and that induces the disputants to conform to a set of social expectations or roles- protector of their interests, and attacker of the position held by the other disputant. This competitive frame of reference stimulates the perceptions that a solution must be imposed, and that power is enhanced by minimizing the position of the other disputant. These attitudes foster the expansion of conflict, until it becomes a matter of principle rather than an issue to be resolved. This expansion intensifies the emotional commitment of the disputants to the point where any attempt at resolution is more "painful" than the effects of never resolving the conflict. At this point the disputants tend to employ coercive methods or avoidance as a means to maintain their position in the conflict (Deutsch, 1949). "Since a true resolution of the conflict implies a joint search for mutual advantage, an essential part of the problem-solving technique must be to divest parties of their inhibitions as adversaries, and to offer them alternative roles, first as analyst and later as partner" (de Reuck, 1990, p.187).

The technique involved in the facilitative problem-solving approach is to transform the roles of the disputants from opposition to analysis, by moving from the process from

negotiation and bargaining to analysis and problem-solving. This change in roles and social interaction will be accompanied by a changing frame of reference from competitive to cooperative. This changing frame of reference will manifest itself in a decrease in bargaining and negotiation and an increase in analysis, cooperation, and problem-solving. Anthony de Reuck (1990) explains this process of reframing the role of disputants and the resultant effects:

> it is inevitable that social structure (patterned behaviour) and frame of reference (patterned ideas) should reflect one another, be mirror images, almost, one of the other, because patterns of behaviour (structure) result from the acting out of the patterns of ideas (frame) which define their situation for the participants (p.190).

Therefore the analytical, problem-solving, facilitated approach fosters conflict resolution by altering the roles and psychological frames of the disputants. Such an approach described by Kelman (1990):

> ...suggests that conflict resolution requires the introduction of different kinds of interaction that are capable of reversing these processes and setting a deescalatory dynamic into motion. Amongst other things, such interactions would enable the parties to discover ways of influencing each other, by exploring what the other needs and what they can therefore offer the other to induce reciprocation (p.200).

The problem-solving approach is predicated upon a series of structural and attitudinal changes, which leads to resolution,

and the transformation of the relationship between the disputants.

Based upon social structure and cultural configuration studies by Basil Bernstein and Mary Douglas and the concept of psychological frames developed by Gregory Bateson and Erving Goffman, de Reuck (1990) provides a theoretical explanation of how the analytical problem-solving facilitated conflict resolution approach is able to bring conflict to a resolution. The approach exploits the ambiguity between the functions of negotiation and analysis and the corresponding roles of opponent and analyst. During the process of analysis, the disputant is able to "slip out" of (actually the process rewards these types of actions through positive social reaction by the moderator and the other disputant) the normal bargaining mode adopted by adversaries. During these periods of analysis, the anxiety attached to the adversarial role is diminished, while the creativity inherent in the role of the analyst is enhanced. During these periods of reduced anxiety and enhanced creativity that the disputants first experience the sense and the rewards of working cooperatively. It is this experience of working cooperatively, in the role of analyst, that entices even further cooperation and risk taking. de Reuck summarizes:

> Practice in the playing the analysis game, when anxiety is allayed and creativity enhanced, offers precisely the experience of cooperation that is needed to initiate the new mode of negotiation. Analysis offers the parties the intellectual tools for re-

interpreting the conflictual relationship between them, but also the immediate experience of joint cooperation in problem-solving (p.188).

At the psychological level, it is through these first experiences of cooperation that the disputants start to redefine their relationship as a joint predicament, that can be resolved through further cooperation. There is a dissolution of the conflictual psychological frame with the perception of a zero-sum solution and the substitution of a cooperative psychological frame with the perception of positive-sum situation.

At the social level, through the experiencing of cooperation, there is a re-definition of the identities of the in-group and the out-group. Through the experience of working cooperatively, the disputants have come to conceive themselves and the moderator for the purpose of conflict resolution, as belonging to the same in-group, albeit temporary.

With the development of a new in-group definition and a psychological frame of cooperation, the disputants are relieved of their old roles as antagonists and psychological frame of competitiveness, the group can focus its energy on developing a solution. Finally, the development of a resolution creates a re-definition of disputants as partners. Through the process of facilitated problem-solving previous social roles and psychological frames are dissolved and replaced upon new

roles and frames upon which a new relationship can be built or an old relationship re-established.

Support for this explanation can be located in the seminal work of Morton Deutsch (1949) on group dynamics and cooperation. Deutsch's research illustrates the following characteristics of cooperative groups as compared with competitive groups: more effective communication, more helpfulness, higher productivity, greater sense of similarity in beliefs and values, and conflict viewed as a mutual problem to be solved. A competitive process was seen to stimulate the perception of a zero-sum solution, the attitude of ethnocentrism, an expansion of the scope of conflict until particular issues can not be isolated and resolved, and finally a level of emotional involvement that precluded any attempt at resolution. Further research by Deutsch (1973) uncovered a correlation between the social conditions which initiate or stimulate the development of a cooperative relationship or a competitive relationship. Deutsch (1982) states this relationship in what he immodestly labels 'Deutsch's Crude Law of Social Relations'- "the characteristic processes and effects elicited by a given type of social relationship also tend to elicit that type of social relationship" (p.9-10). Simply stated a cooperative relationship induces and is induced by cooperative social conditions, while a competitive relationship induces and is induced by competitive social conditions. The facilitative problem-solving approach attempts to create a cooperative social condition by having the disputants redefine their roles as

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analysts rather than antagonists, and by altering their psychological frame of reference from a zero-sum perception to that of a positive-sum perception. In doing so it is expected to induce a cooperative relationship which will enhance the likelihood of further cooperation and ultimately the resolution of the conflict.

> In other words, if one has systematic knowledge of the effects of cooperative and competitive processes, one will have systematic knowledge of the conditions which typically give rise to such processes and, by extension, to the conditions which affect whether a conflict will take a constructive or destructive course (Deutsch, 1982, p. 10).

The facilitative problem-solving approach attempts to change simultaneously the process of interaction between the disputants and the social conditions in which the disputants interact so as to alter the cognitive mind sets of the disputants.

Further support for the potential of the facilitative problem-solving approach can be found in Kelman's (1990) application of the process in workshops with Israeli and Palestinian participants. The workshops have been "particularly useful in enabling participants to observe directly and to analyze the impact of their own actions on the adversary, and the impact of the adversary's actions on themselves" (Kelman, 1990, p.211). The positive effects of the workshops noted by Kelman (1990) parallel many of the key concepts highlighted by de Reuck (1990) in his theoretical explanation of the facilitative problem-solving approach. The workshops have led to the participants experiencing a positive cooperative experience and

an enhanced willingness to continue this form of cooperation, an understanding that the conflict between the two nations is a joint predicament and that analytical discussions may be useful in developing a mutual resolution, and a development of empathy which may be seen as the first step in reframing the psychological mind set from antagonist to partner. This type of action research illustrates the potential of the facilitative problem-solving approach even in the most difficult of international disputes.

De Reuck's (1990) explanation of how the facilitative problem-solving approach may be effective in resolving conflict appears to be theoretically sound and practically possible. His application of social psychological research appears to be compatible with Deutsch's theory of cooperative and competitive groups. Both sets of research point to the importance of altering social conditions as a significant factor in changing the social relationship between disputants. As well both sets of research point to dependent nature between social conditions and social relationships. The two sources of research are also complementary in that the social psychological information is useful in explaining the change in cognitive process experienced by an individual that is required to move a relationship form a competitive orientation to a cooperative one and the cooperative theory is valuable in explaining why the cooperative orientation is more likely to be successful in resolving the conflict.

The problem-solving situation not only fosters the enlargement of the frame within which the disputants conceive their situation but also breaks down the categories of thought which in bargaining tend to block the conception of constructive outcomes. In short, problem solving offers a creative intellectual environment (de Reuck, 1990, p.193).

Successful application of this process by Kelman and others certainly points to the practicality of using the facilitative problem-solving approach to resolve conflict.

The goal of the facilitative problem solving approach is not only the settlement of the conflict episode, but the de-escalation of the situation and the establishment of a new relationship through the resolution of the conflict. Only when conflict is resolved, as opposed to being settled, is the outcome of the process a self-regulating, legitimate relationship.

Conflict resolution and human relationships:

Human relationships, within the context of conflict resolution, can be viewed from many different perspectives. One significant perspective is to examine the locus of control within the relationship. A relationship may be classified on a continuum of control ranging from external to internal (Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, and Burnett, 1992).

An externally controlled relationship is maintained through the application of external rewards and punishments. This is a relationship that emphasizes the use of an external monitor (authority figure) to regulate behaviour, resolve conflict, and to ultimately determine the nature of the relationship between

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the individuals and/or groups (Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, and Burnett, 1992). In schools this type of relationship manifests itself through a code of conduct mandated by the board of education, and a system of school based rules developed and enforced by the staff and administration. Within this system the staff and administration would supervise the behaviour of the students, rewarding behaviour deemed appropriate and punishing behaviours labeled as unacceptable through the traditional procedures of reprimand, detention, suspension, and expulsion. In this type of relationship students are taught acceptable behaviour is anything for which you are not caught, and when caught that conflicts are resolved by relinquishing their power to an adult who then determines what type of behaviours are problematic and then instructs the students on how the problematic behaviour will be resolved (Scherer, 1992).

Outside the school system, external control is apparent in our complex series of laws, enforced by an expanding number of agencies (private and public) and adjudicated through an adversarial system composed of a variety of third parties. Within the school system, as a student, or outside the walls of the school, as accuser or accused, the nature of the relationship between the individuals and the corresponding behaviour is prescribed by an external force or monitor. In a system where human relationships are managed through such external control there is little reason or opportunity for individuals to develop the competencies (attitudes, skills, and strategies)

required for effectively resolve their personal conflicts and to manage a relationship (Maxwell, 1989).

Probably even more regrettable is that a system of external control does not allow individuals a process "... to back off from an old relationship and begin to forge a new one" (Scherer, 1992, p. 17). Within schools "bullies" learn that it is all right to bully as long as you don't get caught and the victims of the bullies learn they are defenseless and dependent upon the protection of others. In society the accuser must learn to always play the role of the prosecutor and the accused must learn to play the role of the defendant. The usual long term effects of such relationships is that the conflict is endured, the relationship is solidified and costs, social and economic, escalate.

At the other end of the continuum are relationships maintained through internal control, which can be described as self regulating. "Self regulation is a concept from the field of developmental psychology that describes a person's ability to generate socially approved behaviour in the absence of external monitors" (Maxwell, 1992, p.149). To state it another way self regulation is the ability of the individual to determine the appropriate behaviour in accordance with the situational demands. The process of self regulation would involve strategies which allow individuals to monitor their own behaviour, assess the situation, determine the appropriateness of the behaviour, and to regulate their relationships with others.

In schools this approach would include the instruction of students in the skills of facilitated problem solving through the processes of negotiation and mediation, and the opportunity to practise these skills in their lives (Maxwell, 1989). Johnson, Johnson, Dudley and Burnett (1992, p. 13) conclude:

> When students are taught how to negotiate and are given opportunities to mediate their classmates' conflicts, they are given procedures and competencies to (1) regulate their behavior through self-monitoring, (2) judge what is appropriate given the situation and the perspective of the other person, and (3) modify how they behave accordingly.

Over the past 25 years similar approaches for the development of the personal competencies required for the self regulation have taken hold in society as alternative forms of dispute resolution (neighborhood justice centres, victim/offender programs, mediation centres) have been established.

The fundamental assumption of the facilitative problem solving approach (in what ever form it takes) is that the parties involved in a conflict have the ability to resolve the dispute. It is this empowering aspect of the process- the active role played by the individuals in defining the issues and solutions- that makes facilitative problem solving an important tool in the development of the competencies required to maintain a self regulating relationship. Briggs (1970, p. 257) describes the relationship between facilitated problem solving and empowerment as: "Allowed to be joint architects in matters affecting them re-enforces feeling of control and autonomy. Yet

it does not give unlicensed freedom to do as they please". Participation in the process provides the individual the opportunities to develop the communication and problem solving skills (Scherer, 1992; Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, and Burnett 1992), as well as nurturing feelings of self confidence, self respect, self discipline, emotional stability, and social responsibility (Maxwell, 1989).

Participation in facilitated problem solving allows individuals to: (1) resolve their own conflicts, (2) develop the competencies required to maintain self regulating relationships, and (3) fundamentally alter the nature the relationship between the individuals. This new relationship may be described as legitimate in that the authority to regulate the relationship is derived from the individuals within the relationship (Burton,1990).

This new relationship should be the basis for new and more effective ways for the resolving of conflict between the disputants. These new and more effective ways for resolving conflict should include attitudes of mutual respect, self discipline, and social responsibility, and processes of communication that reflect open communication and problem solving (Burton, 1990).

These new attitudes and processes should extend beyond the relationship between the disputants to affect the way the disputants resolve conflict with other students within the school, thus having an effect on the climate and culture of the

school (Stern, 1978; Cheatam, 1988; and Porter and Davis, 1985a and 1985b).

It is this change in the way students may spontaneously resolve conflict and its resultant impact upon the climate of the schools that has attracted educators to introduce conflict resolution programs into schools across North America.

CHAPTER 3
LITERATURE REVIEW: CONFLICT RESOLUTION PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS

Conflicts amongst students occur all the time in classrooms and schools: who to sit with at lunch, spreading rumours, name calling, and who is dating whom. In the past students generally received little formal guidance or instruction in how to manage these common conflicts. Usually they were advised: "Not to fight and get along." or "To separate and find new friends." Usually the process of "getting along" or "making new friends" were determined by the norms of the students' peer group. These normative procedures might include the organizing of a fight off the school grounds away from the prying eyes of the teachers, the isolation and humiliation of the weaker student, the spreading of rumours and name calling in attempts to enhance the self esteem of the disputants and the building of alliances with other students for protection. These procedures tend to increase frustration, anxiety, and fear, ultimately escalating the conflict (Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, and Burnett 1992). Over the last thirty years, school systems have become increasingly aware of the negative effects (for example teachers spending more time refereeing than instructing) of student conflicts and have devoted more time and effort to the teaching of productive conflict resolution skills as an alternative to the common procedures used by students to resolve conflict (Maxwell, 1989).

Many schools across North America have introduced programs in conflict resolution. These programs vary in grade level, focus, content, and procedures. Some, usually in elementary school, emphasize the enhancement of self esteem and the development of cooperative skills through games and activities. A second approach, used predominately in elementary and junior high school, trains students to intervene as conflict managers in disputes on the playground or in the school. "Conflict Managers are students selected by their peers and teachers who receive 16 hours of training which emphasizes active listening, teamwork (student mediators work in pairs), and learning the steps of the mediation process" (Roderick, 1988, p. 90). A third approach, common in all three levels of schooling, is providing the student body with instruction and practice in the development of skills and strategies to use in conflictual situations. A fourth type of program, most common in junior high and senior high school, is a process of training staff and students to act as mediators between two students who have been involved in a dispute (Dittrich, 1987). The process of mediation is provided as an alternative method of resolving a dispute and can be defined (cited by Davis and Porter, 1985a, p. 121 from Folberg and Taylor, 1984) as:

> A process by which the participants together with the assistance of a neutral person or persons, systematically isolate disputed issues in order to develop options, consider alternatives, and reach a consensual settlement that will accommodate their needs.

Mediation is a process that emphasizes the participants, own responsibility for making decisions that affect their lives, it is therefore a self-empowering process.

What unites these four distinct approaches (development of self esteem and cooperative skills, conflict mangers, conflict resolution instruction, and mediation) to conflict resolution is a common belief that conflict is a normal, natural, inescapable fact of all human relationships and that schools can enhance students ability to deal with it.

Educators are also recognizing that conflict is crucial to a child's social and moral development (Koch and Miller, 1987). Conflict is the process by which a child bumps up against the needs, wants, and demands of others, and therefore is exposed to the outside world. It is through conflict with peers and the generating of solutions to these conflicts that a child moves from being an individual and learns to adjust to social situations (Piaget, 1972). Conflict also provides the substance for the child's moral development. Moral development occurs as the child makes decisions, resolves conflicts and learns to cope with the tasks of working with others (Kohlberg, 1984). Many schools first attracted by the pedagogical benefits of conflict resolution and the failure of traditional discipline procedures, later recognized the role of conflict in a child's social and moral development. It is this recognition of the role of conflict in a child's social and moral development, as well as the reduction of class interruptions caused by conflict, that has

fostered the growth of conflict resolution programs across North America.

This changing perception of conflict in North American schools can be traced through four main developments in the late 1960's, 1970's and the early 1980's: The Quaker Project on Community Conflict, the introduction of neighborhood justice centres, the establishment of Educators for Social Responsibility, and the founding of NAME- National Association for Mediation in Education (Maxwell, 1989).

The Quaker Project on Community Conflict (QPCC) is a peace and social action program of a tri-state regional body that functions as part of the New York meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Stern, 1978). QPCC has a long history in nonviolent work and conflict resolution training with its roots in the Civil Rights Movement. In the 1960's the QPCC organized and administered community peace squads, developed dialog groups to facilitate discussion between the extreme left and right, and worked with minority groups and police departments to reduce tension between these groups and the police. QPCC has provided alternative to violence programs in state prisons and security at large rock concerts in New York City. With their expertise in non-violent techniques for the prevention and resolution of conflict, QPCC has provided training for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Jewish Defense League, and many gay activists groups (Stern, 1978).

From their work QPCC has developed four basic principles for effective conflict resolution and training To resolve conflict effectively and nonviolently (Stern, 1978, p.7):

- ...participants must improve their communication skills of listening, speaking, and observing.
- ... a supportive environment based upon trust and co-operation must be developed.
- ... the process of conflict resolution must affirm the participants and make them feel good about themselves and others.
- ... the process of conflict resolution must be focused upon problem solving, exploring as many creative solutions as possible.

In the late 1960's individual teachers, weary from continually dealing with competition, conflict, and combat adapted these simple principles of communication, cooperation, affirmation and problem solving and started to teach conflict resolution to the students in their classes. These tended to be isolated, rather than systemic intervention, lacking administrative support.

In 1972 the QPCC initiated the first real system wide intervention under the title of "Children's Project for Friendship", which later became "Children's Creative Response to Conflict- CCRC (Maxwell, 1989). Tired of just "putting out fires" by training adults already involved in nonproductive/violent conflict resolution, the QPCC decided to focus on "fire prevention" by training young children in the techniques of productive/nonviolent conflict resolution (Davis, 1986). The goal of CCRC was that if children learn these skills at a young age, they could grow up to be less violent adults. The

program emphasized the students acquiring an awareness of the complexities of conflict, the abilities to explore and investigate alternatives in conflict situations and the skills required to make appropriate decisions in conflict situations (Putzman, Burger, and Bodenhamer, 1987).

Working with inner city teachers and students in New York City, CCRC developed an approach that used puppetry, games, music, discussion, and role play to improve children's skills in communication, cooperation, and conflict resolution (Roderick, 1988). From this work CCRC published two books of teacher's material for instructing conflict resolution in the classroom entitled: <u>Friendly Classroom for a Friendly Planet</u> and <u>Children's Songs for a Small Planet</u>. The selling of thousands of copies of these books were instrumental in the spreading of the teaching of conflict resolution through out North America. The potential of teaching conflict resolution was further disseminated with the publication of William Kreidler's book <u>Creative Conflict Resolution: More than 200 Activities for Keeping Peace in the Classroom K-6</u>, a compilation of classroom activities developed by himself and others (Roderick, 1988).

QPCC had created the template for conflict resolution programs through out North America. A template to which many projects added the component of mediation. The addition of mediation is linked to the establishment of Neighborhood Justice Centres in the United States.

Three hundred and fifty neighborhood justice centres were introduced under the Carter Administration in the United

States to the deal with the frustrations of a legal system, clogged with many cases that did not require lawyers and judges (Roderick, 1988). Barnes (1991, p.11) summarizes the goals of these centres as:

> resisting the bureaucratization and centralization of the legal system, diverting actions from the courts to alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, preserving community solidarity in the face of massive social change and making human rights effective.

Neighborhood justice centres were designed to be the "court of first resort" (Davis and Porter, 1985b, p. 23), where members of the community could meet to resolve their problems, using mediation as an alternative to formal litigation (Maxwell, 1989). "Relying on a synthesis of skills borrowed from labour mediation field and community empowerment programs, these centres trained community members to mediate disputes ranging from small-scale interpersonal conflicts to community wide disturbances" (Davis, 1986, P. 287).

Some neighborhood justice centres did not restrict their mandate to the resolution of cases referred from the formal justice system. rather, theses centres focused on community empowerment through the building of skills of the community members. These centres assisted community members in the development of skills to promote the program, do the case work leading up to a mediation, perform the mediation, provide the follow up, train more mediators, and ultimately

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manage and evaluate the program (Davis and Porter, 1985b). This focus on community education and development lead to the formation of smaller units of the neighborhood justice centres- community mediation centres. In some jurisdictions the neighborhood justice centres, enticed by the intriguing possibilities of introducing conflict resolution to young people through the provision of training in the schools (Davis, 1986) and the local schools boards attracted by the potential enhancement of the learning environment (Dittrich, 1987) the community mediation centres took the form of collaborative efforts between the neighborhood justice centres and the local school boards. Helena Davis, former director with the San Francisco Community Board Program describes this relationship (Cheatam, 1988, p. 25):

> Schools are natural environments for teaching these skills, because first of all, attitudes about conflict are polarized in school settings. Either you're a good kid or a bad kid. So there's lots of room to develop an alternative view. Secondly, kids learn skills faster than adults. they learn how to build bridges so they can get along in the world, and sometimes they even take the skills home and mediate family conflicts once they know how. Thirdly, schools are conduits. Kids are already assembled there. And finally, kids need safe learning environments, places free of violence and fear, places where conflict is considered a natural phenomenon but where there exits a model for creative resolution.

Three of the oldest and most influential of these collaborations are the: the Community Boards of San Francisco, Hawaiian

School Mediation Alliance, and Project SMART in New York City.

The Community Board Centre for Policy and Training in San Francisco (now referred to as the Community Board Program) was founded by Ray Shonholtz, a professor of law at the University of San Francisco (Maxwell, 1989), and now operates in over twenty two neighborhoods (Davis and Porter, 1985a). In keeping with the Community Board focus of community education and development, it appeared a logical step to establish conflict resolution programs for schools, as schools, are most often the centre of community activity, especially for the children (Davis, 1986). In 1982, funded by the Community Board Program, working within schools with the greatest administrative support, various conflict resolution programs were initiated with the goal of building self sustaining programs within the school. This collaboration lead to the development of three specific components: a conflict resolution course for high schools, a classroom meeting program for elementary schools, and a conflict managers program for elementary and junior high schools (Davis and Porter, 1985b).

It is the conflict managers program which has been most often replicated or adapted in elementary and junior high schools across North America. The conflict managers program is built through the training of staff and students to manage conflict with the goal of these trained and experience staff and students becoming the trainers of other staff and students. After 15 hours of training, which includes the development of

communications skills, problem solving, and conflict resolution strategies, students working in pairs patrol the school yard, lunch room, and hallways assisting peers in resolving conflict (Davis, 1986). This process of assisting is directed by three guidelines (Davis and Porter, 1985a, p. 24):

> 1) Conflict managers must not thrust themselves into a dispute. Talking to the conflict managers is the students' choice. If the students decide to accept help from the conflict manager, they must agree to work hard to solve the problem.
> 2) Conflict managers are helpers, not police. If there is physical fighting , conflict managers do not get involved.
> 3) The conflict manager's job is not to solve the problems for other students but to help other students think of ways to solve problems for themselves.

If the disputants agree to resolve the conflict, the process of problem solving is guided by the following agreement- the parties agree to: resolve the dispute, no name calling, no interrupting and telling the truth (Davis and Porter, 1985a).

As well as providing a structure and process for the establishment and operation of a conflict resolution program within a school, the Community Board Program has contributed a well articulated philosophy of self-sufficiency and empowerment through education and training. The role of the "outside" agency, or collaborator, should be the development and empowerment of the staff and students of the school, so they will be able to train, organize, operate, and evaluate their own programs (Davis and Porter, 1985b).

One of the oldest school based mediation programs was initiated in 1981 through a collaborative effort between the University of Hawaii, the Honolulu neighborhood justice centres and local school boards. This initiative has become known as the Hawaii School Mediation Alliance linking seven islands (Davis, 1986). Mediation was seen as a viable alternative to address the racial and cultural tension and violence that was affecting Hawaiian high schools (Davis and Porter, 1985a). Through the successful (success being defined as a general reduction in ethnic tension, fighting, and suspension as noted by Porter and Davis 1985a and 1985b) implementation of mediation first in a pilot high school and later in 19 other high schools, the project constructed the most complete set of principles for a school based mediation program (Davis and Porter, 1985a). These principles were articulated by Mel Ezer, a professor at the University of Hawaii, in the Training Manual for School Based Mediation. "The manual explains mediation, outlines the program, describes the process, contains mediation skill exercises and simulations, and offers practice in communicating, asking questions and writing agreements" (Porter and Davis, 1985a, p. 22). This manual has been instrumental in the development of school based mediation programs across North America.

In 1983 Project SMART (School Mediators' Alternative Resolution Team) was established by the VSA (Victim Service Agency) with funding from the New City Board of Education, and the New York City Youth Bureau. The VSA originally

started in 1978 with the purpose of providing assistance to victims of crime and moved into the field of community dispute resolution through mediation in 1981. The VSA, New York's largest mediation centre, interest in school based mediation stemmed from its involvement in the delivery of other conflict resolution programs to schools and its participation in the Mayor's Interagency Task Force on School Safety. Mediation was considered a viable means of addressing the significant problems of violence, crime, vandalism, dropouts, and truancy facing New York City schools (Davis and Porter, 1985a). Piloted in one high school, now operating in 12 high schools, mediation has become the primary administrative response to serious intra-student conflict (Porter and Davis, 1985b).

From its conception, Project SMART thoroughly documented every aspect of the program, analyzing and summarizing each intervention and its results. It is from this documentation that the project provides such results as a reduction in suspensions for fighting from 63 in 1982-83 to 18 in 1984-85 (Davis, 1986), 93 Of 116 mediations in the first year resulted in successful agreement (Koch, 1988), and improved self esteem of mediators (Davis and Porter, 1985b), and testimonials such as (Porter and Davis, 1985a):

> All I ever wanted to do was fight. If someone said something to me I didn't like, I didn't think about talking. I just thought about fighting. I came into a mediation session as a disputant with four other girls on the other side. I thought , 'who needs this? What am I

doing here? I just want to punch these girls out.' I figured that the mediator would tell me what I was going to have to do. But she didn't. Instead she drew me out, listened to me. It felt so good to let it all out; then I wasn't angry anymore. I thought, 'Hey, if this can work for me, I want to learn how to do it.' After my training, the atmosphere around me changed. Mediation pulled me out of the hole that I was in; I'm a better person. It's helpful with my family and my friends. It even helps me walking down the street. Imagine me up here speaking before all of you! My mother wants to become a mediator. She says, 'Elizabeth, if mediation can make you so good, I want it too! I say 'Mom, I can train you to be a mediator'

It is through the provision of such results and testimonials that Project SMART has been influential in the spreading of mediation programs through out North America.

The ideals of the QPCC, the success of community dispute resolution centres, and the school specific models provided by the Community Board Program of San Francisco, the Hawaiian School Mediation Alliance, and Project SMART in New York have contributed significantly to the notion that school-based conflict resolution program could be effective (Cheatam, 1988; Roderick, 1988). During the 1980's and 1990's this notion lead to a more concerted, conscious, and coordinated effort to teach conflict resolution to school children of all ages (Davis, 1986).

Through the late 1970's and early 1980's, as the teaching of children the skills of conflict resolution became more deliberate and directed, a separate but related movement was emerging within the expanding field of conflict resolution. This

movement comprised university professors, school teachers, and parents who were "... looking for ways to prevent nuclear war through education..." (Davis, 1986, p.287). The movement was formalized, in 1981, with the formation of Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR), an international organization composed of local chapters, whose purpose was to "...inform young people about the threat of nuclear war and the importance of global interdependence..." (Davis, 1986, p.287). Directed by the teaching adage of "Think globally and act locally", ESR, seeing an intimate relationship between their concerns for world peace and the developing of conflict resolution skills in children, threw their energy and influence into the teaching of conflict resolution skills in schools (Roderick, 1988).

The impact of this informal union was both specific and general. Specifically, the ESR injected considerable resources into the much needed area of teacher development and training (Davis, 1986). Teachers who wished to teach conflict resolution skills and/or issues of world peace were provided access to training and materials. Generally, ESR involvement assisted in creating of a climate that was supportive of the concept of teaching conflict resolution skills in schools (Maxwell, 1989).

The access to training and creation of an environment supportive of the concept led to the development of hybrid programs combining the skills of conflict resolution and peacemaking. One example is the Model Peace Education

program of District 15 in Brooklyn which included units on communication skills, cooperative learning, anger management, and conflict resolution skills, as well as peacemaking, preventing prejudice and celebrating differences, and equality (Roderick, 1988).

A fourth factor that contributed significantly to the expansion of school based conflict resolution programs was the establishment of The National Association for Mediation in Education (NAME). In August of 1984, individuals affiliated with various school based programs from 15 States meet in Craigville Beach, Massachusetts to share similarities and differences of their programs (Davis and Porter, 1985a) and from this workshop developed NAME. Its founding was significant as it brought together key players involved in school based conflict resolution, it recognized the role schools could play in the field of conflict resolution and it provided a recognition of school based mediation and conflict resolution as a field unto itself (Maxwell, 1989). From an initial membership of 40 in 1984, it grew to over 500 members world wide in 1987 (Davis and Porter, 1985a). Today NAME acts as a clearing house and publisher of material related to school based conflict resolution and a provider of training to educators interested in the topics of mediation and conflict resolution.

School based conflict resolution programs have been part of a significant societal trend toward the usage of alternative methods of dispute resolution (Koch, 1986). The courts, clogged with more cases than they can handle, are actively pursuing

alternatives to formal court proceedings such as pre-sentence mediation and work fine programs. Communities and members of the communities have turned inward to resolve disputes amongst themselves through community dispute resolution centres. Even some corporations have entertained alternative methods, other than expensive court proceedings, to resolve environmental issues or employee dismissal questions. Schools, stressed by budget cuts, surrounded by an increasing conflictual and violent society, have turned to alternative conflict resolution techniques as a means of creating a peaceful school community- safe for all students and staff.

Over the past twenty years conflict resolution programs, of one form or another, have become firmly established in schools across North America. For the first fifteen years the programs for the most part have been stand alone projects, such as staff or peer mediation programs, conflict managers, and or conflict resolution training for the staff and students. But in the last five years, guided by research on change in schools and as the overall effectiveness of stand alone projects is being questioned, there has been shift to including these initiatives into plans that attempt to transform the culture of the school (Townley, 1995).

While most programs attempt to steer students away from violence and other inappropriate techniques of conflict resolution through isolated programs (DeJong, 1994a), initiatives to transform the culture of a school "try to change the total school environment, to create a safe community that

lives by a credo of nonviolence" (DeJong, 1994b, p. 8). As Webster (1993) notes attempts to reduce violence must do more than teach individuals how to cope in a violent and often dysfunctional environment. A broad-based effort at changing social norms that sustain violent behaviour must involve the teaching of problem solving, communication, and prosocial conflict resolution skills as well as the modeling and transmission of positive social values. One such program is Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP). This school based conflict resolution and mediation program, initiated in 1985, sponsored jointly by the New York City Public Schools and Educators for Social Responsibility now has four sites across the United States and involves over 4000 teachers and 120,000 students (DeJong, 1994b).

What distinguishes RCCP from the variety of school-based programs that have emerged in the last 25 years is its focus on creating change in the school environment. Its goal is to create an environment where students are "encouraged to experiment with peaceful ways of resolving conflict" (DeJong, 1994b, p. 9). To this end RCCP has developed an extensive program which includes (1) teacher training, (2) curriculum for elementary, secondary, and special education, (3) student led mediation process, and (4) a parent education program (DeJong, 1994b).

The teacher training includes the usual instruction in the pedagogy of conflict resolution skills (active listening, assertiveness, cooperation, and negotiation), but the RCCP training goes a step further to include an alternative classroom

management style (which involve the sharing of control for what happens in the classroom with students) and instruction techniques, role play, discussion groups, brainstorming, experiential learning, and cooperative learning strategies (DeJong, 1994b).

While the content of the RCCP curriculum (peace education, negotiation, mediation, and other methods of conflict resolution) is not unique, it is the implementation that separates if from other conflict resolution programs. Most important in the implementation of the curriculum is the fostering of a classroom climate that affirms and respects students, while supporting and encouraging the use of prosocial conflict resolution techniques. These attitudes are created through a curriculum that encourages a high degree of student participation and the teacher sharing control with the students in the implementation of the curriculum (DeJong, 1994b).

The third component is a student led mediation program that "... provides strong peer models for nonviolent conflict resolution and reinforces students' emerging skills in working out their own problems" (DeJong, 1994b, p. 11). Mediation is used in concert with a series of strict sanctions against fighting and other violent acts (DeJong, 1994b).

The fourth, and as RCCP develops its top priority, is parent education. The program of parent education (topics include intergroup relations, family communications, and conflict resolution) involves the training of 2 or 3 parent leaders in each school who are responsible to train other parents in the

community. To date nearly a thousand parents have received training. Parent education is seen as the first step in moving from "peaceable schools" to "peaceable neighborhoods (DeJong, 1994b).

Several outside evaluations of the RCCP program have stated:

- teachers report a decrease in name calling and violence
- RCCP students learn the key concepts of conflict resolution
- in hypothetical conflicts RCCP students are able to apply prosocial conflict resolution skills
- RCCP students have reported having fewer fights than a matched control group
- teachers report they are more willing to let students take responsibility in resolving their own conflicts
- teachers report an improved understanding of the students' needs (DeJong, 1994b).

Evaluation of school based conflict resolution programs:

The failure of the traditional discipline procedures, detention, suspension and expulsion, have led many schools to search for new ways to teach students how to channel their anger and resolve conflict through constructive non-violent responses. This search for an alternative method for modifying student behaviour has brought schools across North America to the process of mediation. Mediation provided a non-judgmental, confidential, and student empowering technique that could be easily learned and applied by students of all ages.

Also the principles of mediation could be readily adapted to fit the specific circumstances of the school. Most often these adaptations (either school wide through classroom instruction or a pull out training of selected students) have taken on the form of peer mediation. As of April 1992, NAME reports approximately 2000 peer mediation programs operating in North American schools (Harper, 1993).

This proliferation of peer mediation programs raises the question: "What have been the results of all these programs?" This is a rather difficult question to respond to as most of the research done within these programs has focused on the what and the how of establishing a program, while most of the evaluations of these programs have been used to inform policy makers and influence funders (Davis and Porter, 1985). Found within much of this research and evaluation are claims that the school mediation program has made dramatic changes in the lives of the students and the climate of the school (Lam, 1989). But most of these studies would not meet the research standards of methodological rigor. Problems with this research are a lack of control groups (and there are a number of complications when control groups have been used), reliable tested measurement instruments, and an over reliance on invalidated (collected for the purposes of program evaluation rather research) data (Lam, 1989; Johnson and Johnson, 1991).

Three key studies will be reviewed in this chapter: i) The impact of conflict resolution programs on schools: a review and synthesis of the evidence, ii) School conflict management

demonstration project, and iii) Teaching students to be peacemakers.

i) The impact of conflict resolution programs on schools: a synthesis of the evidence- NAME's flagship study, "The impact of conflict resolution programs on schools: a review and synthesis of the evidence" by Dr. Julie Lam (1989) attempts to synthesize much of this questionable data. The purpose of this report was to "... summarize the existing research on school-based mediation or conflict resolution programs in such a way to make it accessible to the community practitioners and school administrators who are interested in starting similar programs in their schools" (Lam, 1989). The study examined a wide range of data, varying from reasonably scientific research to year end reports detailing the activities of the program. The report's examination of 14 programs may be summarized in 6 broad categories: school description, program description, content and training, evaluation goals, process of measurement, and outcomes.

School description: The 14 programs reviewed consisted of 30 elementary schools, 12 middle/junior high schools, 12 high schools, and 1 juvenile corrections facility. School populations varied from fewer than 300 students of over 3000 students. Sites included a mix of rural, urban, and metropolitan. Thirteen of the programs examined were in the US, while one report was from Canada. Most of the schools within the study described their populations as racial mixed. Several of the schools developed mediation programs as a response to the schools

history of violence, truancy, vandalism, and general academic malaise.

Program description: For the most part the 13 programs examined could be best described as peer mediation projects. The other project is an evaluation of the effects of a conflict resolution curriculum in an elementary school. All 13 of the peer mediation projects included some form of pre-training which varied from 12 to 20 hours with a series of "refresher" sessions. Student participation was determined by peer nomination (2 projects), teacher nomination (2 projects), self nomination (1 project), and selection by a committee composed of administration, teachers, and students (1 project). The other projects did not describe their process of student selection. Composition of the groups attempted to balance male and female participation. Also attempts were made to make the group of peer mediators reflect the ethnic mix found within the participating school. Two projects went to great lengths to include marginalized students. Most projects focused on student disputes with other students, while 3 projects include teacher/student disputes.

Content and training: Each of the 13 peer mediation projects developed similar curriculum and training plans for students and teachers. The curricula for the most part focused on the skills of mediation and the role of the mediator within the school. The training varied from lessons integrated into the core curriculum taught by the classroom teacher to 3 day outside of school workshops led by conflict resolution trainers

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from outside the school. What ever the location the training tended to include group discussion, role play, and skill practice. The curriculum of the Peacemakers Education Project differed in that it provided a broad training in the area of conflict resolution for an entire class.

Evaluation goals: The specific evaluation goals of each project varied widely, but the goals may be placed into 4 categories. The first category would be assessing the impact of the program on the general school climate. Included in this category would be specific topics such as student attitude toward the school, student attachment to the school, incidence of fighting and violence, and the rate of suspension and expulsion. The second category would be assessing the impact of the training upon the mediators, their attitudes toward conflict, self-esteem, and skill development. Overall operation of the project could be seen as a third category. This included the number of mediations, success rate of the mediations, disputant satisfaction with the process, and the amount of time allotted to the project. The final category is that of attempting to assess the impact of the project on teachers' attitudes toward conflict.

Processes of measurement: As project evaluation goals varied so did the processes of measurement. The four most common processes were: questionnaires, observations and interviews, surveys, and recording the data related to the management of the peer mediation project. Questionnaires were used to assess: students' attitudes toward conflict (pre-

training and post-training), self esteem of the mediators, and disputant satisfaction with mediation. Many of the projects used interviews to obtain student, teacher, administration, and parent reactions and observations about the project. To assess the climate of the school and the attitudes of the staff and the students school wide surveys were administered. In a few cases project managers record the number of disputes that came to mediation, the cause of the dispute, the outcome of the mediation, and the disputants' satisfaction with the process. A couple of projects used student attendance, discipline records and student achievement as an indicator of the impact of the project.

Outcomes: Generally, the qualitative data obtained through interviews and observation tended to make stronger arguments about the positive impact of the program than did the quantitative data, derived through surveys and questionnaires. Keeping this in mind, here are some of the findings as summarized by Lam (1989):

- none of the studies reported any negative effects from the implementation of the mediation program
- mediation programs are perceived as highly successful (58-93%), as measured by the number of conflicts that end in an agreement that hold up over a specific period of time
- the program appears to have reduced the violence and fighting within some of the school

- teachers, in some of the schools, have reported devoting more time to instruction and less time to resolving student disputes

- the self image, sensitivity to others, and problem solving skills of the mediators were enhanced in seven of the programs

- communication skills of mediators were minimally enhanced by their participation in the program

- in the majority of the of the studies student mediators' attitude toward the school, their sense of school attachment and commitment were not affected by participation in the program

- in general there is little evidence that the program impact positively upon the school climate

But due to the methodological problems cited earlier, Lam describes these findings as "not conclusive" (1989, p. 38) and recommends further systematic study which would include the use of control groups, random assignment to the groups, and both the use of qualitative and quantitative methods.

ii) **School conflict management demonstration project-** In August 1990 a second major study on the effectiveness of teaching conflict resolution within schools was undertaken by the Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management when the Commission launched a three year School Conflict Management Demonstration Project. This project, one of the largest ever undertaken, included over 30 schools (elementary, junior high/middle schools and high

schools) in rural, suburban, and urban communities. The goal of the study was: "...to help assess the impact of conflict resolution programs" (Wheeler, Stephens, Kaufman, and Carlson, 1996).

The programs within the study have taken a variety of approaches in the teaching of conflict management skills. The nature of the program was determined by the school as the Commission directed neither the implementation nor the content of the program (Kaufman, 1991). The programs can be classified into three approaches: mediation, classroom, and comprehensive.

The mediation approach took on three forms. The first form student peer mediation uses (Wheeler, Stephens, Kaufman, and Carlson, 1996, p. 8):

> ...trained students to guide disputing students through the mediation process. Typically, 10-20 students per school are trained in mediation and are commonly referred to as mediators, conflict managers, or fuss busters. Depending on the age of the students, mediations are either conducted in a 'mediation room' or take place at the time of the dispute, e.g. on the playground, in the lunchroom or in the hallway.

Disputes resolved include rumours, misunderstandings, bullying, and fighting.

The second form is teacher-staff-administrator-parent mediations which use trained adult mediators to resolve disputes amongst adults and students within the school and community. This form of program resolved disputes in regards

to personality clashes, school and teacher disciplinary actions, and truancy (Wheeler, Stephens, Kaufman, and Carlson, 1996).

Often an outgrowth of the two preceding forms of mediation is student-teacher mediation programs. Here mediations between student and teacher attempt to resolve issues related to student behaviour, respect, and personality (Wheeler, Stephens, Kaufman, and Carlson, 1996).

The second approach was not limited to a select group of trained mediators but attempted to give all students an opportunity to learn and practice the skills and strategies of effective conflict resolution. These skills and strategies were either infused into existing curricula or taught in separate conflict management courses. In some cases teachers modeled the skills and strategies by incorporating the principles of effective conflict resolution in their classroom management style (Wheeler, Stephens, Kaufman, and Carlson, 1996).

The third approach used to address the issue of conflict resolution was comprehensive in nature including both mediation and classroom instruction. As well this approach drew upon complementary programs such as drug-free initiatives, multi-cultural education, anger management, and violence prevention (Wheeler, Stephens, Kaufman, and Carlson, 1996).

Training for adults and students ranged from 6 to 40 hours spread out over weekdays and weekends, with most schools having 16- 25 hours of training in traditional conflict resolution

topics: listening skills, mediation, negotiation, and cooperation (Kaufman, 1991).

The three year study, using an independent evaluator, collected information from student questionnaires, disciplinary reports, and interviews with students, teachers, counselors, principals, superintendents, and parents. Qualitative data was collected on disciplinary actions, results of mediations, and student attitudes and behaviours. Collecting the data over a three year period allows an opportunity to study the effects of the conflict resolution program over time in one school. As well similar information was gathered from several other schools without conflict management programs to use for comparison purposes.

When presenting their findings the authors of The Final Report of the School Conflict Management Demonstration Project Report (Wheeler, Stephens, Kaufman, and Carlson, 1996) provide the following caveat: "Due to the uniqueness of individual schools and the variety of approaches used in implementing conflict resolution programs, it is not possible to report comprehensive and conclusive trends that apply to all schools". With this caveat in mind here is a brief summary of the Report's findings.

Generally, the implementation of a conflict resolution program postively affects students' attitude toward conflict, their understanding of non-violent problem solving techniques, and their communication skills. In comparing a suburban K-8 school with a conflict resolution program with a similar

suburban school without any conflict resolution program, the authors found that the students in the school with the conflict resolution program:

- were more willing to stop a fight
- were less likely to think people deserve to be beaten up
- were more willing to stop a friend from fighting
- gained an increased confidence in their ability to solve their ownproblems and to help others with their problems (Wheeler,Stephens, Kaufman, and Carlson, 1996)

In assessing the effects of a conflict resolution program on the disciplinary action within a school the authors stated that several schools had a reduction in disciplinary actions. The report highlights one high school whose disciplinary action reduced from 500 in 1990 to 325 in 1992. The authors also note a corresponding increase in the number of disputes resolved through student peer mediation. In comparing similar middle schools, one with a conflict resolution program and one without, the report states that the middle school with a conflict resolution program had a 50% decrease in suspensions in the first year of the project and overall the three most common causes of suspension, fighting, unruliness, and truancy, all decreased over the three years. While the school without a program experienced higher and steadily increasing rates of suspension. This example and similar data lead the authors to conclude that several of the schools had positive changes in

their school climate (Wheeler, Stephens, Kaufman, and Carlson, 1996).

In assessing the implementation of the conflict resolution programs the authors make five salient points:

- "solid results' take time and conflict resolution programs do not provide a 'quick fix'

- conflict management programs are not a 'cure all'

- a variety of factors influence school climate and conflict resolution may be an important tool in creating a positive school climate

- for any positive effects to be felt within the school a sincere commitment on part of the students, staff, and administration is required

- any gains garnered through the implementation of a conflict resolution program will be lost if programs are not continually nurtured and sustained (Wheeler, Stephens, Kaufman, and Carlson, 1996)

. Generally, the report concludes that a conflict resolution program, that teaches young people prosocial methods for resolving conflict, provides an opportunity to practice these methods, and has teachers who model these methods, has the potential to impact positively upon the attitudes and behaviours of students and the climate of the schools they attend.

iii) **Teaching students to be peacemakers-** A third, smaller but more systematic study often cited in the literature to illustrate the positive effects of teaching conflict resolution

within schools is that of Johnson and Johnson (1992). The study took place in a white middle class school in suburban Minneapolis. The study included four stages. The first stage being the collection of base line data on the type and frequency of conflicts that took place prior to the experiment. Students and teachers were asked to document conflicts in which they were involved. The second stage was the training which included an introduction to conflict training, negotiation skills training, mediation skills training, and refresher lessons that took place through out the year. The third stage was the implementation of the program which entailed the classroom teacher assigning two students to act as conflict managers for the day. These conflict managers would patrol the playground, hallways, and lunch room so as to mediate any conflicts that might occur. The fourth stage was to measure changes in student attitudes and behaviours Johnson and Johnson, 1992).

The training was provided to all in the experimental group, which was composed of 106 students in grades 3 to 6. Also two comparison groups, similar in ages to the experimental group, (n=25 and n=30) were randomly selected (Johnson and Johnson, 1992).

The goals of the study were to assess: the nature and frequency of conflicts, the strategies used by students to resolve conflict, and the impact of the training on the students ability to resolve their own conflicts (Johnson and Johnson, 1992).

Data was collected with four tools. A brief form was completed by students whenever they were involved in a conflict. As well teachers kept daily log books recording conflicts which students brought to them to resolve and observations of incidences where students used the skills of negotiation or mediation to resolve a dispute. The third tool was two hypothetical conflict scenarios. Six months after the training two randomly selected groups of students, one who did and one who did not receive the training, were asked to respond to these scenarios. Student response were classified by the strategy students used to resolve the conflict. The fourth method was to video tape conflict resolution simulations. Again six months after the training randomly selected groups (trained and untrained) were asked to act out how they would resolve a specific conflict. The video conflict enactments were assessed for the students' ability to apply the steps of negotiation (Johnson and Johnson, 1992).

The authors (1992) detail six specific outcomes of the study:

- the most common forms of conflict in order of frequency are put downs, playground disputes, access/ownership, physical fights, academic issues, and turn taking

- students' spontaneous use of negotiation and mediation skills were reported by students, teachers, and parents

- the frequency of student conflicts referred to a teacher for resolution reduced by 80%

- in the scenario response untrained students were twice as likely to go to the teacher to help resolve the conflict

- in the scenario response only trained students used negotiation skills to resolve the conflict

- in the videotaped conflict resolution simulations trained students used the skills of negotiations more often

These outcomes lead Johnson and Johnson (1992) to conclude:

- "...that all students need to be trained in how to manage conflict constructively, for they do not seem to be taught negotiation procedures and skills in the home or the community at large" (p. 96)

- that when students are trained "...the student-student conflicts that did occur were by and large managed by the students themselves without the involvement of an adult" (p. 96)

- "...that students generalized their conflict resolution training by spontaneously applying the negotiation and mediation procedures and skills to situations outside of the class" (p. 97)

- that conflict resolution training "can be successful in teaching students how to negotiate and mediate successfully" (p. 98)

Upon replicating similar studies in urban and suburban schools (grades 1-9) Johnson and Johnson (1995) have derived similar results. Trained students are more likely to choose a win-win or problem solving approach to conflict resolution, while untrained virtually never adopt this approach. Relationships between trained students become more self regulating, as they become more dependent on their

competencies to resolve conflicts and less dependent upon teacher interventions to resolve their conflicts.

As the research becomes more systematic and scientific, there appears to be a growing body of quantitative data which is supportive of the earlier anecdotal and qualitative evidence. These data, qualitative and quantitative, appear to be supportive of the potential of teaching conflict resolution within schools and this potential is best reached when:

- it is part of a strategy to change the total school environment
- it involves all the students, teachers, administration as well as parents
- all students are trained in the skills of conflict resolution (negotiation or mediation)
- students are given real and meaningful opportunities to apply their training
- teachers model these skills in their day-to-day operation of their classrooms

Character Education:

Conflict resolution programs may be new, but the role of the school in shaping the values, attitudes, and behaviours of the students is as old as school itself. A major reoccurring movement within education that has attempted to modify the way students think and behave has been described as character education. Character education has taken many forms over the past 95 years, ranging from the "Children's Morality Code" emphasizing the "Ten Laws of Right Living", through

values clarification of the 1960's (a seven step process by which individuals may discover their values) to the contemporary approaches of cooperative learning (predicated on the students assuming responsibility for their own learning) and service learning, which attempts to shape the character of the students through work in the community (Lemming, 1993). Through this evolution of character education an extensive body of evaluative research has been developed, that can be utilized to inform practice and assist in the development and implementation of programs designed to impact upon the values, attitudes, and ultimately the behaviour of students. From this body conflict resolution program may draw from the following learnings (Lemming, 1993):

- The didactic approach alone- pledges and codes, describing virtuous behaviour- and teachers lecturing on the topic will likely have little lasting effect on student behaviour.

- Approaches that emphasize moral reasoning and/or values clarification may effect the capacity of students to reason about questions of moral conduct with little impact upon student behaviour.

- Humanistic strategies focusing on the development of individual skills (problem solving and decision making) may increase the knowledge students have about a certain topic, but are less than successful in changing attitudes and corresponding behaviours.

- Peer-centred/social influence programs appear to have a short term effects in altering student behaviour.
- Students develop within a web or culture and the nature of this culture has a significant impact upon the values, attitudes, and behaviours of students.
- Programs which have utilized a school culture organization have had a significant impact on the development of prosocial values, attitudes, and behaviours.
- The process of altering the culture of a school is a long and arduous task.

The literature evaluating character education indicates that there is real potential in altering the behaviour of students through a school culture approach. In implementing this type of approach Brooks and Kann (1993) provide these guidelines:

- Instruction as to the purpose of and protocol for the expected behaviour is required. This instruction should be supported with "teacher friendly" materials, while allowing teachers a wide degree of autonomy in the teaching of the content.
- The instruction should link the values, attitudes, and language used to express these values and attitudes with student conduct.
- The desired values should be reflected in the policies, procedures, and processes of decision making within the school.

- Student involvement early on in the process of organization, design, implementation, and evaluation, builds student ownership and enhances the impact of the program. The Social Science Education Consortium study concluded that teaching of skills without an opportunity to apply these skills through meaningful decision making had little effect on the students' daily lives (Maxwell, 1989).

- Programs of this nature are usually most effective when parental involvement is regular and routine.

School based violence prevention programs:

Another source of research upon which to develop a school based conflict resolution program is the current violence prevention movement in the United States. Even though there is little evidence to support the overall effectiveness (Webster, 1993; Wilson and Brewer, 1991; Tolan and Guerra, 1995; Schreiber-Dill and Haberman, 1995), significant learning's can be derived which may be used to direct the development of a school based conflict resolution program. Curwin (1995) lists the following as basic elements required if a school based program is to be effective:

The teaching of techniques (ie: negotiation, mediation, and anger management) to prevent and/or manage conflictual or violent episodes. After the students have been taught the techniques, the development of decision making skills is necessary to transfer the techniques to real life situations.

The staff developing and modeling the skills necessary to deal constructively with conflictual situations. The staff modeling these skills, choices, and, behaviours with and in front of students and colleagues. Schreiber-Dill and Haberman (1995, p. 70) describe this as: "A response that models respect for the offender, while critically examining his or her behaviour. The response must demonstrates that the teacher values feelings and differentiates between emotion and reasoned response."

Teachers must become conscious that every action they take has a double nature (Perkins, 1995)- an overt message related to content, curriculum, and control of the classroom, as well as a covert message which reflects the values, attitudes, and expectations of the teacher. It is through these covert messages that students unconsciously absorb the values and attitudes of the teacher and develop their behaviours for interacting with each other (Williams, 1993).

School based programs should involve as many students as possible in the process. Training should not be limited to students who are identified as being involved in violent acts, nor should the training be limited to students who have the characteristics that would make them a good peer mediator or conflict manager.

School based programs must be "thoroughly grounded in values" (Curwin, 1995, P. 74). The development of a set of school wide values supportive of conflict resolution is more

important than the implementation of any specific component of the program.

School discipline procedures must be reflective of the values of conflict resolution. Detention, suspension, and expulsion model for the students retribution as opposed to resolution. Such procedures seldom change student behaviour because "...fear of reprisal seldom leads to compliance" (Schreiber-Dill and Haberman, 1995, p. 70).

In relation to school violence prevention programs Schrieber-Dill and Haberman (1995) suggest:

Limiting the use of overly directive teaching methodologies (ie: lecturing, note taking, checking assignments) as these teacher centred techniques often lead the teacher to punish students for non-compliance, while reducing the opportunity for the teacher to model prosocial behaviours through conversations with individuals or small groups. It is during these conversations that students may have the opportunity to examine their behaviour, discuss the consequences of their behaviour, and practice the skills of decision making in choosing the appropriate behaviour.

Instruction in prosocial skills, modeling of these skills, and the adoption of student centred teaching techniques should be focused on increasing the capacity of students for moral reasoning and empathetic decision making.

In implementing the above guidelines and suggestions for a school based conflict resolution program, schools must not be unrealistic in the role school plays in the lives of the students

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(Johnson and Johnson, 1995; Linquist and Molar, 1995), and they should focus on in-school factors that lead to conflictual and violent situations. Specifically, schools could work toward:

Reducing the fear, anxiety, and penalty of academic failure. Students who do not reach the expectations of the school and/or parents are made to feel like failures. So in an attempt to secure some self-esteem and curry favour with their peers, students who fail academically may revert to anti-social behaviour (Brendtro and Long, 1995; Linquist and Molar, 1995).

Building of social bonds within the school (Brendtro and Long, 1995), while reducing the feelings of alienation (Johnson and Johnson, 1995). Wehlage, Rutter, Smith, Lesko, and Fernandez (1989) describe this social bond as a social psychological state in which the student is attached, committed, involved, and has a belief in the values, attitudes, and norms of the school. The authors state that the developing of social bonds is a principal factor in students experiencing personal success and choosing to stay in school. If unable to develop a sense of belonging in the school or to the school, alienated youth gravitate to others like themselves, and develop a sense of belonging to this group by acting out anti-social behaviours that distinguish themselves from the rest of the student body and the school (Fischer, 1990).

Developing the overall psychological health, self-esteem and prosocial skills of all students should be a focus of the school. Children with high levels of psychological pathology are more

likely to be conflictual and violent (Johnson and Johnson, 1995).

A final point to be made about conflict and violence in schools and society in general is the need to foster an awareness that children are "...more likely to be victims than the perpetrators of violence..." (Linquist and Molnar, 1995, p. 50). This knowledge and corresponding change in attitudes could hopefully replace the present "bootcamp mentality" and the rhetoric of moral condemnation with a preventative "public health approach" (Brendtro and Long, 1995, p.52). Such an approach would attempt to clarify the origins of conflict/violence and to search out logical routes for rational intervention (Krisberg and Austin, 1993).

Summary of research and evaluations:

To summarize the research, school based conflict resolution programs which may be effective in changing the attitudes, values, and behaviours of students include:

A training component, that is broad based including as many of the staff and students as possible seems to be most effective. This training focuses not only on the development of prosocial skills, but also the development of problem solving and decision making skills as well as attempting to increase the participants' capacity for moral reasoning and empathy in decision making.

An exemplar component in which the school and the teachers model the values, attitudes, and expected behaviours of conflict resolution is important. Through the modeling

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process staff and students are able to recognize the appropriate and successful application of conflict resolution skills in real life situations. The concept of modeling extends to the establishment of a school discipline policy that is built upon the values of resolution as opposed to retribution, and the to a system of decision making that recognizes the value of staff, students, and parents through meaningful participation.

A classroom management component, that recognizes the underlying causes of students' conflictual behaviour and is supportive in assisting students in dealing with these causes allows for students to develop. Through this supportive process the teacher models the desired responses to conflict and builds a bond with the student who is experiencing the difficulty.

A pedagogical component, that emphasizes the application of teaching strategies which: share decision making between teacher and student (ie: cooperative learning, resource based learning) and allow the teacher time to be involved in positive interactions with the students reduce the amount of time a teacher spends enforcing rules and resolving conflict.

Effective school based programs recognize that the values and attitudes of students are acquired through a process of social learning and that it is these values and attitudes which are the basis for student behaviour.

The intended outcome of the implementation of the above components is the creation of a total school culture which encourages and rewards all members of the school community to apply the constructive conflict resolution skills and

strategies which they have learned. This new alternative culture of conflict resolution will enculturate the staff and students into the use of these skills and strategies, while, hopefully, enhancing their capacities for moral reasoning and empathy in decision making. Through the process of enculturation individuals will acquire certain dispositions. Perkins (1993) explains disposition this way: "If you have a disposition to behave in a certain way, you have attitudes, understandings, and motivations that nudge you to behave in a certain way" (p. 98). Dispositions have a powerful effect on how individuals behave. For example it is a set of certain dispositions that lead an individual who has lost a significant amount of weight through dieting, to return to their previous eating habits and regain the weight. The weight loss was due to a temporary change in behaviour, but in the long term the old established habits return because the dispositions were not effected or altered.

Dispositions are acquired as individuals learn, work, and play in situations where certain values, beliefs, and behaviours are exemplified, accepted, and rewarded. The individual learns, unconsciously, without any formal instruction to accept, adopt, and display the same values, beliefs, and behaviours (Bandura and Walters, 1963). The process of creating a culture of positive and effective conflict resolution and the developing the corresponding individual dispositions is an on going enterprise of explanation, modeling, and interaction.

CHAPTER 4
KILDONAN EAST COLLEGIATE CONFLICT
RESOLUTION INITIATIVE

The Kildonan East Collegiate Conflict Resolution Initiative is part of the larger trend of using Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in Canada.

Conflict resolution in Canada

The application of the principles of conflict resolution and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in Canada is founded in the scriptures (Paul speaks of the church as a ministry of reconciliation in II Corinthians 5:17-26) and the history of the Mennonite community as peace makers. These teachings and history have guided the Mennonite Church into active participation in the criminal justice system (at many levels including half-way houses, probationary services, prisoner visit programs and alternative sentencing practices) and to the assuming of a leadership role in conflict resolution and ADR.

In 1968 the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), Ontario, the provincial chapter of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Churches had been searching for alternatives to the current practices of retribution without resolution within the Canadian criminal justice system (Bender, 1986). A study committee/task force was appointed to search for alternatives, based upon forgiveness and reconciliation. One alternative the

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committee discovered was a night prosecutor's program in Columbus, Ohio which used mediation to bring about resolution and initiate reconciliation between individuals who had an on going relationship (Niebuhr, 1985). This discovery lead to the notion of using mediation as an alternative that could be used bring about reconciliation between victims and offenders.

In 1972 in Elmira, Ontario two committee members, Mark Yantzi, a probation/parole officer for the Waterloo Region, and Dave Worth, a volunteer with probation services, convinced the presiding judge to accept their recommendation of using mediation to determine the restitution for a case involving two young offenders and twenty two owners of property which the offenders had damaged. Yantzi in his pre-sentencing report suggested (Bender, 1986, p. 1):

> ...that 'some therapeutic value' could come from 'confrontation' between the offenders and the offended. The established way of dealing with the offender left out the possibility of a way not only to give the victim a face but, face to face with a mediator, give both the victim and offender a chance to make arrangements for restitution and perhaps be reconciled.

The success of this case and the continued work of MCC Ontario lead to a proposal for the establishing of a Victim Offenders Reconciliation Program (VORP) and with the support of the Ontario Ministry of Corrections, the VORP was established in the summer of 1975 (Niebuhr, 1985). The news of the successful development of the first VORP in Canada quickly spread to other chapters of the MCC who themselves were

struggling with the role of their church in the process of criminal justice.

By 1973 the Peace and Social Concerns Section of the MCC Manitoba was actively involved, through its Offenders Ministry, with the criminal justice system operating two programs-Grosvenor House, a residence for adult offenders and Open Circle, a prisoner visitation program. Hoping to expand their involvement in the system the Offenders Ministry (with varying degrees of support from the Manitoba Department of Health and Social Services, the courts, and some judges) proposed the establishment of a VORP similar to that of the Ontario model. The proposal was received with much skepticism by the Winnipeg Police Department and the Department of Corrections, who chose not to act on the proposal. Probation Services of the Manitoba government recognizing the potential of post-plea, pre-sentencing mediation as an alternative to imprisonment funded the program. In April of 1979 (the proposal was delayed by the provincial election of 1977) Manitoba's first Victim Offender Mediation Program (VOMP) was established (Niebuhr, 1985).

Under the directorship of Murray Barker the VOMP, hoping to develop the status of a truly independent alternative dispute process and to reduce the reliance of the VOMP on Probationary Services, immediately began offering their services to judges and lawyers. The notion of mediation based upon problem solving and resolution rather than assigning blame and restitution was foreign to most judges and lawyers.

The response by these judges and lawyers, comfortable in the adversarial system, was minimal with only 13 cases referred (Niebuhr, 1985). Under the advisement of Judge Graham Garson, the VOMP extended its services to private prosecution court, where cases could be defined as neighborhood disputes and be referred to mediation rather than going to court. To reflect this expansion of services and the growing conviction that mediation should be more readily accessible to all citizens, the VOMP changed its name to Mediation Services in 1980.

With a new name and expanded mandate, acceptance of mediation as an alternative dispute resolution technique was mediocre at best (Niebuhr, 1985).

Concurrent to the establishment of the VOMP and Mediation Services, the Offenders Ministry of the MCC Manitoba was also working to develop a victim service agency. Working with funds provided by the Federal government summer student employment program and support from the Winnipeg Police Department and the Attorney-General's department, this proposed agency pursued the application of mediation at various levels through out the judicial system- not just post-plea and pre-sentencing as was the case with the VOMP. Working in collaboration with the Winnipeg Police Department and the Attorney-General's department a set of criteria for diversion to mediation were established. This collaboration in July of 1983, led to a process by which staff of Mediation Services regularly visit the Public Safety Building and select cases for mediation on the basis of the established criteria.

With the approval of the Police Department and the Attorney-General's department these cases are diverted to mediation (Niebuhr, 1985). With this process in place and the development of a Youth Mediation Project the number of cases diverted to Mediation Services number 470 in 1985 (A Brief History provided by Mediation Services, 1995).

In 1982 in an attempt to more effectively address community conflict, Mediation Services in partnership with Operation Affirmative Action and the Aberdeen Church (Evangelical Mennonite Conference) worked to establish community mediation services in the North End of Winnipeg (Niebuhr, 1985). In 1984 a fully independent community dispute centre was opened, providing community dispute resolution and conflict resolution training. In 1992 this community dispute centre and Mediation Services were amalgamated to form: Mediation Services: A Community Resource for Conflict Resolution. The new agency provides three services:

- Court Mediation- deals mainly with youth and adult cases diverted from the court, with most of the cases being of the pre-plea variety with only a few of the post-plea nature. If an agreement is reached through mediation the court most often will "stay" the charge. The type of cases mediated vary from mischief to possession of a weapon dangerous to the public peace.

- Community Mediation- assists and encourages community residence in resolving their own non-criminal

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conflicts. Methods used include mediation, shuttle diplomacy, and/or informal conciliation efforts. The cases usually involve family members, neighbors, friends, co-workers, consumer/vendors or tenants/landlords.

- Conflict Resolution Education- is provided through regular public training or contractual private sessions. The training focuses on the empowering of the individuals and organizations to use effective conflict resolution in their various situations. A special emphasis of this component is the assisting of schools in the establishment of their own mediation or conflict resolution programs (A Brief History provided by Mediation Services, 1995).

One school based program with which Mediation Services is involved is the Kildonan East Collegiate Conflict Resolution Initiative.

Background information about Kildonan East Collegiate:

Before examining the specifics of the Initiative, it is important to gain an understanding of the context in which the project has been developed. A brief discussion of the following relevant contextual features will be provided: the school, the staff, the community, and the students. After a brief description of the context, this chapter will examine the beginnings of the Initiative, and the implementing of the Initiative. Another significant contextual feature, that of students' attitudes and perceptions of conflict and conflict resolution will be addressed in the next chapter.

i) **The School**- Kildonan East Collegiate, located in the North East corner of Winnipeg, is a comprehensive high school serving 1100 students grades 10 through 12. The area around the school is primarily residential, with small sections of light manufacturing, retail, and service industries. The school opened, under the name of Kildonan East Regional Secondary School, in 1970 as one of a new generation of Federally funded comprehensive high schools providing academic, vocational and technical courses. Through the '70's and '80's the school provided a comprehensive education for the students of the River East School Division, as well for any student living east of the Red River. During the '92-'93 academic year the school changed its name to Kildonan East Collegiate, reflecting a move away from the regional nature of the school as most of its clientele now came from the River East School Division. The name change was also meant to be indicative of a change in the school's role in the community from primarily a regional vocational/technical school to more local community high school providing a sound academic program as well as vocational training.

KEC currently operates on a semester system, with a staff of 3 in-school administrators, 64 professional staff, and 20 support personnel.

ii) **The Staff**- When Kildonan East Collegiate opened twenty-six years ago, it was designed to maximize teachers' autonomy and decision making. The school division envisioned KEC to be an innovative, progressive, and effective high school. To that

end the division established school-based budgeting, and empowered the administration with a broad authority to make decisions concerning staffing, curriculum development, and professional development. This power was passed to the staff in two forms: departmental autonomy, and the DMG (decision making group). Each department was allowed to operate independently in regards to the curriculum taught, instructional methodology, grouping of students, teaching materials, budget allocation, time tabling, and professional development (virtually as schools within a school). The DMG was an elected body empowered to make all decisions as they related to overall school policy. These features attracted a highly motivated active staff of young professionals seeking innovation and challenge in their teaching careers. With teaching opportunities being plentiful at the time, the bulk of the staff was able to choose to work at KEC. If a teacher disagreed with the management style of the school it was relatively easy to transfer to a more traditional high school. This allowed for a school with a highly cohesive (in terms of educational philosophy and school governance), motivated, and committed staff to evolve. Independence, innovation, and creativity were the "buzz words" of the day. These attitudes led to: developing novel curriculum, extending education beyond the school proper by using the resources of the community, establishing a challenging wilderness education program, and initiating a policy of student empowerment.

Today twenty six years later, most of the staff is twenty six years older, and only remnants of some of the many innovations are in place today. As a large portion of the staff moves into and through mid-career, they begin to reflect upon their common experiences of experimentation and innovation. Their responses vary considerably. For some the years of experimentation and innovation have been invigorating and they have maintained a high level of involvement in school life. This group is striving to keep the old values of KEC alive, its members actively participate on school committees, and try to keep the notion of staff decision making vibrant. This group embraced the Initiative and became actively involved in the management of the project.

For many they are tired of change and leery of the next "band wagon". This, the largest group of teachers, has responded to mid-career by consolidating their effort in the school. Their focus is their teaching and concern for student learning. They put their efforts into doing the best job they can in the classroom, and this provides them with enjoyment and job satisfaction. These teachers concentrate their energies at points where they believe their efforts will make the greatest difference and where they will obtain the greatest rewards (Goodlad, 1984). Their involvement in school life, outside the teaching of classes, is directly related to professional development opportunities that will enhance their instruction. This group was attracted to the pedagogical and classroom management components of the Initiative and became actively

involved in the professional development opportunities, with some teachers later providing leadership for the implementation of specific classroom methodologies and strategies.

The third response manifested by a small group of teachers appears to be withdrawal. These teachers have reduced their involvement in school life to the instruction of their classes. The amount of "life space" (Goodlad, 1984) committed to education is minimal. On the surface their behaviour is similar to teachers who have consolidated their efforts, but this third group of teachers have a less optimistic view of their careers. They tend to be bitter about their past experiences and only see the job becoming more difficult. They are unable to understand the other two group's willingness to get involved with the school decision making structure or professional development, and are therefore usually quite critical of these processes and the people who would choose to get involved with them. The response of the this group to the Conflict Resolution Initiative was that it was just another "band wagon" and if they waited long enough it would go away.

Of course placing teachers in such large groups is not without pitfalls. In doing so I am describing general attitudes and behaviours that would not probably describe no single member of any group. The descriptions are normative constructs that allow me to identify the micro-climates (Bidwell and Kasarda, 1990) present on the staff and to understand the differing responses to the Initiative.

iii) **The community-** The community served by Kildonan East Collegiate is quite diverse. Economically, the "catchment area" reflects quite a disparity with the annual income of the majority of homes to be well below the national average and a small pocket of homes that could be described as quite affluent (average annual household income is $23,000; with an average unemployment rate of 6%). Ethnically, the community is primarily Caucasian, with a rich ethnic mix including Aboriginal, Black, and Asian. Educationally, 42% of the community has less than secondary schooling. A significant portion of the community could be described as relatively stable with 55% of families not moving in the last five years. However, the community as a whole does have a transient nature, with 42% of the community moving within Canada over the past five years. (The above information was compiled from the 1991 census).

iv) **The students-** The students reflect the disparity and diversity of the community. This diversity of clientele is also a function of the wide variety of programs offered by KEC: vocational, technical, regular academic, enriched academic (through Advanced Placement), lifeskills for students who are mentally challenged, alternative academic program for students who are academically challenged, and a support program for students with attendance problems. The extensive array of programs provides students with a real opportunity to be successful. This success is reflected in a relatively low withdrawal rate of 2.4% for 1993 (Renihan and Hoskin, 1994).

For the most part the attitude of the students toward the school can be summed up in this comment of a grade twelve student (Renihan and Hosking, 1994, p. 15):

> 'I find Kildonan East teachers treat the students as though they are older, not like children. Its hard to believe it but I am actually enjoying Kildonan East... there is such a happy atmosphere. I think that this is what making me succeed this year.'

Genesis of the Initiative:

The Kildonan East Conflict Resolution Initiative (KECCRI) is the result of three diverse actions motivated by a common concern- that many students may be at risk of losing their opportunity of an education because of their inability to deal with conflict in an effective pro-social manner. The need to assist students was identified in the school by the Natural Helpers (school based peer helping group), in the community by a teacher in a neighboring school division, and in the province by the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation.

The need for improved conflict resolution skills was first identified by the KEC Natural Helpers program in 1992. In reviewing the students' log books and through discussions with students involved in the program it became readily apparent that the Natural Helper students were spending a great deal of their time assisting students in resolving conflicts and the time spent on resolving conflicts had steadily increased over the past five years. The Natural Helper students also raised the concern that they did not feel trained or qualified to do the types of conflict resolution that was being demanded by their

peers. Based upon the demand for the service and the concern over the ability to deliver the service it was decided that the Natural Helper organization would expand its mandate and include training for staff and students in conflict resolution. To begin such as expansion four teachers volunteered to take training in conflict resolution and mediation from Mediation Services.

Over the course of the year, as the Natural Helpers embarked on their training of staff to lead the development of a conflict resolution program, literature from the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation arrived at the school, asking for innovative projects for dealing with at risk students. At this time the Natural Helper initiative and the Gordon Foundation were seen as two distinct entities within the school.

The possibility of making the Natural Helper extension a project funded by the Gordon Foundation was brought into focus by a teacher from the neighboring Winnipeg School Division Number 1 who had successfully developed conflict resolution programs in two Winnipeg high schools. The teacher approached the school and the Gordon Foundation with a proposal that the Gordon Foundation fund conflict resolution projects in Kildonan East Collegiate and its two feeder junior high schools. These school programs would operate in coordination with a conflict resolution program the teacher would develop in the community with a grant from Health and Welfare Canada.

Based upon this proposal and with "seed" money from the Gordon Foundation the three schools established a joint committee with the mandate of developing a project application. Working in close coordination, but allowing each school maximum latitude in defining their specific project, the committee went about the process of developing and submitting the three applications for funding- one for each school.

After the first submissions for funding one junior high school was approved funding, while KEC and the other junior high school were asked to review and re-submit their applications. Six months later KEC received funding for a two year project, with an option to apply for three more years of funding based upon the progress of the first two years of the project. The other junior high was denied funding again and decided to withdraw from the process of application from the Gordon Foundation and to seek funding for their program from alternative sources. Eventually, it received a compensatory grant from the Provincial government to establish a school conflict resolution program.

While this process of developing a project and applying for funding was moving along, the teacher from the neighboring school division was notified by the Federal Government that there would be no funding for the community based conflict resolution component of the project.

Ultimately after twelve months of planning and applying for funding, a project that was to be a tri-school conflict resolution

initiative, with a significant community component became three independent projects. The first junior high to receive funding embarked upon a project that would provide a broad base of training in conflict resolution to the student body in general, with an emphasis upon the development of these skills in aboriginal students. The second junior high school project, with an alternative source of funding, has evolved into a program which focuses on the development of the teachers' skills in the prevention and resolution of conflict. The KECCRI is a multifaceted approach to conflict resolution focusing on the development of:

- conflict resolution skills (ie: negotiation skills) within the staff and student body,

- classroom management skills in teachers which could be effective in reducing classroom conflict,

- pedagogical techniques (in particular cooperative learning), which embody the basic tenets of conflict resolution- human beings have the knowledge and ability to resolve their own conflicts, this knowledge and ability can be utilized if a cooperative problem solving approach is utilized, and the utilization of such a process has the propensity to alter, simultaneously, the relationship between the disputants and the environment in which they operate,

- staff and student (peer) mediation program,

- and a school discipline policy that models resolution rather than retribution.

The KECCRI is based upon the assumption that the training of staff and students in conflict resolution (specifically, negotiation and mediation) skills, and the modeling of these skills by trained staff and students, supported by the development of non-confrontational classroom management skills, pedagogical methods that utilize cooperative decision making and school discipline policy that facilitates the use of negotiation and mediation would lead to an improvement in the social skills of the students that would promote constructive conflict resolution. This assumption was initially based upon the general principles of social learning theory (Bandura and Walters, 1963). Through the implementation of the project and further research, specific support for this assumption has been derived from the work of Johnson and Johnson (1992 and 1995).

Implementation of the Initiative:

Guided first by the aims, actions, and achievements of Children's Creative Response to Conflict, the San Francisco Community Board, the Hawaiian Mediation Alliance, and Project: S.M.A.R.T, The Kildonan East Conflict Resolution Initiative was launched in January, 1993. As the Initiative evolved its direction and implementation was further shaped by the emerging research into cooperative learning, character education, and school based violence prevention programs.

The focus for the first year was largely the establishment of a system for the management and guidance of the Initiative. To this end a management team composed of one teacher

representing the vocational teachers, one teacher representing the academic teachers, one teacher from the support services department (which because of the nature of the Initiative worked quite closely in the development of the original application and the initial implementation of the various components of the Initiative), and two project managers (the two teachers who initiated the proposal and the request for funding) was constituted to direct the Initiative. The responsibilities of the management team are (Minutes of the KECCRI management team meeting June 15, 1993):

i) Overall direction and implementation of a conflict resolution and mediation program at Kildonan East Collegiate.

ii) To work with the C.E.R.T (Conflict Education resource Team) to establish a schedule of training.

iii) To work with the C.E.R.T. to establish policies, procedures, and protocol required for the proper implementation of the project.

iv) to oversee all financial aspects of the project (budgeting, expenditures, accounting).

The first task of the management team was establishment of a "critical mass of knowledge" related to conflict resolution and mediation through intensive professional development for the 16 teachers who volunteered to be part of the Initiative. This group of trained volunteer teachers would form the C.E.R.T. who would be responsible for the defining of the scope and sequence of the Initiative. Specifically, the duties of the C.E.R.T. are (Minutes of KECCRI management team meeting June 15, 1993):

i) To design further training components.
ii) The development of training schedules in consultation with the management team.
iii) To work with the management team to establish policies, procedures, and protocol required for the proper operation of the project.
iv) Implementation of all policies, procedures, and protocol in the areas of:
-staff working as mediators
-students (peers) working as mediators
-Skills for Independent Living Course
-community component of the project
(year 3)

This group was invaluable in the developing and expanding of the "critical mass of knowledge" about conflict resolution and mediation within the school which allowed for informed and effective decision making about the scope and direction of the Initiative. The C.E.R.T. would later be expanded to include students and parents who had been trained as mediators.

After providing the initial overall direction for the Initiative many members of the C.E.R.T. have taken on specific leadership roles within specific cells of the program. These roles have included doing student/student mediations, and the designing and piloting of a workshop to train students in negotiation skills. A third area in which C.E.R.T. teachers were to be involved was the provision of a school wide introduction to conflict resolution through the Skills for Independent Living Course which was to be mandatory for all students entering grade 10 in the fall of 1994. But due to timetabling constraints most of the teachers who had received the training in conflict

resolution and mediation were not assigned to teach the course. Therefore not all students in the school received the introduction to conflict resolution as was planned. Also if they did receive instruction in conflict resolution the nature and quantity varied with the amount training of the teacher had received. This problem was exacerbated by the decision of the provincial government to make Skills for Independent Living optional in the fall of 1995.

The second major task of the management team was the collection of base line data related to teachers and students attitudes toward and methods of resolving conflict. Working with a consultant, provided by the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation, the management team designed and administered a survey to the entire staff and over 500 students.

The third major task of the management team was to organize a broad school wide training to introduce the entire staff to the concepts of conflict resolution and mediation. Working in conjunction with the Grand Forks (North Dakota) Dispute Resolution Centre and Mediation Services of Manitoba a two day workshop was provided for staff in February, 1994. Topics ranged from "Micro-mediation Skills" for members of the C.E.R.T. to introductory sessions on conflict resolution, mediation, anger management, and supervision. It was hoped that this exposure to conflict resolution training would, at best, affect how staff members would deal with conflict or, at the least, lead to requests for further training in specific areas of

conflict resolution that the staff viewed as relevant and effective.

The most laborious task undertaken by the management team was the development of school guidelines for student mediations. After extensive meetings with the school administration criteria for selecting cases for mediation were developed, and operating procedures for administering the process of mediation were established. The steps of the process are: administration requests a mediation, the mediation coordinator (a volunteer from the C.E.R.T.) determines that the case is suitable for mediation, case work is provided by the administration or support services, the case is mediated, the outcome of the mediation is reported to the administration, and the mediators do any follow up if any is required.

Year one of the Initiative (1993) moved slowly and methodically. In the first twelve months the Initiative:

- formed a management team
- established the C.E.R.T.
- trained 16 teachers to be mediators
- successfully mediated over 20 student disputes
- educated the entire staff in conflict resolution and mediation
- completed a base line survey of staff and students
- designed and piloted a negotiation skills workshop for students

In year two (1994) of the Initiative the scope was expanded, while the foundation programs, mediation of student disputes

by teachers, the training of students in negotiation skills and the collection of data related to students' attitudes toward conflict continued. This expansion included training in classroom management techniques through the provision of WEVAS (Working Effectively with Violent and Aggressive Students) workshops-from the River East School Division and anger management sessions- from Mediation Services.

The Initiative, at the request of three teachers, became involved in the development of curriculum which could be effective in the creation of a culture that is supportive of prosocial conflict resolution. Two Social Studies teachers, supported by the Initiative through the provision of release time and the purchase of materials, developed units in Peace Education for grades 10 and 11. The management team also worked with the Social Studies department in hosting school wide workshops for students on racism, hate groups and the Holocaust. A third teacher, with similar support, has been working on developing conflict resolution, its nature and process, as a means for analyzing literature and organizing writing. These developments were unforeseen by the management team in the original plan, but were fully supported because they were seen as activities that could further the goals of the project.

At the request of the Social Studies department, the Initiative has provided teacher training in cooperative learning and resource based learning. Both of these pedagogical techniques are supportive of the development of a culture of

prosocial conflict resolution as each is based upon similar values and principles as conflict resolution.

In year two the Initiative took flight and started to develop some momentum of its own. At the end of year two the Initiative had:

- expanded its scope to include classroom management, pedagogical training, and curriculum development
- trained 20 staff in WEVAS
- trained 24 more staff (teachers and paraprofessionals) in conflict resolution
- surveyed over 500 students
- hosted 3 two day workshops on conflictual issues (racism, hate groups, and the Holocaust)
- initiated instruction in Peace Education
- successfully mediated over 25 student disputes
- trained 18 young parents in negotiation skills
- increased its leadership base to over 20 teachers

While year two focused on expansion of the scope of the Initiative, the focus of year three was to broaden the base of participation. Specifically, the Initiative moved to get parents and students more actively involved. Parents from the Parent Advisory Council received introductory training in conflict resolution, while selected students were trained to be peer mediators. It is hoped that some of these parents and students will volunteer to become involved in the C.E.R.T., as the initiative plans to become more involved in offering services to the community in year four.

During Year three (1995) the initiative continued to provide WEVAS training to the staff and negotiation skills training to the students. Mediations were conducted by teams of two teachers or on occassion by a team composed of a teacher and a student. With some experience and mentoring it was hoped that teams of two students will be able to co-mediate student disputes in early in year four, but this has not yet happened. Individual cells of teachers worked on their projects related to curriculum development and classroom instruction. Also the Initiative collected data concerning students' attitudes toward conflict.

As year three concluded the Initiative has been able to:

- trained 20 more staff in WEVAS
- trained 20 students in negotiation skills
- trained 10 parents in conflict resolution
- trained 12 students in peer mediation
- surveyed over 500 students
- successfully mediated over 25 student disputes
- expanded its leadership base to include parents and students

At the end of three years it is difficult to determine if the project is having any effect on the fundamental nature of the school and its culture. The many variables at work within the complex high school culture blur attempts to determine a cause and effect relationship between the Initiative and the culture of the school. While direct determination is difficult to ascertain, there have been several indicators which may point

to changes in the school. What is certainly noticeable is an increased willingness of the administration to use mediation to resolve student disputes. On the part of the students there seems to be a growing awareness of mediation as an option for resolving disputes and an increasing willingness to give the process a try. Also staff reluctance and fear of conflict resolution training has been replaced with demands for specific types of training to meet their perceived needs.

To a certain extent the Initiative is starting to become institutionalized as the administration has become more dependent upon mediation as the method for dealing with students interpersonal conflicts. Conflict resolution training has become a significant portion of the Natural Helper training. With the introduction of conflict resolution into social studies and English units, the principles are becoming part of the curriculum.

A final comment on the progress of the Initiative should note the cellular nature of the management of the Initiative. Each cell within the C.E.R.T. manages its own sub-projects, and therefore each cell acts independently. What each cell has in common is the fundamental goal of advancing the notions and principles of effective conflict resolution, whether it be through the training in conflict resolution skills, direct instruction within the curriculum, and/or the modeling of appropriate conflict resolution techniques through pedagogical methods or classroom management. The role of the management team and the C.E.R.T. has evolved to include: educating the staff, students,

and parents, in conflict resolution, facilitating the initiation and operation of sub-projects, resourcing the sub-projects, and monitoring of the sub-projects. This process, developed as the Initiative grew, has led to an uneven development of the overall Initiative. Curriculum development, classroom management, and pedagogical components are only now being applied, while data collection, mediation, and negotiation skills components are now firmly established. It is the mediation component of the Initiative that is the focus of this thesis.

Changing Labour Situation:

The implementation of the Initiative was profoundly affected by major changes in the working conditions of the teachers.

During the first year of the Initiative there were three significant changes in the working conditions of the teachers that profoundly affected the Initiative. First, the school board restricted teacher participation in professional development activities to seven days. This limit made the teachers a bit reluctant to make a commitment to conflict resolution training. This slowed the rate of teacher training and implementation of the Initiative.

Secondly, the high schools of the division and the school board/superintendents' office have been involved in difficult labour negotiations which have included the assignment of teachers to extracurricular activities, a policy grievance, and a series of individual grievances. Again, this has made teachers reluctant to commit to the Conflict Resolution

Initiative as it could be interpreted as voluntary participation in an extracurricular activity (and therefore damaging to the teachers' association policy grievance). Also such participation could be used by the superintendents' office as the grounds for assigning a teacher to work on the Initiative in subsequent years. This situation has forced the Initiative to have any and all training during regular school hours, so the project cannot be construed as an extracurricular activity.

The third, and possibly the most significant, change was the increasing of the teachers' work load by seventeen per cent. In practical terms this meant teachers had less time and energy to give the Initiative. From an attitudinal perspective many teachers felt "betrayed" by the school division, and this reaction led to an unwillingness on the part of some teachers to do anything that would be perceived as "extra".

These changes may have affected the Initiative's ability to recruit all or a majority of the teachers, and slowed the process of developing its various components, it did not deter the teachers who truly believed that the Initiative could have an impact upon the conflict resolution processes of students. The Initiative progressed despite these changes.

CHAPTER 5
KEC STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF CONFLICT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Between 1991 and 1994 the Kildonan East Collegiate Conflict Resolution Initiative administered over 1500 surveys to students of Kildonan East Collegiate, grades 10 (N=314), 11 (N=225), and 12 (N=133), and a number of grade 9 students (N=737) from local feeder junior high schools. The data collected was not for this thesis, but a summary of the findings is included to provide background on the environment in which the Initiative was implemented. As well relevant data from these surveys are used in examining the results of this thesis study.

One thousand four hundred and eleven of these surveys (sample was 56.1% male and 43.8% female) were responded to in such a way as to make their data useful for analysis. The purpose of the survey was to gain an insight into how students perceived conflict within the school and the community.

The data were collected and recorded as the number of students responding to a specific item on the survey and then the number of responses were converted to a percentage of the total number of responses to that item. For items that utilized a Likert scale the students' responses were summed and then divided by the number of respondents, thus providing a mean for the item. For example one item asks the students to indicate the frequency that they observe conflict

within the school. This item provides the students the choices of "daily", "frequently", "few times a month", "less than once a month", and "never". If we view each of these time units as a point on a scale we can assign a numerical value to each point. The response of "daily" would be assigned the value of 1, "frequently" would be assigned a value of 2 and so on for all the choices. For this scale the averages with the lower value would indicate more frequent observations of conflict. For these items the standard deviation was also calculated, so as to measure the consistency of the students' responses. The standard deviation is an indicator of how much variance or inconsistency exists in the responses to an item. A low standard deviation means that students' responses to the item were largely similar, whereas a large standard deviation indicates much inconsistency across students for that item. When appropriate correlations between two items were measured. This analysis was performed by Edward A. Johnson (1996) Ph. D. Psychology, from the University of Manitoba. When available the data collected through the use of this survey was compared to similar data collected in other studies.

The survey addressed the following areas: i) students' definition of conflict, ii) students' observations of conflict at school, iii) sources of conflict perceived by students, iv) weapons within the school, v) conflict with teachers, vi) students' satisfaction in resolving conflict, vii) students' attitudes and beliefs about conflict, viii) conflict in the

community, and ix) major problems in the school as perceived by students.

i) Students' definition of conflict- An item on the survey provided students with a list of seven definitions of conflict. From this list there was no definition of conflict that all or even a simple majority of students accepted (see Table 1 below).

Definition of Conflict as a Function of Gender

Table 1

Definitions	Female Count	Female %	Male Count	Male %	Total
1.Irresolvable differences	160	30.0%	157	23.8%	317
2. Clash of views	232	43.5%	247	37.4%	479
3.Disagreement that end in physical actions	44	8.3%	80	12.1%	124
4. Unwelcome way of negoti-ating	26	4.9%	49	7.4%	75
5. Different means of resolution	17	3.2%	22	3.3%	39
6. First step toward resolution	29	5.4%	39	5.9%	68
7. Violent results of a disagreement	25	4.7%	65	9.8%	90
Total	533	100.0	659	100.0	1192

When this list of seven definitions is collapsed into three overarching perspectives of conflict (positive, negative, or violent) a clearer picture of the students' perspective of conflict is revealed. Definitions classified as positive provided either an optimistic outlook on the resolution of conflict or, at least, a

neutral view of conflict (clash of opinions, different means of resolution, and first step toward resolution). This perspective is endorsed by slightly more than half (50.1%) of those surveyed. Definitions classified as negative were statements that reflected a dislike of conflict or were pessimistic about conflict being successfully resolved (irresolvable differences, an unwelcome way of negotiating). These statements did not infer a physical or violent nature to conflict. Almost a third (32.3%) of the students surveyed subscribed to this view. The third perspective, conflict is violent, shared definitions (violent results of a disagreement, violent results of a disagreement) based upon the explicit belief that conflict necessarily involves physical or violent elements. This view is held by 17.7% of the survey respondents.

When these classifications are further analyzed statistically significant gender differences (see table 1) are revealed. While female and male differences in rank perspective for each classification is evident, the clearest difference is in the violent perspective, which males (22%) endorsed at nearly twice the rate of females (12.9%)

When these perspectives are analyzed by grade level, there is a slight tendency for the more advanced students (grades 11- 87.3% and 12- 86.0%) to endorse more non-violent depictions of conflict than less advanced students (grades 9- 81.2% and 10- 80.2%), but this difference is not seen as statistically significant.

In order to better understand these three perspectives of conflict, much of the analysis that follows will use these perceptions of conflict as a means to analyze other items of the survey. This will help determine the possible influence of one's perspective of conflict in shaping other beliefs about, responses to, and perceptions of conflict in various situations.

ii) **Students' observation of conflict at school-** A number of items on the survey attempted to assess the type, the amount, and the severity of conflict students observed in school (see Table 2 below). The scale used in responding to this item of the survey was: 1= observed daily; 2= observerved a few times a week; 3= observed a few times a month; 4= observed less than once a month; 5= never observed. With this scale a lower mean score relates to a higher frequency of observation. The table also indicates standard deviation as an indicator of consistency within the responses, as well as the number of students selecting the item on the survey (Valid N). This scale is also used in tables 3 through 5.

Average Frequency of Conflict Observed at School
Table 2

Variable	Mean	Std Dev	Valid N
Verbal threats	1.69	1.02	1395
Minor physical contact	2.19	1.10	1384
students excluded from group	2.34	1.24	1384
defacing/ vandalsing property	2.98	1.22	1382

major physical incidents	3.34	1.06	1395

Clearly, the most frequently observed form of conflict are verbal threats, which students reported witnessing on an almost daily basis. The next most frequent conflict forms are minor physical contact and students being excluded from activities.

In summarizing 15 studies that attempted to assess the types of conflict found in schools (elementary, junior high, and high school), Johnson and Johnson (1996) found the most common conflicts to be verbal harassments, verbal arguments, rumours, gossip, physical fights, and dating or relationship issues. By examining the survey results and list created by Johnson and Johnson, it is safe to conclude that most conflict that takes place in high schools is of the verbal nature.

Male students tended to report witnessing instances of property defacement, exclusion, major physical contact, and minor physical contact more often than females (see table 3 below).

Average Frequency of Conflict Observed at School as a Function of Gender

Table 3

Variable	# of Cases	Mean	Std Dev
DEFACING			
female	562	3.06	1.16
male	714	2.92	1.26
EXCLUSION			
female	566	2.20	1.14
male	712	2.44	1.29
MAJOR PHYSICAL INCIDENTS			
female	565	3.44	.96
male	722	3.29	1.10

MINOR PHYSICAL CONTACT			
female	563	2.30	1.05
male	714	2.10	1.12

When the type of conflict is analyzed by grade level, grade nine students reported seeing more instances of exclusion, minor physical contact, and verbal threats than more advanced students. However, grade 11 and 112 students reported witnessing more instances of major physical incidents than grade nine students (see table 4 below).

Average Frequency of Conflict Observed as a Function of Grade Level

Table 4

STUDENT EXCLUSION

Grade	Count	Mean	Std Dev
9	726	2.16	1.17
10	307	2.49	1.25
11	221	2.62	1.29
12	128	2.54	1.33

MAJOR PHYSICAL INCIDENTS

9	731	3.50	1.02
10	308	3.08	1.03
11	224	3.29	1.05
12	131	3.17	1.23

MINOR PHYSICAL INCIDENTS

9	724	2.10	1.08
10	307	2.26	1.12
11	222	2.36	1.11
12	130	2.21	1.06

VERBAL THREATS

9	728	1.58	.97
10	311	1.89	1.08
11	222	1.78	1.05
12	132	1.67	.99

When the amount of conflict observed is correlated with the students' perceptions of conflict, students holding a violent perception of conflict reported seeing more conflict, and

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more instances of defacing/vandalizing property, major and minor physical contact, and verbal threats than did students who held non-violent definitions of conflict (see table 5 below).

Average Frequency of Conflict Observed as a Function of Students' Perceptions of Conflict

Table 5

DEFACING/VANDALIZING PROPERTY

Group	Count	Mean	Std Dev
positive	634	2.97	1.16
negative	407	3.06	1.25
violent	218	2.80	1.30

MAJOR PHYSICAL INCIDENTS

Group	Count	Mean	Std Dev
positive	639	3.41	1.01
negative	412	3.43	.99
violent	221	3.05	1.21

MINOR PHYSICAL THREATS

Group	Count	Mean	Std Dev
positive	635	2.17	1.05
negative	404	2.32	1.11
violent	221	1.91	1.06

VERBAL THREATS

Group	Count	Mean	Std Dev
positive	641	1.66	.98
negative	408	1.70	1.01
violent	224	1.54	.92

When the data on frequency of conflicts is observed from a broad perspective it would appear that the school is a relatively safe environment with most violent events occurring infrequently. This is not to say high schools are not conflictual, only that most of this conflict is verbal in nature. The overall picture of conflict within in the school is one of students arguing, disagreeing, and name calling that occasionally leads to student exclusion, minor physical scuffles, and destruction of property. Only rarely does conflict manifest itself as a major physical altercation. The school may not be violent, but it is

certainly conflictual and there should be concern about how these conflicts are resolved.

Overall most of the students (51.6%) surveyed felt that the amount of conflict in school had stayed about the same during their time in their present school. Males (11.3%) were slightly more likely to perceive that conflict had decreased than females (6.7%). As well 66.5% of the students surveyed felt that the severity of conflict has stayed the same. The students' perception of conflict did not differ by gender, grade level, or perception of conflict.

iii) **Sources of conflict perceived by students-** The most significant sources of conflict identified by the students are: cliques or groups (mean-1.19), boy friend/girl friend relationships (mean-1.63), race/ethnic/cultural differences (mean- 1.80), family wealth and status (mean-2.12), and family relationships (mean-2.22). Applying a weighting system to student responses of: major factor= 1; minor factor= 2; and not a factor= 3 creates a scale where the lower the score the more significant the factor.

When analyzed by gender females tended to identify boy friend/girl friend relationships (mean-1.65), cliques (mean- 1.56) and family relationships (mean-2.18) as factor leading to conflict, while males rated ethnic/race/cultural differences (mean- 2.07) as a factor that more often leads to conflict.

When examined by grade level, grade 11's found boy friend/girl friend relationships (mean- 1.62) a larger factor in

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creating conflict than did all other grades. Similarly, grade 11's found family relationships (mean-2.10) to be a larger factor in creating conflict. The grade nines surveyed were more likely to report that family wealth and status (mean-2.15), as well as ethnic/race/cultural differences (mean-2.16) played a large role in generating conflict.

The sources of conflict identified did not vary by perception of conflict.

Over 100 students completed the item on the survey that allowed them to nominate additional sources of conflict. Three categories accounted for almost two thirds of the nominated sources. These included "attitude/disagreements" (32%), "looks/disrespect" (23%), and "rumours/name calling" (10%). Other sources that received over 5 nominations were drugs/alcohol (7), personality conflicts (7), school (6), marks/grades (6), and conflict among friends (5).

iv) **weapons in school**- Almost half of the students (47.3%) surveyed observed weapons in school within the last two months, with males (54.8%) being much more likely to report seeing a weapon in school than females (39.2%). Johnson (1996) described this difference as "highly statistically significant" (p<.001). It is important to note that conflicts involving violence or the observation of a weapon in school may have a greater impact upon the students and are more likely to be remembered and reported on a survey such as the one used (Collins and Laursen, 1992).

Whether or not a student had seen weapons in school recently was not significantly related to the student's perception of conflict, nor his/her grade level.

v) conflict with teachers- Students reported most of the conflict with teachers took the form of not obeying rules/requests or defacing teacher's property. More serious infractions (such as swearing, minor or major physical incidents) were reported rarely (see table 6 below).

Frequency of conflicts with teachers

Table 6

Item	Mean	Std Dev	Valid N
Defacing	2.98	1.22	1382
Disobeying	2.99	1.40	1398
Swearing	3.70	1.43	1392
Minor physical incident	4.65	.92	1391
Major physical incident	4.77	.83	1394

Scale for responses: daily= 1; few times/week= 2; few times/month=3; less than once/month=4; never= 5. Standard deviation indicates consistency within the responses. The Valid N indicates the number of the students selecting the item on the survey.

Students with violent perceptions of conflict were more likely to be frequently involved in conflict with teachers. Ranked based upon the mean, students with violent perceptions of conflict are most likely to be involved in conflict with teachers in the following forms: not obeying rules (2.71),

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defacing/destroying teacher's property (2.80), swearing/talking back (3.40), minor physical contact (4.46) and major physical incidents (4.67).

Generally, students in the lower grades (9 and 10) were more likely to report conflict with teachers than the students in grades 11 and 12.

Males reported having more frequent involvement with teachers than females concerning conflicts in all areas surveyed (see table 7 below). Scale for responses illustrated in chart 7 are: daily= 1; few times/week=2; few times/month=3; less than once/month=4; never=5. Number of cases indicates the number of students who reported on that item on the survey and Standard deviation is used as an indicator of consistency within the responses.

Frequency of Conflict with Teachers as a Function of Gender

Table 7

Type of conflict	# of cases	Mean	Std dev
Disobeying			
female	569	3.20	1,41
male	724	2.87	1.36
Swearing			
female	566	3.86	1.37
male	720	3.62	1.44
Defacing			
female	562	3.05	1.16
male	714	2.92	1.26
Minor physical			
female	567	4.83	.58
male	719	4.52	1.07
Major physical			
female	569	4.92	.46
male	721	4.68	.98

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When the number of staff and students and the potential conflictual nature of schools (teachers' role to enforce rules and demand standards) is taken into consideration the amount of conflict amongst students and teachers is quite minimal.

In resolving conflict with teachers, students reported (mean score of 1.88 using a scale of: completely satisfied=1; generally satisfied=2; somewhat dissatisfied=3; very dissatisfied=4) that they were generally satisfied- no matter the grade level, gender, or perception of conflict.

vi) students' satisfaction in resolving conflict- Overall students reported (mean score of 1.97 on a scale of: completely satisfied=1; generally satisfied=2; somewhat dissatisfied=3; very dissatisfied=4) being satisfied in their resolving of conflict with other students. Students holding a violent perspective of conflict were less likely to report that they are satisfied in the manner in which they resolved conflict (see table 8 below).

Students' satisfaction in resolving conflict as a function of the perception of conflict

Table 8

Group	Count	Mean	Std Dev
positive	612	1.94	.69
negative	390	1.96	.74
violent	212	2.07	.88

Though students appeared to be satisfied in resolving conflict, the survey does not make clear what methods are be used to resolve conflict. Johnson and Johnson (1996) in their meta-analysis of a number of studies found the most common methods for resolving to be: withdrawal, suppression of

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conflictual feelings, use of aggression to coerce a solution, or reporting to the teacher. This also appears to be true for the student population of Kildonan East Collegiate with nearly 30% of the students indicating a preference to avoid conflict and another nearly 20% indicating that the resolution of conflict tends to include violence. While students may be satisfied by using such techniques, they do little to truly resolve the conflict.

vii) students' attitudes and beliefs about conflict- Generally, most studies on conflict show little gender difference (Johnson and Johnson, 1996). For the most part this seems also to be true in this survey with only modest tendency for females to agree more with the following statements about conflict than males: "Conflict can have a positive outcome", "Conflicts in school are usually caused by things outside the school's control", and "Conflict in the classroom interferes with my learning". However females expressed significantly greater agreement (using a scale of strongly agree= 1; agree= 2;diagree= 3; strongly disagree= 4) with the views that: "Good communications helps resolve conflict" (mean scores: female 1.64, males 1.92), "This school helps students deal with conflict" (mean scores: females 2.38, males 2.53) and "I dislike conflict situations" (mean scores: females 2.00, males 2.27). This difference may be related to the notion that females are more socially attuned than males (Nadler and Nadler, 1984) and are likely to vary their responses to a conflict situation in accordance to the social setting (Rubin and Brown, 1975) and

the relationship with the other disputant (Greenhalgh and Gilkey, 1984). These findings also seem to fit with recent research which has examined gender differences in aggression (Campbell, Muncer, and Gorman, 1993). Females, the literature suggests are more likely to hold an expressive view of aggression, perceiving it as a means of communicating their anger toward others, whereas males tend to have a more instrumental view of aggression, perceiving it as a means of achieving social recognition or material benefit.

Students with a positive perspective of conflict are more likely (using a scale of strongly agree= 1: agree= 2; disagree= 3: strongly disagree= 4) to believe that conflict may have positive outcomes (mean scores: positive group 2.00, negative group 2.12, violent group 2.30). Students with a violent perception of conflict were the least likely to believe the following statements: "good communications helps resolve conflict" (mean scores: positive group 1.72, negative group 1.70, violent group 2.09), and "this school helps students deal with conflict" (mean scores: positive group 2.44, negative group 2.38, violent group 2.68). Students who viewed conflict negatively were more likely than those who viewed it positively or in a violent light to agree with statements such as: "I dislike conflict" (mean scores: positive group 2.12, negative group 2.07, violent group 2.28), "conflict is best avoided" (mean scores: positive group 2.42, negative group 2.25, violent group 2.40), or "Conflict in the classroom interferes with my learning"

(mean scores: positive group 2.30, negative group 2.18, violent group 2.31).

viii) **conflict in the community**- Overall students identified (using a scale of: major problem= 1; moderate problem= 2; minor problem= 3; no problem= 4) people being picked on (mean score= 1.88) as the largest problem caused by youth in the community, followed by gang violence (mean score= 1.97), shop lifting (mean score= 2.01), and vandalism (mean score= 2.01).

When responses are broken down by gender, females viewed the following problems as significantly more serious than males: gang violence, other violence, people being picked on, shop lifting and vandalism. Difference in types of problems caused by youth in the community is also found when the data are analyzed by grade level. (See table 9 below)

Gender differences in the perception of problems in the community

Table   9

Item	# of cases	Mean	Std dev
Shoplifting			
female	565	1.87	.82
male	721	2.11	.94
Vandalism			
female	558	1.93	.86
male	717	2.06	.95
Gang violence			
female	558	1.90	1.01
male	721	2.04	1.07
Picked on			
female	559	1.73	.85
male	716	1.97	.98

Grade 9's perceived as less important than the more advanced students problems of break and enter (mean score grade nine= 2.44; mean score grade twelve= 2.15), stealing cars (mean score grade nine= 2.70; mean score grade twelve= 2.21), stealing from cars (mean score grade nine= 2.55; mean score grade twelve= 2.15), and speeding in residential areas (mean score grade nine= 2.42; mean score grade twelve= 2.09). What grade 9's perceived as important was the problem of persons being picked on (mean score= 1.80). Grades 9 and 10 perceived as more important than did the older students the problems of fire setting, shop lifting, and vandalism. Grade 10 students identified gang violence (mean score= 1.76) and other types of violence (mean score=2.12) as their most significant youth-caused community problem.

Sixty five students nominated other ways youths create problems in the community. The most frequently mentioned were drugs (29.2%), physical assaults (24.6%), sexual assaults (15.4%), and murder (12.3%).

Among the types of conflict observed in the community student reported seeing parent-youth (mean score= 1.79) conflict most frequently (using a scale of often= 1; sometimes= 2; rarely= 3; never=4). Male and female students differed consistently on the frequency with which they reported various problems occurring. Females perceived these problems: parent-parent conflict (mean score female= 2.49; mean score male= 2.59), parent-youth conflict (mean score female= 1.62; mean score male= 1.91), boy friend/girl friend

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conflict (mean score female= 1.91; mean score male= 2.25), friend/friend conflict (mean score female= 1.63; mean score male= 1.98), and inter group conflict (mean score female= 1.82; mean score male= 1.97) occurring more frequently on average than did the males.

When responses were analyzed by grade level, grade 9's were less likely than more advanced students to observe boy friend/girl friend conflicts (mean score grade nine= 2.28; mean score grade tweleve= 1.92), and less likely than grade 10 students to observe conflict between members of different groups (mean score grade nine= 1.95; mean score grade ten= 1.76). The remaining problems of parent-youth, parent-parent, and conflict amongst friends was observed at the same frequency across all grade levels.

When conflict in the community was correlated with students' perception of conflict only one item was different, that being that students with a violent perception of conflict observed conflict between parents more frequently than did those students who held positive or negative views of conflict. Could this indicate a relationship between students' perception of conflict and the amount of conflict that is observed at home? (See table 10 on next page). Responses illustrated in table 10 use a scale of: 1= often; 2= sometimes; 3= rarely; 4= never, therefore the lower the mean score the more often conflict is observed between parents.

Conflict observed between parents as a function of the perception of conflict
Table 10

Group	Count	Mean	Std Dev
positive	630	2.55	.88
negative	403	2.63	.89
violent	218	2.44	.90

Students nominated other types of conflict observed in the community. The most frequent type seen was teacher/student (30.9%), followed by gangs against one person (10.9%), and student/student conflict (10.9%).

When asked to identify the reason why youth cause problems in the community the most common responses were: "have control/get power", "get attention", and "get friends, be part of the group".

ix) major problems in the school as perceived by students- When asked to choose the three biggest problems students face at school students most frequently selected: academic failure (756 nominations), alcohol and drug use (715 nominations), and pressure by teachers and parents (522 nominations). When looked at by gender males (60% of males as compared to 49.2% females) most frequently chose failing at school, whereas females (15.8% females as compared to 6.7% males) most frequently identified conflicts with family members.

An interesting, but not statistically significant, observation can be drawn from the item when students were asked to nominate problems not listed in the original survey.

Over 40% of the students responded by identifying some form of violent or illegal act (ranging from gang violence to vandalism).

From this survey some tentative conclusions about students' perceptions and beliefs about conflict can be surmised:

- While 50% of the respondents viewed conflict positively and believed successful resolution is possible through non-violent or physical means, another 50 % tend to respond to conflict with avoidance or violence.

- Females tend to have a more positive outlook on conflict, observing less violent/physical forms of conflict.

- Conflict most often manifests itself in the form of verbal threats.

- Difficulty in relationships (with friends, between boy friend and girl friend, or between groups) is the most common cause of conflict.

- Over two thirds of the students felt the severity of conflict had remained the same during their tenure in their present school

- The observation of weapons in school is greater than would have been expected.

- Generally most students are satisfied with their methods (keeping in mind that for half the students resolution of conflict involves avoidance or violence) of conflict resolution with teachers and other students.

- Violence (individuals picking on others, or gang threats) in many forms is a concern in the community.
- Parent/youth disagreements are a significant cause of conflict in the community.
- The three most significant problems in school identified by students are: fear of academic failure, alcohol and drug usage, and pressure by teachers and parents.

If a broad profile can be surmised from these survey results it is that KildonanEast Collegiate is a school relatively free of violence. While free of violence, KEC, as would be expected of any institution of over 1000 people, is full of conflict. Most of the student/student conflicts are minor in nature involving rumours, name calling, and boy friend/girl friend disputes. Teacher/student conflict is perceived to be minimal (especially when you consider the nature of the teacher/student relationship, with the teacher the enforcer of rules), while major conflict between teacher and student is rare. While minor in nature a significant number of students believe that these conflicts interfere with their learning. Students also believe that KEC could do a better job in helping students to resolve conflict. Overall KEC can be described as a school where students and teachers work together quite well.

CHAPTER 6
METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this thesis was to collect and analyze the experiences of students who have had their conflicts resolved through the process of mediation. The aim was to let these students talk about their experiences and to explain their perceptions of the process. Interviews were used to gain detailed descriptions of how the students experienced the process of mediation. The interviews were guided by a series of fixed but open-ended questions asked with probes to cover different aspects of the process and its effects. In many instances the interviews evolved into a casual sounding conversation, with the researcher asking questions that he felt appropriate and that lead the student to reflect upon the process of mediation and to reveal more about the process. The unique advantage of this type of research was that it provided the researcher the opportunity to make rich, detailed observations of the mediation process.

Summary of the literature on mediation:

Mediation is a process of facilitated problem solving. This process is face-to-face communication by the disputants, under the guidance of a third party, which involves rigorous analysis of the conflict and ultimately the development of a realistic means to resolve the conflict. The belief is that individuals involved in a conflict, working through a complete analysis of their problems have the ability to reach a resolution. Based upon this belief mediation attempts to provide a structure for

this face-to-face communication that induces interactions between the disputants that focuses on the analysis of the conflict, facilitates mutual understandings, explores alternative solutions, and the generation of a resolution (Burton, 1990). The effectiveness of this process is predicated upon the empowering of the disputants (Maxwell, 1989; Briggs, 1970) and the altering of the social roles and psychological mind sets of the disputants (deReuck, 1990).

If the process of mediation is externally controlled there is little opportunity for the disputants to develop the skills and strategies of conflict resolution, few reasons to engage in the process of analysis and problem solving, and even fewer motives to induce changes in the social roles and mind sets of the disputants.

For mediation to be effective in the resolution of conflict the locus of control must rest with the disputants (Briggs, 1970; Maxwell, 1989; and Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, and Burnett, 1992). The fundamental assumptions upon which this belief is based:

- the parties involved in a conflict have the ability to resolve the conflict (Burton, 1990)
- participation in the process of mediation provides opportunities to develop the attitudes of self confidence, self respect, self discipline, and social responsibility (Maxwell, 1989).

- participation in the process develops the skills of communication and problem solving (Scherer, 1992; Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, and Burnett, 1992).
- empowering disputants re-enforces feelings of control and autonomy (Briggs, 1970).

It is this locating the locus of control with the disputants, or the empowering of the disputants, that creates conditions which induces the disputants into the process of analysis and problem solving.

It is during the periods of analysis and problem solving that disputants are able to shift their roles from antagonist to analyst and their psychological mind sets from competition to cooperation. It is during these times when the anxiety attached to their adversarial roles is diminished and the creativity linked to their new role of analyst is enhanced. This shift from a competitive mode to a cooperative mode is rewarded by positive social reactions from the mediator and the other disputant. It is through these experiences of cooperation that the disputants start to view their relationship as a joint predicament, requiring further cooperation to resolve (deReuck, 1990). Through the process of mediation previous social roles (opponent, antagonist) and psychological mind sets (competitive and negative sum orientation) are dissolved and replaced with new roles (partner, problem solver) and mind sets (cooperative, positive sum orientation) upon which a new relationship can be built or an old relationship re-established.

It is theorized that this new relationship built on attitudes of mutual respect, self discipline, and social responsibility (Maxwell, 19889; Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, and Burnett, 1992) will lead to spontaneous processes of open communication and problem solving between the disputants. As well it is theorized that these methods will be generalized by the disputants in ways they resolve conflict with others and that this generalized response to conflict will impact upon the culture of the school (Stern, 1978; Cheatam, 1988; and Davis and Porter, 1985a and 1985b).

Most research, to date, on the effects of mediation has focused on the success rate of the mediations, the development of skills and attitudes in the mediators, and the disputants general satisfaction with the mediation (Lam, 1989). Only this last factor, minimally, assesses the process of mediation from the perspective of the disputant.

A system of resolving student/student conflict through mediation has been in place at Kildonan East Collegiate since the fall of 1992. Other than tracking the effectiveness of the mediation process in deterring further conflict amongst the disputants little assessment of the mediation process has taken place.

Neither in the literature nor in the administration of the KECCRI has attention been paid to the experiences of the students who have had their conflict resolved through mediation. It was the purpose of this thesis to address this omission by collecting the perceptions of the students of

Kildonan East Collegiate who have had their disputes resolved through mediation. Specifically, this thesis was an attempt to answer the following five questions:

1) What are the disputants' understanding of the process of mediation?

2) Did the disputants feel empowered by the process?

3) Did the disputants perceive a change in their role or psychological mind set during the process?

4) What were the effects of the mediation on the relationship with the other disputant?

5) How has being involved in the mediation process affected the way the participants resolve subsequent conflict?

The sample:

The sample for this study was students who have had a dispute resolved through mediation in the school year 1996-97. This group was chosen for two reasons. First, their mediations was conducted by experienced teacher mediators (with a minimum of three years experience), who are knowledgeable of and skilled in the process of mediation (trained to level 2 mediation). Secondly, it was felt that the experience would be fresh in the minds of the disputants.

At the start of the interview process 15 mediations had taken place, yielding 30 potential subjects. This number of potential subjects was reduced for various reasons. First, 6 disputants were no longer in school, having either dropped out, withdrawn, or graduated. Secondly, seven of the potential subjects did not inform their parents that they were involved

in a mediation at school. They would have had to inform their parents of this through the process of obtaining permission to be part of this study and they did not want to inform their parents. Six students received the information about the research, but they did not return the consent and participation forms. Finally, three students refused to participate in the study for no stated reason.

In the end 8 disputants were willing to participate in the study and share information. This sample was composed of 4 females and 4 males ranging in age from 16 to 18 years of age. Five of the students were vocational majors, while the other three were enrolled in academic courses of study (which reflects the enrollment of the school which is 60% vocational students) . The disputes mediated typically involved gossip and rumours, leading to verbal arguments and in one case a minor physical altercation.

Ideally, both parties to the dispute would have consented to participate in the study as this would allow for a comparison of experiences and perceptions. However, this happened only in two cases, therefore limiting this type of comparison and analysis.

The interview:

The goal of each interview was to allow the participants maximum latitude in voicing their opinions and descriptions of their experiences. The first section of the interview consisted of closed questions that asked the subject to select a definition of conflict from a list provided, that reflected their view of

conflict. The following sections of the interview consisted of a series of open ended questions and follow up probes. The purpose of the open ended questions was to allow the participants to answer freely and express their perceptions. The probes were used to allow the participant to elaborate on an answer or to gain more specific and detailed information. As well a number of interview specific questions were asked by the interviewer. These questions were used so as to encourage the subject to expand upon a previous answer or to facilitate a better understanding on the part of the interviewer. Below is an outline of the interview format:

1) Conflict can be defined in many ways. Please select from the list provided the definition that best reflects your view of conflict:
   1 Not being able to solve disagreements or differences
   2. A clash between two different points of view
   3. Disagreements or differences which result in physical actions
   4. An unwelcome way of negotiating disagreements or differences
   5.People want the same results but try to achieve it in different ways
   6. The first step to finding solutions
   7. the violent results of disagreements or differences

2) Tell me how you ended up in mediation.
   Probes:
- What was the cause of the conflict?
- Who referred you to mediation?
- What did you know about mediation before you agreed?
- How did you feel about going to mediation?

3) Tell me what happened during the mediation.
   Probes:
- What did the mediator do?
- What were your feelings toward the other disputant?
- Did these feelings change? How?
- How did you feel about the agreement that was reached?
- Did you feel the process was fair?
- Did you feel in control of the process?

4) Tell me about your relationship with the other disputant.
   Probes:
- What was your relationship before the mediation?
- What is your relationship after the mediation?
- How has your relationship changed?

5) Tell me about some conflict situations you have faced since the mediation.
   Probes:
- How did you handle these situations?
- Did being in mediation effect how you handled these situations?
- Do you believe that mediation is an effective way to resolve conflicts in high school? Why?

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Each interview begin with the following introduction and instructions:

Introduction:

I would like to thank you for participating in this study of the mediation program at Kildonan East Collegiate. Your response to these questions will allow us to understand the process of mediation from the perspective of the students.

Your participation in this interview will be anonymous and your responses will not be linked to you in any way. The interview, other than asking the cause of the dispute, will not deal with the specifics of your mediation. The focus of this interview is not what the mediation was about, but rather it is intended to examine what happened before, during, and after the mediation.

Could you please summarize what I have just said?

After the study is completed, if you wish, I will pass on to you a copy of my findings.

Instructions:

• The interview should not last longer than 1 hour.

• If some questions are not clear, please ask to repeat or rephrase the question.

• There are no right or wrong answers to any of these questions.

• Answer questions as honestly and as completely as possible.

• If you do not wish to answer any question just say "pass".

During the interview the subjects were extremely candid and open. The subjects answered all the questions without reservation or concern. The anonymity of the process allowed them to express their opinions on the school, the mediators, and the process of mediation.

This candidness provided a glimpse into the lives of these young adolescents. All had a real desire to be in school, not so much for the formal learning, but because they believed staying in school could affect their future prospects. Being in school was also important as it allowed them to socialize with their friends. For some attending school was important so as to not embarrass their parents.

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The lives of these young subjects were revealed to be quite complex, as they attempt to balance the demands of their parents, friends, and teachers. In a number of mediations it was the expectations of others that made resolution of the conflict difficult.

An interesting insight into the process of mediation was the "matter of a fact" kind of way the subjects viewed mediation. While anxious about facing the unknown- their mediation- they viewed the school's offering of mediation as "nothing special" and were quite surprised by two things. The first surprise was finding out that other high schools did not offer the service. Their second surprise was that other high schools would not have such a common sense approach to conflict resolution. For some teachers and administration deciding to offer mediation to students was viewed as a risk, for others on staff it was seen as good progressive education. For the students it was neither perceived as risky or progressive, it was something schools should offer in the regular course of operations.

Another striking feature was the readiness and the willingness of the students to resolve their own conflicts. Most felt themselves to be mature enough to resolve their own conflicts. While most desired to resolve their own conflicts, what became apparent through the interview process was the subjects' lack of conflict resolution options and the the skills to implement these options. For the majority of the students their choices were to "walk away" or to fight. For the minority that

saw talking as an option, talking most often took the form of bargaining and negotiating a "peace treaty" so as to avoid a conflict the next time.

It was interesting to observe during the interviews how the subjects separated the conflict from the school's response to the conflict. For the subjects it was the school's response to their initial conflict with another student that was most often their greatest concern. For many students it was the managing of this second situation that became the focus of the mediation- How can I deal with this situation so as to not be suspended from school? This course of thinking may have been aided by a system where the vice principal of the school offered the subjects the option of suspension or mediation.

As the students told their stories it became readily apparent the school does not listen to students often enough. Each student, who experienced a simlar process of mediation, had his/her own personal victories and defeats within the process. It is the understanding of these differences derived through listening that would be beneficial in the structuring of future conflict resolution programs within a school.

The procedure:

As stated earlier, respondents were students involved in mediation during the 1996-97 school year. A list of names of the students who have had a dispute resolved through mediation is kept by the school mediation coordinator. The researcher met with the mediation coordinator to explain the

nature of the study (purpose, specific research questions, and the potential usefulness of the findings) and the process of data collection (interview, transcript review, and possible follow up interviews). Also at this time the researcher explained the safeguards (anonymity of the participants and the opportunity to withdraw at any time) that will be used to protect the students.

The mediation coordinator distributed to the students who have had disputes resolved through mediation an interview outline (including an introduction to the interview process, the instructions that were followed in the interview, as well as the interview questions), a letter requesting their participation in the study, and letter asking for their parents' consent to be involved in the study. The mediation coordinator requested that the students discuss their possible participation in the study with their parents. Upon the distribution of this letter, the mediation coordinator answered any and all questions from students or parents about the study. The mediation coordinator provided the researcher a list of students who responded positively to the request to participate in the study. As well the coordinator provided to the researcher the signed letters of participation and consent. Due to the confidential nature of the mediation process it was felt that the researcher should only meet with the students who had consented to be part of the study.

The researcher met briefly with each of these students, individually, to review with them what the study was about

and what would be required if participated. Also at this time an appointment for the interview was arranged.

A test of the interview guide was undertaken to assess the clarity of the questions and their ability to elicit the type of responses sought. The interview process was tested on two student volunteers, who had a dispute resolved through mediation the previous year. Minor changes in the wording of some questions were made. For the most part the guide appeared sound, but the need for flexibility in asking the right interview specific probing question at the right time became evident.

Interviews were conducted in the KECCRI mediation room, which provided a quiet and comfortable environment.

All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. The first step in the analysis was to collate the subjects' responses to the five interview questions. In collating the data the researcher looked for similarities and differences in the subjects' experiences and perceptions.

The second step in the analysis was the examination of the data by gender. The researcher examined the data for similarities and differences in the experiences and perceptions of subjects of the same gender, as well as comparing the experiences and perceptions between the genders.

The third step in the analysis was to group subjects' responses by their definition of conflict and to examine if there was a relationship between the subjects' perception of conflict and their experience and perceptions of the mediation process.

The final step was to compare the experiences and perceptions of subjects who were participants in the same mediation. This analysis provided valuable insight as to how individuals who participated in the same event had similar or disparate views.

Upon completion of these analyses the findings were discussed in relation to the five research questions posed earlier in this thesis.

Relationship between the interview questions, the research questions, and the literature:

The purpose of the first interview question, where the subject selects a definition of conflict that corresponds with view of conflict, was to establish the subjects' perception of conflict. These perceptions were used later to examine the effect of students' perception on the process of mediation. At this time there appears to be little literature, if any, that examines this relationship.

The second interview question allowed the subjects to tell their stories about how they ended up in mediation. In the telling of the stories the subjects described the cause of their conflicts and the course of events from conflict to mediation. The causes of the conflicts that led to mediation were compared to common causes of student conflict cited in the literature (Johnson and Johnson, 1996) and to the results of the survey of KEC students (Johnson, 1996). As well the subjects' responses provided a base line of the knowledge students had going into their mediations. This base line was compared to the their

knowledge of mediation protocol and procedures after the mediation. Also responses to this question provided an indication of whether students understood the process of mediation. Most of the literature (Johnson and Johnson, 1996) that deals with cognitive understanding of the process focuses on the mediators (teachers or students) as opposed to the mediated. The responses to this question were useful in answering the first research question addressing students' understanding of the mediation process.

The third interview question was designed to focus on what happened during the mediation. Generally, this question provided a fairly clear view of the subjects' attitudes and perceptions about the process. Specifically, the researcher examined the responses to this question looking for indicators of student empowerment (Maxwell, 1988; Briggs, 1970; and Johnson, Johnson, Dudley and Burnett, 1992) and changes of psychological mind set and sociological role (deReuck, 1990; Deutsch, 1949). The literature suggests that it is these two elements that move mediation from a process of negotiation and bargaining to one of problem solving and relationship building. Subjects' answers to this question were useful in addressing the two research questions related to student empowerment and the shifting of psychological mind sets and sociological roles (research questions 2 and 3).

The fourth interview question focused on the relationship between the disputants before and after the mediation. The literature (Burton, 1990) suggests that mediation has the

potential to legitimize a relationship and to create a situation where the relationship becomes more self regulating (Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, and Burnett, 1992). Reponses to this question and the corresponding probes allowed the researcher to examine the effects of the mediation on the relationship of the two disputants (research question 4).

The final interview question probed the effect of the mediation upon the disputants' methods of resolving conflicts that took place after the mediation. The literature (Stern, 1978, Cheatam, 1988, and Porter and Davis, 1985a and 1985b) implies that involvement in the mediation process would lead to the disputants resolving conflict in a more pro-social way. Responses to this question were useful in addressing research question 5, that of the effect of mediation upon the disputants' methods and ability to solve ensuing conflicts.

It is important to note that this study was neither an assessment of the mediators' skills and abilities, nor an evaluation of the KEC mediation program. Its purpose was to collect the experiences of students who have had a dispute resolved through the process of mediation and to analyze these experiences in light of the current literature.

CHAPTER 7
RESULTS

The students' responses to the five interview questions are provided in four groupings: an overall summary of the subjects' responses, responses as a function of gender, responses as a function of the perception of conflict, and a comparison of responses of disputants who were involved in the same mediation. These results were used to answer the five research question cited in the previous chapter.

Overall summary of the subjects' responses:

Interview question 1: Conflict can be defined in many ways. Select the definition that best reflects your view of conflict.

The goal of the first question was to establish the individual subjects' orientation toward conflict. In the survey of over 1500 KEC students Johnson (1995) delineated three orientations toward conflict common to the student body. This first question allowed for the classification of individual subjects according to their orientation toward conflict, then the experiences and perceptions of subjects sharing a common orientation were analyzed. The three orientations toward conflict were: positive- a sense that conflict could lead to a positive outcome, negative- a desire to avoid conflict, and violent- a belief that conflict involved the use of physical

tactics. As well a comparison between the experiences and orientations of subjects with different orientations was done.

1.1 Definitions of conflict- The subjects interviewed had a variety of definitions with four of the seven possible definitions provided being selected by at least one subject. The definition was chosen that it best reflected the subject's view of conflict. There was no one definition of conflict that all, or even a simple majority, of the subjects selected (see table 11 below and on the next page).

Students' definition of conflict

Table 11

Definition of conflict	Responses
1. Situation where people want the same result but try to achieve it in different ways.	3
2. Not being able to solve disagreements or differences.	2
3. A clash between two different points of view	2
4. Disagreements or differences which result in physical actions	1
5. An unwelcome way of negotiating disagreements or differences	0
6. The violent result of disagreements or differences	0
7. The first step to finding solutions to problems	0
Total	8

If this list of seven definitions of conflict and the subjects' selection of these definitions can be collapsed into three overarching perspectives, a clear picture of the subjects' perception of conflict can be attained. The first perspective of conflict, which may be labeled as "positive" included definitions: "a clash between two different points of view", "a situation where people want the same result but try to achieve it in different ways", and " The first step to finding a solution to

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problems". These three definitions have in common a positive or at least neutral perspective on conflict which is non-violent. Conceivably, those who endorse this view of conflict enter into mediation with the expectation that problems can be resolved to the mutual benefit of both parties, and hence may neither fear nor avoid mediation. This view of conflict was selected by 5 of the 8 subjects.

The second perspective of conflict may be labeled as "negative" included definitions: "Not being able to solve disagreements or differences" and "An unwelcome way of negotiating disagreements or differences". Those who endorse these statements appear to view conflict in a negative light, yet, without assuming it must result in physical action or violence. Conceivably, those who endorse this view of conflict may dislike conflict, seek to avoid it, and enter into mediation with a certain amount of trepidation and reluctance. This notion of conflict was supported by 2 of the 8 subjects.

The third perspective, held by 1 subject, may be labeled as "violent". This view of conflict was reflected in definitions: "disagreements or differences which result in physical actions" and "The violent result of disagreements of differences". Both of these definitions share an explicit belief that conflict necessarily involves physical or violent elements. It is possible that individuals who endorse this perspective may be at greater risk for perceiving violence as a legitimate response to conflict, and therefore be unprepared to problem solve in the mediation process.

These three overarching definitions of conflict are used later to examine the possible influence of one's perspective of conflict on shaping students' beliefs about, perceptions of, responses to, and actions within, mediation.

Interview question 2: Tell me how you ended up in mediation.

The intent of the second interview question was to provide the subjects the opportunity to tell their story about how they ended up in mediation. The subjects were asked to describe the circumstances that led to them becoming involved in mediation. The participants' responses provided the researcher with a glimpse of the causes and contexts of the students' conflicts. As well it was an opportunity to establish the prior knowledge of mediation with which the subjects entered the process.

2.1 Causes of conflict- As would be expected from what was seen in the literature (Johnson and Johnson, 1996) and from the surveys of KEC students' attitudes and perceptions of conflict (Johnson, 1995), the most common cause of conflicts winding up in mediation was rumours and gossiping. This was present to some extent in all six cases. In one case the rumours and gossiping were linked to racism and to jealousy in another. In a third case drunkenness was a contributing factor in the escalation of the conflict from gossiping and rumours to a minor physical assault. In all eight cases rumours and gossiping led to verbal arguments, that escalated into minor physical

altercations in three cases. A grade eleven student described the cause and process of conflict escalation this way:

> ...somebody had said that I had said something and I didn't say it which it was regarded towards somebody of a different race. It wasn't true and I guess the other people believed it and they... came after me for it and I ended up in mediation about a month after it began.

2.2 Referral process- After the conflict manifested itself in the school, the most common route to mediation passed through the vice principal's office. A seventeen year old described her route to mediation:

> I got into a disagreement with somebody, some things were being said about me but weren't true and a big argument started in the hallway and so we were down at the office and the vice principal said that the best thing for us to do would be to try mediation to see if we could work it out, so we went through that.

In four of the 6 cases the subjects were referred to the vice principal by either a guidance counselor or classroom teacher.

In the vice principal's office the procedure by which the students would proceed to mediation was explained. In 6 cases the students were told that their options were to go to mediation or they would be suspended from school. In 2 cases the students were suspended from school and were required to go through mediation to be re-admitted to school. This understanding of school policy was expressed by a 16 year old female student: "Because she told me how the rules of the

school go and [for] you [to] get back in class you have to go through mediation".

2.3 Students' prior knowledge of the mediation process- The subjects' prior knowledge of mediation varied widely. Three of the subjects were totally unaware of the school mediation program and the mediation process. Five of the subjects had a rudimentary knowledge of the mediation describing it as: "... a program for resolving conflict between individuals...", "Basically they try to solve problems between two or more people", or "that when I go there we're going to talk things through and when I leave everything has to be solved or worked out". One subject had experienced mediation in junior high and was quite aware of the process.

2.4 Students' emotional response to the prospect of going to mediation- The subjects' emotional response to the pending mediation also varied widely. The most common response (4 subjects) was that of worry- "Kind of nervous at first because I didn't know what to expect but then after we'd gone through it , it was fine". In 3 cases subjects felt confident and hopeful about going to mediation and bringing the conflict to an end: "I felt good about it because it was a good way to get over things, a good way to clear your head". A third response, expressed by one subject, was that of resignation- "I just wanted to get it over with because I just didn't want to be in the same room with him because I just didn't like him".

Interview question 3: Tell me what happened during the mediation.

The third interview question directed the subjects to describe what happened during the mediation. The purpose of this question was to provide the subjects the opportunity to explain and evaluate the process and to describe any changes in attitude toward the other disputant and/or feelings of control they experienced within the mediation. Through the examination of the subjects' explanations of the process, the researcher was able to ascertain the students' knowledge and understanding of the process after going through mediation. The researcher examined the responses to this question for indicators of a shift in the disputants psychological mind set or sociological roles as well as descriptions of student empowerment.

3.1 Describing the process of mediation- All 8 subjects in providing their overall descriptions of what happened during the mediation outlined the typical steps of the process: story telling, analysis of the problem, problem solving, and the agreement. Here is an example of how the subjects described the process:

> They asked both of us what started the problem and how it finished. They worked through it by asking us those questions, then they went over it and asked us if we wanted to add whatever and then they just worked through it with us and asked us questions about how to work it out and stuff like that.

One student simply and accurately stated that in the mediation they "tried to find the root of the problem".

3.2   Describing the role of the mediator- The subjects described the tasks performed by the mediators: "...told us the rules", "Listened to both sides", "Not pointing fingers", "Asking questions and taking notes", and "Suggested ideas for the agreement". One subject specifically emphasized how important the mediators were in controlling the emotions of the situation:

> It helped because I couldn't sit there looking at her face and speak to her...It's a lot easier because a lot of time if you speak to someone and there's not someone there to stand in the middle of you and speak back to the other person you get more angry. So I think that it's a good idea for them to have two people there...

Seven of the eight subjects also made mention of the importance of the mediators' neutrality. A 16 year old female subject stated that: "I felt it was very fair, they didn't take sides and if you were to say 'well don't you agree with me', they wouldn't agree with you".

Other items that made the process fair in the minds of the subjects were that the disputants had an equal amount of time to talk, the mediators controlled the process, and the disputants controlled the content. A 17 year old male explain the fairness of the process this way:

> Ya, considering that both got to tell our sides of the story. I don't usually get to do that whenever something happens like that, usually the other person tells the story and then I get crappped on so I usually don't have a chance to tell my story.

One subject, a 16 year old male, did not perceive a neutrality on the part of the mediators and stated:

Teachers always back this person up and they're always on his side because he's not mentally challenged but he has some problems and they say he has some kind of disease some kind of problem where it affects his thinking.

3.3 Perceived fairness of the process- When questioned specifically about the fairness of the process, virtually all of the subjects interpreted the question to mean the fairness of mediation within the school's discipline policy as opposed to the fairness within the actual process of the mediation (as was intended). The students judged fairness of mediation in comparison with suspension or expulsion. This alternative interpretation on the part of the subjects lead to an unintended discovery about the disputants' motivation for going to mediation. A male subject described the fairness of mediation within the school discipline policy this way:

Well it was fair that I didn't get kicked out of school for it, because usually lots of kids get kicked out of school as soon as administration finds out about fights because they're not very lenient when it comes to fighting and they don't really like kids fighting so I was glad that they didn't kick me out of school. I was really glad about that. At least I'm not out of school, at least I'm not getting punished.

A 17 year old female subject had a similar response:

Ya, I did because one of the vice principals thought the best thing to do was to be suspended but Ms. -----wanted to see what mediation would do for us so we went through that, so I figured that was pretty fair...

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This motivation of avoiding suspension was echoed by the other six subjects, in particular, a grade eleven female subject who summed up her motivation this way: "...but if I didn't go to mediation I would have been suspended and kicked out of school..."

This notion of fairness and overall satisfaction with the process of mediation (as well as the fairness of mediation within the school's discipline policy) extended to the final agreements that concluded the mediations. The sentiment of fairness with the agreement was expressed in comments such as: "Oh that was good that we had to sign that paper agreeing that we wouldn't have any more problems with that person." and "I felt it was a good agreement". A grade eleven male subject described the agreement in these terms:

> The agreement that was at the end wasn't really sort of an agreement. It was more of a plan basically to try more or less get along, to try to work together as a person and a person... it was basically a plan between me and him that we'll try to work better together and stuff like that.

3.4 Outcomes of the mediations- For a minority (2 subjects) the agreement resolved the conflict, while for the other six subjects mediation brought closure to the incident without addressing the root cause of the conflict. The two who perceived their problem was resolved expressed the following feelings:

> Once we got talking I realized we barely even knew each other and we started arguing with one another and ended up hating each other not even knowing one another and then we

> finally figured out stuff about ourselves and we ended up becoming really close friends and stuff.

and

> Actually ya, because we both got the story straight, we didn't know what to think before we went through mediation. We didn't know what the story was but when we heard what was going on and stuff It was all fair and I figured out what was going on.

Those participants who perceived the incident was concluded (without the problem being resolved through mediation) expressed support for the process and the agreement in terms that compared the agreement to alternative solutions such as suspension. The sentiment of unresolved feelings is most forcefully recalled by a 17 year old male student who stated: "No, after the mediation I still wanted to kill him... We just keep our distance and look at each other, we always want to get in each other's throats but we know there's consequences". With these hostile feelings still present the same student concluded: "The agreement's good, at least I didn't get punished for it, get suspended or expelled so that's good".

This sentiment of closure without resolution was expressed to a varying degree by six participants. When asked to evaluate the outcome of the mediation one subject responded: "I got back in school...".

3.5 Sense of empowerment within the process of mediation- Did this sense of fairness and satisfaction with the process of mediation include a sense of individual control or

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empowerment? When probed about their control within the process the subjects responded from a perspective that equated control with dominance of the process. This perspective of control is outlined in this response to the question- Did you feel you had any control:

> Because you can't feel you have control
> because they're there to work things out,
> you're not better than the other person, you
> guys are trying to work it out, so you're equal,
> you're not trying to work it out to the point
> where you walk out of there and just scrap it
> out. It has to be worked out, you can't argue
> any more.

From this perspective the subjects did not feel they had "control" of the process. Their (all 8 subjects provided similar responses) sense was that no one had "control" but that authority within the mediation was shared between the disputants and the mediators. This collective perception of shared authority is embodied in these three statements from three different subjects: "Because I controlled what I was saying", "I had a little bit of control because I got to say what I felt and how I felt about him", and

> I don't think either of us had control. I think
> the person mediating was having control. We
> had control as far as telling what happened
> and the anger management and stuff like that,
> but, when it comes to certain things we didn't
> have control of anything. We had to follow
> their rules, commands, stuff like that we
> couldn't blurt out and start talking.

All of the subjects responded that they were comfortable with this arrangement of the mediator's controlling the process and the disputants sharing ownership of the content. The

acceptance of this shared authority can be heard in this comment by a grade eleven subject:

> I think there was control on both parts... Because the mediators were there, like controlling what we were saying to make sure we weren't going to like start into an argument or whatever, but yet both of us were in control about what we were saying. We had our stories so we were telling that and we were honest with the stories.

One 16 year old male provided an interesting insight into his perception of control: "Before the mediation, I didn't feel I had any control of the situation because I've always had problems with administration ever since I was a little kid... I'd rather go through mediation". While the amount of control perceived within the mediation was limited it was preferred to the feelings of no control when discipline issues are dealt with by the administration.

For the most part, the subjects responded that they believed they had some control within the process of mediation, but it is not certain if this control is sufficient enough to be described as empowerment.

3.6 Perceived changes in psychological mind set and sociological role- Was this process with its perceived fairness and shared authority enough to create an environment which could induce shifts in the psychological mind sets and social roles of the disputants? Does this process have the propensity to move disputants from a competitive mode to a cooperative mode and to alter their views of each other from antagonist to partner? The literature suggests that the

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effectiveness of the mediation process pivots on these two transformations. Changes in psychological mode and sociological perceptions were only reported in a minority of cases.

In the majority of cases (5 of 8) there was very little change in attitude towards the other disputant during the course of the mediation. In 2 of these 5 cases the anger toward the other disputant was dissipated and replaced with feelings of ambivalence. This ambivalence was described by the subjects as feeling "normal" or "nothing". In another 2 of these five cases feelings of anger and upset were softened to the point where the other disputant was described as; "Not friends but we talk". In the fifth instance no change took place- at the beginning of the mediation the student stated" "I was ready to kill him in the room" and at the end of the mediation the student recalled that he felt as if: "I still wanted to kill him".

Three of the five subjects provided some indication that their feelings (and possibly their psychological mind set) had changed during the mediation. While similar in cause (gossip/rumours) each of these three cases was different in their context and conclusion. One subject stated that she and the other disputant were not aware of each other until the conflict arose, but became good friends through the process of mediation. In the second case, the subject stated that mediation helped ex-best friends become friends again. The third subject described the situation that they were classmates, but now after the conflict and mediation they have no relationship (to the point of avoiding each other or not looking at each other).

The first subject, a 17 year old female, described her feeling about the other disputant at the start of the mediation as: "Pretty angry with the person". During the mediation her feelings changed and this change is reflected in this statement: "This person, she's really nice and we found that we're both quite alike". After the mediation the subject commented that if we were going to be friends it would be better if "we'd talk aside just the both of us".

The second participant, a 16 year old female, was in conflict with a student she described as her "best friend" and that this conflict "was basically our last chance to be really good friends". At the start of the mediation this other disputant was described as "an enemy" and her feelings were that of "anger" and "upset". Early in the mediation she felt she "became more angry", but this anger subsided as she was able to realize how much the other disputant "cared about me". This realization led to a recognition of the lack of self confidence on the part of the other disputant; "She's a lot heavier than I am and I'm a lot smaller than her and she- I think she's pretty but maybe she doesn't feel that way about herself". After the mediation the subject described the relationship as "friends pretty much", but that their friendship is limited because "our parents were pretty angry and they don't really want us speaking to each other, even though they both know we speak to each, they don't want us to".

The third subject, a 17 year old male, stated his feelings for the other disputant at the start of the mediation as: "I never

really hated him, actually I was his friend at the beginning of the year until the rumours came up". As the mediation developed the subject's feelings were of concern as he recalled he: "worried about how he felt". Later in the mediation, the subject stated this emotions:

> I kind of got more sympathetic for him, I felt like I actually cared about what he was feeling which was exactly what I was- I actually sat there and listened to his side and listened to what he had to say instead of just me, listening to me and everyone else listening to me instead.

When asked if they may be friends again the subject replied: "... it's kind of hard because that was such a big problem, especially for him, it was such a big problem, it's kind of hard to become friends after all this happened".

For the most part changes in psychological mind set and sociological roles could only be inferred on these limited occasions. Overall, the process of mediation was only able to induce a sufficient shift in the psychological mind set to the point of positively affecting long term relationships in 2 of the 8 subjects interviewed.

Interview question 4: Tell me about your relationship with the other disputant.

The fourth question pursues the effect of mediation on the disputants' long term relationships. Did mediation promote the development of legitimate and self regulating relationships?

4.1 Relationship between the disputants after the mediation- The most common effect (reported by 5 of the 8

participants) of mediation on the disputants' relationship was the enforcing of a code of conduct that would limit the likelihood of conflict reoccurring. The behaviour of these

subjects was kept in check by an external force- the threat of expulsion- rather than an internal mechanisms such as respect, understanding, or self control derived through the process of mediation. This code of behaviour is succinctly described by a 17 year old male participant: "We don't talk to each other, we just mind our own business" and when queried on why he minds his own business he replied; "I'd get expelled from school". Another male subject echoed this view in this statement: "We don't talk, we just give each other dirty looks... but we both know there's consequences". When asked if it was mediation that kept them from fighting the subject replied: "No, not in the least".

Two female subjects, both aged 16, shared this sentiment when describing their post-mediation relationship as: "Not friends, but we could be acquainted sometimes if we're both at a party, we're not going to argue because it isn't worth it". In this case it was not only the external threat of expulsion from school that made these two disputants maintain this relationship. It was also re-enforced with threats of mutual reprisal:

> After we fought what happened was her
> friends came and threatened to kill me to
> come after me with like a bunch of gangs and
> stuff like that ... me her talked and we

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decided she didn't want that to happen and I didn't want that to happen because I knew what I could've done and she knew she could've done.

External control, whether it be the threat of expulsion from school or the revenge of a gang was the dominant force in maintaining five of the eight post-mediation relationships.

Meanwhile in one of the six cases, the subject was able to build a new friendship, "After that we finally got to know each other. After the mediation, we started talking, saying hi to each other in the halls and started talking and then we switched phone numbers and just doing lots of things together". This disputant outlined how she and her former foe agreed to maintain their relationship after the mediation: "...next time we'd hear stuff instead of taking it out like that and like with students outside in the hall bringing it on and stuff we figured just go right to the guidance counselor and just use the mediation room, we'd talk aside just the both of us".

In another case, a disputant was able to reconstruct a relationship. Before the conflict the disputant described their relationship: "We were together like all the time, pretty much, we were together all day- at school, most of the time we'd go out at night together. We were like best of friends, like you couldn't split us apart...". After the mediation she classifies her relationship as: "We're still friends pretty much just acquaintances, but we always talk...". When asked to speculate about the potential of re-establishing a best friend relationship the subject commented: "Not really because our parents were

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pretty angry and they don't really want us speaking to each even though they both know that we speak to each other...".When asked to speculate on the nature of their relationship without mediation she predicted:

> Probably it would have been the same thing over and over again because we would have never had time to sit down and cool down and talk it out because personally I'm not an aggressive person but when someone comes after me and hurts me physically I'll fight back or emotionally I'll say something back and then usually nothing gets solved unless there's someone there to stop and say, hey look this what needs to go on, you guys need to resolve your problem.

While not the ideal post-mediation relationships as described by Burton (1990), these relationships are certainly legitimate and self regulating in that the parties have developed a pattern of behaviour that is acceptable to both and the reason for maintaining these relationships is not an external threat or sanction.

In the eighth case, a spontaneous act of aggression based upon gossip and rumours, fueled by alcohol, there was little relationship between the two disputants prior to the conflict ("I kind of knew him a little, but not much") and even less after the mediation ("We are further apart").

Interview question 5:   Tell me about some conflict situations you have faced since the mediation.

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The purpose of interview question five was to ascertain the effect of mediation on how disputants handled subsequent conflicts. This is an important question as the purpose of the entire KEC Conflict Resolution Initiative was to teach students more effective ways of. resolving conflict and to create a school culture that is supportive of pro-social conflict resolution. So the question must be answered, did involvement in a mediation enhance the students' skills in resolving conflict? As well the question gave the subjects the latitude to provide their personal evaluation of the process of mediation.

5.1 Perceived effect of mediation on subsequent conflict situations- Four of the 8 disputants reported that mediation had a positive effect on how they resolved conflicts that arose after the mediation. A direct comment from a grade 11 student crystallized a broad feeling held by most of the disputants: "Like what I learned was not to take it to the extreme, just try to find a better conclusion and that conclusion is to talk things over with the person...". One student who faced a similar situation to the one that resulted in her going to mediation responded to this new situation:

> I told them no I'm not going to start anything. I figured we don't need anybody else to see what we're going to be talking about and what we're going to be doing so I figured we would just be ourselves and talk about it on our own without having a whole bunch of other people just jumping in and saying other things. This way we're on our own, we heard what each of us had to say without anyone else saying anything.

These two students, with the permission of a guidance counselor, used the school mediation room to discuss and resolve their conflict.

Another subject was able to apply the process of mediation to resolve conflicts within her family:

> Sort of because if I have a conflict at home I try to like with a family member I try to take another family member and get them to sit down with us and talk it out so I basically use the skills of the mediators at school and took them home with me and then use them for my own personal use - helping my friends or wish my family".

Two subjects, when asked what they had learned about conflict resolution by going through mediation, replied that they had learned it was best to avoid conflict. A grade 11 male described his post-mediation conflict resolution process as:

> One thing that I have been doing is if things come up I just walk away from it or if it's something I can't walk away from...I try to talk to the person, try to let them know what's up. I let them know if I said something, what I said, if they don't like that then that's their problem and I just leave it from there.

Another male subject put it more succinctly: "I wouldn't fight. I would just talk about it. I wouldn't keep it going".

A grade 12 subject, who stated "I really don't get into conflicts" described his post-mediation conflict response: "I just ignore it". This may not resolve the conflict, but at least it does not escalate the conflict, as a grade 11 male's method of resolution: "If it comes to fists and fighting, I'll do whatever I have to".

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The broad effect of going through mediation is that the subjects (7 of 8) say they have learned not to escalate the conflict through verbal aggression or physical acts. Of these seven subjects four displayed pro-social methods of conflict resolution after their mediation.

5.2 Students' evaluation of the mediation process- While half the students reported more pro-social conflict resolution procedures, only two unequivocally spoke in favour of mediation in schools. When asked if mediation is an effective way to resolve conflict in high schools, a grade 11 student responded:

> Actually it is, because it teaches you, everything doesn't have to be solved by arguing or fighting, it's like- it teaches you a lot of things can be solved just by sitting down and talking with the person... If you're by yourselves and a mediator or whatever just talking, you don't have to worry what other people are going to say...

The other subject that responded favourably about mediation in high schools argued for the expansion of the process through out society:

> I think they should put mediation in all levels of school- elementary, junior high, high school, maybe even universities because people disagree everywhere, teachers disagree with students, students disagree with students, maybe even like for they should make a place for family members or something- because a lot of family members disagree because they have programs where they have things for families but they don't rally have mediation for them and they should.

A third subject spoke favourably of mediation because through mediation he was able to get back in school.

One subject was critical of the process and argued that the mediation did not resolve the problem: "Well actually I don't think the problem has really been solved because if the problem had been totally solved I think we should still be friends..."

This student was also critical of the fact that it was teachers who did the mediation:

> I don't agree with mediation because mediation is done by teachers who have been taught to mediate students. I think, no offense to them, they've got their certificates or whatever so they can do it but I think real professional who have been doing it for years and years have degrees hanging all over their walls should be doing it instead of teachers...

Another subject felt that mediation may not be appropriate for adolescents:

> In some respects, ya but you know kids, they don't listen. Adults, I guess for adults, elderly people or older people getting into conflicts but when it comes to kids, always like to deal with things physically always, it's on the top of their minds all the time. You can't really change a person just by asking him how they feel and asking them different questions...

Later in the interview this subject did concede mediation may be "A good way to let go of some of the anger that's built up inside instead of like having to fight".

Two female subjects felt that teaching mediation and conflict resolution was not the role of the school. One participant explained this view:

> Because it's not really up to the school to do stuff like that... if you're going to be fighting then you yourself have to find a way to figure things out because in the future you're not going to have people there to watch you, lean over your shoulder and tell you what to do...

One subject was completely non-committal on the effectiveness of teaching mediation and conflict resolution in high schools.

Analysis by gender:

Most studies on conflict resolution show no significant gender differences (Nadler and Nadler, 1984). This study of mediation, as did the survey of over 1500 KEC students (Johnson, 1996) also shows that this lack of gender difference is true for the most part. However, this study, the results of the study of KEC student survey (Johnson, 1996), as well as some areas of the literature hint that gender differences might exist.

For the eight subjects of this study (4 female and 4 male) there appears to be little, if any, relationship between gender and perception of conflict. The four males were split evenly between positive and negative perceptions of conflict, while the female sample was composed of one subject with a violent perception of conflict, and three subjects with positive perceptions of conflict.

Males and females tend to report similar causes, contexts, and courses relative to the start of the conflict and its referral to mediation. All six cases started with gossiping and rumours, escalated to verbal or physical arguments which were referred by the vice principal to mediation. All share an underlying

motivation in going to mediation of avoiding suspension (3 males and 4 females) or to be re-enrolled in school after an expulsion (1 male).

Both genders entered mediation with the same anxieties and basic knowledge of the process. The two male subjects with a negative perception of conflict and who tend to want to avoid conflict did not exhibit a greater degree of anxiety or desire to not participate in the mediation. Once in the process of mediation, the perceptions of fairness and shared control are for the most part the same to both genders (4 females and 3 males). One male subject questioned the neutrality of the mediators and the amount of control disputants really had. All 8 disputants felt satisfaction with the agreement derived at the end of the mediation (at least to the extent of avoiding suspension and/or expulsion).

As for post-mediation relationships 5 of the 8 subjects reported that their relationship with the other disputant was controlled by an external force- fear of expulsion or gang reprisal. This subgroup of 5 was composed of three males and two females, so there appears to be little gender difference in this area. It may be important to note that only the females mentioned that their agreement was kept in place by threats of gang violence.

A slight, and potentially significant, difference appeared in the subjects' reporting changes in their feelings toward the other disputant during the mediation. Of the three subjects indicating shifts in their feeling toward the other disputant two

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were female. Is this ratio of two females for every one male reporting these shifts significant? Of course the size and make up of the sample make it impossible to make definitive statements about gender differences, but there may be some evidence that females are more socially attuned than males and therefore they respond to social cues such as cooperative initiatives more readily than males (Rubin and Brown, 1975: Swap and Rubin, 1983). Also it should be noted that both females who indicated changes in their feelings successfully resolved their conflict through mediation and were able to maintain a friendly relationship with the other disputant after the mediation. The male who reported a psychological shift in his attitude toward the other male disputant felt the conflict was not resolved and after the mediation the relationship between the disputants was one of dirty looks and controlled aggression. It may be surmised that a psychological shift in attitude on the part of one disputant is not enough to make the mediation productive.

One area of significant gender differences was how participation in mediation affected subsequent conflict resolution situations. All four females reported mediation had an impact on how they went about resolving conflict after the mediation. All four females reported that they were more likely to talk over issues and attempt to understand the others' position. Of the four male respondents 3 indicated avoidance (even though 2 of the 3 had a positive perspective of conflict)

as their preferred conflict resolution technique; while the fourth male indicated he was equally willing to talk or fight.

Another significant difference was that all four female disputants were able to maintain a relationship with the other disputant (albeit that for 2 of the female disputants this relationship was tepid, they continued to talk and to understand the other's position). What makes this result significant is not that all 4 female subjects maintained a relationship with the other disputant, but this is in conjunction with not one male being able to maintain a relationship with the other disputant after the mediation. While the females tried to resolve subsequent disputes through talking and negotiating, the males chose avoidance and the odd "dirty look" as the means of dealing with unresolved feelings. The literature suggests (Greenhalgh and Gilkey, 1984) this may be due to females' greater propensity for handling isolated negotiations (or a mediation) in light of a long-term relationship than males. It also may be inferred, that because males tend to use a more forceful approach (win/lose mind set) in negotiations (Kimmel, Pruit, Maceneau, Konar-Goldbrand, and Carnevale, 1980) they are less able to mediate an agreement that is mutual beneficial to both parties and some thing on which to build a relationship.

Obviously the sample size makes it difficult to make conclusive statements about the effect of gender on the process of mediation, however the results of the study certainly illustrate areas of study that are deserving of more research.

Analysis by perception of conflict:

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It could be safe to assume that the perception of conflict an individual brings to a mediation may affect the course of that mediation. In Johnson's (1996) survey results there appears to be some definite correlation's between conflict perception and the attitudes and actions displayed by the respondents. However in this study, analysis by subjects' perception of conflict does not support the above stated assumption nor produce significant correlation's. These short falls may be due to the small size of the sample and the lack of a validated instrument with which to assess the subjects' perception of conflict.

The sample of this study is composed of five of the eigh subjects having endorsed a positive perception of conflict, two of the eight subjects selecting a negative definition of conflict and one subject choosing a violent definition of conflict.

For the most part the cause, context, and course varied little by conflict perception. The cause was gossiping/rumours in all eight cases that lead to either a verbal or minor physical confrontation that ended up in the vice principal's office from where it was referred to mediation.

The subjects with a positive perspective of conflict entered the mediation with the same levels of anxiety and anger as students with negative or violent perspectives. It is difficult to speculate why no differences in anxiety levels were apparent, but it may be due to the students' self esteem or some other variable not addressed in this study. This area is certainly worthy of more study. As well all subjects from all three

groups entered mediation with the same level of rudimentary knowledge of mediation. A common motivation to go to mediation present in all three perspectives was the desire to avoid suspension or to be re-enrolled in school after being suspended.

Subjects from all three perspectives identified the same levels of satisfaction with the fairness of the process, as well as a sense of shared control during the mediation and in the formulation of the agreement. The only dissenting voice was one subject with a negative perspective toward conflict who felt the process was unfair and that the mediators lacked neutrality.

During the course of the mediation all five participants with positive orientations toward conflict reported at least some change in feeling toward the other disputant. Subjects with negative perceptions of conflict did not indicate they felt any change toward the other disputant during the mediation. The lone student who had endorsed a violent perspective of conflict reported a significant change in feelings toward the other disputant.

After the mediation three of the five subjects who had selected a positive perspective of conflict were able to maintain and develop a relationship with the other disputant, while neither of the two students with negative perceptions of conflict reported any relationship with the other disputant. The subject with the violent perspective reported that she had become very good friend with the other disputant.

In dealing with conflict after the mediation the most common technique was avoidance indicated by 5 of the 8 subjects. Of this subgroup of five were both participants who had endorsed negative definitions of conflict (as would be predicted based upon their preference to avoid conflict) and, surprisingly, 4 of the 5 participants who had selected a positive definition of conflict (which usually indicates a willingness to address and resolve conflict). Two of these four subjects stated that if they were unable to avoid conflict then their most likely response would be to talk and negotiate. One subject with a negative perspective of conflict indicated he was equally likely to use talking or fighting as a means to resolve conflict. Only one participant with a positive perspective of conflict provided examples of how she used mediation to resolve problems at home. The participant with a violent perception of conflict reported that she chose talking and negotiating as her means of resolving conflict and in one instance she even used the mediation room to resolve a dispute between her and another student.

Interestingly, perhaps the most ironic result was that the lone subject with a violent perception of conflict had the most rewarding mediation experience. Through her mediation experience she was able to make a new friend and to maintain a relationship with the other disputant. As well she was one of two students who had applied the mediation procedure to resolve a conflict that occurred after the mediation. When asked why she chose a violent definition of conflict she replied:

"A lot of conflicts do end up like that (violent)". When asked if mediation was used more often to resolve conflict would her perspective change she answered: "Probably".

The only relationship between the subjects' perception of conflict and mediation that can be made is that subjects with a positive perspective of conflict are more likely to indicate a change in feelings for the other disputant during mediation and to maintain a relationship with that disputant after the mediation. Of course these findings are limited by the size of the sample and the weakness of determining an individual's perception of conflict based upon one question. What is required is a more detailed study, possibly using Goldstein's (1990) Conflict Management Inventory, to determine the effect of conflict perception on the course and consequences of mediation.

Analysis of perceptions of disputants who shared the same mediation:

It was the original intent of this study to use only pairs of disputants who shared the same mediation, but due to difficulties cited earlier this was not possible. Fortunately, two pairs of disputants who shared the same mediations volunteered to be part of the study. This will allow for some limited comparison of perceptions of disputants who shared the same mediation experience. The first mediation, which for organizational purposes will be labeled Mediation "A", involved two male grade eleven students. The second case, Mediation "B", involved two female grade eleven students.

Mediation "A": The cause of the conflict that led to the mediation was gossip and rumours. The gossip had supposedly included some racist remarks about a black student. The black student confronted the other student and this led to some shouting, pushing, and shoving. The vice principal referred the disputants to mediation. The subject who was said to have made the racist comments had experienced mediation in junior high and looked forward to the mediation as a way to clear the air. The second subject, the victim of the remark, was reluctant to go to mediation. Both agreed that going to mediation was much better than the alternative- suspension for fighting.

During the mediation the student accused of making racist remarks felt the process was fair and that he had a chance to tell his side of the story, while the other student, the victim, felt the mediators were siding with the other disputant and that he wanted more control in the process than just telling his side of the story. The student who was accused of spreading the gossip stated that for one of the rare times in his life he actually listened to what the other person had to say. After hearing the other side of the story he stated that he felt he "cared" for the other disputant, was "sympathetic" toward his situation, and "understood" why he was so angry. He also stated that he hoped that they could be friends in the future. He even approached the other disputant and shook his hand and asked him to put the incident behind them. They shook hands but he felt that the other student still harbored ill feelings toward him. The disputant stated a desire that the two could be friends

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in the future, but he also realized how difficult it was going to be for the other party to get over his feelings.

The victim of the racist remarks felt no such feeling of empathy and understanding toward the other participant. He indicated in the interview that during the mediation he was on his feet yelling at the other disputant. He stated that at the beginning of the mediation he felt as if he wanted to kill the other disputant and that he still had those feelings at the end of the mediation. He also stated that he felt at some time they would most likely have a physical altercation. The subject maintained he held these feelings because the mediation did not resolve the root cause of the conflict- racism- and that the agreement only addressed ways of keeping them separate and avoiding another fight.

Why did two participants who were involved in the same mediation have such different perceptions? It could be speculated that the difference lies in the roles each disputant took on. The disputant accused of racist remarks came to the mediation with the desire to have the other disputant understand he did not make those comments and therefore adopted the role of a problem solver. His problem was to get the other disputant to understand this. In this mode of a problem solver he was willing to listen to the other party and this process of listening he developed a sense of empathy and understanding for the other party.

The other disputant, hurt by the alleged remarks, took on the role of victim and to him the mediation could only be

successful if the other disputant was punished for these comments. Unable to obtain this punishment he felt the other deserved, he perceived that the mediators were "taking the other guy's side". Not getting what we wanted from the mediation made the disputant sense that he lacked control of the process. This frustration manifested itself in the disputant standing up during the mediation and shouting at the other disputant. In this state he was unable to hear or understand the other party's version of the incident.

This inability to communicate lead to a situation where a mutual understanding could not be developed and conflict resolution was impossible. The best the mediators could hope for in a concluding agreement was that the disputants would stay away from each and the avoidance of another fight.

Mediation "B": This mediation was quite different. The two female grade 11 students, motivated by the twin desires of avoiding: suspension from school and gang involvement, wanted desperately to reach an agreement.

Both parties entered the mediation with a similar attitude as described by one of the disputants: "...it's like a good way to get over things, a good way to clear your head... especially when it's with the person that it was about because then you're talking about the problem and not leading it on".

This willing attitude created in both participants a desire to work with the mediators to resolve the issue. A desire to work with the mediators made them eager to share control of the

process and to accept the direction of the mediators. This may account for both disputants indicating a sense of fairness and control within the process. As they worked through the process each participant commented that their feeling to the other disputant had changed and they saw each other less as enemies, but not quite as friends.

This change in feelings was the basis of the agreement that conclude the mediation. This agreement played itself out in a relationship where they could maintain acquaintances, but not quite be friends. Here the relationship was maintained through equal parts understanding of the other and the fear of external sanctions.

What is certainly of interest in examining these two mediations is the differences in the perceptions of the disputants in Mediation "A". It is hypothesized here that this difference is due to the sociological roles each played during the mediation. This hypothesis is based upon the literature that suggests a shift in the disputants' role from antagonist to problem solver is required for the mediation to be successful. Further support for this notion is gained when we compare Mediation "A" with "B". In Mediation "B" the antagonists were willing to work to together, as partners, to resolve their mutual predicament. This experience working as partners created a sense of "friendship" that extended beyond the mediation. At this time this hypothesis is mainly speculation, deserving further investigation

Research questions:

This final section of this chapter will attempt to answer, with data collected through the interviews, the research questions posed earlier.

1. What were the disputants' understandings of the mediation process?

It can be surmised from the subjects' responses that they entered mediation with little knowledge of the process, but exited with a fair understanding of the process. This increase in knowledge is reflected in their ability to describe the stages of mediation- story telling, clarification, problem solving, and decision making. Also the subjects were able to delineate the roles played by the disputants and by the mediators. The role of disputants was to articulate their version of what happened, to try to understand the other person's position, and to have a significant amount of input into the final agreement. The subjects described the role of the mediators as: making sure the rules of mediation are being followed, providing each disputant an equal opportunity to talk, providing a conduit to maintain communication between the disputants when they are too angry to talk to each other, and to guide the formulation of the agreement. Both genders were equally comfortable in articulating this information about mediation.

2. Did the disputants feel empowered by the process?

In asking interview questions the term control was used rather than empowerment, sensing that the students may not

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understand the term empowerment. What proved to be true was that they also did not understand the term control in the context in which it was being used. To the students the term control meant to dominate. So when asked if they had control, they answer across the board was "no". When probed further the students explained that no one could have control of (dominate) the process because authority for what happened during the mediation was shared. The disputants were responsible for controlling their emotions, telling their version of what happened, and inputting terms for the agreement. The mediators were responsible for managing the process, keeping the mediation moving, and writing the agreement. Overall the subjects felt comfortable with the amount of control they had within the process and though they did not use the term it appears they felt empowered for what happened during the mediation. This sense was best conveyed by the subject who stated: "Before the mediation. I didn't feel I had any control of the situation...". This sense of control was felt equally by both genders.

This sense of empowerment seems to end with the mediation as five of the eight agreements are kept in place by external control- either the threat of suspension from school or gang retaliation. These agreements and their subsequent relationships tend to be controlling rather than liberating and empowering. The disputants tend to maintain these agreements out of the fear of the consequences, rather than a sense of mutual understanding and relationship.

3. Did the disputants perceive a change in their role or psychological mind set during the process?

There wasn't any direct indication that any of the eight disputants felt that the other person became their partner in resolving a mutual dilemma. The students' responses as they pertained to change in roles were limited to descriptions of moving from the role of "enemy" to that of "friend" These were the only responses that described changes in how the disputants related to one another. It may be safe to assume that this larger role of friend embodied the role of partner in problem solving. A second explanation may be that this role of problem solver is only a brief transitional step required before a sense of friendship can be developed and that this step is so short within the mediation process that it is not sensed by the disputants. What exactly may have happened during the mediation is not clear, but what is known that 4 of the 8 disputants developed some sort of friendship coming out of the mediation. It is interesting to note that all four of these disputants are female.

As for shifts in psychological mind sets these can only be inferred from subject responses that stated they went from "angry", "mad", and "upset" to "understanding", "sympathy", and "awareness". There was a direct link between the development of these feelings and the development of relationships that extend beyond the mediation. This shift was indicated by all four female subjects and only one male participant. As well when this item was analyzed by perception

of conflict it was found that 4 of the 5 subjects with a positive perspective sensed this type of shift, while it was not experienced by any subject endorsing a negative view of conflict. This type of change was reported by the one subject who selected a violent view of conflict. It appears to be certain that if this shift, whether psychological or sociological, does not take place during the mediation then there is little if any chance of forming a positive relationship after the mediation.

4. What were the effects of the mediation upon the relationship with the other disputant?

Only four of the eight disputants were able to maintain a positive relationship with the other disputant after the mediation. All four subjects were female. They also comprise four of the five subjects who had a change of feelings for the disputant during the mediation. As well three of the four entered into mediation with a positive perception of conflict.

The mediation had little effect on the relationships between the other four subjects and their partners in mediation. Of these four, three had little if any relationship with the other disputant, choosing to ignore that person as a means to avoid further conflict and its consequences- suspension. The fourth disputant felt the mediation did not resolve the root cause of the problem and that a physical confrontation was highly probable.

It appears that a pro-social relationship after the mediation is largely predicated upon the occurrence of a psychological shift in the mind set of the disputants. During the mediation a

"connection" needs to be made and the disputants must start to view one another as friends. This appears most likely to happen if the disputant is female or if the disputant enters the mediation with a positive perception of conflict.

One significant factor is that no matter if the relationship is maintained by an external force or by a mechanism internal to the relationship (understanding, respect, responsibility) none of the eight disputants have become involved in a conflict with the other disputant again. Only has one of the eight subjects been involved in conflict significant enough to be referred to mediation again. This student is the only student ever to be involved in more than one mediation in the five years of the initiative.

5. How has being involved in the mediation process affected the way the disputants resolve conflict?

For two female subjects involvement in mediation has profoundly affected the way in which they dealt with subsequent conflict. In one case the subject took the process home to resolve disputes amongst herself and family members. She has also encouraged members of her family to resolve disputes using a mediation type of approach. A second subject spontaneously initiated her own mediation type process by booking the school's mediation room and bringing in the person she was in conflict with to discuss the problem and resolve the conflict. She has also referred a friend to mediation. The first of these subjects endorsed a positive definition of conflict while the second chose a violent definition of conflict.

For another two female students their primary response to conflict is avoidance but if they are unable to avoid a conflict they will try to "talk it out" rather than fighting. Both of these subjects shared a positive orientation to conflict.

For three other subjects, all male (2 with negative perceptions of conflict and the other with a positive perception of conflict) their response to conflict is one of avoidance. If there is any potential for conflict they will: "ignore the other person", "just walk away". or "just not bother". In fairness one of the subjects stated that if the conflict could not be avoided, he might try talking the problem over but if that did not work he would withdraw.

The mediation had little effect on one of the male subjects as he stated he might try to talk it over but if it came to a fight he was ready.

It appears the effect of mediation upon future conflict resolution varies considerably by gender, perception of conflict, and what happens psychologically during the mediation.

The implementation of a mediation program into Kildonan East Collegiate appears to have generated two positive outcomes. It seems that a mediation program offers the school administration an effective option in dealing with student conflict, as all six mediations have been successful in preventing further conflict between the disputants. As well only one of the eight subjects has been referred back to mediation and this subject is only one of two students who

have ever been referred to mediation twice in the five year history of the program.

It also appears that mediation may have the potential to impact upon how students relate to one another and how they resolve conflict. This outcome is not as easily delineated as the relationship between mediation and future conflict occurrence, but it is this relationship that provides true value to school based mediation programs. For an educational institution an effective response to conflict and the reduction of future conflict are important in maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment, but of equal, if not greater, importance is the development of skills and strategies within the students which allow the students to effectively resolve conflict without the school staff becoming involved. It is the development of these self-regulating strategies and the opportunities to apply these strategies in meaningful ways that creates a culture of conflict resolution and learning supported by the norms of the staff and students as opposed to the rules and procedures of the school.

To conclude this section it appears mediation can reduce the reoccurrence of conflict within a school and it may also have the potential to impact upon how students relate to one another and how they resolve conflict but to better understand this relationship more research is required.

CHAPTER 8
DISCUSSION

This final chapter, the Discussion, will be composed of four parts. The first part will a summary of what was been learned about mediation. Kirkpatrick's Hierarchy of Evaluation (1967) will be used as the framework for this summary. The second part will be an examination of the question: Is mediation a force for social control or social transformation? The third section will be a discussion of future areas of theoretical research. The final component will be a series of recommendations for the implementation of a mediation program in high school.

Summary of what we have learned about mediation:

Kirkpatrick's model of evaluation ranks levels of evaluation based upon their value to those making program decisions. The four levels in rank order from least valuable to most valuable are: participants' reaction, actual learning that has occurred, transference of behaviour to real life settings, and the impact of the program on the community/school.

i) **Participants' reaction-** From this study and from the literature (Lam, 1989; Kaufman, 1991; Wheeler, Stephens, Kaufman, and Carlson, 1994; Johnson and Johnson, 1996) participant reaction to the process is generally quite positive. The students reported that they felt the process of mediation as applied at Kildonan East Collegiate was fair and that they shared in the control of the process. As well the participants

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reported that they appreciated the role the mediators in helping them resolve their disputes. Most of the students also stated that they thought it was a good idea for the school to have such a program to assist students in resolving their disputes.

Certainly in this study the subjects found mediation quite preferable to suspension.

ii) **Actual learning that has occurred.** A significant amount of learning has taken place on the part of the disputants. They have learned and are able to articulate the steps in the process of mediation. Much of this material was retained over a period of at least three months (that was when the last mediation studied occurred). Johnson, Johnson, and Dudley (1992) report similar rates of retention when students are taught the steps of negotiation. So it would appear that through either classroom instruction or by being part of a mediation students are readily able to learn the steps required to solve problems in a pro-social way.

iii) **Transference of behaviour to real life settings.** The literature (Cheatam, 1988; Davis and Porter 1985a and 1985b; DeJong, 1994a;, 1986; Lam, 1989) and this study are full of anecdotes about how the learned steps of conflict resolution are applied spontaneously in real life circumstances. Johnson, Johnson, and Dudley (1992) tested this application of learned skills in an experimental environment by video taping student role plays in various conflict situation, also by having the student write descriptions of how they would respond to

various conflict scenarios. In this study students who were trained chose negotiations as the means for resolving the dispute far more often than the untrained student. These results clearly point to the need for educating students on the processes of conflict resolution, but it begs the question of whether these students will recall and utilize these skills in real life situations.

Only two disputants discussed in their interviews occasions when they spontaneously applied the steps of mediation to resolve a dispute. Most of the subjects made mention that they would be willing to attempt talking as a means of resolution, but if this failed they would avoid further conflict by walking away. Two students indicated that on occasion fighting would be necessary to resolve a conflict. Research must go beyond anecdotal recollections and experimental study to determine if students are able, on a wide scale, to apply spontaneously the skills of conflict resolution learned either through mediation or classroom training.

iv) **Impact of program on the community/school.** Again the literature (Cheatam, 1988; Davis and Porter, 1985a and 1985b; Dittrich, 1987: Koch, 1986; Lam, 1989) is full of anecdotal evidence based upon a reduction in the number of student suspensions, improved student attendance, and an overall reduction in anti-social behaviour. The question must be asked: Can a conflict resolution program have an impact on the culture of the school? The answer based upon the literature (Leming, 1983; Schreiber-Dill and Haberman, 1995; Townley,

1995; Webster, 1993 and DeJong, 1994b) and the observations made during the five year of the KEC Conflict Resolution Initiative is: no. As the title of Lindquist and Molnar's (1995) article states: "Children learn what they live". The process of mediation and the teaching conflict resolution skills, based upon the values of human dignity, individual worth, mutual respect, cooperation and problem solving, must seem anachronistic to our students who live their school lives in a culture that emphasizes obedience, subservience, retribution over resolution, and cooperation. Why would a student expose him/herself to a process of open and meaning conflict resolution when they are unsure of what value system is in place- the one taught in the classroom or the one lived in the hallway and the school yard? As DeJong (1994a and 1994b) points out, for the teaching of conflict resolution to have an impact it must be part of a total package that includes changes in pedagogy, classroom management, school discipline policies, and school governance. As well he notes the importance of involving the parents and the community.

Through the interviews students made little, if any, comment about how having mediation in the school has changed the way they think about conflict or how they see conflict being dealt with in the school. One female student, who had a very successful experience with mediation and who has use the mediation process spontaneously to resolve conflict with her friends chose the most violent definition of conflict during her interview. When questioned about this she said that

most often she observes conflict being resolved through violence. While the mediation experience may have changed her way of resolving conflict, it has done little to change how conflict is resolved all around her and how she perceives conflict.

To conclude it appears students are: satisfied with the process of mediation, able to articulate the steps in the mediation process, and in some instances are able to apply these steps to spontaneously resolve conflict. As for the effect on the culture of the school it is highly unlikely that a mediation program on its own will have a significant impact. It seems that exposure to pro-social conflict resolution through one mediation does little to change attitudes and beliefs developed by students over a life time.

Social control or social transformation:

The second part of this chapter will focus on the question: Is mediation a process for social control or social transformation. The theoretical literature (Burton, 1990) and the practical school based literature (Cheatam 1988, Davis and Porter, 1985a and 1985b) extol mediation as a device to empower and liberate human beings. Based upon the principles of humanist psychology, mediation is a technique that could assist the individual in actualizing his/her full potential. Could mediation reach its full potential in a school environment?

Examining this question from what was observed in this study it would have to be concluded that it would be difficult for mediation to have a full impact on the development of an

individual. Mediation in the study was used as a social control aprocess to shape the behaviour of the students. It was provided as an option to suspension and expulsion so it had for the most part the same effect as these two disciplinary techniques. By providing the option of mediation in this context it is perceived by the participants as simply another disciplinary action or as a way to escape the consequences that are normally attached to this type of misbehaviour.

Presenting mediation in this way has the potential to create a mind set in the disputants that is not open to the risk taking and problem solving analysis that is required for mediation to be a process of social change. With this lack of risk taking and problem solving there is little room for the disputants to slip out of their roles of antagonists and opponents and to try on the roles of partners and problem solvers. By not doing so they miss the opportunity to feel the rewards of working together and the corresponding shifts in psychological mind set from competition to cooperation. This could be a structural/systemic reason why so few students indicated a change in their feelings to the other disputant.

Without this change during mediation it should not be surprising that there was little change in the relationships between the disputants after the mediation.

Knowing the steps without experiencing the psychological shift during the process of mediation appears to teach students that it is best to avoid conflict. The students who indicated a change of feelings during the process appeared more willing to

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try the steps of conflict resolution with their friends and family.

The absence of this change in combination with doubts about the reaction of others to open and meaningful conflict resolution leads to only limited spontaneous application of the steps of conflict resolution by disputants.

For the most part mediation serves a utilitarian function. For the administration it removes the problem from their desk and is a wise utilization of personnel, having trained teachers (usually on their lunch hours or preparation periods) bring about an end to the incident. In the minds of the administration, it may be safe to assume that mediation has served its purpose if the two students do not return to their office. This utilitarian attitude extends to the disputants. If they can go through mediation and avoid suspension or expulsion then mediation has gotten them what they want (in their minds mediation is a consequences free way to get away with their past behaviour). As well this utilitarian attitude allows them to negotiate an agreement in the mediation that does not require them to take the social risks that a more problem solving oriented approach might.

This utilitarian mind set is manifested in the agreements that conclude each mediation. The agreements are primarily plans that assist the disputants in avoiding one and another. By staying away from each other the students reduce the opportunity of opening up "old wounds", thus avoiding further conflict, but tragically the opportunity to truly resolve the

conflict is also lost. So mediation puts an end to the fight but does not resolve the conflict.

Mediation has proven to be highly effective in bringing an end to specific incidents, shaping student behaviour so that the incidents do not reoccur, and in a few cases developing pro-social skills in some of the disputants.

Implication for further research:

As with any emerging field the areas requiring research are vast. So the question may not be what to research, but where to focus. The current body of literature focuses on questions of theoretical constructs, program implementation, effects of training upon students, and to a lesser extent the effects of a conflict resolution program upon the culture of the school. All these areas, in particular the latter three, are important as schools and society in general attempt to become more effective in the teaching of pro-social skills for conflict resolution.

While all of these areas are important, a shift in focus away from program implementation and its effects may be required. Research that focuses on the consumer of the program may provide valuable insight in the formulation of new and more effective programs (if this research indicates that programs are required and may be effective). In the case of the schools this research would focus on the student.

At this time little is known about students' perceptions of and attitudes to conflict. One specific question that could be addressed is- Do students feel that conflict is of the same

epidemic proportions as do adults? Many of the programs implemented in schools and much of the current research has been driven by this adult perception that conflict and violence in school is out of control. Do young people have the same view- why? why not? Johnson's (1996) survey results indicate that most students feel that neither the rate nor the severity of conflict has increased during their time in school. This is a small survey of a select sample, but it certainly may be taken as an indicator that students' perception of conflict may differ from the perceptions of the adults who operate the school.

Related to this notion of students' perceptions of conflict is the question of how students view conflict. Again adult perceptions are that conflicts that escalate to verbal and physical altercations are "bad". From the eight subjects interviewed for this study the school's reaction to their conflict appeared to be of much greater concern than their being involved in a fight with another student. May this be an indicator that conflict, arguing, and fighting are perceived by students as every day occurrences in the life of an adolescent. This study has been conducted on a small scale, what may be needed is a large scale effort to understand how students perceive conflict.

As well as knowing little about the attitudes and perceptions of students about conflict, little is known about how students resolve conflict in the absence of an authority figure. How do two young children, within viewing distance of their parents but out ear shot of their parents, resolve their disputes over

possession and territory? As important as it is to find out how children spontaneously resolve their own conflicts, it may be equally important to find out how they feel about these resolutions. By what criteria do they measure a "good" resolution? How important is it for them to get their own way? How important is maintaining a relationship with the other person? Do these criteria shift from dispute to dispute? Are they affected by whom the dispute is with?

With this type of knowledge in hand, conflict resolution programs implemented in schools must be rigorously evaluated. This type of study could take the form of pre-program implementation and post-program implementation testing, but ideally the evaluation would include comparisons with control groups. As well this type of comparison study could be extended to the comparing of the effects of different types of conflict resolution training.

A final recommendation to conflict researchers is to limit their study and evaluation to areas that can be directly affected by the implementation of a conflict resolution program. To obtain program and research dollars conflict researchers have been forced to weld conflict resolution to whatever initiative was being pushed by funding agencies. First, it was truancy and student malaise, then it was the war on drugs, now it is violence prevention, and looming over the horizon is the demand for improved academic achievement. Chasing this type of funding has made conflict resolution researchers make claims about the effectiveness of conflict

resolution in all of these areas. These claims, easy to make and very difficult to prove, to tended to discredit the field.

Recommendations for the implementation of mediation programs in high school:

If mediation is to be more than a social control process two areas must be addressed- staff education and program implementation.

i) Staff education- The term staff education is being used to distinguish it from the type of training that is being provided today for teachers and administration. Today the bulk of the time allotted to staff training focuses on the "nuts and bolts" of running the program and to the specifics of how to perform a mediation. Though important in the successful operation of a mediation program, this type of training without conflict resolution education may (and in the case of the KECCRI already has) lead to a program of social control as opposed to social transformation. The best intentions, under the pressures of the day to day operations of the school and without a firm philosophical understanding of conflict resolution, may become lost. The tragedy is not in the program becoming a program of social control. There is nothing wrong with effective and efficient conflict resolution. The true tragedy lies in the missed opportunity to educate students about pro-social methods of conflict resolution. Students must be given meaningful opportunities to develop these skills within the context of their lives.

Through conflict resolution education the staff will begin to understand that conflict resolution is a messy business that cannot always be neatly wrapped up in one mediation session. Also the staff will understand that the value of mediation or any conflict resolution strategy lies in the process not in the resolution. It is through the process that the disputants move from antagonist to partner, relationships are built, and skills developed.

ii) **Program implementation**- How the program is delivered to the students carries a powerful message. As seen in the KECCRI when mediation is provided as an option to suspension or expulsion, it is viewed by the students as another form of punishment. The goal of the students as when confronted with any form of punishment is to survive the punishment while enduring the least amount of pain. In the operation of the mediation this translates into some students attempting to risk little while determining how the "game" of mediation is played. Once both sides have learned the game, it is relatively simply to come to an agreement to conclude the mediation. This attitude and knowledge lends itself to mediations that conclude incidents, but do little to resolve the conflict.

To avoid this situation mediation must be provided to the students in a different structure. For minor offenses, where there would be no suspension or expulsion, mediation should be completely explained to the students and the students should be given the option of using mediation to resolve the

conflict and to re-establish a relationship if possible. For more serious offences, where suspension and expulsion are deemed necessary, the students should be suspended or expelled. Upon return to school mediation should be thoroughly explained to the students and offered as an option to assist in their re-entry to school.

The question may be asked: "Why would a student choose to accept mediation after they have already served their suspension?". If the students understood that the focus of the mediation was to be the restoration of the relationship and that the restoration of this relationship would make their life in school less stressful and more satisfying, many students would choose post-suspension mediation as a means of bringing resolution to their conflicts. If the mediation is successful, school would be less stressful as they would not have to worry about what the other disputant is saying behind their backs, nor would their day be filled with dirty looks and veiled threats. As well the student may be able to use the skills modeled in mediation to resolve future conflicts, thus making relationships more satisfying.

By implementing a program of mediation is way, mediation is removed from the realm of punishment and provided as a tool of reconciliation. In this context the goal of the students going to mediation is explicit- that of attempting to restore a relationship, as opposed to tacit- that of avoiding punishment. This clarity of goal provides a clear purpose for the mediation and a clear job description for the mediators. This openness of

intent should create an environment that is conducive to listening, understanding, and problem solving.

A final point on the implementation of a mediation program is that student (peer) mediators should be employed whenever possible. When using teachers as mediators the school only receives 50% back on its investment. By using students as mediators the school has four students, rather than two students, working to develop effective conflict resolution skills and strategies within a meaningful context.

Also by using student mediators the school sends a powerful message to the school population. Conflict resolution is predicated upon three basic points: people want to resolve their own problems, people will develop the capabilities to resolve their own problems by solving their own problems, and by resolving their own problems people develop a series of new relationships. By using student mediators these three messages are expressed in action rather than word. The model provided by student mediators and their actions has the potential to have a much greater effect than any conflict resolution training program.

A program of mediation, guided by strong philosophical understanding of conflict resolution and implemented in such a way as to focus on relationships rather than resolutions has the potential to develop effective conflict resolution skills and strategies within high school students.

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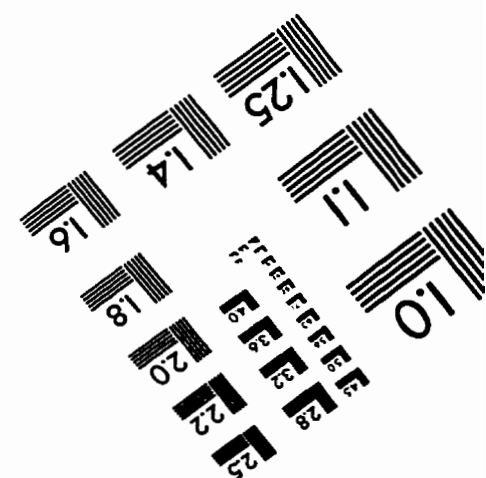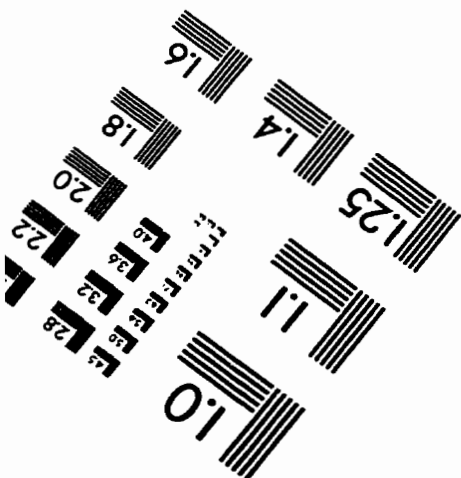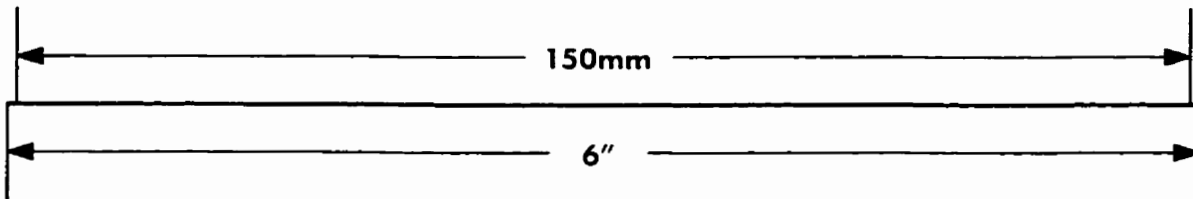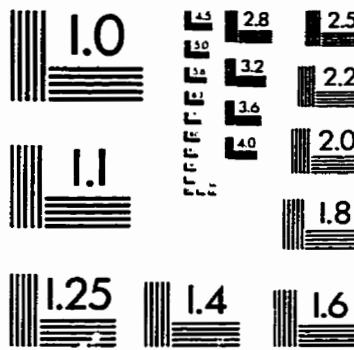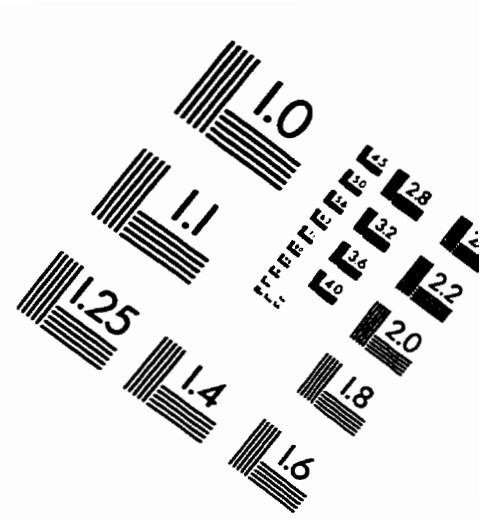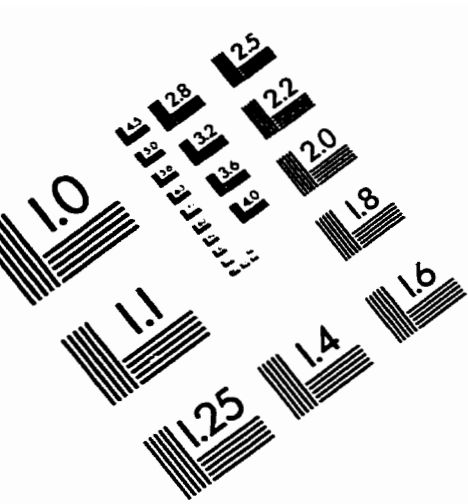
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IMAGE EVALUATION
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