CHAPTER 19

INTRODUCING COOPERATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION INTO SCHOOLS: A SYSTEMS APPROACH

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Families and schools are the two most important institutions influencing the developing child's predispositions to hate and to love. Although the influence of the family comes earlier and is often more profound, there is good reason to believe that the child's subsequent experiences in schools can modify or strengthen the child's earlier acquired dispositions. In this chapter, we shall outline a program of what schools can do to encourage the development of the values, attitudes, knowledge, and skills which foster constructive rather than destructive relations, which prepare our children to live in a peaceful world.

Many schools do not provide much constructive social experience for their students. Too often, schools are structured so that students are pitted against one another. They compete for the teacher's attention, for grades, for status, and for admission to prestigious schools. In recent years, it has been increasingly recognized that our schools have to change in basic ways if we are to educate children so that they are *for* rather than *against* one another, so that they develop the

1

ability to resolve their conflicts constructively rather than destructively, so that they are prepared to contribute to the development of a peaceful and just world. This recognition has been expressed in a number of interrelated movements in education such as "cooperative learning," "conflict resolution," "violence prevention," and "education for peace." Viewing schools from a systems perspective can allow us to see how these movements may complement each other and work in concert to transform our schools at five levels: the disciplinary, the curricular, the pedagogical, the cultural, and the community.

COOPERATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN PEACE EDUCATION

In her book, *Comprehensive Peace Education* (1988), Betty Reardon states that the general purpose of peace education is "to promote the development of an authentic planetary consciousness that will enable us to function as global citizens and to transform the present human condition by changing the social structures and the patterns of thought that have created it" (p. x). This statement emphasizes the role of peace education in transforming the thinking and the values of students around social interdependence and social justice, in a manner that moves them to become agents for the constructive transformation of the larger society. In this sense, peace education must be a core concern of peace psychologists as they endeavor to identify and promote conditions that favor the sustainable satisfaction of human needs for security, identity, self determination and quality of life for all people (Christie, 1997).

We see cooperation, conflict, and constructive, nonviolent approaches to the resolution of conflict as processes that are central to the broader mission of peace education. Deutsch (1994) defined peace education as "educating people to learn to live in a cooperative world, to learn to

manage the inevitable conflicts that occur in a constructive rather than destructive way" (p. 6). In order to accomplish this most effectively, schools must undergo a basic restructuring of the way in which they function. They must become collaborative institutions which are experienced as such by students and teachers in their day-to-day functioning. The ways of working together and the ways of dealing with the inevitable conflicts which emerge must incorporate this change. Most schools, in the United States anyway, are not such institutions, and the people within them, teachers and administrators, are not adequately prepared to function that way. This must be a core concern for educators.

The emphasis of this book on the relationship of structural violence (poverty, institutionalized racism, and sexism, etc.) to sustainable peace highlights an important question regarding conflict resolution that has been expressed by some in the peace education movement. Essentially they ask, "Doesn't 'resolving' conflicts in fact put out small fires that perhaps should be fanned into major conflagrations to aid in awakening a sense of injustice and identifying a need for more fundamental social change?" (Lawson, 1994). We believe this depends on how conflict resolution processes are put to use and agree with Stephens's (1994) view of conflict resolution as midway along a continuum extending from social system change to social system maintenance (see Figure 19.1).

Social change is unlikely without conflict. The question is under what circumstances will the conflict take a violent or nonviolent course? Some will argue that violence is necessary to overthrow those in power who don't want to change because they are benefiting from the status quo. Others will argue that there are many nonviolent methods (see Sharp, 1971) for developing both positive and negative incentives to motivate those in power to acquiesce to fundamental social

change.

In the abstract, one can never rule out the possibility that, in a specific situation, violence may be necessary to remove a brutal, oppressive despot. However, two important points must be made. First, violence is too frequently resorted to before other courses of nonviolent social action are adequately considered. Second, even a revolutionary group must have well-developed skills in collaboration and constructive conflict resolution if it is to function well and to manage its internal conflicts effectively.

A SYSTEMIC APPROACH TO COOPERATION, CONFLICT RESOLUTION, AND PEACE EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

Systemic approaches to conceptualizing conflict processes and intervening in intense conflicts have been gaining increasing attention in the field for conflicts at the individual level (e.g., Pruitt & Olczak, 1995), in schools (e.g., Louis & Miles, 1990; Crawford & Bodine, 1997), in other organizations (e.g., Ury, Brett, & Goldberg, 1988; Costantino & Merchant, 1996), and in or between nations (e.g., Rouhana & Kelman, 1994; Lederach, 1997). This emphasis on systems reflects the recognition that individuals are members of groups: They affect the groups and are affected by them; groups are components of organizations which affect them and which they affect; a similar two-way causation exists between the organizations and their communities.

Raider (1995) proposed that there are four levels of school systems through which one can introduce cooperation and conflict resolution concepts, skills, and processes: Level 1, the student disciplinary system; Level 2, the curriculum; Level 3, pedagogy; and Level 4, the school culture. We suggest that adding a fifth level—Level 5, the community—will enhance the view of the

school system as an "open system" embedded in a larger communal system which can aid in the sustainability of school system change (see Figure 19.2). Interventions at these five levels differ considerably, but all are aimed at change at both the individual and systems level and are centered on the values of empowerment, positive social interdependence, nonviolence, and social justice.

Case Study 1: Conflict and Change

In 1995, our Center (The International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution) was contacted by a newly appointed supervisor of a kindergarden through sixth-grade school district who requested our assistance with managing conflict and change in his new district. The school community was experiencing severe growing pains because of the spread of a more diverse, urban population into what had been a rather small and exclusively white rural community. The district was growing rapidly and was in the process of acquiring a local high school.

These changes had led to an increase in student-student, teacher-parent, and teacher-administration conflicts. Our approach began with a series of group interviews with key stakeholders in the district (teachers, union reps, board members, parents, etc.). These interviews assessed each of the groups' current concerns, their sense of "typical" and "ideal" conflict processes within the district, and their goals for the schools.

These data were then categorized and fed back to all of the interviewees as a group during a day-long feedback and planning session. This group, together, decided on a "whole systems" intervention in the district which included: classroom activity trainings for the teachers (which included training in constructive controversy), peer mediation trainings for the students (third grade and up), adult collaborative negotiation training for *all* staff (including the administration,

5

lunch aides, bus drivers, etc.), and "turn-key" trainings for a select group of staff that, in time, took over the training process. Both anecdotal and empirical evidence have indicated that the intervention has been effective in establishing a safer, more collaborative climate in the district.

Level 1: The Student Discipline System—Peer Mediation Programs

When there are difficult conflicts which the disputing parties are not able to resolve constructively themselves, it is useful to turn to the help of third parties such as mediators. In schools, such conflicts can occur between students, between students and teachers, between parents and teachers, between teachers and administrators, etc. *Mediation programs* have been established in a number of schools, often in response to an increase in student disciplinary problems, incidents of violence, or to the threat of violence in schools. As a result of their relative low-cost, student-centeredness, and reported effectiveness, peer mediation programs have emerged as one of the most widely used conflict resolution programs in schools (Crawford & Bodine, 1997). However, they are usually brought into a school to enhance the overall disciplinary system of a school, not replace it.

Typically, in these programs students as well as teachers are selected and given between ten and 30 hours of training and follow-up supervision to prepare them to serve as mediators. Oftentimes the student mediators are nominated by their peers. Training focuses on the principles of constructive conflict resolution as well as how to serve as a mediator. They are also given a set of rules to apply during the mediation process. Students as young as ten years as well as high school and college students have been trained. The mediation centers in schools get referrals from deans and teachers as well as students. The services of these centers are usually introduced into the school culture by classroom visits with role plays by mediators, posters and flyers detailing the

services, and other ways of persuading the administrators, faculty, and student body of the value of the center's services.

Several evaluation research studies have been conducted over the past ten years which show a consistent pattern of positive effects of peer mediation programs (Crawford & Bodine, 1997). At the individual level, a high level of satisfaction is often reported with the mediation process by both the disputants and the mediators. Beyond this, in a recent study (Jones, 1998), the researchers found that "…exposure to peer mediation reduces personal conflict and increases pro-social values, decreases aggressiveness, and increases perspective taking and conflict competence" (p. 18). Mediation programs appear to have the most positive effects on the student mediators themselves; positively affecting their self-confidence, self-esteem, assertiveness, and general attitudes towards school (Crawford & Bodine, 1997).

Case Study 2: A Fight at P.S. 18

A fight broke out in school today between James, an African-American student, and Luis, a Hispanic student. Luis claims that he was standing around with his friends between periods when he saw James standing against the other wall looking at him with a bad look. One of Luis's friends said in Spanish, "What's his problem?", and then they laughed and joked with each other. Then, for no reason, James got in his face and shoved him. Luis said he knew that James was trying to start something so he took a swing at him. Then the security guard came over. James claims that "these Hispanic kids" are always standing around, talking Spanish and looking at him. Today he heard one of them say "Moreno," which means "Black," and then saw them laughing and joking. James said he knew they were either trashing him or his people. He decided to get out of there, but Luis got in his way so he gave him a shove. Then, for no reason, Luis lunged at him and

started a fight.

This case was referred to peer mediation by the dean, and *you* have been asked to mediate it. The word in school is that the fight is going to continue after school between James's and Luis's friends.

At the school level, mediation programs appear to result in a significant drop in disciplinary referrals, detentions, and suspensions in schools. This, of course, reduces the amount of time that teachers and administrators have to spend dealing with these conflicts. Mediation programs also result in more positive perceptions of school "most notably…the development of a productive learning environment, maintenance of high standards, creation of a supportive and friendly environment, and development of positive overall climate" (Jones, 1998, p. 18). Finally, there is some indication from the Jones study that "whole school" mediation programs (schools receiving curriculum training, conflict skills training for staff, and peer mediation training) may better prepare disputants for mediation than cadre programs (peer mediation training only) by creating a "broader knowledge of mediation and constructive conflict behavior" (1998, p. 27). Generally, it is our assessment that mediation programs alone, although useful, are not sufficient to bring about the paradigmatic shift in education that we are proposing is needed to prepare students to live in a peaceful world.

Level 2: Curriculum—Conflict Resolution Training

Conflict is an inevitable feature of all social relations. Conflict can take a constructive or destructive course; it can take the form of enlivening controversy or deadly quarrel. There is much to suggest that there is a two-way relation between effective cooperation and constructive conflict

resolution. Good cooperative relations facilitate the constructive management of conflict; the ability to handle constructively the inevitable conflicts that occur during cooperation facilitates the survival and deepening of cooperative relations.

Case Study 3: The Morning Community Meeting

At a laboratory school outside of Dallas, Texas, Mrs. Jennings's kindergarten class begins each day with a morning meeting. The meeting begins with the teacher asking, "Does anyone have any problems that we should talk about this morning?" Several hands shoot up. Mrs. Jennings tosses a "Koosh ball" to one student, who answers: "We're running down the stairs to lunch too fast!" "Okay," replies Mrs. Jennings, "What could happen if we run down the stairs too fast?" The group then discusses the perils of stairwell accidents. After this, the teacher asks, "How can we help each other to walk more safely to the lunchroom?" The group then brainstorms suggestions. Together they decide that if any student runs down the stairs, he or she will be asked to return to the classroom and will eat lunch apart from the others for one day. This becomes temporary class policy and is written on the board. The next week the policy is reviewed for effectiveness. If it is working, it becomes formal class policy.

Problem identification, an orderly process for discussion, a mutual framing of the problem, an understanding of consequences, brainstorming, agreements, and an implementation check: These are the seeds of community problem-solving and mediation.

Schools and school districts are bringing conflict resolution concepts and skills into the curriculum, either as a course that stands alone or as a unit within existing programs. These curricula provide lessons and activities for preschoolers through university graduates and are focused on such themes as understanding conflict, communication, dealing with anger, cooperation, af-

firmation, bias awareness, cultural diversity, conflict resolution, and peacemaking. There are many different programs and their contents vary as a function of the age of the students being trained and their background.

Some common elements run through most programs. They derive from the recognition that a constructive process of conflict resolution is similar to an effective, cooperative problem-solving process (where the conflict is perceived as the mutual problem to be solved) while a destructive process is similar to a win-lose, competitive struggle (Deutsch, 1973). In effect, most conflict resolution training programs seek to instill the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that are conducive to effective, cooperative problem-solving and to discourage the attitudes and habitual responses which give rise to win-lose struggles. From a school system perspective, these trainings establish and reinforce a basic frame of reference and language for collaboration, and orient students to a process and skills that are familiar but underutilized. Below, we list the central elements which are included in many training programs, but we do not have the space to describe the ingenious techniques that are employed in teaching them. The sequence in which they are taught varies as a function of the nature of the group being taught.

1. *Know what type of conflict you are involved in*. There are three major types: the zero-sum conflict (a pure win-lose, conflict), the mixed-motive (both can win, both can lose, one can win and the other can lose), and the pure cooperative (both can win or both can lose). It is important to know what kind of conflict you are in because the different types require different types of strategies and tactics (see Lewicki & Litterer, 1985; Walton & McKersie, 1965). The common tendency is for inexperienced parties to define their conflict as "win-lose," even though very few conflicts intrinsically are. But if you misperceive it to be such, you are apt to engage in a com-

petitive, destructive process of conflict resolution.

The strategies and tactics of the different types of conflict differ. In a zero-sum conflict one seeks to amass, mobilize, and utilize the various resources of power to bring to bear more effective, relevant power than one's adversary; or if this is not possible in the initial area of conflict, one seeks to transform the arena of conflict into one in which one's effective power is greater than one's adversary. Thus, if a bully challenges you to a fight because you won't "lend" him money and you cannot amass the power to deter, intimidate, or beat him, you might arrange to change the conflict from a physical confrontation (which you would lose) to a legal confrontation (which you would win) by involving the police or other legal authority. Our emphasis is on the strategy of cooperative problem-solving to find a solution to the conflict which is mutually satisfactory and upon the development and application of mutually agreed-upon fair principles to handle those situations in which the aspirations of both sides cannot be equally realized. The strategy and tactics of the resolution of cooperative conflicts involve primarily cooperative fact-finding and research as well as rational persuasion.

2. *Become aware of the causes and consequences of violence and of the alternatives to violence, even when one is very angry*. Become realistically aware of how much violence there is and how alcohol and drugs contribute to violence. Become aware of what makes you very angry. Learn the healthy and unhealthy ways you have of expressing anger. Learn how to actively channel your anger in ways that are not violent and are not likely to provoke violence from the other. Learn alternatives to violence in dealing with conflict. Prothrow-Stith (1987) and others (see Eron, Gentry, & Schlegal, 1994 for a description of many programs) have developed very helpful curriculum for adolescents on the prevention of violence.

3. *Face conflict rather than avoid it*. Recognize that conflict may make you anxious and that you may try to avoid it. Learn the typical defenses you employ to evade conflict, e.g., denial, becoming overly agreeable, rationalization. Become aware of the negative consequences of evading a conflict—irritability, tension, persistence of the problem, etc. Learn what kinds of conflicts are best avoided rather than confronted—e.g., conflicts that will evaporate shortly, those that are inherently unresolvable, win-lose conflicts that you are unlikely to win.

4. *Respect yourself and your interests, respect the other and his or her interests*. Personal insecurity and a sense of vulnerability often lead people to define conflicts as "life and death," win-lose struggles even when they are relatively minor, mixed-motive conflicts. Helping students develop a respect for themselves and their interests enables them to see their conflicts in reasonable proportion and facilitates their constructive confrontation.

5. *Avoid ethnocentrism: Understand and accept the reality of cultural difference*. Be aware that we live in a community, a nation, a world in which there are people from many different cultures who differ in myriad ways including ways of thinking about conflict and negotiation. What you take to be selfevident and right may not seem that way to someone from a different cultural background and vice versa. Expect cultural misunderstandings; use them as an opportunity for learning rather than as a basis of estrangement.

6. *Distinguish clearly between "interests" and "positions."* Positions may be opposed but interests may not be (Fisher & Ury, 1981). The classic example from Follett (1940) is that of a brother and sister, each of whom wanted the only orange available. The sister wanted the peel of the orange to make marmalade; the brother wanted to eat the inner part. Their positions ("I want the orange") were opposed; their interests were not. Often when conflicting parties reveal their

underlying interests, it is possible to find a solution which suits them both.

7. *Explore your interests and the other's interests to identify the common and compatible interests that you both share.* A full exploration of one another's interests increases empathy and facilitates subsequent problem-solving.

8. *Define the conflicting interests between yourself and the other as a mutual problem to be solved cooperatively.* Define the conflict in terms of specific behavior rather than about who is a better person. Diagnose the problem clearly, and then creatively seek new options for dealing with the conflict that lead to mutual gain. However, not all conflicts can be solved to mutual satisfaction even with the most creative thinking. Here, agreement upon a fair procedure that determines who gets his or her way, or seeking help from neutral, third parties may be the most constructive resolution possible under the circumstances.

9. *In communicating with the other, listen attentively and speak so as to be understood: This requires the active attempt to take the perspective of the other and to check continually your success in doing so.* The feeling of being understood, as well as effective communication, enormously facilitates constructive resolution.

10. *Be alert to the natural tendencies to bias—misperceptions, misjudgments, and stereotyped thinking—that commonly occur in yourself as well as the other during heated conflict.* These errors in perception and thought interfere with communication, make empathy difficult, and impair problem-solving. These include black-white thinking, narrowing of one's range of perceived options, and the *fundamental attribution error* (the tendency to attribute the aggressive actions of the other to the other's personality while attributing one's own aggressive actions to external circumstances such as the other's hostile actions).

11. *Develop skills for dealing with difficult conflicts so that you are not helpless nor hopeless when confronting those who are more powerful, those who don't want to engage in constructive conflict resolution, or those who use dirty tricks.* Fisher and Ury (1981) have discussed these matters very helpfully in the final three chapters of their well-known book, *Getting to Yes.* We shall not summarize their discussion but rather emphasize several basic principles. First, it is important to recognize that you become less vulnerable to intimidation if you realize that you usually have a choice: You don't have to stay in the relationship with the other.

Second, it is useful to be open and explicit to the other about what he or she is doing that upsets you and to indicate the effects that these actions are having on you. If the other asserts that you have misunderstood or denies doing what you have stated, and if you are not persuaded, be forthright in maintaining that this remains a problem for you: Discuss with the other what could be done to remove the problem (your misunderstanding of the other, your need for reassurance, or the other's noxious behavior).

Third, it is wise to avoid reciprocating the other's noxious behavior and to avoid attacking the other personally for his or her behavior (i.e., criticize the behavior and not the person); such reciprocation often leads to an escalating vicious spiral.

A phrase that we have found useful in characterizing the stance you should take in difficult (as well as easy) conflicts is to be "firm, fair, and friendly." *Firm* in resisting intimidation, exploitation, and dirty tricks; *fair* in holding to your moral principles and not reciprocating the other's immoral behavior despite his or her provocations; and *friendly* in the sense that you are willing to initiate and reciprocate cooperation.

12. *Know yourself and how you typically respond in different sorts of conflict situations.* Dif-

ferent people deal with their anxieties about conflict in different ways. Being aware of your pre-dispositions may allow you to modify them when they are inappropriate in a given conflict. We have found it useful to emphasize six different conflict reaction patterns to characterize a person's predispositions to respond to conflict.

a) *Conflict avoidance vs. excessive involvement in conflict.* Conflict avoidance is expressed in denial, repression, suppression, avoidance, and continuing postponement of facing the conflict, as well as in premature conflict resolution. Excessive involvement in conflict is sometimes expressed in a "macho" attitude, a chip on one's shoulder, a tendency to seek out conflict to demonstrate that one is not afraid of conflict. Presumably, a healthy predisposition involves the readiness to confront conflict when it arises without needing to seek it out or to be preoccupied with it.

b) *Hard vs. soft.* Some people are prone to take a tough, aggressive, dominating, unyielding response to conflict fearing that otherwise they will be taken advantage of and be considered soft. Others are afraid that they will be considered to be mean, hostile, or presumptuous, and as a consequence, they are excessively gentle and unassertive. A more appropriate stance is firm support of your own interests combined with a ready responsiveness to the interests of the other.

c) *Rigid vs. loose.* Some people immediately seek to organize and to control the situation by setting the agenda, defining the rules, etc. At the other extreme, some people are aversive to anything that seems formal, limiting, controlling, or constricting. An approach which allows for both orderliness and flexibility in dealing with the conflict seems more constructive than one that is either compulsive in its organizing or in its rejection of orderliness.

d) *Intellectual vs. emotional.* At one extreme, emotion is repressed, controlled, or isolated so

that no relevant emotion is felt or expressed. At the other extreme, there are some people who believe that only feelings are real and that words and ideas are not to be taken seriously unless they are thoroughly soaked in emotion. The ideal mode of communication combines thought and affect: The thought is supported by the affect, and the affect is explained by the thought.

e) *Escalating vs. minimizing.* At one extreme, some people tend to experience any given conflict in the largest possible terms. The issues are cast so that what is at stake involves one's self, one's family, one's ethnic group, precedence for all-time, or the like. At the other extreme are people who tend to minimize the seriousness of their conflicts. The result can produce serious misunderstandings and insufficient effort needed to resolve the conflict constructively.

f) *Compulsively revealing vs. compulsively concealing.* At one extreme are people who feel a compulsion to reveal whatever they think and feel about the other, including their suspicions, hostilities, and fears in the most blunt, unrationalized, and unmodulated manner. Or they may feel they have to communicate every doubt, sense of inadequacy, or weakness they have about themselves. At the other extreme are people who feel that they cannot reveal any of their feelings or thoughts without seriously damaging their relationship to the other. You, in effect, should be open and honest in communication but, appropriately so, taking into account realistically the consequences of what you say or do not say.

13. *Finally, throughout conflict, you should remain a moral person—i.e., a person who is caring and just—and should consider the other as a member of your moral community—i.e., as someone who is entitled to care and justice.* In the heat of conflict, there is often the tendency to shrink your moral community and to exclude the other from it: This permits behavior toward the other which you would otherwise consider morally reprehensible. Such behavior escalates con-

flict and turns it in the direction of violence and destruction.

There has been increased research on the effects of conflict resolution training in schools, but much of it is confounded by the effects of other interventions such as programs on mediation and cooperative learning. The results generally echo many of the findings of mediation programs in schools. However, two important studies should be mentioned. A two-year longitudinal field study in an alternative high school was conducted by our center, *The International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution,* on the effects of training in conflict resolution and cooperative learning on at-risk students from an alternative urban high school (Deutsch, 1993). This study found that training in these processes had a variety of positive effects. Trained students "… exhibited improvement in the management of personal conflicts, experienced increased social support, and felt less victimized by others. Enhanced relationships with others led to increased self-esteem and more frequent positive feelings of well-being among these students, as well as a decrease in feelings of anxiety and depression. Higher self-esteem, in turn, produced a greater sense of personal control and…led to higher academic performance (p. 42). Again, this study speaks to the benefits in school systems of combining conflict resolution training with other types of training, such as cooperative learning.

Other interesting findings emerged in a recent evaluation study in elementary schools of the *Resolving Conflict Creatively Program* in New York City (Roderick, 1998). These researchers found that, irrespective of their participation in the RCCP training, all children in the study got *worse* in the course of the school year in terms of how they thought about conflict and the behavioral strategies they exhibited. The children participating in the study showed, on average, "higher mean levels of aggressive fantasies, hostile attributional biases, aggressive strategies, and

conduct problems and lower mean levels of competent strategies…" (p. 4). What they also found, however, was that in the classrooms where teachers taught the most RCCP lessons, children got worse *at a slower rate*. This study also indicated that there are significant problems in schools with implementing training at the classroom level (in terms of teachers effectively training students and committing to the trainings for the long-term) and with more general organizational readiness (in terms of long-term administration, teacher, and student "buy-in" and commitment).

Level 3: Pedagogy

To further enhance the learning of conflict resolution skills from specific units or courses, students can practice these skills in their regular subject areas with two teaching strategies—cooperative learning and academic controversy.

Cooperative Learning. Although cooperative learning has many ancestors and can be traced back for at least 2,000 years, it is only in this century that there has been development of a theoretical base, systematic research, and systematic teaching procedures for it. Five key elements are involved in cooperative learning (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1986). The most important is *positive interdependence*. Students must perceive that it is to their advantage if other students learn well and that it is to their disadvantage if others do poorly. This can be achieved in many different ways—e.g., through mutual goals (goal interdependence); division of labor (task interdependence); dividing resources, materials, or information among group members (resource interdependence); and by giving joint rewards (reward interdependence).

In addition, cooperative learning requires *face-to-face interaction* among students in which

their positive interdependence can be expressed in behavior. It also requires *individual account-ability* of each member of the cooperative learning group to one another for mastering the material to be learned and for providing appropriate support and assistance to each other. Further, it is necessary for the students to be trained in the *interpersonal and small group skills* needed for effective cooperative work in groups. Finally, cooperative learning also involves providing students with the time and procedures for *processing* or analyzing how well their learning groups are functioning and what can be done to improve how they work together.

Case Study 4: Hate Speech on Campus

In September of 1993, a student committee at Trenton State College in New Jersey invited Khallid Abdul Muhammad to speak at the college during African American History month. This invitation came just after Mr. Muhammad had delivered a "vicious antiSemitic, anti-White attack" during a speech at Kean College in New Jersey. As a result, the college erupted into turmoil for several months. A schism emerged amongst students, faculty, and the administration. Several public protests were held, both in opposition to and in support of the proposed speaker. The media became a constant presence on campus and served to provoke the divisions. One student leader began to receive death threats. On the one hand, such speakers are the glory of academe: The embodiment of free speech and free inquiry. Yet they also embody a classic tension in a free society between free speech and provocation, exposure of issues needing debate, and collusion in spreading harmful ideas

Ultimately, Mr. Muhammad was allowed to speak, but the event was framed constructively by student leaders and administrators as part of a larger educational experience for the college. The college held several events in the weeks following the speech that gave students the oppor-

tunity to air their views and discuss the issues raised by Mr. Muhammad. In the end, the issues were thoroughly articulated and more deeply understood.

Hundreds of research studies have been done on the relative impact of cooperative, competitive, and individualistic learning experiences (see Johnson & Johnson, 1983, 1989). The results are quite consistent. Students develop considerably greater commitment, helpfulness, and caring for each other regardless of differences in ability level, ethnic background, gender, social class, or physical disability. They develop more skill in taking the perspective of others, emotionally as well as cognitively. They develop greater self-esteem and a greater sense of being valued by their classmates. They develop more positive attitudes toward learning, toward school, and toward their teachers. They usually learn more in the subjects that they are studying by cooperative learning and they also acquire more of the skills and attitudes that are conducive to effective collaboration with others. Moreover, when used by skillful teachers, cooperative education can help children overcome an alienated or hostile orientation to others which they have developed as a result of their prior experiences.

However, it is important to realize that although the concept of cooperative learning is simple, its practice is not. Changing a classroom and school so that they emphasize cooperative learning requires that teachers learn many new skills, among them: ways of teaching students cooperative skills; how to monitor and intervene in the student work-groups to improve students' collaborative skills; how to develop curriculum materials to promote positive interdependence; and ways of integrating the cooperative learning with competitive and individualistic learning activities. Commonly, it takes three or four years before teachers feel well-skilled in the use of cooperative learning.

Sometimes parents and teachers have misconceptions about cooperative learning which make them resistant to it initially. There are several myths that it is well to confront (see Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1986, for a more extensive discussion):

1. *Cooperative learning does not prepare students for the adult world, which is highly competitive*. There are two points to be made: (a) the ability of people to work cooperatively is crucial to building and maintaining stable marriages, families, communities, friendships, work careers, and a peaceful world. The reality is that individual as well as corporate success depends on effective cooperation and teamwork (Kohn, 1986); (b) schools, even with extensive cooperative learning, would provide much experience with individual and group competition. The issue is not to eliminate competition and individualism from the schools but to provide a more appropriate balance with cooperation. Furthermore, our impression is that schools rarely teach in a systematic way generalizable skills in how to be an effective competitor.

2. *High-achieving students are penalized by working in heterogeneous cooperative learning groups*. The research evidence (see Johnson & Johnson, 1989) clearly indicates that high-achieving students learn *at least* as much in cooperatively structured classrooms as they do in the more traditional ones. They frequently learn more: especially because teaching less able students often solidifies their own learning. It should also be recognized that cooperative learning does not imply that high-achievers must learn and work at the same pace as low-achievers. Nor does it imply that high-achievers will lack ample opportunities to work alone or to work cooperatively with other high-achievers.

3. *Grading is unfair in cooperative learning*. Group grading is one way of creating positive interdependence. But, even when group grades are used, individual grades may also be used. Al-

though students sometimes complain about grades, complaints appear to be less frequent in co-operative learning classrooms than in the more traditional ones.

4. *The good students do all the work. The lazy students get a free ride.* A central feature in cooperative learning is individual accountability. If a student is "goofing off," this becomes a problem for the group which, with encouragement and appropriate help from the teacher, the group can usually solve. In solving the problem, the group learns a great deal and the poorly mo-tivated, alienated, withdrawn, or reclusive student often benefits enormously as he or she be-comes an active participant in cooperative learning.

Level 4: The School Culture

Most training and intervention concerning cooperation and conflict resolution in schools throughout the country focuses primarily on children. This focus denies the reality that most adults working in the school systems have had little preparation, training, or encouragement to conduct their own work collaboratively or to manage their own conflicts constructively. A culture of competition, authoritarianism, coercion, and contention still appears to reign supreme in schools in this country (Glasser, 1992; Raider, 1995).

In order for school systems to take full advantage of the gains brought by peer mediation programs and cooperation and conflict resolution curricula, the adults in schools also must be trained. Despite significant resistance, adult training can be accomplished through two means: individual-level training in collaborative negotiation skills and work to restructure the school's adult dispute-management system. Collaborative negotiation training for adults often parallels the training offered to students, but focuses on problems that are more germane to the personal

and professional life of adults. We stress that all adults in schools should be trained: teachers, administrators, counselors, bus drivers, lunch room aides, para-professionals, librarians, coaches, etc. Such extensive training can be expensive, but the costs can be significantly reduced by the training of in-house staff initially, who then become trainers themselves for other school personnel. Such training engenders commitment from the adults. In so doing, it can help to *institutionalize* the changes through adult modeling of the desired attitudes and behaviors for the students, and by encouraging the development of new norms and expectations around conflict and conflict management throughout the school community.

Case Study 5: Melting Pot or Salad Bowl?

The J. P. Rockefeller High School is a relatively new school, initially organized as an elite science research school designed to attract science-oriented students. For the first ten years, it achieved this purpose, winning countless scholarships, awards, and commendations for its students. Recently the school experienced a demographic shift from a predominantly White student body to one which is now predominantly composed of students of color. The present student population is approximately 40 percent African-American, 30 percent Latino-American, 25 percent European-American, and 5 percent Asian-American. The faculty is 90 percent European-American and 10 percent African-American. The Parents Association is 100 percent European-American.

Last year the staff decided to become part of the city-wide Site Based Management initiative. The new SBM committee is composed of 18 members consisting of the principal, the union chairperson, a representative from the Parents Association, a student, and elected teachers' representatives from each academic department.

At the last SBM meeting, the teacher from the math department proposed that an official voting seat be designated for an African-American teacher. After much heated discussion, the proposal was voted down. But the problems raised did not go away. Much personal bitterness ensued. Many members of the SBM committee felt that it would be unfair to give a special seat to the Black teachers without opening up other seats for Latino teachers, Jewish teachers, etc. They also deeply resented the implication that they were racist because they voted against the measure. Members of the Black Teachers Caucus (BTC) felt that the school's leadership had been unresponsive to the changes reflected in the student body and that the SBM needed their input to shape the future of the school.

An external conflict resolution consultant was brought into the school to help address the conflict. After a series of initial interviews, the consultant implemented a three-stage approach. First, she addressed the divisive climate of the school by holding several ethnic celebrations in an attempt to broaden cultural awareness within the school. Second, she offered training in collaborative negotiations skills to members of the SBM in preparation for addressing the conflict. Finally, the SBM worked together to design a process for the committee that they were comfortable with. They designated one seat a "multicultural" seat, which would be filled by a Committee on Multiculturalism (which was also established through this conflict) and represent the largest minority group present in the school on any given year.

Level 5: The Broader Community

Collaborative trainings and processes need not and should not stop at the school doors. In fact, many of the student conflicts originate outside of school, at home, on the school bus, or at social events. Parents, caretakers, local clergy, local police officers, members of local community or-

ganizations, and others should be trained in conflict resolution and involved in the overall planning process for preventing destructive conflict among children and youths. In Case Study 6, the youth officer's awareness of the school's mediation program allowed for the possibility of the conflict being handled by the school and not by juvenile court. As an example of this type of community involvement, staff from our center have been training the parents and day care staff at several pre-schools on the East Coast as part of a larger research project. Preliminary findings have been very promising (Horowitz, Boardman, & Cochran, 1998). We encourage school administrators and conflict resolution practitioners to envision the school system as embedded in a larger community system that, ideally, can be brought into this change process in order to better stabilize school change.

CONCLUSION

Efforts to transform schools towards more peaceful and collaborative systems present several challenges for theorists, researchers, and practitioners. First, there is the issue of readiness. Research has shown that unless schools and districts are sufficiently motivated to embrace a change initiative such as this, it is likely to fail (Sarason, 1982; Roderick, 1998). This readiness must exist for a majority of the system, including regents, board members, superintendents, principals, teachers, other professional staff, students, and parents. One method for assessing organizational readiness in schools is being used in the Learning Communities Project, initiated by New York City's Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (Roderick, 1998). For a school to be included in the project, the faculty must vote 70 percent or more in favor of its implementation. This approach could be taken for entire school districts or even for state-wide school initiatives. Administrators and conflict practitioners need to work to develop more innovative methods of fostering

readiness throughout school systems (see Coleman, 1997, for a discussion of fostering readiness).

Case Study 6: New York City Youth Officer

Recently, a conflict that began in a high school in New York City spilled out into the street. Earlier in the day, some members of an Asian gang and some members of an Hispanic gang had gotten into a screaming match in the hallway of the school over one youth "sucking his teeth" in the direction of another. Later, on the street, a member of the Hispanic gang flipped a piece of ice onto a member of the other gang. A fight immediately ensued, which was broken up by the local precinct's youth officer. Because the officer was familiar with the mediation program at the school and trusted the competence of the director of the program, he chose to bring the conflict back to the school for mediation instead of to the precinct and the juvenile justice system. This allowed for an agreement between the youths involved that would have been unlikely if the incident had gone to court.

There is also an emerging concern about whether the current models in use in most conflict resolution trainings in schools are implicitly oriented toward Western males and are therefore not sufficiently sensitive and respectful of "difference" (gender, race, culture, class, etc.). For example, Kolb and Coolidge (1991) contend that many of the commonly prescribed conflict resolution processes (such as recommending to "separate the people from the problem," taking a problem-solving orientation to conflict, and the emphasis in integrative negotiation on interests and rights) are gendered and neglect women's preferences for processes such as dialogue (enhanced understanding through interaction) and for an ethic in conflict focused more on relational harmony and care. They recommend an approach to conflict based on: 1) a relational view of others, 2) a view

of individual agency which is embedded in relationships, 3) an approach to controlling a situation through the empowerment of others, and 4) problem-solving through dialogue.

Similar concerns have been raised regarding the introduction of Western conflict resolution ideas and methods across cultures. Faure (1995) has argued that the Western psychological paradigm that frames our thinking about conflict resolution is based on certain assumptions about constructs such as *conflict, aggression, time,* and *cause and effect* that are not universally shared by members of other cultures. He has called for a radical "re-problematization" of our thinking on conflict resolution which would entail: abandoning prior theorizing and research and starting afresh, integrating cross-cultural perspectives at the beginning of the process, emphasizing non-American data, and using non-verbal instruments. Responding to comparable concerns of Western bias in training approaches, Lederach (1995) argues that the traditional "prescriptive" approaches to training, which view the trainer as the expert and participants as passive recipients of predetermined knowledge, models, and skills, are often inappropriate for application in diverse settings. Instead, the context expertise of the participants should be emphasized, where the trainer and the participants together create a new model of conflict resolution specifically suited to the resources and constraints of the context. Our view on this issue is that scholars and practitioners need to begin to better distinguish between those elements of conflict resolution that are universal and therefore applicable across cultures from those that are not. For example, Deutsch (2000) has proposed that certain human values (such as reciprocity and nonviolence) and the relationship between certain theoretical constructs (such as cooperation and constructive conflict resolution) are universal. The cross-cultural value of these more fundamental elements must be seen as separate from the benefits of certain prescribed processes (such as "separating the people

from the problem," the open expression of needs, or analyzing issues), which are likely to vary considerably across cultures.

A third area of interest for scholars and practitioners is in better assuring the age-appropriateness of training in conflict resolution. We must devise more developmentally appropriate models for training youth (Crawford & Bodine, 1997). For example, younger students often lack the basic social skills which are necessary to resolve conflicts, and so need training in these skills (communication, cooperation, affirmation, and bias awareness) prior to training in conflict resolution or problem-solving. Repeated experiences with problem-solving are designed as part of the conflict resolution training in order to promote the acquisition and stabilization of skills, language, and emotion relevant to managing conflict.

Finally, there is increasing recognition of the problems of implementing any lasting change in schools of any sort and the need to identify the processes and conditions which give rise to a successful implementation (Roderick, 1998). Introducing cooperation and conflict resolution concepts and practices into schools often involves significant systemic change. It requires, in a sense, a paradigm shift in how people see and approach problems. Fostering this type of fundamental change in the norms and practices of a system requires that people have the necessary skills to motivate and persuade, organize, mobilize, and institutionalize the change. These skills need to be more adequately integrated into the training of school system personnel.

In emphasizing cooperation and conflict resolution processes as the core of any comprehensive program for a peaceful world, we have been guided by the view that it takes more than a single course to bring about fundamental change. Students need to have continuing experiences of constructive conflict resolution as they learn different subject-matters and an immersion in a

school environment which provides these experiences. The school should also act for the students as a model of cooperative relations and constructive resolution of conflicts. This pervasive and extended experience, combined with training in the concepts and principles of cooperative work and of conflict resolution, should enable the student to develop generalizable attitudes and skills which would be strong enough to resist the countervailing influences that are so prevalent in their non-school environments. Hopefully, by the time they become adults, they would have developed the attitudes, the knowledge, and the skills which would enable them to cooperate with others in resolving constructively the inevitable conflicts that will occur among and within nations, ethnic groups, communities, and families.

Figure 19.1 Conflict Resolution: Midway between social change and system maintenance. From J.B. Stephens. (1994). Gender Conflict. In A. Taylor and J. Berstein Miller (Eds.) *Conflict and Gender,* 217–235. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, Inc.

Figure 19.2 A systemic approach to transforming schools.