

Peer Mediation in Grades K-12

An Extensive Literature Review

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Introduction

Martin Luther King Jr. once said,

“Sooner or later, all of the people of the world will have to discover a way to live together in peace...If this is to be achieved, man must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression, and retaliation. The foundation of such a message is love” (Hayhurst, 2000: 6).

Dr. King’s insight has not been lost. His vision of peacefully resolving conflicts is still being recognized today with the implementation of peer mediation programs into our school systems. This method of non-violence mirrors the topic we will be concentrating on in this paper.

Recent media stories illustrate how students deal with conflicts. Such resolutions include fights, bullying, and in extreme cases violence and weapons. Peer mediation is an alternative to non-peaceful conflict resolution. It places the power in the hands of the students themselves and allows them to utilize its valuable principles in their everyday lives. As of 1999, an estimated 7,500 to 10,000 peer mediation programs had been implemented in US elementary, middle, and high schools (Williamson et al, 1999: 99). We hypothesize that peer mediation will increase conflict resolutions stemming from situations such as bullying and that these situations will more readily stay resolved because students will have integrated these principles into their thoughts and behavior.

This literature review focuses on the topic of peer mediation in grades K-12. We have collected an extensive amount of literature and will be examining peer mediation at its core. We will discuss advantages and disadvantages including the assessment of different models and peer mediation’s potential unilateral effectiveness. Peer mediation has its limitations and we will be addressing these later on in this paper. The goal of this

literature review is to gain a better understanding of peer mediation and its effectiveness, incorporate it into theories in sociology.

Peer Mediation

What is peer mediation? Peer mediation is a process that is used to bring a peaceful solution between two or more parties involved in a dispute. “Although the programs differ in origin, philosophy, and design, their [the] basic intent is to help students learn to manage interpersonal conflicts constructively” (Schultz, 2002: 306). Each participant’s independent consent to participate and agreement to keep the proceedings confidential, is needed for the peer mediation process to commence (Bickmore, 2002: 33). A third neutral person who is trained (the mediator) facilitates a discussion and helps the quarreling sides to negotiate their problems and to come to a peaceful agreement (Ury, 2000), (Figure 1). Mediators are there to insure that certain “ground rules” be followed (Sellman, 2002). The peer mediation procedure requires finding the right place (which may be at the actual site of the conflict) and time to conduct the meeting, the mediators explanation of the process, setting ground rules, telling the story, generating options and solutions, gaining resolution and agreement, and having closure, departure and follow up (Wandberg, 2002: 27). Delving further into the mediation procedures, step one requires an environment that is free of distractions. It must be private and quiet; for example a room with an open door is not feasible for a peer mediation session. The disputants will not be able to concentrate on the issue at hand, may become embarrassed, or worse may promote physical fighting as a way to show off to those passing by the open door. Step two lets the mediator and the disputants become acquainted while also giving the mediator the responsibility of making everybody

comfortable with the situation. It is then explained to disputants that they will come up with their own agreement/solution, and respect is a priority where as both parties must allow one another to state their side of the issue without interruption. Next the ground rules are set-up and they include, “1.) Be respectful 2.) Work hard to solve the problem 3.) Be as open and truthful as possible 4.) Express feelings without physical violence or name calling 5.) Listen without interrupting while another is talking 6.) Take responsibility for carrying out the agreement and 7.) The situation must be kept confidential (the most important rule to abide by)” (Wandberg, 2002: 28). When we move on to “telling the story” it is vital to not place blame. Disputants should have an equal opportunity to discuss their view of the situation without being interrupted. “Both party’s may have some good points. These good points should be commended and used in the agreement” (Einstein, 1988: 64). This leads into generating option and solutions where the parties involved with the dispute come to these conclusions on their own. Disputants must agree on their solutions, when no solution can be agreed upon the mediator often has meetings with each disputant independently to talk about their wished to get closer to a common ground. These individual meetings are confidential and are used to gain insight into what might help to further the peer meeting into coming to a solution. Once a solution is found everyone must agree to try it out. A contract is then written out describing what resolution the disputants agree to do and then both people sign it though it may also be verbal. Lastly, step seven is the closing of the peer mediation session. Follow up meeting are sometimes suggested if the mediator feels that the dispute should be checked upon at a later time. Otherwise the disputants are thanked for their cooperation and decision to use peer mediation and this concludes the meeting.

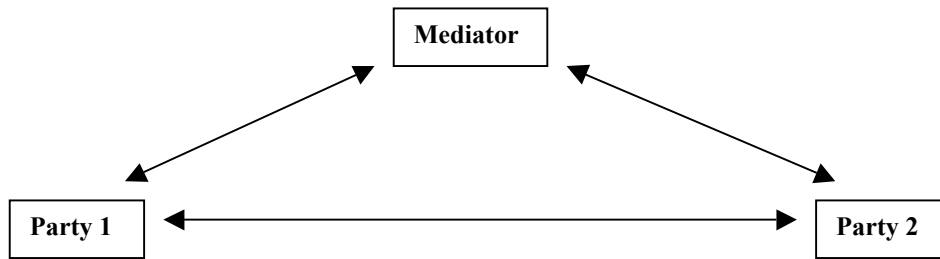


Figure 1: Example of peer mediating structure.

There are eight differing seating arrangements; however, we will be looking at and discussing the most commonly used seating arrangements. These include the round table, distance setup and the living room setup. The round table is used to make for a more egalitarian environment (Figure 2). “It is ideal for minimizing status differences” (Beer, 1997: 29). Next is the distance model, which places the mediator between the parties, providing a sense of distance to maximize the participants’ feelings of safety (Beer, 1997: 29) (Figure 3). Lastly, the living room model encourages participants to let down their guard, which allows for a homier feel bringing chairs close together (Beer, 1997: 29) (Figure 4). This should not be used if participants are feeling intimidated or threatened in any way. Below in figures 2-4 are illustrations of the three models we have just discussed.

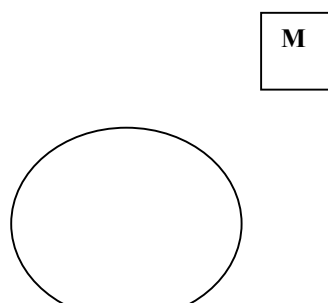




Figure 2: Example of the round table.

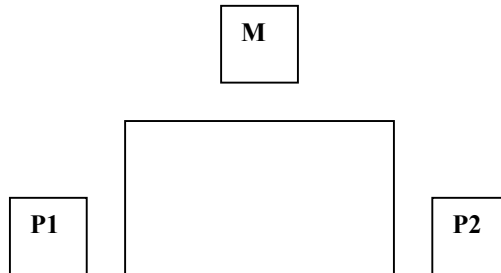


Figure 3: Example of the Distance model.

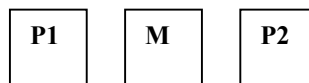


Figure 4: Example of the Living Room Model.

“Due to concern about increasing school violence, students from elementary through senior high school have been learning to mediate peer disputes,” (Humphries, 1999:1). Although authority figures are removed from the actual process of peer mediation, they do oversee the program and are informed of the conflicts going on. Instead the disputants have a peer (student their own age) helping them to reach a peaceful conclusion. This helps them to “create and own the solution” (Rue, 2001: 13). “Each participant tells her/his own view of the problem” (Bickmore, 2002b: 33). Peer mediation allows students to communicate their thoughts on their dispute in a safe and

structured atmosphere. This enables students to think clearly and not have to worry about retaliation. The goal of the process is to avoid violence at all costs.

Honest communication is an essential component to peer mediation; it is the best policy and is also a very important element in order to come to a solution. If one disputant is not being honest about his/her feelings and is ineffective in communicating them and instead acts out, then the other opposing side is least likely to pay attention to what he/she is saying; thus making resolution impossible. Peer mediation is not only something that is used to solve disputes but also allows one to learn to listen to other peoples' concerns and teaches one how to effectively communicate themselves (Williamson et al, 1996).

Another important element of communication is using "I" messages. This form of communication is used to express to the other party how you feel, how the situation affects you, and an overall view of what is bothering you. This is a means of avoiding the possibility of making the other party defensive and angry. For example: if one were to say to a friend, "You're nothing but a spoiled brat. I don't like you because you are stupid and it's all your fault," instead of, "I think that this would not have happened had you been a little more considerate of others," this would help to curb any further hostility and tension. (Girard and Koch, 1996: 65; Simpson, 1998: 34).

It is important to note that each individual has their own meanings and understandings of situations, which undoubtedly will shape what one does and says (Herrman, 2003: 404). Peer mediation will help students in all areas of their life including conflicts with siblings, friends, and even parents. It also prepares them for their future roles in society by improving their social skills, self-esteem, and leadership skills (Ford,

2002: 469; Sandy, 2001: 239; Sellman: 8; and Wandberg, 2002: 12). When interviewed about peer mediation one teacher said, “The negotiation and mediation skills we are teaching our students will have a definite positive impact on the way our students interact with each other [...] these skills go beyond the scope of the classroom, and contribute to the betterment of our community, and our world,” (Johnson and Johnson, 1996b: 333). One needs to keep in mind that peer mediation is not designed to determine who is right and who is wrong (Ury, 2000). One is not on trial when participating in peer mediation. Ury (2000) urges that the “core” of peer mediation is each party’s interests, fears, desires, concerns, etc., (146). Individuals willing to participate take an active role in the process of mediation and in-fact make their own decisions. However, there have been some instances where peer mediation was mandated by teachers and authorities (Bell et al, 2000).

So why “peer” mediation?

Researchers have stressed the importance of children being role models to other children and have suggested that they are not only capable of modeling appropriate behavior, but in the creation and maintenance of social norms in defining behaviors as either acceptable or deviant (Humphries, 99). For many children and young adults, the most common way to solve problems (conflict) is to avoid them all together. Robert Merton states that this is a frequent response historically and presently where oppressed groups “dealt” with conflict between the dominant groups and names this phenomena “retreatism” (Himes, 1980). For the frustrated/deprived individual involved, retreatism serves as a mechanism for “solving” the problem by allowing the person to not participate in the social system and instead turn to deviant behavior. This highlights the

social hierarchy in schools where the less popular kids may simply avoid bullies and embrace their roles' as subordinate to that of others.

Theory Meets Practice

In order to fully understand peer mediation it is necessary to have a firm grasp of its origins. The roots of peer mediation are embedded in sociology, specifically social psychology (Daunic et al, 2000:95). The principles behind it owe much to the work of Charles Horton Cooley, George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer. These theorists have contributed much to social psychology.

We begin with Cooley, one of the earliest social psychologists who laid the foundation for social psychology. Cooley thought that the best way to observe society was in the mind and this is where we shall start. Society is conceived in the mind, we only exist because of our ability to have internal conversations with ourselves about the world around us. Essentially, social psychology is the study of the behavior, thoughts, and feelings of an individual or interacting individuals and of other relationships with larger social units.

Symbolic interaction theory (coined by Blumer, based on Mead's work) focuses on how individuals interpret and give meanings (through the use of symbols) to their social interaction (Wiggins, et al: 557). Mead thought that social life rested on the dependency of our ability to imagine ourselves in other social roles, to view ourselves as subject and object (Abercrombie et al, 2000:353). This reflexive behavior allows individuals to be social actors by taking the role of the other. It is important to note that individuals interpret their world and its surroundings from their perspective; "perspective" is at the core of social psychology and of peer mediation. They are derived

from the way in which we experience our environment (physically, mentally and emotionally). Perspectives are the framework used to guide perceptions that are organized into a definition of the situation and subsequent action (Charon, 1992). When perspectives become mismatched the result is disagreement of the definition of a situation (Sandstrom, 2003: 128). This makes room for conflict to occur. In referring to Cooley's benign view of society, Collins states, "Social problems are just a matter of misunderstanding and can be solved by a broader appreciation of the point of view of others," (Collins, 1994a: 255). It would serve to reason that conflict could easily be resolved, if not avoided by simply becoming aware and by understanding the perspectives of others. In fact, empathy for the other party involved is one of the skills obtained through peer mediation (Williamson et al). The goal of peer mediation is to expose the individuals involved to the other party's side of the story in a process called role taking.

Role taking is a, "reflexive behavior in which a person looks at his or her own behavior from the point of view of another," (Wiggins, et al: 556), Cooley named this concept "the looking glass self". The concept of role-taking runs through most, if not all models of peer mediation, in which mediators ask each side to tell and listen to the other side of the story (Chetkow-Yanoov, 1996; Williamson, et al; Humphries). When individuals understand where the other person is coming from, it is easier to find a solution.

Mead described a three-stage process through which the "self" emerges and the child becomes prepared to fully participate in social life (Wiggins, et al: 57). This is relevant to peer mediation because it explains how the young mind develops and how

children are able to “take the role of the other”. The three-stages are preparatory, play, and game.

When children are in the preparatory stage, they cannot view their own behavior; they can only mimic specific actions that they view around them. Wiggins, et al state that, “Preverbal children behaviors that arouse particular responses in others,” (Wiggins, et al.: 57). They make the example of a young child experiencing being fed every time it cries. Mead explains that the child learns and interprets the sequence of events in the form of a mental image of a sequence (Wiggins, et al; Collins, 1994b). For instance, the “meaning” of crying is that it brings food. Through the continuous social interactions like crying, the child learns the connections between the mental image of the sequence (Wiggins, et al.).

The second stage is the play stage in which children learn roles by assuming specific roles one at a time. The child imitates the associated behavior of that role (e.g. nurse, teacher, mother/father, etc.). Eventually, the child has developed the capacity to actually think about the other’s perspective without having to “play” it. It is at this point in time that children are capable to use peer mediation. The importance of the play stage is that it teaches children how to learn and play roles.

The game stage is the third stage; it is here that the child develops additional social skills. In this stage, children find themselves in situations where it is necessary to respond to the expectations of different people simultaneously. Games socialize children for coordinated and cooperative activities as group members (Wiggins, et al.:58). In the game of baseball, it is necessary for all players to know and anticipate the roles and subsequent actions of everyone involved in order to play the game successfully. The same is found in more complex social interactions, where children are expected to view

themselves from the perspective of the larger group, called “the Generalized Other”. The child internalizes standards by which it judges and views his/her behavior and the generalized other reflects this. At this time, the child has not only developed expectations for him/herself, but also for others. These three stages illustrate how role-taking is possible for children. Some researchers advocate the use of peer mediation as early as kindergarten if not sooner (Johnson and Johnson et al, 1996). In fact, one researcher reported the use of peer mediation as early as nursery school. A nursery schoolteacher in South Africa reported using an “ear-chair,” a “mouth chair,” and a “friend-chair” (Chetkow-Yanoov, 1996). When two children are fighting, she sends them to the chairs to work their problems out. Each student takes turns in sitting in the “mouth-chair” where they tell their side of the story for 2 minutes, while the other child sits in the “ear-chair”. The children go on like this until the matter has been resolved. If no resolution can be found, a third child is brought in, typically a mutual friend, another classmate, the teacher, a parent, etc. who sits in the “friend-chair”. At this point, they all talk together to resolve the issue. While no empirical work has been conducted on this strategy, it does suggest that children are capable of role taking, peer mediation and that it has cultural universality.

Peer mediation is thought to have directly originated from social interdependence theory (Johnson and Johnson, 1996c). Social interdependence theory states, “...that conflicts are inherent in all social relationships, and the way in which they are managed depends on the nature of the social interdependence existing in the situation,” (Johnson and Johnson, 1996c: 464). When individuals work together to achieve mutual goals, the situation is structured cooperatively and results in “promotive interaction,” individuals

working for the achievement of their goals. This leads to constructive and healthy conflict resolutions. When a situation is structured competitively and individuals are working against each other attempting to achieve “exclusive goal[s] results in oppositional interaction that leads to unhealthy resolutions of conflicts,” (Johnson and Johnson, 1996c: 464). The way in which the context of the conflict is perceived and not the actual context determines which pattern, oppositional or promotive interaction will occur.

Conflict

Marx makes a dialectic argument that conflict is generated through the interactive process (Himes, 1980: 30). Peer mediation as stated earlier is used to resolve conflict. In this section conflict will be discussed and an explanation of conflicts appropriate and inappropriate for peer mediation and which are not appropriate for this process will be illustrated. Conflict is an element of life that we experience everyday. It is also important to note that conflict is not necessarily destructive (Nathan, 1998). Researchers argue that it is inevitable and that is why attention needs to be paid to how we deal with conflict (Daunic, et al: 96; Nathan, 1998; and Sellman: 7). The degree of conflict differs in ones daily life. It can be as minuscule as an opinion in ones mind or as large as being bullied in school everyday. It is important to state that conflict should not be compared to violence, as they are not one in the same. Rather conflict is seen as a disagreement and although unresolved conflicts may turn into violence they do not always. Often conflict arises from misinterpretation of something or someone due to not comprehending another person’s motives or behavior. Common conflicts include: bullying, disrespect, the ending of a friendship or relationship, misunderstanding, racism, sexism, misunderstandings, and the

destruction of someone's personal property (Rue, 2002: 42-43). There are five different kinds of conflict, which will be listed below:

- Intrapersonal: An internal conflict whose resolution will primarily affect you. For example, will you do drugs, or will you choose to be drug-free?
- Interpersonal: A conflict between two people. For example, you get in an argument with a classmate over where you will sit during lunch.
- Intergroup: A conflict between two groups. For example, an opponent trips a player on your soccer team, and both teams argue over whether a foul was committed.
- Societal: A conflict in society. For example, conflicts due to skin color (racism) or gender (sexism).
- International: A conflict between two or more nations. For example, war.

(Hayhurst, 2000: 12).

Another researcher, Maire Dugan states that conflict can be broken down into four types: issue-specific, relational, structural-subsystem, and structural-system (Batton, 2002: 481).

Issue-specific conflict is the most common and frequent form; the source of this conflict stems from rumors or is over the possession of personal items (Batton: 482). Smith, et al. agree with Dugan on this type of conflict and states that many mediations revolve around this sort of conflict (569). Daunic et al, found that a majority of referred mediations involved verbal harassment (name calling or threatening) (2000: 99). Relational conflict revolves around problems in the interacting groups and their feelings about one another. According to Batton, peer mediation tends to primarily focus on these two types of conflict (482). Structural conflict includes types of conflict that go beyond the different parties involved, these issues are typically built into the larger social system like race,

gender, or socioeconomic inequality (Batton: 482). It is important to note that conflict serves a function in the different learning processes. Sandy argues that conflict management is critical to the developing mind, “Between the ages of 3 and 7, it helps coordinate play and the forming of relationships with other children. Successful conflict management in middle school helps children create and maintain peer friendships, thus promoting a sense of competence and industry,” (244). She also states that adolescents have much to gain from successful conflict management because it helps in the, “[...] search for trustworthy friends, learns to make decisions (autonomy), establishes goals in life (initiative), and takes responsibility for personal ambitions and work quality (industry),” (Sandy: 244). This is another way in which peer mediation can benefit the individual and society.

Diversity and Conflict

We inhabit a diverse and changing society where not one person is exactly like another person. It is important to peer mediation that everyone embraces diversity and takes into consideration that each individuals’ lifestyle, opinions, and thoughts will not always mirror their own; this is also extended to ones race, ethnicity, as well as physical or mental disability (Chetkow-Yanoov, 1996). “It can actually help to dissolve prejudice” (Rue, 2001: 10). Kenneth Waxman states, “Mediation’s potential to resolve conflicts based upon culturally diverse norms surpasses formal and traditional mechanisms of control,” (Waxman, 2000: 9). Researchers state that fears of differing groups (be it race or religion) are learned behaviors and that it is important to expose our children to diverse groups so that they can gain an appreciation/understanding for them in order to curb conflict in heterogeneous societies. Peer mediation teaches its participants that students

(and people in general) can learn from one another through their differences. If we are open to the differences of other people and learn the necessary skills to “conquer situations of domination, oppression, and negative forms of dependence, we may learn to coexist with other people [...] who act similarly,” (Chetkov-Yanoov, 1996: 13), we can create a more tolerant and less violent environment.

“All conflicts involve cultural differences to some degree,” (Girard and Koch, 1996: 35). There are many cultural factors that influence conflict and go beyond the elements brought in by the parties involved. Girard and Koch cite three cultural factors that influence our perspective, “First, there are dominant positions within any given culture [...] Second, there are dominant positions among cultures (in schools, for example, between English speaking and Spanish speaking cultures). Third, there are the disputants family cultures, from which they have learned certain norms and expectations related to conflict behavior. Fourth, the setting in which the conflict occurs may have its own culture...” (35). Individuals carry with them cultural signals that they project and it is important to peer mediation that one is aware of their influence. Cultural signals are embedded in one’s perspectives as a consequence to their own cultural upbringing; recognizing this is the first step to promoting cultural sensitivity as a foundation to peer mediation and conflict resolution.

There are differing conflict needs and priorities of disenfranchised and privileged groups; the needs of the disenfranchised group are often not met within conflict resolution education in the United States (Sandy: 242). Practitioners of conflict resolution in Latino, Asian-American, African American, and Native American communities often adapt the Eurocentric models of mediation (making some modifications) to avert this

problem. Other researchers state that the skills involved in peer mediation are simple and adaptable to all cultures (Bickmore, 2001a).

It is important to peer mediation to have a group of diverse students, "...including students from different levels of academic ability who represent diverse social, cultural and gender groups—tend to improve the strength, sustainability, and effectiveness of mediation programs, as compared with more homogenous teams [...]. Where mediator teams are diverse and bias is addressed, students may also develop intercultural sensitivity" (Bickmore, 2002c: 138; Bickmore, 2002b).

Two Important Approaches to Peer Mediation

There are two different approaches to peer mediation, the cadre, in which a select group of students are chosen to be mediators for the school and the total student body approach where all students in the school are trained to be mediators. It is difficult to maintain the whole school approach; however, because it needs the support of all colleagues. If they are not supportive, then the approach becomes more difficult (Cremin, 2002: 142). Stevahn et al state that most conflict resolution/peer mediation programs have been established as "add-on, stand alone" programs this approach is problematic because instructors are supposed to fuse conflict resolution education into already existing curricula forcing the two to compete. For this reason, school wide programs tend to not be maintained or adopted (Stevahn et al 2002). It is also difficult to use the whole school approach especially when the peer mediation training is class based because teachers may not be able to allocate an adequate amount of time due to priority that they give towards their own class. (Cremin, 2002). There is also complaint about the funding required to implement school wide programs and curriculum. However, in light of the

economics behind it, many researchers advocate the total student body approach because of the fact that it empowers all students with the skills necessary to effectively deal with conflict, instead of just a select few mediators. This is illustrated by reports that state, “The greatest impact of the programs was on the students who were trained directly and given opportunities to practice mediation, but the entire student population also benefited,” (Bickmore: 139). Convexly, there have been reports that suggest that a well designed and implemented cadre program can be just as effective as total student body approaches. The cadre is the most typical form seen in North American schools because it can effectively deal with a wide range of conflict violence prevention and is relatively inexpensive with hardly any organizational change (Bickmore, 2001a).

Peer Mediation (PM) Benefits and Limitations

The process of peer mediation has several benefits. There have been many program evaluations of diverse elementary, middle, and high schools, which suggest that peer mediation programs provide some positive outcomes. These reports show two things: “1.) Approximately eighty-five to ninety-five percent of the mediated student conflicts resulted in lasting agreements and 2.) The referrals to administrative personnel for inappropriate student behavior decreased” (Smith, 2002: 568). From the process students learn to accept that conflict is natural but that letting conflict escalate into violence is neither natural nor healthy. It promotes positive self-esteem as well as self-respect that many of the disputants might have previously lacked. Mediation creates a safer atmosphere and where children feel safe they are far more likely to do better in school. Academic attendance is also higher due to the decrease in detentions and suspensions that the peer mediation helped to eliminate. Most importantly peer mediation

teaches kids the skills for interacting with and working in harmony with others. They are able to solve their own problems more effectively. Peer mediation is useful in the following instances:

- ✓ The issues are complicated by a strong emotional element.
- ✓ The parties know each other.
- ✓ Maintaining a relationship with the other party is important.
- ✓ One party feels uncomfortable confronting the other side unless someone else is present.
- ✓ The parties work or like together [go to school together or share the same classroom], or for other reasons cannot avoid the conflict.
- ✓ A decision must be reached soon.
- ✓ The parties doubt their own ability to work out the problem.
- ✓ Many people are involved or indirectly affected.
- ✓ One or more parties want to avoid formal proceedings

(Beer, 1997: 16). Peer mediation is however not appropriate for all types of conflict. In fact using peer mediation for certain conflicts may be harmful. “Often the goal of stopping violence is entirely at odds with the goal of reconciliation; to promote reconciliation may simultaneously perpetuate violence...” (Goldberg, 1992:326). It is advised that certain issues should be brought to the principle or school official. Below is a list of conflicts that are inappropriate for peer mediation.

- ✓ A serious incident has just occurred and people are still too upset to carry on a useful conversation.

- ✓ You [the mediator] strongly suspect one party intends to use the mediation to escalate the dispute (to threaten, to gather information, to look good in front of the judge, etc.).
- ✓ One party seems incapable of listening to anything you [the mediator] say, or seems otherwise too disturbed to negotiate a workable agreement.
- ✓ The main problem is, in your judgment, unmediatable.
- ✓ You [the mediator] believe that one party might be better off using the courts or other forum. [Adult situations]. Power imbalance makes fair agreement unlikely.
- ✓ The issue deserves public attention so that mediation does not hide a problem or a settlement from public knowledge (e.g. concealing environmental or work dangers; racial harassment patterns).
- ✓ Key parties are unwilling to participate

(Beer, 1997: 16). More specifically issues such as serious violence or abuse, possession of weapons, suicide, and illegal activities should not be taken up in a peer mediation setting. If these sorts of issues do crop up in a peer mediation session the meeting should be immediately stopped and the appropriate authorities should be brought in.

Does Peer Mediation really work?

While we have described peer mediation and its theoretical foundations, we have yet to report on its effectiveness. “Several program evaluations across diverse elementary, middle, and high school environments suggest that peer mediation programs, may, indeed have some positive outcomes (Smith, 2002: 568). Investigators reported that there was approximately 85% to 95% of conflicts in mediated situations that resulted in lasting agreements and decreases in referrals to administration for inappropriate behavior (Smith; 568; Bickmore 2002b). Most studies on the subject cite the lack of empirical

research. They also point out that implementation of the program in schools for a year is not an adequate amount of time to come up with definite results (Batton; Bickmore 2002c; Daunic et al; Sandy; Smith; Stevhan; Humphries; Johnson et al 1996; Bell et al 2000; Johnson and Johnson 1996). “There is an abundance of descriptive literature and commercially available curricular and training packages; however, researchers know very little about the efficacy of CR [Conflict resolution]- PM [Peer Mediation] programs” (Smith, 2002; 568). Gerber reported that 64% of the agreements were maintained (1999). More empirical research is needed on the subject. Incidentally, of the schools studied in our literature review, all reported that the peer mediation programs implemented were “successful”. We have found that most studies report a reduction in the number of suspensions and expulsions after implementing the program. However, in all of our studies success and effectiveness were not specifically operationalized leading us to speculate as to each programs effectiveness. The following is what was reported. In one study observed by Johnson and Johnson (1996c) in an urban elementary school, an 80% decrease in aggressive behavior was found and in another study conducted in a New York City school, found that suspensions decreased by 50%. An evaluation of Cleveland, Ohio’s urban school district model showed that suspensions went down an average 25%; however they increased in by 2% in Cleveland’s elementary schools (Bickmore 2002c). Similarly, Thompson reported that suspensions decreased by 18.5% in the first year and 50% during the second year of implementing the program (1996). Daunic et al., studied three middle schools in southeast Florida and observed that resolutions acceptable to both parties involved occurred more than 95% (2000: 99).

The role of the mediator plays an integral part in the success of the mediation. In one study of an inner-city elementary school, Johnson and Johnson et al report that peer mediators successfully mediated conflicts 98% of the time and note that this is remarkable because of the violent nature of most of these conflicts, which was reported to be at 85% (1996a: 283). However, the nature of these resolutions needs to be investigated and more closely examined. In most of these situations (84% of the time) the resolution was to simply avoid each other in the future (1996: 283). This is consistent with Daunic et al., finding that, "...students most frequently resolving to avoid each other, to stop the offending behavior, or to 'agree to get along,' (2000: 99). This contradicts other literature which, states that agreeing to get along or avoidance are not solutions.

Case Studies

We have selected a diverse yet small sample of case studies to illustrate differences in peer mediation programs and evaluation methods. Although these studies are not representative of the entire implementation of peer mediation, they offer a glimpse into its structure and potentiality.

Mid-West Inner-City Elementary School

The purpose of the first study we will be looking at was to unearth how effective peer mediation would be in inner city elementary schools. It was the first conflict management program to be applied in the city with ethnically diverse students. This study took place in an inner city in the mid-west where the children in this community came from poverty level and lower class homes. The whole school was receiving free breakfast and lunches. It is not hard to believe that in such a poverty stricken area there were high incidences of violence. The violence of the environment is not conducive to a place of

learning and the whole school being deemed a chapter one school, due to low performance levels, is an example of this. The cadre approach was implemented in this school using 47 conflict managers from the third and fourth grades who were to mediate in pairs during the lunch hour. These student volunteers were paired randomly and pairs were rearranged each week as detailed in a weekly detailed schedule. The children who volunteered to be mediators were trained at the local YMCA for one and a half days while three teachers at the school took part in the conflict management program through the San Francisco community boards. “Students were taught basic communication skills (“I” messages, active listening, reflection of feelings), assertiveness skills, and mediation skills (through procedures such as role playing),” (Johnson and Johnson, 2001b: 282). Once the students started to use their peer mediation skills on the playground they were to fill out a mediation report each time a conflict arose. This form consisted of the names of the students involved with the conflict, strategies used by the mediators to resolve the conflict, the person who referred the students to the mediator, and whether the conflict was solved or not. The peer mediation program took place over the whole school year.

The results of the conflict management program showed a lack of support from administration, which might have prevented great success. Twenty-seven student mediators out of the forty-seven were involved in mediating most of the conflicts in the school. “Only 11% of the conflicts were brought to the conflict managers by the students involved. Most were referred by other students (33%), counselors (17%), or teachers (15%). Few conflicts were referred by administrators (2%) or aids (11%), and in the 11% of cases, the person who reported the conflict went unreported,” (Johnson and Johnson, 283). It is very important for administrators to be involved in furthering the peer

mediation process. The fact that only 2% of administrators referred students to conflict management leads us to believe that they are not as helpful to the program. It is important that everyone in the school including administration and other faculty must guide students into the peer mediation process in order for it to work properly. Content analysis (students' descriptions) and Deutch's theoretical system (typology of conflict) were used to categorize conflicts. Physical fights and verbal aggression were overwhelmingly referred to peer mediators at a staggering 85%. "When the Deutsch categories were used, the majority of conflicts involved relationship issues (87%)," (Johnson and Johnson, 283). Relationship problems resulting in verbal and physical aggression was clearly an issue with these students as represented by the data. Using the content analysis approach there was a significant increase in conflicts using verbal and physical aggression at 91%. "When theoretical categories were used, the majority of conflicts were resolved through forcing (97%). Approximately 1.2 percent of the students accounted for 30% of the mediation conflicts (Johnson and Johnson, 283). Working specifically with the children with high incidences of such behavior would be highly constructive. If they were to be taught conflict resolution skills then the problems in school might be significantly reduced. Overall conflicts were successfully mediated 98% of the time. However this leads to the question of whether or not the 84% of the 94% whom resolved their conflicts by agreeing to avoid each other is a success at all in resolving a conflict.

Utah's 4th -6th Grade Program

Another program occurred at a school in a suburb of the Salt Lake City area. It differs from the previous study because the children who attended this school were from middle and working class homes as opposed to the poverty stricken homes in the inner

city. It had an overwhelming population of Caucasian students ranking at 93% and conversely 7% were Hispanic.

Students in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades who were already serving as peer mediators for the school were elected for this case study. Fourteen out of the eighteen who were peer mediators as well as their parents agreed to join the study. The mediators were selected based on leadership potential by their teachers regardless of having positive or negative influence on their peers. Five hours of training was required divided into three months previous to the onset of the study. This was conducted by two school counselor interns who set out some rules for the peer mediators to follow 1.)

Introductions are to be made as a mediator 2.) Four rules of conduct must be adhered to, which are: no interrupting, no name calling, must be truthful and agree to come to a solution 3.) Each disputant's side of the story must be recognized and discussed 4.) A mutual resolution must be made. Role playing games were organized in the final training meeting and then the students were given a test in order to see if they had retained the information and to ascertain whether or not they had retained the lessons they had learned. Those that passed were then deemed peer mediators and served as such for three months. All of the volunteer mediators were monitored on the playground for twelve hours; this was to observe their behavior in conflict management situations. The observers were extensively trained and made sure to confirm on a checklist the conflict resolution skills that mediators were effectively executing. At the end of the school year all of the participating peer mediators were interviewed separately. All students received equal questions asking what they felt about their experience as a peer

mediator, which took approximately 20 minutes. Once the meeting was over they were given a reward for taking part in the interviewing process.

The results discovered that the children functioning as peer mediators on the playground 64% of the time did in fact accurately carry out and remember all of the steps that they were taught in the conflict resolution training they received. The rest of the mediators missed one step. “Most children (93%) said that they thought that the dispute resolution process was satisfactory” (Humphries, 1999: 4). 86% of children believed that they were well prepared by the training they received while the rest of the peer mediators felt that they were somewhat prepared. 71% of the mediators felt that they were able to assist disputants in a equally agreeable resolution. Mediators discussed the three most common playground disputes as fighting at 50%, name calling at 17%, and swearing at 15% (Humphries: 5). The mediators also divulged that they were often the target of harassment where 36% were provoked by non peer mediators and disputants often tried to start fights with 27% of peer mediators in fights. Lastly 14% of the peer mediators revealed that if you were not well liked by other students then you are less likely to be effective in mediating conflicts. This case study does not give any statistics on the effectiveness of peer mediation on the part of resolving conflicts but does give a good look into how peer mediation should be implemented and structured. Though 64% of the students followed the guidelines correctly the other 36% did not. For peer mediation to be successful the training program should be an on going process where the peer mediators can constantly learn new approaches, be reminded of the old, and voice their concerns on the program.

California Suburban High School Program

The final study occurred in one of the largest California school districts at a suburban high school. Ninety-two ninth-graders were randomly selected from four World Civilizations classes. The ninth graders who were selected were then randomly assigned to be either the experimental or control group. These participants came from middle class backgrounds and had equal academic aptitude. The researchers note that, "...there were a number of gifted and special-needs students in each class," (Stevahn et al, 2000: 309). The researchers of this study thought that "effectiveness" of peer mediation could be measured by answering five different questions. The first question was whether or not students could learn and remember the procedures in peer mediation and conflict resolution. The second measure revolved around students' use of these procedures in real life situations (conflict). The third measure is whether or not students use "distributive negotiation" or "integrative negotiation" to resolve their conflicts. Distributive negotiation is, "...aimed at maximizing personal benefit at the expense of the other, is a battle between disputants who attempt to wrestle concessions from each other to converge on an agreement," (Stevahn et al, 2000: 307). Integrative negotiation is geared to, "...maximize mutual benefit, results in disputants' striving to understand each other's interests so that they can engage in creative problem solving and reach an agreement in which both receive what they want," (Stevahn et al, 2000: 307). The fourth measure was based on students' attitudes toward conflict before and after training, specifically looking at whether they had become positive or negative. The fifth and final measure is centered on whether or not peer mediation and conflict resolution training influences academic achievement positively or negatively (Stevahn et al, 2000: 308).

This study contained five phases, including recruitment, pre-measures, training, post-measures, and retention measures (Stevahn et al, 2000). These five phases demonstrated the reliability and validity of the study. All participants involved used the same materials (textbooks, literature, historical documents, etc.) for the duration of the unit. And all participated in a “bargaining exercise” which involved the buying and selling of U.S. World War II savings bonds (Stevahn et al, 2000: 315). Participants were required to keep a notebook in which they were to complete 45 assignment sheets and then were allowed to pick whichever sheets they wanted for the remainder of their assignment. Grades were based upon the following criteria: 70 notebook sheets received a C, 80 sheets received a B, and 90 plus received an A (Stevahn et al, 2000: 315).

The experimental groups (classes) learned the peer mediation process and training was integrated into World War II history by requiring students to write and role-play 10 negotiating and peer mediating scenarios. The goal of these scenarios was to force students to resolve historical conflicts that they were learning about in the class. The control groups received no peer mediation or conflict resolution training.

The results of this study showed that 92% of the trained students were able to accurately remember all or nearly all of the negotiating procedures and 83% had “complete mastery,” while 93% of untrained students reported zero procedures (Stevahn et al, 2000: 316). In the post-test, given 3 weeks after the study, “...the trained students still recalled significantly more steps than untrained students, $t(90) = 66.34, p < .0001$,” (Stevahn et al: 316). The retention test, which was given 7 months after the study, depicted, “...a significant difference between the trained and the untrained students’ retention of the negotiation steps remained, $t(51) = 6.02, p < .0001$,” (Stevahn et al: 316).

It was also found that 59% of trained students used integrative negotiation in reaching an agreement as opposed to 9% of untrained students who used the process (Stevahn et al: 317). These results suggest that this program was effective based upon the way in which “effectiveness” was operationalized.

Suggestions and Recommendations

Through our research, we have observed some inconsistencies with peer mediation programs resulting in differing effects of the program. We have come up with a few recommendations for future schools that are looking to attain the most out of their PM/CRE program(s). While we realize the difficulties of incorporating conflict resolution education into already existing school curriculum, we think that its implementation is crucial to the success of peer mediation. Most research attributes the unsuccessfulness of some peer mediation programs to the fact that they are “stand-alone,” meaning that they are conducted on the side by teachers who are already obligated to teach their own class and often see PM/CRE as a burden. We think that it is in the best interest of the program to infuse conflict resolution education and peer mediation skills in already existing curricula, like social studies or history. This will allow students to actively view peer mediation and conflict resolution and will serve as a medium for students to obtain those necessary skills.

We repeatedly ran into differences in the way programs were being evaluated, this was problematic for us because often times “success” and “effectiveness” are not consistently operationalized this left us to draw our own conclusions about what we thought constituted a successful/effective mediation program. There was

In order to maintain a successful peer mediation program, the whole school's involvement is necessary. The program must be promoted through teachers and staff; it should be mentioned at school assemblies and during school announcements. Peer mediators need to be respected and the school staff should be the first to do so. During school assemblies or functions, peer mediators should receive special recognition and/or awards. This will display to students the importance of the program and the mediators themselves. Special recognition of peer mediators has been recommended by other researchers, however, has yet to be implemented by all programs.

Most of the programs cited in our research used the cadre approach (a select few group of mediators for an entire school), yet most advocate that the total student body approach is the most desirable and beneficial. Often it are the mediators themselves who benefit from peer mediation programs because of the conflict management skills they learn through their training. These skills will be beneficial to them for years to come and will prepare them for their future roles in life. It has also been reported that self-esteem is raised in students who are mediators. These positive benefits should not be limited to a handful of students in every school, the whole student population can benefit from these effects and that is why we recommend the total student body approach. We think that it is wise to have a few students serving as mediators at a time, but that the training should be taught to everyone and anyone willing can serve as a mediator. Previous studies state that mediators were selected on popularity or leadership skills, however we feel that these criteria just further promote social hierarchies existing in schools and will hinder rather than improve the program.

Most of the literature we have accumulated suggests that conflicts which, are managed through avoidance are unsuccessful. Williamson et al., state, "Conflict can be managed unproductively, by means of avoidance and fighting or productively, through informal and formal means," (1999:2). Yet, some of the research also states that mediations that end with the disputant's agreeing to get along or just agree to avoid each other in the future have been resolved successfully. There are also researchers who state that sometimes there is no solution but to go to court, because power imbalances make while this typically does not apply to elementary students, as well as middle school We find this discrepancy very disconcerting because much of the literature refers to if not revolves around these same researchers who claim that "agree to get along" and "avoid each other in the future" solutions are desirable. The core tenet of peer mediation is to teach students to deal with conflict, and when one just avoids it by turning a blind eye, it can perpetuate and intensify negative feelings, which completely defeat the purpose of peer mediation. This leads us to argue that avoidance is not a desirable solution, nothing is resolved through avoidance. Ultimately more research is needed to obtain substantial and valid data; there should be consistencies with the way in which "effectiveness" is measured and defined. We find it difficult to make inferences about studies that fail to report how certain variables such as "effectiveness" and "success" are/were operationalized. Predominantly, "success" is "observed" from decrease in suspension rates, number of fights reported from previous year, and testimonials from teachers (Johnson and Johnson, 1996c; Stevahn et al., 2000). The wave of peer mediation programs is just beginning to catch on and diffuse across diverse school populations.

Annotated Bibliography

Abercrombie, Nicholas, S. Hill, and B.S. Turner. The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology. (Penguin Books: 2000) 400+ pages with bibliography.

A dictionary of sociological terms and concepts. Will be useful in defining social psychology, symbolic interactionism and Mead's theory of the generalized other. Will provide unbiased definitions and critiques of these terms.

Batton, Jennifer. Institutionalizing conflict resolution education: The Ohio model. (Conflict Resolution Quarterly Vol. 19 No. 4: 2002) 14 pages, including references. Batton examines the Ohio's model for implementing conflict resolution education in schools. There is also discussion of the State's effort to promote CRE. It offers a model for other schools to follow in order to start their own programs. There is also a brief critique of this model by the author in which she discusses the effects of peer mediation. It is useful because it gives statistics on the benefits of peer mediation. This is valid because it compares itself to other state programs and directs one to websites in the event that they want to see the evaluation materials asses by the commission of the program. This raises the validity of the article to its reader. The references are in abundance and are cited throughout the article and will provide us a link to other resources.

Beer, Jennifer E., with Eileen Stief. The mediator's handbook. (New Society Publishers: 1997) 168 pages.

Truly a mediator's handbook. Many examples of how to be an effective mediator. Includes sample situations, diagrams effective models and a specific list of when it is appropriate and when it is not to mediate. Will be useful in our analysis of the situational effectiveness of peer mediation.

Bell, Stephen K., J.K. Coleman, A. Anderson, J.P. Whelan, and C. Wilder. The effectiveness of peer mediation in a low-SES rural elementary school. (Psychology in the Schools, Vol. 37, No.6: 2000) 12 pages including references, charts, and tables.

A study of 6th to 8th grade students whom were trained to be peer mediators from the Conflict Resolution Unlimited manual. Explains the results after one year of implementation. There appears to have been a school wide decrease in suspension as well as referrals. This study is useful because it deals with a rural community and once again illustrates the universal effectiveness of peer mediation.

Bickmore, Kathy. Good training is not enough: research on peer mediation program implementation. Social Alternatives (Vol. 21 No. 1: 2002) 6 pages including references. This journal article discusses the concept of peer mediation including previous research on the topic. The research is primarily based on the Ohio school model in which it basically focuses on measuring the outcomes of peer mediation such as it reducing the level of suspension rates and achievement test results. The content of this journal is very relevant to our research and gives a specific example of peer mediation in action. It cites many references throughout the article, which help to confirm the validity of their claims. This article will be very helpful.

Bickmore, Kathy. Student conflict resolution, power “sharing” in school, in citizenship education. (The Ontario Institute for Studies and Education: 2001) 26 pages, including references.

This article discusses service learning as a form of peer mediation. The author analyzes continuing research about conflict resolution and peer mediation, training projects in a large urban school district. Information was collected from 1997 and 1999 with main emphasis on the question “what processes of conflict resolution learning are being facilitated at each school and what are the observable effects of these processes, among peer mediators and within each whole school community?” The W.A.V.E. program is discussed as well as the discussion of case studies and their correlation with violence. The article is important to our research because it discusses citizenship and how peer mediation benefits it because it empowers the students to be active in their community. Bickmore cites an amazing amount of quality references and has added charts and diagrams for readers to examine.

Bickmore, Kathy. Peer mediation training and program implementation in elementary schools: Research results. (Conflict Resolution Quarterly Vol. 20 No. 2: 2002) 12 pages, including references.

This article explains the peer mediation evaluation project, which is comparable to the CCR’s (Center for Conflict Resolution) program. It gives extensive information on their peer mediation design. They examine nine elementary schools, nine middle schools, and nine secondary schools in three U.S. cities. This is a very helpful article because it shows qualitative and quantitative data that is thoroughly referenced. It gives sample data tables of their collective findings. This is an excellent reference as far as quantifying their data. It will be a very significant resource.

Charon, Joel M. Symbolic Interactionism: An Introduction, an Interpretation, an Integration. (Prentice Hall: 1992) 232 pages including bibliographical references and indexes

As the title would suggest, this book discusses symbolic interactionism and its principles. While this is not the subject of our paper, we will be discussing symbolic interactionism in relation to peer mediation’s origins. This will be a great reference especially when we begin our application of role-taking and “taking the role of the other” to peer mediation and its interpersonal dynamics.

Chetkow-Yanoov, Benyamin. Conflict-resolution skills can be taught. (Peabody Journal of Education Vol. 71 No.3: 1996) 17 pages, including references and appendix. Explains the different models of peer mediation necessary for specific age groups ranging from nursery school to the university level. The author conducted a workshop in South Africa and this illustrates its cultural universal effectiveness. Draws upon homogeneous cultures and schools which incorporate bilingual education to their students and in the end provides skills for understanding different perspectives. Contains the aspect of intercultural sensitivity which illustrates how peer mediation is culture blind and works for everyone. It demonstrates how children can be taught to be non-biased and neutral when mediating between different races. Resourceful in that it gives great case studies

ranging from all ages and that it is intercultural. It also states how peer mediation can be taught to anyone regardless of cultural background.

Collins, Randall. Four Sociological Traditions. (Oxford University Press: 1994a). 321 pages including index and table of contents.

This book goes over the four main sociological perspectives: conflict theory, rational/utilitarian, Durkheimian perspective and microinteractionist theory. It provides a thorough explanation of the theories and many useful examples. Specifically discusses symbolic interactionism, the generalized other, taking the role of the other which relates to the fundamentals of peer mediation. Will be useful in applying peer mediation to sociological theory.

Collins, Randall. Four Sociological Traditions: Selected readings. (Oxford University Press: 1994b). 357 pages.

An overview of the four main sociological theories/perspectives told through selected writings by the theorists themselves. Will be very useful in applying symbolic interactionism, Mead's generalized other, and taking the role of the other to peer mediation. A great resource.

Cremin, Hilary. Pupils in resolving disputes: successful peer mediation schemes share their secrets. (Support for learning, Vol. 17 No. 3. 2002) 6 pages, including references. An article that will be of value to our project. Discusses a conference held to gather sixty young peacemakers together. The author's previous research is expounded upon, explaining its results. Research methods are included within the article as well as charts that are easy to read and understand. Cremin's article will be very useful as it is a study with good statistical backing.

Daunic, Ann P., S.W. Smith, J.R. Robinson, M. D. Miller, and K.L. Landry. School-wide conflict resolution and peer mediation programs: Experiences in three middle schools. (Intervention in School and Clinic, Vol. 36, No. 2, 2000) 16 pages.

Analyzes the effectiveness of peer mediation in 3 middle schools, explains the social psychological roots of peer mediation and offers advice for those working to implement peer mediation programs. This article will be helpful in our critique of the effectiveness of peer mediation in middle schools. Very pertinent to our research.

Einstein Gordan, Vivian. Conflict resolution. (West Publishing Company: 1988) 158 pages + table of contents, preface, glossary, and bibliography.

Focuses predominantly on the practice of mediation in the legal system. This book is generally irrelevant to our topic at hand except for the fact that chapters seven and eight are primarily delegated to peer mediation and its processes. These chapters discuss at length the role of the mediator and the fundamental skills necessary for being an effective mediator. This book will provide a minimal amount of information, however useful these two chapters will be.

Ford, Eve. Oregon's SCRIP model: Building school conflict resolution education capacity through community partnerships. (Conflict Resolution Quarterly Vol. 19 No. 4: 2002) 13 pages, including notes.

This article demonstrates the importance of CRE (conflict resolution education) declining resources. It explains Oregon's SCRIP project and how it was able to sustain itself through community and educational investors, as well as it coinciding with The Oregon Dispute Resolution Commission. Potential benefits of CRE are cited and the future goals of the program. Although Ford's article delves into financial aspects of peer mediation programs which is not relevant to our project it does reaffirm peer mediation/conflict resolution potential benefits as well as future goals for expanding the SCRIP model.

Gerber, Sterling. Does peer mediation really work? Professional School Counseling, Vol. 2, Issue No. 3: 1999) p.169

This article discusses the use of peer mediation in its relation to resolving conflicts amongst students. The author explains the benefits of peer mediation programs and questions the longevity of peer mediation in schools. Included in this article is an evaluation of a specific high school peer mediation program. This article will be beneficial to our research in its analysis of peer mediation.

Girard, Kathryn and Susan J. Koch. Conflict resolution in the schools: A manual for educators. (Jossey-Bass: 1996) 187 pages, including table of contents, appendix and index.

A manual for educators that explains the natures of conflict, the concepts and skills of conflict resolution, alternative dispute processes, and applications for conflict resolution in education. Excellent information, including various models. Excellent resource if developing a workshop or program. A hands on type of book that supplies exercises at the end of each chapter and will be a good resource.

Goldberg, Steven V., F.E.A. Sander, N.H. Rogers. Dispute resolution: Negotiation, mediation and other processes. (Little, Brown and Company: 1992) 503 pages + summary of contents, table of contents and preface.

Discusses dispute resolution in the justice system including family, public and international circles. Information in this text is minuscule to peer mediation, but we will be able to use the information discussed in certain sections of this book that deal with negotiation, mediation, and designing systems.

Hayhurst, Chris. Stay cool: a guy's guide to handling conflict. (The Rosen Publishing Group, inc.: 2002) 48 pages, including bibliographical references and index.

Examines various types of conflict and suggests different avenues in which to solve them peacefully. The book is written for boys but its information can be seen as universal to any gender. Gives six easy steps to conflict resolution. Concise in explanations, yet thorough. Gives helpful organizations and websites at the back of the book for further reference. The concept of peer mediation is well defined making this book very helpful on all fronts.

Herrman, Margaret S., N.L. Hollett, D.G. Eaker, J. Gale. Mediator reflections and practice: Connecting select demographics and preferred orientations. (Conflict Resolution Quarterly Vol. 20 No. 4: 2003) 12 pages, including references.

This article discusses the role of the mediator and their effectiveness due to demographics such as, age, sex, work history, and education. Will be useful because it focuses on the mediator themselves. Provides insight as to the characteristics of male and female mediating styles. Furnishes charts and tables illustrating differences between the above stated demographics and the outcomes of their orientations.

Himes, Joseph S. Conflict and conflict management. (University of Georgia Press: 1980) 282 pages.

The first part of this book is dedicated to the explanation of the various forms of conflict. The author concentrates on the description of conflict in society such as social movements, cultural movements and interracial conflict. While this book does not specifically pertain to peer mediation the second part of this book discusses conflict resolution and provides several strategies for resolution. These strategies for resolution will be very useful in implementing positive change.

Humphries, Tracy L. Improving peer mediation programs: Students experiences and suggestions. (Professional School counseling, Vol. 3, No. 1, p.13: 1999) 8 pages including appendices.

Explores peer mediation and all of its facets. Provides the effectiveness of peer mediation as viewed from students. Offers suggestions for improving peer mediator programs as well as suggestions for mediators. Will be useful in assessing the overall effectiveness of peer mediation. Includes interviews questions and guidelines for mediators.

Johnson, David W. and Roger T. Johnson. 1996a. "Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Programs in Elementary and Secondary Schools: A Review of the Research." *Review of Educational Research* 66: 459-506

This article is basically an overview of peer mediation and the factors that have led to its development. This paper will be very useful to our paper because it provides background information on the topic including types of conflict experienced in schools, strategies used to resolve conflict and theories related to peer mediation.

Johnson, David W., R. Johnson, J. Mitchell, B. Cotton, D. Harris, and S. Louisen. Effectiveness of conflict managers in an inner-city elementary school. (The Journal of educational Research Vol. 89 No. 5: 1996) 6 pages including charts and tables.

This study looks at the effectiveness of a peer mediation program in an inner city school. The program was implemented in grades K-4 over a full academic year. Third and fourth grade students were trained to be conflict managers so that they could mediate their classmates' conflicts. Results of this study reveal very promising data for peer mediation and its use in grade schools. Unlike many other articles on the topic of peer mediation, this study focuses on its use in inner city schools; this will be beneficial to our research in assessing the cultural universal-ness of peer mediation.

Johnson, David W. and Roger T. Johnson. 1998. "Teaching All Students How to Manage Conflicts Constructively: The Peacemakers Program." *Journal of Negro Education* 65: 322. 13 pages including references and charts.

This is another study conducted by Johnson and Johnson; we think that this article will be useful because it was done by the authorities of peer mediation and conflict resolution education. Included in this paper is an outline of the Peacemakers program which targets grades 1 to 12 that teaches students how to effectively manage conflict. Charts are incorporated into the paper to show the different schools with diverse student populations that are involved in the study. There is however one drawback, there is no empirical evidence in the paper supporting peer mediation.

Kressel, Kenneth, D.G. Pruitt, and Associates. Mediation research. (Jossey-Bass Inc.: 1989) 457 pages table of contents, forward, preface and the authors.

Breaks down the different aspects of mediation and research on the subject. Provides information on specific case studies in the field, factors affecting success in mediation and its methodology. It will be helpful in showing how mediation has successfully worked in the past and critiques its limitations as well.

Lovaglia, Michael J., Knowing people: The personal use of social psychology. (McGraw Hill Co., 2000) 242 pages including index.

A discussion of social psychology and its principles as it relates to interpersonal relationships (the micro level). Will be helpful in our application of social psychology, symbolic interactionism, the generalized other, and Cooley's work to peer mediation. The sections relating specifically to these topics will be very insightful to our research.

Nathan, Laurie. At the core: Six strategic principles. (Track Two Vol. 7 No. 1: 1998) 5 pages, including biography of author.

In this article the author discusses six principles which she says "underpins our efforts but which frequently are not applied by international actors." The author discusses the differences between the mediation approaches in different organizations such as the UN, the CCR, and the OAU (the organization for African Unity.) Her six principles are intercultural and will be useful in pointing out that peer mediation is universal, that is to say that it is useful for everyone despite their differences.

Rue, Nancy N. Everything you need to know about peer mediation. (The Rosen Publishing Group, inc.: Revised Edition 2001) 64 pages, including bibliographical references and index.

Principles of peer mediation explained. Advice on how to engage in peer mediation and how to start a program in order to solve conflicts and resolve problems. Advice on how to participating in peer mediation to prevent the most extreme cases such as violence in schools. Exposes peer mediations benefits. Straight to the point text that combines reasoning through tough conflicts with positive outcomes. Accurate with excellent references. Helpful and well thought out. Information that is extremely relevant to our literature review.

Sandstrom, Kent L., Daniel D. Martin, Gary Adanfine. Symbols, selves, and social reality: A symbolic interactionists approach to social psychology and sociology. (Roxbury Publishing Company: 2003) 231 pages + contents.

This book discusses the theory of symbolic interactionism at length. It is a very valid and reliable resource. We will indeed take a lot of much needed information from this text and apply it to our research of peer mediation.

Sandy, Sandra V. Conflict resolution education in the schools “getting there”. (Conflict Resolution Quarterly Vol. 19 No. 2: 2001) 13 pages, including references.

Sandra Sandy critiques conflict resolution education and hypothesizes that it fails to make life long changes in attitude and behavior. She says that research information is scant and mixed on this topic. Sandy does provide some benefits of peer mediation to the mediators. In the end she provides a list of standards that should be met by students upon the completion of the high school education, which will help then to implement mediation skills into their daily lives. This is beneficial to our work because it offers a different spin on peer mediation than any of the other works we have found. Therefore it is a very original resource.

Sellman, Edward. Peer mediation, school culture and sustainability. (Pastoral Care: June 2002)

Provides an overview of peer mediation and its characteristics. Lists the potential for peer mediation in the schools. The author also includes his own personal experience with peer mediation and argues that in order for p.m. programs to be effective, that they need to work with the culture of that particular school. Contains numerous diagrams outlining the framework of peer mediation. This article is very pertinent to our research and also helps to illustrate the cultural universal-ness of peer mediation because this study was conducted in the United Kingdom and includes research from Scotland.

Simpson, Carolyn. Coping through conflict resolution and peer mediation. (The Rosen Publishing Group, inc.: 1998) 96 pages, including bibliographical references and index. Examines interpersonal conflict and communication in adolescence. The who, what, when, where, and whys are explained thoroughly. Problem solving skills and putting such skills to work are laid out in order for one to come to a sound conclusion. Pertinent information relevant to our research. Although a bit out of date it does contain accurate information and excellent resources for further examination.

Smith, Steven, M.D. Miller, T.R. Robinson. Conflict resolution and peer mediation in middle schools: Extending the process and outcome knowledge base. (Journal of Social Psychology: 2002) 19 pages, including references.

This article examines peer mediation and conflict resolution in three middle schools. They layout their design as well as instrumentation and results of their findings. Excellent graphs and charts are depicted within their results. The article sheds light on the effectiveness of the program and gives recommendations for implementing future programs. This article is interesting because it supplies contradictory results. The uniqueness of the article is shown in their discussion of what may be more helpful for the future of peer mediation. This article is very pertinent to our literature review.

Stevahn, Laurie, D.W. Johnson, R.T. Johnson, R. Schultz. Effects of conflict resolution training integrated into a high school social studies curriculum. (Journal of Social Psychology: 2002) 27 pages, including references.

This study examines the effectiveness of peer mediation training in California high school students and the impact of academic achievement. It's very descriptive in its methodology and its quantitative data analysis. There is a plethora of charts as well as comprehensive information on the nature of peer mediation. It is useful in that it studies high school age students; data in this area is scarce.

Ury, William. The third side: Why we fight and how we can stop it. (Penguin books: 2002) 251 pages, including index.

All encompassing books focusing on conflict that may arise between anyone and everyone. A historical view of conflict is examined and prevention is promoted in depth. This text can be helpful for all ages and all people. It contains some unique information that will be important to our literature review. Accurate and the most up to date information as of yet. All facets of conflict are accounted for and the process of mediation including mediation among peers is explored. Excellent and accurate referencing throughout the text.

Wandburg, Robert. Peer mediation: agreeing on solutions. (Capstone Press: 2002) 64 pages, including bibliographical references and index.

Defines peer mediation in a reasonable manner so that anyone may understand. Shows how this concept helps to allow for sound interpersonal relations. The process of peer mediation is described, including an example of peer mediation between students. Tells how one can go from a mediator to a mentor. Excellent references for researching, including a helpful glossary for those stumped on a word. Helpful for setting up a step by step mediating process. Can even help one to monitor ones own actions. A tremendous amount of accurate information relevant to our research.

Waxman, Kenneth M. Creating a mediation process suitable for a medium sized university. (Humboldt State University Master's Thesis: 2000) 106 pages including table of contents, references, and appendices

This thesis was done on peer mediation and in that sense it should prove to be very useful. However, this paper mainly pertains to the college setting and we are not sure that most of the information presented in the paper will apply to our study.

Wiggins, James A., Beverly B. Wiggins, James Van Zanden. Social Psychology 5th Edition. (McGraw Hill, inc.: 1994) 633 pages + contents and preface.

A great overall reference for symbolic interactionism, the generalized other, and taking the role of the other. Will be very useful in our application of these concepts to peer mediation.

Williamson, Deborah, D.E. Warner, P. Sanders, P. Knepper. We can work it out: teaching conflict management through peer mediation. (Journal of Social Work in Education Vol. 21 Issue No.2: 1999)

Discusses the Kentucky case study and the results after a year of implementation of peer mediation. Provides information about the six basic steps of peer mediation and its correlation to violence prevention. Contains an evaluation of peer mediation curriculum in which surveys were administered to teachers of peer mediation and middle school students. Will be useful because of the findings that suggest peer mediation reduces violence and that it can be taught in a straightforward digestible manner. Extremely relevant to our research.