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MEDIATION IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

by

LISA D. SHIPLEY B.A.H.

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Sociology

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

July, 1992

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ISBN 0-315-79807-6

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submitted by Lisa Shipley, B.A.H.

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

Thesis Supervisor

Chair, Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton University

July, 1992

Abstract

Those who promote the mediation model of conflict resolution present it as an agent of empowerment and as a universally applicable method of conflict management. This thesis is an exploration of those claims as they apply to a peer mediation programme in the elementary school environment. The research presented here follows the translation of mediation from the abstract level to its use at the practical level, by children in the school yard. Those socio-cultural factors which impinge on the translation of a discourse of empowerment into everyday reality are illuminated by entering the life-worlds of the participants.

Throughout this translation process, ideological, institutional, and sub-cultural groupings influenced the manner in which mediation was given meaning in the participant's life-worlds. Fundamental to the encounter between mediation as abstraction and everyday reality, was a confrontation with the hierarchical distribution of power which permeates daily life. The conceptual model of mediation, as an agent of empowerment, was unable to effect a re-negotiation of this distribution of power.

Acknowledgements

This thesis represents a small step in the development of my own biography. I returned to academia, after an 18 year hiatus, tentatively, and with much trepidation. The purpose was to broaden my understandings of my own life, and the social environment in which I functioned. This thesis stands as a test of the knowledge acquired through my formal education against the reality of daily social life.

The growth in understanding, and the accomplishment of the many steps that led up to this thesis, has been made with the support and confidence of numerous people. The task has not been easy and their participation in my efforts has been of great significance to me.

This Masters level research would not have been conducted without the influential in-put of certain professors in the first two years of my enrollment at University. Terry Nosanchuk, Connie Kristianson, Lloyd Strickland and George Pollard, professors with whom I have had the privilege of instruction, showed me the possibilities that academia offered. Their confidence in my capabilities, and their academic discussions with me, led to a re-fashioning of my ambitions and goals. Their interactions with me were a first step towards the production of this work.

During the production of this thesis I had the guidance of two insightful and supportive committee members. Steve Richer has always taken my concerns, questions and enthusiasms as legitimate. Although a thesis is often interpreted as a final product, Steve set a tone that allowed the boundaries to be stretched so the growing could continue.

I owe a great deal to John Cove, my advisor. For four years, in various courses both under and not under his tutelage, and throughout this research, John has been the backboard for my thoughts, ideas and feelings. He has allowed me to absorb, challenge and negotiate my accumulating academic knowledge, so that it could become meaningful in my

personal life-world. This has been an essential contribution when considering my original goals for returning to academia.

I am fortunate to have a network of friends and family whose participation in my life is appreciated and cherished. My children, Nicholas and Jordan, have been a continuous reminder that knowledge is only relevant when it can be brought to ground. Their patience, kindness, support and understanding, through laughter and tears, through crankiness and elation, have given my life a depth and intimacy which is most precious.

My parents, long ago laid the foundation for this work. My father always encouraged me to ask why, without fear, and my mother showed me that the why's should never stop. It was they, with their political activism, and their struggle to make things better in the world, that ultimately led to the focus of this research. My sister Jan, my model of courage, who shares and understands my past like no other, has kept me free from the walls of isolation, in spite of the long hours and the heavy demands of producing this study.

Friendship is a life-line that helps you find the sanity in all the chaos. I have two friends who have ridden the roller-coaster of life with me for over 20 years. Debi and Suzanne have cheered from the wings, discussed, encouraged, and believed in me. The intimacy that comes from our long past together, is of deep value. Thanks for waiting for me while I did this. How about dinner? To my friends, Caroline, Lynn, and Debbie, thanks for the special insights you have brought to my life.

When producing a work of this nature, help comes from the most unexpected quarters. My friend Debbie, showed up at my door to read, edit, and encourage, just when I was losing faith. My neighbour Diane helped me find the right words, provided cigarettes and soft drinks, xeroxed, fought computer madness with me, and gave tremendous editing assistance for a long three months.

I can not read the following pages without a feeling of gratitude for the people at Duncan Elementary who allowed me to enter their lives. The teachers did not always like what I had to say, but they continued to ask nevertheless. I applaud the courage and integrity they showed as we struggled to integrate my 'ivory-tower' perspectives with their day-to-day realities.

This thesis is dedicated to Gary, Mark and Margo, students at Duncan Elementary. They come from divergent realities, worlds that are not easily made compatible. The struggles they face are not small. May they have the courage, and the chance, to remain the very worthy and competent people that they are.

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Preface

I came to the desire to understand mediation more fully from my own 'biographical determinedness'. This personal biography shaped the interests and the directions taken in this thesis, therefore, they need to be presented for the role they played in conducting this exploration.

I have had a life-long interest in conflict and conflict resolution practices. These arose quite early, when I had to sit on the floor in my elementary school gym, with my hands over my head, as we practiced air raid procedures during the Bay of Pigs crisis. My concern with international conflict management was reinforced when I moved to Israel for a lengthy stint on a kibbutz. My year long stay broadened my interest from the international level to include the domestic social level. Since I was living in the country for an extended period of time, it gave me the opportunity to be exposed to the very deep-rooted effects continual war had on the make-up of the society and the people. Israeli wars did not only impact on the ability to secure and protect borders. They also effected Israeli attitudes, beliefs and experiences on a very fundamental level. I came to realize that the long-term state of conflict at the international level had permeated daily Israeli social life quite deeply. The strains associated with existing in a constant state of readiness had developed into particular ways of living. Aggressive action in times of tension was not only exhibited with international neighbours, but also with friends, relatives and acquaintances. Terminating the wars at the international level would also have to mean some radical changes in everyday Israeli social life. Unraveling this interdependent relationship between the big wars and the little wars seemed a huge task. Peacekeeping initiatives at the international level would do little to address the manner in which international relations had so deeply permeated domestic social relations.

Several years later I moved to the Northwest Territories and was again confronted with the way different people address social relational problems. I was

exposed to three very different cultures during my two years there, and again found that the lifestyles I witnessed, and the methods of problem-solving used at the intimate level of social relations, were very much related to relations at a higher social level.

When I returned to school I continued to try to understand the nature of the relationship between the larger social organizations and the smaller social relations. I took course work in sociology, psychology and anthropology. In each of these three areas the focus was on this interdependent relationship and its manifestations.

In graduate school I took a course on International Conflict Mediation. We had, as students, received extensive information about mediation, the philosophy, and the technique, and it certainly sounded effective. It was presented as a technique that was capable of interceding at both the broader level of international affairs and at the more intimate domestic level of conflictual social relations. Mediation, as an approach to conflict resolution, had an inherent appeal to my interests in the manner in which conflict is handled at both the macro and microsociological levels (terms I had now adopted through my exposure to academia).

During the course a workshop was held with representatives from two nations that had been at war for over 50 years. As students, we were to be participants in the third party mediation panel and I looked forward to the workshop with much anticipation. It was, however, a great disappointment. The theory seemed to have a great deal of difficulty making it to the ground. In other words, the expectations that had been developed through class discussions at the abstract and theoretical level, were quite far removed from the process and outcomes witnessed at the mediation workshop. In particular, I noticed the inability of this technique, that had been fashioned by North American rational/scientific discourse, to address the very real life emotional experiences of those attending the workshop. These people had witnessed, participated in, survived, and lost family to, war.

Prior to the workshop, I was a whole-hearted proponent of mediation. After the workshop, I had some serious reservations. Taking into account the growing use of this method, it became important to me to understand what mediation meant to those who were promoting it, and how it entered into and became a part of alternative life-worlds. Was there variation in the meaning and experience of mediation as it became translated across life-worlds, and if so why, and what was the nature of that variation? Or had my workshop experience been an anomaly from typical mediation scenarios? I felt the answer to this question was important to both those who promote mediation and to those who use it.

I chose to follow this process of translation through in the elementary school environment because of my interest in children and children's rights. I have had considerable exposure to children under the age of twelve, through my work in the day care field, and my years as a parent, and felt this would be advantageous in understanding their life-words. Also, having held supervisory positions in day care, I felt this would add breadth to my understanding of teacher's life-worlds.

The purpose of the research undertaken here was twofold. As a student of sociology the motivation was to enhance the understanding of those factors which lead to breaches between theory and ground. A more personal motivation was to test my acquired understandings against empirical reality. I have learned much in my six years in academia and it was time to bring these theoretical understandings into concrete daily life.

Mediation in the elementary school environment speaks to many of my interests, in conflict, children, and the relationship between the macro and micro levels of life. All of these represent subjects of theoretical consideration, they also represent aspects of everyday empirical reality.

Introduction

Mediation, as a form of conflict/dispute resolution, is becoming more and more firmly embedded in our Canadian social fabric. All provinces except the Maritimes now have schools that have peer mediation programmes at either the elementary, high school or university level. Labour mediators were used in the recent teacher strikes in Ottawa, the city bus strikes in Ottawa and Toronto, and in the nation-wide postal strike. Cross-cultural mediation was used at Oka, and is in use in multi-ethnic interactions in Toronto. At the international level, the Canadian Institute of International Peace and Security sponsored a mediation in Cyprus in June, 1991, to address tensions on that island, and a Canadian mediator was involved in the discussions just prior to the Persian Gulf War. The growing interest in mediation is also reflected in the increase in the number of articles published on mediation in English speaking periodicals. In 1980 there were fourteen articles published, in 1988 this had increased to ninety (Stone, 1991).

The mediation model of conflict resolution is linked closely to principles of empowerment by those who promote it. So too are the win/win outcomes which are presented as implicit to this technique. For example Barsky states, with reference to divorce mediation (1991:11), "Parties are empowered by being given the ability to make important parental decisions [themselves] rather than referring them to be made by the court". In the high schools, student's use of mediation enables them to feel "that instead of being sentenced by authority they have taken an active role in the solution of their own problem" (Dube, 1992:B2). International mediation is also formulated on the basis of disputant participation in the generation of solutions, and control of the decision-making process.

The emphasis on disputant control is the underlying factor which leads proponents of mediation to perceive it as a process of empowerment. The premise is that

disputants will not agree to any solution that deviates from their own best interests.

Thus the interpretation that is taken is:

People are not problems; people have problems. Each of us is valuable and unique. Conflict resolution involves solving the problems, or changing the situations, to meet the identity needs (recognition, security, control, role defense, and distributive justice needs) of all the people involved.

(Blakeway, 1988:75)

Mediated outcomes are seen as necessarily empowering through an ability to attend to individual needs and change the situation through disputant control.

Empowerment, in abstract terms, means the re-organization of a particular distribution of power. In concrete terms, empowerment has come to mean the opportunity to express personal/group interests in an accepting and legitimating atmosphere. It is implicit to the term that interests and concerns will be listened to, will be seen as valid within the speaker's own reality, and appropriate action will be taken to address those factors which originally led to disempowerment.

To be empowering, the actual technique of mediation must have the capacity to address some highly complicated issues. The distribution of power in society is both a reflection of, and is legitimated by, a complex set of socio-cultural organizations. To change the situation and be empowering suggests a confrontation with established power differentials (that may be formulated on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity, social class and the like), and also with the variety of institutions, ideologies and social practices which support them. When the mediation discourse draws on issues of empowerment in its promotion, it becomes de-contextualized from its societal formation and associates itself with the larger empowerment discourse of the late 1980's and early 1990's for legitimation. Yet the reasons for its recent rise in popularity, and the validity of the

linkages between mediation, win/win, and empowerment (as a re-negotiation of power), have not been established.

Besides claims of empowerment, mediation is also presented, and used, as a universally applicable method of conflict resolution. Its interjection in the number of social moments, highlighted earlier, are evidence of this claim. However, depending on the grievance, different institutional structures, social practices, and ideologies will be called into play in attempting resolution. Thus factors in the socio-cultural environment may also encroach on the presentation of mediation as a universally applicable technique.

Proponents of mediation are asserting that there is a universal method of conflict resolution which involves an adjustment of reality. The onus for making this adjustment is placed in the hands of the disputants by implying that they can change the situation once they are given control of the decision-making process. This seems a heavy responsibility when one considers the very crucial and complex role of socio-cultural factors in the formulation of reality, and in identity and identity needs. The quotations cited above do not indicate how changes in ideologies, institutions and social practices are accomplished through disputant control. The mediation technique begs closer examination. If it enables disputants to competently make these adjustments, particularly to effect a re-negotiation of power, than it is necessarily a transformative social process.

This thesis is an exploration of how mediation gets played out in the everyday reality of our social environment. The primary interest is to assess the survival of the abstract model of mediation, as a discourse of empowerment, through its confrontation with the on-going realities of everyday life. These realities will impinge on mediation and the manner in which it is meaningfully integrated into the participant's lives. The focus is on how actors come to interpret mediation and give it significance relative to their own realities, for it is within these realities that mediation will, or will not, come to be interpreted as empowering.

One of the assumptions made in this research is that mediation involves a process of translation, from its development and introduction at the abstract level, to the creation of the action technique that reflects those abstract considerations, to its use at the practical level. The negotiation of meaning thus constitutes an unfolding process, as mediation moves from the abstract to the practical, and through the life-worlds. The interpretations given to the experience of mediation will be negotiated throughout the translation process and will involve the engagement/disengagement of the various life-world realities that are involved.

This translation process will be followed through from its development and introduction at the conceptual level, to its use at the practical level, in a given social environment - the elementary school. The school context was selected as a field of study for a number of reasons. From a more personal perspective, stemming from my interest in children and children's rights, any technique that has the potential of being empowering for children has inherent appeal. Children's voices are typically heard vicariously, through adults. That mediation can empower children, in their own right, is necessarily intriguing, and worthy of investigation.

From a more disciplinary orientation, following this process through in the educational system took advantage of some unique opportunities. Mediation's move into the elementary school environment is fairly recent in the National Capital region. This provided the opportunity to be exposed to the variety of life-worlds involved in the translation process. There are those who market the process to the schools, school administrators and teachers who 'purchase' the method, and students and/or teachers who become versed in and use the method. The school context allows a comparative analysis of the negotiations in meaning and experiences across and between a variety of life-worlds, within an institutional setting. Many life-worlds are involved and the teacher's and children's everyday reality will be the primary focus of attention. In part this stems from my particular interest in children and my past supervisory experiences

with them. More importantly it is within the teacher's and student's life-worlds that this technique is expected to intercede.

The life-worlds explored in the ensuing pages are constituted in, and constitute, elements that are of interest to both macro and microsociological inquiry. Both levels of interpretation have been included as this will provide a more contextualized and fuller understanding of the processes of translation.

Theoretical orientations and methodology compose the next two chapters. The recounting of the translation process begins with the historical development of the model. This focuses attention on the conceptual and ideological underpinnings of mediation. The translation process is then followed through to its more practical stages. These include its first encounter with the school environment, its introduction at the administrative level of the school, presentation to the students, and movement into the school yard.

Theoretical Orientations

The purpose of this research is to understand how socio-cultural factors may impinge on mediation as an agent of empowerment from both the macro and microsociological interpretive positions. This necessarily means that the theoretical guidance comes from sociological literature that is directed to either, or both, these levels of analysis. The selection of literature to be reviewed has been quite specific; certain issues are brought to the foreground in an examination of mediation that are seen as more relevant to, and more informed by, particular sociological writings.

A macrosociological inquiry allows mediation to be contextualized within a particular socio-structural environment. The Marxist critique of ideology, as presented by Markus (1984:84-103), informs this interest. It posits that any technique that is created as a method of social action will be bound by the ideological formations in the socio-cultural environment within which it is derived. In other words, creativity is bound by the issues in the life-world of the creators. The development of mediation and the current activity associated with it must, therefore, be interpreted within the context of a particular socio-cultural and ideological sphere.

An historical and socio-cultural examination was conducted to uncover the ideological and conceptual issues which led to the recent increased promotion of mediation and to its labelling as an agent of empowerment. The intent was to reveal the conceptual issues the model is meant to address, relative to the environment within which they were developed. In turn, this enhances the ability to assess mediation as a viable agent of empowerment in alternative life-worlds.

Also from the macrosociological perspective, the study of mediation is informed by the literature on conflict resolution practices and conflict theory (Coser, 1956; Kreisberg, 1973; Simmel, 1955). This literature posits that conflict may be seen as "possibly a necessary and positive part of all social relationships" (Coser, 1956:26).

By way of explanation, Coser, details the unifying effect that conflict can have on the social group. Those social conflicts which are oriented to:

goals, values or interests that do not contradict the basic assumptions upon which the relationship is founded tend to be positively functional for the social structure. Such conflicts tend to make possible the readjustment of norms and power relations within groups in accordance with the felt needs of its individual members or subgroups. (Coser, 1956:151)

Social conflict can be interpreted as an opportunity to develop consensual agreement, which enhances the unity of the group.

Coser explains that an important factor in this ability to readjust norms and values, and thus reap the social benefits of conflict, resides in the nature of the social structure itself. An inherent component of any socio-structural organization is a system of institutionalized tension management practices. These practices are the means through which antagonistic claims are expressed (for example, the legal system). However, the underlying nature of these systems of tension management can vary in orientation.

Highly rigid social systems, which have low levels of tolerance for conflict, will have safety-valve institutions. These prevent the readjustment of norms and values through the deflection of hostilities to substitute objects. Coser adds that reduction of hostilities may occur simply as a result of the tension release associated with these deflected hostilities (1956:40). Under these conditions, these systems become an agent of social control.

This type of conflict/tension management can be harmful to the social system within which it resides. While it preserves the structure of the social system, it does little to address the root causes of the conflict, thus allowing them to continue or escalate. Regardless of how harmful the effects may be on the social system, Coser has

here indicated that conflict management systems like mediation, may themselves, be a factor in the perpetuation of differential distributions of power.

On the other hand, the more flexible social system has institutionalized structures that allow for the re-negotiation of the terms of the conflictual relationship. Thus the breakdown of consensual agreement that binds the system together is less likely (Coser, 1956:79). Under these conditions, conflict management systems may be seen as an agent of change and empowerment.

Tension management practices, like mediation, represent the avenues through which dissension over the established relations of power are addressed. The manner in which conflict is managed in any social system becomes a balancing mechanism, either for the deflection of hostility, and perpetuation of the status quo, or as a means of enabling social change. Variations in these practices over time, can be indicators of changing values and norms and the manner in which change in relations of power can/can not occur. The increased use and marketing of mediation, as an agent of empowerment, must be considered in light of this information. The mediation model implies a socially transformative process. Since there has been little research from the sociological perspective, these claims and their implications are difficult to assess. The intent of it's promotion is not necessarily equivalent with it's outcome. Depending on whether mediation leans in the direction of re-negotiation, or alternatively, the deflection of hostilities, it will have significantly different outcomes for the disputant(s), and the social environment(s) involved.

While the conflict literature just discussed takes a very broad macrosociological perspective, the radical pedagogical literature allows movement to a position that transcends both macro and micro considerations. Mediation in the schools represents a mid-point between the macro and microsociological interpretive levels. For the research recounted here, entry into the educational system also serves as the pivotal transition point in the translation of mediation from the abstract to the practical. The

interest shifts from the conceptual motivations behind mediation to the role of institutional structures in the translation process, the first confrontation with the pragmatics of daily life. Entry into the school system also signifies a beginning consideration of the various life-worlds of the participants.

The radical pedagogical perspective found in the sociology of education literature argues that the "educational and cultural system is an exceptionally important element in the maintenance of existing relations of domination and exploitation.." (Apple, 1982:10). In other words, educational systems also play an integral role in the perpetuation of differential distributions of power. When mediation, as a discourse of empowerment, moves into an environment of this nature, it necessarily raises questions of viability.

By the same token, this literature argues that it is within the educational system that serious action can be taken to address the differential distribution of power (Apple, 1982:10). The nature of this action is to "promote curricula which embody emancipatory interests" (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985:215). When mediation, as a discourse of empowerment, moves into the school, it may be interpreted as an example of this kind of action as well.

Mediation in the schools, again, becomes involved in the question of production, (empowerment), or reproduction (of the status quo). To interpret the mediation experience in the schools requires an understanding of the role of educational system structures in the meaning given to the mediation experience. The interpretation of these meanings, as radical pedagogy informs us, must take into account the "commonsense meanings and practices" (Apple, 1982:139) of the everyday life-worlds involved. Apple demonstrates that the ability to move an emancipatory curricula into the schools will not only be influenced by the overriding socio-cultural ideologies of industrial capital, but also by the very powerful impact of the "everyday social practices found in the schools" (1982:139). Participant observation in the school setting was used to identify these

institutional structures and social practices, and the nature of their influence on the mediation experience.

The microsociological direction of the current research is centered on how mediation is experienced and given meaning in the everyday life-world of the participants. The manner in which social relations are interpreted and given meaning by the actor, as subjective reality, is an important determinant in understanding human social relations. Alfred Schutz (1970:1) understood the task of sociology to be the study of the meaningful construction of social reality. Schutz sees the human condition as fluid, motivated, and changeable, and actors as being involved in a creative process. Social reality is thus dynamically related to the meaningful interpretations that the actor gives, and has given, to this reality. Schutz contends that any sociological exploration must include the manner in which social relations are interpreted and given significance by the actor, and the role the actor has played in their very creation. In the research undertaken here an interpretive methodology that would give highest credence to the actors experience and meaning construction was deemed most suitable to accomplish this task. The phenomenological framework as presented by Alfred Schutz (1970) and elaborated by Berger and Luckmann (1966) will be applied.

Schutz's (1970) delineation of the conceptual structures of the life-world further explored the nature of the interdependent relationship between the actor and social relations. The actor is born into a life-world that encompasses the "whole sphere of everyday experiences, orientations and actions through which individuals pursue their interests and affairs..." (1970:14). The life-world is constructed around the meanings and protocols associated with the in-group's (parents, community, culture) particular view of the world. Meanings, norms, customs, values and the means for regulating behaviour which coincide with this world view, are the pre-structural foundations of social relations.

The historical precedence of these social relations, given at birth, is of primary consideration when exploring the translation of an ideological formation into everyday reality. It informs the problem of production and reproduction discussed earlier. The ensuing explanations demonstrate the complexity of structures in the life-world that transformative social processes must address.

Berger and Luckmann (1966) explain that human interactions, over time, develop into recurrently consistent patterns. These recurring patterns of relations are called 'habituations'. They have a logic and significance that is in accordance with the nature of the relationships and environments in which they develop, and serve a current and future function. Habitualized patterns of social relations impose order on the present and make the indeterminate future, determinate and predictable. This frees the actors from having to constantly attend to the problem of meaning, thereby allowing them to get on with their lives.

Habitualized patterns evolve into institutions when the habituations, and their logic and meaning, are shared across a group of actors (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:54). With passage to a new generation, the actor is increasingly distanced from the motivating factors and logic which were the original impetus for the habitualized patterns. They become a part of cultural tradition rather than a moment in biographical memory (1966:61). The original events and meanings that were associated with the development of these habitualized patterns of social relations, become lost and are replaced by institutions (for example, the legal and education systems) and legitimating symbolic universes (for example moral and ideological formations). The result is that objective social relations experienced in empirical reality, become dissociated from their subjective construction.

Since these habituations have become institutionalized in the social reality, they create their own validation through empirical reality. For the actor, "this is how these things are done", has empirical validity, for that *is* the way things are done. The logic

becomes self-contained and self-perpetuating (1966:59) since the institutionalized parameters for modes of conduct are self-validating. By assigning appropriate modes of conduct, they predispose the modes of conduct to a limited sphere of action. With this understanding, Berger and Luckmann, have highlighted the move from the construction of social reality to the social construction of reality.

The reality of everyday social relations, centered on institutionalized habituations, Schutz defines as the paramount reality (1970:253-255). In this reality the actor takes the nature of these social patterns for granted, since they have consistent and continuous empirical validation. Included in the paramount reality is the notion of variability. Boys and girls are different, rich and poor are different, black and white are different, sometimes it will happen this way, sometimes that way, and so on. This enables the variability found in day-to-day reality to also become part of the taken-for-granted. In the natural attitude of the taken-for-granted, there is a suspension of doubt about the nature of current and future reality and interactions.

Elements of the paramount reality are organized on the basis of 'typifications', that is a shared generalized knowledge of the typicality of certain elements appearing together. Each typification has a "typical style of being experienced, and the knowledge of this typical style is itself an element of our stock of knowledge at hand" (Schutz, 1970:118). These typifications include identifying features which allow the classification of events, and subsequently, the modes of conduct that are used to address such events. They are an:

inseparable element of the socio-cultural heritage handed down to the child born into the group... It is thus socially derived. The sum-total of these typifications... constitutes a frame of reference that... in spite of it's inconsistencies and opaqueness, is nonetheless sufficiently integrated and

transparent to be used for solving most of the practical problems at hand.

(Schutz, 1970:119)

No situation calls all elements of everyday reality into play at the same time. The classification of particular elements are based on the interests of the actor at that time. Some will be relevant at particular moments, while others have tangential relevance, and others have no relevance to this particular situation. Schutz (1970:111-122) explains that relevance structures may be oriented to priorities taken from the actors own interests (volitional relevances), or to priorities taken from the socio-cultural environment (impositional relevances). Thus the nature of the actor's interpretations and actions will be dependent of what s/he sees as relevant in any given situation and the typifications associated with those elements.

Every actor, in his/her strivings to find a place in their community and in their own reality, has a unique set of life experiences which must be interpreted and given meaning. The matrix of determinants in the paramount reality presents a variety of elements (for example, norms, values, modes of conduct, standardized expressions, explanations, formulations), which are called upon by the actor to assist in the interpretation and development of meaning in their own biography. Thus the cumulation of life experiences, and meanings, is a composite of the biographical determinedness of each actor, reflected against socio-culturally shared relevances, typifications and institutionalized habituations.

Doubt is no longer suspended, and the natural attitude is undermined, when experience falls outside the realm of available relevance structures and typifications. It becomes a 'critical moment' in the development of meaning. Transformative social processes must force a rupture in established relevances, typifications, the suspension of doubt, and in the individual's subjective biography. Meanings and realities must be reinterpreted, not only on the individual level, but across institutions and sub-

universes. It is at this critical moment that actions and meanings can move either in the direction of production or reproduction.

To accomplish social transformation, or production, Berger and Luckmann (1966) posit that transformative action must be seen as an accepted practice in the society's existing relevance structures. Not only must there exist the sanctioning of the steps needed to develop new meanings and interpretations, but there must also exist the legitimation of the stages where the new reality is appropriated and maintained, and the old reality can be abandoned and repudiated (1966:159). Transformation involves both construction and deconstruction.

How mediation gets played out in the everyday reality of multiple sub-universes, will be a function of what is already there. In translating mediation from the abstract to the practical it must confront the life-world structures of the actors who are involved. It faces a number of sub-universes that already contain established interpretations and meaning on both the subjective and objective levels. For mediation to be empowering it must interject into the life-world structures that exist and interrupt the suspension of doubt. Likewise, there must be some means for deconstructing the old reality and for establishing new relevances, typifications - and new meaning.

The education system presents an interesting environment for a phenomenological analysis. Schools may themselves be seen as an institutionalized habituation, the logic of its creation vested in the patterns of social interaction that existed over 100 years ago. In addition, the school environment is a typification, with relevances, and patterns of interaction that speak to different life-worlds, the staff and the children. A comparative analysis across life-worlds, thus becomes possible in this environment. By entering into the life-worlds of those who participate in mediation in the schools, a descriptive account of the nature of the relationship between structures of the life-world and mediation, as an effective discourse of empowerment, can be developed.

Methodology

The research undertaken here is exploratory, not confirmatory and the approach is qualitative rather than quantitative. That is, the interest is to discover the *quality* of the experiences, not the quantity of experience. "*Quality* refers to the what, how, when, and where of a thing - its essence and ambience" (Berg, 1989:2). It is this essence and ambience that I wish to convey as mediation is translated from the abstract to the practical, and through life-worlds.

The methodology used to conduct this research involves triangulation, or the use of multiple methods to provide different lines of sight to arrive at understanding. Triangulation uses many data-collection procedures, may call on many theoretical perspectives, and may have a combination of data analysis techniques (Berger, 1989:2-5). The breadth of procedure that is allowable through triangulation, was one that seemed appropriate to this study. Since it contained a chronological component and a variety of life-world positions, different methods appeared to be called for at different times. Neither archival research, survey research, interviewing or participant observation, in isolation, provided enough depth to capture ambience and essence. Methods were combined according to that portion of the translation process to which I was attending. The rationale for these combinations will be provided as the steps are explained.

The initial step was to develop the socio-historical context of mediation. While this necessitated some archival research, there was very little literature that focused on the historical development of mediation. Interviewing, over the telephone, sometimes locally, sometimes long distance, was the most informative method for re-constructing the growth of mediation. These interviews were quite focused on history, unless there was something in the interview that indicated that I would glean some information about

the life-world of the mediators. I then proceeded to interview them from the interview schedule I had developed for professional mediators.

In total I interviewed 7 professional mediators. Interviewing provided me with the best opportunity to find out how, and why, they came to mediation, what problems they believed mediation was facing and so on. These interviews contributed a great deal to the chapters on the historical development of mediation and the model itself. My questions were a combination of focused structured and focused unstructured strategies (see interview schedules, Appendix A:172).

While there were certain questions to which I explicitly wanted answers (for example, what does the term mediation mean to you?), I gathered much information by allowing them to continue talking, even though they had already answered the question. By allowing an unstructured component to the interviews, the professional mediators people gave me the particulars of certain experiences that, in their, minds, had something significant to say about mediation, or their experiences with mediation. This gave me in-sight into their beliefs, actions, problems and experiences with mediation. The interviews were usually quite long. The shortest was 2 hours, the longest 5 hours.

The archival research and interviews with professional mediators set the stage for my work in the school. I felt I had a good understanding of what mediation was supposed to be from the professional mediators perspective and could now move to the next stage. One of the professional mediators I had interviewed, was about to conduct a training session at an elementary school and informed the Principal of my interest. I made contact with the Principal and we agreed that I could conduct my research at the school upon presentation of a research proposal to the School Board, and conditional upon their approval. There was also the expectation that I would submit a summary report at the end of my research.

The approval was given by the School Board, and I prepared to move into this environment. While waiting for the programme to be implemented, I read as much as

possible from the sociology of education literature. I had come to this research from a background in conflict and conflict theory. It seemed a fundamental requirement that I be familiar with some of the issues and understandings that the education literature had to offer. Interestingly I again came across material that talked about empowerment, production and reproduction.

Besides reading, much of this time was spent designing questionnaires (questionnaires are in Appendix B:175). I did not think it would be possible for me to interview all the teachers at the school and get their perceptions of the programme. The questionnaire format enhanced the number of contacts I could make. I originally intended to do a pre-programme questionnaire for teachers, and another one once the programme had become established. I wanted to see if there had been any change in the expectations and the meaning of the programme with it's change in status.

In addition, I developed questionnaires for the student mediators and the mediation programme staff. I felt that the privacy a questionnaire offered to these three groups, given the nature of the environment, would possibly allow more freedom of expression than the less private face-to-face interview. Another motivation for using three different questionnaires was to identify similarities and variations in meaning across experiences. It also presented a reliability check on the interpretations I was beginning to formulate in the yard.

I was very aware that for the children, this would possibly be their first exposure to questionnaires of this length and depth. I wanted the experience to be a positive one not only for them, but in light of future situations where they might be asked to share their opinions, beliefs and attitudes. I did not want to cut them off from this opportunity by having a negative experience now. I spent a good deal of time talking to each student before they received the questionnaire, explaining again the point of the research, anonymity and confidentiality, and I included my home phone number so that they could call me if they didn't understand something. I also told them to show it to their

parents before they filled it out and to have their parents call me if they had any concerns.

Teacher questionnaires were pre-tested by teachers and a principal from another school. They all said the questionnaires were too long. I was eventually able to shorten them considerably because many of the technical questions were answered after I began observing in the school (for example, how mediators were selected). The student mediator questionnaires were pre-tested by my son and his friends, and my friend's children. Phraseology and language problems were identified, and these were changed. Of importance to me were the issues of confidentiality and anonymity. I knew that it was important that I make these very clear so that the students would feel secure in responding. I spent a good deal of time explaining these in the questionnaire. My pre-test children appeared satisfied that I would not "spill the beans".

The first step in the translation process is contact with the schools. Before I began observing in the school, I had a brief meeting with the Principal. Although I had the professional mediators perspective, I did not know how the school, or even why the school, had picked up the programme. During my first meeting with the Principal, I asked questions about why the decision had been made to accept this programme, who had been involved in the decision, how they had heard about it, what they expected from it and so on.

Participant observation was seen to be the most relevant form of research given the unfolding nature of the programme. Only by being in the field on a regular basis could I have any hope of discerning the essence and ambience of the teacher's and student's life-worlds, and the role they played in the construction of meaning. I assumed that the meaning given to the programme six months from now would be contingent on the events and struggle for meaning that occurred during the initial stages of implementation.

I attended, as observer, the Principal's introduction of the programme to a grade 6 class, and remained afterwards, to observe the students nomination process. I attended the training session, the assembly introducing the student mediators to the students, meetings with mediation programme staff, and meetings between mediation staff and student mediators. For two months I went to the school three and a half days a week. I had access to two areas of social interaction for this period; the school yard where the programme was taking place, and the staff room, where I sat during the time between recess and lunch. For these months, I observed and interviewed students in the yard at recess and lunch.

I began recording my observations through written field notes, but this became rather cumbersome when in the yard. It is difficult to write field notes while outside in a Canadian winter (and with all the clothing that entails). Since I had a tape recorder, I often used it to make commentary on what I was witnessing in the field and would translate these into written notes at the end of the day.

I wanted some means of checking the reliability of my observations and decided to interview students in the yard as a means of substantiating what I thought I was seeing (yard interview schedule is in Appendix A:172). The students found this quite novel and were lining up to talk to me. I often had to make appointments and promises to interview at the next recess or lunch. I interviewed 78 children from grades 4, 5, & 6 (27 interviews were with student mediators). Thirty-six of these were with females, 42 were with males.

I had begun this process by interviewing the students in groups of two or three. This created problems with privacy and the effects of peer influence on individual responses. I changed my interview format by giving my introduction to several children at once, after which I would move away from the group to ask questions of each child individually. I explained my wish to interview separately by telling them that I was interested in hearing each person's thoughts in privacy. Not only did the children accept

this explanation, it seemed to add to their feelings of flattery. I was showing enough interest in them to take the time to attend to each one individually. They were more than pleased to talk to me privately.

On the other hand, this tactic meant that I could not access as many children as I had originally intended. In addition, since they were coming to me to be interviewed, I had some concerns that I was being drawn into a student self-selection process. Since both males and females were lining up to talk to me I didn't feel that self-selection was gender biased. To ensure against a self-selection process, I would interview the first group of students that came up to me and tell other students that I had plans to interview someone else after this group, or that I just wanted to watch events in the yard after these interviews.

In my verbal introduction to the students, I gave heavy emphasis to the fact that I was not part of the administrative staff for the programme. I explained that I was very interested in how the students in the yard felt about it for a paper I was writing for my teachers at University, about mediation in the schools. This was intended to deal with interpretational problems the students might be having about my presence in the yard. I had hoped this move would relieve any anxiety they might have in telling me their feelings and thoughts, but in the children's eyes, this made me a fellow student, with school work that had to be presented to a teacher. They were more than able to identify with this. I, unwittingly, had invoked a whole series of school-student related typifications that they immediately grasped. They were, in effect, helping me with my homework.

Between group interviews I would watch events in the yard. If I saw a monitor intervene in a situation I would make note of the snowsuits, wait five minutes and then interview the students involved. I was hesitant to approach any situation that might be problematic. This may have reinforced an interpretation that I was an administrator of the programme and it would have interfered in a normal yard event. I had difficulty

assessing which situations might be interpreted as problematic so I let the monitors or mediators identify them for me.

Between recess and lunch I stayed in the teacher's staff room. This time was spent writing up field notes from the previous time in the yard, or reading. I gained a good deal of insight in to what school is about for the teachers, from my time spent here. This was not accomplished through interviewing, I usually sat quite quietly while I was there. However, I was certainly conscious of the conversations that were going on around me and the activities and habits of the teachers. The duration of my stay meant that I did have the chance to have occasional chats with the teachers, although usually they would talk to me only if we were alone.

The time in the staff room became important to my understanding of the teachers life-world. I came to realize how demanding the teaching job is. This effected, considerably, my attitudes towards conducting questionnaires. From my encounters in the staff room I shortened my questionnaires again, and dropped the idea of doing a pre-post format. This decision was made in the first week that I was in the school.

Participant observation was the primary method used in this research. It gave me the most opportunity to be exposed to the various life-worlds in the school. The length of time I spent at the school as participant observer enabled me to identify the less obvious components of these life-worlds. My understanding of life-world relevances and the social practices in the school was a combination of my growing familiarity with the setting and the conceptual framework I brought with me from the discipline of sociology. Most importantly, acting as participant observer drew me in to the implementation process as it unfolded. The opportunity was presented to observe the change in relevances as it occurred over time. The participatory research design proved to be the most informative method for this study. The other research techniques added breadth to the understandings that were developed through participant observation.

The data analysis was an extremely difficult process. I went through the steps of organizing, coding, classifying, categorizing and creating "bibbits", according to the procedures highlighted by Berger (1989) and Kirby and McKenna (1989). In the end I did have categories or themes that were carried throughout the translation process. Certainly, who had control of the events was an important theme, as was peer relations for both the teachers and the students. While all this work spent on classifying data was an important step, in the end I felt that the ambience of changing relevances over time had been lost. I placed all the data back in original chronological order and read through it again. This was much more a reflection of the dynamics of social relations that had taken place.

Formatting concerns were also informed by readings on action research, an orientation that is currently on the rise in the discipline of sociology. Action research (see Fay, 1987,1975; Kirby and McKenna, 1989), as the label implies, involves recognition of the researcher as an active participant in the events that are being studied. All participants, including the researcher, are treated as knowing individuals and the research process is perceived as a sharing of information. This interpretation of the research process is directly related to the ability to bring sociological theory to ground in daily reality. To explain, much of the information developed within the discipline of sociology is directed towards the unmasking of contradictions in the social environment. These contradictions arise from the disjunctures between ideologies that speak to equality of participation, equality of opportunity, empowerment, and so on, and a social system that contains pervasive elements of domination and exploitation. The exposure of these contradictions raises consciousness and implicitly carries the potential for political action and social change. In this way sociology is fundamentally a political practice. In order to complete this circuitous relationship between research and action for social change, the understandings developed from sociological research must be shared with the people who have been studied and evaluated by them as to it's

validity in their own reality. In this way the people take control of the research process, keeping it valid and legitimate to their own reality. The result of this orientation is that research conclusions become tools which are relevant to the people studied and have the potential of becoming the means through which they evolve their own solutions (Connell cited in Kirby and McKenna, 1989:26).

It becomes the responsibility of the researcher to see the actor as having expertise in the experience at hand, and to reflect any interpretations that are developed against this expertise. Meeting this responsibility has influenced many aspects of this study. During the field observations I shared my perceptions with the participants, particularly the teachers, when they asked me questions. My personal sentiment was that we were involved in an exchange relationship, they gave me information for reflection and consideration, and I did likewise. Furthermore, this written presentation of the research includes a chronology of daily events, as mentioned above. This represents the opportunity for the reader and the participants to make their own evaluations on my perceptions of what had taken place. I am ceding to the participant's expertise here. Had I presented only the collapsed categories (the summary chapter) this opportunity would have been deleted. It would remove the possibility of contestation over interpretations.

I have used terminology throughout this written work that, as much as possible, stays away from sociological jargon. This written text is a critical element in the dissemination of information. I have selected words carefully and explained theoretical orientations in detail. The intent is to keep the participant's involved in the evaluative process. The lengthy preface and the following section entitled "Issues in the Research Experience" are intended to demystify my position as a researcher. As Fay, Kirby and McKenna argue, these steps neutralize the position of the researcher relative to the people who have been studied and to readers of the written text. The research process becomes one where all may evaluate, learn and develop understandings.

Issues in the Research Experience

My experiences in the field clarified one important aspect of the negotiation of meaning in mediation. At various steps of the process of moving this programme into the yard, it became clear that not only did one particular event in the process speak to different fields of relevance in the various life-worlds at the same moment (for example, the assembly), but also one-life world's fields of relevance at one particular moment was more dependent on previous events, than on current events (for example, the first day in the yard). This led one to keep in mind not only what was being said and done now, relative to current life-worlds, but also to what had come before. As I moved through the steps of programme implementation, I would constantly be shifting gears, positions, perspectives.

Many times, I found sociological conceptualizations leaping to mind. Lads and ear'oles and girls milking the system (Willis cited in Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985:97, and Apple, 1982:97-100), programme packaging and de-skilling of the teacher (Apple, 1982:140-148), economic class differentials in communication codes (Bernstein cited in Hurn, 1985:192-193) and so on.

These continual negotiations between others and self were not resolved while I was a participant observer. I was unable to add that final layer of interpretation to my interrogations while I was caught in the immediacy of the moment. Only through retrospective consideration was I able to detach myself from the demands of the moment to carry through these personal negotiations of meaning.

The advantage of the current work is that it is not a snapshot picture. It explores a chronological process. When a conceptual interpretation appeared as part of the overall pattern, that is, it was relevant at different points in the chronology of events it was retained. On the other hand, I rejected conceptualizations when they appeared to have come to mind more as a result of my immersion in academia in the last four years, and

were therefore readily accessible (from my own paramount reality), than that the actual events gave them credence. Many times, even with post mortem reflections, I was unable to reconcile my conceptual negotiations. It is one of the limits and possibilities of this research, that not all thoughts, questions or concerns could be reconciled.

One of the more distressing aspects of conducting this research was that on occasion, I became entrenched in a personal moral dilemma. As someone who has been trained in Early Childhood Education, and has been involved with children, and women's support groups for a good deal of my life, I found the research disconnectedness difficult to achieve.

In my 12 years of standing in a day care yard full of children I had developed certain skills that most sociology students probably do not have. One develops an ability, like all teachers have, to have eyes in the back of one's head. Thus while I was emptying a boot of snow, etc, I was still aware of what was happening in other areas of the yard. I also know the signals for serious problems. I know for instance that an explosion of anger is usually preceded by quiet tense voices. I also know that the child who is down and quiet, should be far more cause for concern than the child who is down and crying. In terms of injury, the quieter the more serious.

When I entered the yard my past and current life experiences meant that I would see differently. I was always looking for that look in the eyes, the setting of the mouth, that signals potential problems. I was always listening for those voice changes. Trying to hear the silences. I know that getting a zipper unstuck, emptying a boot or mitt of snow, tying a scarf, (all of which I do by second nature now) are not only care-giving procedures but often a form of moral support. As are those times when a child comes up, hangs around for a minute or two, doesn't say much and then leaves to play with friends again. I have also been bitten, kicked, punched and flailed at, and know about childhood anger and aggression.

Even though I was an adult, I was not a teacher. The students could call me by my first name, they could talk about home, school, and friendship matters in a way they could not with their teachers or parents. My children were the same ages as these children so I was familiar with the verbal jargon, interests, music groups and other issues that were relevant to people this age. For all these reasons and because I had been quite detailed in explaining why I was there including issues of confidentiality and anonymity, these children quickly developed a sense of ease in talking to me. They would tell me anything.

One student spent a good deal of time telling me how pressured she felt in being the only good student in the family. She shared with me the frustration and fears she felt over the severe physical abuse she received at the hands of her brother. She had received a black eye from him, and had not been allowed to stay home until it was cleared up. This meant explanations to teachers and friends that she found invasive. This helped me understand what an invasion of privacy having to go to school can be. Another student's sister had died from heart failure. One student spent a good deal of time telling me about the isolation she felt in her life. No friends, problems at home etc. A male student related his asthma and heart problems to me, including a detailed description of the various medications he was using. While all this gave me incredible insight into the children's day-to-day reality, it became a double-edged sword. The other side of the sword was that, in their eyes, not only could they trust me and talk to me, but then they must also be allowed to ask.

My past experience turned out to be both a help and a hindrance. It gave me more information in terms of understanding and identifying behaviours in the yard, on the other hand, I became deeply immersed in the essence of the yard. This programme had several stressful times, especially for student mediators and teachers. Often this stress was expressed to me alone, only rarely in the presence of others. Often it came in the form of questions. The intensity of the training week-end established ties that are

typical to participants in intense events. It had become a part of a shared history, between myself the mediators and the programme staff. The perception of a bond between myself and the mediators was particularly strong. I was an adult, so in their eyes I "knew" more about what to do, better than they did, and certainly with respect to this programme. However the questions that I was asked often put me in the quandary. My own life experiences, training and moral position requires me to respond to other, especially in situations of stress. On the other hand, from the research position, I wondered, how much will I be influencing the process?

I resolved these situations through compromise which leaned more in the direction of my moral position. I became involved, but attempted to phrase my dialogues in a way that would be informative to me and informative to them. With students it was, what do you think you should do, why do you think that...? With teachers it was why or what about...? By answering questions with a question I was no doubt setting the agenda for their thinking. However, this also showed that I was not cutting them off from concern. It also meant they had to give me more information on why they were feeling or perceiving things this way, which added to my research material. Following the protocols of action research, the information I presented was theirs to assess, accept or reject at their own discretion.

When it came time to prepare this packaged thesis, the language and jargon to present process were unavailable. The discipline of sociology does not contain enough dynamic terminology for a thesis about process. I have had considerable formatting problems and terminology problems. This thesis deviates from the norm in terms of presentation. It does not go from data to results to interpretation. It goes from one unfolding to a subsequent unfolding. My interpretations and conclusions are but one step in that unfolding process, a summary of events to this point in time. They should not be considered the end of a story.

My experiences in the field left me feeling that I had, indeed, entered the essence and ambience of the teacher's and student's life-worlds. Participant observation afforded me the most opportunity to capture these qualities. Although it left me with an unwieldy amount of data, which created technical problems, it was, in retrospect, the richest research design in terms of this work. The following chapters are intended to re-create the qualities, essence and ambience of the life-worlds that were entered while conducting this research.

Mediation: From Concept to Technique

The following chapter presents the socio-historical origins of the mediation model and a description of the practical technique. The purpose of the first section is to set the conceptual context for the development of the pragmatic model of mediation. This is intended to enhance the understanding of the reasons why the model has the particular form that it does. The ensuing section provides an explanation of the mediation technique and why it has come to be termed an agent of empowerment.

Mediation as Concept

While mediation has been an inherent component in the conflict resolution practices of other cultures and other countries for many years or centuries (Ling-Chang, 1991), its growth in North America is far more recent. To understand why there is more activity in mediation now, it is first necessary to have some comprehension of the changes that occurred in the broader socio-historical context that were the impetus for its increased use.

The North American publication which is given credit for the original articulation of the principles found in mediation, was written by Mary Parker Follett in the United States in 1924 (Roderick, 1988:91). In her text, Creative Experience, Ms. Follett explains her belief that the central problem of social relations is the question of power. She argues that the task at hand is not "to learn where to place power; it is how to develop power" (Follett, 1924:xii). Ms. Follett believed that transference of power, and its accordant assessment of who had rights to power and why, were not the hallmarks of productive social progress. Rather power could only be collaboratively developed, for "genuine power is not coercive control, but co-active control. Coercive power is the curse of the universe; co-active power, the enrichment and advancement of every human

soul" (Follett, 1924:xii-xiii). By co-active power, is meant a form of social relations that provides equitable, and mutually satisfactory, control of relevant resources.

Fundamental to the accomplishment of productive social relations is a collaborative approach to problem-solving. The prerequisite to this approach to conflict resolution is that all positions in the dispute be well articulated and be received as valid by other parties to the problem. Only through clear definition of interests and goals, and the acceptance of the validity of each argument by the other(s), can the goals of co-active power and social progress be realized (Follett, 1924:118). Since the relevant issues for each party are attended to, there is the opportunity for all parties to leave the situation satisfied, the principle on which the label 'win/win' rests.

While collaboration and win/win are presented by Ms. Follett as the tenets of social progress, they are necessarily antithetical to the tenets of industrial capital and the competitive market economy. The approach was accepted and lauded by many, but it was difficult to put in place. The translation of the win/win approach from labour relations, the focus of Ms. Follett's work, to conflict resolution, a term which implies a much higher level of intensity and gravity, did not occur for another 40 years, with the arrival of the nuclear arms race.

The Great Depression of the 1930's and the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, entrenched the competitive, win/lose approach in social spheres outside of labour relations. For many survivors of the Great Depression and the Second World War, competition and win/lose was a pervasive way of life. After the deprivation of the Depression years, and the atrocities of the Second World War, North American society became focused on 'the good life'. This was obtainable through successful competition in the market economy both as labour force participant, and as consumer. The collaborative orientation was a contradiction to the interests, skills, and demands of a society competing for the 'good life'.

The Cold War of the 50's and 60's, the war in Viet Nam, the Arab-Israeli wars, the war in the Falklands/La Malvinas and the international arms race maintained the global competitive, win/lose dialogue. In North America, increasing media technology meant that this perspective, dialogue, and language were perpetuated and maintained in people's everyday lives through the newspapers and television. The moralistic platitudes that were a necessary part of the Second World War effort, continued to be used throughout the media to rationalize competitive governmental actions, taken on many levels, throughout this period (Bar-Tal, 1988: Bayer and Strickland, 1990).

Coincidental to these events was a growing feeling of dissatisfaction with this warring approach to human relations. The "Mother's Movement" or the "Ban the Bomb movement" of the 50's, were the first murmurings of public dissatisfaction with the nature of human relations. The Civil Rights Movement, and student political activism against the war in Viet Nam in the 60's, signaled growing dissent towards the nature of American social and government/public relations.

While Canada extricated itself from the concerns over Viet Nam and racism that were occurring in the United States, the arrival of the second wave of the feminist movement in the 60's and 70's, sensitized all North Americans, including Canadians, to yet another realm of human social transgression. In the 80's the plight of Ethiopian famine victims received world-wide media attention and created a flurry of fund-raising activities and relief work in Canada, the United States, and Great Britain. During this time North American Native populations were developing a much stronger political voice, which was also focused on the abuse of human rights. The arms races of the 70's and 80's, although rationalized in the discourses of safety and security, was, in fact creating greater levels of insecurity. As the number of nuclear arms increased, so too did the threat of global annihilation. Peace Institutes, Conflict Resolution Centres and International Affairs departments in universities, multiplied.

In combination, these various discourses indicated a growing sensitization and questioning of the manner in which domestic and international social relations were conducted. The 60's and 70's presented the atmosphere of a time for change. Mushrooming dialogues on human rights, equality of participation, and empowerment, signaled fertile ground for a technique rooted in collaborative problem-solving, the recognition of various interests and social progress. In an age of humanitarian interests, a more humanitarian approach to social relations was called for.

Research on conflict processes and conflict resolution strategies conducted in the fields of social-psychology, political social-psychology, international affairs and political science, in the last 35 years, presented information that was relevant to the humanitarian dialogues occurring in the broader social environment. Comparative analyses of competitive and cooperative conflict practices had isolated the complex sets of causes, actions and reactions involved in competitive, win/lose conflict strategies. By the same token, the analysis of cooperative practices presented the notion, and the means, for developing strategies that would lead to the recognition of the disputant's interests as valid, and win/win outcomes. The concept of legitimation of interests and mutually satisfactory outcomes were an important link to the humanitarian and empowerment discourses that were happening within and beyond the academic environment. This research, and the collaborative strategies that were described, provided the rationalization and the guidelines for the approach to conflict resolution that has come to be called mediation.

Analyses of the mediation technique which take into account socio-cultural considerations are difficult to find. Much of the material appearing in publication takes the form of rhetorical debate, counterpoising the empowering impact of the win/win solutions purportedly achieved in mediation, against the disempowering impact of traditional adversarial, aggressive and win/lose methods of conflict management. (for example see Bailey, 1989 and Kestner, 1988). The available studies tend to focus on

mediation in family law or international relations, and have been conducted predominantly by proponents of the method, or by those who have been impacted by its growth (e.g. lawyers). This raises concerns over bias in the results. More importantly, these studies have done little to address the societal contexts and issues which become critical to understanding the variability of conflict, and the social consequences of conflict resolution practices.

The studies that led to the comparative analyses of competitive and cooperative practices were focused primarily on the most grave forms of conflict, at the intergroup and international levels (for example, Ireland, racism in North America, Arab-Israeli conflict etc.) (for further elaboration see: Deutsch, 1973; R.J. Fisher, 1985; Kuhn, 1962; Mann & Kanagawa, 1985; Pruitt, 1962; Schelling, 1963). The research is biased towards data which illustrates the very negative impact of competitive practices and strategies, and the positive impact of cooperative strategies and practices. Although these research results appeal to the larger humanitarian dialogues, they are, themselves, enmeshed in a particular set of values and interests.

As Michel Pilon points out (1974), these interpretative comparisons of competitive and cooperative conflict styles, are derived within a larger social context which ultimately sees aggressive competition as negative. According to Pilon, recent research and social technologies in conflict resolution are contained by an overriding pacifistic orientation. They stem from a society deeply immersed in a seriously threatening arms race and ignore conflict as an integral part of development in society. Any kind of competitive conflict is seen as illegitimate, thus the techniques that are developed are also pacifistic in orientation. Their purpose is to prevent conflict or resolve it in a non-aggressive, non-competitive manner. Mediation is a means of conflict resolution that is associated with the ideological pacifism Pilon discusses.

Interestingly, the most adamant criticism that was encountered while conducting this research, one that did place mediation in a social-cultural context, came from a

part-time mediator. This professional had come to mediation through post-graduate studies in academia, that is, from an analytic perspective:

"I attribute this [growth in mediation] to Ralph Nader... [he] generated this ethos of consumerism and this ethos of bargaining and the ethos of "I can get a better deal"... We're not thinking anymore, we're all consumers, and there must be a better way to consume this in more digestible bites... So the idea of a new social technology, that I shouldn't have to wait in line anymore to get what I want, there's gotta be a better way,... progress bears the notion that there's a more humane way of doing some of these things. Dealing with the innate human aggressiveness and violence. But I'm very skeptical about all these things because I think we're creating a new social-medical bureaucracy and mediation is sort of the new dermatology. We're not questioning the core problems or assumptions in society that make society screwed up. We're on the verge of going out of control, so let's get things under control.... Now let's just get our anger down and behave a little better and we'll get things under control.... It's [mediation] not a panacea of wonderful outcomes. It's another tool in the tool box of conflict skills. (interview D.K.)

The mediation technique is derived in, and speaks to, isolated elements of the socio-cultural context. It responds to such relevances as, equal rights, empowerment, humanitarianism, peaceful means, a better way and a climate of change. Nonetheless, mediation is functioning in an environment that also contains relevances that speak to a competitive market economy, the good life, consumerism, and a power stratified system of social relations. It is within this socio-cultural environment of multiple, and sometimes contradictory, relevance structures that the mediation technique has been created, and must operate.

Mediation as Technique

The mediation technique, as previously explained, is rationalized through a comparison of conflict resolution practices and their differential outcomes. Deutsch (1990) presents a review of these practices, and their effects, highlighting four primary elements of concern.

Communication: Competitive processes have, what is referred to as, communication breakdowns. There is either no communication or it is false and intentionally misleading. Cooperative processes have communication styles that reflect honesty, openness and the information that is shared is accurate and relevant.

Perception of Other: Competitive processes highlight disparities between the disputants. They maintain and perpetuate a focus on differences. Cooperative practices sensitize disputants to similarities and encourage a convergence of values and beliefs.

Attitudes towards other: The competitive process leads to "a suspicious, hostile attitude, and it increases the readiness to exploit the other's needs and respond negatively to the other's requests" (1990:241). Cooperative processes ostensibly lead to trust, friendship and increase the ability to support the other's needs.

Task Orientation: Competitive processes broaden the gulf between opposing goals and objectives. Satisfaction of one party's needs and requests are seen to be in contradiction to the satisfaction of the other party's needs and requests. It fosters a zero-sum situation. Cooperative processes, on the other hand, define the situation as a mutual problem to be solved by collaborative effort. "It facilitates the recognition of the legitimacy of the other's interests and of the necessity of searching for a solution that is responsive to the needs of all" (1990:242).

The move from competitive to cooperative positioning will result in the resolution of the problem(s) leading to the dispute, and will strengthen the underlying relationship (R.J.Fisher, 1985). The likelihood of additional disputes appearing is

reduced by developing cooperative skills in the disputants that can be used in the future. Thus, mediation is interpreted as a curative approach (used after conflict develops), and as a potentially preventative approach (a method for avoiding future outbreaks of conflict).

As a preventative approach, mediation and the skills associated with it, are often interpreted as life-skills (Canadian Institute for Conflict Resolution, 1990:11): skills which everyone should learn as a necessary instrument for getting through life:

I think the school thing is great... definitely a very good thing to be doing.... It teaches kids, and educating kids is a good thing. Smoking diet, sexual abuse, mediation, sure. Teach these things to kids when they're young. Yeah, I see it as a life-skill. (interview J.D.)

The role of the mediator, as a third party interventionist in conflict, becomes crucial to the development of these skills. The mediator, in effect, becomes both instructor and role model in these skills. In order to train clientele the mediator must first lay the basis for a "helping relationship with each of the parties involved that involves trust, respect, and understanding" (R.J.Fisher, 1990:214). To establish this foundation mediators may meet individually with each party, or with both parties at the same time, depending on the nature and severity of the situation. The advantage of meeting privately is that it gives the disputants the opportunity to freely express their concerns in privacy, and the mediator can clarify the mediation process. As two professional mediators explained:

[I meet with the parties independently]...to really get to know what the parties needs and fears are at this time. And to build trust between myself and them and the process. (interview D.K.)

You've really got to figure out what's going on. That's why I meet with the parties before we begin to mediate, it gives me a real sense of what's going on.

(interview J.D.)

In explaining the process of mediation, mediators will inform each disputant, independently or together, that it is not part of the mediators role to take sides in the dispute or influence the nature of the resolutions in any particular direction. It is an integral part of the mediation technique that the disputants feel that the mediator has no vested interest in the process other than to arrive at resolutions which are mutually acceptable to them (the disputants). In mediation, the third party mediator must be seen as unbiased.

In principle, mediation can only 'work' when all parties to the dispute are willing and interested in resolving the problem. Mediation sets a tone that takes advantage of this intent. Actions on the part of the mediator set a tone of neutrality, trust, safety and control that is conducive to the continuation of discussion. 'Setting the tone of discussions' accomplishes many objectives, including the 'attitudes towards other' and the 'task orientation' components of Deutsch's summary. Mediators do not engage in judgmental commentary of the disputant's input. The ability to freely express one's own perceptions and meanings without fear of reprisal from the mediator is an important step in the legitimization of disputant's realities. During mediation this continued acceptance of speaker's concerns as valid, on the part of the mediator, establishes a model for a future accepting, rather than adversarial, relationship between the disputants.

In terms of 'task orientation', at these initial meetings the mediator discusses the issues under contention as problems which all parties, including the mediator, have come together to discuss. The implication is that, what is shared and similar between the

parties is that there are problems. The notions of legitimation of realities, and problems as shared, are important steps in moving from an adversarial win/lose stance to a collaborative win/win position.

Initial meetings are important for information gathering and are essential for moving the disputants away from polarized competitive positions. They set the structure of the relationship between the disputants and the mediator and are subtly intended to alter the relationship between the disputants. Once mediation begins these ground rules of legitimation, freedom of communication, and problem-solving must proceed in a manner which reinforces these rules. The mediation technique involves a particularly structured form of dialogue that addresses the competitive communication styles, as outlined by Deutsch, and reinforces the ground rules of mediation.

Professional mediators often describe themselves as communication facilitators. One of the roles they assume in mediation is control of the dialogue (Wurtele and Melchin, 1989). The crucial factors to dialogue control are interrupting the argumentative style of discourse and the imposition of the elements of active listening.

Argumentative styles of discourse contain particular dialogue patterns which are not conducive to resolution. These are: interrupting the other speaker, the lodging of accusations and the use of blaming, increasing voice tones, defensive language, avoidance, denial or negation of the previous statement made by other, and accelerated dialogue. Once begun, arguments are difficult to resolve because the patterns of dialogue call for return accusations, which then call for denials and more accusations and so on (García, 1991:818-821). In mediation every attempt is made to prevent or interrupt this kind of dialogue. Disputants are informed of the ground rules for discussion before the mediation begins. These rules include no interrupting, each party will have the opportunity to express their feelings and concerns, in turn, and no blaming (that is instead of saying, "you always...." it is re-fashioned into an 'I' message, "I dislike being called names because it hurts me, upsets me...").

While these rules sound fairly easy to enforce, disputants often come to mediation with considerable feelings of anger. The process of moving disputants from the competitive style to the cooperative style involves a good deal of mediator in-put. As Garcia points out (1991:828), the mediator interrupts the accusation and denial sequence by enforcing the rule of turn-taking. If a denial is begun in response to an accusation, the mediator will interrupt the denial with something as follows, "I can see you want to respond to that, but it is his/her turn to speak. Let them finish and then you will have your turn". By this process of interrupting the interruptions, the mediator legitimates the speaker's right to express their thoughts, and the respondent's right to answer, but has effectively interrupted an escalation cycle. Control of the course of discussion directs dialogue towards the mediator. Each disputant is called upon by the mediator to speak in assigned turns. Since the mediator decides when the turns are switched, the respondent may have to wait a considerable period of time to make that response. The response to an accusation is no longer a response to a recent accusation, and denials directed towards the mediator are inappropriate. The re-fashioning of blaming statements into 'I' messages also interrupts the argument cycle. It focuses attention on self, rather than other. If blame and accusations do not appear they do not demand a response.

The second means of mediator control of the dialogue relates to the legitimization of the disparate concerns of each disputant. The technical term for these dialogue patterns are, re-stating and reflecting. When a speaker is telling his/her story, stating interests or expressing concerns, the mediator will ask for clarification, will re-state the speaker's issues in other language, or ask for further details. When the speaker is finished the mediator will present back to the speaker a summary of what the speaker has said without judgmental commentary. Re-stating and reflecting give a fair amount of attention to each speaker when they are speaking. Mediator attention implies interest and concern. It demonstrates effort on the part of the mediator to understand the particular

speaker's reality, without judgement. This dialogue pattern acts as subtle a form of legitimization for the speaker.

By conducting the conversation in this way the mediator is modeling what is considered to be an important life-skill, active listening, with re-stating and reflecting as the major components. This is a method the disputants are expected to internalize and use throughout the mediation and in their future relations together. It models a form of listening that is oriented to hearing, rather than reacting. This is seen to be an effective form of redress for communication breakdowns. One professional divorce mediator gave a clear explanation of teaching active listening skills in mediation:

What it does in most cases is establish rules. Rules about communicating and treating the other person as you would a business associate... I basically tell them that these are very different communication styles. One person is saying something and the other person is hearing what's being said. So we just go through this checking process.... What I do is I say - stop. I feel I'm seeing a situation where one person is saying something and the other person isn't getting the message.... And then I say, now you tell me what it is you're trying to say and what you're feeling, and then I tell the other person to tell me what they're hearing. And then I show them how they are not saying and hearing the same thing. So I teach them active listening.... And you've got to listen, and not understand in the sense of feeling good about, but know what's actually being said.... And sometimes we have to go through the feedback process, you know, "I'm not understanding what you are saying, could you repeat it, " or, "is this what you mean," or, "this is what I think you are saying, is that correct", that sort of thing. (interview J.D.)

This technique is a subtle means of developing convergence of meaning and attending to 'perception of other' problems. The intent of active listening procedures is to clearly understand what the other person is saying before making judgements and reacting to what is said (Rieke and Willbrand, 1988:113). Through the increasingly precise articulation of points, and the processes of restating and reflecting, the disputants will develop co-generated meanings of the issues under discussion.

Mediators use this method to isolate the issues of contention so that the problem can be considered clearly, and pragmatic solutions discussed. They focus attention away from the emotional content of disputes to the concrete issues that are involved:

you break down what people are saying from the generalities, talking about emotions, to focus much more on the practical aspects. So you hear what they are saying, and say, well could that be achieved by this practical answer? What, practically, could we do that will satisfy that particular need that you have? (interview J.D.)

For disputants to feel satisfied with the outcome, and therefore have a win/win situation, they must fully agree with the solutions. The likelihood that the life-skills learned through the mediation experience will be continued, is much stronger if the disputant satisfaction level is high after mediation is completed. Disputants consider each option as it develops throughout the mediation process. They have the alternative to agree or disagree with any option at any point. As one mediator said, "the common factor in all mediations is the power the mediator has. None" (interview M.C.).

Although the mediator can present alternatives, it defies the principles of legitimating realities, and disputant control of decision-making, for an alternative to be imposed. Should a mediator see that a chosen solution is potentially destructive to one or both of the disputants, they will express their reservations about the solution. Should

the disputing parties agree to proceed, the mediator will not press for an alternative resolution, but may, if particularly disconcerted, withdraw or terminate the mediation.

By placing final control of the decision-making in the hands of the disputants, the sentiment of empowerment is reinforced:

This has been an empowering process... it's preparing them to the point where they are able to negotiate these issues, where they have straight in their minds what they want and what they are doing.(interview J.D.)

...this is the only approach in social work that trains the client to take control of their own lives and teaches them to solve their own problems in the future...reality therapy, behaviour modification, task oriented therapy, are not giving them the skills to solve their problems, so they still turn to the system for help. In the beginning of a mediation they defer to the authority position they think the mediator has, and you need to tell them that you are not going to take responsibility for this... you are giving the client back their own lives.(interview H.C.)

... it makes them much more down to earth, easier for them to understand, and it gives them confidence, "hey I know what I want about that stuff," and they keep it down and focused, it makes them feel, "hey this is workable. I've got some control over this, I can do this. This is not as hard as I thought. This is not something that has to be done by somebody else, I can handle these issues".(interview J.D.)

When all issues have been attended to, (to the satisfaction of all parties in the dispute) an agreement is drawn up that is signed and kept by the disputants, and the mediator.

These procedures are fairly consistent across the variety of situations in which mediation is currently being used. Mediations may be conducted by individual mediators, by two mediators, or by a panel of mediators. There do not seem to be any guidelines as to how many mediators should be involved. Some fairly complex mediations have been conducted by one mediator, (for example the postal strike) while other complex mediations have been conducted by a third party panel (for example at the international level). Regardless of how many mediators are involved, the mediator's role requirements are the same, as a communication facilitator, and possibly as an assistant in the generation of alternative outcomes. All decision-making in terms of final agreements rests in the hands of the disputants. Thus it is seen to have the capacity to be empowering across a variety of life-worlds.

Mediation in the Schools: Adaptations

The subject matter of this chapter represents the midpoint in the transition of mediation from abstract to practice. Mediation in the schools uses a format that has been adapted to suit the particular needs of this environment. This is an initial indication of the influence of socio cultural factors on the practice of mediation. The first portion of this chapter explains particular elements of the school and social contexts that are relevant to the implementation of school mediation programmes. There follows an explanation of the school model of mediation, highlighting the adaptations that are required as it enters this environment. The third discussion gives a description of the school where the programme was implemented and where this research was conducted.

Teachers, Schools and the Public

Day-to-day reality in the school is effected by the interpretation of the role of the schools by society at large. Thus, to contextualize the life-worlds within the school one must take into account the relationship between teachers, schools and the public.

One of the parameters within which schools must operate is the area of accountability. Provincial Ministries of Education, who develop the guidelines and legislation around which classroom content and daily operations are designed, are accountable to state and public interests. The Ministry of Education allocates federal education transfer payments and provincial taxation monies to the various regional Boards of Education. These are governed by the Ministry and a municipally elected body of representatives. The Board's responsibilities include allocation of the sizeable funds relegated to them by the Ministry, and the day-to-day administration of the schools within their Board. The Principal in each school is, in turn, accountable to the Board and

the teachers are accountable to the Principal. Nevertheless, this internal education hierarchy does not operate in a vacuum.

The demand to be accountable to the public, and the need to attend to issues that the public sees as important, has meant continual additions to the curriculum content in the school day over the last 20 years. Public schools now have as a regular part of their school programme: events, guest speakers, and curriculum content, that speak to such issues as, aids, drug and alcohol abuse, child abduction, physical and sexual abuse, school bus safety, bicycle safety, and fire safety. In addition there are programmes to address the environment, the plight of the poor, and multicultural or multiethnic tolerance. The education environment, through the avenue of accountability, has become an arena for addressing public concern over society's ills.

The schools are seen to be an appropriate quarter for this kind of add-on programme for many reasons. It is already a part of the school system's responsibility to inculcate students into appropriate social norms and values. Schools are the first line of contact with people who are/may become susceptible to drug and alcohol abuse, abduction etc. By placing these programmes in the schools, a major portion of the population will be educated as to the socially acceptable means of addressing these situations. Schools are also the first line of contact with the family and are in the best position to identify problem areas and take action against them. These programmes are thus preventative in tone. In addition, education is a system that is already in place and is an economical means for attending to these issues.

These continual and increasing additions to what teachers do, comes above and beyond their traditional academic tasks. Teachers must continue to meet traditional curriculum demands while holding in view the various strengths and weaknesses of the individual children in the class. They are responsible for identifying problems that may occur in a child's academic, cognitive, emotional, or physical well-being and make appropriate referrals when needed. Referrals to special education teachers, school

psychologists, child abuse centres, and the like, usually originate in the child's own classroom. Teachers must conduct these activities and meet these responsibilities in an environment that is bound by rigid time and space constraints and in classrooms that have high student-teacher ratios. Recent increases in add-on programmes have intensified the demands on teacher's everyday teaching reality.

Growing public sensitization and concern over abuse and violence in our society has also had a heavy impact on the social practices in the school. Again this public concern has entered the schools through the avenue of accountability. The traditional tactics of social control in the schools, such as threats, humiliation (e.g. dunce caps, public tongue lashings) and the strap, are no longer acceptable. While class sizes have remained fairly stable over the last thirty years (between 20 and 30), the methods for conducting business with a group of this size have changed considerably. The most serious form of discipline now used in the schools is suspension. The more usual form of discipline is a trip to the Principal or Vice-principal's office.

The rise in add-on programmes and the weakening of authority in the classroom have left many teachers bitter and angry. As one Vice-principal stated:

we have less and less money, and staff and time and more and more responsibility. They keep giving us more to do but they don't take anything away. We get blamed when they say 1 million Canadians are illiterate, but we're also supposed to take care of aids and drugs and alcohol and feeling yes and feeling no [a child sexual abuse awareness programme] and the environment, and we're supposed to think about this kid because they come from this kind of home, and that kid because they come from that kind of home. Why is all this our responsibility? Where are the parents in all of this? (Interview G.S.)

While teachers do not deny the importance of the knowledges gained in these programmes, they do feel that increases in add-on programmes hinder their ability to meet curriculum demands. This affects their ability to prepare students effectively academically, which some teachers believe has a detrimental effect on their teaching records.

Added to the dilemma is the increased legal action taken by parents against the schools. No school would now consider itself exempt from this form of accountability. The relationship between schools and parents is tenuous at best. Where once parent support of the school was taken as a given, it is now a matter of serious question.

The freeze by the federal government on transfer payments to the provincial ministries of education has added fuel to this fire. Schools are facing reductions in teaching and support staff, (including special education teachers, psychologists, substitute teachers, lunch-time monitors etc.) and the purchase of programme materials. Teachers interpret these budgetary restraints as further evidence of a lack of public support, and as a devaluing of the importance of their profession.

The last five years have seen more teacher's strikes in the Province of Ontario than at any other period in the history of education in this province. While media coverage of teacher's strikes continually focuses on monetary demands, on an individual level teachers will say "money isn't the issue, what's going on in the classroom is the issue" (discussions with teachers). Teachers feel that their already tenuous relationship with the public is suffering further damage through inappropriate representation in the media.

Increased accountability to the public on the part of Ministries of Education, School Boards and teachers have led to radical changes in curriculum content and social practices in the schools. The consistent undermining of the teachers authority over the past several years, and an increase in curriculum demands without a concordant reduction in class sizes, has placed the teachers in an untenable position. As teachers try

to balance public demands for three "r" skills and life-skills, in an environment that shows decreased support and recognition, they come to their teaching day with a considerable amount of frustration. For some the demands have serious time and programming considerations. For others they undermine the professional position of the teacher at a very fundamental level.

Mediation programmes in the schools are yet another addition to the strained teaching day. Nevertheless, many schools are adopting this programme. One reason is that it is seen to be responsive to growing public concern over the use of violence in society. More importantly, the programme is marketed as one which, in fact, will alleviate some of the pressures teachers must contend with in their teaching day.

The School Model of Mediation

The most important factor that must be taken into consideration when moving mediation into the schools is that it is a programme that requires implementation. It is not a regular component of the school curriculum and its implementation into the education system forces the first compromises on the ideological underpinnings of the mediation method. Although the actual technique of mediation is similar to the generic model explained earlier, the supporting elements which must be put in place sacrifice some of the disputant control that is seen to be such an important component of the model's ability to act as an agent of empowerment.

The first task in moving mediation into the schools is to make schools aware of the programme. Those who are interested in promoting mediation must contact the schools, inform them of the programme, receive school approval to proceed, train school mediators, and implement the programme. Programme implementation follows a series of fundamental steps, each of which has room for variability so that each school can make the programme as narrow or as broad as desired.

Professional mediators cite improved communication and an improved atmosphere throughout the school as some of the benefits of school mediation programmes. These benefits can be reaped by students, parents, teachers, administrators and custodial staff. Mediation in the school can potentially remove a good deal of the responsibility that teachers assume in disciplining children and allow teachers to get back to their real job of teaching (Dispute Resolution Centre for Ottawa-Carleton, 1988:171). The programme is presented as one which will reduce suspensions, absenteeism, vandalism and violence in the school (Simon, 1988:127).

Furthermore, by creating an atmosphere that is conducive to cooperative conflict resolution, the students and adults associated with the school can experience the benefits of a perspective that sees conflict as having positive value (The Community Board

Programme, 1988:47). All involved learn, through this programme, that conflict does not have to be avoided, and can be reasonably resolved. In the end, since "conflict is a natural part of life; resolving conflict positively can be a life-long skill (Cohen, 1988:234). Mediation is accepted into the schools because of these life-skill and discipline/violence reduction propositions.

Publications on programme implementation recommend that all students and adults in the school receive mediation training (Mediation Centre, 1988:255). The ability to do so is dependent on funding, time, and the nature and level of commitment to the programme by school staff. If this step is taken, however, then "everyone in the class can mediate a problem of anyone else in the class" (Children's Creative Response to Conflict Resolution, 1988:259). This recommendation also stems from the understanding that the most successful method for having children use any form of action is when adults, themselves, act as role models. Thus, "this is the way things are done", will have empirical validity for the children. It is also understood that the more people who have had the training, the more likely it is that the programme will become rooted, and survive over time, or become part of the school's taken-for-granted reality (interview M.C.).

It is typically recommended that the mediation programme not be implemented to address isolated problems. Some form of curriculum content is recommended as support for the mediation's themselves. This 'in class' aspect of the programme introduces the students and teachers to some rudimentary conflict theory, other forms of conflict resolution skills (for example negotiation), and will reinforce some of the skills that are used in the mediated conflict resolution method. For example, by using and reinforcing the use of 'I' messages, or by explaining the escalating anger cycle through terminology like 'climbing anger mountain'. The curriculum content of the programme, while helping staff and students understand the nature of conflict, how it is perpetuated, and what kinds of behaviours can interrupt the escalation cycle, also adds to the sense of

a pervasive use of cooperative conflict styles. This reinforces the belief that the cooperative conflict style is the more socially sanctioned method for dealing with conflict.

Gaining teacher consent to the mediation programme is not always easily accomplished. Teachers are in an authority position in the classroom and rely heavily on discipline to conduct classes effectively (Richer, 1988:280). Having a programme in the school which may set the teachers on an equal footing with their students, or call into question the teacher's discipline methods can cause a good deal of concern. In light of the undermining teacher's disciplinary techniques have encountered in recent years, mediation speaks to a sensitive issue. As one mediation trainer described:

When I first presented it to the school there was a lot of tension from the teachers. The problem was a power issue. It was a control problem. What they were hearing was that the Vice-principal [as head disciplinarian] was not doing a good job and the mediation programme would take away the power of the Vice-principal. The issues were about power and their own self-esteem, their own self-concept, their roles as teachers.(interview M.A.)

Teacher resistance can be a serious hindrance to implementation and the long-term survival of the programme. To effectively implement the programme, and have it take hold, this resistance must be dealt with as soon as it arises. One professional mediator handled staff opposition in the following manner:

I was able to assure them that they would be responsible for the programme and they would have the final decision-making, that it would not replace the traditional disciplinary procedures that they had. And if they weren't comfortable with a dispute going there [to mediation] it wouldn't go. And all

those things that gave them back the power that they were feeling they were going to lose. And I told them about the programme advantages, that this was like having another tool, something else they could use. They would be training the students in problem-solving, and that it had been shown in American schools to influence morale. I told them I thought it should be lodged in the vice-principal's office, which I didn't, because that was important to them. Cause I knew that once I got them to the training session, that the materials would speak for themselves. So one of the things that I insist on, is that one of the school administrators attend all the training. The rest I leave to them, which students, when, where... all that decision-making is theirs.

(interview M.A.)

In order to put the programme in place, and to reap the benefits the professional mediator knows exist, the programme must satisfy concerns raised by the teachers from their own relevance structure: being able to teach large classes effectively with few disciplinary alternatives. A full mediation programme raises a disjuncture in the teacher's life-world. As student empowerment increases, teacher empowerment decreases. As the quotation above indicates, some initial compromises may have to be made in the direction of student empowerment to get the programme going. Prior to informing the students about the programme, teachers decide who will receive the training (students and teachers, or just students), which school rules will be available for mediation, and whether there will be a curriculum content component.

After the issues concerning the breadth of the programme have been resolved, students are informed about its up-coming implementation. Nominations will then take place to obtain a list of potential mediators. Students and staff can nominate students, and staff, if they have chosen to become involved, can nominate other staff or themselves. A selection committee meets, made up of staff and students or only staff, to go through the

candidates and finalize a list of those who will receive the training. Not only 'good' children are selected for the programme. 'Troublemakers' are recognized as having leadership qualities, and the very strong potential of influencing other problem children.

When the list has been finalized, or when the whole school is receiving training, a professional mediator conducts a training session, or a number of training sessions, totalling between 15-20 hours. Most articles which address the use of mediation in the schools advise either prior training of staff and members of the parent body, or co-training with the children (McManus, 1992:15; Roderick, 1988:100; Simon, 1988:128). During the training session, mediators are taught active listening skills, restating and reflecting, the use of 'I' messages and so on. They are advised about issues of confidentiality, the voluntary nature of mediation, and the lack of authority the mediator has to impose decisions. Mediators who are students will be advised not to approach any situations that involve physical violence, and to report any issues that require adult intervention to a teacher (for example, violence or sexual abuse in the home or between peers). Training sessions rely heavily on role playing to develop some pragmatic experience for the mediators before they return to the school. Mediations may occur through referral (for example a teacher, mediator, student may see a problem situation and suggest mediation) or through self-selection (when the disputants decide to go to mediation themselves).

Vivian Gordon (1988:235-239) argues that the ultimate empowerment is for the mediation programme to become institutionalized. Her point is, that for each school the programme will be most effective once professional mediators have left the scene and the programme has become an integral part of the school's everyday reality. Gordon's perspective sees the programme, and the technique, as needing to move into the taken-for-granted reality. She discusses several factors which can impinge on this step.

One important factor in programme implementation is the presence of a coordinator who can oversee its progress. This need not be a professional mediator: it can be a teacher or other adult who has received the training (e.g. a parent). However, it must be someone who can constantly monitor the programme, organize mediator and mediation time-tables, adapt the programme to the unique problems that arise in the school, and act as a technical advisor (Gordon, 1988:237). This can be quite a demanding job. As one professional mediator, who had acted as a programme coordinator explained:

I had to develop a programme that suited the needs of this school. I had to develop a reputation and a sense of trust with the school and visited every classroom and spoke to every class. I trained the staff and the students. We asked for five teachers to volunteer and we got 25 who were interested in taking the training. So I did training for the teachers, over a period of time, so they could cover for each other, and then I did another training session for the students [who would be mediators]. I acted as the coordinator... you know, I met with the mediators, helped them iron out their confusions, discussed referrals to mediation and things like that. I attended the first few mediations to see that everything was going all-right. I met with the parents too.

(interview M.C.)

Institutionalizing this programme in the school is a burdensome undertaking. There must be consideration of the needs and wants of the individuals at the school, and the structures of the education system itself. Funding problems (to pay trainers, coordinators, and to purchase materials) can be a serious block to implementation, as can lack of appropriate scheduling time (training sessions for teachers, time to actually conduct mediations, and the time for meetings with staff, coordinators, and student mediators to address the issues that are particular to the school). As a result of these

very heavy demands, and the necessity of having appropriate role models, Gordon sees full staff support as a prerequisite to implementation.

Most of the evaluative material on mediation programmes comes from the United States, in schools where staff and students have been trained, and where there is both the mediation programme and the curriculum content programme in place. The effects of these programmes are typically presented as very positive:

The offender has to see the human qualities in the victim... recalls one situation in which a student made a racial comment about a teacher. The conflict went to mediation and during that process the teacher was able to see that the student had been under a lot of stress and was upset about a different issue. The teacher also found out that the student himself had habitually been called names because of his ethnic background. (Hamm, 1991:8)

260 disputes, ranging from student-teacher and student-parent "communication problems" to multistudent fistfights, were resolved through mediation. Follow-up interviews show that 90% of mediated agreements are upheld. (Davis, 1988:85)

The programmes show kids that they have options.... All they knew before was to fight. Now they have choices. (Roderick, 1988:99)

...that the children tend to work well together in partnerships, in small groups and as a whole class, because they can live with difference and resolve many conflicts as they arise. The other is that they have developed more than the ordinary facility for using and developing language. (Fine et al., 1991:5)

The language involved in this process is language of analysis, problem solving and negotiation. In the course of their making oral and written messages clear to others, they deepen their own understandings.

(Fine et al., 1991:6)

I found that in some of the mediations the students were able to come to a mutual agreement and also to some understanding of each other's position, the disputants positions, so that they were able to appreciate where the other person was. So that there was a kind of social restitution, in the way that the individual who had been wronged felt much better now, because the other party would say, "Yes I realize now how you feel". (interview J.H.)

The potential of mediation programmes to have a powerful impact on the staff and students in the schools appears to have much credence. However it does not appear to work for everyone. There is a hint of qualified success in McCormick (1988:271):

Unlike the 'at-risk' students described above who appear to have been 'reformed' to some degree, 'at-risk' students who did not participate in the program maintained, for example, their favorable attitudes towards aggression as well as, though to a lesser degree than in the past, their willingness to behave as such.

The 'at-risk' students were students who had been identified as troublemakers and were brought into the programme for their unique leadership potential. They were reformed when they received mediator training. Those troublemakers who had not received the training were fairly impervious to the effects of this programme. Not only

was the degree of influence of the programme weak on this group, but apparently having 'some of their own' trained as mediators had not produced the desired results.

This programme appears to have successes and failures. The point, sociologically, is to understand for whom, and why. By entering into the life-worlds in the elementary school environment, those socio-cultural factors which contribute to the variation in successes and failures, will be illuminated.

Duncan Elementary School

To understand the essence and ambience of the student's and teacher's day-to-day reality, participant observation was undertaken at Duncan Elementary School (a pseudonym, used to maintain anonymity) in the National Capital Region. This is a kindergarten to grade 6 school, with a total registration of approximately 500 students. There were about 250 students in the senior programme (grades 4,5,6) at the time of this study. The mediation programme had been implemented for these grades only, on a trial basis. If it met with success in the older grades, it would be placed in the younger grades the following year.

Most of the students are bussed to the school and since the school had a number of special education programmes some children were bussed from quite far away in order to participate. It, therefore, served a large, mixed-income, geographic area. The majority of teachers in the school were white females ranging in age from mid-twenties to mid-forties. The teachers in the school had 20 to 25 students in their classrooms, although special education teachers had half that number. Teachers had a fair amount of autonomy in the classroom, deciding which subjects would be taught when, and for how long, the only restriction being that they meet Ministry curriculum requirements by the end of the year.

The school was too small for the number of children registered and several portables were used for the older classes. The portables were smaller in size than the regular classrooms and they had been arranged so that access to other school rooms (e.g. the gym, assembly, office) was not a serious problem.

School began at 9:00 A.M. and finished at 3:30 P.M. Morning recess was from 10:30 to 10:45, lunch, from 12:15 to 1:15. There was no afternoon recess for the senior grades. At morning recess the students proceed into the yard by class, all arriving outside within a few minutes of each other. The younger students (grade 4 and some grade

5's), typically took somewhat longer because they needed more assistance with the many layers of clothing our Canadian winters require.

During lunch hour students ate in their classrooms under the supervision of monitors who had been hired from the community. Not every classroom had a monitor, rather, they traveled between two or three rooms, supervising a number of classrooms at once. Inside monitors were also responsible for supervising related hall events, as the children got dressed to go outside after lunch. At lunch the children did not proceed outside by class as in the morning recess. When a child was finished their lunch, they went to a locker in the hall, got dressed and went outside.

Supervising those who were still eating in the classrooms and those who were getting dressed in the hall could be a frantic task. The monitors were not able to be in all places at once and moved into situations according to the nature of the activity that was taking place. They assumed fundamental care-taking tasks such as helping with zippers, opening thermos' that were stuck, sending children to the washroom, etc. They also had disciplinarian responsibilities and would intervene when food was thrown, garbage left on the floor, or when arguments, or pushing and shoving transpired in the halls.

When the weather was good, children would hurry through their lunches and explode into the yard. When the weather was poor, lunches were eaten much more slowly, and the children meandered into the yard in trickles.

The physical layout of the school is not as important to this analysis as the layout of the senior yard. The yard for grades k-3 was located in such a way as to be inaccessible to the senior students. As a result of the very separate geographic construction of the outside play areas, it was possible to implement the mediation programme in the senior yard, without influencing the activities in the junior yard.

The senior yard was approximately 142 yards by 122 yards, forming a large rectangular area to the south of the school. Access to the yard was through two doors, one used by the grade 4 and 5 students, one used by the grade 6 students. There was no

restrictive fencing or other concrete structure that separated this large area into specific 4, 5 or 6 play areas. It was quite open and all the children in these grades could move freely through any portion of the area as they chose.

There was no climber in the senior yard, and balls, hockey sticks and other gym equipment were not allowed in the yard. There was a school rule of 'no physical contact' in this school, as in many other schools, a reflection of the number of legal actions parents having been taking in the last few years over injuries in the yard. This school, like all schools, was in a very vulnerable position at this point in time. It was difficult to believe that a no physical contact rule was viable, but the schools had little alternative protection against parents suing because of injury.

Teachers were responsible for yard supervision at the morning recess. This was done on a rotation basis, two teachers at a time. During the lunch period two monitors, hired from the community, assumed responsibility for supervising the entire yard. They were commonly referred to as "Miss" or "the Miss" by the students. The size of the yard and the number of children in the yard left them little opportunity to do anything more than provide fundamental care-giving tasks (fixing zippers, tying scarves, etc.) and problem-solving or disciplinary interventions. The Misses moved through the yard, approaching situations which, in their judgement, were potentially problematic, or alternatively at the request of a student(s).

The Misses in the yard had limits to their authority. They could not, for example, give detentions, or have the children write lines, or use any of the other discipline tactics that were available to teachers in the classroom. The more typical circumstance was for the Miss to tell the children to leave each other alone, separate them, or send them to stand by the school wall, and time them out (stand there until they have cooled off). In the more serious situations they would send the student(s) in question into the school to see the Vice-principal. The Vice-principal was the head disciplinarian in the school and her office was used for children who were not 'managing' in the classroom or

in the yard. This step was taken by yard monitors either, when a child was badly hurt, when there was a problem involving a lot of anger, and serious physical fighting, and/or there was repeat physical fighting between students that had already been separated. With 250 children playing all over the yard, with the yard as large as it was, the monitors were always moving. This not only made them more visible, which in itself produced a reduction of problems, but made them more available throughout the yard for children that wanted their help.

Lunch hour was a high activity time for the students inside the school as well. The gym teacher ran noon-hour sports Monday, Wednesday and Friday and there were various 'club' activities and choir practices. Some of the grade 6 students acted as noon hour monitors for the children in grades 1-3. Lunch hour was also the time when detentions were served in the detention room (the Vice-principal's office). Since most of the children were bussed to the school this was the only viable time to serve detentions.

Teachers had time away from the students at lunch, recess, and on a rotation basis when their children were in the gym or having second language instruction. A central staff room was available for their use during these times. It was here that I spent the time between recess and lunch and came to understand much of the teacher's life-worlds.

Teachers were 'at-work' during recess and gym/second language instruction. They used this time to grade papers, assemble curriculum materials, contact parents of sick or problem children, or consult with the Principal or Vice-principal on school related matters. There were rarely more than two or three teachers in the staff room at these times and those that were there sat at the tables grading papers while they had coffee. Some teachers would come in, make a coffee and leave, some chose to remain in their classrooms. Most of this time was used to attend to work related items.

Lunch hour was the teacher's own time. They ate in the staff room together, or left the building to go to the bank and attend to other personal matters. The lunch hour at

this school was an important collegial time. Conversation revolved around shared interests in the teaching and adult worlds. Problems with particular children in a given teacher's classroom were discussed and ideas were bounced around between teachers who had previously taught, or had a great deal of contact, with that child. Teachers also did mutual consultation on field trips, including overnights at an outdoor centre, trips to the museums, theatre, and special events. This school had a variety of guest speakers coming into the school, special presentations (puppeteers and children's plays), and special event days (earth day), and organizing these events was done over the lunch hour. It was also the time to discuss, or express disagreement with some new Board or Ministerial policy.

These teacher's teaching jobs extended well beyond the nine to five day. Many of them were taking night classes to up-grade their qualifications, others were on various education committees and attended evening meetings, some ran noon-hour activities like the stamp club or the choir, and many attended week-end workshops (for example on whole language programmes, or peer mediation). Teachers also used the staff room as a place to exchange information gathered from these extracurricular activities.

Teacher's reliance on the peer support in the staff room was particularly evident on the more stressful occasions. Coincidental to the implementation of the mediation programme, teachers were making preparations for the up-coming Christmas season. They had the additional undertakings of preparing each of their classes with a presentation for the school Christmas concert (a play, song, etc.), decorating their classrooms, helping the children make gifts and decorations to take home, and organizing a Christmas craft fund-raiser and the Christmas staff party.

Several of the teachers at this school were parents and the lunch hour included some discussion of parenting problems. At the time these observations were conducted, there was a serious outbreak of meningococcal disease in the Ottawa High Schools with a number of related deaths. Some of the teachers at Duncan Elementary had children who

were attending Ottawa area High Schools and were quite anxious about their children's welfare. They were able to share these fears and concerns with fellow staff members in the staff room.

Lunch hour was an important, and brief, revitalization time for these teachers. The staff room was where the teachers had a break from the isolation of the classroom, sought counsel, vented frustrations and attended to the many curriculum questions which arose during their working day.

Teacher's job demands and frustration were expressed to me through discussions with various staff members, and through responses to the questionnaires that were administered six weeks into the programme. Sixteen teachers and administrative staff (about 50%) returned questionnaires on the mediation programme (including the four teachers who were directly involved in the programme and the Vice-principal who oversaw the programme). Teachers who did not respond cited lack of knowledge or lack of involvement with the programme as reasons for not responding.

Teacher commentary reflected concern over the rise in add-on programmes in the schools. One teacher stated that "new programmes should not constantly be introduced that create overload for staff and students", while another felt that some "provision had to be made to avoid every new programme becoming an add-on in terms of time, energy and workload". One staff member was quite adamant in her remarks:

The School Boards say, "come to our Board, come to our Board, because we have such and such a programme". You know that's how they get more funding, when they get more students to enroll. But they never stop to think what all these programmes mean to us teachers, to our day. All these programmes are done on the backs of the teachers. (discussion M.M.)

Along with these time and academic considerations which already imposed on the teacher's day, staff identified other structural elements in the school system that could impede the implementation of any new programme. These were space, funding, staff support, administrative support, parental support and student support. More importantly teaching staff felt that they should be consulted and properly informed about the details of a programme before it was implemented. Their position in the school hierarchy was a source of dissension. Many commented that there should be more teacher in-put on implementation decisions and six questionnaire respondents cited lack of teacher interest/support as a definitive reason for terminating a programme.

Staff were involved in the decision to implement a mediation programme at Duncan Elementary. Their reasons for adopting the programme will be explicated in the next chapter on stages of implementation. As will be seen, however, the frustrations and structural restrictions documented in this chapter had a significant effect on how the programme unfolded.

From Technique to Practice: Programme Implementation

In order to have a functioning programme at Duncan Elementary, consent was required from the staff, the parents, various levels of the education hierarchy and, most importantly, the students. Mediators had to be selected and trained, the rest of the student body informed of who the mediators would be, and told how the programme would operate. As the previous chapter indicated, the staff at Duncan Elementary had supported the introduction of a mediation programme at their school. Part 1 of this chapter describes how that consent was garnered and what expectations the staff had for the programme. The subsequent section attends to the solicitation of consent from the students. All proper names used in the following discussions are pseudonyms used to maintain the anonymity of the participants.

Once these matters were deemed to have been taken care of, the programme moved to the more pragmatic aspects of implementation. The section entitled, 'Getting Organized', illustrates the many steps that were taken to accomplish these tasks. It was during this stage of implementation that the mediation programme first confronted the complexities of everyday school reality on an intimate level.

Soliciting Consent

Staff Approval

November 1

To establish the link between professional mediators and the school, I had an interview with the Principal, Mrs. Westwood, to determine why and how the decision had been made to implement the programme. There followed a discussion of the Principal's understanding of the benefits associated with the programme. These were in accord with those presented in my discussion of the school model. In addition, Duncan Elementary had

had a conflict curriculum programme in place for a year. Each class spent a required amount of time per week on conflict resolution. In the lower grades (kindergarten to grade 3) this was done through 'caring circles', whereby children met in a group, in a circle on the floor, and shared any interests, concerns, or problems they may have wanted to discuss. In the older grades (grades 4,5,6) they learned about negotiating, 'I' messages, anger mountain and so on. It was felt by the Principal and the staff that the peer mediation programme was a natural extension of the curriculum programme.

In light of this information, I wondered what the peer mediation programme was expected to accomplish that the conflict curriculum programme had not. I again asked, what do you expect from this programme, why does your school have this programme? Mrs. Westwood responded, "I couldn't handle the number of children coming into the office for discipline". Discipline was perceived to be quite a serious problem at this school and it interfered with the Principal's ability to meet administrative job demands. This concern had prompted Mrs. Westwood to lobby the School Board for a Vice-principalship over the past several months, the Vice-principal typically having the position of head disciplinarian in the school. This position had been granted by the Board and had been filled by one of the teachers on staff, Mrs. Wallace, about three months prior to the implementation of the mediation programme.

The Principal had also taken these discipline concerns to the staff the previous spring, "to see if they had any suggestions about what to do about this problem. One of the staff knew about the mediation programme and, after we discussed it, we decided to give it a try". It was decided to implement the programme in the senior grades (4,5,6) the first year and see how it worked before placing it in the younger grades.

The mediation programme was accepted by the staff at Duncan Elementary because of the life-skill and discipline/violence reduction propositions. They indicated on their questionnaires that they had given their approval in the belief that it would help the students be more respectful of each other and learn to solve problems on their own.

Several commented on the considerable amount of time they spent disciplining the children, and felt this programme would relieve them of some of these responsibilities so they could get back to their primary job of teaching.

It was felt that the programme offered the students alternative modes to conflict behaviour and a set of life skills that they could carry into adulthood. Six of the 16 respondents clearly stated that they saw the programme as an effective means of problem-solving in areas other than the yard. They believed that student-teacher problems, student-parent problems and teacher-teacher problems could also benefit from this type of skill. The number of teachers that responded this way may have been lowered because the questionnaire focused on the peer mediation programme only and would have been interpreted as quite separate from the curriculum content programme that was already in place. The classroom programme would be more likely to address these other areas. The eleven respondents who did not discuss school relationships beyond the yard, however, clearly stated that the mediation programme was being implemented "to teach the children" how to resolve "their own problems".

The school staff expected the programme to alleviate school yard problems with discipline and physical aggression by the male students, and 'bitchiness' on the part of the female students. They consistently separated problems like rule breaking, physical aggression and bitchiness as appropriate to mediation, from the more severe problems like drug abuse, deep-rooted emotional problems that "stemmed from the home environment", and gang violence as inappropriate to mediation.

Interpretation of the yard events as problematic may have partially been a reflection of the gender of almost all the staff and their relative class positions. One teacher took a very different view of student behaviour in the yard. Her comment was, "these teachers keep talking about how violent the yard is. This school isn't violent. These teachers should see some of the schools I went to in [a metropolitan area in a large Canadian city] if they want to see violence". This teacher did not know why the

programme had been implemented. Nevertheless, she supported the programme because, in her interpretation, it would give the "teachers, students and other school members life-skills in dealing with conflict management".

Having received staff approval, the programme was presented to the parent committee for their approval. A trainer was contacted, came to the school for discussions with the Principal, and a tentative date was established for the training session. The school requested funding for the training session from the School Board, and permission to implement the programme from the Ministry of Education. This had all taken place during the previous spring and summer.

In light of the financial restraints the schools were facing, the programme had to be placed in the school in the most economical way possible. Mrs. Westwood accepted the responsibility for introducing the programme to the students, and all other coordination aspects of the programme were to be handled by the Vice-principal and four teachers at the school. The trainer was hired for the training session only.

Student Approval

November 1

Mrs. Westwood introduced the programme and explained the nomination procedures to each grade 4, 5 and 6 class. Included in her presentation was a video from N.A.M.E. (National Association for Mediation) which had been made available to her by the trainer. The following is a summary of a presentation to a grade 6 class, which I attended after my earlier interview with Mrs. Westwood.

The classroom in which this took place was in one of the portables. There were 25 students in the class and the student's desks were in lines facing the blackboard, typical to the way classroom space is utilized. There was a good deal of restlessness in the classroom, perhaps because the room was so hot, or because the Principal was

making a personal visit (which is fairly unusual, and denotes the importance of an event). In part it was because in the yard, in front of the classroom windows, a special football day was taking place and many of the boys in the class were scheduled to go outside shortly to participate in this event.

When Mrs. Westwood arrived the room became quiet and still. She began the presentation with:

We are introducing a new programme at this school called a peer mediation programme. You people have been taught how to handle conflict using 'I' statements, and how to negotiate, and you know all about anger mountain. Win/win is what we've tried to achieve. But I think sometimes you're so angry and upset that you don't want to use 'I' messages.

The room was very quiet at this point, the children paying close attention. She continued with an explanation of the difficulties associated with handling anger and angry outbursts and how they so often occurred in the yard. To help with these problems the:

teachers thought of other ways to help you solve your problems where we can not be involved, we're just policemen in the yard. With the peer mediation programme we will be using trained students to help other students solve their problems.

Mrs. Westwood gave a description of the role of the mediator, "to help kids talk out their problems and help them get to the point where they were able to find solutions". The presentation then focused on the techniques of mediation, describing most thoroughly the active listening component. The students were familiar with this concept from the curriculum conflict programme, "but the problem-solving has to come from

the people having the problem," she added. Students were also told that the mediators were not going to decide who was right or who was wrong, "these mediators are not judges, they are your friends and will help you as friends".

There followed a description of the selection process, and the type of person who would make a good mediator. The students were informed that the student mediators would be the:

kids you nominate. They must be good listeners, but they don't have to be good kids. We want people out in the yard that you have chosen, not that we have chosen, since you are the ones that will be using these people.

The students would be making these nominations in privacy and the mediators would be selected from the ones they had nominated. Teachers would also be nominating students but, "there are more students than teachers so your nominations are more important". The students who were going to become mediators in the yard would be going to a training session where they would be taught how to help others with their problems in the yard.

The video from N.A.M.E., a news commentary from the United States which summarizes peer mediation programmes, was then shown to the students. A school yard fight is occurring in the video and two children approach wearing yellow shirts from their school's programme. They ask the students who are having the argument if they want to solve the problem "with us or with a teacher". The students agree to solve the problem using mediation and they go to the 'mediation room' for discussion.

The procedures which were followed in the mediation were consistent with the generic model explained earlier. However, it was considerably abbreviated. Each disputant was asked what their concerns were and these were restated by a mediator. They were then asked by a mediator if they could think of anything that would help solve

the problem. The dispute had been about name-calling and the disputants agreed to not make fun of each other anymore. The mediators ensured that both parties were satisfied with the solution, had them shake hands and sign the agreement. The entire mediation took under five minutes.

Interestingly one of the mediators that was interviewed in the yard was a boy named Sonny. Apparently Sonny had been one of the chronic bullies in the yard prior to his becoming a peer mediator. The news commentator asked him why he had been a bully; with much candor Sonny replied "to get the authority. like my parents have, over other kids". The commentator's summary of this student's participation in the programme was that it gave Sonny the "authority and power he used to take".

After the video Mrs. Westwood reiterated the role of mediators as friends and not policeman, but included, "if kids say no to mediation, that's fine, it's the kids decision, because they can have their friends solve it, or they can go the good old discipline route".

The messages were becoming confusing. On the one hand, Mrs. Westwood was telling the students that they could say no to mediation, and that mediators were not going to be policeman in the yard like teachers were. Mediators would not be part of the discipline continuum and would have no power over the other students. On the other hand the students in the video had not been given the choice to say no, the choice having been to go to mediation or to go to a teacher. In addition, Sonny had been given the power and authority he used to take by becoming a peer mediator. Likewise Mrs. Westwood, herself had placed the programme directly on the discipline continuum with the statement, "they can have their friends solve it, or they can go the good old discipline route". What was this programme about, discipline or life-skills? Looking around the room, there were 25 quiet, intense and stoney faces. It was impossible to discern what the students were doing with these contradictory messages.

After a brief discussion period, where the children were allowed to ask questions (e.g. how much will the programme cost?) the Principal left. The classroom teacher

allowed the students who were involved in the football day to leave and there followed much restlessness, talking and wiggling on the part of the students. At this point the impression that the school was going to use the mediation programme as a form of discipline became even more evident. Trying to get the children's attention, the teacher asked in a slightly raised voice, "Are we using our active listening skills? Thank you for using your active listening skills". By calling on this technique to gain the class's attention, in isolation from the other techniques, such as clear articulation of needs, it became a method of classroom control, equivalent to "class settle down".

The students, once settled, were prepared to begin their nominations. Except for one. It was Katie's birthday and she called out to the teacher, "aren't you going to sing happy birthday to me?" The classroom programme was interrupted to sing happy birthday to Katie. Students, it seemed, were capable of interrupting the teacher's agenda in quite (apparently) innocent ways.

Katie had successfully imposed her priorities on the structured school day and the students had to be refocused on the nomination process. Students were requested to nominate one person each, including themselves if they wished, and provide three reasons why they had made the nomination. The students completed their forms privately, and quietly, at their desks. After they were completed the class met in a circle at the front of the room and read their nominations to the other children and the teacher. During this discussion the teacher verbally nominated a student who, although shy, was praised by the teacher for her helpfulness and cooperativeness in the classroom. The teacher seemed to be giving the student some social recognition, and some behavioural advice to the other students, through this public nomination. However, whether the teacher's admiration moved this very shy child any closer to her peers is questionable.

After the nomination procedures had been completed, the students returned to their desks and continued on with school work that had been started before the Principal's presentation.

Getting Organized

Selection of Mediators

November 5

Senior teaching staff had been allowed to make as many nominations as they wished. All the nominations were reviewed by a selection committee composed of the four teachers who had accepted the responsibility for coordinating the programme. Selections were made by the following method - if the student had a nomination, but no reasons, then they were eliminated, those with two nominations or more were retained and sorted by grade. The reasons for nomination were read to the group and selections were made on the basis of skills directly related to mediation (because s/he's my friend was not appropriate; because s/he helped me solve my problem was).

The selection committee was left with about 35 students and they needed to reduce this to 20. The intent was to have two children for each morning recess and two for each lunch hour, for a total of 20 students. Some children, who were extremely shy, were put on a waiting list because the teachers were uncertain as to their ability to function effectively in the programme. Some children who had the peer support and some of the skills, but not a lot of teacher support, were included because it was felt that the programme would be good for them in terms of self-confidence and because they were members of the more disruptive groups in the yard. One child who had no peer support, was included on the basis of written and verbal teacher support. He was considered a bully in the yard which explained the lack of peer support, but it was felt that, like Sonny in the video, the programme would be good for him....

Once the list of 20 potential mediators had been constructed, these student's parents were informed of their selection and their permission was requested for the student to attend the training session on the upcoming Friday and Saturday.

Training Session

The following description of the first morning of the training session is quite detailed. The intensity of this week-end, and the amount of information that was covered, were important to the way the student mediators acted back in the school. Furthermore, the manner in which various action and verbal patterns were called upon during the two days, patterns typically associated with the education environment, would not be as easily grasped in brief overviews. The trainer had conducted school training sessions for elementary schools in the past. She also had some background in teaching, therefore the strategies and modes of conduct associated with the school environment were familiar to her.

The depth of detail provided of the first mornings events is also intended to immerse the reader in the ambience of this training session. The training session became, in retrospect, a moment of shared biography for all those who had attended. It separated the participants from other members of the staff and student body in terms of knowledge, experiences, meanings and expectations.

November 8

Day 1

The training session was scheduled for two days from 8:30 A.M. to approximately 3:30 P.M. Twenty students were in attendance for the training session, 11 males and 9 females. The Principal, Mrs. Westwood, and Vice-Principal, Mrs. Wallace, were attending and the three female teachers (Mrs. Allen, Mrs. Gordon, Mrs. Martin) from the school who had committed themselves to the coordination aspects of this programme. One teacher, Mrs. McDonald, was absent as she was attending another week-end seminar. Since this teacher was also the one who had informed the school about the mediation programme and had taken a university course on mediation, her absence was seen as

acceptable. There was also a teacher (female) from another school in attendance. She taught in the school that would be receiving these students at the end of grade 6. The trainer, an assistant (both females) and I, were the only other people present. The trainer had permitted me to attend the session on the condition that I participate fully in the activities.

The room in which the training session took place was a large conference room set up with about 10 conference tables arranged in a circle. The trainer and her assistant sat at the front of the room, the school staff, children, and I, were interspersed around the tables in the rest of the room. Children sat wherever they wanted to and since many of them did not have good friends in the room they tended to sit with people from the same grade. At the back of the room was a counter which had coffee, juice, tea, cookies and a selection of fruit.

At 8:50 we were asked to find a place at the tables so we could begin. At each spot there was a pink manual which had been designed by the trainer for this session. Under the title was a sketch of two people, one saying "mediation helped us stay friends", while the other said "sounds like you both won". From the very beginning, there was an articulation of the benefits of using mediation. This was reiterated consistently throughout the week-end.

The trainer began:

Hi my name is ... and I want to welcome you to the mediation training session. What we're going to be doing over the next two days is teaching you how to be conflict managers. We're going to teach you how to deal with conflict and help others deal with their conflicts. What that means is you're going to learn how to listen. To hear what's really important in a problem. What people are really saying. How we're going to do this is with this manual. Don't lose it

because it's really important. You're going to need the manuals when you become conflict managers in your school.

The trainer explained that we needed to get to know each other, so the first activity would be an ice-breaker. Participants were to come together in pairs and interview their partner. After the interview, each participant stood up and described their partner to the rest of the group. One of the questions that had been asked was, why are you here? A list was made on a flip-chart of all the reasons participants had given for being at the workshop. There was a noticeable difference in the terminology between the manual and the list on the flip-chart. The trainer's introduction and the manual consistently used the term conflict to define problems between people. The flip-chart, on the other hand, used the words fight, and problems. Only two people (one a teacher) used the term conflict in their reasons for participation. (see Appendix C:192, for a list of reasons).

The trainer then gave some information about herself and explained why she was there. "I've been working with young people to learn a better way of solving fights, so you don't have a loser. I hope when you go home tomorrow night you will feel that you have learned a better way to solve fights...." This use of the term fights rather than conflict was not to last very long.

This weekend had a pragmatic purpose, to train the participants in the skills of mediation. To accomplish this, the trainer explained that she would be discussing some rudimentary conflict theory, explore attitudes towards conflict, and conflict styles, and train the participants in mediation procedures, over the next two days. She then outlined the agenda for this particular day:

In the first part of the morning we're going to talk about conflict, what is conflict, what happens at your school, what you think about it... how to deal

with it... in order to help other people deal with it you first have to know how you deal with it... this afternoon we'll start talking about communication, to make sure you understand how it works... later today you'll have your first chance to do a mediation.

The students were informed that there would be a break in the middle of the morning and the afternoon, and a break at lunch time, a routine the students were familiar with from school.

The trainer's immediate assumption of control, of the agenda and the dialogue, placed her in a position of authority in the workshop. This move denoted to the students that this was the person to ask questions of, to listen to, to seek guidance from. This was similar to the manner in which classroom student-teacher relationships are conducted and the students showed no difficulty in allowing her to proceed as she had decided without interruption. For the rest of the week-end all questions were directed to the trainer, regardless of the fact that six school staff were on hand. The trainer was regarded as the expert, and was treated accordingly by all the participants.

The trainer moved right into the pragmatic and educative aspects of the agenda. She explained that there would be a lot of moving around over the next two days and some ground rules needed to be established. These were listed on a page of the flip-chart, which was later taped to the wall behind the trainer and remained there for the duration of the session. "I want it to be safe for everyone, so we can make mistakes and it's O.K., and we can learn from you. So we need some guidelines":

-(Trainer's name) is in charge

-listen while others are speaking, one of the things you're going to find is that when people are upset they don't listen very well. So one of the things we have to agree on is to not interrupt.

-show respect- we don't want to put other people down, we're going to make mistakes because you've never done this before and I want you to be able to make mistakes, so no put-downs

-work hard and have fun

Very subtly the trainer had already introduced some of the basic elements of the mediation technique, no interrupting, no put-downs, careful listening, and the creation of a safe environment. These too were familiar to classroom rules that promote the ideology of a safe, caring, fun, school environment. Students had heard these before and knew they meant that control of events would be in adult hands, that they were expected to behave well with each other, and to complete tasks as presented. The students had not had the opportunity to ask any questions or comment on the nature of the agenda, nor would they believe that they should. This again is typical to school procedures. The students do not question the chronological ordering of the day as established by the relevant adults.

During this time the teachers were moving in and out of the room, getting coffee, tea and so on. The Principal and Vice-principal had had a whispered conversation at the back of the room for about five minutes. This seemed to be acceptable and did not draw any comments from the trainer. The children, on the other hand, did not leave their seats unless requested to do so by the trainer. It was accepted as normal procedure in any school related activity that teachers can move around, while students wait until a speaker is finished, and requests them to do so.

The first conceptually oriented component of the training session came through a lengthy exploration of attitudes and meanings given to the term conflict. The children were organized into groups of five by the trainer and an adult was assigned to each group. The children were then asked to "talk about conflict at school. I want you to talk about

what conflict is, draw what it looks like [on flip-chart paper]. Then we're going to come back and share our pictures and thoughts".

When the groups were called back to the table they each presented their pictures of conflict at the front of the room and gave some explanation of it's content. Some examples of their commentary were: street fighters and gushes of blood, he weighs 697 lbs., I'll see you in the future, bashing another kid's knee, if I'm stupid then you're stupider, other kids yelling fight-fight-fight, pulling hair and throwing rocks, kicked the face and fell in the gravel, there was a pile-on. The severity of the incidents presented and the amount of blood and torn bodies in the pictures was shocking. Many of the lines that were used came directly from movies that were popular at the time (e.g. Terminator, with Arnold Schwarzenegger). The students had been asked to draw a picture of conflict and they had. It was too soon to assess whether this was a reflection of what was actually happening in their school yard.

The trainer responded to these pictures and explanations with, "good work guys". She continued:

when we look at these pictures what do we see over and over again... blood, kicking, people killing each other, violence, lots of teachers involved, hurting and tears, unhappiness, silent treatment, yelling. Most of us think of conflict as bad. Is there anyone who can't wait to get to your next conflict?

With student and teacher input the discussion slowly moved from the negative outcomes of conflict (violence, hurt feelings), to the positive consequences of conflict. The participants had no difficulty presenting a number of outcomes that they considered positive, perhaps a reflection of the presence of a curriculum content programme in the school. These were also listed on the flip-chart and included such positive results as: I like arguing sometimes, I get new ideas (teacher), sharing our feelings, talking about it

so you can let the other person know your feelings, you can stop climbing up anger mountain, you understand your friends better, you get to say what's on your mind.

The focus of conversation had moved from one extreme to the other. It had begun with pictures of extreme violence and was now attending to 'being friends'. The trainer told the participants that people don't know how to get to the good things in conflict. "What you're going to be involved in, and what you're going to be doing, is to help the other students and the teachers to learn other ways of dealing with conflict."

Now that the discussion was focused on the positive effects of conflict the trainer used this as a springboard to the next conceptual task. "Conflict is not a bad thing or a good thing, it's how you handle it that makes it good or bad." When a student commented that "you can't negotiate when you're on top of anger mountain" the trainer used this comment to draw the focus closer to her next topic, conflict styles. "Right, and we're going to learn how to help people who are there, get down from anger mountain."

Six Bristol board pictures of various animals were placed around the room, each with a particular conflict style described on it (see Appendix C:193). All the participants had to find the animal that most closely described their conflict style and stand beside that picture. The students were having problems. They could not understand the definition beside 'sheep' and needed to have it explained as they searched the room. Several students also felt restricted by having to make one selection. Patrick commented to the trainer, "I fight differently with my friend than I do with my brother or sister". Katie also recognized the possibility of contradictory interpretations, " my sister might think I'm a gorilla when I think I'm being a lemming". Robbie was quite proud of his selection and expressed a positive outcome of conflict that had not been addressed earlier, " I like being a gorilla. I get what I want that way". The students appeared to be expressing an understanding of reality that contained more variability than was being allowed. The trainer suggested that they find the one they were most like, or to pick one

person and think about how they were with that person, and stand by the appropriate picture. All the students who selected the gorilla were male.

The participants were paired up so that each pair had two different animals. The trainer presented a role play: there was a problem to solve, and each group of two had to interact with each other according to the animals they were supposed to be (e.g. owl would intellectualize the problem, gorilla would take-over etc.). The problem to resolve was: each pairing had to draw a picture, but had only one marker between the two of them, and the best picture would get a reward. In the discussion that followed the role play it became evident that most pairs were unable to resolve the problem of who would get the marker. However, the trainer explained, what had happened was that almost everyone had gotten lost in the problem of who was going to have the marker first, when the real objective was to have drawn the picture. This was a very child-oriented means of demonstrating the problem of identifying core issues in a conflict and how these can become clouded by the conduct of the people involved.

The trainer asked the participants how they had felt during the paired role play. All those who had been gorillas felt good about their successes. This presented a problem for the trainer. Being a gorilla was not part of the mediation philosophy of consensual relations as opposed to conflictual relations. She had a discussion with the students about when it is appropriate to be a gorilla. She suggested that gorilla-like behaviour was acceptable for things you believed in: religion, love and marriage, the environment and peace activities.

Returning to the objectives of the paired exercise, the trainer illustrated how we have a "knee-jerk" reaction to problem situations. By this she meant that we quickly and automatically move into behaviour patterns that prevent us from solving the problem. She pointed out that all those gorillas who had felt good about winning the marker had not, in fact, solved the problem and drawn the picture, and it "was important to know

this difference". There seemed to be some confusion here on the part of the gorillas. They had, in fact, solved the problem. They simply took the marker and drew the picture.

Continuing the discussion on the role-play, the trainer pointed out that some of the students had been able to solve the problem. She asked them how they had accomplished this, to which they responded, "we talked it out". This was a direct lead-in to the next point to be made. Talking about it does not only involve discussion about the problem, it also involves discussion about solutions.

We quickly turned to the manual and had a brief review of the causes of conflict; opinions, feelings, beliefs, and needs. Each cause was supported by a picture of two people arguing over something that was an example of that particular cause.

The students had been consistently attentive most of the morning. Now and then a student would let their eyes wander away, would wiggle in their seats, or scribble on the writing pad that had been provided. These lapses in concentration were brief and non-disruptive. The trainer had indicated times for participant in-put by questioning specific participants by name, or by requesting discussion from the group in general. All the participants respected the trainers right, as the expert, and as the person in charge, to delineate listening and discussion times, and had cooperated with these directives.

All this had taken place before lunch on the first day. By lunch time at 12:05 the participants were showing signs of tiredness and restlessness. There had been no outside break, only a drink break that had lasted 10 minutes. The animal selections and the gorilla discussions had taken up too much time. Although there had been considerable moving around during the morning, concentration demands were high and the participants were tired.

During the 45 minute lunch break Mrs. Martin and Mrs. Gordon played soccer in the yard outside with the students. After some fresh air, and some relief from the intellectual demands, everyone was feeling refreshed and ready to continue.

For the remainder of the first day the trainer moved carefully through communication processes. In language that was readily understandable, the participants received information on verbal and non-verbal communication, coding and decoding messages, and various factors in communication patterns that led to breakdowns in communication. Much of the discussions were in an interactive question-response format, the students being given lots of opportunity to participate verbally. The trainer selected the next speaker and children showed a wish to speak by raising their hands. Again, not only was this format familiar to the people attending the workshop from their involvement in the school environment, but it was also similar to the procedures used for mediator control of the dialogue.

The information on communication patterns led to an introduction to active listening, reflecting, restating, and 'I' messages. This conceptual information was supported by a number of role-plays during the afternoon (see Appendix C:193 for an example of a role-play)

At 3:55 P.M. the students were able to do their first mediation role play. They were presented with a typed-up sample problem that was supposedly on it's way to mediation for resolution. In the role play two students would act as disputants, two as the mediators, with one adult assigned to each group. It was the adults job to assist and observe the children and to discuss the problems that occurred when we returned to the conference room. I was assigned a group and observed that the children seemed quite anxious about this role play. They were all clutching their manuals dearly, referring to the mediation steps frequently. They seemed very concerned about being able to 'do it right'.

There was a brief meeting after the role play to discuss what had taken place. The discussion was short, most people being too tired to participate fully. At 4:30 the training session had finished for the day.

November 9

Day 2

The second day of the training session began with a more detailed discussion of some of the tools of mediation. Summarizing, restating, reflecting, the trainer stated, were the "hardest to do and the most important, and they're the ones that work the magic".

The next segment dealt with setting some of the parameters of the mediation programme. The trainer spoke on issues of confidentiality, mediator neutrality and disputant compliance to attend mediation (Appendix C:193-196). At this point the students seemed to feel that they needed more clarification. They spent the next hour asking questions, most of which started with, "what if..." Each question was specific to some situation that the student had experienced or witnessed in the empirical world. They wanted to know how it became defined in the context of the mediation programme. It seemed that they were trying to integrate the material that had been presented at the workshop into their everyday reality (for examples see Appendix C:193-196).

Of course the possibilities were endless. The student's questions displayed an implicit understanding of the variability of their everyday reality. They asked questions that showed a recognition of gender differences, behaviour differences and levels of severity in conflict. The trainer appeared to be concerned with the number of questions and signaled closure verbally and non-verbally several times. The students had taken control of the events and the trainer had to struggle to regain control. The trainer had a full agenda and was becoming concerned with completing her obligations to the school in the two day programme. She ended the questioning by offering reassurance, "you're going to know these things, think about these questions your asking in real life. These things aren't going to be a mystery to you just because you're a mediator now". She also re-directed the students attention to the role plays, "I'm afraid we won't have enough time to finish what we have to do and I really want you people to have some more experience

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with mediation role plays". This was quite effective since the students quite looked forward to the role plays. It allowed them to get up from their tables and be active participants in the events, but more importantly, it allowed them to feel one step closer to the real thing.

The afternoon was spent practicing role plays and addressing some of the technical issues associated with the programme (for example; where the mediations would take place, how mediators would be identified in the yard, that teachers would be attending the mediations to help if needed, the Principal and Vice-principal would not see the disputants signed contracts, and teachers would decide the teams and the scheduling). Students were reminded that as mediators, they could approach children outside if they saw a problem, but they had to remember, if the disputants were on top of anger mountain they might not be too approachable.

The training session ended with a final comment from each person in the room, one at a time around the circle. The students were tired but high as kites. The school had provided lunches of Kentucky Fried Chicken and Pizza for the two days and the students could also avail themselves of tea, coffee, juice, cookies and fruit at anytime. At lunch and break time there was much talk amongst the students about how many cups of tea/coffee they had had, how many lumps of sugar they preferred, whether they liked tea or coffee better etc. It was quite significant to these students that they were allowed to have unlimited amounts of tea and coffee.

Due to the intensity and demands of the week-end the students had been intimate with the Principal and Vice-principal, and with 20 students and eight adults the ratios were quite different from those found at school. There was much special attention directed to these students, in many ways. Normal school life does not proffer this kind of special and positive treatment. These students had been privy to an experience which most students can never enjoy.

In consequence the students became very tied to the programme and the week-end. It had been, for each of them, a significant event. This reinforced their commitment to the programme and embellished their enthusiasm. When the training session ended they were anxious to get back to the school and show-off their newly acquired skills. Their enthusiasm spilled through the room (for their final comments see Appendix C:196).

The last person to speak was the trainer who ended the training session with:

I'm really impressed. You came here for two days to learn to help other people. You're going to be able to go out now in your families and in your world and help people solve problems peacefully. We don't live in a very peaceful world and you can make a difference. I feel moved that you are going out there with skills to help other people and make a difference. I thank you for trusting me, because you all did what I asked you to do, and I want to thank you for challenging me. I also want to thank the Principal and Vice-principal for giving us the opportunity to have this happen. My final thing is a challenge. What I've learned is that I have to find another word for disputant.

Preparations at the School

November 11-November 25

During the two weeks following the training session the mediators had been meeting with the school mediation programme staff to develop a skit for the up-coming assembly, to discuss what kind of identification they would have in the yard, to practice the skit, and do more mediation role plays. The four programme teachers had had considerable difficulty arranging these meetings with the mediators. The mediators were involved in noon-hour activities and many of them took the bus to school, so before and after school meetings were out of the question. The students did not like giving up their

lunch hours for meetings, preferring to be outside playing with their friends. Nor did they like missing class time; it meant they had to do catch-up work later.

Getting the teams and schedules organized, while considering who was available when, and who would work well with whom, had taken the full two weeks. On top of this, these teachers had to maintain their own classroom curriculum demands, which at this point in time included preparations for the up-coming Christmas season.

Discussions with school programme staff, illuminated the very serious difficulties they had been facing in getting ready to move the programme into the yard. The students had been very anxious to get going with this programme, but the four teachers involved wanted them to have more practice with role plays. The question was, how to assess readiness? The teachers were concerned with keeping the students enthusiasm high without having them go into the yard. They were worried that if the students went into the yard they would fall flat on their faces. The teachers had several meetings between themselves to try and iron out this problem. The consternation seemed to be arising from perceptions of competence and concerns for emotional well-being. The Vice-Principal suggested that they just let the kids go ahead and make their mistakes. In spite of the training week-end the four programme teachers did not feel that the students were ready.

When I met with the teachers they were clearly frustrated, depressed and tired. They had asked for a half day substitute so at least one of them could meet with the mediators, but this had been refused. Most of the funds for the programme had been used and there was not enough surplus to hire a substitute teacher. When I asked if they could contact a retired teachers association, or ask a parent or senior citizen for assistance it was met with silence. The Vice-Principal commented that it wasn't a sign of weakness to ask for help. Apparently three of these teachers were on one-year contracts, and some were tying the success/failure of this programme to their teaching records. At this point one of the teachers made an angry statement that clarified the issue. Speaking about

the lack of support from the administration and from other staff she said, "they all voted for it, did they think it was just going to happen by itself?" The lack of support from their own colleagues was particularly upsetting. The programme teachers felt trapped between what had been committed to by the entire school, as an important programme, and the lack of resources and support available to back up this commitment.

The teachers were resentful that they had not been made aware of the exceptional demands involved in implementing the programme, which was exacerbated by their own lack of experience with the mediation technique itself. There had been a disagreement between the teachers about some of the technical procedures which, in turn, effected their ability to answer student mediator's questions. Programme definitional problems were beginning to be articulated and there was no-one to consult with.

After the meeting two of the teachers continued to express their anger to me in the hall, away from other people. When I said to them, "well the students aren't going to be in the yard alone, when things get messed up you're going to be available for them", they said this was not the issue. The problem was, in their eyes, lack of support for a very demanding task. They again expressed resentment that the complexities involved with programme implementation had not been clarified much earlier. They really felt that most of the staff didn't understand what they were going through. At this point the mediation programme meant for these teachers, anger, frustration, impingement on their curriculum workload, resentment towards their colleagues, and perhaps interference with their work records.

The Assembly

November 26

Two and a half weeks after the training session the programme staff scheduled an assembly. Its purpose was to introduce the student mediators to the rest of the senior student body. The mediators sat at the front of the gym on chairs, while the rest of the students and teachers sat on the floor in front of them. Mrs. Westwood stood between the mediators and the students on the floor and began the assembly. Although the programme had already been explained to every class Mrs. Westwood reiterated particular aspects of the programme to the students:

you don't have to use the mediation programme, you can use your conflict resolution skills, like the 'I' messages that you've been learning in class, or you can use the mediators, or you can come see the Vice-Principal or myself. I don't think this programme will put the Vice-Principal or myself out of a job.

The students on the floor were still and quiet. From the people in the chairs at the front of the room came many nervous giggles and lots of red faces and wiggles. The mediators were quite nervous, Tony telling me before the assembly that he was going to throw-up. With much trepidation the mediators presented their skit, a name-calling situation, and the different outcomes when mediated, and when not mediated. The skit proceeded as planned, the mediators taking big gulps of air before they stood up, and facing their eyes on their co-actors the whole time they were performing. They were more than aware that they were under their peer's scrutiny.

After the skit, the Principal moved to the front of the general assembly and praised the work the student mediators had done. "These students gave up a P.D. day and a

Saturday... they've done a super job... I want to thank these students and show them how much we appreciate what they are doing to make this school a safer place." At this point she called each mediator by name and handed them a certificate tied with a red ribbon. The student mediators were beaming as the students on the floor clapped.

Mrs. Westwood introduced the teachers who were involved in the programme and explained that I was also going to be in the yard watching the programme. She informed them that I was a student from Carleton University and that I was writing a paper for my school on mediation. I would be asking them questions in the yard, and she hoped that they would answer my questions honestly.

Mrs. McDonald then fielded questions from the floor, but there was only time for two or three questions. The assembly had already been 35 minutes long and the students needed to get back to their classes.

Speaking with some of the mediators in the hall after the assembly, they showed their delight that the assembly had gone so well and that the programme was finally going to start happening in the yard. Now they could put their newly acquired skills to work. The mediators were proud and pleased with the acknowledgements they had received in the assembly.

The mediation programme staff were likewise relieved. For them it appeared that the hardest part of putting this programme in place was now over. Successes and failures were no longer strictly tied to them, programme outcomes now depended very much on the mediators and the student body. The assembly had "gone well" and they were pleased that the mediators were still showing a good deal of enthusiasm.

In the School Yard: Confronting Multiple Realities

No-one was adequately prepared for the events that follow, although in retrospect they are understandable. The ensuing chronology is a reflection of the growth in understanding of the first day's events in the yard, the day when the mediation programme entered the children's day-to-day reality. Until the details of the social practices in the yard were fathomed, the first day lacked depth.

Week 1

Monday, December 2

Recess

The programme in the yard began with a 15 minute Monday morning recess. It had been arranged so that there were two mediators in the yard at lunch and another two at recess, each pair having duty once a week. In the event of illness or class trips, the mediators switched their rotation with another pair and informed Mrs. McDonald, who was responsible for scheduling. Should a mediator, who was scheduled for duty, have to serve a detention over the noon hour, this too was reported to Mrs. McDonald who would make other arrangements.

On this cold and overcast Monday morning, Deirdre (grade 6) and Evan (grade 4) proudly donned their red sashes and walked out into the yard. They met near the doors and began walking around the school yard together, wearing their red sashes over their coats. There was only one male teacher on duty in the yard, and he was talking with various groups of students on the far side of the yard. He remained quite distant from the mediators throughout the recess period. The mediation staff person who had been assigned the recess rotation was not present in the yard.

As Deirdre and Evan moved closer to the grade 6 door, three male students came up to them and started pushing each other to the ground. With laughing faces they yelled at the mediators, "hey we're fighting, why aren't you mediating?" Deirdre and Evan laughed and walked away. They hadn't gone far when another group of boys stood in front of them and made a repeat performance. Deirdre and Evan didn't laugh, and walked away.

The 'teasing the mediators' game spread like wildfire. Within 10 minutes seven or eight groups of boys had put on a similar display, calling out "we're fighting, we need a mediator, we need a mediator," or "hey we're fighting, why don't you mediate?" Soon this was happening in several places in the yard at once, often the taunters moving closer to Deirdre and Evan to be in their direct line of vision.

This activity was repeated continually throughout recess, by several different groups of male students. They would throw or trip each other to the ground, pull each other's jackets, or engage in a teasing form of wrestling, all the while giggling and laughing at their own exploits. "We're fighting you have to come mediate!" they yelled. "Hey we're fighting why aren't you mediating?" Many of the other mediators congregated with Deirdre and Evan and thoughtfully watched the taunting and play-fighting.

By the end of recess Deirdre was walking away from these situations in disgust. When I interviewed her at the end of recess she said, disdainfully, "the kids have to know that we're not going to mediate if there's fist-fighting, they aren't taking it seriously".

Lunch

At lunch time the two 'Misses' came on duty. I went and introduced myself to them and told them why I was in the yard. They had seen the video from N.A.M.E. and knew what the programme was intended to accomplish (reduce discipline/violence problems in the yard). When asked if they thought there had been serious problems in the yard, they both said yes, but qualified their answers with, "well you know how kids are". Both

expressed some skepticism and a "we'll have to see what happens" attitude. When I questioned them about the reservations they had, they both responded that they really wondered how well the students were going to listen to other students.

The staff person assigned for mediation yard duty at lunch did not appear in the yard. Aaron (grade 6) and Caroline (grade 4) were doing the mediation rotation for the lunch period. They did not stay together in the yard as the morning mediators had done, Aaron wandering the yard with two of his friends, Caroline standing and chatting to three of her friends near the school door. Caroline was wearing her red sash, Aaron had chosen to carry his.

Aaron, who wandered the further reaches of the yard, was often difficult to locate. With over 200 hundred students in the yard, dressed in snowsuits and florescent hats, mitts and scarves, faces were hidden and identification was difficult. When Aaron could be seen, it was obvious that he was being subjected to the same kind of ridicule that had been evident at recess. Several groups of boys approached him as he wandered, pushing each other and yelling "hey, he pushed me, why didn't you stop him?" or "hey, we're fighting why aren't you mediating?" Aaron ignored these events, turning away from the teasing students and continuing his walk with his friends.

Caroline was not subjected to these same kinds of challenges. She was staying close to the grade 4, 5 door, talking with her friends. About half way through lunch Caroline saw a situation that she felt needed attention and came to me for guidance. She asked me "are we allowed to mediate when someone is pushing someone else?" I had her indicate the situation and saw two students, much bigger than Caroline, pushing and shoving each other to the ground. I could not send her to Aaron for help as we couldn't see him and I hadn't been in the yard long enough to know how these students played together. These two students were pushing and shoving, certainly, but was this playing or fighting? It was difficult to judge.

I was concerned about Caroline entering a situation where people might be on top of anger mountain, as she was much smaller than these two students. There were no mediation staff available, I didn't know how to read the situation, and she was waiting for an answer. I decided to let Caroline make a decision on her own, based on the information that she had been given in training and her broader experience in the yard. I asked her what she had been told about situations like this, to which she responded, "you don't get involved". I then asked her why she had been told this. "So we won't get hurt."

I thought this would be the end of the conversation, but Caroline wasn't ready to go. She had recently been through an intense two day training session that had told her she would be able to help others in problem situations. Here was an event that she thought was problematic, and she desperately wanted to validate her training by 'helping'. She was looking up at me with a worried and anxious look. I told her to go and tell the Miss, that the Miss could speak to them and, if they were interested, suggest mediation. This seemed satisfactory to her and she went and told the Miss, who handled the situation.

This event created many concerns. Caroline had felt that she had a responsibility to move into this situation. The question had not been who approaches whom, but rather at what level of severity was a mediator allowed to intervene. I wondered if this was a reflection of Caroline's enthusiasm and young age, or if there would continue to be evidence of confusion from the mediators about when to become involved and when not to become involved, rather than having the students come to them.

It was obvious that the school rule of no physical contact was blatantly ignored in the yard. While the mediators had been thoroughly instructed that they were not to enter physical contact situations, the messages had been very confusing. They had received specialized training and a lot of special attention so that they could make the yard a safer place. Making the yard a safer place necessarily focused attention on the physical contact

scenarios. The implication had been that this programme would change these events in the yard. And 'this programme' meant, these mediators.

This created concerns about safety issues. It was clear that Caroline had been tempted to enter one of these situations in order to fulfil her responsibility to help. How far would the mediators expose themselves to difficult situations to satisfy their commitment to their job? Under normal circumstances the students who were mediators would not intervene in other people's problems. An adult would take care of it. However, the specialized training and the alignment made between helping others and making the school a safer place, for the mediators, made entry into these kinds of situations very likely.

This, in turn, reflected on my position in the yard. I was an adult, and an adult who had attended the mediation training session. Caroline's reliance on me to clarify elements of the programme for her, indicated that others might do the same. I had to decide on a tactic for dealing with this kind of situation should it occur again, not only because of my research position, but even more importantly, from a moral position. I decided that if a mediator asked for advice about a technical issue I would find some way of not answering. If the question was about entry into a situation, and I interpreted that situation as containing an element of danger for the student, I morally could not ignore it and would tell them to speak to the Miss. Hopefully the mediation programme staff would be in the yard to attend to these programme problems from now on, thereby relieving me of this dilemma.

At 12:40 a mediation took place between a male and a female student who had been calling each other names. I asked if I could attend the mediation, and although Aaron and Caroline were comfortable with my presence the female student was not. I did not attend the mediation, respecting her wish for privacy and her unfamiliarity with me. Mrs. McDonald was in the mediation room for the mediation, working quietly at her desk on

the far side of the room. At 12:45 the students came out of the room and the mediation was over.

I asked the female student if she would answer some questions for me and she agreed. She felt that the mediation had gone "O.K. I guess." Most of her answers were very unforthcoming and I finished the interview quickly. When I asked Mrs. McDonald how it had gone, she replied that the mediators had done a really great job. Later, Mrs. Gordon, who was Caroline's teacher, came up to me and explained, "the female disputant is Caroline's best friend and she's upset because she's afraid she's going to lose Caroline's company at lunch time, so the mediation may have been contrived". Along with the rejection in the yard, this was another indication that the mediation programme was intervening in peer relations at a very fundamental level. Unlike events in the yard, which suggested problems between groups (mediators vs. non-mediators), Mrs. Gordon's assessment intimated that the programme might be effecting more intimate friendships as well.

Out in the yard, Aaron was looking disconsolate whenever I could see him. He was being taunted and teased wherever he went. Aaron spent his whole lunch hour looking for problem spots over the heads of students who were making fun of him.

Tuesday

Recess

It was bitterly cold outside, a fierce wind was raging, with stinging freezing rain. At recess the students were lined up against the school wall to get out of the wind. Not much to do but protect yourself as best you can.

Lunch

By lunch time the wind had dissipated somewhat and the students were outside for 45 minutes. The male students were engaged in much more physical activity than they

had been at the morning recess, and yet again, there was considerable taunting going on. However, in one day the dynamics of the ridiculing had changed considerably. The male student mediators were no longer just watching the taunting, they were now full participants in it. Gary, Jamie, Isaac and Tony (all student mediators) were pushing, shoving, wrestling and tumbling around with their respective group of friends. Jamie, while wrestling with two friends, called to the Miss, "we need a mediation". She told them to go see Tony who was on duty that day, wearing his red sash and also wrestling with friends about 10 feet away. Jamie and his friends broke into laughter and informed the Miss that they had only been kidding. Stephen (also a student mediator) had five fellow students piled on top of him. When he got out from under the pile and saw me watching he commented proudly, with sparkling eyes and a huge grin, "I was flattened like a pancake!"

The male mediators appeared to be re-establishing their bonds with their friends on the second day of the programme. In light of the constant teasing and taunting that had occurred the day before, I could appreciate Stephen's delight in being flattened. His friends still liked him: he was no longer an object of their derision. Within 24 hours the situation had been assessed by the male mediators and they had taken action to rectify it. They had adopted their peer's responses to the programme and in so doing were once again part of their group. By the second day of the programme, they were back to the rough and tumble activities which seemed to be such an integral part of male yard activity and male peer relations.

Four different groups of boys were throwing each other to the ground and piling up on each other, simultaneously calling for a mediator. When the Miss went over, an angry "we're just fooling around" was hurled at her. She continually called on the school rule of no physical contact to try and reduce the amount of pushing and shoving that was happening, to no avail.

Male students unmistakably interpret their activities as goofing around, playing and the normal way to relate to friends. Again I had to ask myself if these were the same activities that were interpreted by the school as problematic and potentially violent? I found myself wondering, and looking for the violent activities that had been alluded to during the training session. Violence seemed like a very severe word for what I saw happening in the yard.

It was quite obvious that there were interpretational problems of what this programme was expected to do. The students clearly thought that the mediators would be the ones to initiate intervention, as evidenced by the structure of their teasing comments. These comments consistently came in the form of "why aren't you mediating?" The onus was placed on the mediators to do something. Caroline's scenario was an example that perhaps the mediators held this same viewpoint.

In addition, the taunting dialogue and actions directed towards the mediators carried a "try it, just go ahead and try it" threatening tone. More was happening here than the rejection of an elite group of students. The rejection of the programme had a strong linkage to the prior relationships between students, and the students and the school. The content of the mediation model was not in question. School relationships and children's relationships were in question.

Thursday

It was a sunny and warm day. The first snow of the year, which had fallen the day before and through the night, was crunchy and hard. There was no indication that there was a mediation programme in the yard this day. The mediators on duty were neither wearing their sashes nor moving through the yard as a pair. Two classes of children were away on a field trip and the yard was much quieter. Even the taunting was weaker on this day, perhaps because of the absent classes, perhaps because the students were busy with the new snow.

I spent the day watching what students do in the yard. Male and female students behaved quite differently in the yard. Male students consistently engaged in some form of physical activity, chasing each other through the yard, pushing, shoving, tumbling, wrestling, building forts and jumping and sliding off small piles of snow. Some of the male students, especially the bigger males, seemed a little rougher in these activities than the other male students. Female students, on the other hand, were typically involved in non-physical activities, standing still and talking, or wandering and talking. Occasionally a group of female students would charge across the yard, or play a sliding game on a piece of ice. These activities were usually short-lived. The gender activities in the yard appeared to be on opposite ends of the pole. Girls walked and talked and occasionally did something bordering on the physical, males were usually physical and occasionally walked and talked.

The children in the yard had become quite aware that I was interviewing with a tape machine. They would line up to talk to me, seemingly quite thrilled with the attention. But only the younger grade 4's and 5's were coming to talk to me. I was also having quite a problem getting privacy for the interviews because there were so many children waiting to be interviewed. I had started interviewing the children in groups of two or three. After my second interview I recognized that I had been naive to think that a student would give an answer that deviated in any way from the answers their friends had just given. When I asked one student if he/she thought their school had needed this programme, I would get their answer and nods of the head or "yeah" from whomever else was there. Peer relations were such a pervasive part of these children's lives that they even effected the manner in which interviews could be conducted. From this point on, I interviewed the students individually.

It seemed that whenever I walked in any direction, the rough-housing diminished. I wasn't sure if the students were seeing me as someone who would invoke mediations or if my presence as an unfamiliar adult inhibited them. I decided to move back to the school

wall and observe from afar. I tried to position myself between the wall and a group of children, hoping this would hide me. It was apparent that if the students were to believe that I was not there to enforce the programme I would have to stay away from any situations that were potentially problematic, or mediatable, for several days. I decided to spend the next few days observing from afar and conducting interviews randomly throughout the yard. I would deliberately stay away from students who were involved in pushing and shoving activities. Hopefully this would reduce the possibility that I would be seen as having some administrative involvement with the programme.

From my position by the wall I was continually asked to fix zippers, empty boots of snow, tie boots, help get mitts back on, tie scarves and so on, from the children around me or ones who went by. I soon came to realize how much the students, especially the younger students, depended on the adults in the yard for care-giving tasks.

Friday

Recess

The snow plow had been to the school overnight and there was a heaping mountain of snow about 50 feet, and to the right of the grade 4, 5 door. About 25 boys were playing a game called 'King of the Mountain'. I was not able to differentiate the grade 4 students from the grade 5 students who milled around the bottom of the mountain. I was able to differentiate the 4's and 5's from the grade 6 students because of the way they were dressed. A grade 6 boy does not wear snowpants, boots, mitts, and possibly not a hat, although headbands are acceptable. Hands, when not in use, are stuffed into pockets, and coats are often left unzipped. The 4's and 5's are all bundled up in full winter regalia.

In King of the Mountain, a group of 8-12 boys 'own' the top of the mountain (these are the frost-bitten grade 6's), while another group of boys run up the sides of the mountain and try to push them off (these are the faceless 4's or 5's). Whoever stays on top of the mountain gets to be 'King of the Mountain'. The students on the top of the

mountain have the 'right' to chase anyone trying to get up the side of the mountain, capture them and throw them to the ground, pushing their faces into the snow. This was very much a pushing and shoving game and very much a boys game. Often the pushing spilled over and continued down the side of the mountain and onto the ground. This whole performance was conducted with lots of laughter, shouting, teasing commentary and jesting threats. Even the tumbling around on the ground at the bottom of the mountain, with faces being pushed in the snow, appeared to be conducted good humouredly and without malicious intent. Being pushed in the snow appeared to be accepted as part of the game.

Students would get up from the ground at the bottom of the mountain, with snow covered faces, laughing, shouting and chasing their "attacker". Problems occurred when the pushing at the bottom of the mountain went on too long and one person appeared to get fed up. This didn't happen often. There seemed to be mutually understood limits about how long this pushing could continue. Once the required frosting of snow had been administered, the attacker (the student who had come off the mountain) left, and the attacked became the attacker. For example, if an older, grade 6 boy had come off the mountain in pursuit of a younger boy, once the older student had managed to get the younger student to the ground, they would start to climb back up the mountain. If the younger boy pursued the older boy, the older boy would take the time to shove them down again and then go back up the mountain. This ground level part of the game didn't keep the big student off the mountain very long. It seemed to be understood by all, that the younger student was allowed two attempts at rebuttal, then the older student had the right to go back up the mountain. If the older student was pursued again problems occurred. There had been an infraction of the rules and the older student would become angry. With all the pushing and shoving that was going on on the top and sides of the mountain, it could easily have been interpreted as aggressive behaviour. But this game was not conducted in anger and it was completely voluntary. The only incidents that

contained any anger occurred when a smaller student hadn't let-up or when an older student had pushed too hard.

King of the Mountain is a game that acknowledges statuses and power relationships for some of the male student body in the yard. As soon as the grade 6 boys position themselves at the top of the mountain the younger students will begin to mill around the bottom. The grade 6 boys do not have to call the younger students to order, they merely stand at the top and wait. The name of the game is apt, this is a game about Kings and their subjects.

By being pushed in the snow the younger students confirm their inferior status and the older students their superior status in the yard. The rules of the game play an integral role in confirming the older student's superiority and the younger student's inferiority. An infraction of the rules on the part of a younger student is much more than 'not playing fairly'. It is a direct threat to the older student's status, and the older student will become quite angry and yell, "leave me alone!". The grade 6 boys have spent two to three years paying dues at the bottom, to reach the top of the mountain. It is their turn to be King.

Younger students acknowledge and legitimate the power structure in the yard through their voluntary participation in the game. In return for succumbing to the pushing and shoving, they must not be pushed too hard. One could imagine a verbal introduction to the rules of this game for a new grade 4 or 5 male student. "Look, I'm in grade 6, so I'm the biggest and the boss, so I get to own the top of the mountain, and you will show that you know I'm boss by trying to push me off the mountain and losing. If you do that for me, I promise not to push you too hard. Deal?" And the younger student agrees, because when they get to Grade 6, then they will get to be boss. This game is a rite of passage.

This conversation, of course, does not happen. The rules, and the game, are transmitted year by year through the male school yard culture. It is an element of their

school yard paramount reality, and as such is part of the taken-for-granted. The goal is to get to be King of the Mountain. This is formulated, in turn, in the broader socio-cultural relevances of status and power. This game, then, not only has importance in terms of student relationships in the yard, but also as a statement on children's relationships in the broader social context. It is this broader context that gives the game its purpose and its significance. The social world in which these children live typically places them in situations of subjugation, while at the same time giving high value to status and power. In their own school yard world, they are able to break free of their subjugation and attain status and power, through King of the Mountain.

This game carries import for the teachers as well. Since it is a game that has "aggressive appearance", it becomes problematic for them in their roles as disciplinarians. It involves a large number of children and has the potential of injury. As the teacher in the yard at recess commented, "if we bulldozed the mountain down we wouldn't have this problem". Robbing the male students of this game would probably engender more anger from the male students than the game itself could ever create. The students of course, would not be able to stop them.

Lunch

The two noon hour monitors seemed to have a different attitude towards King of the Mountain than the recess teacher. The younger supervisor stood with her hands on her hips quite close to the mountain, but did not interfere in a physical way or try to stop the game. She would call out on occasion, "Johnny you're pushing too hard" or "careful you're going to hurt him." She continued to referee from the sidelines throughout the lunch hour, but never stopped any portion of the game.

The mediators on duty did not go near King of the Mountain. While they had attempted interventions in situations elsewhere in the yard, they did not seem to feel that this game, or any parts of it, needed their attention. The large number of students

involved may have been a factor, but they had not intervened on any of the two-person ground events either.

Differences were noted in how the grade 4, 5 and 6 male mediators handled their mediation rotations. The grade 4 and 5 male mediators would not wrestle and tumble while on duty, but the grade 6 male mediators did not hesitate to involve themselves in these activities even when on duty. Grade 6 boys were beyond the rules. For all the male mediators, if their friends became involved in teasing the mediators while they themselves were off duty, they would either say nothing or give some semblance of joining in. They wanted to participate in the mockery to show their membership to their peer group, but having been subjected to it themselves, were not willing to give it a huge effort.

The female mediators were confronted with a very different set of circumstances. They stayed with their friends even while they were on duty, chatting and walking through the yard. For them, the mediation programme did not separate them from their peers, as long as friends were willing to wander the yard with them. Although the male students subjected the female mediators to as much ridicule as the male mediators, the female mediators had their friends with them for moral support. Moreover, the male student body was not part of the female students peer infrastructure, so the rejection that was occurring could be interpreted as coming from "those guys" instead of "my friends".

The grade 4 and 5 female mediators, however, had the difficult task of facing situations that were totally unfamiliar to them. Female students do not usually become involved in the very physically expressive activities. This meant it was more difficult for them to understand and assess these kinds of situations. The younger female mediators were far more hesitant to approach situations than the male mediators, unless they were on duty with a grade 5 or 6 male. The grade 6 female mediators, on the other hand, were much less hesitant to intervene between two males. They would enter

situations alone or with a partner. Their interventions, usually directed towards male students, were not met with much acceptance. One grade 6 female mediator had attempted an intervention and had had a snowball thrown at her face.

As just indicated, additional evidence of student rejection of the programme came when mediators attempted direct interventions. Most of the mediator-initiated interventions were directed towards male students. If a mediator approached a situation and asked the students if they wanted help, the problematic interaction would immediately stop and one of the students would either walk away, or cast an angry comment at the mediators and then walk away. This response was consistent regardless of the gender of the mediators.

Taunting and teasing had continued all week. It was not as severe at the end of the week as the first two days, but it continued nevertheless. Teasing the mediators was not as pervasive primarily because students were not purposefully approaching the mediators. They had other things to do. Hurling derisive comments, taunting and faking fights now occurred only by the male students who were in the mediator's vicinity.

Week 2

Monday

Recess

Who lined up to be interviewed was very much a function of where I was in the yard. If I was within 30-50 feet of the school walls it would be females. If I was between 50 and 100 feet from the school it would be males and females, and further than that was all males. I had to keep changing locations to get something close to an appropriate sample of children. In spite of these ramblings, the grade 6 males were still not coming to talk to me, although I had been able to interview one of the King of the Mountain

students in the hall on the way out for recess. The difficulty in getting grade 6 males to be interviewed concerned me, but I was not able to resolve it until the following week.

To my knowledge the only other mediation involving two females, since Caroline and her friend, took place during this recess. It was a 'yard mediation' in that the mediator handled the situation in the yard without going to the mediation room. Jamie was mediating alone as his partner was away on a field trip. He noticed two girls pushing and yelling at each other and went over to talk to them. By the time he left everyone was smiling broadly. I asked Jamie what had happened. He replied that he had asked them if they wanted to go to mediation and they had originally said yes, but on their way in, had changed their minds. I wondered why they had changed their minds and went over to the girls to see if I could interview them:

R - are you willing to talk about what just happened with the mediator?

Student - (looking at her friend and giggling) yeah

R - so what happened?

Student - oh he just told us we should stop bothering each other

R - do you think that you could have solved the problem yourself?

Both students - yeah (many giggles)

R - would you ask for help again?

Both students - yeah (still giggling)

R - do you think your school needed this programme?

Both students -yeah (still giggling)

R - do you two ever disagree with each other?

Both students - (peals of laughter from both of them) yeah, yeah, but we're
best friends

R - do either of you have a crush on Jamie?

Student - (more double-barrelled hoots of laughter) nods her head and
points her finger at her friend

This mediation was another example, along with Katie and her birthday song, Caroline's friend and the mediation, of the way some of the girls use the system from the inside to get what they want.

The mediation programme staff had not yet made an appearance in the yard. Although my time in the staff room between recess and lunch had shown the importance of the lunch hour for the teachers and how much they would be giving up by coming outside, their absence created a dilemma for me. I had become the yard authority on mediation for the student mediators and was continually confronted with their programme questions and problems. For example, one mediator, Patrick (grade 4) came up to me quite concerned and anxious. He pronounced, "Lisa, I forget how to approach". He stated it as if he was having a memory problem with the training week-end. I couldn't say to him, "but Patrick you're not supposed to approach." I advised him to find his partner and talk to him about it.

Not only did they come to me with technical questions, but I was also expected to provide some form of moral support. The yard Miss had come to me and asked, "will you go talk to Margo (mediator grade 6), she's having a hard time with the kids. You know there should be someone out here for the student mediators, they need some support. It's hard for them, you know the kids are teasing them all the time". I regularly had the student mediators coming up to me and saying "Hi, Lisa, how're you doing?" I knew full well that they didn't really care how I was doing, they wanted someone to care about how they were doing. They also wanted to touch base. When this occurred I would turn these interactions into information gathering sessions. I asked them how it was going, what it felt like to be in the yard as a mediator, had they done a mediation, had they tried to do a mediation, what did their friends think about them being mediators, were they having

any problems? I did not discuss technical aspects of the programme with them, such as "what do I do when...", or "which comes first restating or reflecting?" By responding to the student mediators this way I was able to continue with my research, while, at the same time, not add another level of rejection to their lives.

Lunch

Definitional problems were serious. It was impossible to tell who was goofing around and who was fighting, and I had asked the yard monitors how they knew when to intervene. I was told that they followed the school rule of no physical contact. If they saw children pushing and shoving then it was a violation of school rules, and they would intervene. This seemed rather ambiguous to me, since there had been no mention of the gravity of the event. Since this earlier conversation with the monitors I had spent some time watching the dynamics of intervention.

The monitors/teachers in the yard were representatives of school structure through their care-giving and disciplinary roles. It was evident that the dynamics of their interventions were directly related to differences in the nature of the yard activities, in that they varied by gender. Female students were able to self-select interventions since the kinds of problems they had were not as visible and did not require disciplinary action. They would ask for help in name-calling situations, when they were having an argument with a friend, or when a boy was 'bugging them'.

Alternatively, interventions with male students were monitor-selected. Male student activities could be categorized into two types of play. There were students who engaged in passive/ cooperative games, like running across the yard together, building snow forts, sliding on the ice, or playing soccer with a baby jar lid, tumbling and wrestling. Then there were students who engaged in the aggressive/attack games, like pushing, shoving, tripping, grabbing and a more aggressive form of wrestling. Like King of the Mountain, these activities were conducted to establish prowess, strength and

superiority in the yard. Grade 6's played this way with grade 4's and 5's, grade 5's with grade 4's. It was episodes associated with these games that drew interventions from school representatives in the yard. It was also these activities that had instigated the introduction of the mediation programme itself. Children from the first group of male students would engage in the attack activities, but they were playing for fun. The other group played for status. They pushed a little harder, yelled a little louder, got angry a little more often, and got into a lot of trouble.

Interventions from yard monitors, mediators or teachers changed student's roles in the yard. While in the yard, the students are first and foremost children, and only, secondarily students. Unlike classroom time it is they who decide who they will be with, where they will be, what they will be doing, and what will happen next. Time in the yard is time that they own. Time to be children. This is what recess and lunch time are intended to be, a break for the students from the structures of the school system. Monitor-selected interventions with males immediately change their role from children back to student. They represent an imposition of school structure on a time and a space that the students believe is theirs. The mediation programme, for the students to whom it was directed, was yet another imposition of school structure. These male students thought, and tried to act as if, they owned their time in the yard. The arrival of the mediation programme further reduced their ability to act on this belief. Male mediators were separated even more from their friends and their ability to decide what they would be doing, who they would be with and how free they would be, by having to be on patrol. Male students do not normally wander around the yard.

On the other hand, female students do not draw adult attention. Although they had their arguments, teased each other, called each other names, these were not visible problems. Their time in the yard was not imposed on by the school representatives or the mediation programme. However, they drew attention their way by tattling (or as the teachers call it, through bitchiness).

Monitor or teacher selected interventions were consistently towards males, consistently directed to pushing and shoving, and most regularly towards the status/attack games. These events were consistently unscalable in terms of anger. Interventions seemed to be responsive to school directives and whether, in the monitor/teacher's interpretation, it had crossed the line.

That the mediation programme was being used, through the 'helping others slogan', to aid in the control of status/attack games in the yard was obvious. It became important to gain more information about the groups of children who engaged in these types of games.

Tuesday

Recess

Gary is a student who could clearly be classified as one of the troublemaker students. He was in the special education classroom and was one of the students who could regularly be seen pushing and shoving younger students to the ground. Gary was one of the Kings from King of the mountain. Gary's experiences with this programme exemplify the meaning given to the mediation programme by the children who played status games, the most important of which was King of the Mountain. The description of Gary and what happened with him in this programme is the avenue of access to these children. Gary and I had developed a mutually respectful and humour filled relationship at the training session when we had a lengthy discussion over trading our earrings with each other. The rapport that developed between Gary and myself gave me great insight into his, and his friends, school yard reality.

On this Tuesday morning Gary was on duty and wearing his sash. He was on top of the mountain, chasing students down the mountain and tumbling to the ground with them. About 5 minutes before the end of recess a mediation programme teacher arrived in the yard. This was the first appearance any of them had made. Just before the bell rang Gary

had chased a younger student off the mountain and had run across the yard about 50 feet. The mediation teacher approached Gary in the middle of his exploits telling him that he really shouldn't be doing that, he was not setting a very good example, especially when he had his sash on. Gary turned away visibly angry, and stomped towards the mountain. The bell rang and he turned toward the school. I asked him if I could talk to him as he walked the rest of the way to his assigned school yard door, to which he answered yes.

Researcher - Gary what was happening out there in the yard?

Gary - you mean with me?

R - yeah

Gary - I was playin' with my friends, wrestlin' with them

R - and then a teacher came over and spoke to you about what was happening?

Gary - yeah

R - what was the teacher saying to you?

Gary - she said I shouldn't have been wrestlin'

R - and what do you think about that?

Gary - it's not fair

R - what's not fair?

Gary - we should be able to fight, like play fight

R - you understand when your play fighting because you do it and you

understand when it isn't fighting, how do you tell the difference?

Gary - my friends always play with me like that... [fighting is] when

someone's cryin'... like when someone's pushin' someone in the face

[which is more dangerous than pushing someone's face in the snow]

R - so do you think there's a difference of opinion around here of what is

fighting and what isn't fighting ?

Gary - yeah... cause if it's a real fight they'll punch you in the face and if it isn't they won't

R - what do you think the teachers think is real fighting and isn't fighting?

Gary - both

R - they can't tell the difference?

Gary - no, but we could work somethin' out, you know certain people could be allowed to wrestle, like me and my friends that's what we do all the time. Some people don't know what we do. It's like the wrestlin' you see on T.V., you know the play wrestlin'

R - you mean the W.W.F.? [World Wrestling Federation/Hulk Hogan]

Gary - yeah

Gray and his friends knew what was dangerous and what was not dangerous. He and his friends wrestle, tumble, push, shove and trip - but carefully, within parameters set by their group. Granted their antics are much closer to the edge and this is what upsets the school. But they know, and all the 'others' don't understand that they know.

Wednesday

Recess

As I walked down the hall to go out to the yard for recess a group of grade 6 boys, including the King of King of the Mountain and Alex, Gary's best friend. They yelled out as I walked by "we hate the fuckin' mediation programme", "yeah, no way I'd ever use the mediation stuff". It took me a few moments to put this interaction in it's place. I had no authority in the school, but I obviously had something to do with the mediation programme because that's why I was there. As a result of my lack of power they could safely vent all the frustration they felt about the school, the programme and the

strangleholds that were being placed on their right to be different. I ended up feeling rather pleased that I had happened by.

As soon as we were all out in the yard Gary came up to me and asked "what do I do if I want to quit?" I asked him why he wanted to quit to which he replied "cause it's not fair. They didn't tell me what I was in for... I can't play with my friends or nothin', and all my friends are callin' me stupid and stuff." I asked Gary what he thought he should do and he believed that he should tell the Principal or the Vice-Principal. This was a clear statement of where he and his friends saw this programme as coming from. I asked him how he felt about telling one of the teachers that was involved in the programme. He interpreted this as a suggestion and responded with "yeah I guess I could." Gary told Mrs. Allen, his teacher, that he wanted to quit and she accepted his decision without pressure.

After recess one of the teachers told me that Evan (grade 4) had quit the day before. When I asked his teacher why, I was told that he had been quite ill and that he had lots of problems at home. Evan is also a special education student. However, Evan had already told me that nobody takes the programme seriously and "it's all a big joke".

Lunch

I was not usually permitted to attend the mediations. This was more of an invasion of privacy than the students would tolerate. Although I never stopped asking, I never pressed them into permission. The one monitor-referred mediation I attended involved two boys, one who frequently told the other boy that he had to sit on the ground or he would beat him up. This had happened frequently enough that the second child was in tears and obviously frightened.

The manner in which this mediation unfolded reinforced the impressions I had had when watching the video; that the mediation encounter was forced, deviating considerably from the normal pattern of children's interactions. Entering the mediation room and getting assorted papers and chairs took a few moments, but interestingly,

immediately changed the tone of the interactions between the two students. They became much quieter and calmer.

During the mediation David and Jamie's dialogue closely followed the technical steps as outlined in the manual. Each student had a chance to tell their side of the story. Each mediator restated one of the stories. There was no discussion, nor could there possibly have been, on why these students were interacting in this way to begin with. The mediation moved directly from restating and reflecting to "what do you think can be done about this?" The disputants agreed to stay away from each other. They signed an agreement and left. The mediation lasted about 8 minutes. David and Jamie were feeling pleased and satisfied, as they should have. They had done their job as instructed. The student who had been the perpetrator left hurriedly and disappeared across the yard. The other student went outside and stood by himself beside the school wall.

Week 3

Monday

Before I went out to the yard for recess, as I was waiting in the staff room for the bell to ring, Mrs. McDonald and Mrs. Wallace were having a discussion with me. They had asked me how the programme was going since I was the only one out there all the time. This put me in a difficult position. Any feed-back that would be given on completion of my thesis would not assist the dilemmas that were being faced now, especially for the student mediators. The programme meant a great deal to the people that had put so much time and effort into it. On the other hand, interventions on my part would influence the way events proceeded and subsequently my ability to see social events unfold naturally. The people and their dilemmas won out. I told Mrs. Wallace and Mrs. McDonald that there were problems with visibility, the mediators having abandoned their sashes. As well the rotations were in disarray. With children on field trips or ill, people couldn't find their

partners or forgot which day they were on. I related to them that there was a lot of taunting and teasing occurring and I was picking up feelings of desolation from some of the mediators. The mediators had thought this programme would be fully accepted by the students, as the video and training weekend had led them to believe, and had not been prepared for the rejection that they were being exposed to. I reiterated the Miss's comments that the mediators needed someone in the yard for moral support. I explained the difficulty I was having in the yard, offering moral support, answering questions, and trying to interview and observe all at the same time. It made it hard for me to do the job I had to do.

In the discussions that ensued around rejection I was asked why I thought the rejection was happening. I explained that at this time I thought that some of the children in the yard just saw the mediators as another long arm of the law. My perception was that the student mediators had become aligned with the discipline continuum in the school, particularly during the assembly, and for some children it was being perceived as an extension of adult control. One of the staff with whom I was talking responded to this comment with, "well it is social control really". I replied, and "that's exactly how some of the kids perceive it. So you have to decide why this programme is here. If it's to teach a life-skill, it will be seen that way, because that's what you're actions will support, but if it's social control, some kids will see it that way cause that's what your actions will support. And some kids aren't going to like that. So I guess you have to decide why the programme is in this school and what expectations you have for it."

Tuesday

Recess

I had had no success in getting grade 6, King of the Mountain interviews until this week. I had assumed that they were not lining up to talk to me because they didn't want to, which was in itself a predicament. However, on Tuesday I had walked over to the right

third of the yard to interview some grade 6 girls. When I was finished I stood and watched King of the Mountain from the right middle of the yard. Suddenly three boys, who had been playing the ground level part of King of the Mountain walked up to me and said do you want to interview us?" Two of them were grade 6 boys, and I grabbed the chance.

After the interviews I had to think about what kind of change had taken place that had permitted them to come forward. I spent a few minutes looking around the yard and suddenly realized that it was not that they had changed, it was I who had changed. I had been conducting my interviews in the left portion of the yard that was in front of the grade 4 and 5 door. Although this took a full two-thirds of the yard, it did not cover the entire yard. By going over to interview the grade 6 girls I had crossed an invisible line that separated the 4's and 5's from the 6's. The yard was organized, albeit invisibly, not only by gender, vertically, but by grade, horizontally. Now that I was in grade 6 territory, the grade 6 male students could talk to me.

I had not realized this territorial organization in the yard earlier precisely because grade 6 boys do cross this invisible line. Many, many times I had seen them playing in front of the grade 4, 5 door. What I had not realized was that they were there only to conduct the business of confirming their status. Since this meant pushing and wrestling with someone, I had stayed away from them. When their position had been stabilized they would return to their part of the yard.

King of the Mountain was threatened this day. The grade 6 boys who usually play there, were playing soccer with a stone further over in the yard. The Mountain was empty. Three grade 6 girls went over to the Mountain, and squealing, sliding, and holding hands, they inched up the mountain. They were revelling in the glory of being at the top of a male domain. This situation was not to be tolerated. The grade 4 and 5 boys ran over and started pushing the girls off the mountain. The girls came down. The princes had successfully defended the kingdom for their Kings.

Lunch

Mrs. McDonald, Mrs. Martin and Mrs. Gordon had a meeting with the student mediators at noon. By the time the students had finished their lunches, and those mediators who had forgotten about the meeting were rounded up, there was only 20 minutes left of the lunch hour. The mediators that showed up first began explaining to these teachers the problems they were having in the yard. They informed them about the student's rejection of the programme, and how they, as mediators couldn't tell the difference between fighting and fooling around. A teacher asked the mediators to wait until everyone had shown up before they began to discuss the problems they were having, so everyone could have some in-put. While they were waiting they began talking about an emblem for the new sashes that were being made.

When all were assembled, the students were counseled to wear their temporary sashes in the yard, which they had often been neglecting to do. There had not been very many mediations and this was being attributed to the lack of visibility of the mediators in the yard. "One thing we thought would make you more effective would be for you to patrol together, you have to be visible, so if you consider yourself on duty, then other people will be able to see you as you patrol the yard." This was immediately followed by a teacher suggestion that perhaps there should be four mediators in the yard at a time rather than two. "Two and two can cover more territory." Mark immediately asked "but does that mean we can't play?" Andrea expressed hesitation "I'm not so glad about that because kids [student mediators] are complaining already that they don't get to play and then we'd have to not be able to play two times a week". Heather supported Andrea and commented that she "wanted to leave it, because we want to play". The response to these objections was that "somehow we have to make you more visible and acceptable so you'll be used". Robbie broke in with "how about if everybody's on all the time?" But this meant playing while on duty and the teacher felt that "you should really be out patrolling, if you're down on the ground playing you can't be seen". The mediators were

asked to vote on having two at a time in the yard, or four at a time. The students decided to stay in pairs. After the vote, students were advised to wear their sashes and patrol the yard at least until the next meeting and then it would be discussed again.

Students were again reminded not to intervene in situations involving physical contact, at which point Andrea piped in "but we can't tell if it's a fight". One of the staff thought that perhaps the student mediator should spend some time looking over the situation before making a decision. They were reminded about anger mountain and maybe the fighting students would need a cooling down period. Andrea wasn't comfortable with this proposal and said "yeah, but when they see you looking at them they go - Yeah... What d'you want?" The staff person acknowledged the difficulty this presented and the disappointment they would feel in these circumstances. The students were told that all they could do was make an offer, if the student refused then they would not be able to do a mediation. There was an attempt to appease the mediators frustration by telling them that at these times they could remind the student that it was O.K. for them to say no, but if they wanted help sometime, then they (the mediators) would be available. The mediators were also reminded that if they saw a problem they didn't have to be on duty to suggest mediation. At this point Isaac interjected with "it's not fair that the kids who are at lunch miss 45 minutes and the kids who are on at recess only miss 15 minutes". Mrs. McDonald, who was responsible for scheduling agreed to rotate the schedules so the long lunch hour duties would be more fairly distributed.

Time was running out and the other students were beginning to come in from the yard. Quickly the student mediators were asked what kinds of problems they were having in the yard. Again the difficulty of distinguishing between playing and fighting was raised and the problem of students making nasty comments or walking away when a mediator approached. Time had run out however, and the meeting ended with one of the teachers saying "you're not in the business of solving fights, you're in the business of helping people solve their problems if they want to solve them".

The meeting had been a race against the clock. The students had their issues and priorities, the teacher's theirs. Topics of discussion bounced between the two, a student problem expressed, a staff problem expressed. The student issues, in particular, lost their importance in this meeting. Partially because of time constraints, partially because of the complex critical thinking and vocabulary requirements needed, it was difficult for the students to express the pervasiveness of the rejection and interpretational problems that were occurring in the yard. Since the mediation programme staff had not been in the yard, they could not fathom the depth of rejection these students were facing, or the definitional problems that were associated with technical aspects of the programme. The active listening that occurred in this meeting was, unfortunately, one-directional.

After School

A staff meeting, with mediation programme staff only, took place that same Tuesday evening. Again the staff expressed the frustrations they were feeling with the programme and much resentment that the complexities of implementation had not been made clear. The meeting agenda began with a lengthy review of the noon hour meeting for those who had not been there. The staff felt that the mediators wanted the programme to work right away and were not able to handle the time it was taking to iron out the bumps. Mrs. McDonald felt that the mediators were still committed to making the programme work but were feeling frustrated with the lack of mediation experience they were getting. The conversation that ensued concerned the problem of entry into situations. When students saw a situation and tried to intervene the other students were already angry and were expressing it towards the mediators. While it was explained that they had been advised to merely offer their services, it was suggested at this meeting that it was a question of timing, and judgement and experience were required to alleviate timing problems.

Mrs. Martin commented at this point that she thought the kids in the yard saw the mediators as bosses instead of helpers. Mrs. McDonald agreed that some move needed to be taken that would remove the mediation programme from the discipline continuum up to Mrs. Wallace. How much that really impinged on the programme, she didn't know because there hadn't been enough time at lunch to discuss it.

The conversation continued with a review of the noon hour meeting, covering rotation problems, scheduling problems etc. The number of mediations that had taken place was again reviewed. Mrs. Wallace, turning to Mrs Gordon, asked what she thought was happening. Mrs. Gordon replied, "I think there is still a lot of confusion about what this programme is about, I don't think they really know what a mediation is". Mrs. Gordon suggested making referrals at least from their own four classrooms, they "need to have more experience at the mediations, once they are comfortable with that, then they will have more confidence entering situations". As a grade 4 teacher, with two mediators in her class, she was able to understand the hesitancy they felt in approaching older and bigger students:

I don't blame them for being a little frightened. In my classroom there are lots of conflicts, and although I wouldn't say, you can go to mediation or you can go to Mrs. Wallace, I would say, have you thought about trying mediation? Just to give them some practice and to show them some support.

Mrs. Wallace interjected at this point, from her position as head disciplinarian at the school. She felt that she didn't see very many conflicts in her office. Most of what she had to deal with were infractions made by one child, they had thrown a snowball, hit someone too hard and the like. Her cases were one person problems, not two people problems. She admitted that the yard monitors were probably handling the two person

problems themselves. The implication was that conflict may not have been as pervasive a problem as had once been believed, although rule breaking was.

Mrs. Allen related her own observation that when she had suggested mediation to some children they had responded with, "oh no we can solve it ourselves". She added, emphatically "and they had solved it themselves". Her feeling was that because the mediation programme was available, it reduced the idea of always having to turn to a teacher to solve problems, and that perhaps what it was doing was making the children consider their own skills at problem-solving and inadvertently pushing them to use them.

There ensued a lively discussion about how to give more support to the programme. Mrs. McDonald thought perhaps there could be some way to get the other teachers to refer problems to the mediators. Mrs. Wallace felt the programme had come from the inside out, that it should be happening in the classroom first, but not all teachers were going to agree with that. Mrs. Allen also believed that you couldn't ask other teachers in the school to move it into their classrooms because they wouldn't want to be in that position. Mrs. Gordon wondered why they weren't referring things like 'he took my pencil' etc., instead of expecting the mediators to handle the big things. That way they would be showing support for the programme and giving the students a chance to have some mediation experience. I suggested that moving the programme into the classroom would add definitional problems to a programme that already had definitional problems, as Mrs. Gordon had mentioned earlier. I asked how the student mediators would know the difference between what was mediatable and not mediatable in the classroom. How would she feel if Patrick or Caroline, mediators in her class, came up to her and asked her if she needed help, when they saw her having a problem with a student? Her response was that those were not the kind of problems that went to mediation.

At this point Mrs. McDonald suggested that what happened in the classroom were not conflicts anyway. This brought another round of positional arguing. Mrs. Martin agreed that the teacher would always be considered as 'right' by the children. Mrs. Allen disagreed adamantly, stating as an example, that Gary, her student, always considered the situations in the classroom as conflictual. Mrs. McDonald thought that by suggesting mediation in the class, it would enhance the children's use of skills they had acquired in the curriculum content programme. The discussion lasted a considerable length of time.

In the end it was decided that these teachers would suggest (as opposed to refer) mediation to their own students, but would not expect other teachers to do likewise. Who was going to conduct these mediations then became problematic. If these teachers asked the mediators in their own classroom to do the mediations, it would be too intimate and mediators who were not in one of their classrooms would not be getting the additional exposure. It was settled that mediators from other classrooms would be requested to conduct the mediations.

This meeting exemplified the variability in interpretations that were being given to the programme and the definitional gaps that there were between the students and the teachers. What constituted conflict and what was mediatable was very difficult for these teachers to define in any consensual way. The congruency between these feelings of confusion on the part of the staff and the students in the yard was not recognized. Each of these staff people had spoken from their own reality and experiences, both with the students and the programme. The grade 4 teacher had safety concerns, the special education teacher had male peer group concerns, the Vice-principal had problems with the definition of conflict. These different realities impinged on the ability to attain a solid consensual opinion. These differences in relevances at the teacher's level, mirrored the problems that were happening in the yard at the children's level.

The meeting agenda had not included attention to the very pervasive ridiculing that was occurring in the yard, or why it was occurring. That the students who were

challenging the programme were making an overt statement about their position in the school through the mediators, was not acknowledged. The conversations centered on getting the programme to work in terms of technical matters aligned with the mediators, rather than through recognition of the various groupings in the yard and that these groups responded to the programme differently. While individual children, like Gary, were recognized as having problems with the programme, his reactions to the programme were not regarded as representative statements from his group. The children were heterogeneous as individuals and homogeneous as a group.

Wednesday

Responses to the programme were the same this week as they had been in the previous two weeks. The taunting and teasing continued by various groups of boys, King of the Mountain boys, I now knew, whenever a mediator was near.

After two and a half weeks in the yard, there had been no incidents which caused serious injury or involved explosive anger. What was clearly visible in the yard was much male exuberance that is defined in this culture as appropriately expressed in a physical way. What was also clearly visible was lack of female exuberance.

Arguing, threatening, name-calling, tripping, pushing, shoving, sliding, pile-ons, throwing snowballs, wrestling, bumping, pulling another persons scarf, or a male grabbing a female's hat and running away with it, had all occurred frequently. While many of these represented an infraction of school rules and could, therefore, be easily interpreted as discipline problems, they could not be called acts of violence, aggression, or conflict.

The school yard was by no means free from anger. People were pushed too hard, teased each other, and infringed on each other's territories and friendships. Angry outburst occurred regularly. Invariably when two male students from the same group were angry with each other they would push, shove, or yell at each other for a few

moments and then walk away. Half an hour later, or at the next yard time, they would be playing together again. Overt antipathy between groups was rare. When it did occur, the students would yell at each other, but their friends would typically draw them away, pulling them back into their own group. Usually, they just stayed away from each other.

When female students were angry with one another they would yell at each other for a few moments then walk away or get the monitor. She would tell them to leave each other alone. Half an hour later or at the next yard time, they would be playing together again.

The level of anger in the yard was usually low, sometimes high, but to this point, never seething. The students themselves were more than capable of handling disagreements that arose with friends, through discussion (females), or when play had become a little too rough, through time away from each other (males). After three weeks of observation, school yard dynamics indicated that the students had considerable competence in working out many of the problems in the yard themselves. The most evident means of avoiding problems that was used by both the male and female students was that they stayed in their home territory.

I had been asking the mediators how things were going since last week, and had contacted most of them. Some of these responses were "O.K., I guess" while others displayed a considerable amount of frustration :

Andrea (grade 5) - well when two kids come up and they're pretend fighting
and they see you and they say "look at the mediators, they don't do
beans"

Margo (grade 6) - if everyone's going to ignore us there's no point

Heather (grade 5) - the kids are saying "oh-oh mediators, let's get away
from here"

Isaac (grade 6) - nobody wants to mediate

Tony (grade 6) - they just think it's a joke

Deirdre (grade 6) - they aren't taking it seriously, they think when they are fighting and throwing each other down and saying, "we need a mediator, we need a mediator", they don't know that we can't get involved in a fight. They don't understand

Evan (grade 4) - it's not working and they aren't taking it seriously

Samantha (grade 5) - the kids don't want to go to mediation... because I think they really don't know what's going to happen

The evident problem was that the King of the Mountain students were the only ones in the yard who were perceived as needing 'help'. They looked like they needed help because they were breaking the rules. These were the discipline problems that the programme had been intended to address. Other problems in the yard such as arguments, teasing and the like, the students were more than capable of handling themselves. But the King of the Mountain boys did not want or, in fact, need anybody else's help either. Situations of pure anger, fear or exploitive bullying, like the one mediation I had witnessed, were extremely rare. There was, therefore, no-one for the mediators to help.

Thursday

Five mediations had been conducted by this time, including the two that have already been discussed. Two involved name-calling, one involved tripping, one was the bullying situation, and one was listed as 'they always bug each other'. Four of these mediations had been referred from the yard monitors, and one had been mediator-initiated. The resolutions that were arrived at in the name-calling situations were that the students involved had agreed to stop calling each other names. The other three problems were solved by the students agreeing to stay away from each other. Three of

these mediations had been done by 3 of the 20 mediators, Jamie, Stephen and David, who were very close friends.

The questionnaires were handed out to the mediators, mediation programme staff and the rest of the staff on this last Thursday before Christmas break. Gary had refused to fill out a questionnaire. He wouldn't talk to me anymore and according to his teacher, Mrs. Allen, he would not discuss the programme at all. He was acting as if the whole thing hadn't happened. I asked her what she thought Gary's difficulty had been with the programme. She replied that he had really felt separated from his friends, but also that very early Gary had seen the programme as 'bogus'. In the second week of the programme he had said to her, referring to discussions held in the class in the curriculum content part of the programme, "But that's not what real people are like. Nobody stops and counts to 10 when they get mad. Getting mad gets me what I want." Gary was a gorilla and his reality contained gorillas. Mrs. Allen's problem, she explained, was that she didn't know how to respond to this. They had both known he was right.

Evan said that he would complete a questionnaire although he had already quit the programme. When I asked Tony, he insisted that he was about to quit. I told him that that was why it was important for him to fill one out; I wanted all sides of the story. Margo had run away from home and had not been at school all week. These four children represented the major portion of the 'at-risk' segment of the 20 mediation students.

The school closed this week for the two week Christmas break.

Weeks 4-5

The two week Christmas break had made no difference in the unfolding programme events in the yard. Conditions remained the same, the teasing persisting whenever a mediator walked by. Regardless of Mrs. McDonald's pre-Christmas instructions that mediators patrol the yard together, they continued to remain with their friends and play. It was easier for female mediators to follow Mrs. McDonald's request because their friends would accompany them, but they did not wander far from their home turf.

The first seriously aggressive outburst occurred the first week back at school. Two male students that appeared to be in grade 5 (based on where they played in the yard, and how they were dressed), had a fist fight. They were taking swings at each other's faces and stomachs, and grabbing each other by the neck. They were not shouting or yelling, but swearing at each other through gritted teeth, "I'm goin' to get you, you son of a bitch". They grabbed and pushed with fury. This was a serious altercation and was quite frightening in it's level of aggression. This situation, unlike others, had drawn a fair number of spectators. The students in the vicinity had watched the fight standing safely back, recognizing that this problem was different from most. The monitor had a difficult time separating them and escorted one of the students into Mrs. Wallace's office. The other student had moved closer to the school yard door. As the monitor passed, the student with her glared at his opponent; with seething quiet anger he threatened, "you just wait, I'm goin' to get you."

When I spoke to Mrs. Wallace afterwards about the event she commented that some students were just "not-negotiable". Some of the children came to school with enough anger from their home environments that a small event in the yard could lead to an explosion of this pent up anger. It "just bursts out of them," she explained.

Over the last several weeks, I had come to realize, that the King of the Mountain students were the most problematic inside the classroom as well. There were always some of them in the Vice-Principal's office as I went by. Alex, in particular, was in Mrs. Wallace's office every single time I went by. When I asked about him I was told, "yeah, Alex spends half his school day down there". Alex is Gary's best friend and one of the King's of the Mountain.

Being sent to the office for discipline was not a cause for concern for these students. Unlike the other children they were not shamed, alienated or mocked by their peers because they had been to the office. In fact, it appeared that trips to the office were a prerequisite to membership to the group. These students showed no remorse or concern in having been sent to the office. It was typically sloughed off with cynicism and mockery. Overhearing Alex and Gary one day, as Alex returned from another stint in the office, Gary asked, "What'd you do?" Alex responded with, "I dunno, talked or somethin'". Gary laughed, nodded his head and, knowingly commented, "yeah".

By contrast, the other students functioned within the parameters defined by the school. They did their homework, played non-aggressive games, didn't get sent to the office, and were helpful to the teachers. Male students help by moving classroom equipment, like computers, T.V.'s, V.C.R.'s, desks etc. Female students, retrieve materials from the office, take books back to the library, and monitor the younger students at the lunch hour. These students don't get a lot of attention from the teachers, which is fine with the male students, but many female students want more attention. Female students will hang out with the teacher at recess or contrive situations that draw attention to themselves, like tattling, having the class sing happy birthday to them, or devising a mediation.

Voices from the Life-worlds

The interview and questionnaire responses reinforced the impressions that the mediation programme had to contend with a number of complex and differing realities in the school environment. Student responses to yard interviews seemed to fall into two categories; those who saw the more aggressive male activities in the yard as fighting and something that one needed to be protected from, and those who saw it as playing and something that had to be protected (see Appendix D:198). King of the mountain children would not use the programme themselves, although it was "O.K." for others. They knew how to solve their own problems. Turning to any part of the school structure for help would have sacrificed their position with their peers, a succumbing to the enemy.

Others saw the programme as something that would prevent injuries and fighting in the yard. These students were willing to attend mediations if they felt the need to, but usually felt that they could handle their problems themselves. They also saw it as a programme for 'others'. The most serious threat the programme presented to these students was that they might have to wander the yard with their friends while they did mediation duty.

The mediation programme was interpreted as coming from the staff by both groups. How acceptable this was however, differed by group. The King of the mountain students saw this factor as one of the main reasons for rejecting the programme. The other students saw the programme as an opportunity to help the teachers deal with a difficult job and relieve them somewhat of a burdensome task.

Interviews in the yard also indicated there were interpretational problems with the reasons for the programme and the procedures of the programme. "If there's any garbage hanging around they pick it up and if there are people fighting they take care of it" and "so the teachers could have a rest," I was told by two male grade 5 students. When I asked two female grade 4 students why their school had this programme they

responded with, "well I think it's good because instead when the Misses are being too busy then they could help them... they [the mediators] can come and ask what happened and if it's very very bad they could just tell the Miss and she could just say, well if it's that bad just send them down to the office" and "well so the school will be a safer place, and nobody will get hurt because they're going to be watching." These comments support the idea that this programme was interpreted as a programme which helped the school staff administer discipline in the yard, and that it was the mediators responsibility to initiate mediations.

Mediator questionnaire responses were not representative since neither Gary nor Evan completed questionnaires and Margo was not available to complete one. Tony, who had also said he was going to quit answered that while he hadn't had any problems with the programme (question #5) there hadn't been any good things about the programme either (question #6). Some of the students used the questionnaire to ask me questions about the programme, for example Andrea asked how to tell who needs mediation and who does not. In general the students who responded expressed continuing commitment to the programme, believing that there were many fights in the yard and the programme was needed. However, the exasperation that they were feeling in the yard simmered just below the surface in some of their responses. For example Tony's response to "What's it been like being a mediator?" was, "well mostly all I do is just walk around and I don't get to play any games". Mark stated his dilemma succinctly, "I have only had to mediate once and I felt really good. I thought I would have been a bit more respected by my fellow students being a mediator, but I don't think I am". None of the male mediators said they had problems in the question directed to problems, yet many of them expressed concerns through their other answers, for example Mark's response alluded to above. Seven of the eight female mediators indicated that they had had problems. These included rejection in the yard, definitional problems with the programme, and the programmes interference

in friendships. (A summary of the mediators responses are presented in Appendix E:203)

The mediation staff questionnaires reflected the very serious difficulties that had been faced in implementation (Appendix F:208). They were frustrated with their own inexperience with mediation and inability to handle technical and interpretive problems. As one teacher explained, "we've been tripping along re-inventing the process, probably leaving the ideals behind, pragmatism takes over".

Three Months Later

April

Three months after my last yard observations I returned to the school for two days. As I entered the school on my first day back, Gary, Alex and their friends were by their lockers in the hall. As I walked down the hall, Alex saw me coming and shielded Gary from me by standing in front of him and placing his arms protectively in front of Gary. As I passed by Alex yelled out, "he's quit, he's not in it anymore." I was pleased that Gary had been taken back into the fold after his brief foray with the enemy. Alex was taking care of his own. Alex's actions were such a strong and deep statement of the importance of their friendship that I realized that this programme, had circumstances been otherwise, could have been very costly for Gary (or others in his circumstances, like Evan).

Some accommodations had been made to the programme in light of the problems that had continued in my absence. The teachers involved in the mediation programme were now suggesting the mediation alternative to students who were having problems in their own classrooms. The schedule had been changed so that eight mediators were in the yard at a time, each group doing five shifts. The mediators did not wander the yard, but rather wore their sashes and played. This step was taken so that the "mediators could get back to being kids" (discussions with programme staff).

A month earlier a meeting had been held between a group of grade 6 boys and the mediators because the grade 6 boys were calling the mediators names and teasing them. The grade 6 boys denied any wrong doing, and were upset about having to give up their lunch hour. The mediators had a chance to have their say and at the same time, had some overt support from the school. One of the programme teachers commented that again this had shown the students that the mediators were special people. "What other kids in the school could complain and have a special meeting arranged to deal with their complaint?"

But the programme teachers had also felt that it was time to show some support for the programme, for the mediators sake.

Nineteen mediations had been done between December 2nd and April 7th. Eight had been conducted by, Jamie, Stephen and David who usually mediated together, in pairs. Seven mediations had come from teacher referrals, six from student referrals and two through mediator intervention. The remaining mediations did not indicate how they had been initiated.

One mediation was a name-calling incident between two female students. The six male/female mediations were for name-calling (3) and 'bugging each other' (3). Male/male mediations accounted for 12 of the 19 that had been conducted. Three were name-calling, one was for bullying, three for bugging each other and four for physical fighting (headlock, punching, shoving face in the snow, and hurting him kinda badly) One agreement was illegible.

Mrs. Wallace admitted that she was having to discipline fewer children since this programme had started. It was difficult to reconcile this information with the number of mediations that had taken place, particularly since only four had been about physical fighting. However, one of the teachers commented that it had become an embarrassment for some of the children to have to attend a mediation. It showed the rest of the student body that they were not able to work out their problems themselves. The programme may have been having a preventative effect just from it's mere presence.

My final observation in the school was when I attended a noon hour meeting with the mediators. The meeting was held to consider which steps ought to be taken to move the programme into the grade 1, 2, 3 yard, over the next few weeks. The programme staff at the school felt that what the mediators needed was more mediations and since they were not occurring in the senior yard, they would move the programme to the junior yard. Then, by the time the junior students became senior students, they would be

familiar with the programme and would use it more, thus making the senior yard safer in the future.

The mediators appeared fed-up and irritated during the meeting. They were edgy, would roll their eyes at each other, ignore what was being said and fool around with each other instead of participating. Isaac had to be called in from outside and was shaking his head in disgust when he arrived. Some comments made during this last meeting reinforced the impression that the mediators did not want to continue with the demands the programme was making on them. Heather said, "but I don't want to be a mediator all the time, and if I have to go into the primary yard then I'll be a mediator all the time". Isaac, when I asked him if he was still mediating responded with, "yeah, but I don't want to, this programme is stupid". When I asked him why he was still doing it his answer was "cause, you know, you can't let the teachers down". Mark informed me that "the only mediations we do are referred from the teachers. The students [the general student body] don't want to have anything to do with it. It may help a couple of individual kids, but they don't really want it". During the meeting's discussions Isaac had interjected with "this is all too confusing. can I go now?"

After the meeting, Mark, with his usual perception, gave me his interpretation of the root cause of the problems and frustrations he and his fellow mediators had been through in the last several months. In the same comment he indicated how this programme had come to be interpreted. Turning to me he stated, imperatively, "It's not like we're living in a war zone, you know".

Mediation and the Structures of the Life-Worlds: A Summary

The research recounted here presents a description of the events associated with moving mediation from the abstract level, to the practical level, in the school environment. The first intent of the research was to identify those factors in everyday socio-cultural reality that would impinge on the use of mediation as a universal agent of empowerment. This summary chapter discusses this interest in the relationship between socio-cultural determinants and mediation.

As the implementation process unfolded, ideological, institutional and sub-cultural groupings, had a significant influence on the process and the outcome of events. The purpose of the mediation programme in the school had been to make the use of mediation one of the taken-for-granted codes of action in the school yard reality. The outcome was far removed from the intent. In this chapter, each of the socio-cultural determinants will be discussed for the role they played in the unfolding events, and the meaning given to the mediation experience by the participants. Included is a discussion on the influence the hierarchical distribution of power had on the unfolding events, a central issue which was carried throughout the translation process. The chapter concludes with an assessment of the mediation model of conflict resolution as a universally applicable agent of empowerment.

Ideological Relevances

Several contradictions surface when the conceptual motivations behind mediation are reflected against the everyday school context in which they had to operate. Mediation is formulated in an ideology that counterpoises competitive practices against cooperative practices. The assumption that is made is that competitive practices are universally interpreted as negative, destructive and deviant. This stems directly from the very serious threats, and resultant fears of annihilation, associated with the arms race in the 1970's and 1980's. However, much of our social reality is founded on practices that are formulated in competitive processes (e.g. the education system). This disjuncture between the cooperative foundations of mediation and day-to-day competitive reality, is a central breach between mediation as abstraction and mediation as practice. The consequence for the students was, that comments like Robbie's "I feel good when I'm angry, it gets me what I want", were treated as an anomaly rather than a very real and important comment on children's competitive social reality and on the power relations in the yard. Being a gorilla became de-politicized from the everyday reality of unequal opportunities and the differential distribution of power by channeling it into the ideological dimension.

The interpretation that is taken by proponents of mediation is that conflict has a universal demeanor. Yet, mediation is fundamentally a war model of conflict resolution drawing heavily on research and analyses that have attended to conflict at the international level. The language and interpretations that are used to rationalize the use of mediation at the international level may not be effectively transported into the many social environments in which mediation is currently operating. Certainly this discourse was inappropriate in the children's school yard reality.

The all inclusive definition of conflict results in the classification of differences of opinion, arguments, fights, civil unrest and international armed conflict, within the

same category. This negates the variability of conflict and implicitly suggests that anger and armed conflict are equally as grave and must be brought under the same level of control. That we must "learn to get our anger down" is in keeping with an environment heavily oriented towards the reasoned model of social relations, and away from the affective content of social relations. Rather than offering empowerment for the expression of the affective content of the actor's daily life, which includes anger and dissent, it effectively represses this very real component of social relations.

That mediation works and is magical was repeated several times over the training week-end. This was a reflection of the claims of universal applicability that have been discussed earlier. This perspective presupposes that factors causing conflict are readily definable once the emotional content of the conflict is removed. The very significant contribution made by gender, age, ethnicity, power, and other socio cultural factors such as respect for elders, don't argue with your parents, masculinity and aggression, femininity and 'bitchiness', and so on, in the development of tensions between people and between groups, is essentially omitted from discussions. The premise becomes, that when disputants came into mediation they come from symmetrical positions of power, and homogeneous life-experiences. Consequently the students become more isolated from these factors as legitimate components of tensions and/or conflict. The ability to change the situation is subsequently, considerably reduced.

While the adults associated with the implementation of the programme did not give credence to these socio-cultural determinants, or to the heterogeneity of the yard, the students exhibited an implicit understanding of the variability of their daily reality, during the training session. The numerous 'what if' questions from the student mediators seemed to be an integral step in their ability to integrate this programme into their everyday worlds. The overriding impression was that they were having difficulty placing the rigid and limited mediation format into their fluid, varied, and complex life-world. Testing the boundaries of the programme against their personal understandings, was

their means of bridging the conceptual and the empirical worlds. Halting this process of integration left this step incomplete.

Several aspects of the preparatory stages defined the programme as one of social control, rather than empowerment. From the beginning the programme was defined as a student, yard programme. Staff's exemption from the process created a visible and noted contradiction for some of the students. A life-skill can not be appropriate only for a select group of people. In addition, the training week-end had the tone of a job training session for the students, with little time spent on internalizing this method on a personal level, or interpreting it as a life-skill. The focus was continually on helping others, the obvious intent being that the mediators were expected to influence other student's behaviour in the yard. The assembly also placed the programme on the discipline, or control, continuum by a reiteration of available choices: mediation, or the Vice-principal/Principal. The students who rejected the programme were making a clear statement that they saw the intent to control that was hidden behind the slogan of helping others.

The resulting paradox that is created, is that everyday student and social reality contradicts the conceptual premises of the mediation model. Adaptations to the programme heightened the visibility of these contradictions. On the other hand, the conceptual premises of the mediation model contradict everyday reality, through a discourse that does not come from that reality and ignores fundamental characteristics of reality.

Institutional Relevances

One of the more important effects that institutional structures play in the translation of the mediation model, is that professional mediators must, themselves, function within the strictures of a competitive market economy. As is typical to a market economy this necessitates the development of a concrete 'saleable' product. In terms of mediation, this is most often an offering of the services of the mediator who is seen as an expert in this particular method. Under certain circumstances the product becomes a programme package, as in the schools. Promotion of the mediation model entails the identification of a viable market, a market where these skills are lacking. For mediation, with its premise of a collaborative approach and win/win outcomes, the viable markets in a competitively oriented society are ubiquitous. In order to sell the product the mediation model may need some refinement to enter a particular environment. While this will make the model more adaptable to the market in question, these adaptations infringe on the ability to be empowering.

The typification of 'the school environment', and the associated orientation, 'to teach and help children develop competencies' allows an avenue of access for the presentation of the programme to the schools. Moreover, growing public concern with violence (an impositional relevance), and a perceived problem with discipline in this particular school (a volitional relevance), validated the need for the programme. These relevances find their expression through the institutional elements of accountability to the public and the teacher's roles as disciplinarians.

School staff relied on the professional mediator, as an expert, to assess the validity of adaptations that were made to the programme (for example, having a staff-person as coordinator, or having the programme operate only in the yard). It was the professional's familiarity and expertise that were ceded to when judging whether alterations to the programme would effect its viability in the school, or staff's ability to

oversee its progress. School staff made commitments to the programme which were pragmatically based on current financial restraints, but also on the belief that they could do the job effectively. Reliance on professional expertise is an institutionalized pattern of conduct in the broader socio-cultural environment.

For the teachers, educational structural factors such as, time, funding, space, and work restraints played a significant role in the events that were taking place. Time to attend to the coordination aspects of the programme was particularly difficult to schedule. This exacerbated the already heavy demands of the teacher's teaching day.

Once the staff had accepted the programme two areas of pragmatic concern became important; to define the parameters of the programme (will it involve student/teacher/staff combinations, or just students, and which problems would be open to mediation), and to gain student cooperation and support for the programme. Many social practices subsumed under the typification of 'the school environment' were utilized to address these concerns. These practices included: teacher's authority to define and prioritize particular situations, and the top-down decision-making process in the schools, the use of peer relations to influence student behaviour, and the use of a reward system. The nature of these social practices are a reflection of an education environment that is fundamentally oriented to children's incompetencies, rather than competencies. The following discussions elaborate the use of these school related social practices.

This programme was accepted by the staff as a means of addressing the problems they were having with student behaviour in the yard. It was they who defined the situation as serious and found the means to address it. Students were not consulted as to their perception of events in the yard, their competence in understanding their own realities, their behaviour in the yard and their ability to offer suggestions, was not given credence.

Although the children had been told that there were more students than teachers, and that student nominations would mean more, the teachers ability to make multiple

nominations would certainly have effected the distribution of candidates. Children would be more likely to nominate friends, causing the nominations to be fragmented along the various peer group lines. Teacher's nominations would probably be more consistent since they were sharing a more unified perspective of interpretation. The teacher's nominations would become at least as important as the student's nominations. Control of programme events was never far removed from the teacher's hands before it went into the yard.

Programme parameters were designated throughout the orientation sessions where the dialogue was consistently focused on student-student relationships in the yard. That this method of conflict resolution could be used to address other problematic relationships was effectively shielded from the students through omission. This compromised the level of impact the programme would have on the teachers, and could have on the students. The limited dialogue moved the programme from a life-skill programme to a social control programme. These actions taken by the staff are a familiar occurrence in the school environment, whereby teachers define how much and what kinds of knowledge is transmitted to the students.

The appeal to the peer relations component of these student's lives to gain their support for the programme (e.g. the people in the yard will be your friends), used the trust, affective content, and psychological bonds inherent to these relationships to legitimize the programme. The students would feel compelled to give consent because of the nature of friendship. Their friends would not betray them, nor would they willingly betray their friends. This is not far removed from the old saying "why can't you be like Johnny?" It uses peer relations to define and provide exemplars of appropriate conduct, as defined by the staff.

A reward system is a major element of the school environment, and the initial presentations to the students were not made without the promise of rewards. A safer and happier yard were the most repeated rewards, accomplished through the practice of

helping others. It was assumed by the staff that these were interpretations and goals which were shared with the children.

Teacher skill level with the mediation technique remained weak. They had no prior training, and during the training week-end, the adults were used as supervisors whenever there was a role play. The school programme staff never had the opportunity to experience a mediation even as a role play. As is usual to the school environment, it was taken as given that the teachers were capable and competent in the skills being taught to the children. It was also taken as given that the students were not capable and competent in these skills. These are not always appropriate assumptions to make.

Of particular importance throughout the early stages, was the influence of the media, both in the interpretation of school yard events and in the definition of conflict itself. The plethora of media reports over the last two years concerning violence in the schools, and 'swarmings' by high school students, has created a moral panic over children's use of violence. The teacher's use of the term violence to describe the everyday activities in their school yard, most certainly had been influenced by the broader social discussions of children's behaviours in the schools.

In addition, that media coverage of violent events, and movies and cartoons, had influenced the construction of the student mediator's pictures of conflict during the training week-end, was not acknowledged. The students had clearly drawn pictures of what the term conflict meant to them. The conjecture made by the trainer was, that although there had been little allowance for differentiation in levels of aggression by the consistent use of the term conflict, the students would be able to make that differentiation in their drawings. By not stopping to clarify the different levels of severity it appeared to the students that the adults in the room believed this was, indeed, a fair representation of school yard events. These definitions were not a true reflection of school yard events. This created problems once the mediators entered the yard.

Students had no opportunity to argue the interpretations that were being made, nor would they be likely to oppose an adult definition of this kind, without invitation.

The concept of equality of participation and empowerment became undermined in the early stages of implementation. This was primarily a consequence of institutionalized patterns of social interaction. The teachers were bound by their roles and demands as teachers, and by institutional constraints. These effected the nature of the commitments they made to the programme, and the manner in which the programme unfolded. By the same token the students were not consulted about events in the yard, or about the parameters of a programme that was supposedly operating on their behalf. Although they had been told they could say no to a mediation in the yard, they were never given the chance to say no to the whole programme.

The main contradiction that arises as mediation confronts institutional reality, is between what the model professes to create and it's actual impact. The mediation model is claimed to offer control, empowerment, equality of participation and the legitimation of realities. By contrast, it had the consequence of negating the teacher's reality of work overloads and funding constraints, and children's reality as competent, knowing individuals who are quite able to understand their own behaviours, and the behaviours of others. In truth, the students had not had the opportunity to have control, give their consent, or have their realities validated. There had been no empowerment.

Sub-cultural Relevances

The mediation programme was seriously impacted by the realities of the teacher's and children's sub-cultural life-worlds. The following retrospective review discusses factors from these sub-cultural groupings that created contradictions between the mediation model as theory and as practice.

The programme staff had assumed the responsibility for the programme partially in the belief that it would help all the staff in the school, their collegial sub-cultural group. The influence of institutional factors like funding and time constraints, in combination with the heavy implementation demands, marginalized these people from their peers. The programme interfered with lunch hour freedoms, added meeting and organizational demands and encompassed an interactive technique that only four teachers had received training in.

Furthermore, the programme staff were the only ones who confronted the reality that the expectations created in the marketing of the programme and throughout the training session were impossible to meet. The four programme teachers realized that the resolution of the problems they were confronting involved all the teachers and students, and the whole school system. Yet they were the only ones who had any inkling of the dynamics that were taking place, the rest of the staff not being able to share this understanding or this reality. In consequence, there was much resentment on the part of the programme teachers towards their peers and the educational hierarchy.

The student mediators became an elite group of students in the school. Those who had attended the training session were there because, as far as they understood, they had been given a vote of approval and support from their peers. The training session added to the gulf between mediators and non-mediators. After the training, student mediators had access to information and experiences that the rest of the student body did not have. It was their job to share this information with their peers. However, this supplementary

information and their new 'teaching position' raised these students one level above their peers. The assembly reinforced the separation by the proffering of accolades and rewards to the mediators.

The nature of these events ignored the variability between peer groups, and the importance of equality of position within the peer group. The students were being treated as a homogeneous body that would survive the differences that had been created between mediators and their friends and peers. The ability of this programme, and these mediators, to make a difference in the school yard ultimately depended on how the rest of the student body would interpret the mediator's newly acquired position, relative to the administration of the school, and to their peers in the yard.

Contrary to the teacher's and trainer's attitudes, the yard was far from homogeneous. It was divided according to age, gender, friendship groupings and positions of status and power. This led to a complex, yet invisible geographic organization of the yard that was understood and respected by all the students. Mediators had been expected to cross these invisible territorial markings, which was a singular sign of disrespect for their importance. To expect children to do this, and to act as disciplinarians with their peers, was to negate the very great significance these children place on the organization of the yard, and the boundaries between groupings.

There was a select group of grade 4, 5 and 6 males for whom power and status in the yard was of prime importance. They played on the rough side, and sometimes this roughness went over the edge and they became angry. This was what the school wanted to stop by 'nipping it in the bud' with the mediation programme. These students drew the most interventions, and attempted interventions, from the yard monitors, recess teachers and mediators. However, to tell these students that they were acting violently, or creating conflict, was absurd to them. They were not immune to the media coverage of the Gulf War, the Los Angeles race riots, the Toronto race riots and so on. That was

violence, what they did was play. As Gary had stated, their roughness, in their eyes, was no different from Hulk Hogan and the W.W.F.

These same students did not like school and felt it intervened in their lives. They received a lot of attention from the school, in fact, a whole programme had been initiated on their behalf, but they did not want this attention. The school rule of no physical contact deprived them of everything that was important to them at recess, freedom from the structures of the school, the ability to control their own activities, but, most importantly, to be with and have the chance to interact with, in their own way, people who shared a like world view. The importance this core group of male students gave to power and status, and their connections to a peer group that supported these relevances, was not to be tampered with. Their resistance to the school, the programme, and the mediators themselves, was a collective statement of independence from the imposed school structures.

By contrast, the rest of the student body, males and females, presented a collective statement of compliance. Although the males would teeter near the edge on occasion, in terms of rough play, this appeared as a testing out of boundaries, from which they would quickly retreat if a teacher/monitor intervened. The mediation programme had relatively little meaning for both females and males in this group, beyond what it would do for the 'others' (Kings of the Mountain). It did not impose on their ability to control their own activities in the yard or be with their friends. They typically did not create problems for the school from their compliant position.

The student mediators, on the other hand, were separated from their peers by becoming agents of the school, and because patrolling the yard interfered with their ability to be with their friends. The rejection the mediators faced quickly placed a damper on the enthusiasm that had been built up during the preparatory stages of the programme. Being appreciated by the school staff involved considerable costs to friendships, and the tolerance typically accorded peers.

The mediation programme ignores the variety and boundaries of sub-cultural groupings in the yard. It also undermines the competencies the children have in settling their own problems, and the fact that they already have people to turn to for help, their friends. Having an outsider 'help' was seen by the students as an audacious move. It interfered with the boundaries that define a group which, in part, is derived from the ability to regulate some people as others. Having an 'other' enter the group, shatters the group's unity.

Sub-cultural relations beyond the school environment also effected yard events. The types of severely aggressive incidents as described in the text can not be addressed by mediation. Nor should children between the ages of 8 and 12 try to do anything in this type of situation. 'Changing the situation' that is associated with the mediation technique can do nothing to change the out-of-school reality for 'non-negotiable' children. To suggest the universal application of mediation to problems in the yard is to ignore the validity of these children's out-of-school reality. The socio-cultural factors that create a differential distribution of power and resultant abusive environments for some of these children become marginalized in the presence of this programme. Expressing anger about their personal reality, for some, can most safely be done in the school yard. The dilemma for the other students and the teachers is obvious, but the dilemma for these students is even greater. Mediation can not help them and, in fact, may be harmful by increasing their isolation.

Rather than giving credence to the various realities represented in the school yard, the programme marginalized them even further, through lack of acknowledgement. The stress and frustration that was experienced by programme staff, during implementation, and by the mediators, in the yard, was high. Resolving breaches between the conceptual model of mediation and the complexity of everyday reality, was an insurmountable task.

Power

The overriding factor in the socio-cultural environment that impacted the translation of the mediation technique was the differential distribution of power. Both the students and the teachers participate in a reality that they must come to terms with. A central notion to those realities is a hierarchy of power.

To a considerable degree teacher's daily life is a function of their position in a hierarchy of power; in relation to the public, to the educational system and to their students. Their day-to-day life operates within parameters defined by others. While the teachers had expected to experience some empowerment with this programme, through relief from the heavy discipline demands they encountered, in fact, it added to these strains and further placed their roles as teachers in question.

By the same token, students are at the lowest level of the power hierarchy. Their lives are confined by the interpretations given to them by teachers and society at large. Student's behaviours and competencies were consistently given definition by professional mediators and teaching staff. By ignoring the relevances of the students life-worlds, such as the primacy of peer relations and the social organization of the school yard, the programme became one which denies children's reality. Relative to the considerable lack of power students have to define their own lives, settling an argument with a friend/ peer in mediation hardly appears as a great leap towards empowerment. Students were never given the opportunity to act on their own relevances. There had been no equality of participation and, therefore, no empowerment.

The model proposes that relationships be conducted from symmetrical positions of power, yet fundamental to everyday reality are asymmetrical positions of power. An essential breach between mediation as abstraction and mediation as technique, is the obfuscation of the role of power in social relations. The model implicitly requests those

who are in power to abandon it. This is a formidable request in light of the heavy investment that often accompanies an appropriation of power.

The way the mediation programme unfolded was a reflection of the power struggle that existed in the school system prior to its arrival. While the intent of the model was to be empowering, it had outcomes significantly different from its intent. For the student mediators who function in a complaint stance, they had no way of abandoning the programme when it imposed too heavily on their lives. For these students the programme was disempowering. On the other hand, for the King of the Mountain students, the programme became a channel of expression, for their dissent and resistance to the whole school system. It provided them with the opportunity to say no, as they had been told they could do. For these students, then, the programme did have some element of empowerment. This was not quite what had been intended by the use of the term empowerment. In the final analysis, even the definition of the term empowerment was subject to the parameters set by those who were in power.

Mediation as a Universal Agent of Empowerment

The ability of mediation to be empowering, across a number of life-worlds, is limited by the assumption that cooperative conflict resolution can function outside the parameters of the socio-cultural environment. The programme was moulded by the ideologies, institutionalized social practices, sub-cultural groupings and power relations, that are inherent to the social environment. The model's disregard for the role these determinants play in the construction of interpersonal/intergroup tensions, deflects attention away from these critical factors, making their redress less likely. In retrospect neither the teachers, nor any of the various groups of students, had the opportunity to re-shape the nature of their relationships with relevant others, and thereby become empowered.

Moreover, the variability of conflict becomes negated in the presence of this programme. While the programme could not effectively address the fistfight, the bullying, or the snowball thrown in the face, these very different kinds of encounters become neutralized under the terms of the mediation model. A thrown snowball becomes as serious as overtly expressed seething anger, and seething anger becomes as inconsequential as a thrown snowball.

In combination these difficulties raise serious concerns over the claims made about mediation by its proponents. Clearly more research needs to be conducted on where mediation is successful and where it is not successful. In the school setting a comparative analysis is required with programmes that are cited as highly effective. The level of involvement of both students and teachers in defining the parameters of the programme and the amount of recognition given to the teacher's and student's sub-cultural realities, would be essential concerns. Moreover, the nature of the situations that are addressed by this technique becomes important to its definition as a conflict resolution procedure. Most critically, how far the method was able to change the

situation and re-negotiate the hierarchy of power, not only in the context of the dispute, but in the broader social sphere, and for whom, remains the primary question for a programme of empowerment.

Conclusions

An overlaying goal of the study conducted here was to comprehend how breaches between the theory of social relations and the acting out of social relations develop. By purposively focusing attention on more than one-life world and differences in meaning between them, a deeper understanding of this issue has resulted. This is the subject area of these concluding remarks.

In retrospect, entry into the actor's daily reality made a significant contribution to understanding how the mediation programme came to have meaning within the life-worlds of the participants. It also allowed an assessment of the viability of the claims made about the mediation programme. However, the meaning given to the programme relative to the various realities involved, in isolation, does not speak to the secondary motivation of this work.

The manner in which the 'data' are presented is unusual according to traditional academic standards. As has been explained this has been intentional. This study centered on a chronological unfolding of events. By presenting the events as they occurred, the centrality of the passage of time, shifting relevances, and the hierarchical layering of realities as primary constituents in the construction of meaning was exposed. Recognizing the impact of these elements, in turn, makes evident the emergent nature of daily social relations. The perpetual negotiations between life-worlds, between production and reproduction, and between the micro and macro levels of social relations, only becomes noticeable in the chronological and all-inclusive stance.

Neither the enduring negotiations for meaning between the hierarchical layering of realities, nor the continual shifting of relevance structures over time, were anticipated before entering the field. The lack of preparedness for this essence and ambience of social relations, represents a central component to the breaches between

theory and ground as they relate to this study. To explain this conclusion the methodological and theoretical orientations of this study will be re-examined.

To pursue this research a qualitative research methodology had been selected. Qualitative research allows for a grounded understanding of social relations by presenting the opportunity to explore the nature of experience from the actor's subjective interpretation. As subjectivity of experience was a primary focus of the current study, this methodology seemed most appropriate. The richness and complexity of the life-worlds, in retrospect, was best revealed by the qualitative approach. This methodology was helpful in making an assessment of the mediation programme, but did not provide the opportunity to capture the emergent quality of social relations.

As this work demonstrates, the experiences investigated through qualitative methods have greater meaning when they can be situated in the larger socio-historical context. This requires considerable archival research, or interviewing, prior to entering the field. Being 'in the field' exposes the researcher to an overwhelming amount of information and the relevance of socio-historical determinants is easily subsumed by the demands of the moment. The immediacy of events draws attention to the subjective experience within particular life-worlds, but leaves the negotiations between layers of life-worlds, over time, poorly developed. Setting the broader socio-historical context of the experience under examination, and the necessity of maintaining this information throughout the field experience, is not given enough import in the qualitative literature.

In addition, qualitative literature presses the researcher to collapse data into conceptual categories, a reflection of the heavy influence of quantitative methodologies in the last several years. The study conducted here was not amenable to this technical procedure. The essence and ambience of particular social experiences may be critically related to the passage of time, in that they are a reflection of social process. Process is most effectively portrayed by a chronological presentation and this format should certainly be seen as a viable alternative. Formatting and presentational guidelines that

are available for other kinds of explorations, should be sanctioned and made available for research which involves changing events.

The choice of phenomenology as an interpretive framework was also vested in the credence given to the actor's subjective understanding of reality. This approach had prepared me for a multiplicity of realities, and had focused my attention on identification of life-world structures and the negotiation of meaning within the actor's own life-world. These guidelines were sorely needed when faced with the wealth of information associated with participant observation. Again, it did not prepare me for the interdependent and negotiative aspects of the construction of meaning between life-worlds, and over time. Schutzian phenomenology does not incorporate the hierarchical layering of life-worlds and their dynamic interdependence in a way which reflects the empirical reality that was observed. The language for explaining this layering and the significant contribution it makes to the between-world negotiative process, was not available.

In contrast to the qualitative literature, the phenomenological perspective takes a broad trans-historical interpretation of time, perhaps best called macro-time. This leads to definitions (for example shared world views) that create a sense of stability over time that was contradicted by the observations made here. Only by including micro-time, or the smaller chronological framework, in combination with macro-time, can the constancy of negotiations and evolving nature of social relations become revealed. In exposing the pervasiveness of the negotiative process it becomes possible to recognize the considerable influence the hierarchical layering of life-worlds, and the continual shifting of relevance structures, have in the struggle for meaning.

The difficulties experienced with both qualitative methodology and the phenomenological perspective arose from the manner in which each dealt with the issues of time and the layering of realities. Both pressed for a preclusive position, either micro or macro time, either micro or macro realities, and stability rather than process.

Research which attends to chronological events will demonstrate the interwoven nature of these elements.

Similar interpretive problems occurred when returning to the radical pedagogical literature and the conflict theory literature. When juxtaposing my experiences in the field against the discussions on production or reproduction, the language for relating the dynamics of production and reproduction was lacking. The observation had been that the participants were involved in both production, reproduction, and in negotiations over production/reproduction continually throughout the implementation process. To conclude that what I had observed in the field was either production or reproduction, would add a sentiment of closure that is false. Reproduction was attempted daily, and production was attempted daily, within and between the many levels of the layered hierarchy.

In terms of the outcome of the programme, a choice of production or reproduction would belie the impact the programme had. The effects of the programme to date were perhaps not as intended, but nevertheless, it forced all participants to give reflective consideration to some of the contradictions that exist in daily social life. Reflective consideration was both an impetus and an unanticipated consequence of the programme. The statement that is made by the presence of this programme, through its development in response to a witnessed contradiction, and in its effect in exposing other contradictions, can not be ignored. The mediation programme, itself, is evidence that negotiations between production and reproduction are enduring.

Formatting and terminology problems force reflection on the current rise in action research as discussed in the methodology chapter. Conducting action research will be impacted by subject areas that have a chronological component. The dilemma becomes, at what point does the researcher begin to share their understandings. Timing of interventions which would be most beneficial to the participants is obvious. However,

this raises questions over some of the traditional research standards associated with the discipline of sociology.

Particularly in an unfolding process, as in this study, information that is shared during the unfolding events immediately becomes drawn into the negotiations that are occurring, effectively changing the direction of the process. Once an intervention has been made the process becomes unique. This raises concerns over the tenet of generalizability that is fundamental to social science research (that is, the transportation of conclusions across social experiences). How does one reach conclusions about social relations that have not been exposed to interventions, from social relations that have been exposed to interventions? Generalizations must be approached with caution. It would seem to be a prerequisite that written material that is the result of action research must include the nature, context and quality of these interventions. This necessitates some presentational format that exceeds the current standards for academic writing. The move to action research insists that there be some reflective consideration given to the generalizability and modes of presentation norms associated with social science research.

Breaches between theory and ground, in this study, arose from the false divisions that are created when the stability of social relations is given priority over the emergent nature of social relations. The consequence of a static perspective is that the daily contestation over the hierarchical layering of realities, and over differences in meaning between life-worlds, does not receive enough import. Changes in the laws, in the way teachers are able to teach, in the way woman function in society, in the way aboriginal peoples have a more political voice, and so on, are not threaded to the daily negotiations that produce change over time. The essence of the social relations studied here was the hierarchical ordering of the life-worlds and the interdependent negotiative relationship between life-worlds. The ambience was a constant shifting over time: in

relevance structures, from dialogues in the past to dialogues in the present, between the positions in ordering of realities, always emergent, always in process.

Finding the terminology, understandings and format that reflect the dynamics of social process has been a struggle. Nevertheless, it was a most rewarding and revelational enterprise. To preclude the processual nature of social relations from the empirical studies which inform theory, necessarily obfuscates the emergent nature of those relations. The inclusion of research on social process necessarily enhances our ability to understand both the essence and the ambience of human social relations.

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Appendix A

Interview Schedules: (p. 16 and 19 in thesis)

Some interviews were open format, exploratory. The following questions served as a guide to the interviews, but other questions were inserted as required.

Professional Mediators:

Informed consent procedures

(to be read)

Lisa D. Shipley
(Home Tel: -----)
B 740 Loeb Bldg.
Dep't of Sociology
Carleton University

My name is Lisa Shipley, I am a Master's student in the Sociology Dep't at Carleton University. I am writing my thesis on Mediation programmes in the schools, and I'd like to ask you some questions about mediation. Your answers will remain anonymous, any quotations that will be used will be identified only as coming from a male/female mediator in the National Capital region. I will, with your permission, be taping this interview. However these tapes will be used to aid my own personal recall and will not be presented as part of my thesis. You do not have to answer any of my questions once we begin. If there is a question that you are not comfortable with, tell me and we will move on to the next question. If you do not wish to continue answering questions, please let me know and we will terminate the interview. The results of my research will be available through interlibrary loan from Carleton University once it has been completed. If you have questions about my research prior to that time, I may be reached at the above number.

Questions :(Age, race, gender, ethnicity, education)

1. What does the term mediation mean to you ?
2. How did you first hear about mediation?
3. Why did you become involved with mediation in a professional position?

4. What do you feel mediation has to offer people as a method of conflict resolution?
5. Under what kinds of circumstances is mediation appropriate?
6. Under what kinds of circumstances is mediation inappropriate?
7. What have been the largest problems facing the growth of mediation in Canada?
8. What are the next steps to be taken for mediation to become an accepted means of addressing conflict in Canada?

Grade 4,5,6 students.

Informed consent procedures with student interviews in the yard

Hi. My name is Lisa, and I am a student at Carleton University . I am writing a paper for one of my teachers at my school on mediation programmes in the schools and I was wondering if you would like to answer some questions for me about your school's mediation programme. I am interested in knowing what the people in schools think about these programmes, and not only the teachers and staff, but the students too. So your opinion about this programme is important to me. Once we start the interview you do not have to answer any question you don't want to answer, just tell me you don't want to answer it , and we will move on to the next question. If you change your mind and want to stop answering questions altogether, just tell me and we'll stop the interview. Understand?

Next I want to tell you how I will be using your answers. It is important to me that you tell me how you really feel about this programme. So I interview only one person at a time. That way we will have some privacy and you won't need to worry about what your friends think about your answers. Also I will be taping your answers if you say it's O.K., but the tapes are only for me, so I can remember what you've said when it comes time to write the paper. Nobody else will hear this tape, not your friends, not the teachers, not the principal or the vice -principal. The way I will be using the information is to say: "10 girls in grade 6 felt this way about the programme, and four boys in grade 5 felt this way about the programme" and so on. If I'm going to use something you say to explain something in my paper, I will not use your name. I will only say something like : "a grade 5 boy said this ,.....". So nobody will know what your answers are except me. O.K.? Remember, you can stop the interview any time you want. Do you

have any questions? Do you still want to answer my questions? May I tape your answers?

Student Questions:

(Gender, grade level)

1. What does the word mediation mean to you?
2. What is the mediation programme all about?
3. Why does your school have a mediation programme?
4. Do you think your school needed it?
5. Has the programme made a difference?
6. What other things can you do to solve problems you might be having with another student?
7. When it's recess and lunch time and you are looking around the yard, can you tell the difference between who's goofing around and who's fighting? How do you tell the difference?
8. Would you ask for help from a mediator? When (under what circumstances?)
9. Would you like to be a mediator? Why/why not?
10. Should the programme be continued? Why/why not?

Student mediator questions:

These questions were unstructured and were created as events occurred. In the first two weeks I asked each mediator how they felt about being in the yard and how they felt things were going. If an incident happened where they had intervened, I would ask them what had happened and how they felt about it.

Appendix B

Standardized Questionnaires and Informed Consent Format (p.17 in thesis)

(Note: Questionnaire format has been changed in width to fit the printing requirements of thesis production. Original questionnaires had longer response lines.)

Questionnaire on Mediation for School Staff

Lisa D. Shipley
Sociology Dep't
740 Loeb Bldg.
Carleton University
(messages can be left in 750 Loeb Bldg)
Home Tel: -----

Hello. I'm a Graduate student in the Sociology department at Carleton University. I am writing my Master's Thesis on the introduction of mediation programmes into the school system. Little research has been conducted on the dynamics and impact of putting a new programme in place in the school system, or on mediation programmes themselves. I'd like you to help me rectify this situation. As a school staff member, you will have witnessed, or been effected by, the implementation of the mediation programme at your school. In the following questionnaire, I am asking you to tell me about **your** experiences and thoughts around the introduction of this programme. The questionnaire will take 30-45 minutes to complete and I will be collecting them when I return to the school in two weeks. The results of my research will be available to you through a brief summary submitted to your school and School Board, and through the Interlibrary Loan service at Carleton University. The final report will contain no names and your confidentiality will be fully respected. While the completion of this questionnaire is optional, your input is quite important to understanding teacher's experiences with new programmes. Please indicate your consent to completing this form by signing below. **Thank you in advance for your assistance.**

Signature of Respondent _____

Signature of Researcher _____

In the first set of questions I am asking you to give me a written description of the issues and experiences associated with the implementation of a new programme in the school environment.

1. How was the decision made to implement a mediation programme at your school?

2. Please describe the issues that are important to you when new programmes are being considered for your school.

3. What factors in the school environment are most likely to effect the ability to implement a new school programme?

4. Are there any other comments you would like to make at this time about the implementation of new programmes into the school environment?

The next set of questions is directed to your understanding and expectations of the mediation programme itself.

5. Have you ever had a problem, in either your private life or through work, that was addressed by mediation?

1. No ____

2. Yes ____

6. Have you ever received any formal training instruction in mediation (either for your school or elsewhere)?

1. No ____

2. Yes ____

7. What does the term "mediation" mean to you?

8. What do you believe to be the purpose/goal of a school mediation programme?

9. Why does your school have a mediation programme?

10. Were there any issues of concern to you about the mediation programme itself, when the decision was being made to include/exclude it at your school?

1. No ____

2. Yes, there were issues of concern ...

What were they? (please list by order of importance,

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

11. Have most of the issues listed in question 10 been resolved to your satisfaction?

1. Not applicable
2. Yes
3. No

Which of the items listed in question 10 have not yet been resolved to your satisfaction?

(please list items by the number used in question 10)

12. Do you feel school staff were sufficiently prepared to handle the implementation of this programme?

1. Don't know
2. Yes

3. No What other steps were necessary? (please list)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

13. Do you feel a mediation programme has something to offer the students?

1. No

2. Yes What do you feel it has to offer the students?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

14. Do you feel a mediation programme has something to offer the school environment?

1. No ____

2. Yes ____ What do you feel it has to offer the school environment?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

15. What kinds of problems **can** be addressed by a school mediation programme?

16. What kinds of problems that appear in the school environment **can not** be addressed by a mediation programme?

17. Do you have any expectations of the mediation programme that you feel should be met in order for it to be continued?

1. No ____

2. Yes ____ What are your expectations? (please list by order of importance)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

18. What factors might lead **you** to decide that it should be cancelled?

1. I don't foresee any reason why the programme should be cancelled

2. The following circumstances would lead to my decision that the programme should be cancelled.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

19. Are there any other comments you would like to make at this time about the mediation programme at your school?

The remaining questions are intended to develop a demographic profile of the school staff. This will be used to situate my research results in their particular social/demographic environment. The following questions require only brief written responses or the placing of a check mark beside the appropriate answer.

20. Are you a (please check the appropriate response)

1. Female
2. Male

21. Please write your age in years _____

22. Please check the highest level of education you have acquired

1. Completed High School
2. Some Technical/Vocational training _____
3. Completed Community College or equivalent (CEGEP) _____
4. Some University
5. Completed a Bachelor's Degree (B.A., B. Sc.) _____
6. Completed Teacher's College _____
7. Some education at the Graduate level (M. Ed., M.A., P.H.D.) _____
8. Completed Master's or Doctoral Degree _____
9. Completed a Professional Degree (Doctor, Lawyer, Engineer) _____

23. How many years have you been

1. Teaching ? _____
2. Administrating? _____

24. What grade(s) are you presently teaching?

1. Not applicable _____
2. The grade(s) I teach are _____

Thank you for the time and effort you have given to the completion of this questionnaire. It is most appreciated. Lisa

Questionnaire on Mediation for School Mediation Programme Staff

Lisa D. Shipley
Sociology Dep't
740 Loeb Bldg.
Carleton University
(messages can be left in 750 Loeb Bldg.)
Home Tel: -----

Hello. I'm a Graduate student in the Sociology department at Carleton University. I am writing my Master's Thesis on the introduction of mediation programmes into the school system. Little research has been conducted on the dynamics and impact of putting a new programme in place in the school system, or on mediation programmes themselves. I'd like you to help me rectify this situation. As a school mediation programme staff member, you will have been closely involved in the implementation of the mediation programme at your school. In the following questionnaire, I am asking you to tell me about **your** experiences and thoughts around the introduction of this programme. The questionnaire will take 30-45 minutes to complete and I will be collecting them when I return to the school in two weeks. The results of my research will be available to you through a brief summary submitted to your school and School Board, and through the Interlibrary Loan service at Carleton University. The final report will contain no names and your confidentiality will be fully respected. While the completion of this questionnaire is optional, your input is quite important to understanding teacher's experiences with new programmes. Please indicate your consent to completing this form by signing below. **Thank you in advance for your assistance.**

Signature of Respondent _ _ _

Signature of Researcher

In the first set of questions I am asking you to give me a written description of the issues and experiences associated with the implementation of a new programme in the school environment.

1980) COUNTY ROAD 8, BLAINVILLE, NEW BRUNSWICK, USA
TEL: 012 688 7007 FAX: 012 688 7007 TLR: 012 688 7007

1. How was the decision made to implement a mediation programme at your school?

2. Please describe the issues that are important to you when new programmes are being considered for your school.

3. What factors in the school environment are most likely to effect the ability to implement a new school programme?

4. What, for you, have been the most difficult aspects of implementing this programme in your school?

1. There haven't really been any difficulties ____

2. There have been some difficulties ____ Please explain

5. Are there any other comments you would like to make at this time about the implementation of new programmes into the school environment?

The next set of questions is directed to your understanding and expectations of the mediation programme itself.

6. Have you ever had a problem, in either your private life or through work, that was addressed by mediation?

1. No ____

2. Yes ____

7. Have you ever received any formal training/instruction in mediation (either for your school or elsewhere)?

1. No ____

2. Yes ____

8. What does the term "mediation" mean to you?

9. What do you believe to be the purpose/goal of a school mediation programme?

10. Why does your school have a mediation programme?

11. Were there any issues of concern to you about the mediation programme itself, when the decision was being made to include/exclude it at your school?

1. No ____

2. Yes, there were issues of concern ____

What were they? (please list by order of importance)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

12. Have most of the issues listed in question 11 been resolved to your satisfaction?

1. Not applicable ____

2. Yes ____

3. No ____

Which of the items listed in question 11 have not yet been resolved to your satisfaction?

(please list items by the number used in question 11)

13. Do you feel **school staff** were sufficiently prepared to handle the implementation of this programme?

1. Don't know ____

2. Yes ____

3. No ____ Please explain

14. Do you feel **you** were sufficiently prepared to handle the implementation of this programme?

1. Don't know ____

2. Yes ____

3. No ____ Please explain

15. Do you feel **student mediators** were sufficiently prepared to handle the implementation of this programme?

1. Don't know ____

2. Yes ____

3. No ____ Please explain

16. Please give me your comments on the formal mediation training session.

17. Do you feel a mediation programme has something to offer the students?

1. No ____

2. Yes ____ What do you feel it has to offer the students?

1. -----

2. -----

3. -----

4. -----

18. Do you feel a mediation programme has something to offer the school environment in general?

1. No ____

2. Yes ____ What do you feel it has to offer the school environment?

1. -----

2. -----

3. -----

4. -----

19. Why did **you personally** become involved in the mediation programme at your school?

20. What kinds of problems **can** be addressed by a school mediation programme?

21. What kinds of problems that appear in the school environment **can not** be addressed by a mediation programme?

22. Do you have any expectations of the mediation programme that you feel should be met in order for it to be continued?

1. No ____

2. Yes ____ What are your expectations? (please list by order of importance)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

23. What factors might lead **you** to decide that it should be cancelled?

1. I don't foresee any reason why the programme should be cancelled ____

2. The following circumstances would lead to my decision that the programme should be cancelled.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

24. Are there any other comments you would like to make at this time about the mediation programme in your school?

The remaining questions are intended to develop a demographic profile of the school staff. This will be used to situate my research results in their particular social environment. The following questions require only brief written responses or the placing of a check mark beside the appropriate answer.

25. Are you a (please check the appropriate response)

1. Female ____

2. Male ____

26. Please write your age in years _____

27. Please check the highest level of education you have acquired

1. Completed High School ____

2. Some Technical/Vocational training ____

3. Completed Community College or equivalent (CEGEP) ____

4. Some University ____

5. Completed a Bachelor's Degree (B.A., B. Sc.) ____

6. Completed Teacher's College ____

7. Some education at the Graduate level (M. Ed., M.A., P.H.D.) ____

8. Completed Master's or Doctoral Degree ____

9. Completed a Professional Degree (Doctor, Lawyer, Engineer) ____

28. How many years have you been

1. Teaching ? _____

2. Administrating? _____

29. What grade(s) are you presently teaching?

1. Not applicable ____

2. The grade(s) I teach are _____

Thank you for the time and effort you have given to the completion of this questionnaire. It is most appreciated. Lisa

Questionnaire on Mediation for Student Mediators

Lisa D. Shipley

Sociology Dep't

740 Loeb Bldg.

Carleton University

(messages can be left in 750 Loeb Bldg.)

Home Tel: -----

Hi. My name is Lisa Shipley, and I am a student at Carleton University . I am writing a paper for one of my teachers at my school on mediation programmes in the schools and I was wondering if you would like to answer some questions for me about your school's mediation programme. I am interested in knowing what the people in schools think about these programmes, not only the teachers and staff, but the students too. You do not have to answer this questionnaire, it is entirely up to you. You may answer some of the questions, all of the questions or none of the questions. But your opinion about this programme is important to me. As a student mediator you are in the best position to tell me about the programme in your school. I would really appreciate it if you took the time to answer these questions.

I would like to tell you how I will be using your answers. It is important to me that you tell me how you really feel about this programme. So I will be keeping your answers completely confidential. When I write my paper, the only way your school will be identified is by my calling it "an elementary school in the National Capital region". If I repeat something you have said in my paper, the most I will say about you is that it comes from a girl or boy mediator in grade 4,5 or 6. The teachers at your school, other children, or anybody else, will not know who said this to me by their name. As well, I will keep the questionnaires at my house. They will not be shown to anyone. I am telling you this because I want you to feel safe in answering these questions so you can tell me what you really feel. Remember, you do not have to answer this questionnaire, but it would be of great help to me if you would. I must have your written permission that you have agreed to answer the following questions(my school rules). If you put your name beside the line marked 'Respondent' (that's you), it means you have understood what this questionnaire is for, how the answers will be used, and have agreed to answer the questions.I will be picking up the questionnaires in two weeks when I return to your school.Please sign below if you agree to answer this questionnaire, and turn to the next page for question #1. **Thanks you for your help.**

Respondent (please write your name here) _____

Researcher _____

The following questions ask for your thoughts and opinions on the mediation programme at your school. Please answer the question on the lines under the question. If there is not enough room, continue your answer on the back of the page.

1. What does the term "mediation" mean to you?

2. What is a school mediation programme all about?

3. Why does your school have a mediation programme?

4. Do you feel the mediation training session gave you enough preparation to begin your job as a student mediator?

(place a check mark beside number 1 or number 2, do not answer both.)

1. Yes ____

2. No ____ Why not? (please answer below)

5. What have been the biggest problems for you of getting the mediation programme going at your school?

(place a check mark beside number 1 or number 2, do not answer both)

1. There haven't really been any problems ____

2. There have been some problems for me ____ What were they? (please explain the problems you have had below)

6. What have been the best parts for you, of getting the mediation programme going at your school?

(place a check mark beside number 1 or number 2, do not answer both)

1. There haven't been any good parts for me

2. The best parts have been (please explain below)

7. Please describe what it has been like for you to be a mediator in your school.

8. Do you think the mediation programme at your school should be continued?

(place a check mark beside number 1 or number 2, do not answer both)

1. Yes ____ Why?

2. No . . . Why not?

9. Are there any other things you would like to say about the mediation programme at your school?

10. Are you a (place a check mark beside the correct answer)

1. Girl _____

2. Boy _____

11. What grade are you in? Grade _____

This is the end of the questions I have for you on the mediation programme. I want to thank you for the time and effort you have given me in answering these questions. I really appreciate your help. Lisa

Appendix C

Training Session

Reasons for being at the training session (p.76 of thesis)

(Principal and Vice-principal had left the room)

- wants students to learn how to prevent fights (Teacher)
- want to learn how to solve problems
- enjoy helping and want to learn how to help more
- sees conflict, wants to learn how to help people get along
- wants to lower the number of fights in the school
- nominated to be here, wanted to learn more about the course
- want to learn about listening and conflict management
- excited by a new experience (Teacher)
- believes children can solve their own problems, wants to help them do that

(Teacher)

- want to learn more
- wants to be a mediator
- I'll be able to learn to help people solve their problems
- nominated to be here
- want to learn more about mediation (researcher)
- wants to help others (2 students)
- wants to solve problems (2 students)
- nominated to learn how to help people solve their problems
- chosen to be here to learn
- to learn how to be a student mediator
- believes in helping people not to fight

- believes there are alternatives to fighting and would rather see people playing than fighting (Teacher)

Conflict Styles (p. 80 in thesis)

Turtle - withdraws

Owl - intellectualizes about the issues so that all emotions and feelings are hidden

Lemming - give in and accept the other persons point of view

Ostrich - deny

Gorilla - overpower, force the others to accept your point of view

Sheep - formulate, support and conform to group norms,

forbidding the expression of opposition and disagreement in the group

Role-play (p. 83 in thesis)

Trainer - finish the sentence "the best thing that ever happened to me was...",
but I don't want to see any good listeners. Then switch when I say so.

Conceptual discussions, Setting parameters, What If's (p.84 in thesis)

Trainer - Active listening really means two things, 1. we are trying to hear the thoughts, feelings of the sender. Not only listening to the words, but what's behind them.

2. So we don't have this breakdown we want to check out that we've heard correctly...restating and reflecting. These are the power tools of mediation... do not agree or disagree, restate and reflect using our own words. For example. B. I think what your telling me is that your hurt and confused that A. treated you this way..... Hear both sides of the story.

Remember why you are there, you must listen to both sides of the story and let each person know you are listening to them.

Student question - do people need to agree to go to mediation?

Trainer - can't pressure them or you won't get full co-operation

Principal - I did share with the children that if the problem was very serious the children would not be expected to become involved. If it was a question of abuse of a supervisor or someone was hurt they wouldn't be expected to become involved.

Trainer - what you're trying to do is be neutral.....mediators don't have any power

Trainer - what would you do if one of the people is crying?

Dierdre - ask the other first, because it's really hard to talk when you're crying
(Other students offering many suggestions)

Trainer - Let me give you a hint. Crying is a really loud non-verbal message and we want them to know we've heard them. Give me an example of a (mediation) tool, which tool are we going to use?

Mark - Reflect

Trainer - Right. I can see you're really upset about this. What this will do for them is that it will very much lower how deeply they feel it. If we ask them to start talking we're telling them we don't care that they are upset.

Isaac - If you put your arm around one of them the other one will feel like you've taken one side.

What if the kids having the fight don't want to talk?

Trainer - You're not the boss, you're there to help them talk, and if they don't want to talk about it they're not following the general rules. You haven't failed as a mediator, it's their problem

What if the kids don't like the mediators?

Trainer - Try to change mediators. The other thing is that you as mediators have a real responsibility to say I can't mediate this one because she's my best friend.

What if one wants to go to mediation and the other one doesn't?

Trainer - Most people don't want to go to mediation because they think that the mediators will tell them what to do. Must tell them that they will solve the problem themselves and you're just there to help them talk to each other about it

What if.... and the girl is upset and crying and the boy is just laughing?

Trainer - What do you think you should do?. I think you people can answer this

Janice - reflect

What if ones a gorilla and ones an ostrich?

Trainer - Well it's your job to not let the gorilla overpower the ostrich

What if someone comes to you with a really serious problem, like with their parents or something?

Trainer - The way it's handled in school mediation is that I will not talk about what happens here unless I think someone is going to get hurt or it's a

problem that needs to be taken to the teacher. If someone tells you a problem it's because they want someone to know. You have to tell a teacher when it's serious

What if 2 mediators are fighting?

Trainer - you're human beings, then I would hope you would go to mediation, because it works real well

What if you see two kids fighting and there are no teachers around?

Trainer - inform them about mediation but don't start one. Don't do one without a teacher around

Closing commentary from the participants in the training session (p.86 in thesis)

Samantha - thanks for helping us learn what we don't know

Margo - thanks

Andrea - thanks for teaching me how to be a proper mediator, because in our school I know they wouldn't have taught us that

Katie - thanks

Linda - thanks, I really had fun

Teacher - well done to everybody

Gary - I really enjoyed the role-plays

Aaron - thanks it was a blast

Vice-Principal. - I agree with Aaron. The students were great

Isaac - it was really good. I liked breaking into groups

Tony - Cool

Caroline - I'd like to say thank you for all your help and the listening tools

Teacher - One of the neatest things for me was to learn with the kids

Evan - thanks for teaching me all this stuff

Patrick - I guess I'm having the same feelings as the Vice-Principal and Aaron
(a blast)

Deirdre - I think we're going to be able to use this at school

Principal - I'm really proud of our students. This is going to make our school an
even better place than it already is (CHEERS AND CLAPPING)

Robbie - When I get home I'm going to have the last argument I'm going to have
with my friends in my entire life. Thanks for the cookies and Pizza and
thanks to everybody

Stephen - thanks to (Trainer) and the other teachers

David - I liked the squeaky chairs, the cookies were good, I don't like coffee that
much, the experience was good

Jamie - thanks it was great

Teacher - I think this will do a lot for our school. I think we forget that children
are people.

Mark - thanks to everybody who helped. I think it was very successful

Janice - the programme was great, I hope the real thing is easier. I think we all
worked really hard and deserve a pat on the back

Appendix D

School yard interviews

(p.129 in thesis)

Kings of the Mountain

1 The King of the Mountain

R - What do think the mediation programme is all about?

King - helping people with their problems.

R - why does your school have this programme?

King - I don't know

R - Do you think your school needs it

King - I don't think so

R - If you were having a problem out in the yard with a friend would you ask a
mediators help?

King - No

R - Why?

King - I don't think I have to because I can solve my things myself

R - Can you tell me what other ways there are for solving problems when you're
having a problem with a friend

King - just tell them to stop, or walk away from them

R - do you think the mediation programme should continue here?

King - yeah, I guess

R - Why?

King -For people who can't solve their problems themselves

#2 Male, grade 4

because if you don't want to go to mediation you don't have to so you have a choice
and that's good.....when kids are throwing fists that's only what should be
mediated

#3 Male, grade 5

R- should it be continued?

Student -no...say there was a guy over there and there was a fight and someone got
punched and got hurt then they'd learn a lesson from that

#4 Male, grade 6

R - What's the mediation programme all about?

Student - I dunnow, about helping others or something

R - why does your school have it?

Student - because they wanted it

R - do you think there's a problem in the yard with too much fighting?

Student - no

#5 From Andrea, a mediator

well he came and talked to me because he was having a problem with his friends. I
asked him if he wanted to go to mediation, but he said no he'd just get heck
from his friends, he said he just wanted to talk to me

#6 Male, grade 5/6

R - Why does your school have this programme?

Student - because they thought there were a lot of fights

R - Do you think there are a lot of fights?

Student - no

R - If you were having a problem with a friend would you ask a mediator for help?

Student - No, it's stupid... I'd rather go see Mrs. Westwood, because then... you don't have to talk about it at all, you don't have to solve it

Others

#1 Male, grade 6

R - Why does your school have this programme?

Student - to help stop fights in the school yard

R - Do you think this was needed at your school?

Student - yes, because there were some bad kids in the school and they needed help. And the mediation programme is helping them...because it's a great way.. for people, for the school to be a better place to stay and for people being nice to each other instead of fighting

#2 Male, grade 5

R - Why does your school have this programme?

Student - to help kids stop fighting

R - Did your school need help with that?

Student - yeah, I think they did need help with that because there are only two lunch time monitors and they can't be everywhere at once....so once the peer mediation programme started they are walking around and checking things out also, so I think it's a good thing.....you can ask them for help or if they see a problem they can come and help....go in a room and they won't tell anyone, unless the teachers ask them...

R - would you go to one of the mediators if you were having a problem with a friend?

Student - yeah, because sometimes the lunch hour monitors just say, well you leave this kid alone and he'll leave you alone and you go this way and he'll go that way, but with the peer mediation you get to solve the problem and if that doesn't work you go back until you get the right answer to the problem.....so I think it's a good because

R - Is a friend of yours a mediator?

Student - yeah Samantha and Linda are in my class and they gave me a few hints about it.

#3 Male grade 4

R - Why does your school have this programme?

Student - well because we have a lot of fights and because a kid in this school got two broken arms and two broken legs and the school got sued, so they're going to try and take all this fighting away and put this special programme in

#4 Female. grade 4

R - Why does your school have this programme?

Student - to help people solve problems

R - Do you think your school needed the programme?

Student - yes...because a lot of people fight at this school and they don't use 'I' messages and stuff

#5 Female. grade 4

R - Why does your school have this programme?

Student - well so the school will be a safer place, and nobody will get hurt
because they are going to be watching

#6 Female, grade 4

R - Do you think your school needed this programme?

Student - I think it's good because instead when the Misses are too busy then they
could help

Appendix E

Questionnaire Responses: Student Mediators (p.131 in thesis)

Twenty trained, two quit (males, grade 4,6), one female had personal problems (grade 6), 17 remain

Boys- 4- Grade 6

4- Grade 5

1- Grade 4

9 Boys

Girls - 4- Grade 6

3- Grade 5

1- Grade 4

8 Girls

Question #1 What does the term mean to you?

Boys- helping others to solve their problems (8)

- most people would say helping others solve their problems, but I would say it gives them alternatives (1, Grade 5) Mark

Girls - helping others solve their problems (7)

- sometimes I think about people helping, but sometimes I think about mediators spreading rumours about whom they mediated (1, Grade 5)

Heather

Question #2 What is a school mediation programme all about?

Boys -kids and teachers that try to help kids not get in fights (2, Grade 6)

- to make the playground a safer place (1, Grade 6)
- to lower the fighting level at our school and across North America (1,Grade 6)
- to solve people's problems (2, Grade 6,4)
- helping people that are in conflict (1, Grade 5)
- to help lower the rate of fights and to let people see that solving their differences is better than fighting about them (1, Grade 5)
- It's about students in the school wanting to help other students in the school (1, Grade 5)

Girls - to limit the amount of fighting. It's trying to get us to get along,maybe not as friends, just as people (1, Grade 6)

- to help people, peers at school that have a problem (3, Grade 6,5,4)
- to help make the school a better place and to stop the fight before it turns into hitting (1, Grade 6)
- to reduce the amount of fighting in the school (1, Grade 6)
- Well, I think it is about caring and helping other people and trying to feel what the other person is feeling (1, Grade 5) Samantha
- 2 people go out at recess and mediate. If there is a problem we bring them in a room & try to solve their problem (1, Grade 5)

Question #3 Why does your school have it?

- Boys** - because there have been too many fights, a lot of fights in the yard, to reduce the number of fights in the yard (5, Grade 6 [2], 5 [2], 4[1])
- so students can help resolve their problems without fighting (2, Grade 6)
 - the school thought it would work and it gives Mrs. Westwood a rest at the office (1, Grade 5) Mark
 - because the school thought we needed it (1, Grade 5)

- Girls** - reduce fighting, so school is a more peaceful place (5, Grade 6[2], 5[2], 4[1])
- we desperately needed a mediation programme in our school because there were so many fights and problems. And the principal also gave so many detentions! (1, Grade 6) Katie
 - because our principal wants our school to be a better place (1, Grade 6)
 - I think it has mediation because children feel more comfortable talking with their peers rather than an adult (1, Grade 5)

Question #4 Training gave you enough preparation?

Boys - Yes (9)

Girls - Yes(8)

Question #5 Biggest problems?

Boys - -no problems(9)

Girls - no problems (1, Grade 4)

problems:

- people are faking, they think mediation is a joke, but it's not it's a serious thing (1, Grade 6)

- it took too long to get it started (1, Grade 6) Katie
- not being able to play with my friends (1, Grade 6) Janice
- the mediators have to avoid physical fights and they are all over the yard and some people take it as a joke (1, Grade 6)
- most of the fights at our school are physical fights and we can't mediate physical fights so we end up not mediating at all (1, Grade 5) Heather.
- I can't explain the problems I had. (1, Grade 5) Samantha
- kids at school are afraid to come to us (1, Grade 5) Linda

Question #6 Best parts of the mediation programme?

Boys - no best parts (3, Grade 6[2], 4[1])

- No answer (1, Grade 5)
- to mediate a real situation (1, Grade 6)
- I get more attention (1, Grade 6)
- The Miss (school yard monitor) asked me to mediate and I wasn't even on duty (1, Grade 5)
- I feel confident in myself because I have succeeded in helping people. I can use what I have learned in my own self-development (1, Grade 5) Mark
- the best part for me was when the children were happy that they solved the problem (1, Grade 5)

Girls - no good parts (2, Grade 6, 5)

- no answer (1, Grade 6)
- knowing that people trust you to talk about sometimes personal things (1, Grade 6)
- lots of people came to me to help them solve their problems (1, Grade 6) Katie
- just trying to help people solve their problems (2, Grade 5, 4)
- the first time I mediated (1, Grade 5)

Question #7 What's it been like, being a mediator?

Boys - no answer (1, Grade 4)

- I feel really great that I can help a boy or girl solve their problems (1, Grade 6)
- well mostly all I do is just walk around and I can't play any games (1, Grade 6) Tony

- it's fun but the first couple of weeks I had butterflies in my stomach (1, Grade 6)
- I'm big at my school because I'm popular and stuff (1, Grade 6)
- it's been good because I like helping other people out (1, Grade 5)
- it has been a great experience. I have the chance to help people solve their problems and that they have confidence in me to keep confidentiality and know that they will both get something out of me (1, Grade 5)
- I have only had to mediate once and I felt really good. I thought I would have been a bit more respected by my fellow students being a mediator but I don't think I am (1, Grade 5) Mark.
- It's been fun and every time I help someone it makes me feel good (1, Grade 5)

Girls - It's been good although I'm still a little shy (1, Grade 6)

- I felt happy when lots of people wanted me to be a mediator, but I felt mad because I never got anyone in mediation and people never wanted to solve their problems (1, Grade 6) Katie
- well everything's just normal, nothing's changed (1, Grade 6) Janice.
- it's been fun because I know I'm doing something for the school and when my brother gets here he'll be in good mediating hands (1, Grade 6)
- for me it has been a big opportunity to learn how to be a mediator, but in some ways I want to say who I mediated with and why (1, Grade 5) Heather
- it's been fun, but it has also been discouraging because I feel bad that I haven't had the chance to mediate. (1, Grade 5) Samantha
- I can't wait to mediate for the first time. You feel good when you are out in the yard wearing your sash. (1, Grade 5) Linda
- it has been a new experience for me and I have met people I didn't know before. (1, grade 4)

Question #8 Should the programme be continued?

Boys-YES (8)

No (1, Grade 4)

why- because a lot of people they run up to you and start fighting and say they want mediation and they really don't

Girls- Yes (8)

Question # 9 Other comments?

Boys -No other comments (6)

Other comments

- it hasn't done anything yet but I think it will (1, Grade 6)
- it's helping kids that needed mediation (1, Grade 5)
- I'm glad to be a part of it (1, Grade 5) Mark

Girls - No other comments (4)

Other comments

- I just want to say it's wonderful. It's a pleasure to have in the school system (1, Grade 6) Katie
- It's going good, great. Question (FOR LISA) How do you know who needs mediation or not (1, Grade 6) Andrea
- I think this mediation programme is really good and I think all schools should have a chance to have the mediation programme in their schools. (1, Grade 5)
- I liked the training a lot. It was fun doing the role-plays. I enjoy being a mediator (1, Grade 5) Linda

Appendix F

Questionnaires Responses: Mediation Programme Staff (p.131 in thesis)

Question #2 Issues important to you when implementing a new programme?

- you are consulted before the programme is introduced
- you are prepared for it, given some training
- you are given the time and monetary support necessary
- as above, also the need for the programme and feasibility in the school environment
- a positive programme in any school must be productive (to students and community) and positive in (ideas and methods) and carry over (will it last only one year??)
- background info
- training
- materials
- relevance, advantages to the children
- does the programme respect the children as thinking individuals
- my own personal philosophy
- school's philosophy
- staff's agreement
- principal/admin support

Question #3 Factors in school environment effect ability to implement?

- must have the staff on side
- support of the principal(real not just verbal support,
- knowledge & approval of parents and students
- must have the time,space for it
- 2 or 3 very keen staff with time for the programme

Question #4 What for you have been the most difficult aspects of implementation?

- time restrictions, students want their free time, and staff doesn't have other time except lunch, difficult to meet with mediators

- frustration in not knowing how to deal with issues as they arose as the programme is new to us all
- lack of general support for the programme
- misunderstandings of roles and expectations
- lack of communication between team members
- lack of realistic goals

Question #5 Other comments on programme implementation

- teachers should be released 1/2, 1/4 time to deal with implementation
- part of staff/ student training should be hearing from someone who has implemented a programme
- more help with programme implementation in the training
- it takes time to get all staff 95% behind any new programme
- we all tend to want to see tangible immediate results

Question #13. #14 Were school staff, you sufficiently prepared

- all school staff should have received some training
- very few other teachers actively involved
- most not aware of the steps of the programme
- teacher knowledge low/ assimilation low
- needed more help with implementation
- I feel we made a bit of a leap of faith at the beginning. We didn't really know what to expect and hence we weren't sure if the programme was running well. I do feel that we are developing expectations and changing aspects of the programme to meet those expectation now.
- we've been tripping along re-inventing the process, probably leaving the ideals behind, pragmatism takes over
- old philosophies warp/modify new programmes

Question #15 Were student mediators sufficiently prepared

No (4)- students may have been built up too much, so that the actual experience was a let down. They were not prepared to deal with rejection by their peers because they had been made special and the rejection of school mates who did not want mediation.

- they needed more practice (2)

Yes (1) - I have to say a qualified yes - I felt the training session addressed their initial needs well BUT we didn't have the tools/experience to fully aid the transfer of skills to practice

Question #24 Other comments

- we were not properly prepared for implementation. We did not realize the amount of staff hours it would require. I feel it is worthwhile but it is in no way a certainty that it will continue and be a success.
- we've had lip service support, but no commitment. The strong support needed for the programme isn't in the school
- I don't think this programme and the way it was presented at the training, and no follow-up had a chance of being successful
- this is really a radical programme and the school structure is so big. The whole education system is so big, it's not enough to train 20 kids. We have over 200 hundred kids at the grade 4,5,6 level and at least 150 of them should have been trained. The whole teaching staff should have received some training as well.

END

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FIN