Peer mediation in the UK: a guide for schools

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Cruelty to children must stop. FULL STOP.

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Introduction

This guide is part of the UK's contribution to a two-year European project[1] on mediation in schools funded by the *Daphne-EU programme to combat violence against children, young people and women*. There are four organizations involved: from Spain The Red Cross, from Germany the Osnabrück Forum for Culture and Social Affairs (Fokus), from Belgium The Red Cross and from the UK the NSPCC. Another aspect of the project has been to launch a website[2] to make available to school communities - and to educationalists and other professionals who work with schools - information, resources and contacts relevant to conflict resolution and peer mediation in schools.

The purpose of the guide

The guide, supported by the UK pages of the website, is intended to give those who work in and with schools a sense of what peer mediation is, what it sets out to achieve, and the issues that need to be considered if it is to be introduced into a school. It looks primarily at literature produced in and for the UK, limited as this is (Liebmann, 2000; Tyrrell, 2002), because it is likely to be the most relevant as a starting point for those working in the UK.

The international perspective

It is the USA that has the longest history of peer mediation and the most extensive literature. Other countries – including Australia, Canada, South Africa[3] and Norway[4] with more experience than most – have also introduced programmes in schools. For anyone interested in pursuing the American experience, a good starting point is the CRInfo website[5]. Based at the University of Colorado, it is a gateway to a wealth of conflict resolution resources on the web and in print. Those who would like to find out more about the European perspective will find information about Germany, Belgium and Spain, some of it translated into English, on the Mediation-eu.net website. It is also worth looking at the website of The European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation[6]. This is an independent, non-government network based in the Netherlands for 150 European organizations concerned with a spectrum of topics, including conflict resolution and peer mediation in schools. A comprehensive, reflective and insightful book, Jerry Tyrrell's *Peer Mediation: a process for primary*

schools[7], useful for teachers in secondary as well as primary schools, draws on a range of literature from a variety of countries.

What peer mediation is

Mediation, which can be used in a variety of contexts, is a process whereby people involved in a dispute enter voluntarily into an arrangement to resolve the problem collaboratively. By establishing agreed ground rules for the conduct of the mediation, a neutral mediator enables the participants to identify the issues by talking about the situation from their own point of view, to be heard by the other participant(s), and to say what their preferred outcome would be. Together, the participants then draw up a written agreement. The mediator neither gives advice nor imposes a solution; responsibility and control rest with the participants.

In schools where mediation schemes have been introduced the process works along similar lines, but with pupils mediating disputes between pupils. Usually a whole year group is given some training in conflict resolution after which pupils who are interested are invited to apply to go on to further training. Once trained, the peer mediators work in pairs, invariably with pupils younger than themselves. Because of the age of the mediators and the people they are working with there are clearly particular issues that have to be considered in the school setting, such as disclosure of abuse or incidents that are so serious that the involvement of an adult in the school would be essential.

Peer mediation is invariably considered to be one of a range of techniques and skills, under the much broader term *conflict resolution*, that need to be considered by any school wishing to introduce a scheme successfully. Conflict resolution encompasses a number of approaches, including restorative justice[8], anti-bullying workshops (Bitel and Rolls, 2000), peer leadership training, peer counselling, peer mentoring, and multicultural programmes dealing with prejudice and stereotypes. It also covers issues that may be addressed in classrooms, such as conflicts between countries, ethnic groups, communities and individuals as exhibited in the contemporary world or history or fiction (European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation website). In the wider world it includes processes such as reconciliation, problem solving, reparation and conciliation (Bentley, 1996).

The thinking underlying mediation

An apparently straightforward process, peer mediation calls into question assumptions about the nature of conflict itself, what children are capable of doing for themselves, and the content and purposes of education.

The nature of conflict

The notion of conflict as inevitable appears again and again in the literature, as a phenomenon with the potential to be either constructive or destructive (see, for example, Lampen and Lampen, 1997; the website of the Restorative Justice Consortium[9]; Stacey, 1996; Tyrrell, 2002). It has therefore to be confronted, not avoided, and the nature of the outcome depends on the way it is handled. Lampen and Lampen (1997) believe that 'there can be few tasks more important to our society than teaching young people creative and non-violent ways of handling it'. An organization specializing in training young people in conflict resolution skills, Leap Confronting Conflict, open their information booklet *What's your problem!?* with the statement:

> Conflict is an inevitable part of young people's lives. Left unresolved it can result in consequences that can be damaging and harmful for the young people themselves, for their friends, families, neighbours and the wider community. When worked with creatively, conflict is an opportunity for growth and change, for forging new understandings and deeper relationships between individuals and groups.

Stacey and Robinson (1997), in similar vein, claim that conflict, if dealt with in a way that respects the rights of all involved, 'can be a motivator for positive change and even for transformation'.

In their analysis, Lampen and Lampen (1997) examine the interactions between attitudes, conflict issues and behaviour and draw from them ways in which conflict can be resolved, starting with what can be done in particular circumstances, stopping a fight for example. They propose that conflict resolution should be regarded as fighting for a solution rather than fighting to win. In this light an *enemy* becomes a *partner* with whom to search for *win-win* solutions, which satisfy the needs – though not necessarily all the wishes – of both parties.

What children are capable of doing for themselves

Peer mediation presupposes that children and young people, following suitable training and with ongoing support, are capable of resolving conflicts for themselves.

Lawrence (2000) claims that they benefit from doing so because they have to take responsibility for their feelings and behaviour. She also argues that children often prefer to confide in other children rather than in an adult. Stacey (1996), referring to Maslow's[10] theory of *self-actualisation,* suggests that the skills provided by mediation training and practice develop this *natural inclination* in children.

Practitioners do make clear, however, that there are some kinds of conflict, where abuse is concerned for example, that are inappropriate for peer mediation. This is covered in more detail in the section *What are the problems that can be dealt with through peer mediation?*

The content and purposes of education

Tyrrell (2002) considers the impact that competition between schools, a subject-led curriculum and a plethora of initiatives have had on teachers' workload and on pupils' perceptions of what education is for. He contrasts what many children learn at school, and the way they learn it, with the needs of industry and society for people able to work co-operatively, think creatively and solve problems. Peer mediation, he argues, 'provides an opportunity for children to play an active part in decision-making about issues which interest and concern them. It prepares them to be responsible citizens of the future. It gives them practical *life skills* that they can put into effect in school, at home, and ultimately in the community'.

Three of these skills – affirmation, communication and co-operation - appear repeatedly in the literature (see, for example, Bowers et al, 1989; Stacey, 1996; Lampen and Lampen, 1997). *Affirmation* is respect by the disputants for each other's good qualities, an acknowledgement by each that the other's needs and hopes may have equal weight with their own, and a recognition by each that the other is a partner with whom solutions can be reached. *Communication* involves listening in a way that enables each party to understand the origins of the conflict, the issues underlying the dispute as far as the other party is concerned, and what each is willing to do to reach a solution, and doing these without arousing anger or mistrust. *Co-operation* entails agreeing to come together to discuss and to carry out what is agreed (Lampen and Lampen, 1997). Without these skills, conflict resolution and mediation cannot take place (Stacey, 1996).

Such skills are often absent from the adult world, whether in personal and professional relationships, or in national and international politics. The parallels between the skills required for peer mediation and those needed in the peace talks in Northern Ireland were not lost on the children trained as part of the EMU Project (Tyrrell, 2002).

The origins of conflict resolution in schools in the UK

Conflict resolution in schools began in the early 1980s with the work of the Kingston Friends Workshop Group (Liebmann, 1998; Tyrrell, 2002) who had been inspired by a visit to the UK, in 1982, of the Children's Creative Response to Conflict Programme, a Quaker group from New York (Bentley, 1996). The Kingston Group developed their work in schools in the years following and published their own book, *Ways and Means[11]*, in 1985. The Quaker influence on conflict resolution in schools has clearly been very strong. Liebmann (1998) refers to the support given by Quaker Peace and Service in London, who hosted meetings twice a year for people interested in this work. They also helped to form the European Network in Conflict Resolution in Education (ENCORE) in 1990, whose aims included the promotion of conflict resolution and mediation skills in schools throughout Europe; the dissemination of existing resources and the production of new ones; the encouragement of national and international authorities and agencies to implement the Council of Europe Report *Violence and Conflict Resolution in Schools*; and the maintenance of links with similar organizations in Europe and elsewhere.

In the work produced in the last few years it is possible to hear echoes of the ideas of Quakers who pioneered conflict resolution in schools (see, for example, Bowers et al, 1989). It is also possible to see why the emphases on responsibility and collaboration in conflict resolution would have been in harmony with their values. Bentley (1996) refers to the strong influence of the Quakers on conflict resolution because of their commitment to peace and their tradition of active methods of dealing with conflict.

The development of peer mediation in schools in the UK

Tyrrell (2002) traces the origins of peer mediation to peace education and community mediation programmes in the USA, which were copied and adapted in parts of Europe and Australasia. Liebmann (1998) makes the point that mediation has been a traditional form of conflict resolution in parts of Asia and Africa, though Tyrrell (2002) claims there is little evidence of its existence in those continents.

As far as the UK is concerned, Bitel and Roberts (2003) say that peer mediation in schools began to develop in 1992. Work on conflict resolution and peer mediation skills was initially focused on primary schools (Liebmann, 1998) and the European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation report (2000) comments that this is generally the case. However, as can be seen on the Mediation-eu.net website, there is significant work going on in secondary schools.

There are several routes by which it has been introduced into schools. The principal one is through community mediation services, who saw working with schools as a logical extension of their work in the community, as teaching the next generation 'a preventative life skill' (Liebmann, 1998). Another is through work with young offenders, as was the case with Leap Confronting Conflict based in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. In Northern Ireland (see Tyrrell, 2000) the introduction of peer mediation was directly related to the troubles and the introduction of Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU)[12] by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland.

The work with particular schools often stemmed from government and local government initiatives. CRISP (Conflict Resolution in Schools Programme), for example, developed out of the Leicestershire Mediation Service and the programme was initially made possible by funding from the National Lottery[13]. Highbury Fields School, in the London Borough of Islington, was able to fund their scheme for the first three years with a grant from the African Caribbean Exclusions Project[14]. Morpeth School, in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, introduced a conflict resolution programme through funding available to their training provider and subsequently applied for other funding locally[15]. For both these schools there were particular reasons why they were receptive to approaches from training providers, but in both cases because they were concerned to develop their ethos. What to do once external funding ceases is clearly an issue, though not an insuperable one, for both schools and training providers.[16]

On the basis of responses from 12 agencies to his questionnaire in 2000, Tyrrell (2002) reports that funding came from a variety of sources, including the National Lottery, local authorities and the European Union. The impetus for schools included concerns about community problems that affected them, violence encountered by

young people, and enthusiasm for the values of conflict resolution by some individual teachers.

The extent to which peer mediation is now being used in schools in the UK is impossible to say, though some people have attempted to. Rather optimistically, one claim is that although schools reflect society's unequal, aggressive, adversarial, competitive qualities, 'the good news is that a change to a more equal, caring and co-operative society is beginning and mediation, including peer mediation, is spreading throughout the UK' (Lawrence, 2000). From the figures then available, Liebmann (1998) says that of the 135 mediation services which were then members of Mediation UK[17] 25 were involved, though not necessarily exclusively, in conflict resolution and peer mediation work in schools. A little more recently, Liebmann (2000) cites figures from Mediation UK for 1999 that there were 45 school mediation projects, some working in several schools. Bitel and Roberts (2003) say that peer mediation has been growing 'slowly and steadily' although 'often in an ad hoc manner' and cite research presented at a peer mediation network day at Friends House, London, in September 2000 claiming that there were 60 to 80 mediation projects in schools. It is not possible to be any more reliable at the time of writing. Of Mediation UK's current membership 31 members, including services and freelance trainers, are involved in peer mediation work in schools, though the number actually doing this kind of work may be higher[18].

Not least because of funding, from the perspective of both trainers and schools, there will need to be more official recognition of the value of peer mediation by local and national government if it is to become more widely practised. There has been some interest by government in conflict resolution in schools that involves mediation, in the form of restorative justice. On 12 February 2003, the Youth Justice Board[19] announced an extension of a Restorative Justice in Schools Project in Hammersmith and Fulham to seven other areas around the country. However, this is to be run by Youth Offending Teams and there is no suggestion that it will involve peer mediation.

Some of the literature (see, for example, Liebmann, 2000 and Tyrrell, 2002) discusses peer mediation in relation to its value in citizenship education, and this may be another reason why it will be attractive to schools. In the meantime, however, an item in the Autumn 2003 edition of *Teaching*[20] is revealing about the current state of awareness about peer mediation within the teaching profession generally, at least in England. The item was prompted by a survey carried out in 2002 by the General

Teaching Council for England (GTC), which found that poor pupil behaviour was a major factor in demotivating teachers and added to the difficulty of retention. Practising teachers were asked to suggest resources to promote positive pupil behaviour. The resulting feature does include resources on Circle Time and one on improving children's self-esteem, both of which are relevant to the values underlying conflict resolution skills. However, there are no references at all to conflict resolution or to peer mediation.

The process of peer mediation

There are many descriptions of the process (see, for example, Lampen, 1994; Stacey and Robinson, 1997; Lawrence, 2000; and the European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation, 2000). Tyrrell (2000) puts it this way:

> Peer mediation is a very matter-of-fact, logical, linear process, whereby children help each other to deal with their conflicts, playground disputes, and so on. It is a structured process, managed by two mediators, who are children. They introduce the process, establish ground rules, listen to the story from the perspective of each of the disputants and offer to each of them a summary of what he or she has said. They then provide the opportunity for both sides to voice their feelings, help them identify the problems, brainstorm solutions, and, ideally, agree a solution. Mediation is a voluntary process, so if either of those in dispute decides that he or she doesn't want to go ahead at any stage, he or she doesn't have to. In that instance the conflict is usually dealt with according to the school's standard discipline policy. (Page 11)

Training providers make a point of the importance of tailoring conflict resolution and peer mediation programmes to the needs of the particular school[21]. There has to be a process of referral, and this can be at the suggestion of one of the disputants, or both, or a member of staff (Lampen, 1994), although it is clear that this is the kind of decision that each school needs to make for itself (Stacey and Robinson, 1997).

The ground rules make the process workable. They include rules for both the mediators and the disputants. The mediators will, at the very least, agree to be impartial, to keep 'good' secrets and to refrain from telling the disputants what to do (Tyrrell, 2002). They may, however, suggest a part of the problem that would be easiest to start on (Lampen, 1994). Keeping 'good' secrets is taken to mean that the mediators will maintain confidentiality about what is discussed at the mediation. A distinction is made between 'good' secrets and information that has to be passed on to a teacher because a participant would otherwise be at risk of harm (Tyrrell, 2002), or law-breaking is involved (Lampen, 1994). The disputants will at least agree that there is to be no swearing or name-calling, no interrupting, and no blaming or accusing one another (Stacey and Robinson, 1997; Tyrrell, 2002).

The extent to which, in practice, an agreement is formalized in writing, with copies to the participants, seems to vary even within schools[22]. Lampen (1994), however, says that the mediators may write a short report on the mediation and what else needs to be done, to be shared with the adult supervizing the scheme in school. Such sharing would not compromise confidentiality as long as information about this part of the process were shared with the participants at the beginning of the mediation. The same would apply to the boundaries of confidentiality.

Issues

Which children get to become peer mediators?

The European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation report (2000) suggests that a school's team of mediators will be drawn from all year groups. Stacey and Robinson (1997) say this is a possibility, but that the usual age in primary schools is ten to eleven, and any age at secondary level. On the basis of the literature and the material collected for the Mediation-eu.net website, it is more often the case that older pupils mediate for younger ones. However, the issues exercising practitioners and schools are related more to which children in a year group will progress from the training that is normally provided to whole year groups to the more specialized training that enables them to mediate effectively. Who makes the choice and on what criteria?

Tyrrell (2002) describes this as possibly the most difficult part of the process. He contrasts the common practice in the USA of choosing mediators in advance of the training with what usually happens in primary schools in the UK, which is that the whole class receive some training before the selection of those who will go on to act as mediators. The rationale is that all pupils benefit from the reduction in disaffection and aggressive behaviour[23] and that the opportunities for growth in confidence and competence would otherwise be lost for some pupils.

Inman and Turner (2001), in an evaluation of peer mediation in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, encapsulate the dilemma. They acknowledge the difficulties posed by involving pupils whose behaviour is challenging: that the credibility of a project can be put at risk if those who are meant to be role models are unreliable and pupils whose behaviour is poor are rewarded. However, they conclude that work with targeted groups had been 'transforming' and should be offered to students on the

margins[24]. Tyrrell (2002) concurs: 'The potential for the transformation of previously negative role models is a universal outcome of peer mediation'.[25] He cites the findings of the EMU Project, on which he worked, that found that where children were asked to choose who should become mediators their choices reflected those of the teachers – the nicest and best, most academically able and suitable characters. The question that needs to be asked, he concludes, is: who will benefit most from *being* a mediator?

The Highbury Fields School documentation[26] recommends that would-be mediators be chosen from a range of social strata in the year group because this affects the image of the scheme within the school. Ensuring that the mediators truly represent the range of pupils in a school may also relate to the balance between boys and girls involved in the scheme. Bitel and Rolls (2000), writing about the implementation of peer mediation in a secondary school in Camberwell, describe the steps taken to try to address the under-representation of boys the first time the training was run. In the second year, recruitment was changed from peer election to self-nomination. In advance, the staff co-ordinator approached specific boys, those who tended to be good at sports and who represented a range of academic ability. In terms of attracting more boys this worked and, claim Bitel and Rolls, improved the credibility of the scheme in the school.

There is also the question of the potentially demotivating and disaffecting consequences of saying to some pupils who have volunteered to become peer mediators that they have not been chosen. Tyrrell (2002) suggests that as many children as possible be trained and that the pupils who are not become involved in other aspects of the scheme such as publicity. At Morpeth School[27] many other activities were introduced along with their conflict resolution programme with the result that there are always other opportunities within the school for those who would like to be peer mediators but are not selected. Jason Knibbs, from CRISP, describes with some poignancy the upset that can be caused to pupils, particularly those in primary schools, whose applications have been unsuccessful[28]. He endorses the idea that it helps to have alternatives that these children can become involved in but also believes that the success of the scheme has to take priority.

In this section, and elsewhere in the guide, it can be seen that there is a range of possibilities regarding the process by which pupils are selected to become mediators. The possibilities include self-nomination, nomination by teachers or peers or trainers,

or a combination of these. CRISP invites pupils to volunteer towards the end of a seven-hour PSHE course for the whole year group. To apply they have to complete a written application form explaining why they think they would be effective in the role, and provide the names of a staff and student referee. Applicants are interviewed individually by CRISP workers who also decide, in consultation with the school, which pupils will be accepted. Pupils are informed by letter whether or not their applications have been successful. Highbury Fields School's documents stress the importance of application forms as a means of identifying pupils who will be genuinely committed and of conveying the seriousness of the commitment needed. They too underline the importance of teacher references and consulting with a wide variety of teachers before selecting candidates for interview.

There is also the question of how many pupils should be trained as peer mediators. Stacey and Robinson (1997) recommend a group size of 12 to 16, together with the staff who will be trained alongside them. However, it is not only the effectiveness of group size that is significant. In an interview with Include Youth[29] for the Mediation-eu.net website, the dilemma was put very clearly. The initial training for all pupils in a year group creates much enthusiasm amongst pupils. If all who volunteer are trained the ratio of mediators to potential clients is such that there is a high level of frustration amongst the mediators because there is not necessarily enough work to go around.

What are the problems that can be dealt with through peer mediation?
In a case study based on an evaluation of peer mediation in a primary school, Tyrrell (2002) found in the agreement forms produced during mediations that some quite serious issues had been covered. These included bullying, name-calling involving family background, and threatening to get a gang or brothers to deal with the other person. A common issue, particularly for girls, was one child having taken another child's friend away. For both boys and girls exclusion from a group was a common cause of conflict.

These issues are unlikely to cause any surprise to teachers. However, it is clearly important that mediators have guidance about the kinds of issues they can attempt to mediate. Stacey and Robinson (1997) cite the guidelines of a junior school. These state that mediators should not deal with a fight while it is going on, family matters, anything to do with breaking the law, school rules or property, or violent things. What can be mediated are situations in which children are left out of the group, called

names, have fallen out with friends, have experienced something unfair, are being picked on or teased. Lawrence (2000) excludes theft, drugs, abuse and serious bullying. The pithiest advice is that cited by Tyrrell (2002). He quotes a school principal, responding to a question from a teacher in another school, who said that peer mediators should not deal with anything that involved 'teeth, skin and hair'.

How to pay for peer mediation

From discussions with training providers and schools, it is clear that funding is an important issue for both. The significance of external funding, that is, external to schools, in relation to initiating conflict resolution and peer mediation programmes, has been covered briefly in the section on *The development of peer mediation in the UK.* The European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation report (2000) includes the importance of ongoing training for teachers, pupils and parents, of reflective practice and evaluation. The report does not consider, in relation to these, how they are to be funded, but one of their overall recommendations is that funding from government is required, and that it should be ongoing and long term. Inman and Turner (2001), in their evaluation of five secondary schools in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, found that the schools had mixed feelings about funding from external agencies. Some saw advantages in receiving funds that were earmarked for a specific project. Others believed that if projects were funded by the schools themselves they were more likely to be integrated into the work of the school, would be valued more by staff and would have to be argued for more robustly. Both Morpeth School and Highbury Fields School have valued the benefits of their programmes to the extent that they have either sought alternative funds or paid out of their own funds to continue the schemes.

Practical matters

A number of practical considerations are identified by Stacey and Robinson (1997). These include the provision of suitable accommodation for mediations, timing and frequency, rotas and publicity. They suggest a dedicated quiet room or the play area. Highbury Fields is clear that a permanent room is vital with mediation offered at set times. In practice this is 40 minutes at lunchtimes and some break times, although mediators are also sometimes called upon by a senior member of staff during lesson times. Stacey and Robinson (1997) say that schemes are often run at four lunch times per week but that some schools do have sessions before and after school. They believe that at least 30 minutes is normally needed for a mediation. The

documentation produced by Highbury Fields School makes the point (that every teacher knows but would not necessarily take account of in drawing up a rota) that the rota should reflect the fact that more conflicts arise at the end of the week and towards the end of term.

It was suggested earlier, in the *Issues* section, that involvement in publicising a service is an effective way of engaging children whose applications to become peer mediators have been unsuccessful. Sellman (2002) identifies publicity as an important factor in sustaining schemes successfully, and discusses the importance of frequent advertising and presentations within the school and features in the local press. Peer mediators at Highbury Fields School learned a useful lesson about the role of publicity, even though its initial results were not what they expected. The school's *Peer Mediation* booklet discusses the disappointment experienced by the first group of pupils to be trained that more pupils were not seeking their help. Publicity led to visits to the mediation room by pupils who were curious, some of them asking silly questions, but who were not coming for mediation. However, the mediators found that eventually some did return with problems. They concluded that this sequence of events was part of the process of younger pupils getting to learn about the scheme and trust the mediators.

Schools have arrived at different conclusions about how peer mediators should be identified within the school. Tyrrell (2002) refers to the use of baseball caps in one of his case studies. At Highbury Fields School, when the scheme first started, the mediators wore badges but decided they did not like what this denoted. The badges were replaced by ribbons but they have now decided that these too are unnecessary.

Staff support and training
Belief in the importance of staff understanding the concepts underlying conflict resolution and peer mediation programmes, of support for the scheme in general, and of co-ordination and support for the mediators by a named member of staff is unanimous. This is because of the vital role teachers play in helping to weave the scheme into the fabric of the school by talking with their classes about it. The Highbury Fields School documentation refers to this and the need for teachers to understand that peer mediation is not a punishment and that pupils cannot be forced to go to mediation. The Highbury Fields School *Mediation Training Handbook* also covers the role of staff in the selection of peer mediators. It emphasizes the importance of staff understanding the nature of mediation and the neutrality of

mediators, so that they can advise appropriately about the suitability of candidates. The document makes a case for mediation enriching the school's pastoral system, but only if the scheme is welcomed by the staff. Furthermore, the authors see the role of the mediators not only in mediating conflicts between students but also as acting as a bridge between the student population and the staff, 'flagging up deeper concerns about the emotional well being of younger students' or 'highlighting groups of children where conflict is emerging'. Staff support is also important because in some schemes teachers, following training, take responsibility for teaching conflict resolution within PSHE (Charities Evaluation Service, 2002). Not least, it is because peer mediation will thrive only when it is introduced as part of a whole-school approach[30].

Both Leap Confronting Conflict and CRISP[31] spend a considerable amount of time when they first start working with a school on a mutual exchange of information and opinions with teachers and other staff. In their evaluation of peer mediation schemes Inman and Turner (2001) recommend the involvement of professionals from outside the school, not only when peer mediation is first introduced but in a rolling programme of staff training. The same view is expressed in the European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation report (2000). Tyrrell (2002), on the other hand, discusses the need for external agencies to withdraw if a scheme is to stand any chance of becoming a permanent feature in the school.

Another aspect of staff involvement is practical support for the peer mediators from a staff (not necessarily a teacher) co-ordinator. Stacey and Robinson (1997) argue that there needs to be a weekly team meeting, which should include a debrief, a sharing of experiences and discussions to review and develop the scheme. Highbury Fields School advises monthly or half-termly meetings. Bitel and Rolls (2000) argue that it is the commitment of the staff co-ordinator, their regular support for, and supervision of, the mediators that determine the sustainability of the scheme.

Training

The views on peer mediation training are remarkably consistent. One of the ideas discussed again and again is the importance of a whole-school approach, and of staff understanding and support, as discussed in the previous section. Tyrrell (2002), referring to the EMU-Promoting School Project, writes about the change in approach as the project evolved. In the early stages, the starting point was seen to be training the children. However, it became clear to both Project staff and schools how

important training was for all school staff, not just those who were directly involved in the scheme. Elsewhere in his book, Tyrrell (2002) makes the distinction between peer mediation training as 'a *programme* that children do' and ' "a *process*" that transforms the culture of a school'. If there is one message to schools considering the introduction of conflict resolution and peer mediation programmes that emerges from the literature it is this one, that they will not be effective unless a whole-school approach is adopted, an approach that addresses relationships at every level of the school.

Tyrrell (2002) devotes a whole chapter[32] to training. In it he identifies the approach, its characteristics and the kinds of activities used. What he describes involves active and interactive learning with whole classes and small groups, makes use of the circle and ground rules as in Circle Time,[33] involves everyone *having a go*, co-operative games, children's own conflict stories, the generation of solutions, and the process of peer mediation.

He focuses on eight ground rules that evolved during the course of the EMU Project and explains the rationale for each. The ground rules are: *no put-downs, affirm one another, volunteer yourself only, encourage one another, it's OK to make mistakes, you may pass, keep good secrets, and one person at a time speaking.*
He favours Circle Time as an effective preparation for peer mediation training because of its use of ground rules and their similarity to the skills needed for peer mediation.

Lampen (1994) talks of the importance of training by doing, and the experiential, workshop approach is typical of the training manuals on peer mediation. Lampen and Lampen (1997), who use the term *agreements* rather than *ground rules*, discuss the importance of ensuring that the group is a safe and comfortable place for everyone to work in. *Agreements* play an important role in this and, says Lampen (1994), they need to be continually reviewed. Other factors creating the right environment are the space to be used for training and the organization of that space. The Lampens, for example, talk of the usefulness of chairs arranged in circles for discussion – again the similarity with Circle Time – and in horseshoes for delivering information. While Tyrell's (2002) book focuses on work with primary age pupils, Lampen and Lampen have geared their material for eight workshops to young people 13 to 16 years old. They include appendices to assist trainers in collecting opinions for a final evaluation, additional workshops to develop *listening skills* and *expressing feelings clearly.*

Stacey and Robinson's (1997) book emphasizes conflict resolution skills for all pupils, with peer mediation as the 'icing on the cake' for schools that wish to follow up with this. They outline the process for infant mediation and training, through junior and lower secondary, to upper secondary. They focus on six areas of skill: *speaking and listening, affirmation, co-operation, emotional literacy, conflict resolution* and *mediation*. These are at three levels: *beginner, intermediate and advanced*. As with so much that is written on peer mediation, there are frequent echoes of the terminology and approaches used by other practitioners. It is clear to see, for example, why Stacey and Robinson regard speaking and listening so highly in conflict resolution and peer mediation training. After all, they are the very stuff of the peer mediation process and require higher order skills. Structures to support these skills may be found in much earlier work. Bowers et al (1989), for example, discuss the use within conflict resolution of *admissions* rather than *accusations*, a *no-blame* approach, though they do not call it this. An example they provide is that participants should say, 'I feel upset because...' rather than 'he/she/they always...' Zehra Balman from Leap Confronting Conflict talked of the very same 'I messages'[34] in Leap's own training.

Another example is the focus on skills in *communication*, *affirmation and co-operation*, *raising self-esteem*, *enabling children to understand conflict, feelings and difference* as well as learning about the mediation process as found in Lawrence (2000), which she demonstrates hark back to the early work of the Kingston Workshop Group.

Similarly, there are common experiences of the value of such training. Stacey and Robinson's approach to peer mediation as secondary to the value of conflict resolution training for all is found elsewhere. For example, in one of Tyrrell's (2002) case studies, a teacher comments that the peer mediation service was 'secondary to the value of the training workshops', and the process it initiated in the classroom. It was, she said, 'an added bonus'. On the basis of the evaluation of work in six schools, Tyrrell himself uses the expression 'icing on the cake' to reflect the views of respondents.

Sustainability

Aspects of sustainability have been covered elsewhere in this guide, particularly in the sections on funding and *Staff support and training.* Tyrrell (2002) devotes an

entire chapter to sustainability. On the basis of work with 12 primary schools between 1995 and 1997, he concludes that leadership was the most significant factor in whether a programme was sustainable in the long term, and this was particularly in relation to the ability to address effectively issues of ethos and whole-school relationships.

It may be that the very success of the training for all the pupils in a class or year group reduces the need for a service. Tyrrell (2002) offers this as a possible explanation for statistics collected from six schools between January and June 1998 showing that take-up is often enthusiastic when a service is launched after which there is a fall in the number of mediations.

Sellman (2002) observes from his own experience that little thought is given to sustainability in planning and funding peer mediation schemes. He argues, in common with the rest of the literature, that conflict resolution skills are far more likely to become internalized if they are consistent with the school's pedagogy and organization than if programmes are isolated from them. He says that this perspective is often absent from the agendas of outside agencies. To what extent this generalization can fairly be made is unclear. Reference has already been made to the importance attached to a whole-school approach by Leap Confronting Conflict and CRISP. And both Morpeth and Highbury Fields Schools have ensured that the skills pupils learn do not disappear from the school with the pupils who leave each year.

What are the benefits of peer mediation?

As will be seen in the section on *Evaluation*, the evidence for the benefits of conflict resolution and peer mediation programmes in the UK is mostly neither systematically collected nor scientific[35]. To say this is in no way to undermine the claims made for the beneficial effects of conflict resolution and peer mediation programmes on individuals and schools. However, anyone considering the introduction of such programmes to their schools should be aware both of the nature of the evidence and of the views of practitioners that, when introduced, they do not provide a quick and simple solution (see, for example, Lawrence, 2000). The message from the training providers seen in connection with this project, and from the literature, is that the successful introduction of these programmes requires a considerable investment of determination, powers of persuasion, effort, time and resources[36]. The evidence from the UK is largely subjective and based on varying degrees of formality and rigour in

its collection. Those who would like some harder evidence may find it useful to visit the CRInfo[37] website to look at some of the American findings.

As discussed in the literature, conflict resolution and peer mediation programmes benefit both children as individuals and schools as institutions. They are said to improve pupils' self-esteem (European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation, 2000; Lawrence, 2000) and relationships (Lawrence, 2000; Tyrrell, 2002), give children a greater sense of responsibility (European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation, 2000; Bitel and Rolls, 2000), reduce conflicts (Stacey, 1996; Lawrence, 2000; European Platform, 2000; Tyrrell, 2002), promote academic achievement (European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation, 2000), develop life-skills (European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation, 2000; Bitel and Rolls, 2000), allow teachers to focus on teaching (Lawrence, 2000) and create an environment in which pupils can learn and socialize safely and constructively (European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation, 2000; Lawrence, 2000; Tyrrell, 2002).

Tyrrell's (2002) views on the relevance of much that is taught in schools to the current and future lives of children has been touched on in the section on *The content and purposes of education*. Along with the European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation report (2000), he claims that the skills underpinning peer mediation enhance the teaching and learning environment. For Tyrrell, this is because they are far more consistent with qualities that are valued outside the education system: good interpersonal and communication skills and the ability to work well as part of a team, skills that focus on personal development and citizenship. For these reasons, he argues, such skills should have at least parity in the curriculum with traditional subjects.

This theme, of the relevance of conflict resolution skills to life outside and beyond school reflects the tone of the European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation report (2000), which says that there was general agreement among the participants of the seminar it is based on that such programmes teach 'skills for life'. The same report takes up this idea in relation to peer mediation specifically, asserting that the skills are beneficial not only within school but in other contexts such as the family and work. A further point is that such schemes prepare young people as citizens of a democratic society by giving pupils practical experience of the

democratic process by working together with staff to sustain the service in a way that the traditional hierarchical relationships in schools do not permit.

Lawrence (2000) discusses the impact of conflict resolution and peer mediation programmes on bullying. They will not cure bullying, she argues, but the increase in self-esteem that results from participation in such programmes enables children to deal better with bullying, partly by providing them with coping strategies. They also help schools, with conflict resolution skills complementing a whole-school policy on discipline and positive behaviour, to develop a climate in which everyone knows that bullying is unacceptable, and both the bully and the victim know that they will receive support.

Typical of the claims made for the beneficial consequences of conflict resolution and peer mediation skills are these. Lawrence (2000) cites case studies in which two headteachers and class teachers comment that some former bullies had become accomplished mediators; children had become more mutually supportive; there was less conflict in the playground; mediators were able to stop minor conflicts escalating; staff were spending less time dealing with conflicts; and children were more tolerant of each other.

Criticisms

Given that most of the literature is written by people involved in supporting schools to introduce peer mediation it is unsurprising that there is little attention given to possible disadvantages. The European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation's report on their seminar in 2000 is therefore unusual in including a section on criticisms that have been levelled at peer mediation schemes. 'A major criticism,' they say, 'of the peer mediation method is that it does not offer equal benefits to all pupils'. This refers to the fact that only some pupils will be trained as mediators and they 'clearly benefit the most'.[38] The report, however, provides some counterbalance by arguing that the disputants benefit from the resolution of conflicts and learn from the experience. They cite other counter-arguments that were raised at the seminar. These include the view that peer mediation training should be introduced within the context of other conflict resolution work in the school and that its implementation often implies a change of school culture that is child-centred, and justice is seen as restorative rather than retributive. This issue is also addressed by Clements and Clements (2000). They acknowledge that the people to benefit most from a peer mediation scheme are those who are trained as mediators, followed by

those who take part in mediation. They argue that 'for all students to benefit directly they all need to receive training in the basic problem solving skills which underlie the mediation process'. They go on to advocate 'tailor made programmes' for students of all ages 'if we are to acquire more tools in the problem solving toolbox than the ineffective tools of force, coercion, revenge and violence'.

Tyrrell (2002) adopts the view that it is important to listen to those who are sceptical of the benefits because of the light their objections throw on issues that need to be considered. He takes some of these objections and uses them to explore the issues. One is that some adults are concerned that peer mediation puts adult burdens on to children. He rejects this notion because, he says, the process can be 'energising and empowering' as long as children have the necessary skills, are clear about what can, and cannot, be mediated, and are supported and encouraged by a teacher. In a chapter devoted to responses to objections, Tyrrell argues that at the root of resistance to peer mediation is a clash of values. Even where teachers do attempt to listen to both sides of a story, he argues, the process is one of arbitration rather than mediation because it takes place within the context of a traditional hierarchy. In other words, it is an adult who has control – to apportion blame and issue sanctions. Mediation, on the other hand, is about restoring relationships[39].

Evaluation

There is awareness in the literature of the need to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of conflict resolution and peer mediation programmes (see, for example, Lawrence, 2000). At the same time, there is an acknowledgement that the quality of the results is limited (see, for example, Tyrrell, 2002).

The difficulty of evaluating areas of life that do not readily lend themselves to being quantified should not be underestimated. It would also be naive to suppose that a direct correspondence could be found between the implementation of such schemes and aspects of schools that can readily be measured, like attendance or exclusions or examination results. Interestingly, in the interviews with two secondary schools for the Mediation-eu.net website, the senior staff responsible for, and committed to, the programmes in their schools were both cautious in attributing improvements in aspects of their schools' lives to any single factor. Similar caution was exercised by school staff when considering the impact of the project on improvements in academic performance or reductions in exclusions in an evaluation of five schools in the

London Borough of Tower Hamlets (Inman and Turner (2001). But schools have not, as far as can be ascertained, contributed directly to the literature. It would surely be useful if they did.

For Tyrrell (2002) it is not the lack of data about peer mediation programmes that is the problem but that 'often it is neither structured nor analysed; and rarely is a control group established to verify that any changes have come about because of peer mediation'. Sellman (2002) writes that there has been little research in the UK on the effectiveness of peer mediation schemes. Furthermore, he maintains, there is little systematic monitoring of the training the providers offer which would add to the evidence of the relationship between training and successful outcomes. An article in Leap Confronting Conflict's Young Mediators' Network *Newsletter* (October 2002) refers to the perception of those working with young people that the effects of peer mediation training are beneficial but that, as yet, there was no concrete evidence for this. The European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation report (2000) acknowledges that, despite the importance of 'scientific evaluation studies', they are 'relatively scarce' because they are difficult, expensive and time-consuming. A report by Birmingham City Council's Education Department, summarizing the findings of Hilary Cremin's (Stacey) PhD thesis on the effectiveness of peer mediation programmes in three primary schools in the city, comments:

> The difficulties of carrying out an experiment in a school setting, however, make the results inconclusive, and more research is recommended, in order to understand the links between peer mediation, humanistic practices in the classroom, and the, apparently, central role of the headteacher.[40] (Pages 6-7)

And Bitel and Roberts (2003) comment that many schools do not even record the number of mediations that take place and, more generally, that there is no systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of peer mediation.

The bleak picture painted by these observations is mitigated, to some extent, by references that show that the lack of evidence is not for the want of trying. Tyrrell (2002) found that, in the ten responses he received to a questionnaire he sent to peer mediation trainers in 2000 asking how respondents measured the effectiveness of their training, almost all mentioned monitoring and/or evaluation, though some commented on the difficulty of obtaining other than subjective material. Three had commissioned external evaluations. Bitel and Roberts (2003) acknowledge the efforts made by Leap Confronting Conflict's Young Mediators' Network and CRISP in

Leicester to develop a process of monitoring and evaluation. However, they also comment that these have been unsuccessful and impossible to sustain. The current situation[41] is that the evaluation forms developed by the Young Mediators' Network and CRISP have been incorporated into all training by Leap Confronting Conflict. Peer mediators are being encouraged to use these forms, but to date no information has been received by the Young Mediators' Network.

There are also numerous references in the literature to monitoring and evaluation in practice. Include Youth's *Peer Mediation Training Manual*, for example, contains a bank of forms, one of which is for participants to evaluate the training they have received. Tyrrell (2002) makes frequent references to evaluations that were part of the EMU Project. Describing the training of children in a pilot project in two primary schools in the first half of the 1990s, he comments that children completed evaluation forms each week to provide 'information about their degree of comprehension of the concepts that we were trying to get across'. Similarly, his report of a *training the trainer* course for adults in 1997 includes the results of each day's evaluation. But, even in Tyrrell's work, which was highly reflective, there were clearly sometimes gaps that make some of the findings very tentative[42]. A rare comment, looking at this question from the school's point of view, is to be found in Highbury Fields School's documentation, which refers to record-keeping in relation to its practical value where disputants return to peer mediation, but also in the context of monitoring. However, the writer warns against the collection of such information if it starts to detract from the main purpose of mediation, to resolve conflicts.

The approach can sometimes lead to some tortuous conclusions, which make it difficult to draw firm conclusions about effectiveness. Inman and Turner (2001), for example, set out to do a qualitative evaluation of a project in five schools in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. They set three success criteria: a change in ethos and culture in the school; an increase in the understanding of staff in how to handle conflict; and a reduction in the number of sanctions being given to young people. Assessing whether the schools met the success criteria, they conclude:

Considering the challenges that mounting, maintaining and managing a project for conflict reduction present, it is unlikely that any school would invest the necessary time and staffing resources in it if it was felt to be ineffective, even taking into account SRB funds. Thus, the genuine enthusiasm with which staff and students spoke about the project suggests that it is meeting the success criteria in so far as it is impacting on the students and thus making a contribution to changing the school culture. (Page 17)

More usefully, they did identify a range of characteristics in the schools where the project worked best. These included: the senior management's desire for fundamental change supported by full consultation with the school community; management of the project by staff with the authority to see it through; an acknowledgement of the specialist skills of the external organizations brought in as facilitators and sound communication with them; an explicit policy of keeping the school community well informed through such means as presentations by pupils and regular items at staff meetings; and a recognition of the full demands of the programme and a will to find the time and resources to make it work.

School ethos

Throughout this guide references are made to the importance attached by trainers to a whole-school approach to conflict resolution and peer mediation programmes. Accordingly, there is considerable discussion of the significance of the school's ethos in their success.

Bowers et al (1989) talk of the inherently damaging consequences of conflict resolution programmes unless schools address the implications from a whole-school perspective, because of the clash of cultures:

> The problem in the institutional setting is that, unless the adults in the community have themselves learnt to seek creative responses to conflict and have come to terms with an ethos in which they can exercise their responsibility and authority without being threatened by the active participation of pupils, the introduction of conflict resolution techniques will in fact generate new conflicts. (Page 43)

Stacey and Robinson (1997) make a similar point, saying that peer mediation will make very little progress in a school where teaching styles are overly didactic or where the behaviour management policy is entirely authoritarian and punitive. More constructively, they identify elsewhere in the book characteristics that enable peer mediation to thrive: positive relationships, trust, support, open communication, mutual respect, tolerance, co-operation and a readiness to work through problems. And Tyrrell (2002) reaches a similar conclusion. He found that once other schools knew more about peer mediation, following the two-year pilot of the EMU Project, principals were tempted to see such a programme as the answer to their problems. The difficulty was that they wanted 'the product rather than the process of getting it', that they did not see that there was a contradiction between the values of peer mediation (co-operation, communication and problem-solving) and the values of many schools (a more hierarchical and punitive approach to conflict).

Consideration of the counterproductive effects of the dissonance in values has been taken up more recently by Sellman (2002). Looking specifically at the role of school culture in relation to peer mediation, he claims that schemes 'frequently fail to launch because they are not compatible with the existing school culture or vision'. He argues that where this happens peer mediation is an isolated approach that may be considered suitable only for the playground and irrelevant to other aspects of the school. This results in confusion for the children, who are unsure about what is suitable for mediation and what is suitable for arbitration. Peer mediation, he maintains, 'requires of school culture a shift from teacher control to pupil empowerment and from arbitration to mediation as the dominant form of conflict resolution' so that only the most serious conflicts are arbitrated by teachers. Tyrrell (2002) makes much the same point:

> Peer mediation requires a consistent environment in the school if it is to have hope of taking root. Where there is incongruence between the adult relationships in a school and those being promoted among the children, the children quickly notice it and, rightly, ask "Why?" The programme becomes saddled with a credibility problem. (Page 222)

He goes on to say that children often lead the way and ask for the ground rules established in peer mediation training to be applied to the classroom as well.

How to address this potential problem is taken up by a number of trainers. To some extent this has been covered in the sections of the guide on *Staff support* and *Training* about the importance of taking seriously the scepticism of some staff, and devoting time and effort to ensuring that before a school commits itself to a programme staff have been fully consulted and a majority are in support of going ahead. The implications of what Bowers et al (1989) and Sellman (2002) have said in this context are that teachers themselves need to model the values inherent in conflict resolution and peer mediation. Lawrence (2000) makes a similar point. Arguing that teachers are of 'paramount importance' to the success of such programmes and because they need to model behaviour they should, she says, have high self-esteem themselves. Given the recent history of education in the UK it is not surprising that this cannot be taken for granted. It is therefore important that trainers acknowledge the context in which they are supporting schools.

This is at its clearest in Tyrrell's (2002) thinking. Commenting on the approach adopted by the EMU Project in attempting to build a bridge between the values

underlying peer mediation and the more hierarchical values of many schools, he argues that if peer mediation 'is to be more than an "add-on", more than just another initiative foisted on an overworked and undervalued staff, then peer mediation programmes have to take cognisance of the reality of the school in general, and the classroom in particular'. (Page 221)

Two other practical recommendations that would support the bridge building that Tyrrell refers to are worth drawing attention to here. One is the integration of conflict resolution into the curriculum. Lawrence (2002), for example, argues that conflict resolution and peer mediation should be integral to PSE programmes. Bowers et al (1989) advocate applying the process to subjects like geography, history, religious studies and English. The European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation report (2000) refers to examples of the skills being used in social studies, literature, science and maths.

The other is the integration of conflict resolution and peer mediation programmes into the fabric of the school. Belinda Hopkins, an advocate of the application of a restorative justice approach in schools, creates the image of a jigsaw, showing how different aspects of school life contribute to the ethos[43]. Lampen (1994) maintains that a peer mediation system needs to be part of a whole-school policy on discipline and pastoral care. Stacey et al (1997) say, along similar lines, that peer mediation should be included in the school development plan as well as in policies on behaviour management. Both Bitel and Rolls (2000) and Tyrrell (2002) make the point that peer mediation does not replace conventional school sanctions but complements them. Children then have a choice about how to set about resolving their conflicts.

Some conclusions

In writing this guide I have attempted to look at conflict resolution, and peer mediation in particular, in terms of what teachers and others working in and with schools would want to know (and where they could find out more) if they are considering the introduction of such schemes or looking more generally at ways of improving relationships within their schools. I have tried to look at the available information in an open-minded way and have no ideological or professional axe to grind in relation to this subject. What conclusions can safely be drawn from the literature?

- Although the philosophy underlying conflict resolution and peer mediation is idealistic, for example in its belief that children and young people are capable of developing the skills to resolve many of their own conflicts, its practice is firmly rooted in pragmatism. Conflict is seen as an inevitable aspect of all our lives but appropriate skills and processes can generate positive outcomes. It is accepted that conflict resolution and peer mediation schemes will run alongside conventional pastoral and disciplinary systems and cannot deal with all the kinds of conflict that arise within a school.

- Conflict resolution and peer mediation programmes will not of themselves produce benefits. There is a cost in terms of money, time, effort and will and they require those who work in and with schools to examine and reassess their relationships with each other and with their pupils as well as those between pupils. Schemes take time to be implemented and the associated values to become internalized in the ethos of the school.

- While there is little hard evidence of the efficacy of such schemes, there is plenty in the literature to suggest that many school staff and pupils believe that they improve relationships and reduce the amount of time teachers spend on helping pupils to resolve conflicts. Furthermore, components such as communication skills are, at the very least, consistent with the aims of the curriculum.

- To introduce such schemes schools need the support of external agencies, whether they are community mediation services, conflict resolution specialists or independent trainers.

- And finally, schools initiating these programmes are embarking on a process that will be long term and ongoing if the schemes are to be effective and sustainable.

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Endnotes

[1] ROI – Violence among children and young people: intervention programmes in schools

[2] http://www.Mediation-eu.net

[3] Paul van Tongeren, Executive Director of the European Centre for Conflict Prevention, opens *Conflict resolution in schools: report of the international seminar held on March 2 and 3, 2000 in Soesterberg, the Netherlands* by citing the UK, the USA, Canada and South Africa as countries with extensive experience of conflict resolution in schools.

[4] Peer mediation in Norway has been promoted and resourced by the state – see Tyrrell (2002) page 45.

[5] http://www.crinfo.org

[6] http://www.conflict-prevention.net

[7] Tyrrell J (2002) *Peer Mediation: a process for primary schools.* London: Souvenir Press.

[8] See the Transforming Conflict website http://www.transformingconflict.org, the Restorative Justice Consortium website http://www.restorativejustice.org.uk and the Thames Valley Police website http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/about/rj for more details.

[9] http://www.restorativejustice.org.uk.

[10] Maslow A H (1967) Self-actualisation and beyond. In J F T Bugenthal (ed) *Challenges of Humanistic Psychology.* New York: McGraw Hill.

[11] Kingston Friends Workshop Group (1985) *Ways and Means: an approach to problem-solving.* Kingston-upon-Thames: Kingston Friends Workshop Group

[12] For more details about EMU, see Tyrrell (2002), chapter 5 and the EMU Promoting School Project (1994-2002) website http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/emu/index.html .

[13] Information from CRISP in an interview with Project Co-ordinator Jason Knibbs on 30 July 2003.

[14] Based on an interview with Bernard McWilliams, now headteacher of Highbury Fields School, on 17 October 2002.

[15] Based on an interview with Laura Worsley, deputy headteacher at Morpeth School, on 31 October 2002.

[16] For more details about conflict resolution and peer mediation at Highbury Fields and Morpeth Schools, and about the work of training providers CRISP and Leap Confronting Conflict, see this project's website at http://www.Mediation-eu.net .

[17] Mediation UK is a national voluntary organization dedicated to developing constructive means of resolving conflicts in communities. It represents nearly 300 mediation services. Their website, http://www.mediationuk.org.uk, includes information about peer mediation in schools.

[18] Mediation UK kindly provided this information in October 2003 and is currently looking at ways of collecting more precise information about work in schools.

[19] http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk/youthjusticeboard

[20] *Teaching* is the magazine produced by the General Teaching Council for England (GTC).

[21] See, for example, the articles about training providers Leap Confronting Conflict and CRISP on the Mediation-eu.net website. Before embarking on training with either staff or pupils, they spend a considerable amount of time finding out the views of both on conflict in the school.

[22] See Bitel and Rolls (2000).

[23] This is based on the research of Hilary Cremin (Stacey) and reported in the August 2000 edition of *Mediation*, the journal of Mediation UK.

[24] This is also discussed in the article about CRISP on the Mediation-eu.net website.

[25] Page 87.

[26] See the Mediation-eu.net website case study of Highbury Fields School, in the London Borough of Islington, which has been running a peer mediation scheme since the late 1990s with peer mediators in Years 10 to 13.

[27] See the case study on the Mediation-eu.net website.

[28] For details see the article on the Mediation-eu.net website.

[29] For further details about Include Youth see the Mediation-eu.net website and their own website at http://www.includeyouth.org.

[30] This is discussed in more detail in the section on the ethos of the school.

[31] See the Mediation-eu.net website for further details.

[32] The chapter draws on the EMU Promoting School Project (there are brief details on the Mediation-eu.net website and a link to http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/emu/index.html; the Bristol Mediation manual (Smith V, Major V and Mnatzaganian N [1999] *Peer Mediation Scheme.* Bristol: Bristol Mediation); and Hilary Stacey and Pat Robinson's book *Let's Mediate* (see *References* for publication details).

[33] Information about Circle Time can be found at http://www.antibullying.net/circletimeinfo.htm

[34] Interview with Zehra Balman on 18 December 2002 for an article on the Mediation-eu.website.

[35] The European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation report (2000) says otherwise, that there is 'a growing body of experience and scientific evidence indicating that conflict resolution programmes in schools can be effective'. However, no sources are provided.

[36] See the Mediation-eu.net website items on Morpeth and Highbury Fields Schools, and on the training providers Leap Confronting Conflict and CRISP.

[37] http://www.crinfo.org

[38] This issue is discussed earlier in the guide in the section *Which children get to become peer mediators?*

[39] Readers who would like to explore this further are advised to look at the process of restorative justice. Information is available on the websites of the Restorative Justice Consortium, Transforming Conflict and the Thames Valley Police. Links to all these websites can be found on the Mediation-eu.net website and in footnote 8. Suffice to say here that restorative justice – normally used in the context of bringing together victims and offenders but also used to some extent in schools – focuses on restoring relationships by making explicit the ways in which a crime, or other behaviour, has affected all those involved and on what can be done to repair the damage.

[40] The findings of the study, in the words of the Education Department report, were that 'peer mediation can be used as a strategy to reduce bullying, and to improve pupil feelings of empowerment and self-esteem, provided it forms part of a wider strategy to empower pupils, and to improve their personal and social skills'.

[41] Based on an enquiry to the Young Mediators' Network Co-ordinator by the author of this guide in October 2003.

[42] The example referred to here is in Tyrrell (2002), chapter 3, which discusses information obtained from six schools.

[43] Details can be found on the Transforming Conflict website http://www.transformingconflict.org.