An Evaluation of a Conflict Management Program at an Elementary School

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MASTERS IN SOCIAL WORK
THESIS

Maggie Holland

An Evaluation of a Conflict Management Program at an Elementary School

1994
AN EVALUATION OF A CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
AT AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Written By
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has been approved by the Examining Committee for the thesis requirements for the Master of Social Work Degree.

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

AN EVALUATION OF A CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM AT AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

BY

MARGARET HOLLAND

DECEMBER 1993

There is a growing concern about conflict due to the growing increase in more violent crimes both in the schools and in the surrounding communities. The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of a conflict manager program in elementary school. The program was evaluated by distributing three different questionnaires to three different groups. The groups which were surveyed included the student disputants who used the program to help resolve their problem, the conflict managers who were trained and utilized the conflict management skills, and the parents of the conflict managers. All of the responses were very positive. The disputants indicated that they felt that the program was helpful in resolving their problem. They also indicated that the initial problem had been resolved, the conflict management was done fairly, and that they were satisfied with the conflict managers. The majority of the conflict managers indicated that this program had helped them solve some of their own problems, and that they had gained more self confidence and self esteem. The parents also indicated positive changes and positive attitudes regarding conflict in their son or daughter who had been trained as a conflict manager.
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AN EVALUATION OF A CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
AT AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

"War is only a cowardly escape from the problems of peace."

Thomas Mann

"Peace is not only better than war but infinitely more arduous."

George Bernard Shaw

"Peace cannot be kept by force but only achieved by understanding."

Albert Einstein

"A tragedy last February in a Brooklyn high school made the need to prevent conflicts from escalating even more compelling. Just a few hours before the mayor of New York was scheduled to visit their school, two teens were shot dead by a classmate" (Scherer, p. 14).

Conflict is defined as a fight or struggle. It is also defined as sharp disagreement or opposition in interests or ideas. In the school setting conflict can arise and be dealt with in many ways by students. It can be as minor as teasing
or name calling or as serious as fights, possibly involving weapons, threats, intimidation practices, or gang activity. There is a growing concern about conflict due to the growing increase in more violent crimes both in the schools and in the surrounding communities. "The Gallup Poll has listed "Discipline" as the number one problem affecting teachers in 14 out of the previous 15 years" (Benenson, p.1).

RESEARCH PROBLEM OR ISSUE

An issue that I would like to study is whether or not educating children in conflict resolution skills helps them to better resolve conflicts that they may have with their peers. I'd also like to evaluate whether having trained peer conflict managers helps other students resolve conflicts effectively and if they are able to use these skills in other settings or environments such as at home.

Creative conflict management is a significant area to study because the presence of conflict often prevents students from learning. Conflict is also a significant subject to study because people experience conflict in all areas of their lives. Therefore, learning how to resolve conflict in one area of their lives may give them the skills to help them resolve conflict in other areas of their lives as well.

In general, children are not educated in conflict resolution skills or techniques, and the existing systems haven't given much attention to training young children in
conflict management and mediation skills. The theory behind this program is that these are skills that children could fall back on throughout their life and could use, not only in the school setting, but in the family, neighborhood, and later in their career or job.

The study of educating children in conflict resolution techniques is related to school social work because social workers are often called to help resolve conflicts. There are also educational programs focused at teaching children conflict management skills. This study would be relevant to determine if those programs are worth the time and money to implement them. I feel that studying whether or not conflicts were resolved in the school would be an indication of whether the students were able to take the skills that they learned and apply them to real life situations. Hopefully if they are able to apply these skills to situations in school then they may also be able to apply them to other real life situations and settings as well.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Even though the introduction of Conflict Management Programs in Education is a fairly recent issue in the fields of Education and Social Work, there are several programs across the country that are already in existence and have conducted evaluations of their own programs. The following is information on other programs across the country.
Williams (1991) states that a Conflict Management Program in Ann Arbor, Michigan helped one principal reduce conflicts that required the principal's intervention from 320 to 27 in the first semester that the program was implemented.

According to Richard Cohen, Director of School Mediation Association in Belmont, Mass. "On the average 85 percent of potentially violent incidents involving mediation end in a peaceful resolution" (Williams, 1991).

New York City's William Cullen Bryant High School in Queens implemented Project SMART (School Mediator Alternative Resolution Team). "During the 1983-84 school year (the program's first year of operation), the principal ordered suspensions for fighting at school dropped nearly 50 percent at Bryant, an improvement that school administrators say largely is due to the introduction of project SMART" (Stichter, 1986).

These above articles did not discuss research methods or design. There was no information regarding how these above statistics were gained but there is definitely a supportive attitude towards the idea of mediation. The following is a closer look at some programs across the country.

In 1986 Hadley High School in Christchurch, New Zealand implemented a conflict management program modeled after the Schools Initiative Program which was started by the Community Board Center for Policy and Training in San Francisco in 1982. At Hadley High School, adolescent students, adult students and teachers were all trained because they provided
mediation for students, staff, and parents, and they wanted a representation from all the groups in the population that they would be serving.

At Hadley they evaluated the program with two staff surveys, one in 1987 and one in 1988. These surveys had poor response rates. The program also interviewed the disputants who had used the program as a way of evaluation but was unable to interview all of the disputants. No student survey was conducted. "During this period a total of 139 people used the Hadley mediation service. Of these, 110 were Hadley students, 15 were Hadley staff members, 6 were parents, and 8 were from outside the school" (Camaron, 1991, p.6). "Of the disputes, 41 were between students, 12 were between a teacher and a student, 2 were between staff members, 4 were family mediations, 2 were between a student and a person from outside the school" (Cameron, p.6).

Of the 62 situations that were mediated the following information shows the type of problem and the number of times that problem was brought to mediation: 22 were name-calling or teasing, 7 were fighting and bullying, 7 were about student-misbehavior in class, 6 were misunderstandings and rumors, 5 were property damage or loss, 4 were family mediations, 3 were teacher/student tensions or stress, 2 were teacher inconsistencies, 2 were issues of teachers power and fairness, 2 were disagreements between teachers, 1 was a boyfriend/girlfriend situation, and 1 was a cultural misunderstanding.
In comparing the students who used mediation by grade level there was a "similar tendency for the number of mediations at higher grade levels to be less than the number at lower grade levels" (Cameron, p.7). This data was interpreted to show that younger students are more likely to use mediation because the kinds of conflicts which they have are more amenable to mediation" (Cameron, p.7).

The ethnic background of the disputants was also of interest because it was thought that the students of the minority background might need more help in settling disputes. The actual number of students from a minority background that used the service was low, but the rate of use for that group which was 20 percent, was higher than the percentage of minorities within the school.

The results of the surveys showed that almost all of the staff who responded thought that "Mediation service not only was acceptable but advantageous" (Cameron, p.8). "Almost all disputants also found it acceptable and several indicated that it was preferable to some other options for coping with problems, such as fighting, suspension, or telephoning or calling in parents" (Cameron, p.8). "Some teachers and administrators believed that the incidence of violence at the school had decreased since mediation was introduced. One teacher thought it had increased, whether despite or because of mediation, and many could offer no opinion" (Cameron, p.8).
"Most of the disputants who were interviewed reported positive effects of mediation, these were both short term and long term" (Cameron, p.9). The effect of this program was even more noticeable on the mediators, because of the training they received they were able to use the skills they learned in many different settings.

The Hadley study did not make use of a student survey, and the staff survey that was conducted received a poor response. Due to this method they were unable to evaluate the overall impact of this program in reducing conflict in the school. Their study did show however that there was a significant positive impact on the individuals who participated in the program.

Wakefield Junior High School is located in a mainly Mexican-American area of Tucson, Arizona. It has the smallest enrollment of the fifteen junior high schools in the Tucson school district and the largest percentage (92%) of Mexican-American students. Families in this neighborhood generally have low incomes.

The Wakefield Peer-Mediation Program (WPMP) was organized by using a manual produced by the San Francisco School Initiatives program (which is the same program which we used to train our conflict managers at Washington Elementary School). In the fall of 1986 staff members from the CMP (Community Mediation Program) introduced the mediation process to the students in the form of role plays in the different homeroom classes. In January 1987 the
students were given an all school presentation on the program and nominated peers in order to be peer mediators. In February of 1987 five teachers and two guidance counselors were trained by the CMP staff. Later in February twentyfive students were trained in a three day workshop in order to be peer mediators. The peer mediators then met every morning for twenty minutes during their homeroom, or team time in order to continue to practice their mediation skills.

The Wakefield program had several goals that they were wanting to achieve. These goals included the following:
- Adequate implementation of the program.
- Student body and faculty awareness, understanding, and use of the mediation services.
- Skillful mediation by peer mediators during the process.
- Disputant satisfaction with the mediation process.
- Decrease in the rate of officially reported aggressive conflicts among students.
- Decrease in the rate of aggressive conflicts reported by students on the pre and post student questionnaires.
- Helpful effect on "unreceived leaders" or "at-risk" students trained as peer mediators.
- Helpful effect on students who have been labeled "at-risk" for disciplinary reasons and who have gone through the mediation process as disputants.
- Adoption of a favorable attitude by the student body toward a collaborative (problem solving) style of conflict resolution.
-Adoption of unfavorable attitudes by the student body toward an aggressive, submissive, avoidance, and compromise styles of conflict behavior (McCormick, 1988, p.11).

The Wakefield program used several different methods in order to evaluate their program and to what extent they met their goals. One of the methods used was a pre-test/post-test questionnaire which was given to the student body. This was used to evaluate attitudes regarding different conflict styles and also behaviors both before the Peer-Mediation Program was implemented and afterwards in order to determine if there was any change in attitudes or behaviors as a result of the program.

The researcher also used participant observation. This means that the researcher met with different students and teachers who were not directly involved in the project in order to form a list of different conflict situations which they felt occurred in the school.

A Student Attitude Questionnaire was distributed both before and after the implementation of the program in order to determine changes in attitudes toward different conflict styles. It also included a question asking each respondent about the amount of time in which they engaged in conflict type of activity.

The peer mediators were also asked to complete an open ended survey regarding the peer mediation program. This covered issues of how the program effected the individual mediators, how it was perceived in the school, and how it
could be better promoted.

This study also used documentary evidence, in the form of referral slips for fighting, in order to evaluate the program. The referral slips were a way to record the number of reported aggressive conflicts in the school. This was used as a measure of the level of aggressiveness in the school.

There were also different forms which were recorded as part of the peer mediation program. These forms included the Mediation Referral Form, the Mediator's Report, and the Client Exit Forms. The Mediation Referral Form was used in order to determine what types of problems were being referred to mediation, the level of awareness and understanding of the program by the teachers and staff, and how many referrals to the program were made. The Mediator's Reports were used to document who the individuals were that were using the program, what the conflict was about, and whether the mediators felt that the conflict was solved, and to what degree the conflict was solved. The Client Exit Forms were used to determine disputant satisfaction, and the helpful effect on "at-risk" students.

The following is a summary of the results achieved regarding each of the goals of the program. The successful implementation of the program was achieved. By the end of the three day training most of the students could adequately conduct the mediation process. The mediator surveys also indicated that the students felt that the workshop adequately prepared them to perform as mediators. The majority of the
students felt that the ongoing training was adequate but about one-quarter of the mediators disagreed or were unsure about this. The teacher coordinators felt that they needed more material in order to do the ongoing training on a daily basis. The program coordinators did feel that they could have done better in a couple areas, which included having more males trained as mediators, and having more "unreceived leaders" (at risk or negative leaders) trained as mediators.

The goal regarding skillful mediation by peer mediators during the process was also achieved. "Both of the program coordinators felt that within a month after the initial training, all of the students could competently carry out the problem-solving steps" (McCormick, p.50). The mediators also did well enough that they achieved a 100% rate of successful mediations of those situations that were appropriately referred to mediation. The mediators themselves did not rate themselves so highly. About one-third of the mediators felt that they had successfully mastered the skills of mediation. The majority felt that they wanted to improve their skills.

The goal regarding student body and faculty awareness, understanding, and use of the mediation services received a mixed rating. By the time the mediators had finished their training most or all of the student body and the faculty were aware of the program through different school assemblies and homeroom presentations. There was still, however, some misunderstandings and skepticism regarding the program. Nineteen out of the twenty-four mediators felt that most of
the students knew about the program but only six felt that the student body had a completely favorable impression of it. There were also a few referrals from teachers which were not appropriate referrals as these problems were more student-teacher conflicts versus student-student conflicts.

During the first three months of the program, 22 students were involved in 13 mediations. Seven were referred by different school officials and six were initiated by students. During this same time there were also 25 students reported for fighting who were dealt within a traditional manner. Program coordinators felt that these students should also have been referred to conflict mediation as well as the traditional disciplinary measures which were used.

In assessing the goal regarding disputant satisfaction with the mediation process most of the disputants felt that the mediation process was effective and thought that the peer mediators were good listeners and fair during the mediation. Of the thirteen cases there were eleven (84%) which resulted in agreements between the disputants. The other two cases were not student-student disputes and could not be appropriately mediated so the actual rate was 100% for those cases which were appropriate for mediation. Immediately after the mediation sessions twelve of the disputants were happy with the solutions, five were unsure, and five did not respond to the question. A month later, when the disputants were surveyed, ten of them (four of the initial disputants were not available the day of this survey) were happy with
their agreements and felt that the agreements were upheld and there had not been any further conflicts between the students.

The number of referral slips was used to evaluate the goal regarding the decrease in the rate of officially reported aggressive conflicts among students. The number of reported aggressive conflicts decreased by 47 percent. It seemed that through the education and promotion about the program that some students may have been prompted to resolve their conflicts in a non-aggressive way even though they did not formally use the program in order to resolve their differences.

The self report of aggressive conflicts was evaluated by using the student responses to the pre-test and post-test questionnaire. Only 60% of the sample of students responded to this question regarding their own aggressive conflicts but their responses were similar to the decrease in rate of officially reported aggressive conflicts. The number of students who responded that they had recently been in a physical fight decreased by 51%.

In evaluating the goal regarding helpful effect of "unreceived leaders" or "at-risk" students trained as peer mediators there was little data from which conclusions could be drawn. There were only two "unreceived leaders" who were chosen to be mediators. However, both experiences were very positive. One of the students who had been referred to the office twice before the program started for his behavior had
no referrals during the time of the program. Also the change in their attitudes towards the different conflict styles was significant according to the questionnaires that they completed.

The goal regarding helpful effect on students who have been labeled "at-risk" for disciplinary reasons and who have gone through the mediation process as disputants was also difficult to assess because there were only two students who were labeled at risk who went through the mediation process. The "at-risk" students, however, were referred for fighting less often after they had gone through the mediation process. These students also responded positively to the peer mediation process and the mediators in the surveys that they completed. Both of these students also stated that they wanted to be trained as peer mediators.

Both the goal of adoption of a favorable attitude by the student body toward the collaborative (problem solving) style of conflict resolution and the goal of adoption of unfavorable attitudes by the student body toward the aggressive, submissive, avoidance, and compromise styles of conflict behavior were evaluated by using the Likert type scale on the pre-test and post-test questionnaires. The results showed that there was no statistically significant change in students attitudes. The collaboration style was the most favored both before and after the implementation of the mediation program. The avoidant style was less favored after the program but it was still the second most preferred
style. The aggressive style was the least favored style both before and after the program.

The Wakefield program was overall evaluated to be a successful program. The evaluation was very thorough and complete. It considered the student body as a whole, the peer mediators, the disputants, and the staff and program coordinators, therefore it looked at the program from different angles and viewpoints. It also conducted both a pre-test and post test in order to measure the effectiveness of the program. It also considered a separate variable, the office referrals for incidents of fighting which was a concrete way of measuring the programs effectiveness in the school as a whole.

The Wakefield program was similar to the program that we implemented at Washington because we used the same manual for curriculum from the San Francisco School Initiatives program. Their evaluation of the program was different because they did a pre-test and post-test of the whole student body not just those that used the program, or those who were conflict managers. This study also looked at behavior, not just attitudes, by asking questions about individual's behavior. They also looked at behavior by counting the number of referral slips to the office for fighting.

The study done by Dale Greenawald and Grant Johnson was completed at the Panorama Middle School and the Molholm Elementary School in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

The report doesn't use any findings from the middle
school because there wasn't a program implemented at that school and there were inconsistencies across classes in implementing the curriculum.

At the Molholm Elementary School two randomly selected classes were used as a control group and two randomly selected classes were the experimental group. Pre-tests and post-tests were given to the students. The teachers were given pre and post assessments of the students to complete, classroom observations were conducted and formal and informal teacher and student interviews and surveys were conducted.

There were four objectives that this study was trying to evaluate. They are the following:
1. To decrease violence and antisocial behavior.
2. To teach students new skills in communication and conflict resolution.
3. To effect positive attitudes toward peaceful expression and resolution of conflict.
4. To prevent attitudes and behaviors that lead to delinquency.

In looking at the first objective—to decrease violence and antisocial behavior, the student survey didn't show much difference between the mediators and the control group. However, the principal and the teachers involved "reported that playground violence had been significantly reduced" (Greenawald, p.3). There were also requests from other teachers at other grade levels for the mediators to be
assigned to their recess periods as well suggesting that they felt there was a decrease in violence due to the mediators.

Regarding the objective of developing positive attitudes toward peaceful expression and resolution of conflict, the students added numerous comments to their surveys indicating that they had gained a peaceful attitude towards resolving conflict.

In looking at the third objective of developing communication and conflict resolution skills the qualitative data was strongly supportive that this objective was met but the statistical data was neutral to positive. There were many responses from teachers and staff that could see the children demonstrating their new skills. But this change could not be seen statistically from the responses in the questionnaires by the students.

The last objective was evaluated by student reports of their behavior. Of the 15 items, only two showed statistically significant changes in the positive direction. Several of the other items showed positive changes but none that were statistically significant.

During this process there were observations of students who were not in the experimental group using the conflict management skills. It is felt that the results were most likely somewhat contaminated because individuals in the control group possibly had been influenced by watching the experimental group use the mediation process. Because of this, the differences between the results of the control
group and the results of the experimental group are minimized from what they may have been if the control group would not have been contaminated with the information from the experimental group.

This study was similar to what I did because it looked at the responses from students on questionnaires. It was different because it used both an experimental group and also a control group. It also used the teacher assessments of the students in each group where I surveyed the parents of the conflict managers.

The final study that I would like to examine is a study that was done by Alan Benenson as part of his dissertation for his PHD in Philosophy at the University of Idaho. The study population was composed of eight classrooms in grades four, five and six from four different schools. Two of the schools and four of the classrooms were the control group and two other schools with their four respective classrooms were the experimental group. The experimental group received a six hour teacher training session, six weeks of an eighteen lesson curriculum on cooperation and communication skill building for the students, and a six hour mediation training for 24 peer nominated student mediators. A 24 item survey instrument was designed to test knowledge and application of constructive conflict behaviors. This was given as a pre-test and a post test to both the control group and the experimental group. Two specific aspects were studied. The first aspect was attitude change concerning constructive
conflict management. The second aspect was behavioral change concerning constructive conflict management based on students acting as peer mediators. The results showed that the intervention of peer mediation techniques increased student knowledge of constructive conflict attitudes. Significant differences in attitude were found between the pre-test scores and the post-test scores for schools using the conflict awareness exercises. There was no conclusive evidence that showed that the knowledge of constructive conflict attitudes led to constructive behavior. In both an experimental school and a control school the numbers of incidents reported to the principal actually increased. There were also no formal criteria for when a student would be referred to the principal so this was an aspect that was difficult to measure. The student evaluations of the conflict manager training were overwhelmingly positive. The mean scores of 20 students trained as conflict managers was 4.67 with 5.0 representing the highest score.

This study was the most similar to the study that we implemented at Washington Elementary. The classroom curriculum that they used for their program was the same curriculum from the manual Classroom Conflict Resolution Training for Elementary Students which was written by The School Initiatives Program in San Francisco. They also conducted their training for the conflict managers in two separate three hour blocks of time. They also had the mediators fill out the Conflict Report form after each
mediation. It was also interesting that in this study they also created their own evaluation or survey instrument because there really are not any instruments that are geared to measure attitudes towards conflict among elementary students. In this study the students were trained as conflict managers but were not able to work as conflict managers on the playground because of time constraints. I found this encouraging because I also ran into limitations with my study due to time constraints.

METHODOLOGY

OVERVIEW OF THE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Conflict Management program which Washington Elementary School implemented is modeled after the program and curriculum developed by the School Initiatives Program and the Community Board Center for Policy and Training in San Francisco, California. The program was explained to the parents of the students at a presentation at a parent-teacher association meeting as well as through informational letters which were sent home. Each of the homeroom teachers in the fourth through sixth grades presented some of the material to their class as a whole, giving all of the students some basic knowledge regarding conflict management skills. The students then nominated their peers to be conflict managers. They were asked to nominate those individuals that had good listening and leadership skills. The students then voted on those individuals that were nominated. The teachers and the
program leaders had the final decision regarding which students were trained as conflict managers. An explanation letter about the program and permission forms were sent home to the parents of those students who were selected to be conflict managers. Thirty students were trained as conflict managers, 10 sixth graders, 10 fifth graders and 10 fourth graders so that we would have students at each grade level who were familiar with the program for upcoming years. The students were trained in two mornings on October 26th and 28th, 1992 from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon. The training schedule can be seen on appendix A. The training consisted of some icebreaker games, short exercises on conflict management, and then roleplays of the conflict management process. The steps in the conflict management process can be seen on appendix B. The process includes getting each side to agree to follow certain rules of the conflict management process. These rules include the following: do not interrupt, no name calling, be as honest as you can be, and work to solve the problem. The optional rules are no physical fighting, and talk to the conflict managers, not to each other. These last two rules help to diffuse a tense conflict. The process then goes on to give each person an opportunity to tell their side of what happened, how they feel about it, what they are willing to do to resolve the conflict, and what they could have done differently. This is very important to allow each person an opportunity to talk about what they see is the problem and how they feel about it. For some problems where
feelings or pride have been hurt allowing the individuals to express their feelings is very important. They also have the opportunity to agree or disagree with what the other person is going to do to resolve the conflict, and whether they think the conflict is resolved. If both parties agree that the conflict is resolved then they are both asked to tell their friends that the conflict is resolved without going into detail. They are asked to do this in order to prevent rumors from spreading. When the conflict managers finished the mediation they then completed the conflict manager report form (see Appendix G).

This program trained students to intervene when peers appeared to have a conflict on the elementary school playground over the lunch hour. The conflict managers would work in pairs of two in order to mediate between the individuals having a problem.

EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM

This study focused on two areas. The first area was whether the individuals involved in the dispute felt that there was a successful resolution to their conflict and if this intervention helped them resolve it. The second area focused on whether the conflict managers and their parents felt that the program was beneficial to those who went through the training particularly regarding their conflict management skills, self esteem, and whether these individuals have used these skills in other settings. At the time when
the conflict managers assisted the two disputants they filled out the conflict manager report form (see appendix G) regarding what type of dispute was handled, who the disputants were, and whether or not the conflict was resolved. At a later time the disputants were contacted again and asked that they complete a questionnaire about how helpful they felt the process of conflict resolution was. The conflict managers were also surveyed about how successful they felt the program was. The parents of those students who were chosen to be conflict managers were also surveyed to see if they saw any change in the way that their son or daughter handled conflict. The different variables included were, the success at resolving conflict, which was the dependent variable, and the independent variable was the implementation of the conflict management program. Conflict was defined by many different aspects or levels of conflict including teasing, name calling, spreading rumors, arguments over the availability of resources (such as balls or toys), threats, intimidation practices, physical fights, gang activity, or whatever issue the disputants brought to the conflict managers. Conflict was evaluated on all these levels.

The study population included those students that utilized the conflict management program and the conflict managers, along with their parents. Use of the program was determined by looking at the sheets that the conflict managers filled out at the time of the conflict. The program began with 30 conflict managers and since that time two
students have been asked to leave due to their behavior, and
two have moved to different schools reducing the number of
conflict managers to 26. There were 54 students who used the
program as disputants.

The protection of human subjects was addressed by
sending an informational letter/consent form home to the
parents of the students who were asked to complete the
survey. This letter explained the nature of the study and
asked parents to sign and return the permission slip. This
letter requested parental permission for their child's
involvement in the survey. There was also a place on this
form for the students to sign giving their consent. The
actual questionnaire was sent with the consent form so that
parents were be able to see what questions their child was
being asked to respond to. The parents who were asked to
complete the survey for parents of conflict managers were
also asked to sign their own consent. It was also made clear
that it was optional for the student to participate in
this questionnaire. The students and parents were asked to
complete the consent form and the questionnaires at home and
have the student return them to school. The questionnaires
were handed out in each of the classrooms as well as in the
conflict manager meeting. A manilla envelope marked
CONFIDENTIAL was left in each of the classrooms so that the
students could then return the questionnaires to that
envelope and maintain their anonymity. The teachers were
asked not to look at the responses. The manilla envelopes
were then collected from each of the classrooms.

The questionnaires covered demographics, satisfaction with the conflict management program, and the success of the conflict management program in the school.

There were three different questionnaires. The first was for those students who used the conflict management process in order to resolve a conflict. See appendix C for the disputant's questionnaire. The second questionnaire was for those students who were trained and acted as conflict managers. See appendix D for the conflict manager's questionnaire. The third questionnaire was for the parents of those students who were trained and acted as conflict managers. See appendix E for a copy of the parent's questionnaire. There was also a copy of the consent form included with each questionnaire. See appendix F for a copy of the consent form.

The questionnaire was modified from the National Association for Mediation in Education's (NAME) book entitled School Mediation Program Evaluation Kit written by Julie A. Lam, Ph.D.

The survey was pre-tested by having a few of the fourth through sixth grade teachers proofread it for reading level. It was also pre-tested on five of the fourth grade conflict managers and four other students who used the conflict management process.

I also had put my name and phone number as well as my thesis advisors name and phone number on the consent form to
assist with any questions.

This process has already been approved by Ron Rubato of the Rochester School District Administration, who was the head of student support services. I also gained the approval of the building principal where the study was done. It was also approved by the Institutional Review Board for Augsburg College.

RESEARCH OUTCOMES

The conflict managers completed a report form (see appendix G) for each conflict immediately after trying to resolve each conflict. The results from these forms showed that there were 26 conflicts that the conflict managers were involved in trying to resolve. The total number of disputants was 54. The number of disputants consisted of 43 males and 11 females. There were occasionally more than two disputants in each conflict which explains the 54 disputants for the 26 conflicts. Of the 26 conflicts the conflict managers reported that 18 of them were resolved and 8 were not resolved.

| TABLE 1 |
| RESULTS FROM CONFLICT MANAGER REPORT FORMS |
| # of conflicts attempted | 26 |
| conflicts resolved | 18 |
| conflicts not resolved | 8 |
| # of disputants | 54 |
| Male disputants | 43 |
| Female disputants | 11 |
RESULTS OF DISPUTANT QUESTIONNAIRES

There were 39 questionnaires sent out to disputants who had used the program, 30 to males and 9 to females. This number is different from 53 because some of the individuals were involved in more than one conflict but only received one questionnaire, there were also other disputants who had moved to other schools in the meantime, or were unavailable when the questionnaires were distributed. There were 24 surveys distributed to those individuals who were conflict managers, as well as to their parents. This number is different from the 30 original conflict managers because 1 student had moved, 3 were no longer in the program and 2 were unavailable when the surveys were distributed.

Of the 39 questionnaires which were sent out to those who had used the program as disputants there were only 5 who responded, and one of the 5 only responded to some of the questions. This is a response rate of only 12.8 percent. Of the 5 who responded 2 had used the program once, two had used it twice and one person had used it 4 times. All 5 felt that the program was helpful in resolving the conflict. All 5 also stated that if they hadn't used the program that they would have told a teacher or a staff person about their problem as a next option. Of the 5 that responded 2 were conflict managers themselves and 3 were not. When asked if the agreement is working for them 4 felt that yes it was working and one felt that it was somewhat working. All 5 felt that the original problem that they came to conflict
management for had been settled. The following categories were not responded to by one person so the total number of responses is 4. All 4 were satisfied with their conflict managers. All 4 felt that the agreement was fair. Three responded that they did not feel that the conflict managers took sides, one thought that one of the conflict managers took sides. All four thought that the process went smoothly. All 4 thought that the conflict managers were good at what they did. All 4 said that they would recommend the process to a friend. All 4 thought that they were getting along better with the person who they had gone through conflict management with. All four thought that the conflict managers took their concerns seriously. All four stated that they have seen a positive change in the school climate since the conflict management program started. Regarding relationships between teachers and students, three respondents thought that there was a positive change since the program started and one thought there was a negative change. Regarding relationships between students and other students, two respondents thought that there was a positive change, one thought that there was no change, and one thought that there was a negative change. A table of the results can be seen on the next page. In response to the open ended question "What did you like about mediation?" there were responses of "talking it out" and "they listened to me". There were no responses to the open ended questions "What did you not like about mediation?" and "Do you have any
suggestions for making mediation more helpful?"

See table 2 for the results of the disputants' questionnaires.
### RESULTS OF DISPUTANTS QUESTIONNAIRES

#### TABLE 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM #</th>
<th>QUESTION</th>
<th># OF RESPONSES</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>once</td>
<td>twice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>times conflict management used</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>found it helpful in resolving conflict</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>options they would have chosen if conflict management was not available</td>
<td>a. ignore the problem</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>number who were also conflict managers</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6</td>
<td>A written agreement was reached</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7</td>
<td>Everyone is keeping the agreement</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#9</td>
<td>The agreement is working</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#10</td>
<td>The conflict management was conducted fairly</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#11</td>
<td>The original problem that I came to conflict management for has been settled.</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#12</td>
<td>I was satisfied with the conflict managers.</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#13</td>
<td>The agreement was fair.</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#14</td>
<td>The conflict managers took sides.</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#15</td>
<td>The conflict management process went smoothly.</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#16</td>
<td>The conflict managers were good at what they were doing.</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#17</td>
<td>Would you recommend conflict management to others?</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
#18 Did conflict management make a difference in the way you and the other person get along?
Do you get along:

- Better
- Same
- Worse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Better</th>
<th>Same</th>
<th>Worse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#19 The conflict managers took me seriously.

- Yes
- Somewhat
- No

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#20 Overall how successful was mediation?

- Successful
- Somewhat
- Not

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Successful</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Not</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#24 Since conflict management started I have seen the following change in the school climate:

- Negative
- No change
- Positive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>No change</th>
<th>Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#25 Since conflict management started I have seen the following change in the relationships between students and teachers:

- Negative
- No change
- Positive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>No change</th>
<th>Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#26 Since conflict management started I have seen the following change in the relationships between students and other students:

- Negative
- No change
- Positive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>No change</th>
<th>Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Distribution of respondents by grade:

- 1st graders: 20%
- 4th graders: 20%
- 5th graders: 20%
- 6th graders: 0%

* only 3 out of the 5 respondents completed the demographics, however the percentages were figured by including the 5 respondents

Distribution of respondents by age:

- 7 year olds: 20%
- 9 year olds: 0%
- 10 year olds: 0%
- 11 year olds: 40%
- 12 year olds: 0%

* only 3 out of the 5 respondents completed the demographics, however the percentages were figured by including the 5 respondents

Distribution of respondents by sex:

- Male: 20%
- Female: 40%

* only 3 out of the 5 respondents completed the demographics, however the percentages were figured by including the 5 respondents
RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRES FOR CONFLICT MANAGERS

Questionnaires were distributed to 24 conflict managers and 14 responded. This is a response rate of 58 percent. When asked how many times they were able to try and mediate a problem zero responded that they were able to mediate 0 times, one was able to 1-2 times, seven were able to 3-4 times, four were able to 5-6 times, and 2 were able to mediate 7 or more times. Eleven responded that they were very well prepared to act as conflict managers as a result of the training that they received, three felt that they were somewhat prepared and there were no responses that indicated that they felt that they were not well prepared. When asked the open ended question what they liked best about the training two responded "all of it", three indicated "the role playing", and other statements included "how they showed how they got in fights", "the I statement (exercise)", "knowing how to help solve the problem", "trying to solve make up problems", "going through the process", "doing the acting helped a lot", and "that they figure out their own problem".

When asked the open ended question "Which part of the training was least helpful?" five responded with "none" or "nothing". Other responses were "I thought most of the training was helpful", "when the teachers roleplayed", "reading and writing", and the "are you my neighbor exercise".
When asked what part of the mediation process do they feel most comfortable with the responses included:

- I feel better when we can solve it without going to the teacher.
- feel you get a better school that is safer.
- all
- asking what happened.
- asking what the problem is
- all of it (2 responses)
- listening to the kids problems
- what happened
- the rules
- going through the steps
- when they agree to solve the problem

When asked "What part of the mediation process do you feel least comfortable with?" the responses included:

- when we can't solve it.
- when kids tried to fake it
- none (4 responses)
- trying to find a solution
- asking them if the problem is solved
- congratulating the disputants
- when they don't agree to solve the problem

Only one individual felt that the training could be improved.
Nine respondents felt that it would have been helpful to have more ongoing training throughout the year and 5 didn't feel that more ongoing training would have been helpful.

See table 3 for the results of the questionnaires from the Conflict Managers.
# RESULTS OF THE CONFLICT MANAGER'S QUESTIONNAIRES

## TABLE 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION</th>
<th># OF RESPONSES</th>
<th>RESULTS</th>
<th>PERCENTAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 Number of times you were able to mediate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zero 1-2 3-4 5-6 7 or more</td>
<td>0 1 7 4 2</td>
<td>0% 7% 50% 29% 14%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2 The training in October prepared me well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>well somewhat not prepared</td>
<td>11 3 0</td>
<td>79% 21% 0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3 Is there some way to improve the training?</td>
<td>11 3 0</td>
<td>79% 21% 0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4 It would have been helpful to have more training throughout the year.</td>
<td>9 5</td>
<td>64% 36%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5 If yes, how often do you think ongoing training should have been done?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 once every two months</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>one every two months 11%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 once a month</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>once a month 45%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 once every three weeks</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>once every three weeks 22%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 once every two weeks</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>once every two weeks 22%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 once every week</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>once every week 22%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6 It would have been helpful to have an adult available to conflict managers.</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>yes it would have helped 43% it wouldn't have mattered 21% it would have been more difficult</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7 Have you used any of the skills that you learned through this program in other areas of your life?</td>
<td>yes no</td>
<td>yes no</td>
<td>43% 57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#8 Has this experience helped you solve any of your own problems?</td>
<td>yes no</td>
<td>yes no</td>
<td>58% 42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#9 Has this experience helped you gain more self confidence?</td>
<td>yes no</td>
<td>yes no</td>
<td>73% 27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#10 Has this experience helped you gain more self esteem?</td>
<td>yes no</td>
<td>yes no</td>
<td>64% 36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#11 Since the mediation program started I have seen the following change in the school climate:</td>
<td>yes no</td>
<td>yes no</td>
<td>7% negative change 29% no change 64% positive change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


#18 Since the mediation program started I have seen the following change in the relationships between students and teachers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change Type</th>
<th>Negative Change</th>
<th>No Change</th>
<th>Positive Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#19 Since the mediation program started I have seen the following change in the relationships between students and other students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change Type</th>
<th>Negative Change</th>
<th>No Change</th>
<th>Positive Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Distribution of respondents by grade:

- 4th graders: 58%
- 5th graders: 21%
- 6th graders: 21%

Distribution of respondents by age:

- 9 year olds: 8%
- 10 year olds: 36%
- 11 year olds: 31%
- 12 year olds: 23%

Distribution of respondents by sex:

- Male: 29%
- Female: 71%
RESULTS OF THE SURVEY FROM PARENTS OF CONFLICT MANAGERS

The responses from the parents of the conflict managers were the most positive of all regarding the program. All 14 respondents stated that their son or daughter had discussed the program with them. 13 felt that the program had been a positive experience for their child and one felt that it had "somewhat" been a positive experience. All 14 felt that their child had learned something by the program. When asked what it was that they had learned the responses included the following:

- has learned how to look at both sides of an issue and try to listen to and work with the students
- ways to solve conflicts
- how to resolve conflicts by taking care of the problem and what consequences will become
- that there are always two sides to a conflict and that conflicts are not always solved
- problems can be solved by talking the problem out by anyone, and pretty much everyone is a good person, and even the so called bad problem kids have a good side to them.
- how to resolve problems without always using our fists
  familiarized with how to approach and resolve a conflict
- responsibility
- is more realistic and flexible in conflict situations
- I think the human relations type exercises as the kids were being trained had the most impact
- to be responsible
- responsibility for actions

Nine of the parents had seen their child use the skills somewhere outside of school and five had not seen them use the skills in other areas. 100% of the parents thought that this experience helped their son or daughter be more able to solve their own problems. 100% felt that their child had gained more self confidence and self esteem. Additional comments about how it had helped raise self confidence and
comments about how it had helped raise self confidence and

self esteem included:
- I think she feels very comfortable around most of the students and staff.
- is not threatened by any size, color, age of another person.
- because the adults have given her the power to manage her life instead of relying on them.
- was given more responsibility.
- she believes in herself more.
- he is proud of being in the program
- she feels good about being able to help students and has enjoyed trying to solve problems and have it work out ok.
- by being picked for the program.
- she enjoys going to school more often.

The only suggestions for improving the program were to

"Have a parent info night informing us about the goals of conflict managers, what is done to assure safety for the conflict managers." and "More support on the playground for their role. She has reported that other children in the situation have little respect or tolerance for her intervention".

The one general comment was "I am very glad to see this kind of program on the grade school level. Start teaching these tools now before Jr. High."
### TABLE 4

RESULTS FROM RESPONSES OF PARENTS OF CONFLICT MANAGERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th># OF RESPONSES</th>
<th>PERCENTAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 Has your son or daughter discussed with you at all the conflict management program?</td>
<td>yes no</td>
<td>14 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2 Do you feel that this has been a positive experience for them?</td>
<td>yes somewhat no yes somewhat no</td>
<td>13 1 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4 Have you observed your son or daughter use any of the skills that they learned through this program in other areas of their personal life such as at home, with siblings, or in your neighborhood or other areas?</td>
<td>yes no</td>
<td>9 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5 Has this experience helped them be more able to solve their own problems?</td>
<td>yes no</td>
<td>12 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6 Do you think this experience has helped them gain more self confidence?</td>
<td>yes no</td>
<td>14 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7 Do you think this experience has helped them gain more self esteem?</td>
<td>yes no</td>
<td>14 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Distribution of respondents by sex:

- Male 13%
- Female 87%
DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH OUTCOMES

Considering that there were 39 questionnaires sent out to individuals who had used the conflict management program as disputants and only 5 responded, this is a very low rate of response, only 12.8 percent. One possible explanation for this is that individuals who had used the program had forgotten specifics of the incident for which they used the program so therefore chose not to complete the questionnaire. One possible way to increase this response rate would be to distribute questionnaires at the end of each month (or another shorter time period) for individuals who had used the program that month as disputants. This would allow a shorter period of time to elapse between when they used the process and when they completed the questionnaire, hopefully promoting a higher response rate. Since the responses from the few disputants who responded to the questionnaire were mostly positive, another explanation for the poor response rate could be that individuals who may have responded negatively chose not to answer the questionnaire. They may not have felt that their responses would be confidential or that they may have some type of consequence as a result of their response so chose not to respond.

The disputant surveys that were returned were overwhelmingly positive. 100% of the disputants found the process helpful in resolving their conflict. 75% felt that everyone was keeping the agreement. 80% felt that the agreement was working. 100% thought that the conflict
management was done fairly. 100% felt that the original problem had been settled. 100% were satisfied with the conflict managers. 100% felt that the process went smoothly. 100% thought that the conflict managers were good at what they did, and 100% would recommend conflict management to others. Acknowledging that there were only 5 respondents that were disputants and 2 of those 5 were also conflict managers so probably had a positive attitude toward the program, it was still interesting that they all responded so positively.

The response rate for the conflict managers was much better. There were 14 responses out of 24 questionnaires that were handed out giving a response rate of 58%. The conflict managers probably had a higher response rate because they were more invested in the program. They had gone through the training and towards the end of the year we were meeting with them every other week. 79% of the conflict managers felt that they were well prepared by the training in order to be a conflict manager. 93% stated that there wasn't any way to improve the training. 43% of the respondents stated that they have used the skills that they learned in other areas of their life. 58% felt that the experience has helped them solve some of their own problems. 73% felt that they had gained more self confidence by this experience. 64% felt that they had gained more self esteem. 64% felt that they had seen a positive change in the school since the program started. 69% felt that there had been a
positive change between students and other students since the beginning of the program. 58% of the respondents were 4th graders, 21% of the respondents were 5th graders and 21% were sixth graders. This may suggest that it was more socially acceptable at a younger age, to be a part of this program, and to respond to the questionnaire. This response of more 4th graders may also be because the individuals who were no longer in the program were 5th and 6th graders so there were fewer of them to respond.

The parents response rate was also 58% as there were 14 who responded out of 24 questionnaires that were sent out. These responses were even more positive than either the disputants or the conflict managers themselves. 93% of the parents felt that this had been a positive experience for their son or daughter. 64% have observed their child use the conflict management skills in other areas of their life. This is higher than what the conflict managers reported about themselves, only 43% of the conflict managers reported using the skills in other areas on their life. 100% of the parents felt that this experience helped their child solve their own problems. 100% felt that their child had gained more self confidence through the program and 100% felt that their child had gained more self esteem through the program.

In looking specifically at the question "whether or not educating children in conflict resolution skills helps them to better resolve conflicts with their peers", 100% of the disputants felt that conflict management was helpful for
them. 100% felt that they and the other person were getting along better. 100% felt that the mediation was successful. Another question which we hoped to answer with this study was whether students would be able to use these skills at home or in other areas of their life. 43% of the conflict managers, and 64% of their parents reported that they were using these skills in other areas of their life. These results show that educating children in conflict management skills does help them to better resolve conflicts with their peers and students will be able to use these skills in other areas of their life.

METHOD LIMITATIONS

The first limitation of this method was that the conflict management program had already been implemented when my evaluation began so a pre-test and a post-test wasn't possible. This made it impossible to look at the effect that the program had on the overall school climate, because we weren't able to measure the school climate before the program began. It also made it impossible to evaluate the attitudes of the participants, either the disputants or the conflict managers, regarding how they felt about different ways or styles of resolving conflict before we implemented the program.

Another limitation was that we waited until the end of the school year to start evaluating the program. We could have evaluated what the conflict managers thought about the
training in October immediately after the training so that it would have been fresh in their memory. We also could have evaluated what the disputants thought of the process throughout the school year. There may have been students who used the process back when it first started, and may not have remembered all the details of their conflict when it came time to fill out the questionnaire.

Another limitation of the study was that the team of individuals who implemented the program had noticed that the program had not been utilized recently as much as it was initially. This may be partially due to the fact that we initially did not have any follow up trainings so the selected conflict managers may have lost enthusiasm for the program. We eventually did start to have follow up trainings but some of the enthusiasm was lost in the interim. We should have started having follow up meetings soon after the initial training.

The other limitation was that in order to be approved by the Institutional Review Board, I had to get written permission by each student and their parents in order for them to be involved in this study or fill out the questionnaire. This probably reduced the response rate. If I could have just had students complete the questionnaire in school without their parents written permission there probably would have been a higher response rate.

An additional limitation was that we did not have enough respondents from different cultural backgrounds in order to
compare satisfaction with the program between different cultural groups.

The training program itself also did not allow for different conflict management styles or approaches for different individuals from different cultural backgrounds. This may be an area where conflict managers could have further or advanced training.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

For future studies I would try to do a more complete look at the effects of the conflict management program and the training on the students and the school as a whole. I would try to get a concrete measurement of office referrals for fighting. I would also try to do a before and after survey to see if general attitudes about fighting, conflict, or delinquent behavior would change at all from before the program to after the program was implemented. I would also look at trying to set up an experimental and a control group, possibly surveying another school that didn't implement the conflict management program to use that as a control group.

Another change that I would do is to distribute the questionnaires periodically throughout the year because then the students would be more able to easily remember the situation or conflict which they used the conflict managers for. Another reason for doing this periodically would be that you wouldn't run into time constraints at the end of the year and the students and teachers may not be as frustrated with each other as they may be at the end of the year with
the anticipation of summer vacation coming up.

Additional studies could also look at how effective this program is for people from different cultures and how willing they may be to use it. These studies could also examine what changes should be made to the program or the training of conflict managers in order to better serve individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.

CONCLUSION

Overall the results of this study were very promising. The disputants, the conflict managers, and the parents of the conflict managers all responded very positively to the program. They all stated that they saw positive results in dealing with conflict as a result of the program.

Such reinforcing responses should indicate to the professionals in both the fields of Education and Social Work that this would be a worthwhile program to continue to support. Support will be needed in the schools where it is presently working and also in other schools which are trying to implement it in their building and among their students.

This program isn't meant to be a panacea for conflict or discipline within the school or a remedy for severe behavioral disturbances but it can help create an atmosphere where the students have the knowledge and may be willing to help resolve some of the conflicts themselves.
Conflict Management Training Outline

Day One

9:00
Ice Breaker: Group Knot- Untangle the Knot 15 min.

9:15
Orientation: (p.10)
   What the program expects and what they expect of the program. 5 min.

9:30
Brainstorm (p.17)
   Brainstorm what Conflict means to them. 5 min.

9:35
Denial, Confrontation, Problem Solving
   Three pieces of butcher paper, kids brainstorm what each word means. 10 min.

9:45
Different Styles of Resolving Conflict
   Story with three different endings. 10 min.

9:55
Role of the Conflict Manager (p. 22) - Role play "helping" and role play conflict managing. 30 min.

Break 10:25 to 10:40 15 min.

10:40
Conflict Management Process (p. 24-25)
   Write out steps on butcher paper. 15 min.

10:55
Conflict Management Practice 25 min.

11:20
I Message - Skits and worksheets (p. 49) 30 min.

11:50
Wrap Up 10 min.
Day Two

9:00
I Love My Neighbor 15 min.

9:15
Review Conflict Management Process (p. 29) 10 min.

9:25
Active Listening (p. 37) 10 min.

9:35
Conflict Management Practice (p. 40)
Fairy tales 25 min.

10:00
Break 10:00 to 10:10 AM 10 min.

10:10
Energizer Animal Game 10 min.

10:20
Conflict Management Practice 25 min.

10:45
Test for Reflective Listening and Expressing Feelings
Circle group 1st. person expresses feelings, next person does reflective listening, every other one. 20 min.

11:05
Problem Solving Skills (p. 61)
Brainstorm things that make for a good resolution. 10 min.

11:15
Report Form and Logistics of the Program (p. 65)
Where clip boards will be, filling out the forms etc. 10 min.

11:25
Conflict Management Practice 20 min.

11:45
Ice Cream Sundaes and Wrap up 15 min.
Elementary Conflict Management Process

Introduction and Groundrules

1. Introduce yourselves.
2. Ask if they want to solve the problem.
3. If yes, move to a different area to talk.
4. Get agreement from each disputant to each rule:
   - do not interrupt
   - no name calling or put downs
   - be as honest as you can about what happened and how you feel
   - agree to work to solve the problem

   (-no physical fighting)
   (-speak directly to us)

Defining the Problem

5. Conflict Managers will decide who will talk first. (possibly choose the angriest or the one most upset.)

6. Ask person #1 what happened - Restate.
   Ask person #1 how he/she feels about this and why?

7. Ask person #2 what happened - Restate.
   Ask person #2 how he/she feels about this and why?

Finding Solutions

8. Ask person #1 what he/she can do to solve the problem?
9. Ask person #2 "Do you agree?"
10. Ask person #2 what he/she can do to solve the problem.
11. Ask person #1 "Do you agree?"

   (Make sure there is a solution for each part of the problem.)
12. Ask both disputants what they could do differently in the future if the same problem arises.
13. Ask them if the problem is solved.
14. Ask the disputants to tell their friends that the problem has been solved, to prevent rumors from spreading.
15. Congratulate students for their hard work, and for solving the problem.
16. Fill out the Conflict Manager Report Form.
Questionnaire for Disputants
Appendix C

For Students Who Have Used the Conflict Management Program

You are receiving this survey because at some time during the last year you have used the conflict management program. Please answer the following questions according to how you view the conflict management program. There is no right or wrong answer. This is your choice to answer this survey, you do not have to answer if you do not want to, but it would be helpful for the study we are doing. Please take a few moments to complete the following questions. Thank you!

Please put a check mark in the line by the answer you choose.

1. How many times have you used Conflict Management? __

2. Did you find it helpful in resolving your conflict?
   a. yes _ b. no__

3. If the conflict management program was not available what would you have done? (check one)
   ___a. ignore the problem
   ___b. fight
   ___c. tell a teacher or staff
   ___d. other (Please explain)

4. What type of conflict did you use the program for?
   (Check one)
   ___a. someone wanting to fight you
   ___b. spreading of a rumor
   ___c. name-calling
   ___d. racial problems
   ___e. fighting over an object
   ___f. property damage
   ___g. girlfriend/boyfriend situation
   ___h. other (please specify)

5. Are you a Conflict Manager? a. yes _ b. No__

6. Was a written agreement reached in conflict management?
   a. yes___ b. somewhat____ c. no____

7. If so, is everybody keeping the agreement? (check one)
   ___a. yes, everybody is keeping all terms of the agreement
   ___b. yes, everybody is keeping at least some terms
   ___c. no, only I am keeping the agreement
   ___d. no, only the other person is keeping the agreement
   ___e. no, no one is keeping the agreement

8. If the agreement is not being kept, what points of the agreement are not being kept? ____________________________

9. Do you feel that the agreement, as agreed upon, and signed, is working for you? a. yes _ b. somewhat__ c. no__
10. Was the conflict management conducted fairly? 
   a. yes  b. somewhat  c. no

11. Do you feel that the original problem or problems for which you came to the conflict managers have been settled? 
   a. yes  b. somewhat  c. no

12. Were you satisfied with your conflict managers? 
   a. yes  b. somewhat  c. no

13. Was the agreement fair? 
   a. yes  b. somewhat  c. no

14. Do you feel that your conflict managers took sides? 
   a. yes, both did  
   b. yes, one did  
   c. no, neither did

15. Do you feel the conflict management process went smoothly? 
   a. yes  b. somewhat  c. no

16. Do you feel the conflict managers were good at what they were doing? 
   a. yes  b. somewhat  c. no

17. Would you recommend conflict management to a friend who was having problems? (Check one) 
   a. yes, without reservation  
   b. yes, but with some reservation  
   c. no, If not why not?

18. Do you think conflict management made a difference in the way you and the other person(s) get along? Are you getting along: (Check one) 
   a. better  
   b. about the same  
   c. worse

19. Did you feel that the conflict managers took your concerns seriously? (check one) 
   a. yes, both did  
   b. yes, one did  
   c. no, neither did

20. Overall, how successful would you say your mediation was? (check one) 
   a. successful  
   b. partially successful  
   c. not successful

21. What did you like about mediation?
22. What did you not like about mediation?

_____________________________________________________________________

23. Do you have any suggestions for making mediation more helpful?

_____________________________________________________________________

24. Since the conflict management program started I have seen the following change in the school climate: (check one)
   ___ a. negative change
   ___ b. no change
   ___ c. positive change

25. Since the conflict management program started I have seen the following change in the relationships between students and teachers: (check one)
   ___ a. negative change
   ___ b. no change
   ___ c. positive change

26. Since the conflict management program started I have seen the following change in the relationships between students and other students: (check one)
   ___ a. negative change
   ___ b. no change
   ___ c. positive change

Please answer the following questions about yourself.

Name (optional)_________________________________________________________________

Grade_________ Age_________ Sex_________

Ethnic Background (Please check one)
   ___ African American  ___ Native American
   ___ Hispanic/Latino  ___ Caucasian (White)
   ___ Cambodian  ___ Vietnamese
   ___ Laotian  ___ Hmong
   ___ Bi-racial (please specify)__________________________
   ___ Other (please specify)____________________________

Please add any other comments._________________________________________________

Thank you for completing the survey!

Some of the above questions were taken from the booklet School Mediation Program Evaluation published by NAME (National Association for Mediation in Education) and written by Julie A. Lam, Ph.D.
Survey for Conflict Managers

You are receiving this survey because you have been trained and have been performing as a conflict manager for this past school year. Please answer the following questions according to how you view the conflict management program. There is no right or wrong answer. This is optional, you do not have to answer this but it would be helpful for the study we are doing if you would please take a few moments to complete the following questions. Thank you!

1. How many times were you able to try and mediate a problem between peers in the last year? (circle one)
   a. 0   b. 1-2   c. 3-4   d. 5-6   e. 7 or more

2. How well did the training in October prepare you for acting as a conflict manager?
   ___ a. I was very well prepared
   ___ b. I was somewhat prepared
   ___ c. I was not well prepared

3. Which part of the training was most helpful for you?

4. Which part of the training was the least helpful for you?

5. Which part of the mediation process do you feel most comfortable with?

6. Which part of the mediation process do you feel the least comfortable with?

7. Is there some way that you think the training could have been improved?  a. yes  b. no  If yes, how so?

8. Do you think it would have been helpful to have more ongoing training throughout the year?  a. yes  b. no

9. If yes, how often do you think ongoing training should have been done? (check one)
   ___a. once every two months
   ___b. once a month
   ___c. once every three weeks
   ___d. once every two weeks
   ___e. once every week
Questionnaire for Conflict Managers
Appendix D

10. Do you think it would have been helpful to have an adult, other than the playground supervisors, available to the conflict managers in case they ran into problems mediating?
   a. yes, it would have been helpful
   b. I don't think it would have mattered
   c. I think it would have made it more difficult

11. Have you learned anything by this experience of being a conflict manager? a. Yes  b. no

12. If so, what have you learned from this program?

13. Have you used any of the skills that you learned through this program in other areas of your personal life such as at home, with siblings, in your neighborhood or other areas?
   a. yes  b. no
   If yes, where?
   Which skills did you use?

14. Has this experience helped you solve any of your own problems?  a. yes  b. no
   If so, how?

15. Do you think this experience has helped you gain more self confidence?  a. yes  b. no
   If so, how?

16. Do you think this experience has helped you gain more self esteem?  a. yes  b. no
   If so, how?

17. Since the mediation program started I have seen the following change in the school climate:  (check one)
   a. negative change
   b. no change
   c. positive change

18. Since the mediation program started I have seen the following change in the relationships between students and teachers:  (check one)
   a. negative change
   b. no change
   c. positive change

19. Since the mediation program started I have seen the following change in the relationships between students and other students:  (check one)
   a. negative change
   b. no change
   c. positive change
20. What suggestions do you have for improving the program?

________________________________________________________________________

Please give us the following information about yourself.

Name (optional) ____________________________________________________________

Grade__________ Age__________ Sex__________

Ethnic Background (Please check one)

___African American ___Native American
___Hispanic/Latino ___Caucasian (white)
___Cambodian ___Vietnamese
___Laotian ___Hmong
___Bi-racial (please specify)____________________
___Other (please specify)________________________

Please add any additional comments you may have.______________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Thank you for completing the survey!

Some of the above questions were taken from the booklet
School Mediation Program Evaluation published by NAME
(National Association for Mediation in Education) and written
by Julie A. Lam, Ph. D.
Questionnaire for Parents of Conflict Managers
Appendix E

Survey for Parents of Conflict Managers

You are receiving this survey because your son or daughter was trained as a conflict manager earlier this year and has been acting as a conflict manager throughout the past school year. Please answer the following questions according to how you view the conflict management program. There is no right or wrong answer. This is optional and you do not have to answer this but it would be helpful for the study we are doing if you would please take a few moments to complete the following questions. Thank you!

1. Has your son or daughter discussed with you at all the conflict management program? a) yes ___ b) No ___

2. Do you feel that this has been a positive experience for them? a) yes__ b) somewhat__ c) no___

3. Do you feel that your son or daughter has learned anything by this experience? a) yes__ b) no__
   If so, what have they learned?

4. Have you observed your son or daughter use any of the skills that they learned through this program in other areas of their personal life such as at home, with siblings, or in your neighborhood or other areas? a) yes___ b) no___
   If yes, where?
   Which skills did they use?

5. Has this experience helped them be more able to solve their own problems? a) yes__ b) no___
   If so, how?

6. Do you think this experience has helped them gain more self confidence? a) yes___ b) no ___
   If so how?

7. Do you think this experience has helped them gain more self esteem? a) yes____ b) no____ If so, how?

8. What suggestions do you have for improving the program?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Questionnaire for Parents of Conflict Managers

Appendix E

Please answer the following information about yourself?

Name (optional)__________________________

Age______ Sex______

Ethnic Background (Please check one)

_____ African American _______ Caucasian(White)

_____ Hispanic/Latino _______ Native American

_____ Cambodian _______ Vietnamese

_____ Laotian _______ Hmong

_____ Bi-racial (please specify)_____________________________________

_____ Other (please specify)_____________________________________

Please add any additional comments you may have.__________

_________________________________________________________________

Thank you for completing the survey!

Some of the above questions were taken from the booklet
School Mediation Program Evaluation published by NAME
(National Association for Mediation in Education) and written
by Julie A. Lam, Ph. D.
CONSENT FORM
EVALUATION OF THE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Your child(ren) is invited to be in a research study about the effectiveness of the conflict management program which was implemented this year at Washington Elementary School. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

The study is being done by Maggie Holland who has been doing a field placement at Washington school this year for her Masters degree in social work. She is attending Augsburg College in Minneapolis, MN. She can be reached at Washington school (Mondays and Wednesdays) at 281-6111 if you have any questions. Her thesis advisor is Vincent Peters at Augsburg College. He can be reached at (612) 330-1633.

PURPOSE
The purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of the conflict management program for both the students that used the program and also for those students who were trained as conflict managers.

PROCEDURE
If you agree to allow your child(ren) to be in this study we would ask you to do the following:

1. Sign the consent form for your child to be involved.
2. Have your child sign the consent form.
3. Have your child fill out the questionnaire/survey.
4. If your child was trained as a conflict manager complete the survey for the parents of conflict managers.
5. Return the consent form and the questionnaire/survey to school with your child. Any questionnaire which is not returned with a consent form will not be able to be used for this study, so please return both.

This survey is administered with the approval of the Rochester school district and Augsburg College. Your participation in this survey/questionnaire is strictly voluntary and you may choose to not answer every question. The only risk involved is that you share your views and opinions with us. You may withdraw from the study at any time. The benefits will be that the results of the survey/questionnaire will be more accurate if more people respond to the survey. This will also help us improve the Conflict Management program in the years to come.
CONFIDENTIALITY
The records of this study will be kept private. In any report that may be published, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify an individual. The records for this research will only be accessible to the person doing the research, Maggie Holland, and her advisor, Vincent Peters, an associate professor at Augsburg College. The records will be destroyed when her thesis is completed.

Voluntary Nature of the Study
Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not in any way affect your relationship with Washington school, the Rochester school district or Augsburg College.

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and received answers if needed. I have answered any questions my child may have had. I consent to allow my child participate in the study. My child agrees to participate in the study.

Parent's Signature_________________________ Date__________
Child's Signature_________________________ Date__________

For Parents of Conflict Managers
If my child was a Conflict Manager I also agree to complete a survey/questionnaire regarding what I thought of the program as a parent.

Parent's Signature_________________________ Date__________

Investigator's signature_________________________ Date__________
BIBLIOGRAPHY


