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**Article: "Teaching Students to be Peer Mediators"**

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**This article details a program of empowering students to be peacemakers and mediators with classroom conflicts.**

**This was done to help students learn to solve their own conflicts and to free up the time of teachers and principals to actually teach and not be constantly managing student behavior.**

**Students are taught steps:**

**1. Negotiation**

- a. State what you want.**
- b. State how you feel.**
- c. State the reasons for your wants and feelings.**
- d. Summarize your understanding of what the other person wants, how the other person feels and the reasons underlying both.**
- e. Choose one plan and shake hands.**

**Students are then taught to be a conflict mediator. The Mediator introduced him/herself and asks the students if they want to solve their problem. The Mediator does not proceed until both answer "Yes."**

**Mediator explains:**

- 1. S/he is a volunteer.**
- 2. S/he is neutral and will not take sides or decide who is right or wrong.**
- 3. Each person can state his/her views without interruption.**

1. Solve problem.
2. No name calling.
3. No interrupting.
4. Be as honest as you can.
5. You must do what you agree to do.
6. All mediation is confidential.

The final step is the Peacemaker program where two students are assigned as official mediators each day. Students alternate so everyone gets a chance and all students are involved in extensive role play before actually mediating a real problem.

**RESULTS:** The results proved to be positive at Highland Elementary. 80% of the student/student conflicts were resolved without teacher involvement and zero cases were referred to the principal. Parents began to request their child's involvement in the negotiation program. Those whose children were involved reported their children began mediating conflicts at home as well.

**BENEFITS:**

The benefits appear to be overwhelmingly in favor of students mediating their own conflicts. I think this is a skill everyone should learn and it is helpful to teach it as early as possible. It helps children attain a higher level of maturity and understanding of the views of others as well as increasing their listening and comprehension skills.

**Note:** This summary is courtesy of Cathy Gehardi, 1992, prepared for Psych Foundations presentation and reading requirement. Thanks Cathy!

This model is very close to being the same model as used by "Victim Witness" programs in large cities. That mediation model was developed by Paul Forgach, a former trainer for the ITT Cadre (1973-1980)