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THE OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF A PEER MEDIATION PROGRAM AT  
MILLVILLE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A  
PEER MEDIATION/ADVISORY PROGRAM FOR A MIDDLE SCHOOL

by  
Kyriakos M. Evrenoglou

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment for the requirements of  
Masters of Arts Degree in the Graduate School of  
Rowan University  
May, 1999

Approved by

Date Approved May 1999

## Abstract

Kyriakos M. Evrenoglou

The Overall Effectiveness of a Peer  
Mediation Program at Millville Senior High  
School and the Development of a Peer  
Mediation Program for a Middle School.

1999

Dr. Ronald Capasso  
School Administration

The first purpose of the study was conducted in order to describe and evaluate the effectiveness of a peer mediation student assistance program. The means to accomplish the purpose of the study was to investigate the overall attendance, verbal, and physical interpersonal conflict among tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students at Millville Senior High School during the 1995-1996 and 1997-1998 school calendar years. A quantitative ex post facto design was employed. In addition, a subcommittee of stakeholders was developed to collaboratively develop a plan that would extend the goals and potential benefits associated with peer mediation programs in the future Lakeside Middle School in Millville, New Jersey.

In response to the data and information acquired during the investigation, peer mediation seemed to lessen the number of nonviolent interpersonal conflicts. Violent interpersonal conflicts did not differ in incidences. A peer mediation subcommittee developed a series of products and approaches based on stakeholders and staff feedback. The subcommittee and stakeholders agreed to the following with respect to a peer mediation program at the middle school level: (a) goals, (b) effectiveness, (c) coordinator's responsibilities, (d) type of program, (e) the implementation phases, (f) parent brochure, and (g) Peer Mediation Teacher Handbook.

### Mini-Abstract

Kyriakos M. Evrenoglou

The Overall Effectiveness of a Peer  
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Mediation Program for a Middle School.

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Dr. Ronald Capasso  
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The two purposes of the study were conducted in order to describe and evaluate the effectiveness of a peer mediation program and to collaboratively develop a plan that would extend the goals associated with peer mediation programs. The effects of the program were reported and a plan with products developed.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the Millville Board of Education and the Administration for allowing me the opportunity to fulfill my academic obligations. I extend my deep appreciation to Dr. Shelly Schneider, Mr. Steve Saul, Ms. Janice Oliver and Mrs. Mary Beth DuBois whose utmost professionalism extends well beyond this study. Dr. Ronald Capasso, who has guided my academic internship with understanding and vision. The wonderful staff and my students at Millville Senior High School. I must also extend my most humble heart to the following colleagues who not only were instrumental in the consistency of this study but whose utmost loyalty extends well beyond this study: Joan Cooper, Danette Corneilus, Estelle Davis, Sue Jacobsen, Ellen Nickerson, and Joan Siniavsky.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### Focus of the Study

In partial response to the increase of discipline issues and violence in schools, peer mediation and/or advisory programs have been instituted in schools in order to help solve interpersonal conflicts (Benson & Benson, 1993; Galassi, Gullledge, & Cox, 1997). In schools, peer mediation programs use students as mediators in order to encourage problem solving skills between disputants (Araki, 1990). Advisory programs are premised on the assumption that students need adult guidance for the expression of warmth, concern, openness and understanding. The rationale is that a positive psychosocial climate between teachers and students have been reported to improve student academic achievement, student empathy and discipline within a school and community (Galassi, et al., 1997).

There are three models of peer mediation programs. The first is the Total School Model in which all students are taught the principles and practices of conflict resolution (Johnson & Johnson, 1995). The second is the Elective Course Model in which selected teachers teach a mini course on mediation. The third is the Student Club Model, which involves selecting students from the student body. The major advantages offered by the latter model are two-fold: (a) to select mediators from the student body whom represent them, and (b) the procedures help minimize out-of-class time (Lupton-Smith, Carruther, Flythe, Goettee, & Modest, 1996). The mediation procedure consists of four steps: (a) stop the hostilities, (b) a commitment from the disputants to the mediation process, (c) facilitate the negotiation procedures, and (d) formalize an agreement. The negotiation procedure itself consists of six steps. Each disputant will: (a) define what they want, (b)

describe their feelings, (c) explain the reasons associated with their wants and feelings, (d) reverse perspectives in order to see the other disputant's perspective, (e) mutually generate optional agreements, and (f) agree on a course of action (Johnson and Johnson, 1995).

Regarding advisory programs, any activity that can be related to the psychosocial needs of early adolescents could be included in an advisory program (Galassi, et al., 1997). However, advisory programs have been recently categorized into six types. They are as follows: advocacy (one-on-one relationships), community (focus on group spirit, morale, social skills), skills (focus on developing self-management and decision-making skills), invigoration (focus on relaxing, having fun, disconnecting from the academic formalities), academic (focus on cognitive needs) and, administrative (focus on housekeeping needs, announcements, etc.).

A major concern among school administrators and teachers is the overall effectiveness of implemented programs. Program evaluations have focused either on peer mediators or the disputants themselves. It is the intent of this project to assess the overall effectiveness of a peer mediation program and to develop a program that will address the issues of positive social skills and conflict resolution skills in a middle school.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe and evaluate the effectiveness of a peer mediation student assistance program. The means to accomplish the purpose of the study were to investigate overall attendance, in-school suspensions, violence, and repeat referrals among 10th, 11, and 12th grade students at Millville Senior High School. In addition, it is the intent of the interns to collaboratively develop a plan that would extend the goals and potential benefits associated with peer mediation/advisory programs into a middle school setting. The research component of the project resulted in a report to inform teachers and administrators of the current effectiveness of the program in order to

delineate if there are gender, grade level, and district differences among disputants. This was in order to identify underlying areas that may be deemed in need of attention. This information was taken into consideration when developing a peer mediation/advisory program for a middle school.

The development purpose of this project was to refine leadership competencies in analyzing and solving problems using appropriate decision-making techniques, and initiating and effectively managing change as both a leader and a member of a leadership team. The organizational purpose of this project was to provide research based feedback regarding program effectiveness.

Program evaluation is a significant component of systematic, consistent and valid decision-making. A major responsibility associated with schools is how to make schools safe learning environments. Peer mediation programs have been advocated as a means of preventing violence and resolving conflicts (Araki, 1990; Benson and Benson, 1993; Johnson & Johnson, 1995; Johnson, et al., 1995).

In making program decisions, a systematic approach to program evaluation is a major component in the decision-making process (Carruthers, et al., 1996).

### Definitions

The following definitions were used in the study:

1. Aggravated Assault (code 320) - A person attempts to cause or purposely causes serious bodily harm to another individual (i.e., injury which may create substantial risk of death, permanent disfigurement, or impairment of the functions of an organ) (Vukceovich, 1998).
2. Gang Fight/Assault (code 340) - A fight between, or an assault by, two or more members of a group (Vukceovich, 1998).

3. Harassment (code 139) - Purposely interfering with a student, teacher, or any school community member from the educational process (i.e., name-calling, degrading remarks).

4. Incitement (code 137) - Attempts to encourage others to participate in any violent behavior.

5. Peer Mediation/Conflict Resolution Programs - Programs that use peers who use a course of action that employ the procedures of both mediation and negotiations in order to resolve disputes (Lupton-Smith, et a., 1996).

6. Sexual Assault (code 370) - Subjecting an individual to sexual contact or exposure without one's consent (Vukceovich, 1998).

7. Sexual Harassment (code 150) - Harassment in which someone is forced to endure unwanted physical or verbal innuendoes (Vukceovich, 1998).

8. Simple Assault (code 310) - A person attempts to cause, threatens to cause, or purposely causes bodily injury to another individual (Vukceovich, 1998).

9. Verbal Altercation (code 140) - A conflict between/among individuals in which a physical confrontation may become imminent.

10. Violence (code 300) - A physical confrontation by two or more individuals by mutual consent in which physical harm is intended. It does not include shoving, etc.. in which the individuals stopped the incident prior to harm coming to any of the participants (Vukceovich, 1998).

11. Other Violent Offenses (code 380) - Infractions that are not classified in the aforementioned categories (Vukceovich, 1998).

### Delimitations of the Study

All referrals, mediation sessions, school attendance records, and conflicts of violence were quantified. The data was from the 1995-1996 and 1997-1998 school

calendar years. The study did not exclude any referrals or cases with respect to the student's academic achievement, learning-disability status, special-education status, basic skills status, gender, socioeconomic or cultural status. The stakeholders in developing the peer mediation/advisory program were comprised of administrators and teachers who had an interest, knowledge and experience with peer mediation/advisory programs.

#### Limitations of the Study

It is with caution that each of the findings is reported. The data will only be applied to Millville Senior High School students during the school calendar years of 1995-1996 and 1997-1998. In addition, the peer mediation program may have a greater influence among the 11th and 12th-grade students as compared with the sophomore classes. Although a peer mediation student assistance program is in effect at the eighth and ninth-grade building, inconsistencies may exist in procedures associated with the program's implementation. No attempt was made to partition out transfer students or students returning from the district's alternative school. The data for the program evaluation study did not include interviews, surveys, open-ended questions or observations (process-oriented evaluation).

#### Setting of the Study

The City of Millville is located in Cumberland County, New Jersey. It was established in 1801 and was officially incorporated as a City by the New Jersey State Legislature in 1866. The form of government employed up until 1913 was the Mayor-council. Thereafter, as a result of the Walsh Act of 1919, the city changed to a commission form of government in which five commissioners were elected and the one with the highest number of votes served as the city's mayor. This form of the city government still exists today (Millville City Commission, 1990).

The social characteristics of Millville based on the data compiled by the New Jersey State Data Center is as follows: (a) Urban residence - 25,992 (100%); (b) rural residence - 0 (0%); educational attainment (based on persons 25 years and over) - 16,308 (less than 9th grade - 1,791; 9th to 12th grade without a diploma - 3,127; high school graduate - 6,122; some college but without a degree - 2,362; Associates degree - 1,008; Bachelor's degree - 1,366; Graduate or professional degree - 532). The percentage of high school graduates or higher is 69.4% in which 11.64% of the 69.4% have a Bachelor's degree or higher.

Economically, Millville as of 1990 (Cumberland County Department of Planning and Development, 1990), has been categorized as an urban community. The average household salaries based on the 1990 Census for Whites; African-Americans; American Indian and Eskimo; Asian/Pacific Islanders; Hispanic and other races are respectively as follows: \$38,414.00; \$25,432.00; \$22,264.00; \$22,839.00; \$23,194.00. Cumberland County currently ranks last in per capita income in the State of New Jersey. As a result, the Millville Public School System ranks in the bottom 10.0% in community wealth of all New Jersey school districts. The Millville Public School System's socioeconomic status of low-middle class is in the District Factor Group "B" (based on educational level, occupational status, median income families living below the poverty level, percent unemployment, urbanization status, persons per household). The ethnic background of the students enrolled at Millville Senior High School are as follows: 71.06% are Whites; 18.30% are African-Americans; 9.36% are Hispanic; 0.98% are Asian/Pacific Islanders; 0.23% are American Indian/Alaskan natives. There are approximately 650 females and 675 males (Millville Board of Education, 1997).

Based on the 1990 Census Profile Series, the percentage of children under 18 residing in a two-parent or one-parent home was 70% and 30% respectively. In addition,

7.0% of the latter was headed by a male, whereas 23% was headed by a female. Millville falls below the reported New Jersey State average of 80.0% regarding the two-parent household status. Regarding the status of single male and female headed households, Millville is higher than the state percentages of 4.0% and 16.0% respectively (Fenton, 1995).

Millville Senior High School was established in September of 1964. The school complex was and continues to be in operation as the senior high school building. It is located on Wade Boulevard and Pine Street.

The Board of Education is comprised of a nine member team with three additional members who represent the four sending districts. The sending districts are as follows: City of Woodbine, Commercial Township, Lawrence Township, and Maurice River Township. The inclusion of members representing the sending districts is due to a law enacted in 1995 by the State Legislature in which sending districts must be represented on the boards of the school district to which the respective district sends their students (Johnson, 1996).

The data provided indicate that the students of the Millville Public School District have a lesser social, economic and educational status than that recoded for the state norm. Addressing these issues will not only require local, county, and state agencies, but also place a greater burden on the public school system due to the aforementioned factors. The increase in state aid has been instrumental in providing much needed services to the students via the Abbot v. Burke decision. In addition, curricular change and revisions as well as professional development and research are necessary processes in order to address the unique needs of our students. It is with the hope that the students of this district will obtain the necessary knowledge, skills, and development in order to enhance their personal and social potential in a positive and productive way.



### Significance

Limited attempts have been made to determine the overall effectiveness of a peer mediated student assistance program at Millville Senior High School. Little is known as to what degree the program influences overall student attendance, in-school suspensions, repeat referrals, and violence/force related incidences among the student population. In addition, the principal of a middle school of the Millville Public School System would like a program that would extend the goals and potential benefits associated with peer mediation/advisory programs into a middle school setting.

Benefits to be gained from the project are as follows: (a) to systematically assess the overall effectiveness of a peer mediation student assistance program via an outcome-based collaborative action research design, (b) aid major stakeholders in providing feedback for program improvement, and (c) filter the data into a collaboratively developed middle school peer mediation/advisory program.

### Organization of the Study

The remainder of this study includes the following: Chapter 2 Review of Literature - researched data of the effectiveness of peer mediation programs and related areas of study; Chapter 3 The Design of the Study - a description to the research design, research instrumentation, sample population, sampling technique used in the study, a description of the data collection approach, and a description of the data analysis plan; Chapter 4 Presentation of the Research Findings - results of statistical analysis and surveys employed in the study; and Chapter 5 Conclusions, Implications, and Further Study - conclusions, implications and recommendations for further study, implications of the study on the intern's leadership development, and how the organization changed as a result of this research study.

## Chapter 2

### Review of Literature

This investigation has involved a series of important factors all of which deserve a certain amount of attention. The literature to be reviewed is divided into six major sections. The sections are as follows: theories on conflicts in schools; types of conflicts in schools; strategies used to resolve conflicts comparing trained and untrained students; discipline problems and fights; components of peer mediation programs; and success rates of mediations.

#### Theories on Conflicts in Schools

There are a number of theories associated with conflict, however the majority may be categorized as either human developmental theories or social psychological theories.

The human developmental theories include the psychoanalytic theory and the cognitive developmental theory. The psychoanalytic theory proposes that conflicts with and the normal detachment from parents are healthy stages for one's development of individuality and subsequent relationships (Irvin, 1996). This usually results when a strong emotional bond exists between the parents and child. As the individual matures, family relationships are disrupted, conflicts arise and the person begins to develop alternative caring and committed relationships with peers that replace the ties with parents. If relationships are not strong prior to puberty, the conflicts between the child and parent(s) can become destructive. The cognitive developmental theory proposes that conflicts resulting from moving beyond the concrete levels of thinking to the formal thinking level initiate a revision in the development of self-esteem, reflection, introspection, comparison with others, and sensitivity to various opinions by individuals (Irvin, 1996). Conflict is the

mechanism by which individuals form new or modified cognitive structures, developing new perspectives and changes in patterns of reasoning which result in changes in attitudes towards peers and parents. These new behavior patterns create new conflicts, as roles and expectations are renegotiated. In this context, negotiation is viewed as an advanced construct of reasoning.

A social psychological theory that has been frequently used to describe conflicts is the duals-concerns theory which is also known as the conflict strategies theory (Johnson & Johnson, 1995). The theory proposes that there are two major concerns in conflict resolution: (a) obtaining one's goals and (b) maintaining an appropriate relationship with the other individual. Both the goals and relationships may vary in degrees of importance. The degree of importance would determine the proposed five strategies a person chooses to employ in resolving a conflict. The five strategies are as follows: (a) Integrative, problem-solving negotiations which is employed when the goal and the relationship are very important; (b) compromise, when both the goal and the relationship are very important; (c) Smoothing, when the goal is of no importance whereas the relationship is important; (d) withdrawing, when neither the goal or the relationship is important; (e) forcing or distributive, when a disputant views his or her goal as very important but not the relationship in which the individual seeks to achieve the desired goal by forcing, coercing, or persuading the other to yield.

#### Types of Conflicts in Schools

Araki (1990) investigated the effects of a peer mediation project in a high school, intermediate school, and an elementary school in the Honolulu School District in Hawaii. One of the five major purposes of the study was to determine what was the nature of disputes in the school utilizing peer mediation. A case study model was used in conducting the study. It involved three project schools within a school complex that

consisted of a high school, a feeder intermediate school, and a feeder elementary school. The district in which the three schools were chosen for the study consists of 44 elementary and secondary schools; 34,790 students and 2,078 instructional personnel. Questionnaires, interviews, and unobtrusive measures (data on types of problems mediated, outcomes of mediation, and specific characteristics of disputants by the project coordinator).

The data analysis procedure was qualitative whereas the results were presented in a descriptive, analytical manner. In addition, triangulation was employed in which multiple data sources were cross-validated. The types of conflicts were categorized into eight major categories over the two year period that were mediated. They were as follows: (a) gossip/rumors--statements perceived by one person about another that are viewed as untrue, offensive, and annoying; (b) arguments--a verbal interchange by individuals resulting from misunderstandings, personality differences, disagreements, shouting at each other, and "can't get along"; (c) dirty looks--stares that are interpreted as annoying; (d) classroom behavior--insubordination; (e) harassment--insults, threats showing the "middle finger", bullying, name-calling, and picking on one another; (f) jealousy--a boy/girl problem; (g) fight/pending fight--a physical engagement or near-fight; and (h) invasion of privacy--giving out someone's phone number, reading personal letters, etc. The types of conflicts were ranked in descending order for the two years. The statistical analysis yielded to points: (a) the types of conflicts with the highest occurrences were gossip/rumor (27.2%), harassment (27.2%), arguments (19.7%), and classroom behavior (9.1%); and (b) the conflict with the highest proportion at each project school was arguments (high school), gossip/rumor (intermediate school), and harassment (elementary school). Out of 331 disputants, 218 were females (65.9%) and 113 were males (34.1%). A X-square test indicated statistical significant ( $\chi^2=43.8$ ,  $DF=7$ ,  $p<.001$ ) between gender

and types of conflict. The three highest types of conflicts among females were gossip/rumor (23%), arguments (15.4%), and harassment (12.4%). The three highest types of conflicts among males were harassment (13.6%), arguments (4.8%) and gossip/rumors (4.5%).

Other investigations have observed similar observations concerning types of conflicts in schools. Johnson, Johnson & Dudley (1992) investigated the types of conflicts occurring in the whole student body in a suburban, middle-class elementary school (Grades 1-6). The students were described as heterogeneous in academic achievement with learning-disabled and special-education students in each class. The classrooms were randomly chosen from a pool of instructors who volunteered in the study. The data collecting procedures were that all students completed a conflict report form on any conflict in which they were involved. The variables gathered were as follows: (a) date of conflict, (b) names of disputants, (c) description of the conflict, and (d) the strategies employed to resolve the conflict. The investigators provided description data in presenting the types of conflicts employed by the students. It was reported that the most frequent conflicts involved put-downs and teasing (harassment), playground conflicts (arguments over games played, taking another person's ball, etc.), and access or possession conflicts. The percentage of occurrence for each of the aforementioned conflicts were 36%, 22%, 19%, and 12% respectively.

Johnson, Johnson & Dudley, et al. (1994) in another elementary school setting investigated the types of conflicts occurring in a middle-class American suburban school. The sample consisted of 92 students (36 males and 56 females) in Grades 1 through 6 (1 first grader; 8 second graders; 42 third graders; 11 fifth graders, 8 sixth graders). Four dependent variables were investigated. One was the frequency and type of conflicts occurring in each classroom prior to the implementation of a conflict resolution program.

The procedures were previously described in the study conducted by Johnson, Johnson & Dudley (1992) in this section. Briefly, students were asked to complete a conflict report form in which they were involved and to the best of their ability described the strategies they employed in dealing with the conflict. The investigators reported that the most frequently occurring conflicts were physical aggression or fighting (N=58), playground disputes (N=44) access or possession disputes (N=32), turn-taking disputes (N=20) harassment (N=16) and academic-work disputes (N=8). The percentage for each of the aforementioned types of conflict were 33%, 19%, 18%, 11%, 9%, and 5% respectively.

Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, Ward et al. (1995) also investigated the types of conflicts that occurred in a midwestern, suburban elementary school. All students were of a middle-class background. One hundred forty-four students (71 males and 73 females) from Grades 2-5 were employed in the study. The classes were randomly selected as the control group. Each classroom teacher involved in the study distributed and collected a conflict report form to both the treatment and control groups. The form asked for the following information: date, student's name, who was involved in the conflict, what was the conflict about, strategies used to resolve the conflict, and what was the solution to the conflict. All student responses were coded independently by two different coders. An 87% agreement level was reported. There were a total of 209 conflict incidences reported by all students occurring at school. The conflict type, frequency, and percentage of occurrence in descending order were as follows: preferences (53, 28.0%); possession/access (56, 26.0%); physical aggression (34, 16.0%); playground issues (21, 10.0%); harassment (18, 9.0%); turn-taking (15, 7.0%); and academic work (7, 3.0%).

### Strategies Used to Resolve Conflicts Comparing Trained with Untrained Students

There are a few studies that attempted to examine the impact of conflict resolution and peer mediation training on students' use of the five strategies found in the conflict strategies theory. The five strategies are as follows: (a) forcing, (b) withdrawal, (c) smoothing, (d) compromising, and (e) integrative negotiations.

Johnson, Johnson, Dudley et al. (1995) investigated the effects of a peer mediation training program in an American, suburban, middle-class elementary school. Ninety-two students in Grades three through six received 30 minutes of training per day for six weeks (15 hours). The research design was a pre-post procedure in which students were evaluated before, immediately after, and four months following the training. The conflict-resolution training program focused on the following: (a) the nature of conflicts, (b) how to negotiate agreements with classmates, and (c) how to mediate conflicts. Four dependent variables were investigated. They are as follows: (a) the frequency and type of conflicts occurring in each of the four classrooms prior to the study; (b) strategies students used to resolve conflicts (used student total recall, conflict scenario, videotaped conflict simulation measure) before and after training; (c) the ability to transfer the conflict resolution training to classroom situations, and (d) the attitudes of the participating teachers and principal (interview). In comparing the strategies employed in resolving two conflicts (personal insult through name calling and access to a computer), there was a significant difference ( $P < .0001$ ) in the strategies employed. It was reported that before training, 50% or more of the students used the strategy of telling the teacher, whereas after training only 15% would have done so. In addition, before training none of the students used the integrative negotiating procedure to solve conflicts, whereas 60% of the students used the integrative negotiating procedure after training. The percentage use of the following additional strategies were reported for before and after training respectively:

(a) physical force (1%, 2%); (b) verbal force (10%, 3%); (c) negative withdrawal (22%, 9%); (d) command or request (9%, 5%); (e) positive withdrawal (4%, 0%); (f) invoke norms (4%, 0%); and (g) proposed alternatives (0%, 0%). In investigating the ability of students to use the seven step negotiation procedure (state wants, state feelings, state reasons, reverse perspectives, suggest multiple solutions, reach a mutual agreement), students were given a conflict role play and were videotaped. There was a significant increase ( $P < .0001$ ) in the use of the negotiation steps after training as compared with before training. The pre and post-training percentages of use of each negotiation step are as follows respectively: (a) state wants (62%, 100%); (b) state feelings (0%, 81%); (c) state reasons (15%, 88%); (d) reverse perspective (0%, 88%); (e) suggest multiple solutions (0%, 94%); and (f) reach mutual agreement (46%, 100%).

Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, Ward et al. (1995) investigated the effects of a peer mediation training program on the management of school and home conflicts. Two hundred and twenty-seven students in a midwestern, suburban school participated in the study. One hundred and forty-four students (71 males and 73 females) were the treatment group and 83 (38 males and 45 females) formed the control group. The classes were randomly selected from a pool of 22 teachers who volunteered for the study. The students were randomly taken from Grades two through six. The investigators compared the trained and untrained students for the following variables: (a) types of conflict; (b) strategies used to resolve the conflict; (c) the resulting solution; and (d) the setting in which the conflict took place. The aforementioned variables were measured by the Conflict Report Form. Students were asked to recall and fill out a report once a week for six months. The strategies students reported were categorized on a continuum of 0 to 12 from most destructive (physical and verbal aggression) to the most constructive (invoking norms for appropriate behavior, proposing alternatives, and negotiating) as developed by



Johnson, Johnson & Dudley (1992). The results of this study reported a total of 783 conflicts (209 at school, 574 at home). There were a significant difference between the types of conflicts that occurred in the school and at home (X-square,  $p < .0001$ ). Conflicts over preferences/values and possession/access were more frequent at home (82%) than at school (54%). Physical fights and verbal insults made up 25% of the conflicts at school but only 8% at home. A nonsignificant difference was observed between the control group and pre-trained experimental group, whereas a significant difference ( $p < .0001$ ) was found between the control group and the treatment group during and after training. In the experimental group, a significant difference ( $p < .001$ ) was observed between the pre-training and during training, as well as between the pre-training and post-training periods. Negotiation was only used once before training and never in the control group; whereas during and after training, 40% of the conflicts were resolved via negotiations. Percent decreases were reported between the pre- and post-training periods in the experimental group in the following strategies respectively: Physical force (10%, 6%); verbal force (18%, 7%); negative withdrawal (16%, 13%); telling teacher (10%, 3%); command/request (7%, 1%); invoke norms (16%, 10%); propose alternatives (13%, 7%); negotiating (1%, 42%). In addition, there were no significant ( $p < .0001$ ) differences among strategies used in school and in the home for either the control group or the experimental group during the pre-training period or the post-training period. Students were reported to use the strategies employed in school just as frequently as in the home. Nonsignificant ( $p < .001$ ) differences were found between males and females in the strategies used to manage conflicts in both the control and experimental groups.

Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, Mitchell et al. (1997) investigated the effectiveness of a conflict resolution training program in an American midwestern school. The subjects were 176 students in Grades six through nine. The experimental group consisted of 116

students (57 males and 59 females). The control group consisted of 60 students (27 males, 33 females). The experimental group was trained in conflict resolution and peer mediation procedure; whereas the control group had no training. A pre-test/post-test, control-group experimental design was employed in the study. Two dependent variables were identified in the study. The first was the "how I manage conflicts" measure. The assessment was via a pencil-and-paper form. All participants were asked to write about how they would manage conflicts. The measure assessed both knowledge of the negotiation and mediation procedures and the willingness to utilize the aforementioned procedures. The second variable was a Conflict Scenario written measure which was also given before and immediately after the training period to all subjects. The pencil-and-paper measure asked subjects to read two case studies that end with an unresolved conflict. They were asked to write an essay about what they would do if they were in those situations. All responses were classified as that report in previous studies (Johnson, Johnson & Dudley, 1992; Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, Ward et al., 1995): Similar results were reported as that observed by Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, Ward et al. (1995) in which nonsignificant differences ( $p > .0001$ ) were reported between the control group and pretrained experimental group, and between males and females within each group. The results indicated that before training, most students used strategies other than negotiation to resolve conflicts (aggression, threats, withdrawal, telling the teacher, commanding or requesting the other to give in, evoking norms others should conform, proposing alternatives for the other). After training, 75% of the experimental group listed 100% of the negotiation steps as the procedure they would use to resolve their conflicts. This was significantly greater than the pre-test at the  $p < .0001$  level. There were nonsignificant differences among grade levels and between males and females in the aforementioned variable. Nonsignificant changes ( $p < .0001$ ) were also reported in the control group before

and after the training period. The second variable was whether students could apply the negotiation procedures. Before training, there was only one attempt to negotiate a problem by either the experimental or control groups. After training, the experimental group used negotiation (34%) and proposed alternatives (22%) to the scenario. Only one subject in the control group did so. In addition, nonsignificant differences at the  $p < .0001$  level were reported for the second variable in the following areas: among grade levels; between males and females; and pre-test/post-test scores in the control group population.

### Discipline Problems and Fights

Johnson, Johnson, Dudley & Acikgoz (1995) conducted a study to determine whether students would use the training obtained from a peer mediation program and thereby decrease the number of discipline problems teachers and administrators have to confront. The sample consisted of 92 students (36 males and 56 females) in Grades one through six were randomly chosen for the study. A pre-post test design was employed. The treatment consisted of a conflict resolution training program which dealt with the following topics: nature of conflicts; how to negotiate agreements; and how to mediate classmates' conflicts. The students received the training for 30 minutes per day for six weeks. After the training, the teachers chose two students per class to be the class mediators. The mediators wore T-shirts, patrolled playgrounds and lunchrooms, and were available to mediate conflicts. The data collected were via an interview format of teacher and principals. They were asked about the impact of the training on the students, the classroom environment, and classroom life. The observation period was four months. The results via the interviews indicated an overall positive affect on the aforementioned issues as a result of the training. All teachers reported to have observed the following: (a) a greater willingness of trained students' to be involved in positive conflict resolution; (b) a decrease in the number of conflicts, less severe and less destructive; (c) less time spent

resolving conflicts; (d) conflicts referred to them were reduced by 80%, and (e) the number of conflicts referred to the principal was reduced to zero.

Similar results were also reported by Johnson, Johnson, & Dudley (1992) in a midwestern elementary school. A similar design was employed as that of Johnson, Johnson, Dudley & Acikgoz (1995). The investigators also reported an 80% decrease in the frequency of student-to-student conflicts that teachers had to previously confront as well as a reduction in the teacher referrals of students to the principal.

Similarly, Meek (1992) investigated the effects of a conflict resolution program in New York City by employing an outcomes based research design. The purpose of the study was to survey teachers and have them determine the frequency of physical violence, verbal harassment, and student attitudes before as compared with after the implementation of the program. An ex post facto study design was conducted. One hundred and thirty teachers were surveyed and the results were as follows: (a) a 71% reduction in physical violence; (b) a 66% less reporting of name calling and verbal put-downs; (c) a 69% increase in student cooperation in resolving conflicts; and (d) a 50% reduction in student assaults.

Tolson, McDonald & Moriarty (1992) conducted a study to test the hypothesis that peer mediation is an effective alternative to traditional discipline. Seventy-five percent of the subjects were African American (N=42), in Grades nine and ten, and enrolled in the middle or low educational track. The control group consisted of 24 subjects with a mean grade point average of 1.57, whereas the treatment group consisted of 28 subjects with a mean grade point average of 1.60. It is important to note that the control group had more males (70%) than the treatment group (50%). The procedure for subject group selection was that students who were referred to the school disciplinarian for being involved in an interpersonal conflict were randomly assigned either traditional

discipline (control) or mediation (treatment). Three measures were employed to determine effectiveness. They are as follows: the total number of times students were referred for interpersonal conflicts; the number of times students were referred for any disciplinary problem; and experimental group evaluation (rating) of fairness, the extent of compliance, skill usefulness, mediators' skills, and the disputant's interest in becoming a mediator. The following results were reported: (a) a significant ( $p < .05$ ) reduction of referrals for interpersonal problems in the treatment group; (b) a nonsignificant reduction in the total number of disciplinary referrals; and (c) 75% of the students ranked high the five aforementioned rating criteria of the mediation process.

### Components of Peer Mediation Programs

School conflict resolution programs have been described of being from three models (Graham & Cline, 1989; Johnson & Johnson, 1995; Lupton-Smith, et al., 1996). The three models are often described as distinct program types although they are similar in operation. A brief description of the three models is addressed in this section of the review of literature.

The first peer mediation model is the Total School Model (Johnson & Johnson, 1995; Lupton-Smith, et al., 1996). All students are taught the principles and practices of conflict resolution and all have the opportunity to practice and act as peer mediators. The strengths associated with this model are noted as follows: (a) all students learn constructive conflict resolving skills; (b) experience in being a mediator; and (c) a probability that the likelihood of the overall frequency and severity of conflicts will decrease within a school population. However, weaknesses have been noted by the aforementioned researchers. A major weakness is that its implementation requires considerable time and commitment from both faculty and administration. Another noted weakness is that the model seems to be most appropriate for the elementary school level

where teachers have the same students for the major part of a school day. The rationale given for this is that mediators and the mediation process may be made more readily available in classrooms, or schools with a low teacher-to-student ratio. It is considered more difficult to implement, operate and monitor in large middle and high school settings due to a lesser teacher-to-student contact and student-to-student contact.

The second model is the Elective Course Model (Graham & Cline, 1989; Johnson & Johnson, 1995). Here, teachers teach a mini course on peer mediation/conflict resolution skills. The format provides a forum for mediators to conduct mediations and are given frequent feedback for improvement. The advantages of such a model have been noted as follows: (a) class time availability, (b) varied opportunities for instruction on related topics, (c) leadership development, (d) depth of training, (e) ease of scheduling, and (f) mediator availability. Weaknesses associated with this model are the limited amount of diversity of students enrolled as well as the time of day restrictions (Lupton-Smith, et al., 1996).

The third model is the Student Club Model (cadre approach) which involves selecting students from the student body to serve as peer mediators. Training of these students is often after school. The major advantages offered by this model are as follows: (a) the balanced selection of mediators from the student body who they represent, and (b) the procedures aid in minimizing out-of-class time (Lupton-Smith, et al., 1996; Johnson & Johnson, 1995). This approach has been lauded to have a greater diversity and recruitment among students who normally do not get involved in school activities. In comparing this model with the Elective Course Model, the cadre approach involves more student involvement. In contrast, noted disadvantages of the cadre approach are in its depth of training and frequency of support by teachers and administrators (Lupton-Smith, et al., 1996).

There are many programs that describe how to implement and operate a peer mediation program (Cohen, 1988; Johnson & Johnson, 1995; Kenney & Kearney-Lynch, 1990; School Mediation Associates, 1988). There are three stages regarding the "how to" of the program. The three stages are as follows: (a) an introductory stage, (b) a training stage, and (c) an operational stage. The first stage involves getting the program familiarized among the school community (the mediation and negotiation procedures). Various modes of introducing the program have been proposed. The goal of this stage is to gather support from stakeholders (community, teachers, students, administrators). A common approach is having an advisory committee. The training stage involves selecting and training the peer mediators and teachers as well as dealing with the planning and implementation process of the program. Common issues that are often needed to be addressed are as follows: (a) identifying a program coordinator; (b) the identification of students and teachers for training; (c) scheduling of session time; (d) defining issues to be mediated; (e) identifying program confidentiality procedures; and (f) evaluating the program. The operational stage mainly involves the actual implementation, formative and summative program evaluation, and program improvement or maintenance procedures. Various researchers have addressed each of the aforementioned stages (Araki, 1990; Drew, Devictor, Eisen, Holley & Olsen, 1998; Johnson & Johnson, 1995; Kenney & Kearney-Lynch, 1997; Lane & McWhirter, 1992; Lupton-Smith et al., 1996; Tolson et al., 1992).

The core of any peer mediation program involves the implementation of the mediation procedure and the negotiation procedure. The peer mediation procedure consists of four steps: (a) stop the hostilities, (b) a commitment from the disputants to the dedication process, (c) facilitation of the negotiation procedures, and (d) the formalization of an agreement. The negotiation procedure consists of six steps. Each disputant will:

(a) define what they want, (b) describe their feelings, (c) explain the reasons associated with their wants and feelings, (d) reverse perspectives in order to see the other disputant's perspective, (e) mutually generate optional agreements, and (f) agree on a course of action (Johnson & Johnson, 1995).

There are many skills involved in both the mediation and negotiation procedures that need to be implemented by peer mediators. Most peer mediation/conflict resolution programs instruct through various methods and materials of the skills and characteristics (a) listening skills, (b) questioning skills, (c) empathizing skills, (d) analyzing skills, (e) problem-solving skills, (f) negotiating skills, (g) identifying issues, (h) conflict dynamics, (i) conflict management skills, (j) speaking skills, (k) cooperation, (l) identifying anger characteristics, (m) note-taking skills, (n) agreement building skills, (o) giving feedback, (p) responsibility, and (q) assertiveness (Araki, 1990; Johnson & Johnson, 1995; Opfiter, 1997; Thompson, 1996).

### Success Rates of Mediations

An important question to answer regarding the effectiveness of a peer mediation program is how compliant are the disputants to their agreed upon solution to their mediated interpersonal conflict. Lupton-Smith et al. (1996) reviewed the effectiveness of three exemplary peer mediation programs from three urban schools in North Carolina. The first was an elementary program in an international magnet school with approximately 450 students in Grades K-5. Students in fourth and fifth grades functioned as mediators for Grades 3 to 5. The program was coordinated by the school's guidance counselor. The program was implemented in three stages. The introductory stage consisted of teachers spending two weeks on collecting data on the nature and frequency of conflicts among students in their respective classrooms. An advisory committee of teachers, parents, counselors, and administrators aided in the planning and development of the program. In



the fall of 1993, all teachers and students were trained in conflict resolution principles. Consultants trained the teachers (12 hours of training) who in turn taught 15 lessons of conflict resolution to their respective students over a two month period. In addition, the process of identifying students to be peer mediators was conducted. The students were also trained by a consultant through a once a week, 10 week elective course format. In the operational stage, mediators were paired by grade level and mediated conflicts. Two mediators were assigned for one week, then another two mediators for the next week and so on for the remainder of the school year. Referral slips were kept in the homerooms with referrals to mediation usually made by teachers, students, or even parents. The coordinator of the program sent out follow-up forms to disputants after agreements have been signed by them in order to determine compliance. During the first year of the program, 60 mediations were conducted with all reaching an agreement. In addition, the success rate was reported to be 97%.

Similar introductory and operational phases were described for the two remaining schools (middle and high schools). The success rates were reported to be 98% and 95% for the middle school and high school respectively.

Araki (1990) investigated the effectiveness of a peer mediation program in the three schools (high school, middle school, elementary school) in a Honolulu school district. A research-based Dispute Management in the Schools Project (DMSP) was developed and implemented by the Manoa Program on Conflict Resolution of the University of Hawaii. Procedures associated with the implementation of the program was not provided by the study. In addition, the descriptive data were reported as the total sum of interpersonal conflict cases rather than delineated per school. The results indicated a total of 136 cases were mediated. Of these, 127 reached agreement in which 7 of these agreements were later broken. Overall, a 94% success rate was reported.

### Chapter 3

#### The Design of the Study

##### General Description of Research Design

The purpose of the study was to describe and evaluate the effectiveness of a peer mediation student assistance program. The means to accomplish the purpose of the study was to investigate the overall attendance, verbal and physical interpersonal conflict, altercations among tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students at Millville Senior High School. In addition, it was the intent of the researcher to collaboratively develop a plan that would extend the goals and potential benefits associated with peer mediation programs in the future Lakeside Middle School in Millville, New Jersey. The means to accomplish the second purpose was in the development of a collaborative subcommittee of stakeholders (Leithwood, 1992). The quantitative research component resulted in a report to inform teachers and administrators of the current effectiveness of the program in order to delineate whether there were general, grade level, and district differences among disputants.

The research investigation took place during the months of July 1998 through March of 1999 at Millville Senior High School and at the Culver Center in Millville, New Jersey. Several sessions were scheduled in order to determine the two aforementioned purposes of the study. Session 1 consisted of a meeting with both the disciplinarian and the peer mediation coordinator. Its purpose was to discuss the problem, significance, and data acquisition approach to the investigation. Sessions 2 through 4 consisted of meetings with the disciplinarian and peer mediation coordinator in order to identify the variables of the study, delineate the operational definitions, and retrieve data regarding peer mediation

sessions via the Peer Mediation Coordinator for the school year 1997-1998. Sessions 5 through 7 consisted of meetings with the district's Computer Statistician in order to explain the variables needed for data retrieval, discussions regarding confidentiality of data, retrieval of the data sheets, and data analysis. Session 8 consisted of the principal researcher tallying the data.

A peer mediation committee was developed in order to collaboratively develop a plan that would extend the goals and potential benefits associated with a peer mediation program in a middle school setting (sixth, seventh, and eighth grades). Session 1 consisted of meeting with the principal of the future Lakeside Middle School in order to discuss the needs, goals, philosophy and mission of the school. Session 2 consisted of meeting again with the principal in order to identify the stakeholders of the project. Session 3 consisted of the researcher contacting the potential stakeholders in order to develop a committee. Session 4 consisted of meeting with the stakeholders. The researcher gave an orientation pertaining to the purpose of the committee and disseminated current research regarding peer mediation programs. Session 4 consisted of meeting with the committee in order to collaborate and discuss the current research and in implementing an agreed upon program. Session 5 consisted of meeting with the committee in order to address the results of a questionnaire. Appendix A contains a checklist of questions regarding program planning, implementation, decision-making, and process. Session 7 consisted of the development of the first draft of the teacher handbook. Session 8 consisted of members receiving a copy of the first draft for perusal, corrections and/or recommendations from the core middle school teachers. Session 9 consisted of a meeting with committee members in order to finalize the agreed upon program products.

### Description of Development and Design of the Research Instruments

Three data gathering techniques were employed in order to address the two purposes of the study. Two quantitative unobtrusive gathering techniques were employed regarding the purpose of evaluating the overall effectiveness of a peer mediation student assistance program. The first was a summary data sheet compiled by the peer mediation program coordinator (Appendix B). The data sheet contained the following information: (a) the number of peer mediation sessions; (b) the grade, gender, and ethnic background of each disputant; (c) the total number of agreements, and (d) the overall success rate of the contractual agreements during the school year of 1997-1998 (Araki, 1990; Carruthers et al., 1996). The second quantitative data gathering technique consisted of the district's Director of Technology develop a program in order to retrieve raw data associated with the overall attendance and nonviolent interpersonal conflicts among students during the school years of 1995-1996 and 1997-1998. The variables gathered were as follows: (a) student identification number, (b) student grade, (c) student gender, (d) offense code, (e) offense description, and (f) district (Appendix C). The nonviolent and violent interpersonal conflicts were as follows: (a) Aggravated assault - code 320, (b) Gang fight/assault - code 340, (c) Harassment - code 139, (d) Incitement - code 137, (e) Sexual assault - code 370, (f) Sexual harassment - code 150, (g) Simple assault - code 310, (h) Verbal altercations - code 140, (i) Violent - code 300, and (j) Other violent offenses - code 380.

The third data gathering source was a questionnaire (Armstrong, 1989) in order to determine the needs, goals, processes, resources and barriers associated with the development of a peer mediation program in a middle school setting. Appendix A contains 19 questions focusing on program planning, implementation, decision-making and process.

### Description Sample and Sampling Techniques

An ex post facto design was employed to accomplish the first purpose of the study. The subjects for the quantitative research portion of the study were comprised of tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students who had been enrolled at Millville Senior High School during the 1995-1996 and 1997-1998 school calendar years. The students were collectively from the following communities: Millville, Dorchester, Leesburg, Laurel Lake, Heislerville, and Woodbine. The age of the subjects ranged from 15 to 18 years. Subjects were identified via discipline office records, stored in the district office's computer data base who were involved with any violent or nonviolent conflict that resulted in a school disciplinary action.

The members of the peer mediation committee were administrators, teachers and guidance counselors and, upon their own volition volunteered for this study. The criteria for acceptance into the committee were that the volunteers had two or more of the following characteristics: interest in the development of the peer mediation program, experience in implementing a peer mediation program, worked in a school that had an implemented peer mediation program, and knowledge of the basic foundations associated with the aforementioned program. The members were informed of the project via the principal of the Lakeside Middle School by holding a general session of potential teachers of the Lakeside Middle School. In addition, the principal provided the researcher with a list of district staff who had two or more of the aforementioned criteria. The researcher contacted each individual on the list via telephone.

### Description of the Data Collection Approach

Quantitative data were obtained from the computer database sheets in hard copy from the district's Director of Technology at the Culver Center Administration Building in Millville, New Jersey. Quantitative data was also obtained from the Millville Senior High

School's Peer Mediation Coordinator in which a summary sheet of total disputant peer mediation sessions were provided (Araki, 1990). This was done due to the policy of confidentiality.

Qualitative data gathering involved previously described sessions of peer collaboration and discussions, review of questionnaire data, interviews, and school visitations. In addition, data was collected through school visitations, and quantitative and qualitative research data from peer reviewed journals, and other school district program in which notes were taken by the researcher. Verification of the accuracy of the information was done at the end of each meeting in which the researcher provided a synopsis of the meeting and gave opportunity to the committee attendees to modify and/or correct the information provided.

#### Description of Data Analysis Plan

The information obtained from the attendance and discipline records were organized into the following variables: subject number, subject grade, gender, offense code, offense description, and district. The data was summarized descriptively in a table format (Appendix C). Total numbers (nominal data) were employed and organized by partitioning each interpersonal conflict variable into the two school calendar years of 1995-1996 and 1997-1998. Comparisons were made between each pair of total values for each variable. The data obtained from the peer mediation coordinator's records were organized into the following variables: (a) the total number of peer mediation sessions, (b) the total number of disputants by grade level, (c) the total number of disputants by gender, (d) the total number of disputants by ethnic background, (e) the total number of conflicts by gender, and the overall success rate in percentage.

To meet the purpose of collaboratively developing a plan that would extend the goals and potential benefits of a peer mediation program, all data obtained via

questionnaires, interviews, research perusal, other school programs and stakeholder's feedback were disseminated and discussed among the committee members. Decisions based on the information obtained and presented with each meeting was obtained via shared consensus in which parliamentary procedures were implemented. The committee consensus was then given to the general transition team staff and the principal of the Lakeside Middle School in which they reviewed and voted on its revision and acceptance.

## Chapter 4

### Results and Discussion

The purpose of the study was to describe and evaluate the effectiveness of a peers mediation student assistance program. The means to accomplish the purpose of the study was to investigate the overall attendance, verbal, and physical interpersonal conflict altercations among tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students at Millville Senior High School. In addition, it was the intent of the researcher to collaboratively develop a plan that would extend the goals and potential benefits associated with peer mediation programs in the future Lakeside Middle School in Millville, New Jersey. The means to accomplish the second purpose was in the development of a collaborative subcommittee of stakeholders.

#### Peer Mediation Program

The statistical information regarding the implementation and success of the Peer Mediation Program at Millville Senior High School is presented in Table 1.

Table 1:

Conflicts by Grade, Intergrade, and Gender is reported via Peer Mediation Sessions during the 1997-1998 School Year.

Grade (n)	Total Conflicts	
	Intergrade (n)	Gender
Seniors - 62	Senior/Junior - 7	Male/Female - 42
Juniors - 59	Senior/Sophomore - 2	Female/Female - 105
Sophomore - 62	Junior/Sophomore - 15	Male/Male - 36



For the 1997-1998 school year, 183 peer mediation sessions were conducted. It was reported by the Peer Mediation Coordinator that five conflicts resulted in a breakage of a contract (Appendix B). Three of the five resulted in a fight, whereas the remaining two were a result of administrative intervention. This resulted in a Peer Mediation success rate of 97.5% for the first year of the program's implementation. The majority of conflicts occurred within the same grade level (N=159) whereas a total of 24 were Intergrade conflicts. The gender conflicts were as follows: female-to-female (N=105); female-to-male (N=42); and male-to-male (N=36). The number of disputants among the three grade levels were as follows: seniors (N=62); juniors (N=59); sophomores (N=62).

#### Nonviolent Interpersonal Conflicts Among Grade Levels and Between Genders

Incitements were defined as attempts by an individual to encourage others to participate in any violent behavior. There were three of these incidences during the 1995-1996 school year (tenth grade, 1; eleventh, 2; twelfth, 0). Two of the disputants were males and one was a female. During the 1997-1998 school year, there were five incidences (tenth grade, 2; eleventh grade, 3; twelfth grade, 0). Two of the disputants were males and three were females (Table 2).

Harassment was defined as any individual who purposely interferes with a student, teacher, or any school community member from the education process (i.e., name-calling, degrading remarks). There were nine incidences during the 1995-1996 school year (tenth grade, 3; eleventh grade, 4; and twelfth grade, 2). All nine of the disputants were males. During the 1997-1998 school year there were six incidences (tenth grade, 3; eleventh grade, 1; and twelfth grade, 2). All six of the disputants were also males (Table 2).

Verbal altercations was defined as any conflict between or among individuals in which a physical confrontation may become imminent. There were 32 incidences during

the 1995-1996 school year (tenth grade, 13; eleventh grade, 13; twelfth grade, 6). Twenty-four of the disputants were males and eight were females. During the 1997-1998 school year, there were six incidences (tenth grade, 3; eleventh grade, 1; and twelfth grade, 2). Four of the disputants were males and two were females.

Sexual harassment was defined as a form of harassment in which someone is forced to endure unwanted physical or verbal innuendoes. There was one incident during the 1995-1996 school year (tenth grade male) and none reportedly accrued during the 1997-1998 school year.

Overall, there were more nonviolent interpersonal conflicts during the 1995-1996 school year as compared to the 1997-1998 school year (N=46 and N=17 respectively). This was also evident among the three grade levels comparing the two school years in which there were 18, 20, and 8 incidences in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades during the 1995-1996 school year respectively. With respect to gender differences, there were far greater nonviolent interpersonal conflicts involving males during the 1995-1996 school year than females (36 and 9 respectively) and more than the number of nonviolent interpersonal conflicts involving males over females during the 1997-1998 school year (12 and 15 respectively).

#### Violent Interpersonal Conflicts Among Grade Levels and Between Genders

Aggravated assault is defined as a person or persons attempting to cause or purposely cause serious bodily harm to another individual. There were no incidences reported during the 1995-1996 school year (Table 2). Two incidences were reported during the 1997-1998 school year (2 male tenth graders).

Gang fights/assault is defined as an altercation between, on and assault by, two or more members of a group. There was one reported incident (eleventh grade female)

during the 1995-1996 school year. There were no reported incidents during the 1997-1998 school year (Table 2).

Sexual assault was defined as one who subjects an individual to sexual contact or exposure without one's consent. There was one incident (tenth grade male) during the 1995-1996 school year. None were reported during the 1997-1998 school year (Table 2).

Simple assault was defined as an attempt by an individual to cause, threaten, to pause, or purposely causes bodily injury to another individual. There was one reported case in the 1995-1996 school year. There were 14 incidences (tenth grade, 9; eleventh grade, 4; and twelfth grade, 1) during the 1997-1998 school year, of which six were males and eight were females (Table 2).

Violence was defined as a physical confrontation by two or more individuals by mutual consent in which physical harm was intended. It did not include showing, etc., in which the individuals stopped the incident prior to harm coming to any of the participants. There were four incidences in the 1995-1996 school year (tenth grade, 1; eleventh grade, 2; and twelfth grade, 1) all were females. None were reported during the 1997-1998 school year (Table 2).

Any infraction that was not classified in any of the aforementioned violent interpersonal conflicts was defined as "other violent offenses." None were reported during the 1995-1996 school year, whereas three incidences were reported (three tenth grade students) during the 1997-1998 school year (Table 2).

Overall, there were more violent interpersonal conflicts during the 1997-1998 school year as compared with the 1995-1996 school year (N=19 and N=10 respectively).

The high number of incidences were accounted for mainly in the tenth grade during the

Table 2:

Frequency and Types of Conflicts in 1995-1996 and 1997-1998 School Years by Grade, Gender, and District

Type of Conflict	School Year	Grade			Gender		District				
		10	11	12	M	F	MV	CT	LW	WB	MR
Incitement	1995-96	1	2	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	1
#137	1997-98	2	3	0	2	3	1	3	0	0	1
Harassment	1995-96	3	4	2	9	0	6	3	0	0	0
#139	1997-98	3	1	2	6	0	5	1	0	0	0
Verbal Altercations	1995-96	13	13	6	24	8	22	3	1	2	4
#140	1997-98	3	1	2	4	2	8	1	0	0	0
Sexual Harassment	1995-96	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
#150	1997-98	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Violence	1995-96	1	2	1	0	3	2	0	0	1	0
#300	1997-98	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Simple Assault	1995-96	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
#310	1997-98	9	4	1	6	8	12	0	0	2	0
Aggravated Assault	1995-96	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
#320	1997-98	2	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0
Gang Fight	1995-96	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
#340	1997-98	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sexual Offense	1995-96	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0
#370	1997-98	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Violent Off.	1995-96	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
#380	1997-98	3	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	2
<b>GRAND TOTALS</b>		<b>42</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>

Note: MV = Millville; CT = Commercial Township; LW = Lawrence Township;  
WB = Woodbine; MR = Maurice River Township

1997-1998 school year. The other grade levels for both the 1995-1996 and 1997-1998 were very similar regarding the number of incidences. There were 4, 5, and 1 incidences in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades during the 1995-1996 school year whereas there were 14, 4, and 1 incidents during the 1997-1998 school year. With respect to gender differences, there were more males during the 1997-1998 school year than males in the

1995-1996 school year (8 and 3 respectively). There were also a few more females during the 1997-1998 school year as compared with the number of involved females during the 1995-1996 school year (8 and 5 respectively).

#### Violent and Nonviolent Interpersonal Conflicts Among the Districts

The total number of violent and nonviolent interpersonal altercations during the 1995-1996 school year were as follows respectively: Millville, 3 and 29; Commercial Township, 1 and 7; Lawrence Township, 0 and 2; Woodbine, 3 and 2; and Maurice River Township, 0 and 5. The total number of violent and nonviolent interpersonal altercations during the 1997-1998 school year were as follows respectively: Millville 15 and 11; Commercial Township, 0 and 5; Lawrence Township 0 and 0; Woodbine, 2 and 0; and Maurice River Township, 2 and 1 (Table 2).

Overall, the township with the most reported incidences of both violent and nonviolent interpersonal altercations was Millville in both the 1995-1996 and 1997-1998 school years (32 and 26 respectively). The other four sending districts had reported low incidences of altercations in both of the 1995-1996 and 1997-1998 school years respectively (Commercial Township, 8 and 5; Lawrence Township, 2 and 0; Woodbine, 5 and 2; and Maurice River Township, 5 and 3).

#### Attendance

The total possible days were based on the product of the total number of registered students and the total number of school days in session. Their numbers were 208,713 and 231,747 for the 1995-1996 and 1997-1998 school years respectively (Table 3). The actual days present were 189,124 and 210,641 for the 1995-1996 and 1997-1998 school years respectively. The percent attendance was calculated by dividing the number of days present by the total possible days and then multiplying by 100. The present attendance for the 1995-1996 and 1997-1998 school years were 90.6% and 90.8% respectively.

Table 3:

1995-1996 and 1997-1998 Attendance Register Totals

School Year	Days Possible	Days Present	Percent
1995-1996	208,713.0	189,124.5	90.6%
1997-1998	231,747.0	210,641.0	90.8%

Developing a Plan to Extend the Goals and Benefits of a Peer Mediation Program

Appendix D contains the results of the checklist questions for program planning, implementation, decision-making and process. The purpose of the checklist questionnaire was to address the following questions: (a) what are the goals of developing a peer mediation program in a middle school setting? (b) how do the stakeholders define the effectiveness of the program? and (c) what are the different components of the program?

Questions four and twelve of the aforementioned checklist addressed the questions regarding the goals of developing a peer mediation program. After deliberations among the subcommittee members, the goals were as follows: (a) promote the life skills of listening, responsibility, communications, problem-solving and decision making; (b) enhance social problem-solving skills; (c) promote collaborative, democratic decision making; (d) improve overall school attendance; and (e) to improve and promote a positive school climate. Question 13 of the aforementioned checklist addressed the question regarding what stakeholders define as an effective Peer Mediation Program.

Through discussion and feedback via the committee members and staff input, the focus of the effectiveness of the program was agreed to be how the program would effect the classroom management. Areas that were emphasized were improvement in classroom management (time), discipline and climate; less violent behavior; positive interpersonal conflict resolutions; improved communication; and social problem-solving.

Questions 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 addressed the question regarding the different components of the Peer Mediation Program. Collectively, the committee and staff feedback outlined the responsibilities of the coordinator and each individual teacher (questions 2, 3, and 18). Teacher resource material needs (films, handbook, scenario video) and where the resource materials will be located were also outlined (questions 6, 7, 10, and 11). The type of program chosen for the middle school was of the cadre type in which students who represented the total school population would be identified and trained (question 5). The implementation phase was determined to be three stages. The first stage was identified as the introductory stage in which assemblies, school newsletters, guidance referrals, student and teacher handbooks, parents night, and video scenarios would be used to introduce the peer mediation program (question 19). The second stage was identified as the training stage in which the following issues were addressed: the role of the coordinator, who will be trained, how will previous mediators be identified, preservation of confidentiality, criteria for peer mediation mediator, and program evaluation (questions 3, 6, 17, and 18). The third stage was identified as the operational stage in which the following issues were addressed: ongoing support, training, and evaluation (questions 2, 7, and 11).

### Discussion of Findings

For the 1997-1998 school year, 183 peer mediation sessions were conducted. Five of the 183 sessions resulted in a breakage of their respective contracts. This resulted in a peer mediation success rate of 97.5% for the first year of the program's implementation. Similar results were also reported by Araki, 1990, and Lupton-Smith, et al (1996). Araki (1990) investigated the effectiveness of a peer mediation in three schools (high school, middle school, and elementary school) in the Honolulu School district. A total of 136 mediation sessions were conducted with seven of these agreements broken. Overall, a 94% success rate was reported. The aforementioned investigator reported that the effectiveness of the program may have been attributed to certain characteristics that are viewed as essential to the development of a successful program. They were rated as follows: (a) a committed coordinator, (b) administrative support, (c) continuous training, (d) school wide knowledge about the program and its goals, (e) parental awareness and understanding, and (f) necessary time and space as valuable resources. Other insights noted by Araki (1990) were that mediators do not necessarily have to be of the same school, grade level, gender, or ethnic groups in order for the program to be successful. Lupton-Smith, et al (1996) reported a 95% success rate in a high school's two year program. The investigators noted some contrasting features of their program. The first is that the coordinator had credibility as a trained and working court mediator. Second, the community's professionals were the initial group to initiate the concept of a peer mediation program to the school administrators. Finally, the investigators emphasized the diverse selection of the mediators. Besides having academic performance as a criteria, the mediators represented the gender, grade level, and ethnic background of disputants as well as exhibit the attributes of school listening skills and leadership qualities. The results of this investigation also indicated gender differences regarding disputants. There were 105



female to female sessions as compared to 36 male to male and 46 male to female sessions. Similar results were also observed by Araki (1990).

Nonviolent interpersonal conflicts were compared among grade levels and between genders during the 1995-1996 and 1997-1998 school years. The nonviolent interpersonal conflicts were as follows: (a) harassment, (b) incitement, (c) sexual harassment, and (d) verbal altercations. There were four major observations regarding the nonviolent interpersonal conflicts. The first was that there were more nonviolent interpersonal conflicts occurring during the 1995-1996 school year. The second was the higher occurrences were across all three grade levels (N = 18, 20, and 8 respectively) during the 1995-1996 school year (N = 8, 5, and 4 respectively). The third was that there were far greater nonviolent interpersonal conflicts during both the 1995-1996 and 1997-1998 school years involving males than females. The fourth was that among all of the nonviolent interpersonal conflicts during the 1995-1996 school year, 69.6% (N = 32) were verbal altercations whereas during the 1997-1998 school year there were six incidences. It would seem that the peer mediation program during the 1997-1998 school year may have had a significant impact on verbal altercation conflicts. Tolson, et al (1992) reported a decrease in the number of interpersonal referrals, however, mediation did not change the total number of disciplinary referrals. In addition, the major type of interpersonal conflict reported by Tolson, et al (1992) and was also verbal altercations at the high school level. In the discussion by Tolson, et al, the decrease in the referrals was attributed to the knowledge of the existence of the Peer Mediation Program. The aforementioned investigators gathered anecdotal support by one of the deans of students who indicated the disputants who went through the program viewed it as more punishing and embarrassing for them than via traditional discipline modes. A few interesting observations unique to Millville Senior High School were that more males were disciplined for nonviolent

interpersonal conflicts than females during both the 1995-1996 and 1997-1998 school years (males = 36, females = 9, and males = 12, females = 5 respectively). However, more females than males participated in the peer mediation program during the 1997-1998 implementation school year (females = 126, males 57 respectively). It would seem that females are more willing to discuss interpersonal conflicts than males. Further research from male disputants might reveal why they are less reluctant than females to discuss and use the mode of negotiation in order to resolve conflicts in a more socially acceptable manner. From this research, strategies may be devised in order to have males choose peer mediation as a constructive form of resolving interpersonal conflicts.

The interesting finding associated with violent interpersonal conflicts were that a higher incidents occurred during the 1997-1998 school year with 14 out of 19 cases being tenth graders (73%) whereas during the 1995-1996 school year there were nine total cases. In addition, the tenth grade level accounted for the majority of nonviolent interpersonal conflicts during the 1995-1996 school year (N = 18) and the majority of the violent interpersonal conflicts during the 1997-1998 school year (N = 14). The trend when combining the 1995-1996 and 1997-1998 school year was a decrease in the incidence of all conflicts from tenth to the twelfth grade. This trend was also reported by Araki (1990), and Talson, et al (1992). "This data seems to indicate that positive conflict resolving techniques need to be implemented throughout the tenth grade," curriculum (i.e. history, social studies, health education, English).

The implemented Peer Mediation Program did not result in significant changes regarding overall attendance during the 1997-1998 school year as compared with the 1995-1996 school year. The attendance for the aforementioned school years were 90.6% and 90.8% respectively. To date, limited research has been done regarding the overall impact of a peer mediation program on school attendance. However, with the percentage

being in approximately the 90% range, it would seem that it would be to improve overall attendance by addition of a peer mediation program. In addition, other variables would have a more direct effect on attendance (i.e., sickness, injuries, parental vacations, etc.).

The results gathered via a questionnaire, collaborative discussions and feedback among the Peer Mediation Committee and general staff, addressed the following four questions: (a) What are the goals of developing a Peer Mediation Program in a middle school setting? (b) How do stakeholders define the effectiveness of the program? (c) What are the different components of the program? (Appendix D). Overall, the general consensus of the committee was in agreement with the goals of current Peer Mediation Programs (Araki, 1990; Carruthers, et al, 1996; Cohen, 1998; Drew, et al, 1998; Johnson & Johnson, 1995; Kennedy & Kennedy-Lynch, 1990; Lupton-Smith, et al, 1996). The goals were to promote personal listening, responsibility, communications, social problem solving, and decision making skills as well as to promote a positive school climate. The focus of the effectiveness of the program was agreed to be the following areas: (a) classroom time managemeng, (b) classroom discipline, (c) school climate, (d) less violent behavior, (e) positive interpersonal conflict resolutions, and (f) improved student communication and social problem-solving skills (Araki, 1990; Carruthers, et al, 1996; Drew, et al, 1998; Johnson & Johnson, 1995; Lupton-Smith, et al, 1996). The following areas were addressed and decisions were made regarding the components of a Peer Mediation Program: (a) coordinator responsibilities; (b) teacher resources and their availability; (c) the type of program; and (d) the three phases of the implementation stage. The components and their implementation were similar to hose proposed by Araki, 1990; Carruthers, et al, 1996; Cohen, 1998; Drew, et al, 1998; Johnson & Johnson, 1995; Kenney & Kearney-Lynch, 1990; and Lupton-Smith, et al, 1998.

## Chapter 5

### Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

#### Summary

The purpose of the study was to describe and evaluate the effectiveness of a peer mediation student assistance program. The means to accomplish the purpose of the study was to investigate the overall attendance, verbal and physical interpersonal conflict altercations among tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students at Millville Senior High School. In addition, it was the intent of the researcher to collaboratively develop a plan that would extend the goals and potential benefits associated with peer mediation programs in the future Lakeside Middle School in Millville, New Jersey. The means to accomplish the second purpose was in the development of a collaborative subcommittee of stakeholders (Leithwood, 1992). The quantitative research component resulted in a report to inform teachers and administrators of the current effectiveness of the program in order to delineate whether there were gender, grade level, and district differences among disputants.

For the 1997-1998 school year, 183 peer mediation sessions were conducted. It was reported by the Peer Mediation Coordinator that five conflicts resulted in a breakage of a contract (Appendix B). Three of the five resulted in a fight, whereas the remaining two were a result of administrative intervention. This resulted in a Peer Mediation success rate of 97.5% for the first year of the program's implementation. The majority of conflicts occurred within the same grade level ( $N = 159$ ) whereas a total of 24 were intergrade conflicts. The gender conflicts were as follows: female-to-female ( $N = 105$ ); female-to-male ( $N = 42$ ) and; male-to-male ( $N = 36$ ). The number of disputants among

the three grade levels were as follows: seniors (N = 62); junior (N = 59); sophomores (N = 62).

There were more nonviolent interpersonal conflicts during the 1995-1996 school year as compared to the 1997-1998 school year (N = 46 and N = 17 respectively). This was also evident among the three grade levels comparing the two school years in which there were 18, 20, and 8 incidences in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades during the 1995-1996 school year, whereas there were 8, 5, and 4 incidences during the 1997-1998 school year respectively. With respect to gender differences, there were far greater nonviolent interpersonal conflicts involving males during the 1995-1996 school year than females (39 and 9 respectively) and more than the number of nonviolent interpersonal conflicts involving males over females during the 1997-1998 school year (12 and 15 respectively).

There were also more violent interpersonal conflicts during the 1997-1998 school year as compared with the 1995-1996 school year (N = 19 and N = 10 respectively). The high number of incidences were accounted for mainly during the tenth grade in 1997-1998 school year. The other grade levels for both the 1995-1996 and 1997-1998 school years were very similar regarding the number of incidences. There were 4, 5, and 1 incidences in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades during the 1995-1996 school year whereas there were 14, 4, and 1 incident during the 1997-1998 school year. With respect to gender differences, there were more males during the 1997-1998 school year than males in the 1995-1996 school year (8 and 3 respectively). There were also a few more females during the 1997-1998 school year as compared with the number of involved females during the 1995-1996 school year (8 and 5 respectively).

## Conclusions

Within the limitations of this study, the following conclusions were drawn regarding the effects of a Peer Mediation Program:

1. The Peer Mediation Program at Millville Senior High School resulted in a 97.5% success rate.
2. There were more nonviolent interpersonal conflicts during the 1995-1996 school year as compared with the 1997-1998 school year among all three grade levels.
3. There were more females than males among the three grade levels who agreed to resolve conflicts via peer mediation.
4. More males than females were involved in nonviolent interpersonal conflicts during both the 1995-1996 and 1997-1998 school years.
5. More males during the 1995-1996 school year were involved in nonviolent interpersonal conflicts than males during the 1997-1998 school year.
6. There were more violent interpersonal conflicts during the 1997-1998 school year as compared with the 1995-1996 school year which were accounted for mainly in the tenth grade during the 1997-1998 school year.
7. More males and females during the 1997-1998 school year were involved in violent interpersonal conflicts than males and females during the 1995-1996 school year.
8. There were more Millville Senior High School students from Millville that were involved in both violent and nonviolent interpersonal altercations in both the 1995-1996 and 1997-1998 school years as compared with the sending districts (Commercial Township, Lawrence Township, Woodbine, and Maurice River Township).
9. There were similar percent attendance values for the 1995-1996 school year as compared with the 1997-1998 school year.

Within the limitations of this study, the following conclusions were drawn regarding the development of a Peer Mediation Program for the Lakeside Middle School in Millville, New Jersey:

1. The goals of a Peer Mediation Program in a middle school setting were agreed to promote the following: (a) listening skills, (b) responsibility, (c) communication skills, (d) social problem-solving skills, (e) positive decision-making skills, and (f) a positive school climate.

2. The focus of the effectiveness of a Peer Mediation Program was agreed to be in the following areas: (a) classroom time management, (b) classroom discipline, (c) school climate, (d) less violent behavior, (e) positive interpersonal conflict resolutions, and (f) social problem-solving skills.

3. The areas that were addressed and agreed upon were in the following components of a Peer Mediation Program: (a) coordinator's responsibilities, Appendix E; (b) teacher resources and their availability, Appendix D; (c) the type of program, Appendix D; (d) the three phases of the implementation stage, Appendix D; (e) the Parent Brochure, Appendix F; and (f) the Peer Mediation Teacher Handbook, Appendix G.

Within the limitations of this study, the following conclusions were drawn on the interns leadership development:

1. The intern improved in the area of professional leadership by exhibiting the ability to analyze and problem-solve using appropriate decision-making techniques through the use of an ex-post-facto and qualitative research designs in quantitatively assessing the effects of a Peer Mediation Program at Millville Senior High School in the development of a Peer Mediation Program for Lakeside Middle School at Millville, New Jersey, respectively. In addition, the intern infused the conclusions of the investigation in

the use of a professional, collaborative committee composed of stakeholders in the development of a Peer Mediation Program in a middle school setting.

2. The intern improved in the area of organization through planning and facilitating a professional, collaborative subcommittee which employed research, communication and management skills through the use of self-assessment, feedback, metacognition and affectation. The experiences employed the application of Bridges Zone of Acceptance and considered the following thinking schemas of sequential, precise, technical and confluence among the stakeholders.

### Recommendations

1. A similar study be conducted district wide.
2. A study should be conducted to determine the effectiveness of an interdisciplinary approach to interpersonal conflicts among tenth grade students.
3. A study should be conducted to determine the effectiveness of a program that would encourage more male students in resolving interpersonal conflicts via a Peer Mediation Program.
4. A collaborative interdisciplinary committee should be developed in order to plan, implement, and evaluate a research based program that encourages positive interpersonal conflict resolution among tenth grade students.
5. A collaboratively planned, research based program should be implemented and evaluated regarding chronic interpersonal conflict offenders and their parents.



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**Appendix A**  
**Checklist Questions for Program Planning, Implementation,**  
**Decision Making and Process**

**CHECKLIST QUESTIONS FOR PROGRAM PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION,  
DECISION MAKING AND PROCESS**

1. How will a teacher's personal day be changed by the program?
2. How much additional preparation time will the program require?
3. How much paperwork will be involved in implementing and monitoring the program?
4. How will the program "fit in" to the content to which learners have already been exposed?
5. What kinds of teacher resource materials will be provided?
6. Will resource materials be in each teacher's room, in a separate room in the school, at the central administration building, or at some other location?
7. What kinds of new learning materials will be provided for learners?
8. Are reading levels and other characteristics of these materials clearly appropriate for learners to be served?
9. What patterns of teacher-learner interaction will be demanded?
10. Will any required instructional procedures demand teaching techniques teachers have not already mastered?
11. What kinds of in-service training will be provided?
12. What is the relationship of the innovation to standardized tests learners must take?
13. What are the implications of the new program for classroom management?
14. How strong is the central district administration's commitment to the support of the new program?
15. Who, specifically, can be called on for help if there are problems regarding implementation of the innovation?

16. To what extent do parents know about and support the new program?
17. What procedures and how will Peer Mediators be identified from area elementary schools? (as well as within the middle school)
18. What will be the functions of the Peer Mediation Coordinator?
19. How will the program be introduced to the school community?

**Appendix B**  
**Peer Mediation Sessions Summary Sheet**

# MILLVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MILLVILLE, NEW JERSEY 08332-2299

FROM: Joan Cooper  
DATE: August 18, 1998  
REF: Peer Mediation

Please find enclosed statistical information regarding the implementation and success of the Peer Mediation Program at Millville Senior High School. I thought that you might like a copy for your files, as well as seeing the statistical breakdowns.

For the 1997-1998 school year, we had 183 Peer Mediations. Only five conflicts resulted in a breakage of a contract in some way. Three of those five were actually fights and two were administrative intervention. This gives us a 97.5% success rate, which is outstanding for our first full year.

Please note the following statics:

Conflicts by grade level:	SENIORS	62
	JUNIORS	59
	SOPHOMORES	62

Most conflicts occur within the same grade level, however, we had a total of 24 that had a combination of different grade levels.

SENIOR/JUNIOR	7
SENIOR/SOPHOMORE	2
JUNIOR/SOPHOMORE	15

## Types of Conflicts/Gender

MALE/FEMALE	42
FEMALE/FEMALE	105
MALE/MALE	36

## Racial Breakdown

	Black	White	Hispanic	Other (Interracial)
Seniors	27	20	9	6
Juniors	20	34	7	1
Sophomores	<u>23</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>
	70	81	19	13

Some observations at this time would be that all the students, in every grade level, are taking advantage of peer mediation as a solution or alternative to fighting. We an also see that females tend to have the most conflicts. We can also note that the Hispanic population clearly has the least amount of conflicts in our school.

**Appendix C**  
**Summary Data Sheet for Interpersonal Conflicts**



## Summary Sheet for 1995-1996 and 1997-1998

[illegible]

**Appendix D**  
**Results of the Checklist Questions for Program Planning, Implementation,**  
**Decision Making and Process**

## **RESULTS**

### **CHECKLIST QUESTIONS FOR PROGRAM PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION, DECISION MAKING AND PROCESS**

1. How will a teacher's personal day be changed by the program?
  - Teachers will feel confident that a potential problem will be dealt with effectively and efficiently.
  - Teachers will experience a significantly less amount of conflicts among students.
  - Teachers will have a program that may help solve some of the small "gossip/rumors," possession, and jealous encounters.
  - Possible loss of preparation time.
  - Advisors/Mediators may encounter:
    - Extra paperwork (i.e., assignments, forms, scheduling)
    - Able to leave class, schedule mediations (Silver Run: Schedules Peer Mediations in the morning; Rieck Avenue: Employs an aide to find and mediate within a small time frame; Holly Heights: Extra prep time is provided for Peer Mediation scheduling).
2. How much additional preparation time will the program require?
  - Continual updates for both staff and students (i.e., newsletters, staff meetings, etc.)
  - Inservice and ongoing training of staff/teachers (i.e., cafeteria aides, hall/recess aides, bus drivers, etc.) for approximately 1.5 to 3 days.
  - For advisors, preparation time of 2 - 3 days per week.
  - Depends on:
    - When to train: The end of the year? Prior to school opening? Ideally, one facilitator per period (with an extra prep period provided)
3. How much paperwork will be involved in implementing and monitoring the program?
  - For Teacher:
    - Minimal for teachers who refer students in conflict
    - None for teachers, only referral
  - For Coordinator:
    - Most paperwork regarding: Immediate - Scheduling med. contracting pairing mediator after-gathering
  - Selection process of mediators, contracts for mediations, statistics evaluation of program, staff updates.
    - A schedule of mediations should be kept
    - Referrals and monthly meetings with students mediators and involved.

4. How will the innovation "fit in" to the content to which learners have already been exposed?
  - This is a good life skill; program regarding the skills such as: listening, responsibility, communicating, problem-solving, decision making, etc.
  - P.M. is also familiar to the school communities of Holly Heights, Rieck Avenue, and Silver Run schools.
  - Will enhance social problem-solving skills, violence prevention, and small disputes between students.
  - Program will help promote a democratic way of solving conflict.
  - Collaborative learning, cooperative decision making constructivism.
  - All teachers should be exposed to conflict resolution for possible usage every day.
  
5. What kinds of teacher resource materials will be provided?
  - Films, a manual, question/answer opportunities, statistics on effectiveness, questionnaires on their perception of the program.
  - Mediation handouts, VCR tapes (testimonials), referral forms, teacher infusion materials.
  - Information that will be provided to prepare both students and faculty members to be cognizant of peer mediation/conflict resolution (promotional).
  - Depends on model (type) chosen! (total school, elective, cadre).
  
6. Will resource materials be in each teacher's room, in a separate room in the school, at the central administration building, or at some other location?
  - Yes - Provided to teachers in their desk manual.
  - Yes - Referral forms, mediation information.
  - Central location where information can be easily dispersed (in each house at Lakeside).
  - Central location, a PM site.

**\*Manual Content:**

Intro to PM; tie in with school philosophy, mission statement (why of PM).

The what of peer mediation/conflict resolution techniques

The how of PM (referral forms, mediation/negotiation forms, procedures)

- Appendix for
  - Procedures for selection of peer student mediators and teachers.
  - Referral forms, mediation/negotiation forms, procedures.
  - Teacher sample lesson plans for (communication, listening, empathy, problem-solving, decision-making, questioning, prioritizing).

7. What kinds of new learning materials will be provided for learners?
  - Skills: Communication skills, listening skills, problem-solving skills, decision-making skills, work ready simulations.
  - Training Manual
  - Homeroom teachers? Could be provided with information in order to remind students of mediation and a quick exercise of conflict resolution.
  - No response
  - Refresher in-service for peer mediators on a yearly basis.
8. Are reading levels and other characteristics of these materials clearly appropriate for learners to be served?
  - Contracts will be written in students' own words.
  - For non-reading individuals: Contracts may be orally given and then signed after the explanation.
  - Yes
  - No response
  - For intermediate levels, are always different than HS level.
9. What patterns of teacher-learner interaction will be demanded?
  - Teacher patterns:
    - Acts as monitor during session
    - Acts as advisor to mediators after the session
    - Acts as a witness to participants during and after each session
    - Openness to the mediation process and for students referral
    - An understanding of the dynamics associated with the peer mediation process/session
    - Cooperation between student and teachers in imperative learners
    - Apply skills and resources of PM
10. Will any required instructional procedures demand teaching techniques teachers have not already mentioned?
  - No, however, each case will be received as an individual case that may require creative/unique approaches in the solution to the situation
  - Belief that actual listening of old style teachers may be a problem
  - No
  - No response
  - Not necessary but guidance courses would possibly help
11. What kinds of in-service training will be provided?
  - Need a full day for teacher mediators
  - Faculty meeting to introduce and update the rest of staff (i.e., video, manual/brochure, videos)
  - Possible assembly to introduce to students-teachers
  - Any kind for students and interested staff each year and as requested by any staff member
  - Student training regularly role play and the Peer Mediation process

- Teacher inservice for teachers/advisors in order to oversee and administer guidance to students involved in the program
  - No response
  - Three day training )both teacher/student mediators)
12. What is the relationship of the innovation to standardized tests learners must take?
- Improve attendance?
  - Improve climate of school (safe, orderly, warm environment)
  - Facilitate problem-solving/decision-making skills
  - Prioritize possible solutions
  - Unknown
  - No comment
  - No response
  - None aware of
13. What are the implications of the new program for classroom management?
- And in resolving interpersonal conflicts
  - Teachers may refer to the program as needed in situations requiring: coaches, team play, group dynamics, communication skills, scenario building for social problem-solving
  - Less violent behaviors, improved communication among students which will lead to more TOT and less instructional interruptions
  - Improve classroom management discipline and climate
  - No comment
  - Program may be used as tool in order to solve problems
14. How strong is the central district administrations' commitment to the support of the new program?
- Quite supportive for there have been previous inservices which required funding. In addition, the new principal is committed to the implementation of conflict management skills to the student community. (A few respondents were uncertain of the commitment level of the central office.)
15. Who, specifically, can be called on for help if there are problems regarding implementation of the innovation?
- In the district:
    - Joan Cooper, Shelly Schneider, Sue Jacobson, Danelle Cornelius, Kyriakos Evrenoglou (including Mr. Richard Cohen who trained and is a consultant)
  - Strongly suggested that an administrator and/or guidance counselor be involved with the coordination of sessions

16. To what extent to parents know about and support the new program:
  - Parents of participatory schools have informed parents of their child's participation in the program. Modes of informing all:
    - Provide a student handbook
    - Provide a parent handbook
    - School newsletter
    - PTA meetings
    - Back-to-School night
    - Video simulations of role playing scenarios, etc.
    - Web page
    - Parent conferences
    - Holly Heights: Parents signed a consent form and/or have verbally expressed their approval of the project and their child's participation.
    - High school: A letter is sent home to the parent of peer mediators in order to inform them that the program is an alternative choice of students in order to deal with verbal disagreements and their child is part of the process of mediating the disputants.
17. What procedures and how will Peer Mediators be identified from area elementary schools (as well as within the middle school)?
  - Place in a central file within each school as well as in their personal file.
18. What will be the functions of the Peer Mediation Coordinator?
  - Advise monthly meetings
  - Monitor/schedule mediators and mediations
  - Ensure student confidentiality
  - Facilitate teacher/student workshops, seminars and program evaluation procedures and processes
  - Conflict resolution/peer mediation consultant
19. How will the program be introduced to the school community?
  - Assembly, school newsletter to parents/guardian, administration/guidance referrals, student handbook, teacher handbook, video, cause, threatens to cause, or purposely causes bodily harm.

**Appendix E**  
**Coordinator's Responsibilities**



## **Peer Mediation Program Coordinator Job Description**

The peer mediation coordinator must be based in the school; have anywhere from one to six hours during each school day to devote exclusively to peer mediation (varies with program design); *not* be a school disciplinarian. In addition, the coordinator ideally

- has excellent communication skills;
- has a demonstrable ability to win students' trust;
- is self-motivated and able to work independently;
- is well liked by school staff.

The responsibilities of the peer mediation coordinator include:

### **Program Design**

- identifying potential sources of financial support
- creating and overseeing an advisory council
- overseeing all aspects of program design
- designing the referral process and related forms

### **Outreach and Publicity**

- coordinating in-school publicity and education of both staff and students
- maintaining positive relations with administrators, disciplinarians, and teachers
- maintaining relations with parents and the community
- keeping the school and community updated on the program's progress

### **Training**

- overseeing selection of trainees
- coordinating all aspects of the training, including locating trainers, arranging for the training site, obtaining parental permission, and providing refreshments
- training mediators themselves if they are able

### **Casework**

- coordinating mediator availability
- taking referrals
- explaining mediation to parties and encouraging them to try mediation
- determining when an intervention other than peer mediation is necessary
- scheduling mediation sessions
- locating appropriate mediators for each session
- mediating cases when necessary
- supervising mediation sessions
- helping mediators improve their skills
- following up on all cases

### **Program Maintenance**

- keeping records
- recruiting new mediators
- facilitating regular meetings with mediators
- coordinating program evaluation

**Appendix F**  
**Parent Brochure**

# *Lakeside Middle School*

*2 North Sharp Street  
Millville, New Jersey  
08332*

*Dr. Shelly Schneider.....Principal*

*....PM  
coordinator*

*School Hours:*

*Telephone numbers:*

*Main office-*

*Guidance-*



*Peer Mediation*

hundreds of schools across the United States.



Dear Parent

The Lakeside Middle School has instituted a peer mediation program.

Mediation is a form of conflict resolution in which trained students, with adult supervision, help their peers talk out and resolve interpersonal conflicts.

Student mediators, who are trained, do not take sides or make decisions for their peers; they aid them in finding their own solutions. Peer mediation is a safe, effective program that has been implemented in

Mediation is voluntary

and students choose to work with mediators. Through this program, students will learn to resolve interpersonal conflicts in a constructive and respectful way. Students who participate in the peer mediation process should be willing to:

***\*Solve the problem***

***\*Be honest***

***\*Allow the other***

***person to present his  
his or her version***

***without interrupting***

***\*Be polite and***

***\*Respectful to all***

***parties in the***

***mediation process***

***\*Do his or her part in***

***carrying out the***

***agreed-upon***

***solution***

***(responsibility)***

***\*Keep the process***

***confidential***

Please encourage your child to use this process whenever he/she feels they need a third person in order to resolve a problem. All that is necessary is to inform any of his or her teachers and they will contact the peer mediation coordinator.

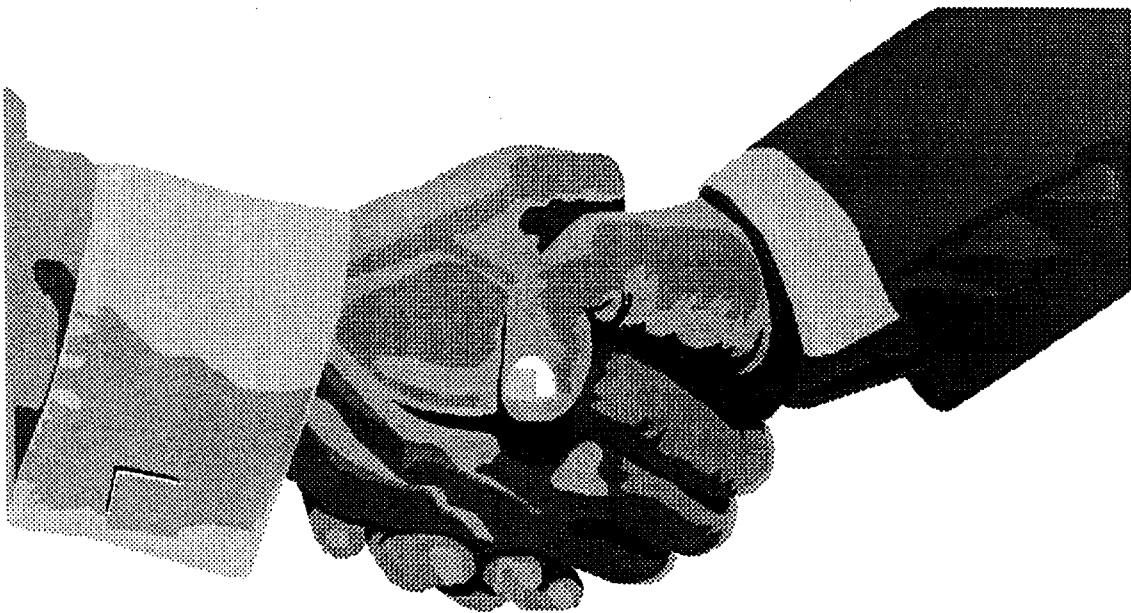


**Appendix G**  
**Peer Mediation Teacher Handbook**

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***Peer Mediation Teacher  
Handbook  
For  
Lakeside Middle School***



**3rd draft**

## **Introduction**

Mediation is a form of conflict resolution in which trained students, under adult supervision, help their peers talk out and resolve interpersonal conflicts. Student mediators do not take sides or make decisions for their peers; instead, they help create their own resolutions to conflicts. The program is a safe, effective program that has been implemented in thousands of schools across the United States. It enables students to settle their disputes in a safe and cooperative manner.

Mediation is voluntary and students (disputants) choose to work with mediators. A mediator is a "third person" who aids disputants solve a conflict. The mediator does not take sides, but serves as an impartial listener. The goal of the mediator is to help disputants solve their problems and mutually reach an agreement.

## **THE "WHAT" AND "WHY" OF PEER MEDIATION**

### **Goals of Student Peer Mediation**

Many students have low self-esteem. This comes from many sources, such as failure at school, lack of support at home and cruelty of their peers. Many of today's students also lack problem solving and communication skills. These are the academic and social goals of Student Peer Mediation.

### **What is Mediation?**

During mediation, two carefully trained students sit in a staff-supervised room with two or more disputants. They orchestrate the proceedings through active listening, questioning, and problem solving techniques. In this fashion, they guide the disputants toward finding the solutions unique to their special disagreement.

### **What Do Disputants Learn?**

Disputants learn that there are many ways to solve a problem. They learn that they do not have to go only to an adult to find solutions. They are guided through



problem solving techniques by skilled, non-judgmental, and unbiased peers. Disputants cannot help but pick up problem solving skills.

#### What Do Mediators Learn?

Mediators learn all the same things as disputants with the added bonus of finding increased self-esteem, better listening, communication and observation skills, cooperation and teamwork skills.

#### What Do Staff Get Out of Having a Peer Mediation Program?

When problems occur between students, they will be referred to mediation instead of staff telling them what to do. This will decrease the time teachers have to spend trying to solve minor problems between students. The marginal behavior student may be brought into line by the added self-esteem that being a mediator brings. Increased problem solving and communication skills can transfer to other academic areas.

#### PROBLEMS

There is no cure-all. Peer mediation is one technique to be used in the overall discipline policy of a school. It works best when it is formally instituted into the line of consequences in this policy. This helps alleviate one of the major drawbacks of this technique which is getting cases sent to the mediators. If inserted into the formal discipline procedures, then the cases are automatically referred to mediation. If mediation is not a formal step, then staff forget to use the valuable service it provides. The second problem lies in the fact that some children have no desire to solve the problem. This is usually the dominant disputant or, in simpler terms, the bully.

### Ground Rules for Peer Mediation

Student who want the help of a peer mediator must be willing to:

- \* Solve the problem*
- \* Tell the truth about the situation*
- \* Let the person present his or her version without interrupting*
- \* Be polite and respectful to all parties of the mediation process*
- \* Do his or her part in carrying out the agreed-upon solution  
(responsibility)*
- \* Keep the process confidential*

## IN SEARCH OF PEER MEDIATORS

We are seeking nominations from you to choose students from the sixth and seventh grade whom you think will make good peer mediators. We currently have identified students who were peer mediators during their elementary school experience. We are in search of assembling a diverse group of students who represent all racial and ethnic backgrounds, cliques, and so on here at Lakeside. The students need not be only high achievers. The qualities that we are looking for are as follows:

- \* Good listener*
- \* Respect of their peers*
- \* Responsible*
- \* A good social problem solver*
- \* Non-judgmental*
- \* Trustworthy*
- \* Sense of commitment*
- \* Empathy*
- \* Sense of fairness*
- \* Concern for others*
- \* Is trustworthy*

Once selected, students will participate in mediation training. Students who complete the training will serve their peers by mediating interpersonal conflicts. Thank you for your help, time, and support.

(Detach here)

---

Referred by: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee 3: \_\_\_\_\_

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

The following forms regarding the actual mediation scheduling will be used here at Lakeside. It is the intent for you to be familiar with them. They are:

- \* Teacher permission to mediate form (Appendix A)
- \* Teacher referral form (Appendix B)
- \* P.M.P. (peer mediation pass) found in Appendix C

In addition, a video demonstrating the peer mediation process has been produced. It was possible with the joint cooperation of the peer mediators and peer mediation coordinators throughout the district. It is in the hope that you show this video to your classes in order to familiarize you and your students with the peer mediation process and for encouraging you and your students the use of this valuable program.

Finally, resources of how to integrate peer mediation into your lessons is available in the teachers' work rooms. For further additional information, see

---

## Appendix A

### Teacher Permission to Mediate Form

## Teacher Permission to Mediate Form

Dear Teachers:

As you are probably aware, \_\_\_\_\_ was recently trained to be a peer mediator. Our school peer mediation program is now ready and our mediators are excited to begin mediating. Although we will be making every effort to schedule mediation sessions so that they do not interfere with academics, occasionally we will have to pull students out of class to mediate. Please indicate below whether it is currently okay for this student to mediate occasionally during your class. We will check back with you regularly to update this information. Of course, students will be required to make up any work that they miss.

Period	Teacher Signature	Subject	Room	Yes or No	Teacher's Name
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					

Comments (please put your name next to comments):

Feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.  
Sincerely,

---

**Appendix B**  
**Teacher Referral Form**

**Lakeside Middle School  
Millville, New Jersey**

**Mediation Referral Form**

Name of person making the referral \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Names of disputants \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ ASAP \_\_\_\_\_ Sometime Today \_\_\_\_\_ Can wait till tomorrow

Type of conflict (check one or more)

\_\_\_\_\_ teasing

\_\_\_\_\_ name calling

\_\_\_\_\_ property dispute, ownership

\_\_\_\_\_ property dispute, money

\_\_\_\_\_ rumors

\_\_\_\_\_ intimidation, harassment

\_\_\_\_\_ friendship dispute

\_\_\_\_\_ put-downs

\_\_\_\_\_ pushing, shoving

\_\_\_\_\_ excluding

\_\_\_\_\_ threats

\_\_\_\_\_ other reason: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this to \_\_\_\_\_ or drop it in the referral box outside the \_\_\_\_\_ office.  
Thank you.

**DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE**

-----  
Mediation scheduled on \_\_\_\_\_ (day and date) in \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Mediators \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of assigned supervisor \_\_\_\_\_



**Appendix C**  
**Peer Mediation Pass**

P.M.P

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Report to: \_\_\_\_\_  
for Peer Mediation Session

P.M.P

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Report to: \_\_\_\_\_  
for Peer Mediation Session

P.M.P

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Report to: \_\_\_\_\_  
for Peer Mediation Session

P.M.P

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Report to: \_\_\_\_\_  
for Peer Mediation Session

P.M.P

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Report to: \_\_\_\_\_  
for Peer Mediation Session

P.M.P

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Report to: \_\_\_\_\_  
for Peer Mediation Session

P.M.P

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Report to: \_\_\_\_\_  
for Peer Mediation Session

P.M.P

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Report to: \_\_\_\_\_  
for Peer Mediation Session

## Biographical Data

Name:	Kyriakos M. Evrenoglou
High School:	Millville Senior High School Millville, New Jersey
Undergraduate:	Bachelor of Science West Chester State College West Chester, Pennsylvania
Graduate:	Doctor of Philosophy Exercise Physiology Temple University Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  Master of Science Health Education West Chester State College West Chester, Pennsylvania  Master of Arts School Administration Rowan University Glassboro, New Jersey
Present Occupation:	Health and Physical Education Teacher Millville Senior High School Millville, New Jersey