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Helping students resolve their conflicts through conflict resolution and peer mediation training

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Abstract

The study examined the effectiveness of Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation (CRPM) training on resolving 10-11-year-old primary school students’ interpersonal conflicts. Research was conducted in two low-SES primary schools. A total of 520 students from 12 classrooms received training. Peer mediation forms filled by the mediator students following the mediation sessions were used to collect data. Of the 444 mediation sessions, 98.9\% resulted in agreement and 1.1\% in no-agreement. Majority of the conflicts referred to mediation were physical, verbal, and non-verbal violence, relationship and communication conflicts, and conflicts of interest. Results of the study indicated that CRPM training might prove to be effective in resolving 10-11-year-old students’ conflicts.

Keywords: Peer mediation; and conflict resolution; peace education.

1. Introduction

Interpersonal conflicts are natural and unavoidable in schools where, in each classroom, 20-40 individuals with different cultural backgrounds, values, personalities, and objectives are randomly brought together for an elemental purpose such as education. Yet, Johnson, Johnson, and Dudley (1992) claim that most students are ill-equipped with skills or knowledge about how to resolve conflicts or how to manage their feelings in conflict situations. Mismanagement of interpersonal conflicts, on the other hand, usually results in violence. Unfortunately, violence in schools continues to jeopardize the safety and quality of education in the schools today. Woody (2001) argues that school violence has received greater attention in society and in the professional literature in the past decade, primarily because of the recent increasing acts of violence in schools throughout the world. However, these acts are

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