DRACON INTERNATIONAL

BRIDGING THE FIELDS OF DRAMA AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Empowering students to handle conflicts through school-based programmes
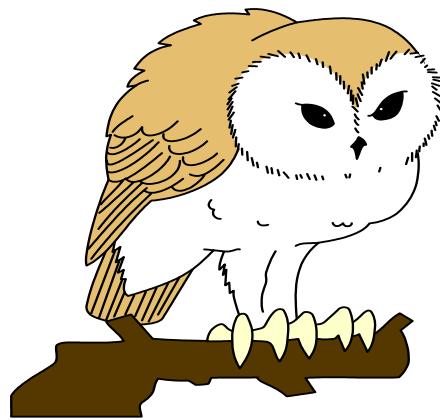
SCHOOL OF TEACHER EDUCATION

MALMÖ UNIVERSITY

2

This book is dedicated to all the young participants from Sweden, Australia and Malaysia who, through their insights and courage, have made this project possible

Preface

This book is the result of several years of collaborative teamwork between researchers from three different continents. Despite limited economic funding and great geographic distances between the project groups, we are happy to have succeeded in compiling this monograph.

National meetings and international conferences have presented the team members with valuable opportunities for discussing the on-going process with each other.

Within the international research team the participants represent different disciplines, the implication being that various methodological approaches have been used. In addition, different cultural settings have determined the ways in which the research and development work has been conducted. The word "bridging" in the book's title implies not only the bridging of drama and conflict management, but also the bridging of different methodological approaches and cultural traditions.

Although based on a collaborative team effort, different chapters have been assigned one or more main authors. At the beginning of each chapter the authors are presented in alphabetical order. A presentation of each of the authors can be found at the end of the book.

The Swedish DRACON team has functioned as an informal editorial group. Horst Löfgren and Birgitte Malm have had the main responsibility for compiling and revising the texts. Birgitte Malm has also proof-read and translated texts into English. Horst Löfgren has formatted, designed and been responsible for the layout of the book.

Barsebäck, Sweden
May, 2005

Horst Löfgren and Birgitte Malm
Managing Editors

5

Contents

1   General introduction

Dale Bagshaw, Mats Friberg, Margret Lepp,
Horst Löfgren, Birgitte Malm and John O'Toole

1.1   Purpose of the DRACON project

DRACON is an interdisciplinary and comparative action research project aimed at improving conflict handling among adolescent school children by using the medium of educational drama. Beginning in the early 1980s a number of programmes to teach conflict handling skills to students in schools have been implemented in countries such as the United States of America (USA) and Australia. Very few have used drama methods to teach such skills, even though role-playing teenage conflicts seems to be an ideal method of engaging adolescents in conflict exploration and learning. When DRACON was initiated in 1994 the idea of joining the two academic and practical fields of conflict resolution and drama was almost unheard of. The tendency to keep the two fields separate is strange given the fact that drama and conflict are two words that have a lot in common.

In order to emphasis this marriage of DRAma and CONflict resolution we baptized the project DRACON. The Greek word 'drakon' means serpent or dragon. In the West dragons are monsters that breathe flames, gloat over treasures and eat innocent virgins. We do not want to be associated with such things. We prefer the Eastern dragon, which has a completely different character. It symbolizes calmness and wisdom. The dragon is often pictured with a pearl in its mouth. If you pick the pearl you can control the dragon. This, we think, is an apt metaphor for what drama and conflict resolution is all about. Conflicts and dramas can develop into destructive monsters but if you possess the pearl of wisdom and calmness you can domesticate the monster.

That we had chosen the right name for the project was confirmed when we found out that the project has a great forerunner with a similar name, Drakon. He was a lawgiver in ancient Athens. Some time about

the year 621 BC he wrote down the customary law. He was said to have restricted blood revenge and was the first to distinguish between wilful and unpremeditated murder. His laws gained the reputation of being quite harsh, though, which is indicated by the word 'draconic' or 'draconian'. However, he was a pioneer in conflict resolution and a man of integrity who was greatly respected by his contemporaries (Henriksson, 1988).

The bulk of this book is devoted to our efforts to develop and research drama programmes which empower adolescents in three countries - Australia, Malaysia and Sweden – to handle their own conflicts in constructive ways and to become leaders in their schools and communities. However, the reader will find much more than this in the present book. For comparative reasons there is a presentation of background factors in each case study, containing information about the cultural context and the educational system in each country. In the case of Australia and Sweden we also present primary data about the prevalence of different conflict handling styles, including aggressive behaviour, among adolescents.

The book also contains an extensive theoretical section where the reader will find a review of current theories of conflict and conflict resolution as well as corresponding theories in the drama field. We have tried to make the two fields mutually intelligible by translating their basic vocabularies to each other. We have also made an effort to construct an analytical model, which encompasses the basics of each field as well as to explore in what ways practical procedures can be integrated. Furthermore, the theoretical section analyses how the educational system as well as national and ethnic cultures condition conflict handling and drama work among school children. The reader will find a discussion of what the psychology of adolescence has to say about teenage conflict and why experiential learning through drama could be an effective way to develop conflict competence.

For the practical minded reader, who wants to use our findings in the classroom or elsewhere, we have added an appendix with short descriptions of all the drama exercises used in DRACON.

The structure of the whole DRACON project can be illustrated as in Diagram 1.1.

14
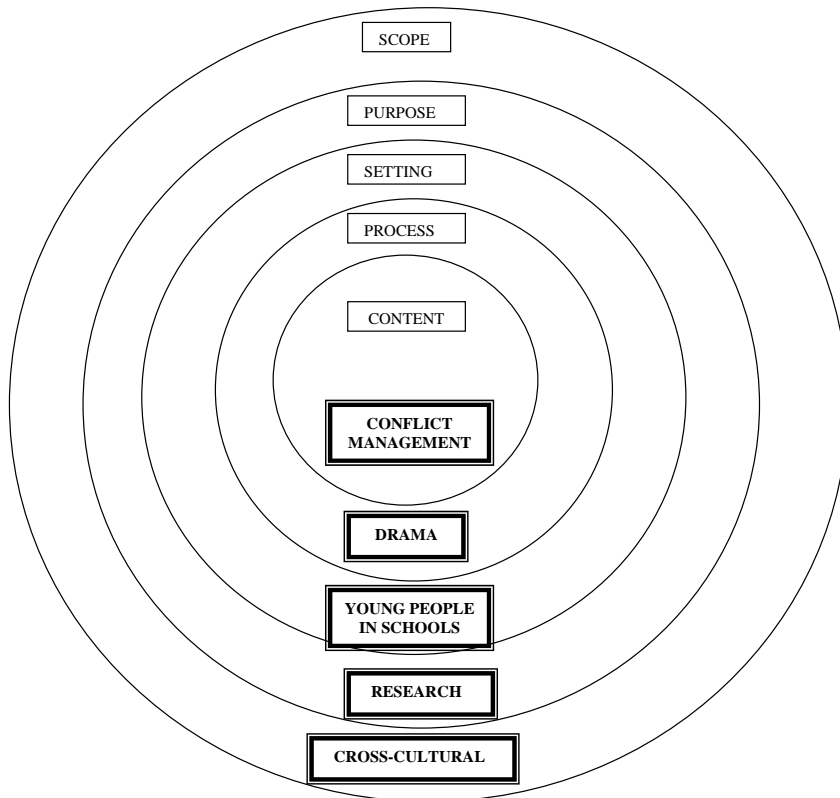
Diagram 1.1. Fundamental structure of the DRACON project

The scope of the programme has been cross-cultural, based as it is on the collaboration between researchers in Australia, Malaysia and Sweden. The purpose of the research has been to develop new methods of conflict management, focussing on young adolescents in schools. The main aim of DRACON has been to teach adolescents to manage conflicts by helping them to integrate drama exercises with their own personal experiences of conflict, thus increasing their empathic understanding as well as personal empowerment.

1.2.   History and organisation of the project

The DRACON project has a chequered history. The official start of the project can be dated exactly to the first of May 1994 when a foundational meeting was held in Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia, involving Swedish conflict researchers and Malaysian drama specialists. However, the idea of a combining conflict resolution and drama came a few years earlier. A Swedish industrial consultant, Jöns Andersson, who had retired from his profession, initiated this idea. He lived most of the year in Southeast Asia and dreamed about setting up a drama school in Malaysia. Andersson thought that drama would be the perfect medium in which to work with conflicts and organized a contact between peace and conflict researchers and prominent drama specialists in Sweden and Malaysia. Unfortunately Andersson had no further influence on the development of the project because of his death in 1995.

A group of Swedish and Malaysian researchers had cooperated for some years on a comparative study of how conflicts are handled in different social and cultural contexts in Sweden and Malaysia. The project was called *Culturally conditioned models of conflict resolution in Sweden and Malaysia* and lasted between 1988 and 1994 (Allwood & Friberg, 1994). It was an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural project, which produced at least one big offshoot – the DRACON project. From the mother project DRACON took over two important ideas - that culture matters in conflict management and that drama and conflict processes therefore should be studied on a comparative or cross-cultural basis. DRACON also inherited the principle of organising international research cooperation on a symmetrical basis between independent national teams meeting at yearly international conferences.

At an international meeting in Aldinga, near Adelaide in South Australia in late January 1996 it was decided to extend the Swedish-Malaysian research cooperation with two Australian teams[1]. DRACON International was born.

The Swedish team was initially linked to the Department of Peace and Development Research, Gothenburg University and was later based on a network with team members from Gothenburg University, Malmö

---

[1] Lodging and international travel costs were paid by a grant from the Swedish Institute. Three persons from the University of the Philippines participated in the conference. The intension was to form a fifth team but unfortunately they could not finance their further participation in DRACON.

University, University College of Borås and Västerbergs Folk High School. Two Australian teams were set up, one in Adelaide linked to the Group for Mediation Studies (now the Conflict Management Research Group), School of Social Work and Social Policy, University of South Australia and the other in Brisbane linked to the School of Communication, Language and Arts, Faculty of Education, Griffith University. The Malaysian team was linked to the Research and Education for Peace Unit, School of Social Science, Science University Malaysia in Penang.

Each team has specialists in the two fields, drama and conflict resolution, both as researchers and practitioners. More than 30 researchers and drama pedagogues have at different times been associated with the project on a part-time or unpaid basis. The core group consists of about 10 persons[2]. The Penang and Brisbane teams had long experience of working with drama among adolescents before DRACON International was established. In Malaysia, drama specialist Janet Pillai had worked with children's theatre workshops (Teater Muda) for five years under the auspices of an independent theatre company, the Five Arts Centre. In Australia, drama specialists and researchers, John O'Toole and Bruce Burton, had been involved in the Whole School Anti-Racism Programmes in New South Wales and Queensland for a long time. In the Adelaide team, Dale Bagshaw has for many years worked internationally in the field of mediation and conflict management and Ken Rigby is renowned internationally for numerous books and extensive research on bullying. The Swedish team encompassed specialists with solid knowledge both in conflict handling theories, Mats Friberg, and drama pedagogy, Anita Grünbaum and Margret Lepp.

Financing a project like this has been a major problem. Grants from the Swedish Institute and the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation proved decisive in initiating the project and building a network. The four teams have been responsible for financing their own research. Because of the hazards involved in getting grants from universities and national foundations the teams have not always walked in tandem. In a network organisation initiative goes to the team who has the greatest motivation and the biggest resources. In rough terms one could say that the drive pushing the project forward has moved over a ten-year period from Sweden to Malaysia to Australia and back to Sweden again.

---

[2] See author presentations at the end of the book.

The fact that so many people from two disciplines and three countries have managed to work together on a complex research design for almost ten years and have produced about 100 working papers plus a major international publication without a central budget is truly amazing. Add to this the fact that DRACON has included approximately 4000 students in surveys studies. A further 2500 students, 150 teachers and 20 school counsellors have participated in intensive drama programmes and 1300 students have experienced a Theatre in Education programme about conflict handling. These achievements testify to a strong commitment and a strong belief in the vision we share. Naturally the project has not been without ups and downs. We will touch on some of the problems below. Most research report are silent about such matters, but we want to share our experience for the benefit of other researchers, who plan to initiate decentralised, interdisciplinary and cross-cultural research projects.

One of the reasons for the success of the project is that our international research co-operation has been based on symmetry. We all remember the enormous enthusiasm created at the international workshops. All in all we had eight of them, the first in Aldinga 1996 and the last in Penang 2004. Most conferences have been held in Penang.

It has not always been easy to keep the momentum of the project after having returned to the chores of academic life at home. At the workshops we had an intense feeling of participating in the development of a unique social innovation of potential relevance to young people all over the world. The inclusion of four parallel projects has opened up, not only for comparisons, but also for complementarities and sharing between the teams. Innovations in the design of drama-conflict programmes as well as research methods have in fact diffused (not sure this is the right word) from one team to the other and it is not wrong to talk about a process of co-evolution through which the four studies have tended to converge towards a common more comprehensive DRACON model incorporating some innovations from all teams. This is most evident in the case of the Brisbane and Swedish projects, which have gone through the longest period of continuous development.

"Let one hundred flowers bloom!" was the catchword at the beginning of the project. All four teams initiated pilot field studies. Soon there developed a need for methodological stringency and theoretical clarification. At times the yearly conferences looked like the tower of

18

Babel because of endless discussions about the meaning of key terms in the two disciplines of educational drama and conflict resolution. Early on it was decided to produce a so-called bridging report designed to relate the two terminologies to each other. In the year 1999 the theoretical work as well as the four field studies had progressed far enough for us to begin planning a major international publication – the book you are just reading. However, the work progressed very slowly and in early spring 2001 it almost looked like the whole effort to produce a joint book was too much for a decentralized, international network of this kind.

Although the initiative for the DRACON project initially came from Sweden, the Swedish team was not as successful as the other countries in regard to financing their research. After several years of unpaid work the Swedish team was finally given a grant in 2001 from The Swedish Council of Scientific Research for three years research. Leadership for the project and economic responsibility was given to the School of Teacher Education at Malmö University.

This changed the situation fundamentally, because in the wake of the crisis the Swedish team decided to make the international book the first priority of the team. In late April 2002 the team announced its willingness to take on special responsibility for the integration of the book, working out guidelines, reading all contributions and giving feedback. The other teams accepted this informal editorial group.

The Swedish team was still an unwieldy group of five members, who were scattered by some 750 km from each other and could not meet face to face more than once or twice a semester. Hence, it was a good idea to have chapter editors in addition to a central editorial group. In this way the other teams did not risk being "overrun" by the Swedish team. Each team still had the final say in regard to their country chapters. The other chapters in the book are joint efforts and based on collaboration between different authors.

We think this background is of importance to the reader, who wants to understand the nature of this book. All authors do not necessarily agree with everything written in the book.

1.3   Underlying principles and assumptions

Before specifying our research questions and the design of the project we would like to introduce a general discussion of the need for drama programmes for conflict resolution among adolescents in the schools surveyed in Australia, Malaysia and Sweden. Our theoretical thinking and our practical work were informed by a social philosophy that can be summarised in five basic principles.

Modern society has put great resources into technological innovations but neglects the urgent need for social innovations such as new creative ways of managing conflicts. Conflicts can be extremely costly even in crass economic terms. They also damage relationships, families, groups and organizations. Businesses are at risk of failing, families of splitting apart and persons with "difficulties in co-operating" are excluded. Unfortunately many people feel helpless when involved in conflicts. They attack or they withdraw. Neither of these reactions is adequate. Attack leads to counterattack and so the conflict escalates. If one withdraws from conflict the problems are swept under the rug. They remain unsolved and pop up again, often in a new form. Creative ways of handling conflicts are lacking not only on the individual level. Few organisations have routines or systems for handling conflicts constructively. This can be labelled as *conflict literacy*, a phenomenon, which seems to be more widespread than ordinary illiteracy in the world of today.

Luckily, there appears to be a growing interest in conflicts and their resolution. During the last thirty years there has been a revolution in both the theories and practical methods of solving conflicts but these innovations have not yet found their way into society on a massive scale. People can use the newly developed skills for self-help in their own conflicts as well as for interventions to help others in conflict. Such practical skills or *conflict competence* cannot be taught only in theory. Many of us have experienced difficulties in applying conflict theories to situations we find ourselves in. We might have very advanced ideas about how the conflict should be managed, but as soon as it heats up, these ideas "go out the window". Reasonable adult persons can suddenly behave like children on the playground. We think we have a conflict, but in reality the conflict has us. We lose control over the conflict because the conflict influences our thoughts, but also our feelings, our will and our actions. These are not always integrated

20

within us. Where strong emotions are involved disagreements can easily transform into interpersonal antagonisms.

When conflict escalates, perception becomes selective. Participants see what they want or fear to see. Everything becomes black or white, and subtle nuances disappear. In emotional terms, you can say that insensitivity to the other increases. We lose our capacity for empathy. Our will also becomes single-minded, focused on one goal that we want to achieve at any cost. Our actions become reactive. We react defensively, often in a primitive way, to the other person. Communication between the parties becomes negative and repetitive, filled with misunderstandings, and can ultimately break down. Those who want to avoid these traps have to learn new skills in conflict situations. First they must learn to recognize situations that can easily escalate into intensive conflicts. To counter selective perception, they must actively search for similarities between the "enemy" and themselves. To counter insensitivity and reactivity, they must learn empathic listening and appropriate ways of responding. The best way to learn such conflict competencies is to begin with ones own experience of conflicts. It is not enough to study conflict on a purely theoretical level. Empathy, active listening and appropriate communication are life competencies that one can only achieve through practical training, as they involve not only mental intelligence but also emotional and physical intelligence.

Ordinary life experience or the "school of hard knocks" is a slow way to develop conflict competence. It often fails, because we learn the defensive responses of attack or avoidance, which are commonly used in most cultures. The fundamental hypothesis in this project is that drama can be an effective way to learn conflict handling. We believe in the importance of learning conflict competence through one's own experience (experiential learning) rather than through books or lectures. However, there is one condition - the learning situation needs to be structured through a trained facilitator and that is exactly what happens in *educational drama*. Commonly drama is associated with performance on a stage, but here it refers to artistic and pedagogical methods in which creative forms of group work are used to stimulate the personal growth of the participants, development of knowledge based on experiences, appropriate styles of communication, as well as joint decision-making.

Educational drama can be a way of processing the experiences of conflicts. Through re-enactment or role-play the participants access a

21

more meaningful experience of the conflict, including thoughts, feelings and body experiences. On the other hand the participants can keep a distance from these experiences through the fictional character of role-playing. In this way they can explore alternative actions and their consequences. They can also explore how the conflict looks to other participants, for instance how the opponents experience the conflict, through playing the role of the opponent.

The basic idea of this project is to merge two academic and practical fields, which often have been separated – educational drama and conflict management. The separation of these two is in many ways artificial. Conflict management on a deeper level requires processing of personal experiences of conflict and that is precisely what could happen through drama work. The integration of drama and conflict is expressed in the inter-disciplinary design of the project. Therefore the research teams contain both drama experts and experts on conflict management.

Drama and conflict management are heterogeneous fields with many schools and approaches. We have chosen *educational drama* (ED) within the field of drama, and *mediation* from the field of conflict management. Both these fields emphasise voluntary participation in a group process, under the guidance of a trained facilitator (drama pedagogue or mediator), the need to create a safe space between the participants, the importance of empowering the participants to act and communicate and the importance of finding their own resolutions to a conflict. One main difference is that mediation is initiated by the parties themselves and often takes the form of a process of problem solving, aiming to reach an agreement, which is acceptable to all. Educational drama is often situated in a school context where the facilitator initiates the process that has an artistic rather than a problem solving focus. Here, conflicts are treated either implicitly or indirectly and the goal is not necessarily to reach an agreement.

The second basic idea of the project is that the *school* is a strategic arena for learning, practicing and spreading conflict competence. What the children learn at school is ultimately what they take with them into adult life. At present the school systems in the countries under study often lack effective ways of handling conflicts and teaching conflict competence. The teachers themselves have fairly limited conflict competence and the skills they have learned through life experience are often inappropriate. When the students come into conflict with each other or the school, the teachers at first often ignore or trivialise the

22

conflict. Then they use admonitions, warnings or exhortations. When this does not help and the conflict gets serious, they fall back on the disciplinary system of the school and mete out punishments for breaking the rules of the school (Cohen, 1995). The teachers often lack both skills and time to involve the students in a constructive conflict management process. Neither do they teach the students the skills to handle their own conflicts. Rigby and Bagshaw (2003), for example, found that students generally do not trust their teachers' ability to assist them to resolve their conflicts and that they often make their conflicts worse.

In other words, conflict illiteracy is widespread among teachers as well as students. The increasing pressures of modern life the result is, in many cases, a growing tendency towards violence, bullying and racism in schools, disharmonious students, and a school environment that is not conducive to learning. By developing and researching drama programmes for constructive conflict handling, this project is aimed at contributing to the creation of a more harmonious school environment, and to provide the students with life competences and social values that will have an impact on the future of society and ultimately contribute to the building of a democratic peaceful culture.

The third basic idea of the project is that *early adolescence* is a critical period in terms of conflict handling. Young adolescents are in a transition phase from childhood to adult life. They live in a situation of tension and they can themselves contribute to creating conflicts. Our research shows that students 13 to 15 years of age often find it difficult to handle their own conflicts (Bagshaw, 1998).

Knowledge about the dynamics of conflicts and skills in conflict management are often lacking. Efforts at improving conflict management through theoretical studies, exhortations or punishments have little or no effect. The ideas that the school is a strategic arena and that adolescents have a particular need of conflict competence are manifested in the project design. The field studies are primarily focused on students at the age of 13-16 years in selected schools, and secondarily focused on teachers and school counsellors.

The fourth basic idea of DRACON is that ways of handling conflicts are conditioned by the *culture* of the conflicting parties. Styles of conflict handling are learned and relatively uniform within a particular social group. Earlier research, our own as well as others, has shown that there are systematic differences between the dominant national cultural groups in Malaysia, Australia and Sweden (see 3.2). For instance, Ma-

laysians often fear open conflict and therefore avoid conflicts. People are afraid of open confrontations and tend to communicate in indirect ways. In Australia people tend to be more straightforward and less afraid of asserting their will or attacking the other verbally. The Swedish culture can be located somewhere between these two extremes.

Drama work with conflicts needs to be adapted to the cultural background of the participants with respect to nationality and ethnicity as well as class and gender. Pedagogical programmes that work in Sweden might be less feasible in Malaysia and vice versa. Programmes that work for boys may not work for girls. Knowledge about the cultural sensitivity of drama work is important because the participating countries are all multicultural or at least moving in that direction. Our intention is to develop culturally inclusive programmes that function in drama classes composed of students from different cultures. Therefore we have given the project a comparative design with four independent research teams, one in Sweden, one in Malaysia and two in Australia (Brisbane and Adelaide).

The fifth basic idea, which has grown stronger with the project itself, is the idea of *empowerment* of the participants. This idea is more or less implicit in both educational drama and conflict management. It is not enough to teach conflict handling skills to our students. We want them to take over the responsibility for the teaching and learning processes as well as for the handling of actual conflicts among themselves. Empowerment for learning takes the form of developing drama programmes in which the students are not told how to behave in conflicts but are provided with conflict situations from which they can learn and draw conclusions themselves. Empowerment for teaching takes the form of *peer teaching*, where higher-grade students who have participated in the DRACON programme teach students in the lower grades about conflict handling. Empowerment for conflict handling takes the form of building self-help capacity in all students as well as intervention capacity in some of them. By intervention we mean basically some form of *peer mediation*. Some students are trained to mediate between peers who come into conflict with each other. The concept of empowerment is important also in another way. We want the whole school in which we are working to be empowered as well. That means that the drama programmes should be taken over by the school when the DRACON team leaves.

In summary, the five basic ideas of DRACON are:

24

- It is possible to improve conflict literacy handling through drama.
- The school is a strategic arena for learning conflict handling and literacy skills.
- Early adolescence is a critical period for learning conflict resolution strategies, as there is a high frequency of conflicts.
- Ways of handling conflicts are culturally conditioned.
- Empowerment of students is needed in order to build up self-help as well as intervention capacities.
- With this in mind, the two overall aims of DRACON International are:
  1. To develop and research integrated programmes using conflict management as the content, and drama as the pedagogy.
  2. To empower students through integrated, school-based programmes to manage their own conflict experiences in all aspects of their lives.

1.4   Theory building and research design

The DRACON project is an action research project that embodies a range of research methods. We have identified a social problem, i.e. destructive adolescent conflicts at school, in the family and at leisure time. We have a positive vision and believe that empowering students to handle their own conflicts in more constructive ways is possible through the medium of educational drama. We think that the appropriate research methodology in a case like this is *action research*, where participant researchers and drama facilitators work together to plan action programmes intended to realise this vision. Action research involved three types of tasks:

- the practical task of realising the vision through interventions in social reality,
- the research task of gathering data about the intervention and evaluate it's results, and
- the theory-building task of guiding the planning of the interventions and explaining the results.

The first task in the DRACON project was the practical task of developing drama programmes for improving conflict handling in school classes in different socio-cultural contexts and then to implement the programmes in some chosen schools. This task and how it was fulfilled is best described in the four field studies presented in the second half of the book.

The second task was to research and evaluate the drama programmes. Our vision could not be realised in one step. The development of drama programmes was an evolutionary process, which required several research cycles. For each version of the programme we had to gather data about it's functioning so that we could construct a better version. We also needed data about initial conditions and about the implementation process. In DRACON the interval between the cycles has been about one year and the number of cycles have varied from one (Adelaide) to three (Penang) and nine (Sweden and Brisbane). Basically we wanted to know if the programmes were effective. Did the students learn anything? Did they use what they learnt in their own lives? Did DRACON have any effect on the incidence of conflicts in the schools involved? The research questions will be presented in detail below.

The third task was to develop the concepts and theories needed to guide the whole enterprise. The theoretical tasks were directly related to the philosophy of DRACON presented above. All the five basic ideas of the project were in some ways problematic. They were in need of theoretical elaboration.

Firstly, there was a need to construct a conceptual bridge between the two fields of drama and conflict management so that the two professions could understand each other. This was not an easy task. Even though the two fields share many basic values and assumptions they are still fairly alien to each other. When the DRACON project was initiated in 1994 we had not heard about any similar projects linking the two fields in a rigorous way. Even today (2004) such efforts are few. This may have something to do with the fact that both disciplines are quite new, still struggling for general recognition and for positions in schools and universities. Both fields are also dynamic and comprise many different approaches competing with each other. It is perhaps too much to ask that two disciplines that are still struggling to find their own identity should engage in comprehensive co-operative ventures. Intimate co-operation can trigger fears of being swallowed up by the other and a

defensive tendency to keep the purity of one's own field. There can be a resistance to learn more than on the superficial level from each other. These tendencies have manifested within the DRACON project from time to time and it is only toward the end of the project that a more genuine interest and understanding of the other field has developed.

Here we could add that interdisciplinary co-operation in itself is a challenge. The very word 'discipline' indicates that there is a constant "disciplining" process going on in every professional or academic field. As we all know it is only after years of study and training that professionals get the status of full membership in a profession. During this time they acquire not only the know-how (procedures), but also the know-why (theories) and the know-what (facts) of the field. As Bourdieu (1988) has shown in several investigations, they also acquire a taste or subtle cultural preferences and a *habitus* or more or less unconscious behaviour dispositions such as forms of discourse, body language, aspirations and so on. Interdisciplinary collaboration, therefore, is a form of intercultural co-operation and as such is fraught with all the difficulties of communication across a cultural barrier. When the cultural codes do not match each other misunderstandings are legion. Translating the terminology of one field to the other is just a first step in interdisciplinary understanding. The real barrier derives from the fact that each side does not have access to the other side's tacit, experiential and non-discursive knowledge as long as they do not participate in the practical procedures of the other field.

We decided early on that a high priority task was to explore basic definitions and procedures used in each field. The task goes beyond translating the terminology of one field into the language of the other. An effort is made to review the major theories in each field and to construct an analytical model, which encompasses the foundations of each field. From this background we are asking in what way the practical procedures in each field can be integrated in a joint drama-conflict-resolution process. This work is reported in Chapter 2.

According to the second tenet of the DRACON project, the school is a strategic institution for the learning of conflict competence. In the formative phase of the project we were looking for an arena in which the practical procedures of drama and conflict management could be combined and we opted for the school system. However, this choice was not unproblematic. We soon found out that the institution of schooling has its own inbuilt limitations and an ethos, which in many

ways is contrary to the ethos of both educational drama and conflict management. In the countries involved, the educational systems were also under severe stress in the current transformation of industrial and industrialising societies into post-industrial or post-modern social structures. These insights led to the second theoretical task of the DRACON project, viz. to explore how the educational system in industrialising (Malaysia) and post-industrialising (Australia, Sweden) societies operate as a context for conflict handling and drama. Is the school a conducive space or not and is it changing in the right direction? Early on in our research we noticed that the DRACON programmes initiated by the four teams followed very different trajectories. Could this be explained by the different schooling systems in the three countries? Macro-sociological theories of schooling proved useful for comparative purposes. This work is reported in section 3.1.

The third tenet of the project was to focus on a particular age group, 13-16 years of age. Adolescence is a stage in the psychosocial development of a person, which has its own characteristics. It is a transition period in which peer relationships and sexual identity and autonomy issues increase in importance. There is a huge literature in social psychology dealing with this period. We thought it would be valuable to review this literature in terms of its implications for conflict handling and susceptibility to drama work among adolescents. Would it be possible to draw any conclusions about the developmental needs of adolescents and how our drama programmes could cater them? Is drama the right way to explore and learn conflict handling during this stage of the life span? This theoretical exploration is reported in section 3.3.

The fourth basic idea of the project is that ways of handling conflicts are culturally conditioned. We knew from earlier research that there are some huge cultural differences between as well as within the three countries of study. On the national level the biggest gap is between on the one side Australia and Sweden, which are mainly Western and Christian countries, and on the other side, Malaysia, which is a mainly Eastern country with a mixture of Malay Muslim, Indian Hindu and Chinese Confucian, Taoist and Buddhist cultural traditions. We knew that these differences have an effect on how conflicts are managed in the three countries. After some time we also began to realise that the cultural value-systems influence the way drama is carried out in the four cases. We assumed that drama is a cultural artefact in itself, which is more or less compatible with different national cultures. This idea

28

provided an alternative or complementary explanation of the design and outcome of the drama programmes carried out in the three countries. A cultural analysis is also relevant in another way. We wanted to know if we could design drama programmes that would function well in culturally homogenous as well as culturally mixed classes. How should the programme be designed so that it could handle ethnic or racial conflicts in the classroom? The theoretical exploration of these issues is reported in section 3.2.

The DRACON project aims at empowering students to handle their own conflicts. A major hypothesis is that educational drama is an effective medium for developing conflict competence in adolescent school children. Educational drama differs in many ways from traditional mediums of learning by being student-centred rather than teacher- or book-centred. By role-playing their own types of conflicts the students gain a total experience of the conflict on many levels – cognitive, emotional, social, physical and so forth. They are provided with opportunities to learn for themselves and from each other by reflecting on their experiences and by sharing in the group. We call this experiential learning, that is to say learning by thinking, feeling, communicating and doing rather than by reading a book or listening to the teacher. This type of learning seems to be very effective for certain types of knowledge, for certain types of personalities and under certain conditions. There are reasons to believe that experiential learning is one of the best ways to learn conflict-handling skills. Why this is so is explored in section 3.4.

1.5   Specification of research questions

The DRACON project has formulated the following eight research questions:

1. What are the most common types of conflicts among adolescents? How do they perceive their conflicts and how do they behave in typical conflict situations?

2. How can adolescents explore their own conflicts through the medium of drama?

3. Can the development of relevant drama methods and programmes in schools improve adolescents' capacities for handling conflicts?

4. How resilient are these drama methods and programmes? Will they function under troublesome conditions, such as in "problem" classes and in ethnically divided schools?

5. Can the same or similar drama programmes be used for school-teachers and counsellors to stimulate their participation as facilitators in the drama programmes?

6. Under what conditions and to what effect can the drama programmes be implemented in a whole school? Can they be taken over and run by the school itself and under what conditions?

7. What kind of observations/measurements can be developed for studying the long and short-term effects of drama programmes?

8. What are the effects of different background or contextual factors (national and ethnic cultures, school systems etc.) on the design and outcome of the field studies?

Question 1 and 2 are preliminary questions that provide a baseline for dealing with the other questions. Question 3 about how to improve conflict handling among adolescents through the medium of drama is the central DRACON question and most efforts in all research teams have been devoted to this question. Question 4, about how resilient the proposed drama processes are, is also a central question that has been faced by almost all teams. The other questions are also important as follow-up questions, but it has not been possible for all the teams to do systematic research on them. The last question (no. 8) is of a different nature. As a comparative question it cannot be answered by each field study taken separately. It is a matter for joint analysis.

Basic conflict handling styles

The first research question concerns typical behaviour in conflicts among adolescents. We need to have an understanding of adolescent conflict handling styles before we develop drama processes for improving these styles. We are particularly interested in the types and prevalence of aggressive behaviour. What do the adolescents do when they get angry with each other? What types of actions do they experience as most hurtful, when they are the targets of the aggression of their peers? Are there typical differences between how boys and girls handle and experience conflicts?

We hypothesised that adolescents, more than adult people, have a tendency to fall back on instinctive fight or flight, attack or withdraw reactions when they perceive a situation as threatening. As we have mentioned above both reactions are natural but undesirable in many situations, as they leave the underlying conflict issues unsolved and, in the case of attack or aggression, cause a lot of harm and damage the relationship between the parties.

There are other more constructive ways of handling conflicts, such as through compromise, joint problem solving or seeking help from reliable outsiders. How common are these compared to attack and avoidance? Do students who have not received any training in conflict resolution use such methods at all? These are important questions that we needed to answer before we developed drama processes geared to improve the ways adolescents handle conflicts. The Adelaide and Swedish teams have independently collected systematic data on self-reported conflict behaviour in a two-step process. In the first step a number of students were interviewed collectively (focus groups) about their experience of conflict. On the basis of this information question-naires where constructed and distributed to large samples of students in many schools. The details of the research methods are described in the Adelaide and the Swedish chapters (4 and 5).

Exploring conflicts through drama processes

How can adolescents explore conflicts through the medium of drama? We were convinced from the start that drama would be an appropriate medium for exploring conflict, but the question of *how* remained. In the beginning some teams worked with fictional conflicts in drama classes. Another avenue opened up through the survey studies. Here we got information about typical adolescent conflicts that could be narrated to a drama class. The participants were instructed to explore these con-flicts by using the drama tools provided by trained drama facilitators. Later we found out that the participants became even more motivated when they worked with material from their own personally experienced conflicts. For reasons described above (see 2.3) the exploration was limited to unilateral conflict explorations. If a student A disclosed a conflict with another student B, other students except student B could participate in the dramatisation of the conflict.

As personal conflicts are sensitive matters we expected a measure of resistance to disclosing information about them and also a reluctance to

perform in role-plays. Therefore one important question became how the drama process could be designed in order to create a *safe space* where sensitive information about their conflicts could be shared and transformed into distanced dramatic situations and explored without individuals being personally exposed. Which drama tools (improvisations, role-plays, visual art, dance, music and so on) would be most conducive as media for expressing the participants' experience of personal conflicts? What types of conflicts would they report? Drama was here seen both as a medium of conflict exploration and as a research method to elicit information about adolescent conflicts. In the case where surveys have been used to map conflicts the data produced by the two methods could be compared. Would they yield the same results or not?

Improving conflict handling through drama processes

The purpose of DRACON has changed somewhat over the years. The first formulations emphasised the study, development, testing of singular drama exercises for conflict handling as a first step to improve the conflict-handling repertoire of students. The drama experts, however, argued that drama doesn't work in bits and pieces (singular exercises or intervention methods). It is the whole programme or process that has an effect. The question became how to weave different drama exercises and techniques together into a powerful process for exploration and learning. Would it be possible to combine drama tools from different approaches within educational drama such as 'process drama', 'forum theatre' and 'theatre in education'? Such a programme could be targeted at a drama class comprising about 15 to 25 students, conducted during or after school hours and run during an intensive week or stretched out with weekly sessions during a full semester. The programmes would require the presence of specialists in the field of drama as well as conflict management.

The task then became to develop appropriate drama processes or programmes that empower students to handle their own conflicts and at the same time to research the process. The effects of the programmes have been evaluated by several criteria. We will begin with the effects on the individual level and present them in a logical sequence:

- Motivation. Would the drama programme engage all the students in a drama class? As measures of motivation we used indicators such as listening to instructions, willingness to engage in exercises, hav-

32

ing fun versus boredom, arriving late to sessions, refusing to be involved, causing disruptions, leaving in the middle of sessions and so on.

- Learning drama language and skills. Would the students learn drama literacy and skills, i.e. the concepts, rules and ways of drama work? For instance, there are rules about the focus attention and when to be silent, when to talk and when to act. This criterion is very important, as the programmes in some cases were targeted at students without prior training in drama.

- Learning conflict language. Would the programmes function as a method of learning conflict literacy, i.e. the central concepts of conflict theory? Every team chose their own selection of basic concepts, though they overlapped to a high degree. Were the students able to understand their own conflicts in these terms and did they memorise the terms several months after the end of the programmes?

- Conflict handling skills. It is one thing to know what to do in conflict situations, another to be able to act on that knowledge in the drama exercises and role-plays. Would the programmes function as a method of learning conflict-handling skills? Such skills included appropriate assertiveness, active listening, joint problem solving, peer mediation and so on.

- Peer teaching. Would the students be able to teach other students drama and conflict literacy or even conflict handling skills? If this could be registered, for instance through video recordings, it would provide us with very persuasive evidence that the students, who practised as teachers, had learned something about drama and conflict handling. It would also show how the effects of the programmes could be multiplied and spread from one class to other classes in a whole school.

- Practising skills in their own life. Would the students use the new skills in handling their own conflicts with schoolmates, friends, siblings, parents and teachers? Would they ever spontaneously intervene as mediators in conflicts between peers? This is of course a highly desirable outcome and efforts have been made to document such cases.

Conflict processes are going on at many levels at the same time - interpersonal as well as inter-group. Adolescents are 'groupies'. Their be-

haviour can be very different if you meet them one at a time or as a group. Therefore a focus on the individual and his/her attitudes and interpersonal conflict handling is not enough. We have to complement with macro- and meso-approaches if we want to understand how adolescents handle conflicts. Thus, some teams have asked questions about the effects of the drama programme on the school class as well as the school as a whole. Such effects are probably very limited, when we are studying the impact of a single drama programme in one drama class. However, when the focus is on implementing the programmes in a whole school the following types of group effects must be considered:

- The integration of the school class. To what extent will the drama programmes have an effect on the inter-group conflicts in a school class, e.g. integrating antagonistic students or integrating marginalized students? Will it build bridges over barriers created by gender, race, ethnicity, social class, subcultures and so on? Will it improve the quality of the teacher-student relations as well as student to student to student relations? Will it create more time for learning by reducing distractions and disciplinary problems?

- The integration of the school as a whole. Will the programmes have an impact on "school climate" by decreasing the tensions and improving communication among students as well as between students, teachers, administrators and parents? This would show up as a decrease in the incidents of destructive conflicts at the school as a whole.

How resilient are the drama programmes?

It is easy to construct effective drama programmes when the conditions are ideal such as where the students are already trained in drama and recruited on a voluntary basis from a harmonious school class, the programme is strongly supported by the principal, the class teachers and the parents and run by a qualified team of conflict resolution and drama facilitators. However, we were looking for processes that could be implemented on a large scale in many schools. Therefore we have run the programmes also under rather challenging conditions.

In most cases we have worked with drama elective classes in secondary schools, but some programmes have also been tested with students who have not received prior training in drama and whose participation was obligatory. Some classes have been very positive and co-operative from the start. The teaching staff has described other classes as "diffi-

cult", "uninterested" or even "hostile" to drama. A necessary condition for our work has been to obtain the approval of the school principals, the class teachers and the counsellors, but in some cases their support has been given more as 'lip service' than in real terms. There were cases, where class teachers have tried to sabotage the programmes, e.g. by negative attitudes and by questioning the programme.

In terms of socio-economic criteria for selecting schools and classes we have strived for diversity. The schools have been located in urban, suburban as well as rural areas. The socio-economic profile has more often been low than high. Many students have come from disadvantaged backgrounds. In terms of gender all combinations have been tried, the majority being mixed classes. Even more importantly, we have studied how the programmes function in ethnically homogenous classes as well as in mixed classes. The Brisbane team has explicitly asked the question if drama can be used to bridge cultural barriers by deconstructing ethnic or racial stereotypes.

Running a drama programme under widely different conditions will tell us if it is resilient or not. Given the disciplinary problems in many schools, the following questions were deemed to be interesting. Is it possible for DRACON to take on "problem classes", e.g. a class where a group of noisy students hostile to drama rule the whole class? What can be done to overcome an antagonistic power structure in the class? How can hostile or shy students be integrated in the process?

Training teachers and counsellors

DRACON aimed to train teachers and counsellors as facilitators in drama classes as a step towards encouraging the school take over the drama programmes. We expected many teachers and counsellors to be unfamiliar with the student-centred approaches to teaching, drama work and conflict handling used in the DRACON project. Therefore we hypothesised that a large proportion would be incapable of facilitating drama programmes in their schools before receiving professional training. We were interested to know how they would react to an intensive course based on the same drama programmes as the students have received. Would they learn the languages of drama and conflict handling slower or quicker than the students? Would they become empowered to use the new techniques in their ordinary work at school? DRACON programmes have been run for counsellors in Malaysia and for teachers in Australia and Sweden.

Implementation of drama programmes in whole schools

Can the programmes be implemented in a whole school? Under what conditions and to what effect can DRACON be taken over and run by the school itself? An implementation process requires an extension of the classroom programmes with respect to both action and research. In action terms the DRACON process should include teachers and administrators as well as students. The idea is to empower the regular staff to run the programmes without the assistance of the DRACON team. In research terms, a number of whole school parameter have to be studied, parameters that could have an effect on the success of the implementation process, for example the structure of power, authority and discipline, the incidence and types of conflicts, pedagogical models, emotional atmosphere at school and so on.

Measurements of effects

All DRACON teams have grappled with the question of how to measure the effects of the drama programmes. As we have seen above the effects should be gauged on many dimensions (motivation, language, skills, practice and so on) and on many levels of aggregation (individual, school class, whole school). The effects are short term as well as long term. Both qualitative and quantitative indicators have been used. The type of data has varied from observations, diaries and paintings to audio and video recordings, interviews and questionnaires. The data has been gathered at different measurement points in the process. Thus one could say that the DRACON process requires the integration of three different languages, the language of drama, the language of conflict handling and the language of research. No standard measures of effects have been developed. Each team has tackled this problem in its own way. Annual international DRACON conferences have been an important forum for discussions on these issues.

Comparisons of the four field studies

Why did we plan to carry out similar action research studies by four independent teams? The original idea was to do a comparative study taking culture as the independent variable. By standardising research questions and research design it may have been possible to draw grounded conclusions about how drama and conflict processes are conditioned by national or sub-national cultures. However, we soon found out that strict standardisation was not possible. For a number of reasons

36

the drama "experiments" could not be done in the same way in the three countries. To give just one example, in Sweden and Australia the school system is to some extent open to drama and it was fairly easy to find schools willing to participate in DRACON programmes. In Malaysia the schools were more or less closed to such "experiments". The Malaysian study therefore had to be conducted after school hours in the first cycle. This difference in the design of the studies is in itself of comparative interest. Rather than using culture only as a background variable to explain the effects of a standardised drama process on conflict handling, we became aware that cultural differences explained why the field studies tended to follow such different trajectories in the four cases. We also realised that, even if a very important conditioning factor, culture is only one such factor. The school system is another very powerful conditioning factor and should be studied as such.

Working with four parallel projects has made us sensitive to the importance of the broader social, economic and institutional context in which the drama and conflict processes were carried out. Even though systematic comparisons of cultures, school systems and drama processes are beyond the strict logic of our research methodology, as the fieldwork components were not controlled and matched, we have still made tentative conclusions concerning these variables. We agreed that all four studies should collect information on the following types of contextual factors: national and ethnic cultures, structure of the school system and socio-economic and gender background of students.

1.6   Ethics and ethical principles

This section will focus on ethical issues that arise in research with adolescents for the purpose of studying educational drama as a method for conflict management in the educational sectors of Australia, Malaysia, and Sweden.

The words 'ethics' and 'morals' are often used synonymously. However there is a distinction between these two. Morals indicate "the oughts and shoulds of society", and ethics indicate "the principles behind the shoulds" (Thompson & Thompson, 1981: 1). Together they provide standards and principles to guide and conduct decision-making in the protection of human rights in a civil society. They are based on the principles of professions. For example, personal and professional

values, moral principles, and ethical dilemmas are related to decision-making and accountability in the delivery of education. In extreme situations, conflict resolution practices can come close to the enforcement and practice of law and at all times must be conducted within the boundaries imposed by legislation in a particular country.

Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences is important and necessary for the progress of both individuals and society. Research should be done, should focus on important issues and should be of high quality. This is called the 'research claim' (HSFR, 1990). Ethical principles provide norms for the relationship between researchers on the one hand and the suppliers of information and participants in scientific studies on the other, thereby facilitating the relationship between the research claim and the claim for individual protection. It is important that these principles are followed. In Sweden the principles adopted by the Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences have to be followed for research projects. Similar principles to those outlined by the Swedish Council are outlined by Human Research Ethics Committees (HREC) in all Australian Universities. These HREC committees closely scrutinise and supervise all research conducted by staff and students. Most, if not all, publicly funded Education Departments in Australia also have research committees and ethical guidelines in addition to those provided by the Universities. In Malaysia there are no formal ethics committees or protocols in Universities or schools, however there are ethical guidelines formulated by the Ministry of Education.

Exceptional ethical dilemmas for researchers include: what to do with information about illegal behaviour by students, such as the use of drugs or weapons at school, or behaviours that jeopardise the safety of students (such as threats of suicide), or information about teachers who engage in unethical behaviour in the context of their relationship with students in certain classroom situations.

1.6.1 Ethical guidelines

In Australia and Sweden most human service professions have ethical codes of practice (for example law, social work, teaching) and all University researchers are bound by similar human research ethics principles. In Australia there are some local variations between ethics committees in Universities. However, in general, each University's research

ethics are similar to those outlined by the national Swedish Council for Research. In Malaysia, the education authorities decide almost all ethical considerations involving schools.

In Australia, research proposals involving public schools must be cleared by each University's human research ethics committee and the relevant education department's ethics committee. This can be time-consuming and restrict the parameters of the research. Signed and informed consent is required from both the participants and their parents or caregivers (if under the legal age of consent) before the research can proceed.

In Malaysia any work done in schools by researchers must also have written parental permission and permission from the student participants. In the DRACON project the Malaysian research team used student identity cards and numbers to identify the children, not their names, to preserve anonymity. Students were also informed of the project in detail and told they could volunteer to participate if they wanted to.

The following requirements outlined by HSFR (1990) for the protection of research participants were commonly used by researchers in the DRACON project - the 'Informational Requirement', the 'Requirement of Consent', 'Confidentiality Requirement' and the 'Requirement of Restricted Use'. These four requirements are related to eight specific rules.

In the first requirement - *The Informational Requirement* - the researcher should inform those affected by a particular piece of research about the aim of the undertaking. According to rule 1, the researcher should inform suppliers of information and people studied in a research project about their role in the project and the conditions attached to their participation. In particular, they should be informed of the fact that their participation is voluntary and that they have the right to decline or withdraw at any time. They should be provided with all information about the study that may reasonably be thought to affect their willingness to participate.

In the second requirement - *The Requirement of Consent* - participants of a scientific study have the right to determine for themselves whether or not to participate. According to rule 2 the researcher should obtain consent from participants for their participation in a study. In some cases (such as in Australia), consent should also be obtained from

parents or guardians if the participant is under the legal age of consent, which is 18 years. In Sweden this is required if the participants are less than 15 years old and the study is of an ethically sensitive nature. Under Rule 3, participants of a study should have a right to decide freely if they will participate, for how long, and under what conditions. They should be able to terminate their participation without any negative consequences to themselves. Under Rule 4, participants should not be subjected to in appropriate pressure or influence. Neither should a relationship of dependence exist between the researcher and intended participants. Under Rule 5, all staff on research projects that involve the use of ethically sensitive information about individuals, identifiable persons should sign an agreement of professional secrecy regarding such information. According to rule 6, all information about identifiable persons should be recorded, stored and reported in such a way that individual persons may not be identified by outsiders. This applies in particular to information that may be considered to be ethically sensitive. This means that it should be impossible in practice for outsiders to access the information.

The third requirement - *Confidentiality Requirement* – requires that all information about participants of a study should be given the highest possible confidentiality and should be stored safely so that unauthorised persons cannot access it. However the limits to confidentiality (such as the South Australian legal requirement to report child abuse) should also be spelt out in advance.

In the last requirement - *The Requirement of Restricted Use* - information obtained about individual persons is only to be used for the purpose of research. Under Rule 7, information about individuals, obtained for research purposes, should not be used or made available for commercial or other non-scientific purposes. Under Rule 8, personal information obtained for research purposes should not be used for the making of decisions or adopting of measures that would directly affect the individual, unless the individual concerned has granted special permission for this.

1.6.2   Research and ethics

Qualitative approaches, such as the use of focus groups, drawings, diaries, video-recordings and individual interviews, were commonly used in the DRACON project. Ethics are central to maintaining the "integ-

rity, honesty and legitimacy" of research practice (Tim, 1997: 42). In devising our methodology it was recognised that there is no such thing as 'neutrality' in social science, since we can never function independently of our culture and our belief systems. Values were viewed as culturally relative and it was recognised that value judgements impinge on every stage of the research process (Tim, 1997: 52). Tim stresses that this does not mean that 'anything goes' in the conduct of research – standards and discipline are still important and values and assumptions on which research decisions are based should be open to scrutiny. Reflexive theory demands that the perspectives and values of the researcher are clearly stated and explicit.

Sarantakos (1998: 256) points out that conducting qualitative interviews is difficult and requires "trust, collegiality and friendship" between the interviewer and interviewee, a high level of interviewer competence and ability of the interviewee to verbalise views, opinions and ideas. Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell and Alexander (1995: 61) define interviewing as a conversation with a specific purpose.

> … a conversation between researcher and informant focusing on the informant's perception of self, life and experience, and expressed in his or her own words. It is the means by which the researcher can gain access to, and subsequently understand, the private interpretations of social reality that individuals hold. This is made public in the interview process.

This definition highlights four key areas that the DRACON researchers needed to attend to when interviewing the adolescents in the various projects. Firstly, the importance of the researcher developing rapport with the informants; secondly, the need for the relationship between the researcher and informants to be egalitarian; thirdly, for the researcher to highly value the informants' perspectives and constructions of social reality; and finally for the language of the informants to be used in the interview and reflected in subsequent accounts of the interview.

Qualitative approaches, such as focus group interviews are seen as useful research techniques when the researcher is trying to gain a better understanding of the informants' own perspective or construction of their lived experience and social reality. It is assumed that "the informant has an everyday, common-sense working knowledge of his or her own life history, the cultural milieu of which he or she is a part, and a sense of self identity" (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell, & Alexander, 1995: 73).

41

1.6.3   Reflexivity

Reflexivity is generally assumed to mean "reflecting upon and understanding our own personal, political and intellectual autobiographies as researchers and making explicit where we are in relation to our research respondents" (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998: 121). Reflexivity is required both within the interaction and in the production and interpretations of the research account (Probyn, 1993) and should explicitly acknowledge factors such as power, gender, ethnicity and class.

In the DRACON project the adult researchers were not only socially more powerful than the adolescent participants, but were also in a position to interpret as well as to represent. Therefore in the focus group research, for example, every effort was made to reduce the power-distance between the researchers and the adolescent subjects by paying careful attention to the application of the ethical principles outlined and to participant needs with regard to language, information, preparation, timing, privacy, location, introductions, seating, physical comfort and for 'time-out'. A collaborative model of interviewing was employed, characterised by shared power between the adolescents and the researchers and openness to the young people's perceptions and experiences.

To illustrate how ethical principles were applied in the DRACON project, the following reflexive questions were central:

- How do adult researchers develop an understanding of how the specific context and the broader cultural discourses affect the ways in which adolescents talk about their experiences and the ways in which adult researchers understand what adolescents say?

- How do adult researchers empower adolescents to tell their stories from their own subjective positions and how do they hear what adolescents say through their 'adult-centric' cultural constructions of childhood?

- How do researchers ensure that the influences of their own lived experiences as a child, adolescent and adult are visible within the research process?

1.6.4   Summary

When conducting research with adolescents, the DRACON researchers followed the guidelines of the four requirements/principles and eight

rules set out earlier. We were mindful that researchers have a duty to give suppliers of information, participants and other affected parties clear information about the research activity and an opportunity to study ethically sensitive sections and controversial interpretations occurring in research reports before these are published. We were also aware that on appropriate occasions, the researcher should ask participants and other affected parties if they would like to know where the research result are going to be published, and if they would like to receive a report or summary of the study.

The responsibility for ethical considerations in research rests primarily with the leader of each research project. In the Western context, this is the case after the project has been scrutinised by the various Ethics Committees involved. The leader of any research project in the humanities and social sciences should ensure that staff involved is acquainted with the ethical principles and guidelines, and is also responsible for the confidential collection and storage of personal information. Responsibility for breaches of ethics must be clearly spelt out at the beginning of a research project and may be influenced by legislation and policies that are in place in a particular country or state.

References

Allwood, J. & Friberg, M. (1994). *Culturally Conditioned Models of Conflict Resolution. A comparative analysis of Malaysia and Sweden*. Project Report to SAREC (Swedish Authority for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries). Unpublished report.

Bagshaw, D. (1998). What Adolescents Say About Conflict in Schools. *Children Australia, 23*(3), 17-22.

Bourdieu, P. (1988). *Homo Academicus*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Cohen, R. (1995). *Students Resolving Conflict. Peer mediation in schools*. Glenview, IL.: GoodYearBooks.

HSFR (1990). *Ethical principles for scientific research in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HSFR)*. Uppsala: Ord & Form AB.

Henriksson, A. (1988). *Hexikon*. Höganäs: Bra Böcker.

Mauthner, N. & Doucet, A. (1998). Reflections on a Voice-centred Relational Method: Analysing Maternal and Domestic Voices. In J. Ribbens & R. Edwards (Eds.), *Feminist Dilemmas in Qualitative*

Research: Public Knowledge and Private Lives (119-146). London: SAGE Publications.

Minichiello, V., Aroni, R., Timewell, E. & Alexander, L. (1995). *In-depth Interviewing: Principles, Techniques and Analysis* (2nd Ed.) Melbourne: Longman Australia.

Probyn, E. (1993). *Sexing the Self: Gendered Positions in Cultural Studies*. London: Routledge.

Rigby, K. & Bagshaw, D. (2003). Prospects of adolescent students collaborating with teachers in addressing issues of bullying and conflict in schools. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *23*(5), 535-546.

Sarantakos. (1998). *Social Research* (2nd Ed.). South Yarra: Macmillan Education Australia.

Tim, M. (1997). *Social Research: Issues, Methods and Process* (2nd Ed.). Buckingham: Open University Press.

Thompson, J. & Tompson, H. (1981). *Ethics in Nursing*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co.

2 Bridging the fields of drama and conflict management

Dale Bagshaw, Bruce Burton, Mats Friberg,
Anita Grünbaum, Margret Lepp, John O'Toole
and Janet Pillai

2.1 Introduction

The DRACON project is built on cooperation between two academic and practical fields of expertise – drama and conflict resolution. We hypothesise that the principles and methods of the two fields can be combined to provide a powerful medium for conflict management in schools. The two fields emerged during the 20th century in the same Anglo-American countries more or less independently of each other. They share a similar knowledge base, similar democratic values and similar methods of creative group work. Yet, the two fields are often kept apart, their terminologies are different and even though they seem to borrow some practical procedures from each other, they seldom recognise each other.

In this chapter we construct a conceptual bridge between the two fields of drama and conflict resolution by exploring basic definitions, typologies and theories as well as basic procedures used in each field. The general aim is to make the two fields mutually intelligible to each other. First we give a presentation of each field separately using the same basic format. In the concluding section we highlight areas of convergence, divergence and complementarities. We have also made an effort to lay the foundation of a synthetic model as well as to explore in what ways practical procedures can be integrated. A more specific task of the chapter is to introduce all concepts and procedures used in the four case studies presented in the second half of the book.

2.2 Conflict management

2.2.1 Key definitions

Conflict management is a specialist field of scholarship and practice that has developed since the Second World War. The field has expanded in the last three decades after a slow beginning in the 1950's and 60's. Different social sciences converged in the analysis of conflicts as well as in the quest for improved ways of managing conflicts. Practitioners in many applied fields such as family mediation, labour-management relations and international diplomacy learned from each other's theories and processes. 'Conflict' is now increasingly understood as a generic term that applies to social clashes on many levels from the interpersonal to the international. A basic idea, giving rise to the field of conflict management, is that all conflicts are similar enough in their structure and dynamics to make it possible to develop general concepts and theories of conflict as well as generic procedures for conflict management.

There are many different definitions of conflict, suggesting that conflict can be *constructive* or *destructive* and involve *action* or *no action.* Deutsch (1973:10), a leading theorist, writes that "a conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur … An action that is incompatible with another action … in some way makes the latter less likely or less effective." Others suggest that a conflict can arise when two or more people or groups perceive their needs, interests, views, values or goals as being different or incompatible, whether or not they propose to take action (Tillet, 1991; Fisher, 1990; Johnson & Johnson, 2002). Conflict can also arise when there are "scarcities of certain resources such as power, influence, money, time, space, popularity, position and rivalry" (Johnson & Johnson 1991: 303). On a more positive note, conflict can be seen as "a dangerous opportunity" (Bolton, 1986: 207).

Moore highlights that conflicts can be based upon a number of factors (Moore, 1996). *Value-based* conflicts are caused by different criteria or priorities for evaluating ideas or behaviour, different goals and different ways of life, ideology or religion. *Structural* conflicts are caused by negative patterns of behaviour or interaction; unequal control, ownership or distribution or resources; unequal power and authority; geographical, physical and environmental factors and time con-

straints. *Relationship* conflicts are caused by poor or miscommunication, stereotyping, strong emotions or repetitive negative behaviour. *Data-based* conflicts are caused by lack of information and misinformation, different views on what is relevant, different interpretations of data and different ways of assessing or processing data. *Interest-based* conflicts can be caused by different procedural interests, psychological interests and substantive interests that form the substance of a dispute (Moore, 1996: 60).

Postmodernist, narrative theorists offer a different perspective on conflict. They view conflict as an inevitable by-product of diversity and the operation of power - contests over whose meanings or stories are privileged - rather than the result of the expression of personal needs and interests:

> … conflict is likely because people do not have direct access to the truth or the facts about any situation. Rather they view things from a cultural position … they develop a story about what has happened and continue to act into a social situation out of the story they have created (Winslow & Monk, 2000: 41).

From this perspective, dominant discourses in the *social, economic, cultural* and *political context* influence the way that a conflict is perceived, defined, handled and processed.

The literature often distinguishes between realistic or necessary conflict and unrealistic or unnecessary conflict. In *necessary conflict* there are substantive differences expressed as opposed needs, goals, means, values, rights or interests. These substantive aspects can be dealt with in negotiation or mediation, although where there are value conflicts the most that can often be achieved is for people to agree to disagree. *Unnecessary conflict*, however, stems from ignorance, error, historical tradition and prejudice, dysfunctional organisational or group structures, competitive attitudes and behaviours, hostility, or the need for tension release – factors which to a significant degree can be prevented and controlled. These aspects of conflict do not form the substance of a conflict, but get in the way of effective conflict management. They need to be dealt with before effective negotiation can occur around the substantive issues. Sometimes counselling or time is needed before mediation can begin, or counselling can occur alongside of mediation in order to assist one or both parties to handle the emotional aspects of their dispute.

Conflict resolution may be defined as any method, process or procedure which is intended to transform a conflict into a less costly form of interaction between the conflicting parties - for example the transformation of a painful and unproductive quarrel between two people into a creative dialogue. As conflicts are seldom resolved once and for all, some researchers and practitioners in the field prefer 'conflict management' or 'conflict transformation' to the term 'conflict resolution'. In this chapter we will study conflict handling in general, independent of whether or not it is intended to lead to conflict resolution.

2.2.2   Key approaches in a historical perspective

Conflict is a natural and inevitable part of all human relationships and therefore certain forms of conflict management have been present from the very beginning of human existence.

Conflict resolution was born as an academic field of study and research in the 1950's in the West, starting in the United States. The interdisciplinary field of peace and conflict research pioneered new studies of international conflicts but was slow to move into practical applications because of the nature of international conflicts. However, the whole field of conflict resolution gained a new momentum in the 1970's because many people started to apply non-coercive and participatory methods of intervention to intra-national conflicts such as family quarrels, industrial disputes, conflicts at the workplace, neighbourhood conflicts and so forth (Sandole & Sandole-Staroste, 1987).

In general terms the trend is now gradually moving away from expensive, time-consuming, public legal procedures such as formal arbitration and adjudication. In the latter processes the conflict is settled by coercive means without giving serious consideration to the causes of the conflict or the needs and interests of the people involved. Increasingly, conflict management processes now emphasise cooperation rather than competition. Collaboration outcomes are reached through 'problem solving', 'controlled communication', 'workshops', 'facilitation', 'conciliation', 'mediation', 'consultation' and so forth. New centres for conflict management and mediation have been set up across the Western world. Slowly people are choosing to get help from mediators and consultants with a different type of competence - people from diverse backgrounds such as law, psychology, social work, counselling,

organisational studies and communication sciences, often with additional training in conflict management or dispute resolution.

The new approaches have been given many different labels. In the legal system they are called *alternative dispute resolution (ADR)* – that is, alternative to litigation. In Australia the latest trend is to call these approaches *primary dispute resolution processes (PDR)*, in particular in family law where counselling, conciliation and mediation are central. In many ways the traditional court-based approaches and alternative dispute resolution (ADR) approaches represent two competing cultures or sub-cultures within Western society (Boulle, 1996). Traditional Western approaches to dispute resolution tend to be individualistic, confrontational and retributive, based on an adversarial culture of law. Central to this culture is the concept of universal legal rights. On the other hand, alternative approaches are inspired by more communitarian culture, which emphasises the long-term interests and relationships of parties embedded in a community. This leads to a restorative justice model of dispute resolution in which incompatibilities are sometimes played down in favour of restoring the relationships between the parties.

Alternative dispute resolution processes, such as mediation, privilege the concept of voluntary 'win-win'-solutions to conflicts - a pragmatic concept going beyond the idea of 'right or wrong', which often leads to win-lose outcomes. In mediation it is assumed that under certain conditions mutually satisfying solutions to conflicts can be found when parties voluntarily come together to identify disputed issues, explore their mutual interests and develop new creative options and new ways of relating to each other. They themselves carry the main responsibility for the management of their conflict. This approach is favoured where people want to be in control of their own decisions and where the preservation of an ongoing relationship is needed, as adversarial processes tend to irrevocably damage relationships

The development of conflict resolution in some Western schools mirrors the development of conflict management in general. The conventional approach to conflicts used in most schools can be compared to legal methods of conflict management. The law corresponds to the disciplinary code of the school. Disciplinary school codes may prohibit behaviours such as bullying, vandalism, name-calling and teasing. The teachers can be viewed as the 'police' and the 'judges' of the system. The school Principal represents a higher authority to whom the most serious cases are referred. As schools have experienced more and more

problems with student conflicts and violence this hierarchical disciplinary system has proved to be inadequate. Since the 1980's, alternative approaches to conflict management have slowly penetrated into the educational systems of many Western countries (Cohen, 1995).

Some schools have started to build comprehensive conflict management systems. First of all they have tried to create a supportive school climate conducive to conflict prevention. Secondly, they have introduced conflict management skills to the students and staff. Thirdly, they have introduced collaborative procedures for solving conflicts, such as *peer mediation*, in which some students are selected and trained to mediate conflicts between their peers. However, in most cases the new methods have been seen as complementing the disciplinary system. The DRACON project has grown out of these developments. We are searching for new and creative ways to empower adolescent school children to manage their own conflicts.

2.2.3   Basic concepts of conflict

Components of a conflict situation

Before presenting the basic concepts of conflict management we have to understand what conflict is. Conflict can be positive and is necessary for good decisions and for growth, change, learning and intimacy to occur. However the term 'conflict' has many relatives, most of which have negative connotations, such as dispute, argument, debate, disagreement, contradiction, crisis, incompatibility, clash, struggle, fight, violence, tension, hostility, dissonance and so forth. These terms all cover some aspects of the main concept but not the whole. Disagreement for instance is not necessarily conflict as people can agree to disagree. Hostility and tension are not conflict as they can stay on the level of feelings and emotions without developing into destructive action. Incompatible goals are not conflict as the parties may refrain from pursuing their goals. In these cases we may talk about *latent conflict* in the sense that the situation has a potential to develop into *emerging*, *manifest* or *real conflict.*

Latent conflicts are characterised by underlying tensions that have not fully developed and have not escalated into a highly polarised conflict. Often, one or more parties may not even be aware of the conflict. Here approaches such as giving information, education or counselling

tend to be most appropriate, with an emphasis on prevention and early intervention. Mediators, for example, can help people identify the nature of the conflict, who is involved or affected, the needs, issues and interests involved and possible procedures for resolution.

Emerging conflicts are conflicts where the parties are identifiable, they acknowledge that there is a problem, most issues are clear, but no workable negotiation or problem solving process has developed (Moore, 1996). Parties tend to adopt a particular strategy or style for handling the conflict at this stage and again may be assisted by timely access to information, education, counselling and/or mediation or conciliation which assists them to manage their relationship and process their conflict in a constructive manner.

Manifest conflicts are those in which the parties who are actively engaged in an ongoing dispute, may have adopted strategies or styles and started to negotiate, and may have reached an impasse or stalemate (Moore, 1996). Manifest conflict has been defined by Fisher (1990: 6) as "a social situation involving perceived incompatibilities in goals or values between two or more parties, attempts by the parties to control each other, and antagonistic feelings by the parties towards each other". The word 'perceive' is very important in this definition as a particular person or party might decide to interpret the other person's actions as not really aimed at him or her, not really negative or not of importance anyhow. Such a conflict situation can be characterised as *unilateral* conflict. The subjective character of the situation indicates that a conflict is a social construction. Conflicts do not 'just happen' to people. They are constructed by the participants in interaction in a particular cultural context and are influenced by their definitions of the situation.

Conventional wisdom says that it takes only one person to make a conflict but two to solve it. However, from a constructivist perspective one would argue the opposite, that it takes two to make a real conflict and only one to solve it.

The definition of manifest conflict presented above indicates that conflict in the generic sense involves at least four components:

- parties or actors to the conflict,
- attitudes towards each other and the relationship,
- behaviour towards each other and
- contradiction or the substantive content of the conflict.

51

If we take the first component, the parties, for granted we arrive at the following formula:

$$\text{Manifest Conflict} = \text{Attitudes} \cdot \text{Behaviour} \cdot \text{Contradiction}$$

or in short:

$$\text{Conflict} = A \cdot B \cdot C$$

In this formula, A stands for negative attitudes, B for destructive behaviour and C for contradiction.

Manifest conflict is at least a triadic construct. Of the three the behavioural component is the only clearly visible or manifest aspect of the conflict. Attitudes and incompatibilities, on the other hand, are more or less hidden, sometimes even to the parties themselves, e.g. as unconscious hostility to the other person. The three components together form the so-called *conflict triangle*.

A *latent conflict* is said to exist if there is no conflict behaviour, but there are contradictions and/or hostile attitudes. A conflict is usually latent before is becomes manifest and there is always a possibility that a latent conflict is transformed into a manifest one. A manifest conflict can also have latent aspects, for example, when the parties hide their true attitudes towards each other.

Figure 2.1. The Conflict Triangle

This is the beginning of the so-called ABC-theory of conflict, originally proposed by Galtung in an unpublished paper (1967)[3]. The simple

---

[3] A more recent version is available in Galtung (1996).

ABC-formula is worth remembering as it highlights the significant features of the definition of conflict given above.

There is at present no generally accepted theory of conflict, only a vast number of different approaches and a few efforts at synthesis. Each approach provides a different lens through which to view conflict and suggests a particular approach to its resolution or management. Unfortunately many theories are almost mono-causal emphasizing only one or a few factors. For instance, the theory of strategic games focuses on the C- and B-components but neglects the A-component, while social psychological theories often emphasize A or B but miss C. The authors of this book favour an eclectic approach believing that all theories have something valuable to contribute to our understanding of conflict as a multidimensional phenomenon.

The following section provides an overview of theories according to their main causal factors. The main components will be analysed and in the following order:

- Parties to the conflict.
- Contradiction or Content of the conflict (C).
- Conflict Attitudes (A).
- Conflict Behaviours (B).
- The socio-cultural context of the conflict.
- Conflict handling styles or strategies.
- Outcomes of the conflict.
- Conflict processes.
- Conflict management and/or resolution.[4]

For each component we will describe the major theories and implications for conflict management. Taken together the factors can also be used to diagnose any particular conflict situation.

Parties to the conflict

In every manifest conflict there are parties, commonly pitted against each other. Depending on the number of independent actors, a distinction can be made between *bipolar, triangular and multi-polar* conflicts.

---

[4] To be treated in the drama section of this chapter, section 2.3.

The parties can include a variety of people, individuals or groups, factions within the groups, allies, spectators, perpetrators and victims, mediators, authorities, advocates etc. If the main parties are individuals we talk about *interpersonal conflicts,* if they are collectives we are dealing with *inter-group conflicts* such as tribal fights or industrial disputes or international wars. There are also *intra-personal conflicts*, that is to say two sub-personalities of the same tormented person are fighting for supremacy within one psyche. When a person is helping another person with an intra-personal conflict it is not called 'conflict resolution' but 'therapy'. Conflicts at school that concern us in the DRACON project tend to be interpersonal or inter-group conflicts, but there is an intra-personal dimension to these conflicts as well. It is not always easy to separate intra-personal, inter-personal and the inter-group conflicts.

Some well-known theories explain conflicts as originating from the nature of the parties, such as realist theory and transpersonal theory. *Realist theory* says that conflict is caused by the antisocial nature of humans, our aggressiveness and hunger for power (Friberg, 1973). The legal system (adjudication) is basically an offshoot of realist thinking to which has been added the idea of universal rules (law) applying to everyone (equality in court). The rules are enforced by the state, which is assumed to have a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence within its territory.

The *transpersonal theory of conflict* suggests that people are driven by egoistic desires generated by an individuated sense of self According to transpersonal theory there is a possibility of ultimately transcending power struggles by a process of spiritual development. When we drop our sense of an individuated self and surrender to the greater whole, we are in tune with the dao (the way) as the Chinese say. The idea that all conflicts can be seen as illusions produced by the egoist mind and that antagonists are united on a deeper level has been a source of inspiration to many people engaged in conflict resolution (Edelman & Crain, 1993).

According to *socialisation theory* people's behaviour in conflicts depends on how they have been socialised. Harsh socialisation, including physical violence and emotional deprivation, often produces aggressive adults who are prone to create conflicts around them (Lowen, 1976; Hetherington, 1983). Some people are assumed to have 'wounds' from childhood. Conflict resolution processes that treat the root causes rather than the symptoms attempts to heal the psychic wounds of par-

54

ticipants through some sort of individual or group therapy. According to this view, then, interpersonal conflicts are closely related to intra-personal conflicts.

Every theory about the nature and causes of conflict holds a key to conflict resolution. Theories emphasising the nature of actors as crucial in the emergence of conflicts with other actors usually regard *actor transformation* as the key to conflict management. On the individual level this may come about by a change in personal style, on the group level through a change of leadership, changes in the interests of the constituency a party represents and so forth.

Contradiction or content of the conflict (the C-component of conflict)

The content of the conflict is referred to when we talk about 'bones of contention', incompatible goals and values, contradictory interests, dis-agreement on substance, specific grievances, substantive issues and so forth. If there are many substantive issues the conflict is termed *diffuse*, whereas a conflict with only one issue is called *specific*. What appears at first sight to be a conflict between two parties over one issue is often a complex conflict between many parties over a variety of issues. A divorce, for instance, may include not only husband and wife but also lovers and children, relatives and friends and the issue is not only press-ing decisions about income and habitation but also questions about their future relationship, how to share responsibility for children, divid-ing the property and so forth.

Interest-based theories (including the theory of *strategic games*) argue that conflicts arise because people pursue incompatible interests or values (Rapoport, 1960). *Interests* are concrete and divisible and therefore conflicts of interests can often be solved through a *compro-mise*, sometimes called 'splitting the difference'. *Values* are abstract and indivisible and difficult to trade through a bargaining process, e.g. one party wants a socialist order and the other a liberal one. Value stands against value and the winner takes all. In both cases we are deal-ing with *zero-sum* or *distributive* conflicts - what one party wins the other loses. However most real life situations involve *mixed motive conflicts*. Workers and employers have a common interest in the profit-ability of the firm and at the same time opposing interests in the split-ting of the profit. In such systems of 'antagonistic cooperation', for example in a school class, there is always some space for negotiations.

55

Problem-solving is a conflict management technique that focuses on dissolving the contradictions of the conflicts. It has become the major approach to conflict management within the alternative dispute resolution field. It offers a fairly linear and rational approach to resolution if the parties agree to see the conflict as their shared problem. The basic technique consists of focusing on the needs, interests and goals of the parties that underlie their positions, then generating a variety of creative options and designing outcomes that meet the needs of all concerned, commonly known as a '*win-win*' solution (Fisher & Ury, 1981; Moore, 1996). For example, if both parties want to have the one orange available it can look like a zero-sum game. However, if through discussing *why* each party wants the orange (the needs), it may turn out that what one person really wants is the juice from the pulp and what the other needs is the peel to produce marmalade jam - the situation can then become a *positive-sum* (or 'win-win') *outcome* (Cornelius & Faire, 1989).

Conflict attitudes (the A-component of conflict)

The attitudes that the conflicting parties have toward each other and to themselves have at least two components - the *cognitive* (assumptions about and images of the enemy and of the self), and the *emotive* (positive or negative feelings). Other words for the A-component are hostility, tension, dissonance and so forth.

Conflicts always involve considerable subjectivity through processes of perception, cognition, communication, social construction, motivation, valuing and emotions. The presence of strong emotions and rigid perceptions is of course a challenge to all procedures of conflict management that requires a measure of rationality, for instance, joint problem solving. We need a different set of theories with *socio-cultural, social-psychological and depth-psychological perspectives* in order to understand the subjective aspects of conflicts.

The typical pattern of attitudes in conflicts is that we perceive ourselves as intrinsically right and/or good and the other party as wrong and/or evil. The other is criticised, judged and labelled. This fundamental asymmetry of the 'self-other' images can be explained, at least partly, by *depth-psychological theories* as resulting from repression and projection (Keen, 1986). Each person excludes from her consciousness the unwanted aspects of herself (the *shadow*) and automatically attributes them to the other party. This mechanism of *projection* can also be

called scape-goating. Often the negative attitudes are not even directed towards the original source of the frustration; for example, a man scolded by his boss at his job takes it out on his wife when he comes home. Such conflicts are called *unrealistic, projected or displaced*.

The image of oneself is as important as the image of the other. For a group conflict to emerge, each party has to develop a sense of identity. Often the shared identity within each group is taken for granted by the participants as well as the analysts. However, *constructivism* claims that the identity of a party is a social construction that evolves with the conflict itself. In some group conflicts, especially ethnic conflicts, people have socially constructed a history and a common ancestry and created myths about differences that were not really there from the start (Eller, 1999). The 'self-other' separation is often reinforced through a process of *social polarization*, in which people on both sides of the conflict cut all links with people on the other side. The boundaries between the groups are strengthened through discourses of inclusion and exclusion and the construction of images of the other as 'the enemy' (Jabri, 1996). Solidarity within the groups is emphasized. Persons who socialize with the 'enemy' are regarded as traitors.

Applied to the personal level, social constructivism leads to the idea that the self is not an inner essence, but a multiple set of identities constructed in large measure by people's group affiliations. According to constructivism almost everything in a conflict situation is socially constructed - the identities, the interests and values of the parties as well as the events, facts and realities of the conflict. In this view people are story telling creatures and they not only tell stories, they live them too. The stories that guide people's lives are constructed from the discourses available in the culture. Conflict arises between people when they construct incompatible stories, stories that lead to diametrically opposed readings of the events in the conflict, the *narrative view* of conflict (Winslade & Monk, 2000). The facts of the situation are not so important, because people don't have direct access to the objective truth of any situation. Conflict can also arise when some voices are marginalised and others are privileged, in particular where there are gender, class or ethnic differences.

Depth psychology arrives at similar conclusions about people living their stories or myths, but focuses more on the internal essence of the individuals involved. For Freud, Jung and others these stories derive not so much from the external world as from dreams arising out of our

individual and collective unconscious. In this view there is an inner essence after all, but we are not fully aware of it. The unconscious can be described as a dreaming process which flows like a river and manifests itself not only during the night but also in many indirect ways when awake such as through personal feelings and social atmospheres, individual and group fantasies, intuitions, non-verbal communication, body experience, visual imagery, inner voices and daydreaming.

In this view conflicts have a dreamlike quality, where we tend to lose a part of our normal awareness and to develop tunnel vision. We no longer have a conflict. The conflict has us. In conflicts we live out archetypical relationship dramas emerging out of the collective unconscious (the *theory of archetypical conflicts*). Universal archetypes are at work behind the seeming chaos of the conflict (Mindell, 1995).

From the point of view of subjectivist theories, conflict management is a matter of changing subjective perceptions and constructions rather than objective interests. If we accept the Buddhist view that conflict is in the hearts and minds of people, then it is in the hearts and minds that resolution comes about. Basically some *reconciliation* or healing of the relationship has to occur through changes in perceptions, emotions, stories, narratives or discourses.

Conflict behaviour (the B-component of conflict)

In manifest conflicts the parties try to control each other through different types of behaviour, both verbal and non-verbal. An important threshold has been reached when physical violence becomes a part of the picture. Sometimes words like action-reaction, attack-defence, struggle, clash and fight are used to describe this component.

While psychological theories tend to focus on the cognitive and emotional processes and perceptions that influence conflict behaviour, *interactionist theory* focuses on the behaviour itself. According to this type of theory the behavioural component (verbal and physical) should have a favoured status in conflict theory, as all conflicts are constituted and sustained by the behaviours of the parties involved. It is important to notice that conflict behaviour cannot be understood by studying the individual behaviours of the parties in isolation. A significant feature of conflict behaviour is that it develops in cycles of actions and reactions.

Conflict is a communication process, both verbal and non-verbal. *Communication theories* focus on the use of language, gestures, sym-

bols and structures of discourse, how people argue, take turns in producing messages etc. It is a commonplace observation that each individual always brings unique experiences and meanings to any conversation. How then is it possible to reach agreement on the meanings of the messages in situations coloured by fear and mistrust? How do the parties convey meaning and coordinate the management of meaning? Interpretations of a message in a conflict will be shaped by the context, the nature of the relationship as well as the self-concept and culture of each individual (Pearce, 1976). Misunderstandings are inevitable in conflict situations.

Theories of communication have identified a number of barriers to communication or *communication killers* that tend to provoke the other into defensive responses or aggression - such as using threats, orders, criticism, name-calling, demanding, blaming, judging, patronizing, diagnosing motives, interrogation and persuading with logic (Cornelius & Faire, 1989: 35-43). Marshall Rosenberg calls the language we normally use in conflicts *wolf language* (Rosenberg, 1999). He has invented an alternative language called *giraffe language* with a potential to transform conflicts into peaceful dialogues. Giraffe language is a language for compassionate communication where you can speak your mind without creating hostility. The two primary skills needed when speaking this language are *appropriate assertiveness* (clearly express to the other, 'I'-messages) and *compassionate listening* (empathically receive from the other, 'you'-messages).

As adversaries engage in contentious behaviour they may eventually begin to use physical violence against each other. This is usually preceded by a number of serious verbal threats. When physical violence erupts a new dynamic is generated. The logic of war takes over. Now the parties treat each other as 'inanimate objects' and construct 'the other' as the enemy. The fight itself has a brutalizing effect on the parties and their relationship, often bringing out the worst qualities in each. At this level the conflict feeds itself in a vicious circle of violence, resistance and revenge that it is very difficult to break out of.

Feminist theories in the modernist genre view gender-based conflicts as a consequence of patriarchy and challenge men to address their violent behaviour. Postmodernist feminist theories also focus on the importance of language and power in the construction of gendered identities and the place of conflict therein. Feminists are all concerned with gendered nature of abuses of power within relationships, such as is

59

evident in much of the violence, sexual harassment and bullying in schools. Dominant constructions of masculinity in schools, for example, are often associated with the ability to provoke and win fights, misogyny, and with abusive behaviours toward girls and boys who display feminine qualities {Connell, 1987: 38}.

Conflict management with respect to violent conflicts requires first of all a *security approach*. Before choosing an appropriate intervention screening for violence and abuses of power should occur. This is necessary to keep the antagonists safe and to prevent one person from dominating, controlling or harming the other. Conflict management on lower levels of intensity includes introducing rules for behaviour.

Socio-cultural context of the conflict

Under this category we include a number of components of the conflict situation, such as the power resources of the parties, the presence of allies, mediators, bystanders and authorities, the institutions for conflict management available in the culture, the social structure, the organizational and cultural conditions etc. Almost all conflicts have *structural* elements. They have to be understood not only from a micro but also from a macro perspective. The tensions between a worker and an employer are not only a matter of personal animosity, it is also influenced by systemic factors such as the distribution of authority, rights and obligations in the institution and in the larger socio-cultural system. Therefore the DRACON approach to student conflicts does not treat interpersonal conflicts in isolation from the rest of society. Cultural dimensions such as age, gender, sexuality, social class, ethnicity, ability and race are considered when relevant. Also organisational and institutional factors, such as teacher authority, student rights, the structure of the school class, the whole school atmosphere, school policies and so forth are considered[5].

The DRACON team also pays a lot of attention to the *cultural* understanding of conflicts[6]. Our reasoning is simply that conflict is a form of social action and that social action carries meaning. Thus conflicts are always located within a system of meaning or a cultural context. When a culture legitimates violence through discourses of inclusion

---

[5] The macro-sociological aspects of schooling are discussed in chapter 3.1.

[6] For a more detailed analysis of the relation between culture and conflict see chapter 3.2.

and exclusion based on myths, or a particular worldview, conflict resolution requires cultural understanding more than anything else.

Culture also has an impact on conflicts in another way. Even the sheer existence of cultural differences between neighbouring groups can be a challenge to conflict management. The value systems of the groups may clash but even more important are the communication barriers that follow from different systems of meaning. As we have pointed out, mutual understanding is rare in many conflicts, but very much needed for conflict resolution. Therefore training in cross-cultural communication and understanding can be a decisive factor in conflict management between different cultural groups.

Conflict handling styles or strategies

Conflict handling styles refer to the strategies the parties use to deal with the other party. Do they try to dominate the other party, avoid the conflict, give in to the other, or try to find a compromise? Do the parties aim for a mutually satisfying solution? *Styles* are the particular orientations used by individuals or groups, which guide the specific moves or countermoves (*tactics*) used to enact the strategy.

There are several conceptualisations of conflict styles. The simplest model is the *FFF-model - fight, flight and freeze* (Dana, 1989). The fight and the flight modes are the most common reactions. They occur frequently in human conflicts even if there is no physical threat. A fourth option is to *flow* (Cornelius & Faire, 1989: 58-59). We need to take a more creative attitude to the conflict if we assume that all people involved in a conflict situation have an equal right to exist and therefore a right to their own viewpoints. The cardinal rules of 'flowing' in conflict situations are:

- Do not coerce the other. When attacked, do not attack back.
- Do not walk away. Be 100 per cent present in a conflict situation.
- Talk it out. Be attentive and assertive at the same time.
- Make a deal that satisfies both parties (a win-win solution).
- If you can't make it on your own, turn to an impartial third party.

A different but related conceptualisation of conflict styles has been constructed by Thomas and Kilmann (1974). When we are in a conflict situation we are concerned about two dimensions:

- the intention to satisfy our own needs (assertive) and
- the intention to satisfy the needs of the other (cooperative).

By combining these two independent dimensions we arrive at five conflict styles as ideal types (see Figure 2.2):

- Competing (lion): high in assertiveness and low in cooperativeness.
- Accommodating (camel): low in assertiveness and high in cooperativeness.
- Avoiding (turtle): low in both assertiveness and cooperativeness.
- Compromising (fox): intermediate on both dimensions.
- Collaborating (owl): high in both dimensions.
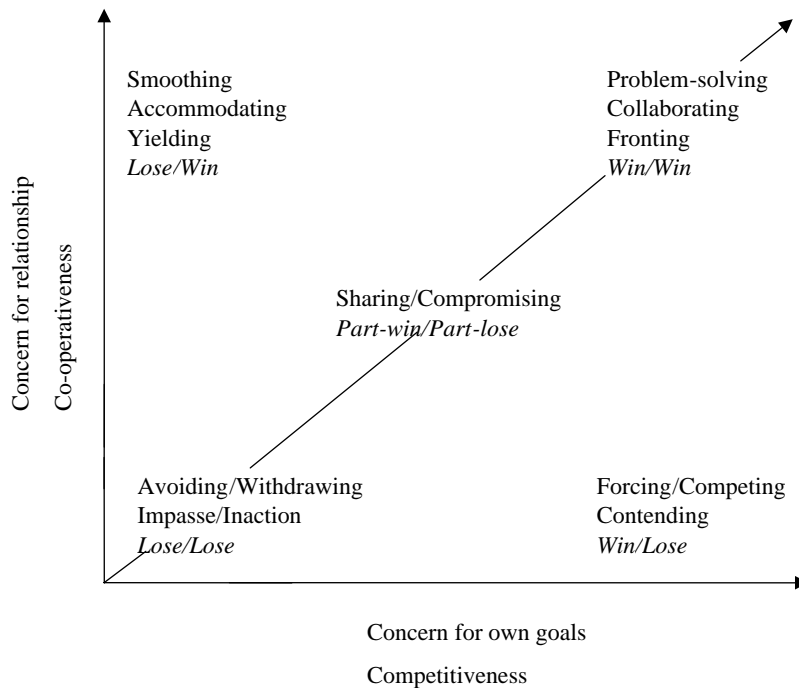
Figure 2.2. Conflict strategies commonly used to manage conflicts

There is no assumption that collaboration is the 'best way' of handling conflicts under all conditions. Collaboration seems to be the most effec-

62

tive style when the parties are dependent on future cooperation, the time pressure is not too high, they trust each other and the issue is important to both of them (Folger et al., 1997: 201).

Thomas and Kilmann suggest that there is a positive but not very strong relation between personality type and conflict style. Each person uses more than one style, depending on the situation they are in, but we usually have one style we use most, particularly in a crisis or an argument with people we are close to. In an earlier project we have shown that the different styles are differentially used in different cultures. Malaysians tend to favour avoiding and accommodating styles. Swedes also avoid and accommodate, but less so than the Malaysians; they are relatively more into competition and collaboration (Friberg, 1996).

Bagshaw and Rigby developed an instrument (based on Johnson, 1997) to measure adolescent styles in the South Australian DRACON project and found differences between the styles used by males and females (Chapter 4). Johnson (1997) has developed a typology of styles, which is very closely related to Thomas and Kilmann's, but the two underlying dimensions are different. Johnson assumes that we are concerned about two things in a conflict with others:

- getting what we need or want and/or
- the relationship with the other person.

This typology leads also to five basic conflict styles. He calls them forcing (shark), smoothing (teddy bear), withdrawing (turtle), compromising (fox) and problem solving (owl) when mentioned in the same order as above.

The three conceptualisations of styles were used in the DRACON project and therefore all of them have been included here.

Outcome of the conflict

Resolved or not, the conflict leads to an outcome such as withdrawal, impasse, stalemate, an agreement, physical damage or an improved relationship. Conflict is a transformer, a process that leads to changes on many levels. One way to describe these is to use the ABC-model. Thus we can think about transformations of contradictions (C), relationship (A), behaviour (B), parties and so forth. For instance, the use of a particular style of conflict handling has fairly predictable effects on

the outcome of the conflict with respect to both the relationship and the contradiction.

The withdrawing and forcing styles of conflict handling are not concerned with enhancing the relationship, or the needs or interests of the 'other', and can therefore be seen as self-serving and competitive, usually leading to 'lose-lose' or 'win-lose' outcomes and to a deteriorating relationship. Smoothing, compromising and problem-solving styles, on the other hand, all involve taking the needs and interests of the 'other' into account (to varying degrees) and can therefore be described as co-operative. Smoothing and compromising, however, involve giving up some or all of your own interests and needs in order to preserve the relationship with the 'other'. Compromise, in particular, has often been presented as an ideal form of conflict management. However, it always leaves the parties somewhat frustrated as they still have to give up something. The problem-solving style strives for an outcome that takes into account the needs and interests of all parties to the conflict ('win-win'), at the same time preserving or enhancing the relationship between them. This outcome can be beneficial but it is not always easy to achieve. It takes more time and requires a willingness to understand the other parties' needs, interests, fears and concerns.

Conflict process

How does conflict change and develop over time? What are the incidents or critical events that help *escalate* (intensify) and *de-escalate* the conflict process? The focus here is on the interaction between the parties over time. Normally we can distinguish between three phases of the conflict: the origin, the escalation and the resolution or de-escalation phases, although these are not always linear.

The most recent advances in theories of conflict have focused on the subjective side of conflict. Conflict resolution theories, social-psychological theories, and communication theories have been integrated within a general theory of *escalation* (Glasl, 1992, 1999). This theory explains the general dynamics of conflicts over time and is also very useful in finding ways of preventing or resolving conflicts. It is specifically applicable to interpersonal conflicts, but recently a number of higher-level variables have been added to the theory including inter-group and international levels. Efforts have also been made to integrate projection theory, personality theory and trans-personal theory into the framework.

64

Using the concepts of ABC-theory, we can describe the basic process of the conflict escalation theory as running through three major stages (the *CAB-hypothesis*):

1. Phase of discussion. The attention of the parties is on C rather than A and B.

2. Phase of polarization. A dominates over B and C.

3. Phase of destruction. B dominates over A and C.

In the initial *discussion phase* the emphasis is on the contradiction (C). The parties have differing conceptions of the issues at stake, and each tries to persuade the opposing party to change their views and perceptions. They continue to have respect for each other, although the means used for persuasion become increasingly 'hard' in nature. The idea is to find a solution together with the opposing party.

At a certain stage in the conflict process, the parties begin to feel that it is useless to try to discuss things with the other. This is the beginning of the *polarisation phase*. Now the opposing party has become the major problem (A), and the original issues (C) fall into the background and lose their saliency. The relationship and communication between the parties become poisoned by negative feelings, attitudes and malicious images of the other. Trust declines rapidly between the parties.

If the conflict moves even further, it eventually reaches the third phase, the *destruction phase*. In this phase, one or both of the parties turn to verbal or physical violence (B) and attempt to annihilate the other, or at least cut down the size of the opponent by violent means.

The theory of escalation is of relevance to conflict management, as the discussion, polarization and destruction phases require different approaches and methods of conflict management.

2.2.4   Concepts of conflict management

The words 'conflict resolution' and 'conflict management' have a lot of relatives such as agreement, settlement, modus vivendi, cease fire, conflict termination, reconciliation, conflict handling, problem solving, transformation of the conflict, de-escalation, cooling, exploration, treatment, outcome, solution, peace-making, peace-building, peace-

keeping and so forth. They refer to different aspects of conflict resolution such as:

- a style or strategy of conflict handling,
- an institutionalised procedure for conflict handling,
- a phase in the conflict process and
- an outcome of the conflict.

By *conflict management* we mean all methods that can erase, reduce or transform the conflict into a less costly form of interaction, less costly in terms of the ongoing relationship, feelings, health, safety, time, money and resources in general. Conflict management is about de-escalation of conflicts. It is about limiting destructive behaviour (B), decreasing emotional tensions (A) and transcending contradictions (C) - in short, *cooling* the conflict. This does not mean that it is always easy to find a smooth path from a high-intensity conflict situation to a calm one. Usually there are many 'ups and downs' on the road to harmony. Sometimes a conflict can be so *frozen* with all tensions kept under the surface that it is impossible to work on the conflict directly. In this case conflict managers need to heat it up before real work can start. This can occur if the parties are encouraged to express their subjective positions and feelings for each other assertively, not submissively or aggressively. According to Parry, a famous practitioner in the field of conflict management, one of the simple rules of conflict resolution is: "You can't have conflict resolution without conflict!" (Parry, 1991: 55). The conflict has to be made manifest and brought out into the open before resolution work can begin. This principle of intensification of conflict before resolution is also familiar to drama workers as will be seen in the next chapter.

It is seldom the case that a conflict is completely resolved in the sense that all latent aspects of the conflict are eliminated. It is more often the case that the conflict is controlled or managed or that people agree to disagree. The original conflict is *transformed* into a new type of conflict, sometimes called a *meta-conflict*, which takes a less destructive form, for example a physical fight between mafia gangs is converted into a juridical struggle in court. In order to emphasise this fact we sometimes prefer the terms 'conflict management', 'conflict handling' or 'conflict transformation' to 'conflict resolution'.

Direct and indirect resolution of conflict

An important distinction can be made between *direct* and *indirect* conflict management. In the first case conflict management is a recognized and intended consequence of a procedure and in the second case an unrecognised or unintended consequence of other activities. A thousand small frustrations and unresolved conflicts in everyday life contribute to the building of diffuse tensions. Every culture has accepted methods of releasing or displacing tensions. The phenomenon of *running amok* is an example from Malaysia. Malay culture in general emphasizes self-control and constant restraint but provides people with an accepted way of 'breaking loose and going mad', which is interpreted as spirit-possession (Karim, 1990).

In the dominant cultural traditions of Sweden and Australia drinking with friends, athletics or sexual activity can operate as outlets for tensions, particularly for men. Physical sport can release energies that otherwise could have been fuel for conflicts. However, displays of masculinity amongst groups of sportsmen has also be linked to sexual violence toward women, as in the cases of sexual harassment and gang rape brought to public attention in Australia and the UK.

The distinction between direct and indirect approaches to conflict is very important when analysing the role of (educational) drama in conflict resolution. As will be elaborated in the concluding section we think drama has most relevance as an indirect approach to conflict management. The direct procedures are basically negotiation procedures. *Negotiation* may be defined as a verbal interaction in which two or more parties seek to reach an agreement on a contentious issue.

Third party roles

A procedure of conflict management can be defined as a culturally available system of norms or institutions that, if introduced into the conflict at a particular moment, transforms it into a new conflict or a situation that is less damaging than the original conflict. The basic distinction is between *self-help procedures*, namely procedures that can be used directly by the involved parties, and *third-party intervention procedures* that are dependent on intervention by an outsider. If the parties cannot solve the conflict by direct negotiations, one or more impartial third parties can be called in, such as a facilitator, conciliator, mediator, arbitrator or judge. Other parties may also be involved in a bi-partisan

way, such as supporters or advocates. In passing it is worth noticing that the term 'third party' is a misnomer as the original conflict can be between more than two direct parties. On the other hand it recognizes that an additional actor(s), even if neutral, is always a party with its own interests in the conflict.

Any third party role can be described by two major dimensions – partiality and power – as is shown in Figure 2.3.

	Impartial	Partial
With coercive power	Police Administrator Arbitrator Adjudicator or judge	Ally or partisan
Without coercive power	Facilitator Conciliator Mediator	Supporter Advisor Advocate

Figure 2.3. Third Party Roles

Our empirical data show that when people in general, and schoolchildren in particular, intervene in conflicts they often take the roles of ally, supporter or advisor, that is to say the partial third party roles. These roles are usually motivated by power and loyalty considerations. Each party to the original conflict builds up a coalition of supporters and allies against the other party – especially when the conflict has reached the polarisation phase. The result is often further intensification and escalation of the conflict. Conflict resolution in *symmetric conflicts*, where there is a roughly equal balance of power, requires the intervention of third parties who take an impartial stance. This is particularly true when the third party does not have any power to coerce the parties. Mediation, for instance, is built on the idea that the conflicting parties voluntarily accept the service of a mutually acceptable, impartial third party. If mediators are perceived as favouring one of the parties, or as having a vested interested in one party, the issues in dispute or the outcome, mediation will not work.

Resolution of asymmetric conflicts

Power is always a major consideration in conflict management. The greatest challenges to conflict management occur in *asymmetric conflicts*, conflicts where there are vast differences of power which are not amenable to mediator intervention.

Power is rarely static and can shift during the mediation process, depending on what is under discussion. There are many different bases of power, including the power to reward or coerce, charismatic or referent power, informational and expert power. The power of language or discourse is also important to consider – people can easily be marginalized by dominant discourses, which discount their cultural values and ways of viewing the world.

If one party persists in dominating and exploiting the other it is inappropriate to choose or proceed with mediation as the process relies on each party's competence to negotiate a fair outcome for themselves. A judge, on the other hand, has the power to make and enforce decisions. In most cases the formal adjudicative legal process can assist in the management of conflict where there are large differences in power, in particular where the laws are progressive, the judges are enlightened and parties have access to legal assistance. However, this is not always the case.

A number of renowned thinkers and practitioners in the field of group conflicts (e.g. Galtung, 1967; Curle, 1971; Lederach, 1995) agree that where there are major imbalances of power, conflict managers should take a partial role and support the weaker party - but only as long as that party remains weak. The challenge is to find non-violent roles that are effective in bringing about genuine peace. Two third party roles have been suggested for asymmetric conflicts – the educator and the advocate. When is comes to self-help in such conflicts the whole repertoire of *non-violent action* developed by Mahatma Gandhi and others is very relevant[7].

When conflict is latent and people are unaware of power imbalances and injustices, consciousness raising is a necessary condition for conflict management on a deeper level. The task of the educator is to overcome ignorance and raise awareness of the nature of the conflict as a first step in the process of restoring equity. Consciousness leads to de-

---

[7] For a review and analysis of 200 non-violent methods, see Sharp 1973.

mands for change and the next task becomes advocacy i.e. giving voice to the less powerful in a confrontational dialogue with their opponent(s).

If successful, consciousness-raising and advocacy will lead to a change in the balance of power. The weaker party will be empowered to speak in such a way that the stronger party listens. In this way an asymmetric conflict can be transformed into a symmetric one, thus making it available to symmetrical interventions by ordinary mediators (see Figure 2.4).

Where imbalances of power are gender-based, such as where there is sexual harassment or domestic violence, feminists urge that the processes chosen be subject to public scrutiny and/or that, where private processes such as mediation are chosen, special procedures be put in place to support the weaker party and to ensure safety. This would include measures such as: using two specially trained and gender-aware mediators; ensuring safety before, during and after the mediation; applying strict rules for behaviour in the sessions; using shuttle mediation or separate sessions; linking the weaker party to advocates and support persons; making sure that parties have equal access to information and to expert advice before making a decision and so forth (Astor & Chinkin, 1992, 2000; Keys Young, 1996).

Asymmetric			Symmetric
conflict	>>-->>		conflict
	1. Consciousness raising	2. Advocacy	3. Mediation
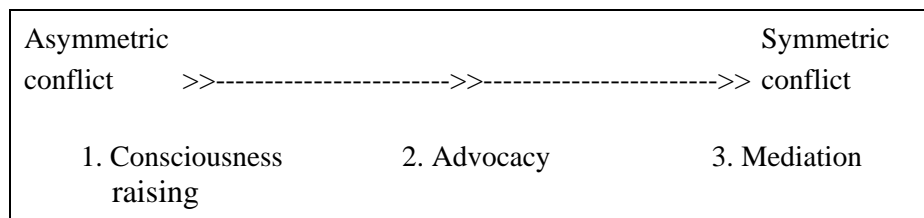
Figure 2.4. Conflict management approaches for asymmetric and symmetric conflicts

Whether a conflict should be regarded as asymmetrical or symmetrical is often a knotty question. The power imbalance may be subtle, hidden, fluid and/or difficult to define. From a constructivist perspective power is not a completely objective property that can be attributed to a relationship independently of how the actors define the situation and how it

is defined in a particular culture[8]. Therefore there is often a grey zone in which it is unclear if the third party should act as a partial advocate or an impartial mediator - it is impossible to be both. Prominent practitioners such as Marshall Rosenberg and Arnold Mindell have worked with the relation between 'oppressor' and 'oppressed' in a seemingly impartial way trying to empower both sides (Mindell, 1995: 35). The challenge is to empower the 'oppressed' to speak his/her truth and at the same time to empower the 'oppressor' to listen to this truth. A certain form of impartiality - respecting both parties as human beings - is necessary in order to get the 'oppressor' involved in the conflict resolution process, but obviously the parties have to be approached in an asymmetric way. Family mediators in the Western world have struggled with this issue in divorce mediations where there are often gender-based imbalances of power, in particular where there is domestic violence (Bagshaw, 2003).

The theory of asymmetric conflicts is of relevance to the handling of student conflicts at schools. International research has shown that bullying in schools is quite widespread (Olweus, 1993; Rigby, 2002). *Bullying* is defined in many ways. Rigby's most recent "tentative" definition of bullying is based on a variety of published views of what bullying is:

> Bullying involves a desire to hurt + hurtful action + power imbalance + an unjust use of power + evident enjoyment by the aggressor and generally a sense of being oppressed on the part of the victim (Rigby, 2002, p. 51)

Thus, bullying is by definition an asymmetric conflict. If the students are more or less equal in power we do not call it bullying but a quarrel or a fight. In Sweden one in ten students in primary schools report that they have been the victims of bullying during the last year (Eriksson, Lindberg, Flygare & Daneback, 2002). In Australia approximately 50% of schoolchildren report that they have been bullied at least once during a year, with one child in six reporting being bullied on a weekly basis. (Rigby, 2002).

---

[8] The Western culture of egalitarian individualism colours how the concept of power is used by Westerners. In the East collectivism and vertical relations are often seen as natural and people have an emotional need to be protected by father figures. For them power imbalance is not a problem in itself, only the abuse of power. For a detailed analysis of power in the Asian context, see Pye 1985. See also chapter 3.2 in the present book.

Bullying has been treated in a number of very different ways. These are summarised in Rigby (2003). Generally, responsibility for bullying has been attributed to the 'bully' or 'bullies.' Efforts have been made to change their behaviour, either by imposing sanctions (see Olweus, 1993) or by counselling methods or by both. Efforts have also been directed towards changing the behaviour of victims, for example by helping them to act more assertively or refraining from acting provocatively. Other approaches have focussed upon the influence of peers and friendship groups and have made use of so-called problem solving techniques. For instance, Maines and Robinson (1992) have developed a method of using peer group influence to persuade children who have bullied others to act more supportively towards those they have victimised. Pikas (2002) has proposed the use of interviews with individual members of a bullying group in which the interviewer shares his or her concern for the victim. This procedure, he believes, can help towards the resolution of bully/victim problems in secondary schools, especially if further meetings involving all the participants are convened and mediation techniques employed. Such problem solving methods contain elements that are consistent with the approach taken by DRACON. It should be noted that DRACON was not originally specifically focused on bullying but it is our ambition to develop drama-based intervention programmes which have the potential to reduce the frequency of bullying as well as other unwanted conflicts at school. The Brisbane sub-project has been focussed specifically on bullying since 2002.

Dividing the tasks of conflict management

We now turn to symmetric conflicts. The bulk of the conflict management literature is targeted at these types of conflicts and impartial third party roles. As we have seen there are many such roles, including facilitator, conciliator, mediator, arbitrator and judge. What determines whether a particular role is effective in solving a symmetrical conflict? The answer in part has to do with the nature of the conflict and its level of escalation. Let us first investigate what the third party can do in order to transform the conflict. According to the ABC-model, conflict management implies three main tasks:

- Conflict termination (focus on the B-component): putting an end to destructive behaviour, such as through an agreement on cease-fire or ground rules for respectful behaviour. This task implies a security approach oriented towards control of violence and the creation of a

safe space where the parties can feel physically and emotionally secure.

- Reconciliation (focus on the A-component): dispersion of negative feelings and images of each other. This task calls for a process approach in the sense that the negative feelings and stories have to be processed until the emotional and/or communicative bond between the parties is formed or healed.
- Conflict settlement (focus on the C-component): reaching an agreement on the substantive issues at stake in the conflict. This third task requires an issue-oriented approach. This involves identification of the shared issues, analysis of the underlying perceptions, meanings, interests, needs or fears, the creative generation of new options and negotiation of a mutually satisfying solution.

The three ABC-tasks are quite different and require specific methods and skills. Here it is very important to make distinctions between the *phases* of a conflict, because each method of conflict management must always be chosen or adapted to the stage of escalation.

Any conflict management process may be described as a conflict escalation process 'run backwards'. The first task is to stop any violence. Security takes priority. It is very difficult to try and change the negative attitudes that the parties have toward each other if fighting still continues. The second task is to achieve a measure of reconciliation between the parties. The 'self-other' polarity must be overcome before the underlying contradictions can be handled in a reasonable way. At the polarization stage people are often "dug into their trenches", with strongly held positions (their solutions) that are fixed or entrenched, and with no understanding of the perceptions, meanings, interests or needs underlying their own position and that of the other. They attack each other, rather than the problem, and it becomes impossible to carry out a rational dialogue about the substance of the dispute. This is the reason why the *security approach* should be followed up by a *process approach,* which in turn can successively be transferred into a negotiation process, preferably between the parties themselves.

These theoretical considerations can be summarized in a so called *contingency model of conflict management* (Glasl, 1992; Fisher, 1990). Table 2.1 shows how the effective uses of a number of conflict resolution methods are contingent on the level of escalation of the conflict.

Table 2.1. A contingency model of approaches to conflict management

Phase of conflict	I. Discussion phase (C)	II. Polarization phase (A)	III. Destruction phase (B)
Approach to management	Issue-oriented approach (settlement)	Process-oriented approach (reconciliation)	Security-oriented approach (termination)
Method of management	Self-help Collegial help Mediation (of issues) F-a-c-i-l-i- W-o-r-k-	Socio-therapeutic consultation, Mediation (of relationship) -t-a-t-i-o-n -s-h-o-p-s	Coercive inter-vention, Adjudication, Arbitration

The contingency model indicates that there are serious limitations to self-help as a method of conflict resolution. The participants have a chance to solve the problems themselves without external help if the conflict is still in the discussion phase (C). When the conflict has escalated into the polarisation phase self-help becomes very difficult because the participants see the 'other' as the major problem to be solved and have adopted fixed positions on the issues. 'Self' and 'other' are treated in an asymmetric way. Therefore solutions suggested by the other are automatically rejected as partial. An impartial third party has an essential role to play on this level.

We have seen that if the parties cannot solve the conflict by direct negotiations, an impartial *third party* can be called in, such as a facilitator, conciliator, mediator, arbitrator or judge. When compared to arbitration and litigation, mediation is a relatively voluntary, informal, private and collaborative approach to resolving conflict, with the third party (mediator) in charge of the *process* (how the conflict is resolved) and the disputants in charge of the *content* (what is discussed) and *outcomes* (what is agreed to). While mediation is a voluntary, facilitative process, both arbitration and adjudication are *determinative* processes and for that reason of less interest to DRACON. In determinative processes, the parties leave it to the third party to find a fair solution to the conflict on the merits of the opposing positions, and the third party imposes a solution. In adjudication the third party also enforces the decision.

According to Rosenberg's model of *non-violent communication* reconciliation is about the establishment of a heart to heart connection through the use of an appropriate language (Rosenberg, 1999). The mediator in this case works as a 'translator' between the parties, translating the 'wolf language' of the parties into 'giraffe language'.

Similar processes are used in an approach called *transformative mediation* in which the focus of the mediator is on the opportunities for personal growth that unfold at every moment of the mediation process (Bush & Folger, 1994). The guiding words for this process are 'empowerment' of the parties and their 'recognition' of each other. Postmodernist theories have also inspired conflict managers to develop a relatively new approach to mediation, called *narrative mediation*, in which the focus is on deconstruction and reconstruction of the 'problem-saturated stories' the parties bring to the mediator (Winslade & Monk, 2000). The transformative and narrative models of mediation have some features in common with educational drama, especially the focus on the process itself, not the outcome.

2.2.5   The problem solving process

Mediation is a conflict management process, which has some features in common with facilitation in educational drama. As we have pointed out, there are many models of mediation. Here we will describe a basic problem solving approach which is outlined by many authors (e.g. Moore, 1996). Problem solving is easier to understand and more commonly used than other approaches, so for this reason we have taught it to our DRACON students. We also refer in this section to a transformative approach (Bush & Folger, 1994) and make special reference in the next section to a narrative approach, which we believe is most closely aligned to educational drama (Winslade & Monk, 2000).

From a problem-solving perspective the term mediation is commonly defined as a process by which the parties, together with the assistance of an acceptable, impartial person or persons, voluntarily and systematically isolate issues in need of consideration to develop a range of options, consider alternatives and reach a consensual settlement that will take into account the interests and needs of all concerned. Mediation is a process that emphasises the parties' responsibility for making decisions that affect their lives. The mediator manages the process but does not get involved in the decision.

The problem-solving process can be divided into three main phases – preparation, intervention and consolidation – and then further subdivided into twelve stages as shown in Table 2.2.

It must be stressed that the process is more circular in its application than this linear presentation shows. The mediator may need to return to and renegotiate or consolidate earlier stages from time to time as the process unfolds and as each issue is dealt with. In what follows we will give a short description of each phase of the problem-solving process and where possible indicate how the transformative and narrative processes are different.

Table 2.2   Phases of the problem-solving process

I.   The preparation phase
1. Inviting the facilitator
2. Conflict assessment
3. Agreement on the ground rules and procedures
4. Creating a safe space
II.   Intervention phase
5.   Defining the problems or issues
6.   Redefining the problems or issues
7.   Inventing and designing options
8.   Developing principles for deciding
9.   Negotiation
10. Preliminary or trial agreement
III.   Consolidation phase
11.Reality testing
12.Implementation, review and revision

I. The preparation phase

1. Invitation to the third party

The initiative for starting the mediation process lies with the parties themselves. This requires that conflicting parties jointly acknowledge that they cannot solve the conflict themselves and that they want to be helped by a mutually acceptable, impartial and skilled third party. Access to the conflict is a major issue for the third party, as he/she has no

power to pull the parties to the negotiation table. Parties may be mandated to attend an information sessions but cannot be mandated to participate or settle.

2. Conflict assessment

The third party makes a preliminary investigation of the conflict to find out if it is ripe for intervention and which types of intervention processes are appropriate. This is often done separately by interviewing relevant parties to the conflict, in particular where there is the potential for imbalances or abuses of power.

3. Agreement on the ground rules and procedures

If the initial assessment indicates that mediation is appropriate, the mediator tries to create a commitment to the mediation process and ensures the appropriate selection of a mutually acceptable third party or parties. The mediator must be given the power to *control and manage the process*.

4. Creation of a safe space

The preamble and 'ground rules' lay the foundation for the mediation process. However, the parties must believe that they have a *safe space* in which they can explore the conflict on a new level. The problem-solving process is feasible only if there are no serious disturbances in the communication process, the balance of power and the emotional climate.

Relevant mediation skills at this stage are active listening, summarising, clarifying, paraphrasing, demonstrating impartiality (such as by giving the parties equal time), constraining the expression of negative feelings (such as by referring to the ground rules or acknowledging feelings), modelling appropriate assertiveness, reframing (e.g. restating a negative as a positive, or shifting from a past to a future focus, using "I" rather than "you" statements), maintaining body-awareness and an open posture and using techniques to encourage empathy, such as reflective questioning, role-play and visualisation. The facilitator must consider power and safety issues during the whole intervention.

II. Intervention phase

The intervention phase begins when all parties for the first time are brought to a common session with the mediator in order to do the agreed work on the conflict itself, unless separate sessions or shuttle mediation has been chosen as the preferred option. The problem-solving process has distinct sub-phases guided by a linear means-end-rationality where everything in the process is geared towards reaching the final goal – a mutually acceptable agreement.

The parties are empowered by the mediator as to their goals, options, skills, resources and decision-making independently of the other outcomes of the mediation.

The intervention phase can be divided into five sub-phases, which come after the four sub-phases of preparation.

5. Defining the problem

Exploration usually starts with *storytelling*. Each participant gives his or her version of the conflict. In this early stage the mediator tries to build trust in the process. Each of the participants views are actively and equally listened to by the mediator, as well as each other.

6. Redefining the problem or issues

As long as people stick to and defend their original positions movement is impossible. The facilitator therefore assists the parties to move from the positions taken at the beginning by encouraging them to focus on the needs, fears, interests, wants and concerns underlying each position. When positions are translated into interests through techniques such as *needs analysis* or *conflict mapping* the parties can release their defensive stances and develop empathy. In this stage of the mediation the third party ensures that the nature of the conflict is fully explored from all perspectives so that all participants clearly understand the issues, interests and needs of the other, and unnecessary fears are allayed. The redefined problems or issues take the form of how to best satisfy the *mutually defined interests* of the parties - their interests are no longer defined as mutually excluding.

7. Inventing and designing options

This can be the most creative stage of the problem-solving process. The parties are encouraged to generate as many proposals or options for

78

resolution as possible before choosing between them. This can be done through the technique of *brainstorming*, where every idea is listed without ownership, discussion or evaluation, even if an idea seems to be totally absurd. Criticism is forbidden at this stage of the process.

There are many other techniques the mediator can also use to generate options, including asking each of the participants reflective questions.

8. Negotiation

If misunderstandings, misperceptions, differing values, resentments and rigid positions have been discussed and clarified or dealt with, the participants know and understand each others' interests and needs, and there is a whole set of new creative options to choose between, the parties are ready for fruitful negotiations aimed at reaching an agreement.

The parties need to fully understand their best possible options or alternatives to an agreement - their best "walk away" options. It is unethical for the mediator to give the parties advice at any stage, however, as this is *their* agreement.

9. Preliminary agreement

By this stage of the process the parties are usually able to reach a provisional, preliminary or trial agreement on the major issues of the conflict. It is desirable for agreements to be recorded to avoid future misinterpretations or misunderstandings. Writing agreements is the responsibility of the mediator, whose task is to ensure that agreements are couched in clear, accurate, positive, mutual and specific terms, wherever possible using the language of the parties.

III. Consolidation phase

10. Reality testing

Some time must be given for testing the agreement and making the necessary adjustments concerning economic, personal and other matters. 'Sleeping on the decision' before signing the final document is good advice. The parties may also wish to consult with significant others.

11. Implementation, review and revision

There are always unforeseen factors and new developments or changes that might jeopardise the agreement. The parties can fall back into old pattern of behaviour over time or new factors or situations may emerge making it necessary to amend agreements. The best agreements provide for flexibility, as situations rarely stay the same. Consolidation means planning recurrent reviews of the agreement, setting up ongoing support systems, renewing consultations and so forth.

2.2.6 A narrative approach to peer mediation

Research evidence suggests that young people in Western secondary schools are heavily influenced by the dominant discourses of their peers, for example in the social construction and performances of their masculinities and femininities. Dominant discourses on 'macho' forms of masculinity, in particular, contribute to destructive conflicts and violence in schools (Bagshaw, 2004). The relatively new narrative approach to mediation, which is currently being trailed with young people in schools in South Australia and New Zealand, is therefore extremely relevant to use in programs in the DRACON project.

Narrative mediation is based on postmodernist, social constructionist thinking, which challenges the view that an individual has an essential essence, instead arguing that we have multiple identities, which are fluid and "mapped onto us by the social and cultural world around us" (Winslow & Monk, 2000: 37). The narrative approach to conflict management acknowledges that discourses, stories or 'truths' are constructed from a particular social and cultural view of reality, in a particular historical time and place. A well-known narrative therapy theorist, Michael White, stated that: "We enter into stories, we are entered into stories by others and we live our lives through stories" (White, 1989: 6). From a narrative perspective, language (as discourse) is viewed as a precondition of thought and gives meaning to our every day interactions. When they talk, people are constructing their world. In this sense language is performative.

The word 'narrative' refers to a mode of thinking and was coined by Jerome Bruner who argued that:

> … people construct their intentions and enact their "performances of meaning" with the characteristics of a well-formed story rather than with

facts, realities, or cause-and-effect logic … and alongside this there is a "landscape of consciousness" which people know, think, and feel (Winslade & Monk, 2000: 52).

From the narrative perspective there is no universal truth - there are many 'truths'. Socially constructed stories serve to mediate, shape and create our truths or realities. People make meaning in story form and in any conflict one would expect different narratives to describe the situations or events in the conflict. All parties to a conflict, and others, will have their own stories or versions of the 'truth'. The mediator works with the parties to create an alternative but plausible story in a way that makes sense to the participants. No one story is true but out of the complexity of stories can emerge a range of possible future stories.

Power is viewed differently from a narrative perspective and is closely aligned with discourse. Not all stories or voices are equal - some are privileged and others are discounted or marginalized. Conflict is seen to be an inevitable product of the operation of power in the modern world, closely related to knowledge and whose meaning gets to be privileged. Dominant discourses specify what is 'normal' and what can be talked about, by whom and in what contexts. The voices of disempowered people or minority groups tend to be subjugated or silenced by the voices of people in power. Conflict will develop when power and privilege is threatened or resisted.

In mediation, cultural stories are being produced and reproduced, performed and re-enacted and in mediation these stories can be unpacked and reshaped to create a different world or view of self or reality. The narrative mediator's task is to assist people in conflict to deconstruct their various perspectives of a conflict and to expose the multiple truths or realities. Deconstruction involves "unpacking" taken-for-granted assumptions and unquestioned 'truths' or inevitable realities that are reflected in the stories people bring to mediation. In assisting the parties to view things from a new and different perspective, "the familiar is rendered strange, the gaps or inconsistencies in a story are highlighted, and opportunities to resist an unquestioned truth are made clear". The mediator emphasises "curious exploration rather than simple acceptance", helping to create new meanings to events and rendering background assumptions visible and open to revision (Winslade & Monk, 2000: 43).

The DRACON project rests upon the belief that, using a narrative approach, educational drama can provide the opportunity and context for young people to deconstruct and reconstruct their histories, identities, stories and meanings in relation to their conflicts.

2.2.7   Conditions for effective mediation

There are necessary conditions for reaching an agreement through informal processes such as mediation. Here we will explore some of the prerequisites with regard to the parties and their relationships, the nature of the conflict, the mediator and the context.

As to the parties themselves, a basic condition is their *capacity to act in their own legitimate self-interest*. The purpose is to enable the participants to engage in a constructive dialogue concerning the substantive, psychological or procedural issues they bring to the mediator and ultimately to reach agreements and/or continue to handle their disputes without assistance. This requires a willingness to negotiate, some minimal skills in communication on the part of the participants and a roughly equal balance of power. *Mental illness and/or drug or alcohol addiction* can jeopardise the success of the process. In these cases the client(s) may be referred to therapy or medical treatment.

Mediation works best when the parties have an *ongoing relationship* with each other. If there is no need to cooperate in the future, or there is a perception that nothing is to be gained from a negotiation, the incentive to engage in the process decreases considerably. In ongoing relationships *power should not be severely unbalanced*. To a certain extent power shifts according to what is under discussion and a mediator can sometimes balance power by using shuttle mediation and/or ensuring that people have equal time, equal access to information, abide by ground rules and so forth. However a mediator cannot jeopardise his or her impartiality by becoming an advocate for one party.

Most importantly, for mediation to work, the parties must have *a common wish to reach an agreement* or some sort of understanding. This cannot be taken for granted even if the parties turn up at the negotiation table. *Traditional religious attitudes* or *rigid beliefs* can make it difficult, if not impossible for people to move from their position on some issues. A willingness to see the other person's point of view, even if to eventually agree to disagree, is essential.

When it comes to the nature of the conflict itself, mediation is most needed in the earlier phases of the escalation of a conflict or dispute - the *phase of polarisation* and in the *phase of discussion*. The *phase of destruction* lies beyond the range of mediation and the issue of violence itself should never be mediated. In the polarisation phase, subjective factors such as cognitive rigidity, stereotyping, hostile emotions and dysfunctional communication play a greater role than the content of the conflict. As to the discussion phase when the content is still in focus, the most difficult contested issues to handle are issues involving basic needs, values, identities and worldviews. Some value-based issues can only be resolved by agreeing to disagree.

The facilitator must have the necessary education, training, skills, values, cultural background and personality for the process to work. It is too easy to aggravate the conflict by making a few simple mistakes or appearing to be biased. The first essential condition for the facilitator is an *impartial* attitude and behaviour, both perceived and actual. The second condition may be the attitude of *empowering* the participants. The third is to be a *patient, effective listener and communicator.* For this to happen, the mediator must be comfortable in the presence of conflict. Fourthly, a mediator should convey an attitude of *acceptance* of all the participants and respect and understand socio-cultural differences. Most mediators would agree with the distinguished mediator Dr John Haynes, when he stated that mediation works best when the mediator acknowledges that there is *good* in all people.

> We seek … to find the good, nurture it and respond to it. As we do that we see the clients empowered in their goodness that opens the way for their productive problem solving to emerge. There is no longer any right or wrong in the room, merely useful and useless ideas, behavior or suggestions. We transform the participants by our refusal to be judgmental. We empower them with our love (Haynes, 1996: 125).

Finally, the facilitator needs to have a *positive attitude* to conflict, a *sense of humour* and an ability to *think laterally* and *creatively*.

2.2.8   Peer mediation

We will end this section on conflict resolution with some comments on peer mediation as this particular application of mediation is of special relevance to the DRACON project. Peer mediation has become wide-

spread in recent years, particularly in primary schools in some countries such as Australia and the United States (Cornelius & Faire, 1989; Lantieri & Patti, 1996). This social innovation is just being introduced in some Swedish schools and is almost non-existent in Malaysia. The models for peer mediation have been the problem-solving approach and more recently the narrative approach (Winslade & Monk, 2000). The pioneers of peer mediation have claimed outstanding benefits from implementing programs in schools for many types of student-to-student conflicts:

- One author claims that approximately 90% of all mediation sessions result in an agreement that satisfies all parties of the conflict (Cohen, 1995).

- Peer mediation teaches students essential life-skills and gives them greater insights into the human condition through real-life practice and direct experience.

- Peer mediation empowers students, gives them higher autonomy and increased self-esteem. One peer mediator said: "Being a mediator makes me feel ecstatic because I leave the mediation room knowing I've helped resolve a problem and relieved another person's mind" (Cohen, 1995: 48).

- Peer mediation has a preventive effect by reducing the incidence of destructive conflicts at school in general. The load on the disciplinary system is reduced.

- Peer mediation creates a better environment for learning. The classroom becomes safer and calmer and the students are less distracted when they are there.

- Peer mediation improves "school climate" by fostering feelings of belonging, ownership and control over school life.

Up to the mid-90s only a few research studies have been conducted on the effects of peer mediation programs in schools – some have presented positive results, others more negative ones. The South Australian DRACON team received negative reports about peer mediation in focus groups from many Year 9 students from a wide range of schools. They had appreciated peer mediation in their primary schooling, but did not find it useful for their age group (13-15 years) in secondary school. There were many reasons provided including: their conflicts were too serious, boys found it "sissy" and preferred to solve their own disputes,

84

they did not trust their peers as mediators and their peer groups were more important. They preferred older students and teachers to mediate their disputes.

Well-knows authorities on conflict resolution in schools in the United States have found a significantly lower incidence of conflicts in secondary schools that had a peer mediation program compared to schools that lacked such programs (Johnson & Johnson, 2002). However, a major review of nine peer mediation programmes carried out in four states in the US (Powell, MuirMcClain, & Halasyamani, 1995) questioned the validity of most of the findings. Whilst reported incidents of conflict declined in many of the primary schools, there was very little evidence to show that the students of the schools had actually learned to manage their conflicts better, or that conflicts were genuinely de-escalated by the peer mediators. Similarly in seven secondary schools in the South Australian DRACON project there was no evidence that peer mediation worked and in some instances it appeared to have made conflicts worse.

It is important to point out, however, that the necessary conditions for successful implementation of peer mediation programs are not always in place in schools. One of the most important conditions is that there is an adult program coordinator based in the school and trained in mediation. This person oversees all aspects of the program's operation, selects the peer mediators, functions as their mentor and decides whether a particular conflict should be a case for the disciplinary system or for peer mediation. As has been explained, not all conflicts should be mediated, in particular where the parties are involuntary or there is a severe imbalance of power, a history or threat of violence or abuse, addiction to drugs or mental illness. Mediation in such cases leads to failure as parties are required to be competent to negotiate fair outcomes for themselves.

A central weakness of most *peer* mediation projects is that they select and train just a few older students as mediators. Whilst peer mediators develop a valuable understanding of conflict management themselves, there is little evidence that the rest of the students in the school are similarly empowered, especially in secondary schools. Powell et al's (1995) study demonstrated that when all the students in a school were taught peer mediation and conflict management skills there were clear indications that the program had a preventive effect, even on destructive conflicts such as fights and bullying at the school. The re-

85

searchers argue that a program should also include a serious effort to change the experiences of young people at home and in the community as well as at school. They argue that training *all* students must be part of any program, and that community involvement is an essential element. The DRACON approach is partly based on these insights. We would argue that a whole school approach is desirable, involving all students, teachers and if possible the parents and broader community.

2.3   Educational drama

Drama may be defined as 'the dynamic embodiment of events in a problematic or conflictual human situation. The enactment of drama comprises a group of people agreeing to suspend their disbelief in order to be other than themselves in a fictional context. If they enact the events in front of others who accept the fiction, the drama becomes theatre' (adapted from Wall & O'Toole, 1991: 1).

Drama is the art form that most explicitly mirrors and explicates human conflict. Conflict is part of the basic business of drama, which exists to depict and explore human relationships. Drama by nature depicts human beings in dialogue. Key words and concepts are shared between drama and conflict resolution. The very words *protagonist* and *antagonist* to label the main parties in a conflict derive from Greek drama. A central element of drama is *tension*, and the impetus towards the final *resolution* of that tension. Dramatic action consists of *dialogue, opposition, negotiation, argumentation*, all employed in the drive towards resolution of tension.

Drama in education includes drama management and group activity in fictional role-play promoting educational quality. Drama is both a method and subject, with a holistic perspective, integrating feelings, thoughts and actions (Lepp, 1998).

2.3.1   Historical perspectives

Historically, drama has a long relationship with education, and almost as long - and as equivocal – an association with conflict management and social control.

As anthropologists such as Victor Turner (1982), theatre scholars like Eugenio Barba (Barba & Savarese, 1991) and drama educators like

Larry O'Farrell (1996) have pointed out there are dramatic and proto-dramatic elements of many ancient shamanistic rituals. In ancient Greece the concept of mimesis was explored in all its complexity, and in BC 330 Aristotle observed and attempted to define the effect of drama on an audience, explicitly in terms of the purgation of excesses of pity and fear (Aristotle & Buckley, 1902).

Drama and Theatre have been used to assist in generating and maintaining a stable and harmonious congruence of thought and social purpose, by Governments from ancient Rome (Bread and Circuses), through both sides in both World Wars (Propaganda), to modern Singapore ('The Theatre that Governs') (Pao Kun, 1996).

Plato, a generation before Aristotle, warned of the potentially disruptive effects of poetry and drama. Governments and social controllers have been equally aware of the potential of drama to backfire or subvert that very congruence ("It is a gin of the devil to draw men to wickedness" as one medieval cleric put it.)

Drama's very effectiveness as an agent of conflict resolution and therapy is also limited, as has been noted in for example Northern Ireland, where an ambitious official schools programme of attitude change through drama has not lived up to the overoptimistic hopes for it (Fyfe, 1996). Not only that, but it must be noted that drama may also be traduced into assisting the escalation and maintenance of conflict: training for war is in no small measure carried out through dramatic simulation, enactment and the selective management of dramatic empathy.

Official ambivalence to theatre is always present - it is part of the two-headed nature of drama and theatre not just to reflect and refract and celebrate society, but to interrogate it - to ask awkward questions as well as providing happy endings. Third World governments and non-governmental agencies welcome the power of theatre to speak to the community and influence its attitudes to health and to the environment, but look nervously on its potential to stir those communities into unrest. Many of the developing world's most distinguished playwrights and directors have spent time in gaol and exile - Wole Soyinka (Nigeria), Rendra (Indonesia), Kuo Pao Kun (Singapore), Ngugi wa Thiongo (Kenya) and Vaclav Havel (then Czechoslovakia).

In the 1920's Moreno and his associates founded the Psychodrama (the drama of the individual) and Sociodrama (the drama of the group) movements. Both were predicated on the assumption that drama may

be used to assist in the restoration of personal, psychological and social stability (Nolte, 2000). Moreno started his career doing drama with the children in the parks of Vienna and by developing Theatre of Spontaneity (non-scripted theatre) with adult actors. In his medical profession with refugees and prostitutes his interest in socio-psychological processes accelerated the development of new and elaborated therapeutic acting methods.

Moreno's work has since been developed in the USA into a clinical and educational practice in both psychiatry and adult training. In the case of psychodrama, role-play has provided highly focussed and controllable therapeutic enactment. Although both of these fields in some parts of the world have tended to play down the dramatic roots of drama, recent research and development in both fields, such as the work of Landy (1991) in psychodrama and Smigiel (2000) in adult vocational training, have sought re-acquaintance with the aesthetic structures of drama and theatre. As psychodrama primarily must be looked upon "as a specific method of psychotherapy, a treatment approach to psychological problems" (Kellermann, 1992: 18), psychodrama within the DRACON-project has been limited to the practice of a few psychodramatic techniques.

Parallel with the rise of progressive and liberal education throughout the twentieth century has been the growth of explicitly educational uses of drama. From the turn of the twentieth century, educators in Britain and America started to look for and find in drama a pedagogy to accomplish the liberal progressive education which was attempting to centre the curriculum on the personal and social development of the child: "giving children a rudimentary dramatic training in the belief that such a training has a benefit of its own" (Bolton, 1984: 18). In the years following the first World War this developed in the USA into 'Creative Dramatics' and in the UK into the 'Drama in Education' movement, both based on the active learning power of *doing* drama rather than reception as an audience, and both espousing improvisational methods - albeit quite different ones - to permit children to take part in drama not only as actors, but as playwrights and directors.

2.3.2   Key movements in drama pedagogy

Creative dramatics has taken as its centre the notion of putting on plays, and encouraged children to see themselves as imaginative actors. Influ-

enced by ideas from progressive and liberal education about the right of the child to learn by doing, exploring and expressing, creative dramatics grew as an alternative to traditional children's theatre and from a critique of letting children mechanically learn and perform texts without relevance for themselves. Exercises and improvisations, with their roots in Stanislavskij's training programme for actors, were adapted to suit children, emphasising play, spontaneity and having fun. Creative dramatics, with its focus on liberating the child and on democracy training, spread its ideas from the USA to Europe and strongly influenced children's theatre developed in Scandinavia from the middle of the 20th century.

Drama in Education (DIE)

Another influential worldwide movement has been Drama in Education, which has a strong social and group orientation. The participants are characterised as collaborative learners, engaged in learning by shifting role perspectives. For a long time the dominant mode of Drama in Education was group role-play with no concept of an external audience, a derivative from children's spontaneous extended dramatic play. The teacher is often engaged in the dramatic context as a character herself, going along with the action or directing the development of the ongoing improvised drama from inside - a technique known as 'teacher-in-role'. In this kind of role-play, the participants become entirely absorbed in the dramatic context as characters, empathising with the situation and their role, making it up as they go along, in concert with the other members of the class or sub-group. Frequently several groups are enacting the same scenario simultaneously, or with all the students in pairs. More recently, a broader range of theatrical techniques, exercises and conventions have been added to this group-based empathic role-play, not least to provide the participants with the opportunity of looking at and exploring the context with a measure of distance. This work is now most usually referred to as 'process drama'.

The Drama in Education movement has established and developed both a philosophy and a distinct pedagogy based on this premise of the students' being total participants in extended dramatic play (without an audience), that has become very influential internationally. A number of stages in the movement's development over the last fifty years may be identified, usually associated with individual gifted practitioner-theorists, each of whose work was taken up by a generation of drama

teachers intent on establishing drama and theatre in schools and community settings, with varying success world-wide.

In the 1950s Peter Slade focussed attention on the significance of children's own dramatic play, allowing that to create the conditions for learning. In the sixties, Slade's associate Brian Way extended this idea into harnessing the dramatic instinct in a more organised way through the exercises of theatre, to provide a developmental progress for the individual. The philosophical drive came largely from Rousseau through Dewey and the 'progressive education' movement - crystallised in Richard Courtney's *Play Drama and Thought* (Courtney, 1968). Theatre itself was downplayed in favour of children exploring drama in the private context of the classroom itself, with no external audience.

Theatre in Education (TIE)

Drama in education became the dominant mode until the seventies, when the next leap forward was provided equally by the next inspiring pioneers and close colleagues, Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton, and a parallel movement within theatre, that of participatory theatre-in-education (TIE). Rather than just concentrating on the individual's development per se, the whole social context of the learners and their drama-work became the focus of the work. The teachers set out to find techniques that utilised the power of drama to open up, explore and influence attitudes, 'a dynamic means of gaining new understanding' (Bolton, 1979: 112), both of socio-political issues and of personal gestalt. Issue-based classroom drama became the norm, strongly influenced by the theatrical and educational ideas of Bertold Brecht, and of the play-theorist Lev Vygotskij. Using drama as a means of socialisation or social control was off the agenda. Instead it was replaced by sceptical and assertive interrogation of the society and its mores, usually with an underlying intention of contributing towards changing those mores. Personal developmental learning was seen as a product of the layering of experience, including play experience and all the social and cultural contexts of the learner.

In the TIE teams that sprang up all over the UK in the 1970s, and some of which still exist, an audience of school students - usually one class - was visited by a group of 'actor-teachers', who engaged them as active participants with a mixture of scripted theatre and improvised dramatic action, sometimes integrally - engaging the whole class as

characters in the drama - and sometimes more peripherally - for example stopping the action to give the audience a task such as interviewing the characters to provide advice as to what should be done next. The overwhelming bulk of this work, in TIE team and drama class, has been on social and political subjects as well as personal import, investigating social issues such as injustice, particularly in the secondary school.

Theatre for development

The concept of Theatre for Development refers to communities drawing on their own specific cultural traditions in a process of creative problem-solving and community empowerment to address issues of concern in their own communities. Interchangeable terms include Theatre for Social Change, Theatre of Liberation, Cultural Action, Protest Theatre and Popular Theatre, most of which draw inspiration from Latin-American liberation theology and the work of Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal.

In Theatre for People's Development, community education programmes target issues within the areas of health, environment, education and politics. It locates the creative process within specific social, cultural and political contexts using familiar cultural forms and processes as a participatory media to raise collective consciousness and promote self-determined change.

In the developing world, community theatre workers and Theatre for Development specialists like PETA (The Philippines), Free Travelling Theatre (Kenya) and MAYA (Thailand) have had little difficulty in adding process drama to their repertoire of theatre practice. As has been frequently pointed out, this has been partly because, besides the Western theatre canon, many of these communities are re-discovering their own dramatic traditions that already incorporate improvised drama forms, active audience participation and an awareness of the socially critical and educative function of theatre incorporated in their traditional forms.

Theatre of the Oppressed

An equally influential worldwide movement of drama education, Theatre of the Oppressed has grown up contemporaneously with the Drama in Education movement - in some places until recently almost independently. This was founded by the Brazilian theatre director Augusto Boal. Directly inspired by Paolo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

(1972), Boal set out to develop a community theatre practice that has become, in effect a pedagogy, whose original aim was to help the poor and disenfranchised to liberate themselves by revealing the nature and conquer-ability of the things that oppressed them. His most celebrated technique, Forum Theatre, used a company of actors to rehearse and re-enact on stage a story of oppression provided by the audience, then invite the audience as 'spect-actors' to intervene and change the behaviour of the oppressed protagonist, in order to find the most effective method of dealing with the oppression. In recent years, Boal has acknowledged the problems of only working at the community level. His theory and practice have concentrated more on the individual, on establishing a basis of workshop drama exercises to assist individuals to deal with their own 'cops in the head' that provide much of what oppresses them. This method of theatre and therapy is called 'Rainbow of Desire' with the therapeutic potential of using theatre to transform life.

Like Drama in Education and TIE, Theatre of the Oppressed has been enthusiastically taken up both in Western school settings by teachers, and by Theatre for Development groups in the developing world. There are signs too that all the movements are re-discovering their common ground. Forum Theatre and many other workshop techniques based on Boal have been added to the corpus of drama in education strategies. The increasing body of drama work being applied in many settings worldwide to the field of conflict handling, at levels from the geo-political to the school classroom, draws from all four traditions.

Crossover in movements

Overall, then, the movement towards Drama in Education as a learning device has consolidated its pedagogy and diversified its practice over the last two decades, establishing a strong foothold in the schools, especially in English-speaking countries and some European ones, such as Scandinavia. In some developing countries, particularly in Africa, the movement has had a major influence on the equally fast-developing field of Theatre for Development. Extending the pedagogy into social therapy is being tried in some war-torn countries, such as Northern Ireland, Israel and the Balkans - with equivocal but promising results (Fyfe 1996, Knezevic 1995, Schonmann 1996). Here drama has been tried out as a medium for conflict handling.

There is now a lot of crossover in these movements, particularly in the incorporation of Theatre of the Oppressed techniques like Forum

and Image Theatre in Drama in Education. This is the case in both Sweden and Australia, for example, where Drama in Education has been for a long time established in schools and tertiary education. In Malaysia there is virtually no drama in schools within the curriculum. However, both these approaches are understood and practised where possible, in special projects, and within the small tertiary drama sector.

Four perspectives

In an elaborated form the different acting and role-taking methods used within the framework of Drama in Education may be described as four perspectives on drama pedagogy: the artistically oriented perspective, the personal development perspective, the critically liberating perspective and the holistic learning perspective (Sternudd, 2000).

Different group context and aims may call for different drama tools and the trained drama teacher/drama pedagogues have knowledge about all four perspectives. Connections to the aesthetics, to humanistic psychology, to social science and to experiential pedagogy make the drama area rich but the complexity also creates dilemmas, when theorists or practitioners totally identify with one perspective and lose understanding of the relevance of other perspectives.

1. The artistically oriented perspective concentrates on the creativity of children and young people, on their ability to express themselves in dramatic form and to co-operate in performing processes. Basic training of body and voice is followed by training of spontaneous acting capacity through improvisation, often resulting in a performance build on ideas from the group. Reflection is focused on how scenic form is given to the story being told. Conflicts are primarily studied with the intention to create dramatic tension. Drama work within the artistically oriented perspective can be looked upon as the preparation for performing theatre built on the dramatic texts of others.

2. Within the personal development perspective both group development and on human growth are in the centre of interest. To a certain extent the same types of exercises, improvisations and role-plays can be used as within the artistically oriented perspective, but reflection is about the themes/ problems/feelings/relations that are investigated and not about the aesthetic form. The personal development perspective anticipates psychodrama but does not involve individual problems or traumas. Focus is on general human phenomena and on

93

group dynamics within this perspective. Conflicts are studied with regard to the influence on personal growth.

3. The critically liberating perspective focus on observing and changing power balance – to train the oppressed to break oppression. Forum theatre and other methods represent this perspective. Different role-playing methods can also be classified as belonging to this perspective on the assumption that an aspect of society is present. A combination of traditional drama tools with special awareness creating techniques is being used. Reflection is on how society influences and how the individuals can influence on society. Conflicts are studied from a power perspective.

4. Within the holistic learning perspective interest is focused on universal questions. What distinguishes the method most clearly from others is the teacher in role-technique. Folk tales, stories, historic and actual events can be the starting point for deeper studies of condition of mankind. Many different techniques can be used organised in sequences that give the students possibilities to experience human situations from different perspectives. Reflection is about learning about human conditions. Conflicts are studied as the force to human development.

2.3.3   The relationship of drama to conflict – basic concepts

Drama and conflict

As we have seen, conflict is central to drama and key words and concepts are shared between drama and conflict management. Not only are the words protagonist and antagonist used for the main parties in a conflict but the dramatic curve (dramaturgy) in almost every written drama describes the escalation and de-escalation of conflicts. Tension is an important element of every kind of educational drama and how the release of tension is handled creates learning, both in the educational drama and in the conflict-handling situation.

Humans are 'storytelling beings' who select, order and attempt to control their social and personal reality in terms of on-going narratives. Drama works by constructing a fictional narrative of particular ongoing relationships and conflicts, which may be controlled and changed at the will of the playwrights or participants. These fictional narratives are constructed in the very way in which real conflicts are construed. Me-

diators identify three classic phases of conflict: 'latent', 'emerging' and 'manifest'. They construe the phases and factors involved in escalation, and work towards de-escalation and resolution. This is, too the shape of classic drama - from seeds of conflict, to action and escalation in which the conflict emerges and is made manifest, and in the steps taken by the characters to de-escalate and resolve the conflict - successfully in comedy, unsuccessfully (without the help of the gods) in tragedy!

Furthermore, all the areas of situation and relationship that are explored by dramatic action are central to real-life understanding and stable relationships. Drama is about the clashes and conflicts of personality, of values, of attitudes, of emotions, of interests both internal and environmental, of philosophy and ideology, of ethics and morals.

Pedagogical drama models are often used to define and diagnose the nature of conflict, as well as to present the circumstances that motivate adversaries to take particular action. These models examine conflict situations by re-enacting in a fictional context the dynamics of human interaction and motivation that lead to the escalation of conflict. In retelling/re-enacting, the participants expose their needs and clarify their motivations for certain action they has taken.

The intention in pedagogical models of drama is to deconstruct the simplistic classifications, which dominate perception and perspective-taking. It provides the participants opportunities to exhaust their points of view by playing the protagonists, or provides opportunities to deconstruct the enemy image by playing the antagonists or opportunities to view the conflict situation more objectively by playing the third parties.

Drama as a holistic model

Drama centrally depends on an emotion equally central to conflict resolution – *empathy* (the ability to identify not only cognitively but also affectively with others), to 'step into others' shoes' to some degree, and temporarily see the world from an alien viewpoint. Drama actually works through the simultaneous operation of both empathy and distance. The 'dual affect' (Vygotskij, 1974), whereby the participant "weeps in play as a patient, but revels as the player" permits both emotional identification and closeness to the conflict, and dispassionate awareness of the elements of that conflict, as many writers on drama have pointed out. Concomitant with this, drama permits the point-of-view (and the accompanying emotional orientation) to be changed or switched - within the conflict event itself: from protagonist to antago-

nist; from the centre of the conflict event to the edge: the supporting character/s, and interested onlookers or chorus; to outside the conflict event: the onlookers or audience.

Drama works as a holistic model to explore the interaction of all these aspects of personality and society, the cognitive and affective domain, the personal and the social need. Drama is in fact a very ancient and a very effective model of human behaviour and human relationships. Drama simplifies the contours of a conflict so that the important components can be seen as a whole. Drama is able to expose the skeletal aspects of conflict and subject it to analysis simply by having control over 're-enactment'. Since drama is at least once removed from real life the concept of aesthetic distance enables the examination of components of the conflict such as role, motivation, behaviour, perspectives, the dynamics of escalation, etc.

If to be analysed is a relationship in conflict, the different phases in the conflict can be separated, explored and reassembled and at the same time the emotional content and the subjective meaning attached to the conflict can be made visible. Drama's deepest purposes are in animating the model, letting us see the structure of the conflict clearly, while acknowledging and retaining all the emotional and subjective factors that have shaped the conflict in the first place.

Role theory and drama

The Psychodrama, Drama in Education and Theatre of the Oppressed movements have already laid much of the groundwork for drama's use in conflict handling. In preventing, mediating or resolving a conflict, the protagonists and mediators must understand the nature of the roles that are assigned and what may or may not be negotiable. The centrality of role-play as a dramatic technique has naturally involved the close investigation of the nature of role, and thus invoked the whole field of role-theory and the social construction of role in real life. A repertoire of role-drama techniques has then been developed as part of the pedagogy to permit the examination of people's status and positions in the dramatic situation, the particular role or roles that they hold in that situation, and the postures and behaviours they adopt in maintaining the role(s). This is in fact their very purpose. The improvisation techniques by Johnstone (1981) in exploring and revealing status and power in human relations have been highly influential.

96

Though the function of drama in education is to simplify moments of life so that they can be comprehended on a stage or acting space, drama is actually more complex than real life in the way it engages three quite distinct contexts simultaneously: the real life context, the fictional dramatic context and the context of the performative event. The participants have three sets of roles. Their interaction and overlay of these on each other, the invocation and suspension of each of them, are what provide the learning potential:

1. The participants in real life belong to different families; they are all at a particular school for the same general purposes participating in a drama class, in a particular room, with a particular teacher. All participants may have a relatively fixed relationship with each other in terms of status. On a day-by-day basis the roles are fixed.

2. In the fictional context of the dramatic event in which they perform as actors, they take the roles of characters. How they play those roles will determine the nature and the narrative of the play. In this context the real life context is at least partially suspended, to allow the dramatic narrative to unfold - the teacher may become the one who needs help, or may be abused, without consequences in the real context.

3. In the context of the performative event, the drama lesson, they have another set of roles: as playwrights, directors, actors and audience of the dramatic event they are engaged in creating together. Within any dramatic event, whatever the genre of drama, participants and teacher are there to fulfil one or several of four basic functions:

   - As playwrights (also improviser or dramaturge) they create and structure the fiction, invent the situation, characters and storyline.

   - As directors (also leader, teacher, narrator) they manage the context of the event and the fictional context.

   - As actors (participant, role-player) they play out the characters in the fictional context.

   - As audience (also spectator, critic) they watch and listen, receive, observe, respond and reflect on the dramatic action (watching the action from inside or outside, deliberately changing one's point of view on the situation, sitting down in post-drama de-briefing, discussion and reflection, and even re-creating the experience in another art form, of painting, poetry and song, or writing).

In process-oriented theatre forms, such as TIE and forum theatre, the relationship is fluid too. Process drama is the most process-oriented of all. The participants may take on all of the functions, sometimes simultaneously: for example, in experiential role-play, a teacher may enter the action unexpectedly as teacher-in-role to provide a new ingredient; alternatively, a participant may - in character - say or do something to move the plot forward, or change its direction. Both are operating as playwright as well as actor.

2.3.4 Participant and audience

It is necessary here to clarify what 'audience' in dramatic role-play means. This may be, but need not be, *an* audience. A role-play may take the following forms - the first two of which are not strictly role-play at all, though they are often miscalled that:

External audience

An external audience may involve (usually) two participants reproducing a conversation or action in front of an audience of fellows or assessors who are watching to see if the actors are reproducing the procedures correctly. This may be with a prepared script, or it may be improvised from an outline scenario.

In this form, which is particularly common in the use of role-play in vocational training, the audience and the actors are clearly distinguished, with the focus of the activity on providing an accurate imitation or representation to the audience, either as learners, or as assessors. The actors have to concentrate their efforts on making the action visible and clear.

No audience

However, one of the major contributions of the Drama-in-Education movement is to have identified that significant learning occurs through the experience of the improvised dramatic action, the role-play itself. For this, the concentration needs to be on what is happening in the dramatic context. In its simplest form, experiential role-play, the actors should be empathising so completely with their characters that the action proceeds spontaneously, authentic to the situation. If the learning is occurring in the action itself, an external audience is unnecessary, in

fact becomes an encumbrance. The action may not be clear to those outside the action - especially in an intense and secret discussion, for instance. Moreover, if the actors are aware of the audience it distracts their concentration from being immersed in the situation and leads to self-consciousness. Furthermore, if they then try to play to the audience, to make the situation clear to them, it distracts from their own authentic enactment (it takes a very skilled and experienced actor simultaneously to empathise with and project a character). So a number of role-play forms have evolved with a different concept of audience entirely:

- In whole-group role-plays all the learners are involved in a situation as different characters, sometimes with the teacher too (as teacher-in-role). Periodically, or at the end, the action will be stopped (or break down) for the participants to reflect on what they have experienced, to discuss, debrief or negotiate the next phase of action. This reflection is the audience function delayed, observing retrospectively and critically what they themselves have been through.

- Simultaneous role-play in pairs or groups permit a large class or group to engage in and experience together situations only involving a few people - such as scenes of manifest conflict in families or work situations. At the end, the participants report back, discuss and compare their experiences - again the retrospective audience reflection.

Intermediary audience

In either of the above forms, some participants may be withheld, as 'monitors' of the action. They will be briefed to observe the role-play, unobtrusively, and note particularities to be fed back to the participants in the reflection. Sometimes participants will take it in turns to be monitors and role-players. This is a kind of 'intermediate' audience, neither wholly inside nor outside.

- A variation of this is where the 'monitor' is briefed to observe the action, and then intervene at a particular point, to provide a new character, and thus a new dramatic ingredient or constraint.

- Participants may be asked to act out a situation to an audience of other participants - a scene they have prepared, or one that they have already role-played experientially. The actors remain in their roles

while the audience then become active participants and interview the characters, finding out more about them or giving them advice.

- Only one step further, and the audience may be invited to intervene in the action itself - and this turns the audience into Boal's 'spect-actors', and the role-play effectually into 'Forum Theatre'.

Following from the above, a drama incorporates both audience and actor within its essential structure - embodying the roles and points-of-view of the participant and the observer. More significantly, although in modern Western Theatre the actor and audience are usually kept as distinct roles for different people, in some forms of traditional theatre and contemporary process drama, these two positions can be exchanged and interchanged. This is significantly true of the two major movements in drama education. Drama-in-Education chooses to talk of 'participants' rather than actors and audience, and Theatre of the Oppressed has coined the term '*Spect-actor'*.

2.3.5   Sub-text and Dramatic modes

Drama works through exploring and making manifest *sub-text*. In real life the sub-texts of interactions and relationships are always implicit (that's what *sub*-text means), the relative status of the participants, their motivations, attitudes, emotional orientations to each other, and the latent and incipient conflicts which those engender. In drama, the sub-texts drive and control the action, and the condensation of time, place and action enables the cause and effect of these sub-texts to be made explicit, or to resonate with the real lives of the participants.

An important element of this is that, particularly in conflict scenarios, the text and the sub-text may directly contradict each other as sets of motives conflict; drama permits these contradictions to be made visible. More than that, through the operation of dramatic irony the contradiction can be highlighted for examination coolly, and for the interpolation of humour and distance to illuminate the emotional heat.

Metaphor and Aesthetic Distance

Drama is always at least one remove from real life. Some forms can remain quite close to real experience, and quite personal and direct, while others generalise the experience into indirect, more metaphorical

100

and universally recognised experience (at least within the shared culture or cultures of the participants).

Some dramatic modes deal closely with real conflicts in which case enactment tends to be more literal and imitative of real life. Enactment becomes more of an affective process where one relives or experiences the past in the role of a participant. Such dramatic modes operate on a more therapeutic level. The participant is minimally distanced (under-distancing) from the real conflict. These dramatic modes tend towards greater levels of personalisation and are more literal in their presentation.

On the opposite end of the continuum we may find dramatic forms that generalise a personal conflict into a universally recognised experience. In such a case enactment would have to be more indirect, metaphorical or stylised. Metaphor plays a significant role in distancing the participant from the conflict (over-distancing) so that enactment becomes a cognitive process of remembering the past where the participant plays more the role of an observer. Aesthetic distance serves a pedagogical function in that the participant is able to play the role of participant and observer simultaneously, unlike in a real conflict. Depending on the intensity of the emotion and the need for distance the participant may choose to move from the role of participant to observer and back.

Figure 2.1 illustrates how certain dramatic modes encourage greater levels of distancing as one moves further up the vertical continuum from the level of personalisation to generalisation. Similarly some dramatic modes are focused on participants exploring and experiencing a dramatic situation while at the other end of the continuum are dramatic modes that focus on participants presenting the dramatic situation to an audience in performance. Moving along this horizontal continuum from the experiential to the performance mode reiterates the pedagogical function of 'distancing' in different dramatic modes and its relationship to the examination of conflict and human relationships. The original idea comes from Bolton (1984) and has been further developed by Grünbaum (2000).

Level of generalisation
Metaphorical/Abstract/Indirect

Process drama   Conventional theatre
                                                      Children's theatre

                      Theatre-in-Education

Children's play   Theatre for Development

Personal development   Performance role-plays
Drama-in-education   Forum Theatre

Experiencing   **Performing**
Mode   **mode**

    Role-play training

Sociodrama   Rainbow of Desire

Psychodrama

Level of personalisation
Literal/Imitative/Direct

Figure 2.5.   Dramatic modes in a two-way continuum

2.3.6   Drama processes

To engage in the re-enactment of a dramatic situation, participants commonly undergo and processes such a contract that clarifies the context and purpose of the re-enactment. They take part in warm-ups for building trust and physical embodiment and in exercises for the development of artistic skills and understanding of artistic functions. Furthermore they engage in enrolment and lastly de-enrolment and closure aimed at bringing the participants fully back to reality.

The dramatic contract

Before any dramatic event can happen, the participants must agree to abide by the basic *contract* of drama, which is that they will share the willing suspension of their disbelief in order to enter together the fictional world of the drama. Put simply, if all the participants do not accept the fiction, then the fictional world cannot be created - drama can only happen voluntarily, at the will of all the participants. This is important for another reason, that drama provides a 'safe space'- where the participants agree that whatever happens in the fictional and real life contexts will remain distinct - the fictional conflicts that the characters have will not be translated back into the participants' real lives (and conversely, that the tensions and affections of real life will be suspended in the interest of keeping the fiction authentic). Drama is above all an ensemble art form, depending on every participant playing their part to create a unified whole.

This means that the contract must be prepared for, the space and the event made special. In a conventional theatre this is easy - the building and all the design features are designed to help the audience and actors know and follow their roles, everyone's motivation is congruent and nobody is there unwillingly. In a classroom, training or counselling group, the messages may be entirely different - the building is designed for something entirely different, and members of the group may have resistance to the idea of using drama, they may not like or trust each other or the environment.

Therefore, preconditions have to be established. Participants have to be helped to establish and accept the contract. There must be trust that the other participants will honour the rules of the context of the dramatic event, and of the fictional context. An ensemble must be created. Sometimes these rules need to be spelt out and agreed explicitly. Often, dramatic games and exercises are used, firstly as 'ice-breakers', then more specifically develop trust and concentration, or to focus on the particular theme of the drama work to be undertaken. This is akin to the preconditions for conflict mediation; before any progress can be made, the antagonists must at least agree on the need to have the mediation and on the establishment of the equivalent safe space - the mediation context mirroring drama's context of the dramatic event.

Safe space

Safe space in an educational environment, and especially within drama in education, is essential for learning to take place. Safe space makes it possible for participants "to dare", to share lived experiences, ideas, and opinions. The learning environment must be a safe space for expressing personal experiences, developing a feeling of trust, and accepting each other's differences, such as gender, age and cultural background. Only when the learning space is perceived as safe, the willingness for sharing and the courage to step into the shoes of others will be established.

To develop an atmosphere where the participants could comfortably disclose and explore their true feelings and thoughts about a conflict situation through drama activities is crucial for the continuing process. A deliberation contract concerning work principles has to be agreed upon early in the programme.

Circular seating arrangements, where equality and communication are physically supported, create safe space. In this arrangement, no single individual is seen as superior and face-to-face communication is possible. To sit in the circle and talk is the most equal of meeting, because everyone is able to see all the other participants and each individual sits equally close to the centre. In addition to seating arrangements, the notion of movement and action also builds safe space. Moving tables and chairs gives students permission to also move about the room and that it is safe to do this, just as it is safe to move among different ideas and to play in the processes of discovery.

With a heterogeneous student population, creating safe space may require additional thought, sensitivity, and strategies. Creating safe space is essential in contributing to quality in education. Hence the circle may be used at the beginning, as an ending and closure to an exercise, lesson or workshop.

Preparation

As part of ensuring that the contract is established, and the functions distinct and agreed upon, time and care must be devoted to preparing and focussing the participants. An appropriate mood and readiness must be established. In a conventional theatre, this is assisted by the physical location and surroundings - for audience the design of the theatre and the rituals of attendance, for the actors the set, costumes and

make-up. In other settings the location may actively work against the operation of drama - in the classroom, the clinic or the street, which were all designed for something entirely different. The implication of this is that a preparation phase is necessary. As in theatre, the participants need a warm-up, both physical and psychological. In the various forms of role-play and process-oriented drama, the participants need focussing, and sometimes warming-up into an appropriate mood and physical readiness where they are able to embody their roles with ease.

Enrolment and derolment/closure

If, in addition, they are being asked to take a role, even if this is just a generalised shift of viewpoint ('this has happened to you - how do you react?') it is crucial that they are enabled to focus intellectually and emotionally so that they can operate and respond appropriately. Particularly if they are asked to adopt a realistic, personalised or complex role where they will be expected to empathise and respond as a specific character perhaps very alien to their own disposition, it is crucial that time, space and appropriate preparation be allowed for this enrolment process. This often takes the form of concentration exercises, preliminary improvisation, in-role writing, artwork or physical tasks. To "step into another person's shoes" means entering into a changed mental mode and demands a measure of preparation. To "take off the shoes" may similarly be necessary. People who have taken on the roles of troublemakers or victims, oppressors or the oppressed in a conflict may need careful help to derole. A reflection phase for the whole group of participants supports the derolment and closure.

Artistic skills

Another demand of drama is the development of artistic skills among the participants. Both of the above interventions entail complex artistic management skills:

- the teacher or participant must time the intervention appropriately to his or her reading of the developing action (and often this kind of intervention will be in response to that artist having read the action as lacking something or needing a boost in dramatic tension),
- the intervention needs to be made at the appropriate energy level to create an awareness among the other participants of what is happening, without stopping the action.

In order to do this, the intervener's need must be very clear and operate at the level of both text and sub-text. Textually, within the fictional context, the 'character' is appearing and intervening in a way that can be seen to be in character and something that the other characters can relate to and take their cue from. Sub-textually and simultaneously, the intervention needs to remind the other participants of the context of the event, that the player is intervening for a purpose to which s/he wants the other players to respond - which they will understand, and which they are likely to be willing to accede to.

These are subtle artistic skills - just as there are pre-conditions for the very dramatic event to occur at all, the necessary artistic background and support must be provided, or the drama will either disintegrate, or remain on the most superficial level, in terms of useful learning a poor experience. Learning and artistry are closely and proportionally related.

Reflection

Reflection has been described as the ability to examine one's own actions, thoughts and feelings (Newell, 1992) and thinking purposefully to gain new insights, ideas and understanding. Reflective thinking is closely related to experience. In drama in education the key to learning is not only the experience itself but also the reflection related to that experience.

In role-play (as well as in most structured educational drama events) the effective phases are (a) initiation, (b) experiences and (c) reflection. Initiation is the stage of preparation, dramatic enrolment and/or rehearsal. The experience is the drama itself. Reflection may follow the drama or be interwoven with the drama itself, and may include public enactment, re-enactment or performance, but is nonetheless a distinct phase.

Drama generates its own meanings, which cannot easily be reduced to simplistic resolutions and assumptions or written down as discursive text. However, it is possible, and in some cases necessary, to reflect upon the meanings, those personal to each participant and those shared by the group. This important phase, sometimes debased by the misleadingly cognitive term 'debriefing', firstly happens spontaneously, participants chatter energetically, and gradually formulate their considered responses. The same may be seen following an intent process or impro-

vised drama. In the case of inexperienced participants, particularly in role-play exercises, this reflective process may need to be carefully structured, and even to begin within the dramatic fiction itself. If there is a teaching, counselling or clinical component, this is particularly crucial, to make explicit the nature of the experience just shared, and what useful knowledge may be derived from it. The combination of experience and reflection enhances learning.

2.3.7 Constraints

Drama and theatre entail a number of limitations and constraints, which spring from the nature of the art form itself, which must be borne in mind when contemplating using drama in the arena of conflict management.

Fictionalised context

Drama is fictional and voluntary. Even if dealing with 'real-life' events, the dramatist or participant group selects and adapts the totality of those events to construct and manipulate the dramatic narrative *at will*. The drama can only happen at the conscious will and intellectual and emotional commitment of all the participants. For instance, where the conditions for either empathy or distance are not present, the depiction and exploration of conflict through drama become either impossible or spurious.

Dramatic action and tension

The space needs to be made as congruent as possible with the fictitious situation - in a personalised role-play it is difficult for participants to respond appropriately as, say, adults in a crisis interview if there is an external, amused audience, or they are being asked to sit at desks or on the floor. Appropriate time must be made for the action, in order to fully establish concentration and dramatic tension. Dramatic tension, essential to the effective operation of any drama, will only occur if the characters' goals and purposes are strong, their tasks are clear, and the action is delayed by appropriate constraints. This is crucial.

There are basic skills necessary for participants in any form of drama, including:

- the ability to make and accept the contract and the functions appropriate to the genre,

- the ability to sustain and take responsibility for shaping dramatic action appropriately,
- the ability both to respond and to interact sensitively and appropriately as an actor.

Protection and exposure

For the actor/participant in drama, there is a dialectic relation between protection and exposure, exploration and communication. On the one hand, the dramatic fiction permits the freedom to explore an unknown landscape, emotional or ideological, without consequences. This may involve the participant in exploring his/her own personal experience, but protected from embarrassing or wounding disclosure ('this is not me, it's only the character'). On the other hand, the presence of an audience imposes the need to perform, to make actions recognisable to communicate them to others, which to a degree means fixing or typing them. It takes a skilled actor, with time for rehearsal, to marry these conflicting demands authentically. To ask inexperienced participants, for example in a role-play, to take on a new situation, often with little enrolment or preparation, and act it out immediately, or with a few minutes preparation for an audience, is asking for inauthentic emotion and superficial understanding of the dynamics, as well as inept performance. An audience of colleagues may in fact be more exposing than strangers, disposed to laugh at the depiction rather than scrutinise the behaviour depicted. It is important in all process-oriented dramatic genres, such as role-play, to decide whether:

1. the purpose is spontaneous exploration, in which case there should normally be no external audience that will interfere with the concentration - at most a video-camera or a couple of briefed monitors, or

2. the purpose is communication through performance - in which case time should be scheduled for rehearsal and fixing. In forum theatre, for instance, the 'spect-actors' are invited to participate, but not until rehearsed actors have enacted the problematic situation.

Questions not answers

Although the drive of dramatic tension is towards complete resolution of conflict, very rarely in adult drama is the happy ending either complete or believed. The primary job of the dramatist is to problematise, to raise the questions that a particular situation or group of characters

can generate. The art of the dramatist is in making the conflict as hard as possible to resolve. The meanings that emerge from the drama, even after appropriate reflection, are never fully explicit. There is an inextricably interwoven framework of intellectual and emotional understanding, indirect and non-discursive. They cannot be told, but they can and do resonate with the participant's real life experience. They are therefore very difficult to convey to others, even other participants, especially in words. All drama itself can do in the field of conflict mediation is to provide a range of alternatives, and to make visible other ways of looking at the conflict, other possible avenues to explore.

Unpredictability

Throughout history, drama has been viewed ambivalently by those who make, manage or invoke stability in values or social systems. This is because, though it may be realistic, drama is not linear. Beyond what in dramatic terms is the infantile desire for simple resolutions and the triumph of the morally impeccable hero over pure evil, drama's meanings are provisional and ambiguous. The heroes we sympathise with, from Hamlet to Mickey Mouse, are flawed or just a little demonic - that's what makes them recognisably human. The more problematic the character's motivations and actions, the more we can exercise that dual affect of empathy and distance, emotion and thought. These resonate with the real life experience and understanding of the participants in ways that can be apprehended but not fully comprehended or explicated. This makes drama in education very suitable for setting up difficult and wayward challenges in say, training situations where the client is being trained to deal with the vagaries of real life conflict, such as counselling or police work. Drama is a quite unsuitable vehicle for linear processes, for wherever 'standard procedures' or 'correct procedures' are needed in real-life.

Impermanence and transience

Drama is a lived event, experienced in the moment, and only partially recaptured afterwards through reflection or replay. This makes any dramatic action, or behaviour observed within a drama, very hard to analyse cognitively or use systematically. Observation and reporting, or use of video or tape-recording, can help recapture the moment, but only through a transformation, which must be recognised as such. In particular, written dramatic text - script or transcript - is extremely unreliable,

because it can only deal with the verbal text (and perhaps a few of the grosser non-verbal actions, embodied in annotations or stage directions), and not reveal the interplay of language, action and gesture, text and sub-text.

2.4   A conceptual integration of conflict management and drama

In this chapter we are constructing a conceptual bridge between the two fields of educational drama and conflict management by exploring basic definitions and typologies, as well as the basic procedures used in each field. The intention is to highlight areas of convergence and divergence, and to look for complementarity and the possibility of synthesis. An effort is made to construct an analytical model that encompasses the fundamentals of each field, as well as to explore in what ways practices and procedures can be integrated.

2.4.1.   Similarities

Both fields deal with conflict and transformation. Drama and conflict are directly related – one standard definition of drama is as 'the dynamic embodiment of a conflict situation involving two or more parties' (O'Toole & Wall, 1991: 1). While this is a considerable oversimplification, it is certainly a useful working definition, accurate for most of the drama that most people come across most of the time. In this definition, people agree to be other than themselves and to enact a conflict – real, imagined or adapted – in a fictional context. Educational drama in schools focuses on the pedagogical uses of involving young participants in the exploration of personal and social conflicts. Drama democratised the theatre-making process by handing it over to the participants. Theatre-in-education and drama-in-education developed participatory and intervention techniques that replace the notion of a passive reception or audience for drama with that of participants invited into the dramatic fiction to negotiate ways of dealing with crisis or conflict.

Of the several approaches to conflict management, cooperative approaches such as mediation seem to share the most similarity with educational drama. The two fields independently arose contemporaneously,

and they have much in common in terms of philosophy, values, goals and processes. Both fields, for instance, have emerged as components of a broader 'progressive' and humanistic approach to building a more humane world. Both carry with them the promise of a more egalitarian and democratic society. Both emphasise a participatory approach in which people are empowered to explore or resolve human problems according to their own understanding. Both work on the assumption that the structures of society, cultures and relationships are alterable. Both are based on group work with voluntary participation plus skilled facilitation, normally without an external audience. Unlike their conventional predecessors in both fields, both narrative and transformative mediation and ED are associated more with process than with endproduct, with negotiation more than with decision-making. Dispute resolution processes such as mediation developed as a reaction against the adversarial nature of the formal legal system, and is based on a more communitarian view of justice. Mediation assumes that mutually satisfying solutions to conflicts can be found when parties voluntarily come together to identify disputed issues and explore their mutual needs in order to find new creative options. Thus, both mediation and ED are concerned with ownership – there is a structure and procedures, but the right to initiate these lies in the hands of the participants, who also own the right to change them as they go along and to make their own decisions.

Most of the terminology used to express the conflict components in the two fields is different, but a few key words, significantly, are not: the very names given to the two main parties in a conflict: 'protagonist' and 'antagonist' both derive from Greek drama, and obviously words such as 'role' and even 'dramatic' often crop up, as we have shown earlier in the chapter. More than this, some terms are used in common, and where the terminology *is* different, it is often possible to give a direct translation from one to another, or use a simile in common, as may be seen from the table below.

Many other definitions are also shared. Narrative mediation views conflict in terms of emerging narrative - just as drama is expressed through narrative. In latent or emerging real-life conflict, much of the underlying attitudes and motivation and some of the action is still hidden from the participants, and for others these form a revealing subtext, just as it is in the early stages of a drama, before the crisis (see the section on sub-text in 2.3 for a more detailed explanation.

Table 2.3. Terms for components of conflict and drama

Conflict terms	Drama terms
Tension	Dramatic tension
Party	Character
Content/issue	Theme/issue
Attitudes	Attitudes
Behaviour/conflict handling	Dramatic action
Negotiation/mediation	Negotiation/mediation
Escalation	Building to crisis
Crisis	Crisis
Resolution/outcome	Resolution/denouement

Among the several theories of conflict, the general theory of escalation, which integrates dispute resolution, social-psychological and communication theories aptly explain the dynamics of interpersonal conflict, and this is often mirrored in the fictional conflicts enacted in drama. The action/reaction processes which lead to conflict escalation, and the stages of that escalation: debate or discussion > polarisation > destruction > outcome (that may be resolution or further destruction) correspond to the model of dynamics provided by the classic structure of Greek drama and the 'well-made play' of formal theatre, in terms of *tension,* with one important difference, which will be discussed later in this section.

The table below, along with the diagram of tension, shows the correspondence in structure and nomenclature that characterise the two fields.

In conflict theory and classic theatre 'tension' means the escalating intensity of attitude, behaviour and content. In both, tension is uncomfortable, discomforting. In real conflict this is involuntary and malign; in any dramatic conflict, whether formal theatre or process educational drama, tension is indispensable, a major factor in the very pleasure of the audience or the participants.

Table 2.4.   Terms for the escalation of conflict and drama

Conflict terms	Drama terms
Incipient tension	Expectant tension
Latent conflict & discussion	Exposition
Rising tension	Rising tension
Emerging conflict	Emerging dramatic action
Crisis: polarisation into manifest conflict	Peripateia – the crisis revealed
Escalating tension peaks	Climax - the tension peaks
Understanding, breakdown and de-struction	Tragic denouement – cathartic un-derstanding
Satisfactory resolution – happy end-ing	Comic denouement – happy ending
Compromise	Open ending
Debriefing	Reflection, de-roling
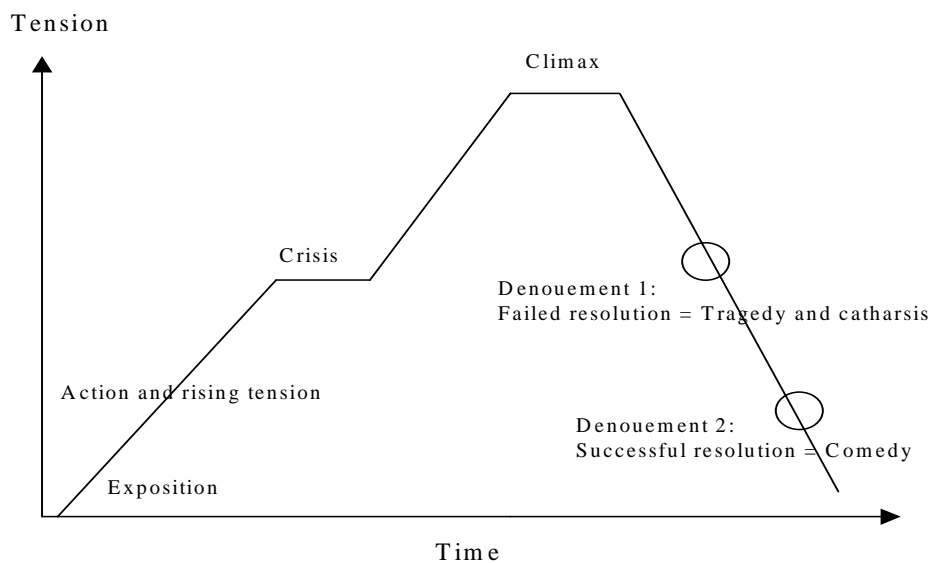
Diagram 2.1.   Model of dynamics provided by the classic structure of Greek drama

The model also ties in loosely with the three-stage analysis of conflict in terms of 'latent', 'emerging' and 'manifest' as described in Chapter 2.2.3. The climactic plot of a play, as first mapped by Aristotle in his *Art of poetry* (330 BC, variously translated, e.g. Hamilton-Fyfe, 1940) in terms of its effect on the audience, has an *exposition* phase, roughly corresponding to the *discussion* phase in conflict analysis, where background information is revealed to the audience – the parties are introduced and the 'latent' conflict content is hinted at. There follows a period of *rising action* where the protagonist and antagonist take increasing action against each other – the 'emerging' conflict - to a point explored in detail by Aristotle that he labelled *peripateia*; this word has been variously translated as *crisis* and *discovery/revelation* and incorporates the meanings of both words. Though not specifically labelled in formal conflict analysis, in common parlance this is the *point of no return* where the 'emerging' conflict becomes 'manifest' and without some kind of change or intervention will inevitably become destructive. In both real life and theatre, the manifest conflict reaches a peak, and then either the destructive dynamic is completed leaving the tensions unresolved, but replaced by *breakdown* or *tragedy* - a reflective sense of finality that Aristotle interpreted as purgation – *catharsis*, as Boal points out, an egotistical state that is in itself satisfying and discourages further action (Boal, 1979) or somehow the tensions are eventually entirely resolved in the dénouement of *comedy*, or 'win-win' as mediators put it. As defined by Aristotle and commentators right up to the middle of the twentieth century, 'comedy' is not necessarily a humorous play, it is one with a happy ending.

In real life, complete resolution of conflict is achieved not without hardship and very rarely – and as the classic comedy often shows, such complete resolution can only be achieved by divine intervention – the *deus ex machina* that real life antagonists and mediators long to find. It is not surprising that in the pragmatic and sceptical twentieth century theatre that began with the *realism* movement, either of these complete denouements became rarer, and has been replaced with problematic compromises and open endings more reflective of the outcomes of most real life conflicts. As conflict management specialists themselves agree, there are no complete solutions in human affairs, and this reminds us that conflict resolution is a relative, not an absolute concept. In general, of course, the playwright and the educational drama leader are concentrated on the first part of the tension graph – making the

problem more interesting and dramatic by escalating the conflict –
while the conflict mediator must deal with the tension that has passed
the crisis, and become manifest conflict, and seek to de-escalate it. In
that way their purposes are the obverse of each other, of course: one
problematises the conflict, heating up (escalating) the tension; the other
seeks to de-problematise and manage it, by cooling (de-escalating) the
tension.

Educational drama does not work exactly like the well-made classic
play, anyway, though often the correspondences can still be seen. It is
also necessary to look at the differences.

2.4.2   Differences

There are some striking differences of approach between educational
drama practice and conflict management approaches such as mediation,
which define their specific nature and purposes. Immediately, of
course, while both may be about creating new states of understanding
through experience of conflict, and participants can only engage in both
drama and mediation voluntarily, one is for the purpose of giving pleas-
ure or learning, while the other is to relieve pain.

In the case of conflict management, the aim is to resolve or trans-
form the conflict into a less costly form of interaction, either control-
ling and managing the situation of conflict, or resolution. The aim and
tasks are therefore to terminate, reconcile or reach a settlement. Prob-
lem-solving mediation is initiated by one or more of the participants
with the aim of reaching an agreement on substantive issues in dispute.
In educational drama, the process is much more important than the
product, and in fact a satisfactory denouement cannot be achieved
without maximising the tension within the situation of conflict, though
it may be said that this is also true for narrative and transformative me-
diation. A fictional conflict is created and enacted, to explore and flesh
out a generic understanding of conflict by particularising it through
experiential enactment and reflection, with the aim ultimately of learn-
ing more about human nature, human relationships, social issues and
the participants' selves. Educational drama is a pedagogical process in
which usually a facilitator takes the initiative for starting the process,
and doesn't necessarily demand a solution; often – and most produc-
tively – there is no clear-cut resolution, or the outcome is ambiguous,
with each individual participant left to draw his/her own conclusions.

115

The twin almost contradictory components of human relationships, *empathy* and *emotional distance* are central to both conflict management and educational drama, but they are used quite differently. In a real interpersonal conflict, there is often neither empathy for one's antagonist, nor distance from the relationship, and among the main purposes of the mediator is to seek to achieve enough of either for the combatants to be able to change their behaviour in order to de-escalate the conflict. In educational drama, empathy and emotional distance can be invoked, suspended and played with at will. The participants start by invoking empathy to enter the situation 'in the shoes of another' – their fictional character – and can fine-tune empathy and antagonism at will, to 'play' with the situation. They can move from empathy to varying levels of emotional distance from the conflict by varying the form of dramatic activity used, in order to reflect on the situation from outside the role, or from a range of levels of engagement and empathy. Having said that, we will return to this crucial factor of emotional distance shortly, as it is actually more complex than this.

There is an interesting difference in the levels of emotional and cognitive engagement that operate in ED and mediation that probably relate to their historical origins in Western society. Conflict management approaches such as mediation emerged as reaction against adversarial legal systems and other power-based methods of conflict handling, and until the recent emergence of new models such as *narrative mediation* and *transformative mediation* they were still coloured by the rationalist approach of the Western legal mind. There is still a preference for 'left-brain' solutions as may be seen in the long-standing popularity of idioms such as 'conflict analysis' and 'problem-solving'. Generally, the tendency is to cool down overheated conflicts so that they become amenable to 'rational talk'. Problem-solving mediation still adheres to a rationalist and cognitive approach.

ED arose as part of the movement in progressive schooling, and more recently in constructivist education, in part as a reaction against the rationalistic, cognition-centred and emotionally impoverishing schooling provided by Western education systems, seeking to incorporate an educational aesthetic. However, it also reacted against the passive product-centred values of conventional theatre, where students are seen primarily as audience. It sought to recreate the theatrical aesthetic as a holistic experience, re-creating the students as 'percipients' – participants in making, performing and reflecting on drama, through the

116

reintegration of cognition with emotional, sensory, kinaesthetic and spiritual understanding. The processes of making drama - playing with conflict, building a group dynamic and an ensemble, physically and emotionally embodying the conflict through role-play and other forms of enactment – are to help participants understand and reflect on the nature and structures of conflict, and, more broadly, on themselves, human nature, relationships and social structure. Educational drama integrates the affective and cognitive, the personal and social, the physical and abstract in understanding.

2.4.3. Towards an integrated model

Both drama and cooperative conflict handling practices such as mediation can be said to deal with two types of reality: *everyday reality* and an *alternative reality* which in some ways mirrors real life, but is not identical with it. Both fields are working with the interplay between the two realities but in different ways.

Drama work focuses on the alternative reality of the enacted drama – a *safe space* for role-play and improvisation. All participants know that they are not the characters they play, but they also know that the fiction has some basis in real-life 'drama'. During their dramatic activities, the participants observe themselves and the others, and after each session (sometime within it) their observations are shared and reflected on. The learning that happens is assumed to be relevant and close to real life.

Mediation also focuses on an alternative reality, but with a more consequential aim of letting this reality re-define the real-life situation. Again, the alternative reality is a *safe space* (safe here meaning physically or emotionally protected, or both) in which the parties can process the conflict constructively, without having to fight it out. In adjudication, the alternative reality is set up as a *meta-conflict,* which takes the form of a notional legal trial, occurring in the theatricality (meta-theatricality, anyway) of the court. When it comes to mediation, it may sound strange to talk about a *meta-conflict* as so much emphasis is placed on *cooperation* between the parties in exploring the original conflict. However, it is probably a very realistic concept, as every mediator knows that cooperation is only one aspect of what happens in the mediation theatre. The meta-conflict represents another type of reality because it requires that the parties mentally step out of their original conflict positions and enter into a new type of game. Mediation cannot

happen if the parties do not accept a collective new fiction: "Now we will act as if we will be able to find a solution that satisfies both of us." The real outcome is not always in accord with the fiction.

If we examine more closely those two complementary/contradictory conditions for drama and conflict management to work: *emotional closeness* and *distance*, we may see a closer correspondence. Closeness within the meta-conflict (if not actual empathy) seems to be a major factor in conflict resolution. The meta-conflict must be close enough to everyday reality for it not to be discarded as utopian, unrealistic or ir-relevant to the original conflict. This is accomplished in mediation by letting the parties represent themselves in the mediation process. In difficult conflicts the mediator sometimes meets with representatives, but there is always a risk that the parties will feel alienated from the whole process. The risk is even bigger in a courtroom, where most of the process is taken over by professionals in *roles* such as the 'judge', 'prosecutor' and 'counsel for the defence'. We shall examine what we mean in this context by '*roles*' later this section.

In drama, closeness to real-life conflicts can be achieved in many ways. How close, depends on how safe the 'safe space' is. A group that likes and trusts each other will be able to work much more closely to real-life conflict than one where real conflicts or at least tensions be-tween and among individuals and groups exist. DRACON has used a diversity of approaches of varying levels to create the fictional conflicts to play with. For the second kind of group, it may be safer to work from distanced stories, where the generic or archetypal structures of conflict can be seen, recognised and be seen to be relevant, but not intrude with consequences for the real relationships of the participants. However, mostly, DRACON has started with the participants identifying conflicts from their own or their peer groups' lives, and devised the drama work from them. Always, however, real-life stories of conflict have been fictionalised, the real being woven together with the imaginary to pro-vide the 'safe space' where the conflict may be played with and re-flected upon with emotional distance, even by the originator of the story.

The drama facilitator almost never works with the real, raw conflicts of the participants, though the basis in the recognisable and the real, is crucial, of course. Unless the participants are able to touch base with some aspect of everyday reality, neither performance nor narrative will be believable nor able to convey what may be called 'dramatic truth' –

118

and so not useful for authentic learning about real-life conflicts. It is a paradox of dramatic fiction vis-à-vis reality that for the safe space to be achieved from the moment when the participants step into their alternative reality the drama facilitator works to achieve emotional distance from which the participants can choose to engage in empathic closeness and out again, in a controlled oscillation. In most cases, the mediator works for immediate closeness. However, the mediator is sometimes in a similar, but not identical, situation to the drama leader: the antagonists may already have a 'negative closeness', where they understand their opponent´s Achilles heal only too well, and the mediator needs to establish a measure of emotional distance to engage in rational conflict handling. In other situations where the participants are strangers the mediator works to increase empathy and understanding. If a real conflict surfaces during the drama sessions, the two parties are not encouraged to work together on the real conflict. This is because in order to understand conflict, it is necessary often in drama to work *unilaterally,* from the point of view of one protagonist. The mediator, working on symmetrical conflicts (see 2.2) must be impartial - bilateral or multi-lateral – working with all parties at the same time. That makes drama particularly relevant to investigation of asymmetrical conflicts, where gross power imbalances mean the conflict handling needs to be unilateral. That is the very underpinning of *Theatre of the Oppressed*, which seeks only to change the situation and behaviour of the oppressed protagonist, not the oppressor (see 2.3). Some other forms of Theatre for Development and Drama and Theatre in Education also take unilateral conflict management as a guiding principle – to raise awareness of the nature of oppression and the possibility of liberation, for training in advocacy and giving a voice to the disempowered. When participants are offered the opportunity to take part in the dramatic fictions, to try out what it feels like to be powerful and experiment with the most effective ways of dealing with misuse of power, they are being given valuable instruments to use in their real-life struggles.

This is another reason why participants are discouraged from playing their own characters, or characters in situations like their own, when a drama has been derived from a real situation. It underlines the importance in drama, already mentioned, of emotional distancing. If a participant plays himself or herself, s/he naturally identifies with that character in the drama, and the freedom to explore different pathways of action and reaction are diminished or closed. Even if ego needs and

defences do not undermine the willingness to engage openly in the drama, the close identification robs the protagonist/participant of the ability to think afresh. However, the success of mediation is clearly dependent on the capacity of the parties to step out of their on-going real-life conflict, into that safe space where the more cooperative meta-conflict can be enacted. In the new game, the parties are still usually playing themselves in the safe space, but the rules are different. The safe space may even permit the revelation of more truthful understandings of the nature of the conflict and their own behaviour than in the real-life battle. When processing their perceptions and emotions, parties can sometimes feel their sympathies shift, that the original conflict was an illusion, evaporating like a nightmare on waking.

In drama too, the interplay of distance and closeness often creates dreamlike situations where participants appear to observers (and themselves) to demonstrate considerably greater knowledge of human behaviour than they could reasonably be expected to have, or a psychological depth of understanding about the characters they are playing which is far beyond their everyday awareness and knowledge. The drama weaves together into an integrated 'lived-through' experience the memories of their real experiences, their observations, the stories they have read and shared, and the products of their imagination. One school of thought in drama education, inspired by Jung, that was particularly notable in the 1970s, goes considerably further and claims that the participants, in the deep engagement of drama, can tap into the collective unconscious and find the archetypes of conflict from the history of humanity, that are beyond everyday reality, but that subtly influence it – and that it is these archetypes that are displayed in the sophisticated understanding of the participants.

2.4.4. Two key integrators: Role Theory and Masks

Among the broader theoretical frameworks of social psychology, the one that perhaps sheds most helpful light on both drama and conflict management is that of role-theory – which significantly has also emerged and developed over the last thirty or forty years, illuminating in turn the emerging fields of drama education and alternative methods of conflict handling. The notion that humans engage in multiple roles, each with different sets of behaviour, language and signals, and each part of a multiple self or set of selves or personae, also can bring to-

gether in shared understanding of practical action practitioners who hold entirely conflicting philosophical positions on the nature of identity. Jungians and Marxists, biological determinists and post-modernists can all find common ground in the phenomenology of role – and all are found among drama educators and mediators. The role-theorists themselves are well aware of the value of the dramatic metaphor in explaining real life. One of the earliest and most influential, Erving Goffman, picked up, particularly in his classic text *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Goffman, 1971) on the old medieval and renaissance concept of *Teatro mundi* (the 'theatre of the world' that so absorbed Shakespeare: "All the World's a stage…", "life's but a walking pageant, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage…").

Role theory aided the exploration of two elements of behaviour vital to both conflict management and drama education. The first of these was the concept of *multiple personae* – social behaviour consists of the presentation of a range of 'identities' for each social context we construct, or have built-in, or both (depending on where your philosophical orientation lies) a set of responses that are appropriate for that situation and relationships – these are fine-tuned by factors such as the status, the particular role and its purpose, and the individual's motivations and attitudes, that together make up the postures adopted to maintain the relationship. From *teatro mundi* comes another very useful metaphor to help both conflict managers and drama educators explore the multiple identities necessary for these presentations: the *mask*. For the essentialist, especially the Jungian, the various masks may each reveal parts of the 'true' self, and our instinctive familiarity with these masks is because they are all derived from shared archetypes in that collective unconscious. However, at the same time they also allow the 'naked and vulnerable' self to stay hidden safe behind the shared and acknowledged meaning of the mask. For the post-structuralist, the masks provide a way of actually defining the very nature of identity, and perhaps even more important, of allowing humans to construct a stable and comprehensible 'self' in a way that distinguishes it from 'other' and in turn permits the individual consciousness to scaffold a constructed understanding of 'self <u>and</u> others'.

This provides a further explanation for the importance of that 'alternative reality' to both drama educators and mediators: it creates another *frame*, whereby all the masks or postures take on a shift of meaning, because there is a newly imposed difference of distance between the

121

participants/protagonists and their situation. This shift provides new opportunities to examine the taken-for-granted 'realities' of the behaviour in real-life role. They offer opportunities not only to *reflect* on these, but *refract* them so that new perceptions are inescapable, and new insights possible.

2.2.5. Integration in the project

Drama in the DRACON Project has not been used as a replacement for conflict management procedures such as mediation, nor as a direct aid to them in providing additional techniques for the resolution of real-life conflicts. At the inception of the Project, this was seen as one of the intentions by some of the conflict resolution specialists in the team, but not by the drama specialists. The initial theoretical negotiations between the two specialised disciplines resulted in a mutually agreed purpose for drama vis-à-vis conflict – as a strategy and set of techniques and instruments for *indirect* conflict management. All four of the projects have pursued this investigation of drama as a way of assisting young people to deal with conflict for themselves, by providing them with knowledge and understanding of the structures and processes of conflict, not by intervening directly with drama in their own conflicts. Certainly, all four of the projects have invited and encouraged the students to use their own conflicts, and their emotional engagements with those conflicts, as integral parts of the drama-work, but as the raw material only. Thus real-life has been processed through the aesthetic of dramatic fiction and - particularly in the case of the Malaysian Project - of other art forms of dance, music, visual arts and creative writing, into metaphor, each narrative an embodied metaphor, lived-through in the moment by the students, but framed and reflected-on through discussion and distanced action both simultaneously and after the event. The students' real stories haves guaranteed a measure of authenticity and emotional engagement in the drama. The fiction and the framing provide the distance necessary for usable understanding, that can be transferred from the fictions to illuminate real-life conflicts with the cool light of cognitive understanding – the Brisbane DRACON Project was for a while even called 'Cooling Conflicts'.

It has been our hypothesis that armed with this knowledge, adolescents will themselves have the tools to address and even prevent the conflicts that do arise in their lives. Within the Project, this has been

122

variously described as 'conflict handling competence' and 'conflict literacy', a competence and literacy that emerges from and infuses the whole participant group or class, and is processed by each student into a personal understanding and sense of agency or empowerment: 'I no longer feel so helpless in the face of conflict, because now I understand how and why conflicts happen and what I can do to de-escalate them'.

The addition of peer-teaching in the Brisbane and Swedish projects, and follow-up theatre-in-education in the Malaysian project have provided another dimension for indirectly dealing with real conflict through the increased sense of agency generated in the project. These extensions seek to reach beyond the individual students, and beyond the joint understanding of the participant group or class, into the wider community of the whole school, and even the local community – to begin to change the culture of schools. Students who have shared their understanding of 'self' and 'other' through an artistic experience that has created conflict literacy will also have shared a new familiarity and empathy, and a respect for that 'other' based on a stronger understanding of the selves within the 'self' and what those selves together can achieve.

References

Aristotle (330BC – 1940) *Aristotle´s Art of poetry* [A standard translation by W. Hamilton-Fyfe]. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Sections 6-11, 13.

Aristotle & Buckley, T.A. (1992). *The Poetics*. Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books.

Astor, H. & Chinkin, C. (1992/2000). *Dispute Resolution in Australia*. Sydney: Butterworths.

Bagshaw, D. (2004). *Verbal abuse and adolescent identities: Marking the boundaries of gender.* Doctor of Philosophy, University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Bagshaw, D. (2003). Contested Truths: Disclosing Domestic Violence in Family Law Mediation. Chapter 3, Part 1 "Preparing for Success: Opportunities through Education". In W. J. Pammer & J. Killian

(Eds.), *Handbook of Conflict Management* (pp. 49-84). New York: Marcel Dekker Inc.

Barba, E. & Savarese, N. (1991). *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology*. London: Routledge.

Boal, A. (1979). *Theatre of the Oppressed*. London: Pluto.

Bolton, G. (1979). *Towards a Theory of Drama in Education*. London: Longman.

Bolton, G. (1984). *Drama as Education*. London: Longman.

Bolton, R. (1986). *People skills - How to assert yourself, listen to others and resolve conflict*. Australia: Prentice Hall.

Boulle, L. (1996). Law and Mediation: Conflict or Coalescence. In D. Bagshaw (Ed.), *Conference Proceedings, Second International Mediation conference: Mediation and Cultural Diversity* (pp. 12-16). Magill: University of South Australia.

Bush, R.B. & Folger, J. (1994). *The Promise of Mediation. Responding to Conflict Though Empowerment and Recognition*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Cohen, R. (1995). *Students Resolving Conflict. Peer mediation in schools*. Glenview, IL.: GoodYearBooks.

Cornelius, H. & Faire, S. (1989). *Everyone Can Win. How to resolve conflict*. East Roseville: Simon & Schuster.

Courtney, R. (1968). *Play, Drama and Thought*. London: Cassell.

Curle, A. (1971). *Making Peace*. London: Tavistock Publications

Dana, D. (1989). *Managing Differences. How to Build Better Relationships at Work and Home*. Connecticut: MTI Publications.

Deutsch, M. (1973). The *Resolution of Conflict: Constructive and destructive processes*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Edelman J. & Crain, M.B. (1993). *The Tao of Negotiation. How to resolve conflict in all areas of your life*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.

Eller, J.D. (1999). *From Culture to Ethnicity to Conflict. An anthropological perspective on international ethnic conflict*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Eriksson, B., Lindberg, O., Flygare, E. & Daneback, K. (2002). *Skolan – en arena för mobbning* [The school – an arena for bullying]. Stockholm: Skolverket.

Fisher, R. & Ury, W. (1981). *Getting to Yes. Negotiating agreement without giving in*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Fisher, R. (1990). *The Social Psychology of Intergroup and International Conflict Resolution*. New York: Springer.

Folger, J.P., Scott Poole, M. & Stutman, R.K. (1997). *Working Through Conflict. Strategies for relationships, groups, and organizations*. New York: Longman.

Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* London: Penguin.

Friberg, M. (1973). Maktpolitik, maktbalans och fred: En teoretisk kritik av realismen [Powerpolitics, Balance of Power and Peace. A Theoretical Critique of Realism]. Gothenburg University: PADRI-GU Papers.

Friberg, M. (1996). Conflict Resolution in Sweden and Malaysia – A Survey of Cultural Conditioning. In D. Bagshaw (Ed.) *Conference Proceedings, Second International Mediation conference: Mediation and Cultural Diversity*, (pp 102-110). Magill: University of South Australia.

Fyfe, H. (1996). *Drama in the context of a divided society*. In J. O'Toole & K. Donelan (Eds.), *Drama, Culture and Empowerment*. Brisbane: IDEA Publications.

Galtung, J. (1967). *Theories of conflict.* Oslo: PRIO Papers.

Galtung, J. (1996). *Peace by peaceful means. Peace and conflict, development and civilization.* London: Sage Publications.

Glasl, F. (1992). *Konfliktmangement. Ein Handbuch.* Bern: Paul Haupt Verlag.

Glasl, F. (1999). *Confronting Conflict. A first aid kit for handling conflict.* Stroud: Hawthorn.

Goffman, E. (1971). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life.* London: Penguin.

Grünbaum, A. (2000). *Psykodrama och Dramapedagogik. En jämförande studie ur ett svenskt perspektiv*. (Psychodrama and Drama Pedagogy. A comparative study from a Swedish point of view) Stockholm: PsykodramaAkademin.

Hamilton-Fyfe, W. (1940). *Aristotle's Art of Poetry.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Haynes, J. (1996). Beyond Diversity: Practicing Mediation. In D. Bagshaw (Ed.), *Conference Proceedings, Second International Mediation conference: Mediation and Cultural Diversity* (pp. 119-128). Magill: University of South Australia.

Hetherington, E.M. (Ed.). (1983). *Handbook of Child Psychology: Socialization, Personality and Social Development.* New York: Wiley.

Jabri, V. (1996). *Discourses in Violence. Conflict analysis reconsidered*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Johnson, D.W. & Johnson, F.P. (1991). *Joining Together. Group theory and group skills* (4th Ed.). London: Prentice-Hall International.

Johnson, D.W. & Johnson, F.P. (2002). *Joining Together. Group theory and group skills* (8th Ed.). Boston, Mass.: Allyn and Bacon.

Johnson, D.W. (1996). Reaching Out. Interpersonal effectiveness and self-actualisation (6th Ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Johnstone, K. (1981). *Impro. Improvisation and the theatre.* New York: Routledge.

Karim, W.J. (1990). (Ed.). *Emotions of Culture. A Malay Perspective.* Oxford University Press.

Keen, S. (1986). *Faces of the Enemy. Reflections of the Hostile Imagination*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.

Kellermann, P.F. (1992) *Focus on Psychodrama. The therapeutic aspects of psychodrama.* London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Keys Young. (1996). Research Evaluation of Family Mediation Practice and the Issue of Violence. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

Knezevic, D. (1995) 'The healing Power of Theatre'. In P. Taylor C. Hoepper, Eds. *Selected Readings in Drama and Theatre Education.* Brisbane: NADIE Publications

Landy, R. (1991). The Dramatic Basis of Role Theory. *The Arts in Psychotherapy, 17,* 223-230.

Lantieri, L. & Patti, J. (1996). *Waging Peace in our Schools*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Lederach, J.P. (1995). *Preparing for Peace. Conflict Transformation Across Cultures*. New York: Syracuse University Press.

Lepp M. (1998). *Pedagogiskt drama med focus på personlig utveckling och yrkesmässig växt. En studie inom sjuksköterske- och vårdlära-*

rutbildningen [Drama with focus on personal development and professional growth: A study carried out in nurse training and nurse education]. (Studia Psychologica et Pædagogica, 133). Stockholm: Almquist & Wiksell International.

Lowen, A. (1976). *Depression and the Body: The biological basis of faith and reality.* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Maines, B. & G. Robinson. (1992). *Michael's Story: The 'No Blame' Approach.* Bristol: Lame Duck Publishing.

Mindell, A. (1995). *Sitting in the Fire. Large group transformation using conflict and diversity.* Portland, Or. Lao Tse Press, Portland, Oregon.

Moore, C. (1996). *The Mediation Process. Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Newell, R. (1992). Anxiety, accuracy and reflection: The limits of professional development. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *17*, 1326-1333.

Nolte, J. (2000). Re-experiencing life re-aligning art with therapy and education. In J. O´Toole & M. Lepp (Eds.), *Drama for Life: Stories of adult learning & empowerment.* Brisbane: PlayLab.

O'Farrell, L. (1996). Drama and Cultutal Identity. In J. O'Toole & K. Donelan (Eds.), *Drama, Culture and Empowerment.* Brisbane: IDEA Publications.

Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at School*. Cambridge: Blackwell.

Pao Kun, K. (1996). Uprooted and Searching. In J. O'Toole & K. Donelan (Eds.), *Drama, Culture and Empowerment.* Brisbane: IDEA Publications.

Parry, D. (1991). *Warriors of the Heart*. Coopertown: Sunstone Publications.

Pearce, W.B. (1976). The coordinated management of meaning: A rules-based theory of interpersonal communication. In G.R. Miller (Ed.), *Explorations in interpersonal communication* (17-35). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Pikas, A. (2001) New developments of Shared Concern Method. *School Psychology International*, *23*(3), 307-326.

Powell, K., Muir-McClain, L. & Halasyamani, L. (1995). A review of selected school-based conflict resolution and peer mediation projects. *Journal of School Health*, *65*(10), 426-432.

Rapoport, A. (1960). *Fights, Games and Debates*. New York: Vail-Ballou Press.

Rigby, K. (1997). *Bullying in Schools – And What to do About It.* British Edition. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Rigby, K. (2002). *New Perspectives on Bullying*. London: J. Kingsley.

Rigby, K. (2003) *Stop the bullying: a handbook for schools* (Revised edition). Melbourne: ACER.

Rosenberg, M.B. (1999). *Nonviolent Communication. A language of compassion*. Encinitas: PuddleDancer Press.

Sandole, D. & Sandole-Staroste, I. (1987). (Eds.). *Conflict Management and Problem Solving: Interpersonal to International Applications*. London: Frances Pinter Publishers.

Schonmann, S. (1996) 'The Drama and Theatre Class Battlefield'. In J. O´Toole & K. Donelan (Eds.) *Drama, Culture and Empowerment*. Brisbane: IDEA Publications.

Smigiel, H. (2000). Making it Work: Educational Drama in Vocational Training. In J. O'Toole & M. Lepp (Eds.) *Drama, Adults and Learning*. Brisbane: Playlab.

Sternudd, M. (2000*). Dramapedagogik som demokratisk fostran?* Fyra dramapedagogiska perspektiv – dramapedagogik i fyra läroplaner [Educational drama as a means of fostering democratic values? Four perspectives in educational drama – educational drama in four curricula] (Uppsala studies in education, 88). Uppsala, Sweden: Uppsala University.

Thomas, K.W. & Kilmann, R.H. (1974). Thomas-Kilmann conflict MODE instrument. Tuxedo, NY: Xicom.

Tillet, G. (1991). *Resolving conflict: A practical approach*. Sydney: Sydney University Press.

Turner, V. (1982). *From Ritual to Theatre*: *The human seriousness of play*. New York: Performing Arts Publications.

Vygotskij, L.S. (1974). 'Play and its role in the development of the child'. In J.S. Bruner, A. Jolly & K. Sylva (Eds.), *Play: Its role in development and evolution*. London: Penguin.

White, M. (1989). The externalising of the problem and the re-authoring of lives and relationships. *Dulwich Centre Newsletter, Summer*.

Wall, D. & O'Toole, J. (1991). *Senior Drama Syllabus*. Brisbane: Board of Senior Secondary School Studies.

Windslade, J. & Monk, G. (2000). *Narrative Mediation. A new approach to conflict resolution*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

3 Macro and micro approaches to conflict and drama

Dale Bagshaw, Mats Friberg, Margret Lepp,
Horst Löfgren, Birgitte Malm and Ken Rigby

3.1 Macrosociology of schooling

3.1.1 Introduction

The DRACON project focuses on conflict handling and drama work in a particular setting, the schooling system. This setting will have an impact on the type of conflicts that adolescents are engaged in as well as the conditions for using drama for conflict handling. In this section we use a macro-sociological perspective and argue that schooling is an institution for learning, which in many ways is adapted to industrial society. Schooling was a marginal phenomenon in pre-industrial society and will probably become radically reformed with the move into post-industrial society. This theoretical perspective leads to definite hypotheses about the characteristics of and differences between the educational systems in the three countries Australia, Sweden and Malaysia.

An elementary school education for all was introduced in Sweden in 1842 and the first national curriculum was introduced in 1878. In Australia free and compulsory schooling was proposed from as early as 1833 by Governor Burke as a way of 'removing that convict taint… a solution to Anglo-Irish sectarian conflict… to develop political loyalty to England' – and almost incidentally to create a literate and numerate new generation of Australian-born citizens – or as more cynical commentators have put it 'to ensure working class children grew up to be working class adults'. Free and compulsory schooling was introduced in all the states between 1868 and 1872 (Wight, 2004).

In Malaysia nation-wide schooling was not achieved until after independence from Great Britain in 1957. Since independence Malaysia

130

has seen explosive industrial growth. Around 1990 industry passed agriculture as the most important sector of the economy, as measured by its contribution to GNP. At that time 86% of all children between 6 and 16 years of age went to school.

Malaysia is a country undergoing rapid industrialisation and therefore its system of schooling is still in a phase of expansion, while Australia and Sweden have moved far into post-industrialism where the functions of the school are changing. With this in mind, we are able to reflect on how the schooling systems in Malaysia, Australia and Sweden differ and how the differences affect the DRACON programmes in the three countries.

3.1.2   Schooling in post-industrial society

Australia and Sweden have been industrial societies for more than half a Century. Malaysia has recently become an industrial country. At the same time all three countries are undergoing a process of structural change that could be called post-industrialisation. The introduction of advanced information technology in many parts of the economy is often seen as the decisive factor in the movement towards post-industrialism. However, post-industrialism is an integrated phenomenon affecting all aspects of society. A fully developed post-industrial society does not yet exist anywhere on the globe. Different visions of the future are possible. However, futurists seem to converge on some basic characteristics of post-industrial society (see e.g. Bell, 1976; Toffler, 1980; Inglehart, 1997; Castells, 1999). These characteristics are:

- a revolution in information and communication technology,
- globalisation of economic and political life,
- glocal orientation (global and local rather than national),
- multiculturalism (more cross-cultural encounters),
- increasing pace of change (more social and technological innovations per unit of time),
- knowledge and human creativity (not land or capital) as the most important factors of production,
- workforce distributed in the tertiary (service) rather than the primary (agrarian) or secondary (industrial) sector,
- people working with other humans rather than with things,

- temporary project or network enterprise (not household or factory) as the basic unit of production,
- decentralization of work and individualization of labour,
- creative, flexible and project-employed labour,
- non-patriarchal "sibling-society" with post-materialist (self-actualisation) and post-modern (relativistic) values,
- subjective well-being (post-industrial) rather than mere survival (pre-industrial) or economic growth (industrial) as the leading societal project,
- collective consciousness, culture and politics increasingly shaped by entertainment and symbolic manipulations in the media.

As from the late 20th Century we live in a so-called future chock – life is in a constant flux and the world is becoming less and less predictable (Toffler, 1970). This places many people under some kind of stress, which is often expressed as conflicts and tensions in their workplaces and their homes.

This is one of the reasons why there will be an increasing demand for better ways of handling conflicts in post-industrial society. Another reason is the increasing frequency of cross-cultural encounters that will take place in a world were national borders are melting down. Ethnic, national and religious cultures are inert phenomena and there is not much evidence to support the assumption that the basic attitudes and values of different people, who are brought into contact by global communications tend to converge in the short run (Friberg, 1999). For decades and even generations we will have to live in a multicultural context and accept associates and partners who practice a variety of different life styles. This meeting of different cultures may threaten some old certainties.

Post-industrialism poses some definite challenges to the established system of schooling. The traditional school, which is modelled on the factory, is dysfunctional in a network society. The open as well as the hidden curriculum have to prepare children for their future tasks in the system. How is this possible if the post-modern world is insecure, complex and in rapid change? The children cannot be pre-programmed for a given task. Nor is there a secure knowledge base grounded in a universally accepted science. If post-industrial working life requires flexible

and creative workers with a capacity to re-programme themselves towards the endlessly changing tasks of the production process, the same qualities have to be cultivated in the core procedures of the learning institution. A network society requires an educational system that is organized as a network rather than as a factory or a bureaucracy.

A new central concept could be the *learning net[9]*. It does not start with a school, a manager, a teacher and the question of what children need to learn. Instead, it starts with the students, their need of knowledge and the question of what resources and persons they could connect to in order to get the knowledge they needs. In this way education would be a self-initiated process not confined to childhood and adolescence but accessible to everyone during the whole lifecycle through alternation between study and practical work. What to study, when, where, with whom, how etc., will be a matter of personal choice.

The learning net is a radical alternative to the present school system. The dissolution of the established system is a process that has already started in many countries. It has been and still is a long process of slow erosion regarding concepts such as nationally standardized curricula, teacher-centred learning, the classroom, lessons, age-grading, hierarchy, compulsory attendance, examinations, pre-planned learning etc.

In the short run the new tendencies will show up as reform efforts within the basic structure of schooling. We will recognise most of the ideas that have been put forward by reform pedagogical movements during the whole 20th Century. Here the emphasis is on individual freedom in learning, self-initiated learning, development of emotional intelligence and social skills, problem based learning, learning by doing, learning by experience, group work, teambuilding, networking, computer aided learning etc.

In the future there will probably be a greater need for drama in educational systems. Drama can be seen as a method of developing many highly valued personal qualities in post-industrial society such as creativity, self-expression and emotional intelligence. As opposed to computer-based individual learning, drama is based on group processes and contributes to the development of social skills. At the same time it is a voluntary method where you learn by doing and from your own experience and have a lot of fun at the same time. This seems to be an un-

---

[9] The idea of the learning net is derived from Illich, 1970.

beatable combination. It could open up a great space for learning through drama in the near future. Drama is in tune with the post-materialist values of individual freedom and self-expression, but it is also an answer to the post-industrial need of workers with social skills. More and more people are working with other people rather than with things in post-industrial society. People will need a lot of training to navigate in the new psychosocial landscape and drama could very well be the ideal arena for such training.

3.1.3 Conflicts at school

What can be said about conflicts at school given the theoretical background presented here? First of all we postulate that the transition between industrial and post-industrial eras will be characterized by crises, conflicts and contradictions. More specifically we postulate a basic conflict between the industrial schooling system with its rules and regulations and post-industrial values where authorities are challenged and students demand more freedom. This conflict emanates from the fact that attendance in school is obligatory and coercion often leads to resistance. We expect the conflict to sharpen with the age of the student but also when we move from early industrialism to late industrialism and further into post-industrialism for the simple reason that individual freedom becomes an increasingly important value along this path of development.

At the phase of early industrialization the school system has to be fairly authoritarian, given the need to instil the unfamiliar discipline of the factory into a population of mostly peasants and artisans. The fact that the students, though coerced, tend to obey their new masters at school has a lot to do with the lingering presence of patriarchal gerontocracy. There are fathers and elders, mothers and relatives, chiefs and priests who uphold traditional religious and communal values and help reinforce the disciplining process at school.

The typical situation in middle and late industrialism is very different. Research indicates that conflicts between students and school are endemic even at the peak of industrialism. Even though the school system has a homogenizing effect, i.e. socializing everybody into the roles of industrial society, it tends at the same time to reproduce the social class system, that is to say the social inequalities based on one's position in the system of production. In order to understand this phenome-

non we need to see the school as an arena or meeting ground for different social forces such as teachers, students, parents and administrators. Each actor brings his/her own background and culture into the school. The school managers formulate an explicit ideology, which is translated by the teachers into daily practice at school. The operative ideology will be conditioned by the often-robust middle class background of the teachers. The students will meet the ideology and practice of the school with their own culture, which derives partly from their peers – the youth culture – and partly from their parents – more often than not a lower class culture. Thus a clash between social classes or ethnic cultures often happens at school.

With the transition into late industrialism and early post-industrialism we postulate an increase in the frequency of non-confrontational resistance now spreading beyond working class children to middle-class children as well. Actually we predict a number of other social problems to increase at the same time, such as absenteeism, vandalism, bullying, stress and various psychosocial ills. These problems are building up to critical proportions as we move into early postmodernism. There are complex reasons for this prediction.

Many reforms will be tried out in the schools but as long as the hidden curriculum remains more or less unchanged only cosmetic improvements can occur. Obligatory schooling and disciplining of children in the factory model is simply incompatible with the emerging logic of post-industrial society, particularly with the anti-authoritarian freedom culture that children learn from their peers, from media and even from some parents. This incompatibility is sharpened by basic changes in the social system of authority associated with the emancipation of women and the demise of the patriarchy. It is common for both parents to have a profession. If most of their time and energy is directed to their working life, one can safely assume that less time will be devoted to taking care of their children. The result is a relocation of social and custodial functions from the family to the educational system. The school tends to be overloaded with new tasks it was never designed to handle. On top of the regular teaching tasks in the classroom the teachers are now drawn into curative, parenting and policing roles.

Mass media is another significant factor influencing the socialisation of the young. In many cases it seems that children have been brought up by entertainers on the TV-screen rather than by their busy parents. At school they may find their teachers boring compared to the TV-

entertainers. Leisure time, freedom and new exciting experiences are important to the new generation. They do not like hard intellectual work if it is not fun. However, if young people are genuinely interested in an activity that they enjoy they can sit for hours and learn a lot at a rapid pace, for example within computer technology. When the conventional school is unable to absorb students' life energy, this force is free to move in other directions, manifesting itself as passive resistance, noisiness and chatting rather than working.

Some increasing problems in school, especially student-to-student conflicts, are a simple consequence of the expansion of schooling itself. The number of years students spend in obligatory schooling tend to increase during the whole industrial phase. The youth have of course always been involved in conflicts, particularly during the unruly phase of adolescence. In pre-industrial society these conflicts were enacted in the villages and streets, today they happen on the school premises (Guggenbuhl, 1993). Therefore conflict management becomes a very important task for schools during late industrialism and early post-industrialism. The increase in incidents of conflicts happens at the same time as the teachers tend to lose their authority to the gang of student peers – a trend described above as the emergence of sibling society. Therefore the old authoritarian measures of school discipline do not work so well. The challenge is to build a new type of authority that respects the freedom needs of the students and to develop new constructive ways of handling conflicts.

The pressure on the school also comes from above. In order to meet the new post-industrial demands, the administrators will try out a number of management reforms such as adaptation of school units to local interests, goal or output based steering of the school unit, regulation of the teacher's workday, forced collegial cooperation, introduction of new school subjects and pedagogical methods, new methods of quality control etc. Many countries at this stage of development experience a significant growth in school bureaucracy and an increasing resistance by teachers against administrative control from above.

This analysis is supported by time budget and interview studies of teachers in technologically advanced countries (Hargreaves, 1994). Their findings can be summed up in the so-called *intensification thesis*. Teachers are facing higher expectations and more socio-therapeutic and custodial tasks are put on them. There are new demands from the school bureaucracy to engage in cooperation outside the classroom and

136

to implement pedagogical and organizational innovations (Malm, 2003). The workday is extended and there is less time for relaxation, for informal conversations with colleagues and for upgrading of teacher's knowledge. The intensification of the teacher role produces an overwhelming pressure on many teachers, which at first leads to lower quality of performance and later may result in 'burn outs'. No wonder many teachers are sceptical towards educational reforms that they believe will put an extra load on them.

3.1.4   Some comparative conclusions

The situation in Malaysian schools can be partly explained by characterizing Malaysia as a society in the midst of a rapid and vigorous industrialisation process[10]. It follows that the school system is still in an expansive phase. Educational opportunities have grown enormously since independence in 1957. The government has put a lot of resources into the educational system and education is highly valued by the population. Many poor people see this as the entry ticket to modern affluent society. In its phase of expansion every institution seems attractive and people believe in its social value. In Malaysia we expect teachers to be given high status and respect and many children, especially in the growing middle class, give their school and their teachers a central place in their life.

The industrial economy is not yet fully developed. As many as 16% of the labour force are still working in the agricultural sector and the rural-urban divide is quite noticeable in Malaysian society. Thus we can explain why the schooling system is fairly authoritarian and still partly based on religious and ethnic values. The educational system neither serves the local community (as in pre-industrial society) nor the individual (as in post-industrial society). The goal of education is national economic growth, nation building and a strong state. The whole system is a world in itself strongly separated from the rest of society. With the exception of urban schools, parents have little influence in the school. They dare not voice their criticism against the teachers, who are regarded as too high up in the hierarchy.

The Malaysian school by necessity contains many traditional elements that are considered to be out-of-date in the West, such as teacher-

---

[10] Some sectors of the economy are even moving into post-industrialism.

centred pedagogy, learning by rote, regular examinations, strict obedience to authority and so on. The students are urged to work hard during long schooldays followed by homework. Comparative studies of achievements in reading, writing and mathematics show that the system works well in this respect. In industrialised Asian countries students have in many evaluation studies in mathematics and science shown themselves superior to Western students (see e.g. Robitaille, 1993; Beaton, 1996; OECD-PISA, 2001; Hiebert, 2003). The question is for how long? When Malaysia rapidly moves into post-industrialism, the system will probably quickly reach its peak and then start to decline. However, we should not ignore the possibility that a fairly hierarchical and authoritarian system has a stronger staying power in Asia because of deep-rooted cultural values in this part of the world. This topic is explored in the next section.

The obvious conclusion is that there is at present very little space for alternative types of drama in Malaysian schools. The idea of student-centred learning is simply too radical for the established system. Thus, the DRACON programme had to take place outside the school curriculum. As to student conflicts we expect them to be managed by the teachers, counsellors and principals in a top-down fashion. The discipline system is probably efficient, judged by its own criteria. Teaching students to handle their own conflicts through for instance peer mediation would be an alien proposition.

Looking at schooling in Australia and Sweden after having studied Malaysia, we are struck by the differences. The major contrast is between a system in decline and a system in expansion. Here we are not measuring decline in terms of budgets and enrolment figures. We are talking about a crisis industry, which does not deliver what is was set out to do and therefore has become a major worry to the students, the teachers, the parents, the school managers, the general public and the politicians in the two countries. In our analysis this development could be predicted from the misfit between the old schooling system and an emerging post-industrial society. It is noteworthy that this diagnosis is not yet generally accepted. The enormous problems piling up in the educational system have already produced a regressive current urging us to go back to the old authoritarian pedagogy (Enkvist, 2000). When facing widespread dissolution of discipline and norms, lower standards of achievement, growing noise and discomfort in the classes and teachers turned into social workers, some people cry out for strict discipline,

138

concentration on knowledge, more grades and ability grouping. However, the opposite tendency is stronger, to move in the direction of more freedom but with responsibility in parity with this freedom.

In our understanding, the problems in the educational system are at least partly repercussions of a deeper process of structural change in society as a whole. The basic structure of schooling is still there but increasingly questioned from the point of view of post-materialist values, post-modern forms of thought and post-industrial principles of organisation. We have argued that the educational system is undergoing rapid changes and reforms, which loosens up the rigidities of conventional schooling without as yet leading to a new stable order. Numerous experiments are made with private/independent schools, increasing self-steering of the local school unit, parents' rights to choose a school and students' rights to choose forms of work and so on. Thus, the space for drama and other forms of student-centred learning is growing in democratic and technologically advanced countries like Australia and Sweden.

At the same time conflicts and other social and psychological problems at school have multiplied. Swedish investigations indicate that many students are unhappy at school. Stomach trouble, dizziness, depression, sleeping problems and other psychosomatic and stress-related symptoms have increased during the last decade among 15 year olds, especially girls (Danielson, 2003).

According to another investigation, 20% of the students in Grade 8 report that they have been exposed to violence (beaten, kicked or other forms of violence) at least once during the school term. More boys have been exposed to violence than girls. They are also the main perpetrators of violence as a survey of Swedish students in Grades 7, 8 and 9 has demonstrated (Lindström, 2001). The conventional disciplinary system does not seem to be able to handle these conflicts well. Something more is required. We would like to find out if this "something more" can be provided by DRACON.

3.2   Cultural aspects of conflict and drama

From the beginning, the DRACON project was conceived as a cross-cultural study. We wanted to develop some insights, if possible, into how processes of drama and conflict handling are conditioned by the

cultural context in which they take place. As Australia and Sweden belong to the same cultural sphere, the Western one, and Malaysia to the Eastern sphere, the biggest contrast and the most interesting comparisons are between Malaysia and the other two countries.

In the DRACON field studies, especially the Malaysian study, we will present mainly anecdotal evidence (based on participant observation) about the cultural aspects of drama and conflict processes. However, in this section of the book we will present a theoretical analysis of how culture conditions drama processes and conflict handling procedures. The following questions will be discussed in this section:

- What is meant by culture?
- Which are the cultural traditions in the three countries?
- What are the differences between the cultures?
- How does culture condition conflict handling and drama?

Understanding culture

The concept of culture is hard to understand as it is like the air that we breathe – we cannot see it and it is largely outside of our consciousness. The DRACON International team therefore took a reflexive approach in our annual meetings to raise our awareness of the cultural and cross-cultural aspects of our research.

There are many ways of understanding culture, which differ between the various disciplines of anthropology, linguistics, cultural psychology, sociology, history and the humanities. Contemporary cultural studies' accounts of culture view it as a 'way of life':

> In short, 'culture' is a term that can designate, in Raymond Williams' phrase, the 'whole way of life' of a social group as it is structured by representation and by power. It is not a detached domain for playing games of social distinction and 'good' taste. It is a network of representations – texts, images, talk, codes of behaviour, and the narrative structures organising these – which shapes every aspect of social life (Frow & Morris, 1993: viii).

The concept of culture is complex. Culture can be understood as learned systems or shared patterns of traditions, myths, legends, rituals, beliefs, values, norms, meanings and symbols that foster a shared sense of identity and community. To varying degrees these patterns and

140

meanings are passed on from one generation to the next, although cultures continuously evolve and change and vary from one location to another and from one historical period to another. In defining culture, Matsumo distinguishes between *individual* and *shared* cultures:

> The set of attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviour shared by a group of people, but different for each individual, communicated from one generation to the next (Matsumo, 1996: 16).

Matsumo points out that there may or may not be a similarity between a person's individual culture and the corporate shared meanings of the group's culture which exists in the social consciousness beyond the individual. Most individuals have multiple identities, which vary according to time and context, or to put it another way, they have multiple lines of identification in terms of factors such as their age, occupation, gender, class, ethnicity, language, history, sexuality, politics and nationality. Any one of these may be more prominent than another in different contexts or points in time.

All of the countries in this study could be described as multicultural. The concept of *multiculturalism* refers to "the coexistence of many cultures as recognized parts of society" (Lum, 1999: 81). In terms of ethnicity, Australia, for example, is currently the second most multicultural society in the world. However in the broad sense multiculturalism also includes other cultural factors such as gender, national origin, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation and so forth (Pederson, 1988). Cultural *diversity* refers to "differences in and among societal groups based on race and/or ethnicity, gender, age, physical/mental abilities, sexual orientation, size and other distinguishing characteristics" (Lum, 1999: 81). Lum predicts that in the next 50 years or so immigration and fertility patterns will lead to increasingly multiracial, multicultural and multiethnic societies (ibid: 83), a phenomenon experienced by the three countries involved in DRACON.

Okun, Fried, and Okun, (1999: 9) identify key elements of culture about which scholars are in agreement:

- Culture includes all aspects of human life by which groups impose order and meaning on their life experiences.
- It involves communication between all the senses in patterns that are recognisable by members of a given culture.

- The way that language is used in a culture shapes meaning and experience which in turn shapes the language.

- The most effective method for understanding one's own culture is to compare it to other cultures.

- Members of a specific culture experience their culture as "the way things are and the way things should be", a phenomenon called ethnocentrism, our natural tendency to assume that everybody else views and understands the world in the same way that we do which often leads to cross-cultural misunderstandings.

- Culture influences the way we understand, view and interpret conflict, for example, and the way that we respond to it. Conflict exists in every culture, but there is great variation between cultural groups in the rituals and practices that have developed around it.

Culture is often described by using the metaphor of an iceberg with the visible, uppermost layers such as fashions (hairstyles and clothing), food, popular music, language and verbal and non-verbal symbols bearing some similarity to an outsider or observer. These visible signs are usually indicators of underlying values and can act as signs of belonging and help to bind groups or sub-cultures together. The deeper layers of the iceberg, however, are hidden from view and include values and meanings which are diverse and harder to change (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001).

Social constructs such as race, ethnicity, class, status, disability, health and gender are categories created by the dominant cultural group in a particular community, institution or society. Who has high status or who is included in a particular category that is considered as 'normal' or 'powerful', and who is marginalised, 'othered', pathologised or considered as 'deviant' is usually determined by the dominant individuals or groups in a culture and is also reinforced or maintained through the dominant cultural, social, medical, legal and economic discourses (McHoul & Grace, 1993). From this perspective, for example, the term 'adolescence' can be seen as a category that refers to a socially-constructed and culturally-produced period in the life span at a particular point in history and in a particular cultural location. Dominant discourses about what is 'normal' adolescent behaviour with regard to conflict, and the status of adolescents in a society or group, vary from

142

one cultural group and location to another and from one point in history to another.

The concept of *enculturation* refers to the way that individuals become members of a culture, or of many cultures (to varying degrees), through "observation, experience and instruction" (Okun, Fried & Okun, 1999: 5). In individualistic cultures developmental theorists promote the idea that during adolescence an individual must differentiate the self from others in order to develop a separate identity (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989; Payne, 1997; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969), an idea that is essentially Western. This conception of identity focuses on the need for individuals to have an internal locus of control and sense of security (Maslow, 1943), whereas in collectivist cultures one's sense of self is controlled externally, and includes the extended family and community (Okun et al., 1999). Adolescents are subjected to many influences including the school's culture and subcultures - curricular, pedagogies, authority structures and peer/friendship groups; their family and local community; their ethnic/racial/class groups; and the youth culture and associated consumer industry - fashion, music, popular literature, magazines, books, television and films (Kenway & Willis, 1993).

Cultural identity is a historically variable but culturally specific and it is based on a commonality of experience, perspectives, language, traditions and environments. Language is important as it is central to the construction, negotiation and communication of meaning and thought and enables us to categorise, label and make sense of a situation in similar or different ways. Westerners, for example, tend to focus more on "things and objects, rather than on processes and relationships" (Okun et al., 1999: 8)

Ho's (1995) concept of *internalised culture* helps us to understand how in Western cultures individuals use categories as a shorthand way of understanding and communicating about events and experiences. Other cultures use different approaches to understanding and communicating which are either more abstract or more particular. Categorising can be useful but can also lead to stereotyping others by putting them collectively in boxes instead of seeing their unique aspects – such as "all Malaysians are cooperative" or "all women are powerless relative to men". As previously explained, people belong to a number of categories - such as age, gender or ethnicity – one category may be more relevant in some situations but not as relevant in others. Categorising or

naming allows attributes to be attached which can then lead to differentiation and regulation.

Emic dimensions of culture are culture-specific and *etic* dimensions are culture-common. All cultures share some broad, universal characteristics, such as the need for food, water, shelter, belonging and so forth which are often manifested in similar ways but these needs may be met in different ways in different cultures depending on history, the environmental context and the tools and technologies available.

Cultural dimensions and national profiles

Each culture evolves ritual practices, prescriptions, patterns, cultural myths and symbols to support them. Language is centrally important and dominant discourses in the culture reinforce or favour certain dimensions over others. Some dimensions tend to cluster together and become mutually reinforcing. For example independence, individual rights, egalitarianism, control and dominance are common in Western cultures and interdependence, honour and family protection, authoritarianism and harmony and deference are common in Eastern cultures.

A key question for us in the DRACON project was: how do we know the position of a culture based on these dimensions? We can take a more or less educated guess on the basis of comparisons of observations, anecdotal evidence, historical analyses, text analyses and so forth. There are also a number of cross-cultural attitude surveys that have produced some quantitative data. One study that the Malaysian and Sweden DRACON teams referred to was Hofstede's survey of IBM employees in 53 countries based on a questionnaire with 60 questions about the employee's basic values and beliefs. In Hofstede's definition culture is a group phenomenon and it is "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another" (Hofstede, 1991: 5).

After a factor analysis, Hofstede identified four components, whereby the cultures were found to differ:

- *Power distance*: "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally" (ibid: 28).
- *Individualism-collectivism*: "Individualism pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose. Everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family. Col-

144

lectivism as its opposite pertain to societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive ingroups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty" (ibid: 51).

- *Masculinity-femininity*: "Masculinity pertains to societies in which social gender roles are clearly distinct (i.e. men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success, whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life); femininity pertains to societies in which social gender roles overlap (i.e. both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life)" (ibid: 82). It should be noted, however, that Hofstede's work had been criticised for failing to recognise that sex and gender are not the same thing (Degabriele, 2000) as highlighted by by feminist theorists of difference in the 1980s and queer theorists in the 1990s. Whilst sex is biologically determined, gender is socially constructed. People are enculturated as feminine or masculine, regardless of their sex. He recognised that people have multiple and varied aspects of their identity but claimed that identification on the gender level of his hierarchy is determined "according to whether a person was born as a girl or as a boy" (Hofstede, 1991: 10). He reinforced the notion that individuals and nations have an essential or fixed gendered identity based on sex, which ignores other influences on the construction of masculinities and femininities. Masculinity in a male body and femininity in a female body are valorised – transgendered bodies disrupt this dichotomy.

- *Uncertainty avoidance*: "the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations. This feeling is, among other things, expressed through nervous stress and in a need for predictability: a need for written and unwritten rules." (ibid: 113).

Every country was scored from roughly 0 to 100 on each of the four dimensions[11]. The results of the measurements for the three countries in this study are shown in Table 3.1 below.

---

[11] The scores represent relative, not absolute positions of the countries. They measure how people in one country differ from people in other countries.

Table 3.1. Cultural profiles of Australia, Malaysia and Sweden (from Hofstede, 1991)

Country	Power distance	Individual-ism	Masculinity	Uncertainty avoidance
Australia	low 36	high 90	high 61	low 51
Malaysia	high 104	low 26	mid 50	low 36
Sweden	low 31	high 71	low 5	low 29
Median (53 units)	60	38	50	68

Table 3.1 shows the cultural profiles of the three countries. The Malaysian sample is an ethnic mixture. From our earlier research (Alwood & Friberg, 1994) we know that this gives a fair representation of the three ethnic groups in Malaysia as they do not differ much on the four dimensions. The most striking feature of the figure is that the Malaysian and Swedish profiles are most distant from each other, while the Australian profile is closer to the Swedish on some dimensions and closer to the Malaysian on others.

The dominant Swedish and Australian cultures are both characterised by egalitarian individualism. From Hofstede's study, which gives the global picture, we read that this pattern is quite common in the West, especially in Protestant countries, but there are interesting internal differences in this group. The Anglo countries of Great Britain, USA and Australia are revealed as the most individualistic countries in the whole set of 53 countries. The Nordic countries are less individualistic. Their inhabitants are more group or community-oriented, a fact that may be related to the strong position of voluntary organisations and unions in this part of the world.

The Malaysian pattern is the opposite of egalitarian individualism. On these dimensions we have the biggest gaps between Eastern and Western countries. According to Hofstede's data, Malaysia is the most hierarchical culture in the whole set of countries, even though hierarchy is a characteristic of all Asian countries and many others as well.

In order to understand leadership in Malaysia we have to take another other dimension into account as well. The power of the leader is not perceived as coercive power. Because of the collectivistic mentality relationships between leaders and their followers are coloured by the

family metaphor. The leader is perceived as a benevolent father figure or patriarch, not as a harsh despot.

Hofstede exemplifies values and attitudes associated with a traditional constructions of masculinity and femininity as a way of thinking and being on a national level, which is problematic. The relative position of each country on the masculine-feminine dimension is therefore difficult to predict. His table shows that Malaysian culture is exactly in the middle of this dimension, neither very tough, nor very tender. Australia is depicted as having a more of a masculine culture without being extreme. Its position is in fact very close to the Anglo cultures of Great Britain and the USA. The findings of contemporary Australian sociological studies of male and female students in schools do suggest that the dominant discourse on masculinity depicts men and boys as tough, competitive, independent and in control and the dominant discourse on femininity depicts women and girls as soft, cooperative, dependent and nurturing, in spite of this not being a reality for some (Connell, 1995). However, the mythic structure of Australian masculinity based on rugged individualism is in contrast to the egalitarian notions of 'mateship' and heroism evident in the ANZAC legend.

Sweden, on the other hand, is the most feminine country in the Hofstede study. This suggests that in Sweden gender roles are not so different. Men can be tender and nurturing and women assertive and tough. Hofstede has shown that high scores on the dimension of femininity represent a whole syndrome of attitudes that tend to correlate with each other, such as sympathy for the unfortunate; environmentalism; small is beautiful; quality of life rather than economic growth; people are more important than money and things and so on. This cluster of attitudes may strike the reader as expressions of a 'green' ideology. This ideology has firm cultural foundations in all Nordic countries.

A culture leaves its marks on every part of the human environment. If you know the cultural code you can read its messages in all the media. In the case of drama and conflict we do not only look for the values and beliefs expressed in language, we also study how it is expressed, patterns of speech, intonations, the use of pauses, the use of metaphors, gestures, movements and postures. Dominant discourses – what can be talked about and what cannot, by whom and in what circumstances - and the structure of language itself can give clues to the hidden dimensions of culture. For example, Bahasa Malaysia lacks a generic term for

'conflict', which may suggest that Malays avoid open and direct confrontations.

In the international DRACON meetings the first step in our annual meetings was to raise our consciousness of our own cultural conditioning. Comparisons between the Swedish, Australian and the Malaysian experience were very helpful in developing our cultural awareness and sensitivity. For instance, in Malaysia people sometimes expect their leaders to give emotional protection to the community. Swedes on the other hand expect leaders to make good decisions for them and their country. This reflects the contrast between the Western pattern of egalitarian individualism and the hierarchical collectivism of Eastern cultures.

One thing that was apparent in our international study was that the boundaries between Western and non-Western cultures are not clear and our attempts to categorise were problematic. All cultures are heterogeneous containing many subcultures or countercultures that contradict the dominant culture, or hybrids that represent combinations of elements of different origins. Borders are permeable as evidenced by their ability to be transgressed. Furthermore, cultures are fluid and changing, or can be embedded in each other like Chinese boxes. We were aware that propositions about national cultures are only true in the statistical sense; otherwise we can easily fall into the trap of constructing stereotypes. Ethnocentrism and stereotyping go hand in hand because the stereotypes of others are often constructed from the taken for granted assumptions and knowledge of one's own culture.

Cultural Studies emerged as an interdisciplinary field in the late 1950s, early 1960s in Britain and initially focused on class (Bennet, 1998). However the focus changed as it spread around the globe, for example standpoint theorists' focussed on the study of everyday life (Smith, 1987; Smith, 1999) and others focussed on popular culture (Inness, 1999; Rogers, 1999). We previously distinguished between the surface and the depth of a culture - on the surface of a culture we find certain symbols, hero images and styles of life. Flags, pop stars and dressing styles, to mention a few examples, are fairly easy to change without changing the deep structure of a culture. Malaysian youth do not acquire Western values or thinking habits just because they wear jeans and drink Coca-Cola. The depth of a culture – the basic values, metaphors and taken for granted assumptions - changes much more slowly.

It must be borne in mind that Hofstede's understanding of culture as "programming of the mind" can lead to *cultural determinism*, which conceives of the individual as completely determined by cultural conditioning. Recent theorists emphasise the importance of human agency in the reproduction and transformation of culture (for example, Giddens, 1997) and the need to acknowledge diversity (Okun et al., 1999).

The cultural traditions of Australia, Sweden and Malaysia

"Oh, East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet …" wrote Kipling (1865-1936) in one of his poems (though he was writing ironically). A large number of researchers and theoreticians postulate a cultural division between Western and Eastern traditions of thinking and being[12]. The two traditions have developed almost independently of each other for thousands of years until they were brought into contact by Western colonialism a few hundred years ago. The historical roots of Western traditions go back to Christianity and even further back to the ancient civilisations in the Middle East, Greece and the Roman Empire. During the modern period the West has been the cradle of powerful cultural currents such as the renaissance (15th Century), the protestant reformation and state absolutism (16th), natural science (17th), the enlightenment (18th) and the political ideologies of liberalism, conservatism, nationalism, socialism, fascism and so on. The Eastern traditions have their roots in India, China, Japan and Southeast Asia and have been shaped by the great religious movements of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism, which are quite different from Christianity in their basic view of the world and how the self is understood. How can we situate the three countries under study in relation to this world historic process and what can we learn about their cultures on this basis?

In passing it should be noted that the macro perspective taken in this section of the book is different to the macro-sociological approach presented in the preceding section. There we assumed that there are worldwide processes of change, like industrialisation and post-industrialisation, which have an impact on all parts of a society. In this section we assume that there are regions in the world with different cultural traditions, some being more resistant to change than others.

---

[12] A few examples are Weber, Bull, Dumont, Berger, McNeill, Habermas, Galtung and Huntington.

Ultimately, we have to arrive at a balance between the concepts of social systems and epochs and the transition from one to another on one hand, and the concept of cultural regions and cultural continuity on the other. A few decades ago the former approach had the upper hand. It was widely believed that modern industrial capitalism would produce the same type of societies all over the world. Today social scientists are not so sure.

The end of the 20th Century saw a remarkable resurgence of very old cultural traditions in many parts of the world. The Iranian revolution in 1979 was the first sign of the continued relevance of Islam in the modern world and since then there has been much talk about Islamic development models. Christianity, Judaism and Buddhism have also experienced resurgence. Hinduism became a political force in India in the 1990's. The economic miracles in China and other countries in Asia triggered a debate about Asian values and the specificity of Asian capitalism. In 1986 Berger reached the conclusion that Japan and the four 'Tigers' (Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and South Korea) have gone through a capitalist modernisation process after World War II without showing strong tendencies towards individualism of the Western type (Berger, 1986). Many other researchers agree that modernisation (science and technology) is not the same as Westernisation (the adoption of Western values) even though modernisation first emerged in the West. Everywhere domestic values and traditions have resisted the modernisation process.

Understanding Australian culture

One key to understanding Australian culture is the colonial origins of its non-indigenous population. It has taken more than two centuries for the Anglo-Australian legal system to recognise that Aboriginal people occupied the continent and held title to the land at the time of the European invasion. The perception of Australia as an uninhabited land ("Terra nullius"), which is how it was approached by the British when they established their first penal colony in New South Wales in 1788, was only recently overturned by the High Court in the Mabo vs. Queensland case. The fear and contempt for Aboriginal people and culture, which perpetuated the lie of "Terra nullius", is deeply institutionalised and still evident today.

Other penal colonies were formed in Australia up until 1868. However, South Australia (settled in 1836), where some of the Australian

150

data was collected, was never a penal colony. Australia's first non-indigenous settlers in the other States, however, were mainly convicts, mostly from the poorer classes (a few were upper class) in Great Britain. Their guards and others were free settlers, some from aristocratic families and the landed gentry.

The bulk of the early settler population in Australia came from Great Britain and Ireland. A high proportion of early immigrants were Irish people who were both highly religious and anti-British authority. This has left Australia with a legacy of English as the mother tongue, Protestant and Catholic versions of Christianity as the dominant religions and with mainstream values and modes of thinking typical of the West.

Today Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders make up more than 2% (and growing) of a total Australian population of 20 million. Those who inhabited the land when the Europeans settled Australia were initially subjugated and marginalized and until relatively recently had very few political, social, economic and legal freedoms and rights. Over 250,000 Aboriginal people lived in Australia at the time of settlement, with possibly 500 cultural/language groups/tribes. For reasons of poor health, and violence at the hands of some of the early colonisers, their numbers substantially declined.

The dominant non-indigenous Australian culture is basically Western and up to the mid 20th Century the bulk of the population were similar to the British (Fernández-Armesto, 1995). The settler experience in itself has left an imprint on the culture. A popular myth is that it has provided Australians with a very masculine pioneering spirit that goes with the opening up of a vast wilderness, a spirit often combined with rugged individualism, mate-ship and a democratic anti-authoritarian attitude.

Until the mid-20th Century Australia had restricted immigration via its 'White Australia' policy. However, while Australia has an unsavoury record with this policy, and a predominantly Anglo-Celtic mainstream of immigration, it has not always been consistent. To describe Australia as 'Anglo-Celtic' can also be misleading: the Irish were and are culturally very different from the English, and most of the Irish disliked the British seriously. Large numbers of the convicts were actually gaoled freedom fighters, and the hordes that later fled the potato famine (1845-55) had no cause to love the English. So from the start there have been cultural clashes and not a homogeneous monoculture.

In Australia there were major waves of immigration long before the Second World War. For example, from the 1840s and 50s there were immigrants from Germany, many of whom settled in Queensland and South Australia, the sites of the two Australian DRACON projects. The gold rushes in the 1800s brought a number of people, especially Chinese and Americans. The first restrictive immigration laws came in 1855 – to restrict the Chinese – but the Chinese continued to arrive in numbers, especially to the Palmer River gold rush in Queensland (1880s) organised by the Tongs, who held their wives and families captive until they had paid off the fare, then sent them to join their husbands. The majority settled, and in Queensland were ubiquitous running the market gardens and as shearers' cooks.

There have been selective waves of non-Caucasian immigration for particular purposes, for example the Afghans for the camel trade, Japanese pearl divers in Broome and the Gulf, the semi-slave 'Kanakas' trade in Pacific Islanders. Large numbers of southern Europeans, Greeks and Italians, came after the First World War. Many of them settled in South Australia and in Queensland for the sugar cane cutting. Also many Eastern Europeans migrated, many of them Jewish, right through the period from the 19th Century Russian pogroms to after the Second World War.

After the Second World War, with Government-assisted migration, substantial numbers of continental Europeans arrived in the country from the Western sphere, initially from the North (eg. Dutch, German, Poles), and much later (because of the darker colour of their skin) from the Mediterranean countries (e.g. Greeks, Italians).

There has been a slow opening for Asian migrants in the last three decades but the European influx has been larger. Today roughly one in five Australians have been born abroad. Given Australia's sparse population and its closeness to Asia, Australia is looking increasingly to Asia economically, but there is still considerable resistance to opening up her borders to Asian immigrants or refugees. This resistance has increased during the current conservative Commonwealth Government's term.

In South Australia the original free settlers[13] wanted to establish a utopia as part of a social and economic experiment under the Wakefield

---

[13] Many of the early settlers, especially in South Australia, were English aristocrats and landed gentry.

Plan. Basically this was a plan to ensure that the class structure of the UK and the privileges of the wealthy were maintained with a good supply of labourers who could not afford to buy land. Since these beginnings, South Australia has been known as a progressive, liberal welfare State – for example it was one of the first places in the world to allow women to vote, to establish a youth court and to initiate 'boarding out' for children (foster care).

The Australian Labour Party was founded in Queensland during the 1891 Shearers' strike – by legend, under the 'Tree of Knowledge' at Barcaldine, where the shearers used to sit to plan strategies. Queensland had the first Labour members of parliament (fifteen of them in 1893) and the world's first Labour government (in 1899 – it lasted a week!). Australia had the world's first national Labour government in 1904. The Labour Party was an important political force in the country after Federation in 1901 and during the 20th Century. However over the last decade the conservative Liberal and National Governments have dominated federally. Here we have a clear parallel to Sweden, a country were Social Democracy has been more successful – as measured by the number of years in government – than in any other nation. Arbitration and conciliation between employers' and employee's associations have a long tradition in both countries.

Understanding Swedish culture

Swedish mainstream culture is Western – a version that can be extended to the Scandinavian community of countries including Norway, Denmark and Iceland – all speaking closely related Germanic languages. Scandinavia with the inclusion of Finland, which has a completely different language, forms the Nordic community with a total population of about 21 million inhabitants. Despite the language barrier, Sweden and Finland have been politically united under Swedish dominance for a period of more than 500 years, ending in 1809. The descendants of the original inhabitants of the Nordic region – the Same people – live mainly in the mountains in the north and comprise only 35,000 people. They speak a language that is related to Finnish.

Located at the Northern periphery of Europe the Scandinavians have always been late in adopting the cultural innovations of mainstream European culture. In the Viking age (9th to 11th Century) the Scandinavians developed a pagan alternative to the medieval Christian culture on the European continent. The peasants, merchants or robbers, who

travelled far away in their longboats, discovering America five centuries before Columbus, were a real menace to Northern Europe and had to be stopped by intensified Christian missions from Germany and England. After 200 years of expansion the 'Nordic fury' lost its energy and the region was slowly incorporated into mainstream European culture. It is possible to argue that this incorporation has not been successful. There is still a feeling of being something apart in the collective consciousness of the Nordic people. One could say that the Scandinavians are reluctant Europeans. Today the Nordic countries, except Norway and Iceland, are members of the European Union. However, only Finland is member of the European currency union.

The pre-Christian epoch with its more or less tribal society has left important legacies in Sweden. Its structure was much more egalitarian and democratic than the hierarchical structures of Imperial Rome, which left its imprint on countries like Britain and France[14]. The Nordic countries were never conquered by the Roman Empire and this may be one explanation for the resilient egalitarianism of the Swedes. To this should be added that Sweden never had a feudal society with serfdom, as was the case on the European continent. The bulk of the peasantry remained freeholders and even formed their own estates with representation in the parliament since the 15th Century. The strong position of the peasantry in Scandinavia prior to the industrial epoch was an exception in Europe and goes a long way to explain the corresponding power of labour in industrial Sweden.

The Protestant reformation of the 16th Century had a strong impact on the Nordic countries. In cultural terms it was a step in the direction of individualism, rationality and a strong work ethics. Liberation from the international organisation of the Roman Catholic Church led to a strong and centralised Swedish state, a homogenous national culture and a disciplined subject population. Sweden has received a number of migrant artisans and magnates and even a king throughout its history but they have all been absorbed by mainstream culture after no more than one generation. As a result there have been almost no religious, ethnic, linguistic or provincial divisions in the country until the recent wave of immigration after World War II. The labour requirements of the expanding Swedish industry after the war led to an organised immi-

[14] The Germanic tribal culture had features like bilateral kinship, local self-determination and chiefs chosen by an assembly of male warriors.

gration from Europe. More than one half came from the Nordic countries, particularly Finland. In the 1980's the composition of migrants changed drastically as Sweden began to receive political refugees from Asia, especially the Middle East, in great numbers. Today about 15 % of the total Swedish population of about 9 million have been born outside the country. The integration of people from distant cultures has proved to be very difficult and as a consequence a new underclass has been created in the Swedish society.

Understanding Malaysian culture

Malaysian culture is a complex blend of many different cultural traditions, the structure of which it is quite challenging to map. The first observation is that Malaysia, historically and culturally, belongs to the Indonesian archipelago (the Nusantara region or the Malay world), home to over 230 million people and divided into five independent states, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei and East Timor. This cultural region also reaches into the southern Philippines and the south of Thailand. The region has been under the influence of similar cultural forces for millennia even though the local variations are large. Today the Malay language is the common glue and so is Islam, except for some enclaves such as the Bali people, who are Hindus. Even more important is a shared heritage of Austronesian tribal culture followed by a strong Hindu-Buddhist influence from India, which lasted for a millennium beginning in the first few centuries AD. There is no ethnic or cultural reason why the nations formed in this region should have their present borders. The reason is basically colonial. Malaysia was formed out of the British colony of Malaya, and the Republic of Indonesia out of the Dutch colony of the Netherland Indies.

The conversion to Islam in Malaysia was a slow process drawn out over several centuries and it did not imply a radical break with the previous religions, as was the case for conversion to Christianity and Islam in the West. In Eastern civilisation, of which the Malay world is undoubtedly a part, different cultural currents are not seen as contradicting each other. Eastern people have an eclectic or syncretistic attitude. Islam often blends with animistic and Hindu beliefs. This "blending" did not happen only in Nusantara. The Islamic mission came to the Malay world via Mogul India. The orthodox tradition of Arabic Islam underwent a synthesis en route so to speak. It was Sufism, the mystical element of Islam, that appealed to Hindu converts in India as it later did

155

to the Malay Hindus. Syncretism was easy as the Sufi version of Islam was compatible a worldview, which was already bent on mysticism (Sievers, 1974). Another explanation for the smooth adoption of Islam can be found in the fact that it spread through trade, not by a dramatic military conquest as in the Middle East. No external Islamic power ever threatened the region, as did the colonial powers of the West. Instead, Islam became a symbol of resistance to Western dominance.

The continued existence of pre-Islamic cultural elements is acknowledged in the word 'adat', which refers to the customary laws originally regulating the life of the rural masses. Adat, then, is still strong, as even Islam and the modern courts have to take it into account. Traditionally people lived in villages (kampung) supporting themselves through rice cultivation, fishing, hunting and trade. They were strongly community-oriented, acting on the principle of collective responsibility and making decisions by consensus. Even though 'mesyuarat' (discussion) and 'muafakat' (consensus) are Arabic-derived words in Bahasa Malaysia, they reflect a very deep layer in the indigenous culture. Present day Malaysian politics on the village as well as the national level cannot be understood without knowledge of this basic method of conflict resolution. Mesyuarat is a gradual process of mutual adjustment between contrasting points of view until the participants reach a consensus. In mesyuarat the participants avoid expressing open disagreements with each other. The process is very different from a typical Western discussion in which arguments and counterarguments are posed against each other in the hope that a synthesis will emerge, but seldom does.

Indian culture gained great influence in Malaysia in the 5th Century when the native rulers invited Hindu Brahmins and learned Buddhist from India. A number of Indianised kingdoms with divine rulers arose in the region. The most famous were the maritime kingdom of Srivijaya with its centre on Sumatra (7th-14th Century) and the land-based kingdom of Majapahit centred on Java, which reached its zenith around 1400. The kingdoms were backed not by bureaucracies or armies. Basically, they were maintained by special types of vertical loyalties. The main function of the king or raja was to bring moral or cosmic order and emotional protection to his people. Pye (1985) and others have shown that the cultural foundations of power and authority in Asia still differs from the modern West. The concept of the ruler as a protector or father is still widespread in the Malay world today.

The Brahmins brought with them a hierarchical view of social relations. An elaborate caste system was never established in the region but it is fair to say that the result of Indian influence was the formation of a very status-conscious aristocratic society. This cultural tradition was not broken by the, in principle, egalitarian religion of Islam. Malaysia today has a 'world record' in the number of aristocrats and monarchs per inhabitant. There are 13 "sultans", one for each state in the Malaysian federation.

Given that the region has been under the impact of Western colonialism since 1511, when Malacca fell to the Portuguese, one would expect an adoption of Western values. However, the impact of colonialism was quite limited in Malaysia until 1874 when the British decided to reshuffle the economy of the peninsula to fit the industrial needs of the colonial power. Even then the British ruled indirectly; they focused on economic and administrative reforms and were distanced from internal cultural and political matters as much as possible. Another indication of the limited influence of Western values is the fact that, despite half a millennium of Western influence, Christianity made few inroads in the Malay world as a whole.

The other possible indication of a Western influence is conversion to Islam in the 14th Century. Islam is after all a close relative to Judaism and Christianity, which share the basic concept of a transcendental God in contrast to the Eastern religions, where God or the Divine is more or less immanent in the world. The conversion to Islam implied a new mentality, such as greater stress on the individual worth of all men as compared with the influence of Christianity in the West. It also established a link to the Arab world with its Islamic centres in Cairo and Mecca. Islamic law (shariah) still applies to Malays in personal matters and is enforced by Muslim courts in Malaysia.

The British laid the foundation of the present Malaysian state and economy. They are commendable for having furnished the country with a modern economy and infrastructure, a centralised administration, a legal system and the beginnings of formal schooling. But they have also created an enormous problem of cultural integration by recruiting Chinese and Indian immigrants in big quantities in an effort to build an export economy geared to their own economic interests. The great wave of immigration began in the 1850's and lasted into the 1930's, when restrictions on immigration were introduced. As the ethnic groups lived separately from each other little assimilation took place. The co-

lonial setting produced a complex racial division of labour with the Malays in the civil service and agriculture, the Chinese as mine workers and entrepreneurs and the Indians as plantation workers and professionals.

During the last 50 years ethnic consciousness and ethnic loyalties have become paramount and supersede many other group loyalties. Communalism is the basis of most politics in the nation. It has proved practically impossible to form multiethnic parties. Even though an industrial economy has been formed through rapid economic growth since the 1970's, working class consciousness across the ethnic barriers is low.

Today the Malays comprise about 58% of the population of Peninsular Malaysia. The Chinese form the second largest group (31%) followed by the Indians (10%). To this should be added the original inhabitants of the land (orang asli), now constituting about 60 000 in West-Malaysia or less than 1% of the total population of Malaysia (18.2 million in 1991). The ethnic groups display some differences in values and lifestyles but they are basically Asian people with common Eastern values.

Culture and conflict

How does culture impact on conflict or, to be more precise, how do national value-systems influence the dominant ways that conflicts are handled in a specific country? We will use the five conflict handling styles presented in section 2.2. to reflect on this question.

- Avoiding the conflict (postponing, not talking, not taking position, withdrawing etc.).
- Compromising (meeting half-way).
- Competing (concern about one's own interests or goals at the expense of the relationship).
- Collaborating (finding a mutually satisfying solution together with the other person).
- Accommodating (adapting to the other's goals or interests to preserve the relationship).

These five options or strategies in conflict situations are limited to self-help only. A sixth option is to call in a third party such as a friend or a

facilitator such as a local leader, manager or professional helper and if the situation gets serious a lawyer, arbitrator or judge, often called 'third party help'. A major distinction is between third party help of a directive type (control of the decisions or outcomes lies with the third party) and a non-directive type (control lies with the participants). Arbitration is an example of the first type, mediation of the second (see 2.2).

In an earlier study we found that avoiding and compromising strategies for resolving conflicts scored highest of all the potential strategies in Sweden and Malaysia. Competing had the lowest score.[15] This finding was surprising given that the two cultures are so different from each other. However it is possible that this scoring pattern is fairly widespread in the world as most people experience open disagreement as stressful. Avoiding conflict provides the most comfortable way out, at least in the short run. Compromising also offers a quick outcome as it is based on a 50:50 solution, although some things are not able to be divided easily. Competing on the other hand is difficult for many. It requires assertiveness and stamina to face the opposition of another person, whose needs are not taken into account. The competing style can easily end up in a painful power struggle that irrevocably damages the relationship between the opponents. Many people know this and avoid the competing style until they do not have any other alternative.

Accommodating and collaborating strategies both have clear advantages and drawbacks. Accommodating is often used to preserve the relationship but the price is high – it involves withholding or sacrificing one's own views, interests or needs. Collaboration has the advantage of leading to win-win outcomes and good relations when it succeeds, but it requires a willingness to devote a lot of time to conflict exploration together with the other person, who has to be trusted or at least respected. In everyday life both time and trust are scarce resources.

All strategies have advantages and disadvantages and their usefulness depends on the situation. How they are weighted depends on the values of the culture in addition to other factors such as gender, balance and bases of power, the conflict handling style of the opponent, impor-

---

[15] A questionnaire based on Hofstede's items and the Thomas and Kihlmann instrument for measuring interpersonal conflict-handling was distributed to a matched sample of 200 university students from Sweden (Göteborg) and 50 students form each ethnic group in Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur).

tance of the issues to the parties, the context and so on. If we focus on the cultural factors only, we can formulate the following hypotheses:

1. Hierarchy, collectivism and rigidity leads to relatively higher preferences for avoiding, compromising, accommodating and third party help, while egalitarianism, individualism, flexibility and masculinity favours competing and self-help in conflict situations.

2. Values that Hofstede associated with femininity increase the preference for a compromising style and possibly also collaboration.

3. A flexible culture is one important condition for a high incidence of collaboration. Other contributing factors are egalitarian and Hofstede´s feminine values.

4. In hierarchical cultures the third party helper is expected to determine the solution; in egalitarian cultures the participants are more likely to want to make their own decisions.

Everything that makes open disagreement and conflict situations stressful to people produces a preference for avoidance, compromise and accommodation and a desire to get help from third parties. There are reasons to believe that hierarchy, collectivism and rigidity all produce feelings of unease in conflict situations but in different ways. In a vertical culture there are latent conflicts between the 'underdog' and the 'topdog' and a low level of trust between people. People fear that open conflicts will go out of control and emphasise harmony and conflict prevention. They believe that if everyone stays in their place in the hierarchy the conflict will be solved. Thus avoiding, accommodating and so on are the preferred modes of conflict handling. The preference in vertical cultures is to leave the management of the conflict to directive third parties high up in the hierarchy who can tell the conflicting parties what to do. Third party approaches such as arbitration would therefore be preferred, rather than mediation.

People in egalitarian cultures on the other hand believe in the norms of equal opportunity and fair play. A competing attitude is often encouraged and does not pose such a big threat. They usually prefer to stay in control of the conflict as long as possible, but if they don't think they can, they prefer to go to non-directive third parties like friends, colleagues and maybe facilitators, mediators or conciliators who are not too high up on the status ladder. In some Western countries where adjudication in courts has been a preferred mode of conflict handling,

conflicts can be protracted and costly if one litigant does not agree with the judge's decision.

Collectivism has almost the same effect as hierarchy. In such cultures people feel uncomfortable in expressing opinions that differ from the group. Avoiding open confrontations is preferred by people in such cultures. In individualistic cultures, on the other hand, people are expected to have their own independent opinions. The competitive mode is not so risky.

In rigid cultures people feel threatened by uncertain and unknown situations. Conflicts are regarded as dangerous because people don't know how the conflicts will develop. It is better to avoid, accommodate or seek help from experts. The high level of stress and anxiety in such cultures will probably be released in other ways. Aggression may be displaced or ventilated at proper times and places, for example through sport. Flexible cultures can tolerate a lot of deviance and disagreement. The emotional atmosphere is also more relaxed. Therefore the competing style is more accepted. Conflict can be managed to a certain extent by agreeing to disagree.

We must be aware that Hofstede's way of labelling cultures is Western and, as previously explained, the terms masculinity' and 'femininity' as he describes them should be used cautiously. People in what Hofstede describes as 'feminine' cultures generally do not value the 'masculine' arrogance of the competing style, which overrides or ignores the interests of others. The relationship is more highly valued than competition and avoidance, and concern for human interests and needs take priority.

It is difficult to formulate any grounded hypotheses about the cultural conditions for collaboration except it requires a flexibility, where people can accept a lot of disagreement and discord without getting upset. Perhaps Hofstede's feminine values would matter as people in such cultures give priority to taking the needs of the other party into account. Egalitarianism can also make a contribution by giving every participant equal rights to a voice on the issues in contention. Individualism implies a willingness to consider one' own needs and that may be a condition for considering the needs of others as well. Individualism does not necessarily imply egoism (or a competing stance), which is inappropriate in the case of collaboration. On the other hand, some collectivistic cultures have worked out effective and lengthy group decision-making processes for reaching a consensual resolution to conflicts.

The *mesyuarat* procedure in Malaysia is a good example. However, the participants never express disagreements openly and therefore can't put all issues and interests on the table. Maybe *mesyuarat* is an exercise in advanced accommodation rather than collaboration.

If our assumptions are correct, a culture characterised by a combination of hierarchy, collectivism and rigidity would be afraid of using direct approaches to the management of conflict and therefore would opt for conflict evading strategies such as avoiding, compromising and accommodating. If avoidance is favoured, however, the tensions of unprocessed conflicts may build up and outbursts or explosions may occur. In this situation competing often remains the only alternative because of a lack of experience in handling open conflicts. Once the switch has happened, there are no limits to the excesses of that style. An inspection of Hofstede's data indicates that the highest incidents of violence and internal wars show up in cultures that combine hierarchical values with a rigid worldview. None of the countries in the DRACON project fall into this category.

Given the tentative and generalised hypotheses offered above we should be able to predict the preferred strategies of conflict handling in a country from its cultural profile. If we add up the influence of all the dimensions we will arrive at the following predictions:

- Malaysia will have the highest preference for avoiding, compromising and accommodating styles of the three countries. Preserving the relationship with the other person, at least on the surface (keeping face), will be the first consideration in all conflicts. The competing style will be abhorred. People in conflict will avoid open confrontations, instead they will pursue the conflict by using indirect strategies. They will also turn to third parties for help at an early stage. The third party would be a superior (often a patriarch) in the power structure and would be expected to take a determining role in the conflict.

- Mainstream, non-indigenous Australians will have the highest preference for competing styles compared to the other two countries. Avoiding and compromising may also be common but not so common as in Sweden and certainly not as common as in Malaysia. Tolerance for a competing style implies that Australians may be able to be more direct and confrontational in conflicts. They can appear to people from the other two cultures as being too assertive or even dis-

respectful. Australians generally prefer to solve their conflicts them-
selves. If they don't think they can, they will call in informal or for-
mal facilitators, conciliators or mediators, that is to say non-directive
third parties, or readily take their conflicts to court.

- Sweden will be a case in the middle but much closer to the Austra-
lian pattern than the Malaysian one. Swedes have a tendency to hold
back, to be reserved, shy and uncommunicative compared to Austra-
lians. The expression of aggression in public life is strongly inhib-
ited and frowned upon. Compromise will be put forward as an ideal
in most conflicts. In both Sweden and Australia there is some space
for collaboration if defined as a problem-solving process.

- We must stress here that our national generalisations do not take into
account individual and cultural differences based on factors such as
class, age, gender, race and ethnicity. However, they can be useful
hypotheses when conducting cross-cultural research similar to that
of the International DRACON project.

Culture and drama

So far we have analysed the relation between culture and conflict. What
about drama? Our field studies have investigated conflicts and drama
processes within the institutional context of drama programmes. Instead
of focusing on behaviour in single drama or conflict events we want to
move our focus to the wider context of designing drama courses or
programmes over longer periods of time. We noticed at an early phase
of the DRACON project that the four field teams worked with quite
different techniques and procedures within the tradition of educational
drama. Evidently there were national versions of a seemingly interna-
tional drama tradition. In the preceding section 3.1 we tried to explain
some of the differences with the help of a macro-sociological model of
schooling. In this section we will present an alternative or rather com-
plementary explanation in terms of culture.

Our basic assumption is that educational drama is a culture in itself,
which is more or less compatible with different national cultures. This
would be clearer if we could describe the drama culture with the help of
the cultural dimensions of Hofstede and others. We could then compare
the profile of the drama culture with the three national profiles.

To begin with it is clear that the type of drama used in DRACON
originated in the West. On this ground we expect the values implicit in

163

the drama tradition to express Western values in general. On the other hand, it is also possible that drama deviates from these values. After all, it was introduced as a progressive social innovation, which implies a break with some old patterns. In this case, however, knowing the origin does not help us much. At present educational drama is a marginal institution in the world. If it could be scaled up in size and play a dominant role in a society, how would we characterize the culture of that society? The following is an educated guess:

- Low power distance - very egalitarian; empowering everybody, especially the 'underdog'.

- Middle position on the individualism-collectivism axis - drama is a very strong group process, in which the participants learn "we"-consciousness and how to melt into the group. On the other hand, the individual has a right to his/her own opinion. He/she carries full responsibility for participation and can leave the group at any time.

- Drama encourages tenderness and nurturing rather than toughness and assertiveness; it is oriented to people rather than things, to life rather than work.

- Low uncertainty-avoidance - drama requires a flexible and tolerant attitude; nobody claims to know the absolute truth; willingness to take risks is encouraged.

- Mythos - drama expresses the artistic mythos rather than the analytical logos.

If we plot these values along the five dimensions we get the diagram below. From the diagram we read that drama is not fully compatible with any of the three cultures. It seems to be somewhat closer to Swedish culture and most distant from the Malaysian one, but the differences are small. Each culture has a tense relation to drama on at least one dimension. In the case of Australia and Sweden the incompatibility is on the logos-mythos axis; in the case of Malaysia it is on the power distance axis. Where incompatibilities are strong, we hypothesise firstly that drama will pose a challenge to the culture on that dimension and therefore will risk being rejected by that culture, and secondly that drama will counter resistance by adapting to mainstream culture on that dimension. As a consequence national versions of the international culture of educational drama will develop.

164
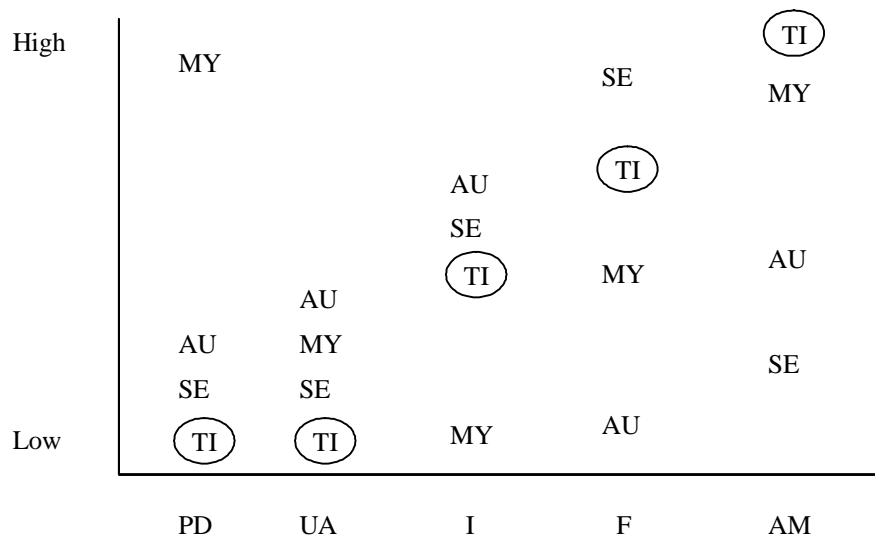
Abbreviations: PD=Power Distance; UA=Uncertainty-Avoidance; I=Individualism; F=Femininity; AM=Artistic Mythos.

TI= Theoretical Ideal; AU=Australia; MY=Malaysia; SE=Sweden

Diagram 3.1. Comparisons between participant countries related to the cultural dimensions of educational drama

Let us state the implications of these hypotheses in more concrete terms. In Malaysia, drama may be perceived as a tremendous challenge to the hierarchical conception of human relations and very difficult for teachers, school authorities and decision-makers to accept. It may also pose a challenge to the participants in drama groups, as it demands a more individualistic attitude than is commonly taken for granted in that culture. Some participants will be shy and reluctant to perform in front of the group. We predict that the facilitators will adapt by choosing or developing special procedures to overcome such difficulties. However, the egalitarianism of drama is very difficult to change without losing the ethos of drama. Therefore we predict that drama in its more or less Western form will remain marginal in the educational system in Malaysia for a long time[16]. The strong point of drama in Malaysia is its reso-

---

[16] Here one should also consider the macro-sociological factors analysed in section 3.1.

nance with the artistic mythos-character of the culture. Drama work in Malaysia will have a tendency of putting the whole emphasis on art, especially the non-verbal arts (visual arts, music, dance etc) and stay away from analysis and abstract discussions (logos).

In Australia and Sweden drama is in tune with the egalitarian values of both cultures and in Sweden the tender and nurturing aspects of drama will be favourably received as Swedish culture has a feminine bent. In Australia drama may be perceived as being too 'feminine' and therefore rejected by some, in particular by males. In both countries drama will be seen as misplaced in the school system for some time, because the artistic mythos-quality of drama deviates too much from the mainstream values, which tend to be rationalist and science-minded (logos). As drama can adapt to this tension without losing its ethos altogether, we predict that the national drama cultures in Sweden and Australia will downplay the artistic side of drama over time and give bigger space to verbal role-plays and analytical discussions. In Australia more than in Sweden the collective aspect of drama can pose a problem for those who feel that free individuals should never submit to a strong group process where they fear they will lose personal control. These are quite specific predictions that can be tested through comparisons between the four DRACON field studies.

Conclusion

Whilst recognising that culture is a social construction and is constantly changing we have used two approaches to explore the dominant facets of the three cultures represented in the DRACON project - a qualitative historical approach and a quantitative survey approach. Our explorations and tentative hypotheses have been made with the intention of strengthening our cultural sensitivity in general as well as in specific ways. We have become more aware of the possibility of a Western bias in the concepts and theories we have used in the DRACON project. Paying attention to aspects of culture has added a necessary dimension to our field studies. An understanding of the specific cultural context of students' behaviour in drama courses is a sine qua non, as we want to compare cultures across the East-West divide. Because of time and budget restraints we have not made any systematic measurements of cultural factors as part of our field studies to date. We have to rely on the secondary sources presented here, combined with critical observations and interpretations made by the field researchers and drama ex-

perts. Most of our field-based evidence can be characterised as anecdotal.

Will the field studies confirm or disconfirm our theoretical predictions? The answer is probably more open than the reader may believe. It is important to realise that all the survey studies we have referred to above have been made on samples of adult persons. Hofstede used IBM employees and in our earlier research the survey was made on university students. In the DRACON project we have focused on adolescents from 13-16 years of age. If the dimensions of Hofstede and others reveal the deepest part of a culture, adolescents may already have their basic cultural patterns set when we meet them. If not, they may be more open to learning and change. Therefore our field studies of adolescents can throw light on a theoretical issue of considerable interest.

The problem of trying to compare cultures or countries is complicated by the fact that humans have some universal experiences and needs, and each individual person has different experiences and evolves through many stages of physical and psychosocial growth from birth to adult maturity at different rates. In addition, dominant discourses, cultural norms and experiences are influenced by gender and vary historically and in different locations within countries, for example rural/urban. In addition each of the DRACON countries could be described as multi-cultural. The categories of child, adolescent and adult also rely on dualistic thinking and ignore similarities between the categories. We know that adolescents think and behave differently to adults in many ways and are similar to adults in other ways. If we observe a significant difference between adolescents' behaviour and our cultural predictions for adults, how should we explain the difference? A detailed comparative study of adolescents' behaviour in conflicts and drama may lead to some surprising insights of relevance for the theories of culture, conflicts and drama as well as the theories of psychosocial development.

3.3   Adolescence and conflict

In this book we are concerned with the handling of conflict by young people. Conflict is generally viewed as an inevitable part of life and as occurring because people have incompatible goals. For instance, two people want the same thing; one person wants to control another who

doesn't want to be controlled; one person wants the other to stop doing something and the other wants to continue. Struggle ensues. Such conflict is, of course, not limited to adolescence and many of the conflicts experienced by adolescents are similar to those found among both younger and older people. In this chapter we are concerned specifically with shedding light on the characteristics of adolescents and the conflicts they experience, especially in relation to how conflict resolution skills can be developed or inculcated through the use of drama.

3.3.1   Psychology of adolescence

A commonly held view is that adolescence is a period of "storm and stress". This view was first propounded in 1904 by G. Stanley Hall and has been extremely influential. Hall argued that what characterised adolescence is the experience of practically ungovernable turmoil both in regard to emotions and relationships and, as a consequence, a great deal of psychological instability. If this were really so, one would expect practically all adolescents to experience a great deal of conflict, both internal and external, and be particularly ill prepared to deal with it. We might think that the emotional instability present during adolescence would make it exceedingly difficult for adolescents to employ thoughtful and rational methods of handling conflicts with others. One might conclude that "problem-solving" and "compromising" would be, for the most part, beyond them. A more therapeutic approach aiming at first dealing with the incapacitating stress of being adolescent might appear necessary.

In fact, this traditional view of adolescence as a period of chronic emotional instability has received very little empirical support (see Coleman & Hendry, 1999). Although a minority of adolescents do at times experience high levels of emotional turbulence, the majority evidently do not. According to surveys of adolescents focussing upon their mental health "the large majority of adolescents appear to get on well with adults and are able to cope effectively with the demands of school and peer groups" (Siddique & D'Arcy, 1984).

Yet it is true that as a person moves into adolescence a number of new challenges are experienced or become much more pressing. These include the following related concerns:

- coming to terms with a new and evolving physical self,

- handling sexuality,
- changes in cognitive capacities,
- changes in moral capacity,
- becoming more autonomous, especially in relating to parents and other authorities,
- identity formation,
- the peer group.

Challenges in these areas are responded to in different ways. For some adolescents they give rise to a good deal of stress. They also help us to understand the kinds of conflicts that adolescents experience in their relations with others and how they seek to handle them.

Coming to terms with a new and evolving physical self

During adolescence the necessity of viewing oneself in a new way is dramatically revealed by looking into a mirror, - and remembering what you were like only a little while ago, and by looking at others who used to be like you, again, just a little while ago. The growth spurt, when it comes, is apt to be a surprise for everybody, and especially for the one who has "spurted". The rapid change in height generally occurs among girls earlier than for boys, sometimes as early as 9 and a half years, but sometimes as late as 15 years. Among boys, the corresponding range is from 10 and a half to 17 years. Such variations in the onset of the growth spurt can be highly disconcerting to those who "spring up" early, and especially to those whose physical development is much delayed.

A further matter of concern may arise when adolescents observe that not all parts of their bodies have developed at a corresponding rate, for example, noses or feet may appear disproportionately large, and their general appearance has changed. It is not therefore surprising that for some adolescents there is a high degree of sensitivity relating to their physical appearance. In our study of the frequency and hurtfulness of treatments experienced by young adolescents we found that 62% of boys and 71% of girls reported that "unpleasant things had been said" about their appearance; for both sexes 10% of the students reported that such unpleasant things were often said about them. Moreover, some 10% of boys and 29% of girls reported that they were hurt or upset by

such treatment "a lot" (Rigby & Bagshaw, 2001). Whilst girls appear to be more commonly upset by negative comments about their appearance, a substantial proportion of boys also appear to be highly sensitive to comments about how they look.

Other pubertal changes commonly affect how adolescents feel about themselves. Among girls the growth of breasts, which can occur any time between 8 and 18 years, commonly has important implications for their self-image and how they are regarded, especially by the opposite sex. Again the timing is important, with both early and late development posing a problem for some adolescent girls. The appearance of pubic hair, the development of testes, and the elongation (or non-elongation) of the penis among boys and the onset of menarche among girls are important events that adolescents must come to terms with. Sometimes this is achieved with considerable difficulty, often depending upon the time at which the changes occur and the outcome of comparisons that adolescents invariably make with others of a similar age. The adolescent is prone to ask: Am I normal? If seemingly not, this can be a source of considerable worry and produce a painful sense of vulnerability. For those who have developed early, there can be a sense of being an oddity, out of step with others. On the other hand, for some "being big for one's age" may confer advantages over others, a potential for power that can be, and sometimes is, abused.

Handling sexuality

For most students the change in attitudes towards members of the opposite sex before and during adolescence is enormous. This can be illustrated by responses to a sentence completion task by school children of different ages (Coleman, 1974: 60-61):

Pre-adolescent:

- Eleven year old boy: For a boy girls are utter menaces.
- Eleven year old girl: For a girl boys are very stupid and not needed.

Adolescent:

- Seventeen year old boy: For a boy girls are sacred grails.
- Seventeen year old girl: For a girl boys are the cause of the most ecstatic and most tragic moments in her life.

170

For some adolescents, coming to terms with a dramatic new orientation of interest is not easy. Whilst some take the change in their stride and rapidly learn to relate easily and naturally in intimate relations with members of the opposite sex, many do not. Approaches to the opposite sex may be fraught with anxiety and fear of rejection. Attitudes may be profoundly ambivalent. This may account for the remarkable degree of offensive language that occurs between boys and girls during adolescence, with boys the main offenders (see Duncan, 1999). There is also the constant denigration of those who are seen as "sexual misfits" either because of their evident ineptitude in relating to the opposite sex or because of a real or supposed homosexual orientation. The latter typically become the butt of unkind remarks and, occasionally, targets for physical bullying. It is frequently surmised that the hostility directed towards supposed "queers" relates to doubts about the offender's own sexuality. If so, it is not surprising that adolescence, being a time of some confusion about one's emerging sexual identity, should be often characterised as a time when there is such intolerance towards people who can be dismissed as "gay."

Changes in cognitive capacities

As children mature they become more able to think in different ways. According to Piaget (1932) in early childhood children typically think only in simple, concrete terms; later (he theorised) in adolescence they develop the capacity for formal operational thought which enables them to reason logically and think abstractly. The age at which this transition occurs varies between individuals and between cultures. Basing his estimate on his work with young middle class children in Geneva in the 1930's, Piaget opined that formal operational thinking was achieved for the most part by the age of 15 years. However, in a study of a large sample of Australian adolescents in Sydney (Connell, Stroobant, Sinclair, Connell & Rogers, 1975) it was found that formal operational reasoning was rare before the age of 16 years. Given that the average age of students who participated in the DRACON investigation in Australia was 14 years, it would appear that relatively few in this study would have reached the stage at which such cognitive capacity could be assumed. Implications of the attainment of formal operational thinking for conflict resolution appear to be mainly relevant to children in later adolescence. It may be surmised that the capacity to think abstractly about such concepts as reciprocity and democracy may enable older

adolescence to appreciate and engage in more socially responsible behaviour.

A further corollary of the emergence of hypothetical and logical reasoning in adolescence is the increasing capacity to reflect on one's own perspectives and those of others, as opposed to being restricted by an egocentric mode of thinking. According to information processing theory this is made possible during adolescence because more cognitive resources become accessible, there is greater breadth to content domains, and there is an increased ability to combine abstract information and evaluate arguments. It can be expected that involvement in dramatic productions at this stage of cognitive development would enable adolescents to make use of and develop further these emerging cognitive capacities in the course of understanding others and entertaining new options for conflict resolution.

Changes on moral capacity

The quality of moral reasoning is also thought to undergo developmental changes during adolescence (Piaget, 1932; Kohlberg, 1963). This may result from improved logical abilities and the capacity to think in abstract terms. It may be stimulated by an in increased awareness of alternative personal, social and political viewpoints and a desire to resolve differences. The impetus to resolve such differences becomes stronger as adolescents seek to come to terms with issues of identity and the core values to which they must subscribe. However, it should be recognised that although there are sequential stages of moral reasoning, such that older children are less likely to reason at a pre-conventional level, for example, thinking that 'good behaviour' means helping only those who help you, it remains true that most adolescents - and indeed most adults – plateau at the level of 'good behaviour' which means no more than obeying the law. Kohlberg has suggested that exposure to higher levels of moral thinking can lead to an enhanced ability to think and act more appropriately. It is therefore possible that involvement in dramatic productions in which higher levels of moral thinking are acted out can bring about more desirable forms of interpersonal behaviour.

Research into pro-social behaviour during adolescence suggests that the capacity for perspective-taking is related to higher levels of moral reasoning, especially among males (Eisenberg, Zhou & Koller, 2001) At the same time perspective taking may be viewed as an information-

gathering tool that can be used for good or ill, for example, for manipulating others. When perspective-taking is combined with a disposition to feel sympathy for others in distress (commonly evident in early and middle childhood) its influence on pro-social behaviour is much more positive.

Becoming more autonomous, especially in relating to parents and other authorities

A consequence of the growth in maturity during the adolescent yeas is the desire for greater independence and freedom. This often results in a growing aversion to being controlled by authorities, especially by parents and by teachers. At the same time there is an increasing capacity on the part of growing adolescents to insist upon being given greater autonomy.

Although most adolescents remain on good terms with their parents, relations generally become less positive. For instance, between the ages of 13 and 17 years among Australian students there is a significant trend towards them reporting that they are less able to "get on" well with their own mothers and their own fathers.

According to Noller and Patton (1990) most conflicts between parents and adolescents are about day to day living and relationships within the family. Consistent with this view, in a study involving the families of 14-16 year olds of the nature of disagreements between adolescents and their parents, these issues were found to be the most contentious: helping out in the home, having enough money to spend; the use of the telephone; adolescent untidiness; noise level and time to get home at night. This list suggests at least two themes; first, a conflict of interest between what adolescents and their parents want, with the latter wanting a quieter and tidier environment and more help with family chores; and, second, a desire on the part of adolescents for the freedom that comes with greater spending power, greater access to the family telephone and the right to come home late at night. Such conflicts may have ramifications for adolescent relations with peers. There is evidence that feeling "over-controlled" by parents is related to adolescent schoolchildren being more involved than others in bully/victim problems at school (Rigby, 2002). It has been suggested that acting aggressively towards peers at school can be a consequence of adolescents feeling frustrated as a result of perceived negative treatment in the home (Olweus, 1993).

Attitudes to other forms of authority, such as teachers and the police, also tend to become less positive, especially in early adolescence. This can be at the basis of some conflicts with teachers, which increase over this period, and, also, for a minority of adolescents, an increase in anti-social acts and trouble with the police. Some writers see this escalation of conflict in adolescents as having positive features. For example, the US Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry (1978: 71-72) state:

> We consider that some measure of rebellion against adult authority is a normal and necessary feature of the adolescent process, and its absence may signal some failure of optimal ego development.

Argyle (1986: 79) adds:

> For most adolescents, there is a degree of rebellion, if only to establish that they are separate individuals in their own right.

Identity formation

According to identity formation theory as proposed by Erikson (1968) the fundamental task of adolescence is to define an identity for themselves as a basis for adult development. An emerging identity may have many facets. These may include physical (being strong, fit, athletic); social (being popular, a leader, a follower); sexual (being straight or gay); moral (adhering to defined principles); religious (believing in God); knowledgeable/competent (having know-how and skills to earn a living). For the adolescent the process of arriving at what one really wants to be, may involving a good deal of uncertainty and experimentation. Logan Pearsall Smith advised:

> Don't laugh at a youth for his affectations. He's only trying on one face after another to find his own (cited in Fitzhenry, 1986: 328).

Each face he or she "tries on" may bring about conflict with others who do not like that face. Hence, the variability and inconsistency of adolescent behaviour may be a further reason for conflict with others during adolescence.

How adolescents think about themselves as a male or a female person is an important aspect of identity formation and one that can have important implications for involvement in conflict with peers. Much has been made recently of the so-called 'construction of masculinity' according to which there is a tendency for males in general, and adoles-

174

cents especially, to assume characteristics consistent with a tough, aggressive, dominating image of themselves (Connell, 1987). Less prominently, it has also been suggested that the 'construction of femininity' is a process according to which adolescent girls assume desirable feminine characteristics and accordingly behave intolerantly towards those who do not conform the desired image.

It should be acknowledged that post-modern thinkers have challenged the notion of the discovery of a true and authentic self identity For example, Kenway, Willis, Blackmore, & Rennie (1997) argue that an individual's identity is the on-going result of the discourses that have shaped his/her history and which shape her/his world and is constituted and reconstituted daily. Hence considerable emphasis is placed upon the 'shaping' influences, especially the current conceptions of what one should be like according to the peer group.

The peer group

The peer group becomes an important influence on the behaviour of children from early childhood and continues into adolescence, when it is commonly seen as becoming more important relative to adult influence, especially in some specific domains such as choice of clothes and sources of entertainment. However, although at times the 'peer group' may appear as an all pervasive influence standing in opposition to parental and teacher influence and producing reflex action responses in conformity with group norms, adult influence does not vanish. Moreover, there is also a process of individuation at work, which enables adolescents to 'define who they are' and at times this puts them in opposition to 'the mob'.

3.3.2   Stress, social interaction and conflict handling

It has been argued that for some, but not all, adolescents the adolescent years can be at times extremely stressful as a consequence of the changes to which they need to accommodate and the developmental tasks with which they are confronted. Research suggests that approximately one adolescent in four may at some stage fit this category (Siddique & D'Arcy, 1984)). When stress levels are high, problem solving is difficult. One might expect highly stressed adolescents to engage in fight or flight strategies in seeking to cope with conflict situations. They might also be prone to misperceive situations by exaggerating

differences that exist between them and others with whom they are in conflict, and adopt extreme measures, as in the use of force. Alternatively, they may deny differences that do exist and adopt an inappropriate smoothing approach rather than come to terms with the actual situation.

Although the developmental approach to understanding the psychology of adolescents provides some insights, its limitations should be noted. For example, it has been observed that with the onset of adolescence, there is an increase in capacity for perspective taking and empathic concern. However, it has been reported in Australia that attitudes towards victims of school bullying become increasingly negative between the ages of 8 and 15 years and to become more positive only in the later teens (Rigby, 1997). We need to ask how the environment in secondary schools contributes to these outcomes. Further, it has been noted that the extent to which conflicts occur between adolescents is relatively independent of age. A large-scale study (n=16,231) of Australian high school children revealed that the age at which adolescents were most at risk of being the target of peer harassment at school depended upon the age at which students transferred from primary to secondary school (Rigby, 1998). For example, in South Australia where the transfer is in year 8, students experience most conflict with peers at the age of 13. In Victoria where the transfer is in year 7, such conflict is greatest at the age of 12. This finding should draw our attention to social psychological factors, such as the supportiveness of the school environment, which can at times be a more powerful determinant of interpersonal behaviour than age-related developmental changes.

We should also recognise just as different kinds of school environment can override developmental factors that may appear to have universal validity, so too can a broader social and cultural milieu, possibly of the kind that are represented in this study of adolescents in Sweden, Malaysia and Australia. Numerous cross-cultural studies have reported failure to replicate generalisations based upon a population sampled in one country but not another; for example Kohlberg's post-conventional stages of moral development are more commonly found in countries such as the United States which value individualism, rather in non-Western countries which value collectivism.

Coleman's (1974) Focal Model of adolescent development suggests that debilitating stress is least likely to be present when the demands made upon adolescents occur one at a time, thus allowing them to han-

176

dle each independently and successively before trying to cope with another. According to Coleman, this is typically what happens. However (he contends) when multiple demands are made upon the adolescent more or less simultaneously, stress levels are particularly difficult to manage. For instance, an adolescent may find that adjusting to rapid physical maturation (or, worse still, the consciousness that development has been delayed long after that of one's peers), concerns over the nature of one's sexual orientation, and conflicts with parents and other authorities in one's quest for greater autonomy, may all occur at about the same time. Other life events with which adolescent would normally cope adequately may add greatly to the burden. Under these conditions, the gloomy predictions of adolescence as a period of "storm and stress" may seem justified.

Addressing the social interactional needs of adolescents through drama

We have argued that although adolescence is for some students a period of considerable vulnerability, especially when a number of 'developmental demands' occur simultaneously, there is no reason to adopt a highly protective approach towards 'getting them through' the awkward years. It is preferable to view adolescence as period of growth potential, given the emerging capacities and the challenges with which they are faced.

In responding to their educational and social needs, it is important to recognise the nature of the demands that are being made upon adolescents from a developmental perspective. These have been described above as deriving from the need to accommodate to physical and biological changes; growing sexual consciousness and associated dilemmas; the drive for autonomy and independence from adult control; and the difficulties inherent in developing a satisfactory sense of identity.

But in addition, there are emerging capabilities that seek expression. Especially there is a growth in both cognitive and moral potential. Young adolescents are, in the main, reaching a stage in their psychosocial development at which they are ready to learn new ways of handling conflict, especially by employing a collaborative and mutual problem-solving approach. Unfortunately, they are also at a stage at which they are becoming increasingly critical of adult authority and in particular the authority of teachers when it is used in a directive manner. Teachers typically lack credibility as experts in how to improve student relationships with peers. In fact a recent study of young Australian adolescents

(n=632) concluded that less than 50% of 14 year olds believed that teachers at their schools acted in a helpful way in resolving conflicts. The prospects of helping young adolescents to resolve conflicts with others by either the use of direct instruction by teachers or through interventions conducted by teachers themselves are not good.

The involvement of young adolescents in drama work offers new hope. As distinct from being directed by school authorities to behave in 'better' ways in interacting with others – both peers and adults – engagement in drama provides a means by which students can employ their emerging capacities for reciprocal role playing. Not only can this be enjoyable and creative, but it can also lead to students reflecting upon their experiences and subsequently trying out new ways of interacting with others with a deepened understanding of both themselves and others. Given the importance of the issue of conflict in schools and its resolution in the lives of adolescent schoolchildren (documented at length in this book) one can rightly challenge the conventional curriculum of high schools which in a large measure fails to cater for this vital aspect of adolescent development.

3.3.3   Conclusion

From the point of view of helping adolescents to handle conflicts more effectively, it is misleading to view the adolescent stage of development as a period of inevitable mental instability that renders adolescents incapable of adopting and applying rational and consistent methods of handling conflict with others. At the same time, it should be acknowledged that during adolescence developmental factors might result in exceptional demands being made upon capacities to handle some conflicts. These developmental factors include dramatic changes in physical maturation, new demands being made as a consequence of sexual development, the recognition of a need for greater independence and autonomy (and consequent conflicts with parental and non-parental authorities) and pressure to define one's identity as a preparation for entry into the adult world. Each of these may create stress and give rise to conflicts with others. According to Coleman's Focal Model, this is likely to occur when such demands made upon adolescents are experienced at one point in time rather than successively and have an unbearable cumulative effect. Under some circumstances, therefore, it may be that the provision of strong emotional support is a prerequisite to help-

ing an adolescent to adopt an appropriate method of handling a given conflict. But for the majority of cases, and for most of the time, it is not therapeutic intervention that is needed, but rather strategies and skills that can enable adolescents to handle the conflicts they experience.

3.4   Experiential learning in DRACON

We are working with a content of knowledge less easily acquired through traditional methods. Therefore, during the development of the programmes, we have tried using different methods of teaching and learning. Special exercises within DRACON are aimed at making young people aware of different types of conflicts as well as different ways of acting in conflict situations. Our experience is that younger teenagers are not especially susceptible to traditional teaching, i.e. a teacher simply giving lectures about conflicts and conflict handling. Instead, we try to organise teaching so that it is based on experience. If young people can develop emotional understanding through pedagogical drama exercises, we assume that they develop new knowledge and new competencies in more efficient ways.

Several of our pilot studies show that young people are more susceptible to conflict theories and explanations after first having partaken of simulated conflict situations. The exercises are realistic, but as they are simulated they feel safer for the participants, who are given the opportunity of reflecting over the conflict situations without too much stress.

A learning situation whereby the student reflects on a concrete experience and learns something new in the process is termed experiential learning. In our drama programmes this process is further accentuated by discussion, analysis and evaluation of the experience.

> From these processes come the insights, the discoveries, and understanding. The pieces fall into place, and the experience takes on added meaning in relation to other experiences. All this is then conceptualised, synthesised and integrated into the individual's system of constructs which he imposes on the world, through which he views, perceives, categorises, evaluates and seeks experience (Wight, 1970: 240).

Dewey, Lewin and Piaget represent leading traditions within the field of experiential learning. Common to all three traditions is that learning is a process taking into account the development of the whole individ-

ual; where purpose and self-direction are the organising principles for life long learning in education.

The process of experiential learning can be described as a four-stage cycle involving four adaptive learning modes – "concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation" (Kolb, 1984: 41). Further, Kolb defines the characteristics of experiential learning as a "process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (ibid: 38).

According to Kolb learning involves integrating the human functions of thought, feeling, perception and behaviour. In experiential learning it is the process and not the result that is in focus. Learning and adaptation, rather than content and outcome, are accentuated. As a result, acquiring knowledge is part of an on-going process, undergoing constant change and transformation. Learning through experience is the natural way to learn!

3.4.1 Gardner's multiple intelligences

If one accepts Gardner's (2001) theory of multiple intelligences, one can say that teaching in schools has focussed mainly on the linguistic and logic-mathematical intelligences. According to Gardner there are students who learn more efficiently with methods connected to other learning styles than the two academic ones.

Even if there are many definitions of intelligence, they all centre on our ability to learn through our experiences and to cope with new situations in life in a good way. If we accept the thought that people have different intelligence profiles it is reasonable to assume that people learn in different ways.

The emphasis on visual-spatial, musical-rhythmical and physical-kinaesthetic talents has awakened a greater interest in the practical-esthetical subjects in school and the theory of multiple intelligences has helped to legitimate drama activities. It is foremost the physical-kinaesthetic, inter-personal and intra-personal abilities that are developed through educational drama.

Long before Goleman (1998) and Gardner (2001), Witkin (1974) formulated his ideas about emotional intelligence, which he believed the school's aesthetical education programmes should aim at developing. Witkin advocates an upgrading of the esthetical subjects and ar-

gues in favour of these subjects as a means of bringing experiences from outside the school into education, thereby creating spaces in school for emotional values and experiences. If the origin and content of artistic work in school is the life we experience with our senses, then teachers of the esthetical subjects should be able to evoke the same sort of experiences in the classroom (Witkin, 1989).

In conflict situations and in learning about conflicts it is not only logical thoughts that are involved; the whole person is engaged with senses and emotions. Therefore, in many situations pedagogical methods that profoundly engage the whole person are needed for more efficient learning.

3.4.2   Human Dynamics

Human Dynamics "identifies and documents inherent distinctions in the functioning of people *as whole systems*" (Seagal & Horne, 1997: xix). Based on research comprising about 40.000 people from over 25 cultures, nine human basic patterns on how people function individually and in groups have been identified.

Central to Human Dynamics is the contention that people learn in many different ways; consequently this needs to be taken into account in learning situations. The theory is based on three universal principles of how human's function: the mental, emotional and physical dimensions. Even though we all have a mental, emotional and physical dimension, one of these dominates our way of functioning. Some people are mentally centred (rational and logical), others emotionally centred (relational and emotive) and others still are physically centred (practically active).

According to Seagal and Horne, the majority of the Western population seems to be emotionally centred (emotional-mental or emotional-physical), while the majority in the Far East seems to be physically centred. This causes consequences for cross-cultural communication and co-operation between East and West. People have different basic patterns and therefore different learning requirements.

Schools in the Western World are thus mainly constructed to suit those who have the emotional-mental basic pattern. This means that a traditional school does not cater to the basic patterns of learning for a majority of the students. Those who are more emotionally-physically

181

centred need freedom of movement. They find it difficult to sit still and need to talk in learning situations. Also, those who are physically centred have difficulties in an emotional mentally focused school, as they need time to build up comprehensive learning structures.

In the DRACON project we work a great deal with drama exercises. We try to analyse the outcome of the exercises and give explanations to strengthen young people in building up new competencies. The use of drama in education should be especially suitable for students with an emotional-physical basic pattern, i.e. the majority of students. However, students with a basic mental pattern may have some difficulty becoming involved in drama as they at the outset observe more than they participate.

3.4.3 Peer teaching

Peer teaching is a special form of learning that can prove effective by helping to overcome the distance between teacher and student. It is important that students are willing to engage in the subject in order to be able to inform and teach other students. By being given responsibility and being entrusted with the task of acting as tutor/teacher for other students, the individual can grow with the assignment and active learning can begin.

Peer teaching can also contribute to making learning more fun, as the students are more actively involved. Through teaching others, the students first have to reformulate the knowledge into their own words. They acquire a deeper understanding of the content when they are forced into formulating their knowledge into their own sentences. Understanding the meaning of something is the essence of in-depth learning; that is why it is difficult to teach something when we only have a superficial acquisition of skills. Superficial acquisition of skills does not work when we have to teach others. As many teachers have experienced, we learn when we are forced to give a lesson ourselves.

Peer teaching builds on the assumption that it is easier for students to communicate with one another than it is for the teacher-student. This may depend on the shift of power as well as being able to identify with one another. Within peer teaching discipline problems seem to be reduced.

Teachers are now generally required to give up the role of traditional knowledge conveyer and instead focus on how to organise adequate learning situations in order to encourage students to learn.

The DRACON programmes have demonstrated that peer teaching has been especially successful in Australia. The DRACON programmes have demonstrated that peer teaching has been especially successful in Australia. An overwhelming majority of participants has identified the peer teaching as the most valuable element of the program, both as peer learners, and especially as peer teachers – where they have significantly reinforced their own learning as well as discovering new social skills.

Peer teaching has also inspired and been tried in Sweden. Follow-up interviews have demonstrated that students enjoy and appreciate peer teaching.

Due to cultural differences, peer teaching would probably be more difficult to introduce in Malaysia.

3.4.4 Drama - the pedagogy of experience

Since the beginning of the 20th Century, drama teachers and researchers have tried to explain how we learn through drama. For example, Stanislavskij's acting training (1944) has both methodically and conceptually affected a number of drama representatives.

Systematic training of the senses (fantasy, concentration and relaxation, contact and co-operation) in combination with demands of authenticity and insight in the creative process, characteristic of Stanislavskij's system, has had a strong influence on the development of educational drama (Pusztai, 2000). Many drama teachers share Slade's (1954) and Way's (1967) conception that to focus on performance too early during the training is devastating for the artistic and pedagogical aspects of drama. Lipschütz (1976) and Stanislavskij both emphasise the importance of inner image creation. Lipschütz contends that small children are skilled in thinking in images – a skill that needs to be recaptured in order to liberate creative abilities. Exercises in inner image creating stimulate the imagination and this is closely linked to spontaneity. In spontaneous creating the imagination has access to more or less conscious material in a more or less symbolic way (Lipschütz, 1971). Teaching using one's imagination becomes enjoyable and there-

fore forms a prerequisite for the sort of creating processes that help strengthen identity.

> Through the creative process we come into contact with that which is unique within us. Our inner experiences are formed in different ways and we are given a better overview and perspective of them. We are able to understand and eventually also to control our thoughts, feelings and imagination. The creative process can thus become an important tool for a deeper understanding of the self (Lipschütz, 1976: 19).[17]

The potential of learning in drama is connected to experiencing ourselves as the role person as well as ourselves in the fictitious situation (Boal, 1979; Bolton, 1984). Boal and Bolton call this double perspective 'metaxis'. By seeing and perceiving the world from different role perspectives and at the same time being able to relate the role to one's own outlook, empathy and the understanding of complex situations is developed. The most important learning does not take place on the outer level of action but on an inner subjective level of meaning. Moreover, Bolton (1984) points out that emotions must be involved for drama teaching to be effective. The participants must be "touched emotionally enough to bring about a change of attitude, a change in the value" (Bolton, 1979: 32). When teenagers act as adult problem solvers in a conflict play, they practice adult language and adult behaviour on an outer level. A qualitatively different learning takes place when they become emotionally affected by the situation and gain insight in conflict handling connected to their own life-world.

The life-world is a perspective that is often in focus in different forms of drama activities, as drama usually takes substance from human life-worlds. When using drama for learning, the teaching substance is often taken from the students' life-world, for example experienced conflict situations in school. Education and the students' life-world perspective are then brought together and studied through drama for further exploration, understanding and learning.

> Because this form of dramatic activity harnesses those very processes that we go through when we make social contexts in 'real life'. I believe it creates a unique opportunity for the participants to reflect on the meaning of what they are creating. Because it relies minimally on mimesis, the

---

[17] Freely translated from Swedish.

participant is *living* the event rather than just *copying it* (Bolton, 1992: 12).

In Scandinavia, Möller Nicolaisen (1978) coined the concept of *pedagogy of experience* in connection with Nordic leadership education for drama and theatre educators in 1972/3. The pedagogy of experience refers to an education where the participants are given the opportunity of experiencing (e.g. simulated situations) under non-authoritarian forms and reflecting on these experiences together. Möller Nicolaisen contends that all teaching should aim at making people autonomous. This is not possible to achieve through education that encourages the reproduction of knowledge (e.g. reproduction of learnt homework). Instead an active knowledge seeking process is needed, where all senses are stimulated and where impressions are sorted, valued and chosen in order to be formed into one's own creative expressions that in turn become subjects of reflection. Möller Nicolaisen (1978: 16) also stresses the importance of the group for learning and democratic development.

> The free and choosing (autonomous) person is not an isolated phenomenon but is influenced by and have an influence on the groups she is part of. At the same time as one develops the personal consciousness it is important to increase the social consciousness through tolerance, acceptance and constructive openness. Of course, it is possible to lecture about these conditions. But they only become knowledge if they are experienced and learnt.[18]

Bergström (1995) and Möller Nicolaisen (1976) both emphasise that children need to sort through and be able to evaluate flows of information. Children need to develop their creative powers, their ability to play and their ability for empathy as well as develop a democratic disposition. This requires that schools "free not only the brain's power of order but also its chaotic powers" in order to "guarantee the progress of creativity and other chaotic bound abilities" (Bergström, 1995: 214). Rigid school structures need to be broken up in order to provide space for a creative learning process where each child is given the opportunity for individual development.

In order for the participants to become emotionally involved in drama a certain working climate is needed, which is necessary for crea-

---

[18] Freely translated from Swedish.

tive activities and group dynamic processes. For instance, drama creation must always be voluntary and the participants should feel assured that they only need to perform what they themselves wish to (Lipschütz, 1971).

Reflective drama practice fills the criteria for a pedagogy of experience. Education built on this experience provides us with authentic opportunities for creating our own knowledge. Educational drama in its modern meaning comprises systems of games, exercises, improvisations and role-plays, which in different combinations are developed into specific methods. Within all drama activity play and games are embedded. Drama and theatre are above all about language – the language of words and of non-verbal signals and the language of feeling and experience translated into action.

Reasons for finding time to use drama in the classroom should be based on the fact that drama is experiential and therefore provides realistic and purposeful experiences for the participants. Dramatic play is one of the central ways in which young children learn about the world, about themselves and especially about human nature - how and why they and other people behave in certain ways. Drama is about exploring - discovering and creating - and about performing. In experiential roleplay, the simplest and most common form of drama, where the participants are the people in the story, the goals of the characters are made complex either by conflicts, or dilemmas, or some other obstacles.

The focus of drama as a discipline is the human condition, the human being in dramatic action, a unity of "what if" (thought, imagination) and "as if" (action, drama) that is meaningful in its transformative power (Courtney, 1995: 173). Within drama we can experiment with what people in a certain situation would, might or did do, and discover why they acted that way.

3.4.5   Summary

Within the DRACON project we assume, given the appropriate conditions that young people can construct, deconstruct and reconstruct knowledge themselves and that the teacher's main task is to be able to organise for that learning to occur. We also assume that students learn and become more influenced in their thinking through reflections on direct experience. It is in connection with this that educational drama provides us with some quite unique possibilities. As already mentioned,

186

with the help of educational drama we can create exercises that directly build on the participants' own experiences of conflict situations.

How do we get young people to think and reflect about their experiences? Educational drama can be seen as a possible learning method. Drama is about learning processes that engage all of the individual's senses, and involves the individual's thoughts, emotions and acting in a developing and learning process. However, it demands a certain kind of working climate characteristic for creative activities and dynamic group processes. It also demands pedagogical leadership, a group that works well together, fictitious creative play and pedagogical aims in order to integrate emotion, thought and action in a developmental process.

Experiences and emotions are important ingredients in all learning but acquire special significance when it comes to learning about conflict handling and using one's own experienced conflicts as a starting point. This view on learning is related to the prerequisites we have had in working with this project. During a limited time we have offered to help increase students' conflict handling competences. Acquiring knowledge, skills and practice in interpreting one's own and others communication (verbal and non-verbal) is of great significance in order to understand oneself and others better. Increasing one's knowledge and understanding of how emotions, thoughts and actions interact and influence one another is something we constantly need to remind ourselves of.

In order for schools to function well we need to develop greater self-knowledge and be able to reflect on our behaviour and the ways in which we communicate with others. By helping to acquaint young people with these natural tools many problems and conflicts could probably be prevented. Educational drama can offer a potential platform for experiential learning.

References

Allwood, J. & Friberg, M. (1994). *Culturally Conditioned Models of Conflict Resolution. A comparative analysis of Malaysia and Sweden*. Project Report to SAREC (Swedish Authority for Research Co-operation with Developing Countries). Unpublished report.

Argyle M. (1986). Social behaviour problems in adolescence. In R.K. Silbereisen, K. Eyferth & G. Rudinger (Eds.), *Development as ac-*

tion in context: problem behavior and normal youth development. New York: Springer-Verlag.

Beaton, A.E. (1996). *Mathematics achievement in the middle school years: IEA's Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMMS).* Chestnut Hill, MA: TIMMS International Study Center, Boston College.

Bell, D. (1976). *The Coming of Post-industrial Society. A venture in social forecasting.* New York: Basic Books.

Berger, P. (1986). *The capitalist revolution.* New York: Basic books.

Danielson, M. (2003). *Svenska skolbarns hälsovanor 2001/02* [Health behaviour in Swedish school-aged children]. Stockholm: Statens Folkhälsoinstitut (www.fhi.se).

Bergström, M. (1995). *Neuropedagogik* [Neuropedagogy]. Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand.

Boal, A. (1979). *Theatre of the Oppressed.* London: Pluto.

Bolton, G. (1979). *Towards a Theory of Drama in Education.* London: Longman.

Bolton, G. (1984). *Drama as Education.* London: Longman.

Bolton, G. (1992). *New perspectives on classroom drama.* Hemel Hempstead: Simon & Schuster.

Castells, M. (1999). *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture.* Malden, Mass: Blackwell.

Carter, B. & McGoldrick, M. (Eds.). (1989). *The Changing Family Life Cycle: A Framework for Family Therapy* (2nd Ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Coleman, J. (1974). *Relationships in adolescence.* London: Routledge & Kagan Paul.

Goleman, D. (1998). *Working with emotional intelligence.* London: Bloomsbury.

Coleman, J.C. & Hendry, L.B. (1999, 3rd Ed.). *The nature of adolescence.* London: Routledge.

Connell, W.F., Stroobant, R.E., Sinclair, K.E., Connell, R.W. & Rogers, K.W. (1975). *Twelve to 20: Studies of City Youth.* Sydney: Hicks Smith.

Connell, R.W. (1987). *Gender and power.* Sydney, Australia: Allen & Unwin.

Connell, R.W. (1995). *Masculinities.* St Leonards: Allen and Unwin.

Courtney, R. (1995). *Drama and feeling: An aesthetic theory.* London: McGill-Queen´s University Press.

Degabriele, M. (2000). Business as usual: how business studies thinks culture. *A Journal of Media and Culture, 3*(2). (http://journal.media-culture.org.au/0005/business.php).

Duncan, N. (1999). *Sexual bullying: gender conflict and pupil culture in secondary schools*. London: Routledge.

Eisenberg, N., Zhou, Q. & Koller, S. (2001). Brazilian Adolescents Prosocial Moral Judgement and Behavior: relations to sympathy, perspective taking, gender role, orientation and demographic characteristics. *Child Development*, 72, 518 -534.

Enkvist, I. (2000). *Feltänkt* [Wrong thinking]. Stockholm: SNS Förlag.

Erikson, E.H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. New York: Norton.

Fitzhenry, R.I. (1986). The *David and Charles Book of Quotations*. Ne ton Abbot, Devon: David and Charles Publishers.

Friberg, M. (1999). Schumpeter's principle – cultural continuity in a changing world. In M. Schulz (Ed.), *Peace and Development. Their interrelationship in the global system*. Göteborg, Sweden: Padrigu Papers.

Frow, J. & Morris, M. (Eds.). (1993). *Australian Cultural Studies: a reader*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

Gardner, H. (2001). *Intelligenserna i nya perspektiv* [Intelligence reframed]. Jönköping, Sweden: Brain Books.

Guggenbuhl, A. (1993). *Die unheimliche Faszination der Gewalt*. Zurich: Schweitzer Spiegel Verlag.

Hargreaves, A. (1994). *Changing teachers, changing times: teachers' work and culture in the postmodern age*. London: Cassell.

Hiebert J. (2003). *Teaching mathematics in seven countries: Results from the TIMMS 1999 video study*. Washinton, D.C.: US Govt. Printing Office.

Ho, D. (1995). Internalised culture, cultocentrism and transcendence. *The Counselling Psychologist*, *23*(1), 4-24.

Hofstede, G. (1991). *Cultures and organisations: Software of the mind*. London: McGraw-Hill.

Inglehart, R. (1997). *Modernization and Postmodernization. Cultural, economic and political change in 43 Societies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Kenway, J. & Willis, S. (1993). *Telling tales: Girls and schools changing their ways*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

Kenway, J., Willis, S., Blackmore, J. & Rennie, L. (1997). *Answering Back: Girls, Boys and Feminism in Schools*. St Leonards: Allen & Unwin.

Kolb, D.A. (1984). *Experiential Learning: Experience as the source of learning and development.* Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Kohlberg, L. (1963). The development of children's orientation toward moral order: 1. Sequence in the development of moral thought. *Vita Humana*, (6), 11-33.

Lindström, P. (2001). School Violence: A multi-level perspective. *International Review of Victimology*, *8*(2), 141-158.

Lipschütz, D. (1971). *Dynamisk pedagogic* [Dynamic pedagogy]. Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand.

Lipschütz, D. (1976). *Samspel i grupp* [Teamwork in groups]. Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand.

Lum, D. (1999). *Culturally Competent Practice. A Framework for Growth and Action*. Pacific Grove: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

Malm, B. (2003). *Personal values, professional roles*. Malmö, Sweden: GM Educational Consulting.

Maslow, A. H. (1943). A Theory of Human Motivation. *Psychological Review, 50*, 370-396.

Matsumo, D. (1996). *Culture and Psychology*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Möller Nicolaisen, S. (1978). *Experiment med upplevelsens pedagogik, konstruktiv gruppsamvaro och kollektivt skapande* [Experiments using the pedagogy of experience, constructive group relations and collective creativity]. Fagersta: ATR/teater.

Noller, P. & Patton, W. (1990). Maintaining family relationships at adolescence. In P.C.L. Heaven & V.J. Callan (Eds.), *Adolescence, an Australian perspective* (pp. 53-65). Sydney: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

OECD-PISA (2001). *Knowledge and Skills for Life: First results from PISA 2000*. Paris: OECD.

Okun, B., Fried, J., & Okun, M. (1999). *Understanding Diversity: A Learning-as-Practice Primer*. Pacific Grove: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at school.* Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

Payne, M. (1997). *Modern Social Work Theory*. London: Macmillan.

Pederson, P. (1988). *Handbook for Developing Multicultural Awareness*. Alexandria, VA: American Association of Counseling and Development.

Piaget, J. (1932). *The moral judgment of the child*. London: Kegan Paul.

Piaget, J. & Inhelder, B. (1969). *The Psychology of the Child*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Pusztai, I. (2000). *Skådespelarövningar som didaktiska instrument i pedagogiskt drama* [Drama exercises as didactical instruments for drama in education]. Stockholm University: Akademitryck.

Pye, L.W. & Pye, L.W.. (1985). *Asian Power and Politics. The cultural dimensions of authority*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press.

Rigby, K. (1997). Attitudes and beliefs about bullying among Australian school children. *Irish Journal of Psychology, 18*(2), 202 – 220.

Rigby, K. (1998). *Manual for the Peer Relations Questionnaire (PRQ)*: Point Lonsdale, Victoria, Australia: The Professional Reading Guide.

Rigby, K. (2002). *New perspectives on bullying.* London: J. Kingsley.

Rigby, K. & Bagshaw, D. (2001). What hurts? The reported consequences of negative interactions with peers among Australian school children. *Children Australia*, *26*(4), 36-41.

Robitaille, D.F. (1993). *TIMMS monograph: Third International Mathematics and Science Study*. Vancouver: Pacific Education Press.

Seagal, S. & Horne, D. (1997). *Human Dynamics. A new framework for understanding people and realizing the potential in our organizations.* Williston: Pegasus.

Siddique, C.M. & D'Arcy, C. (1984). Adolescence, stress and psychological well-being. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *16*, 267-270.

Sievers, A.M. (1974). The mystical world of Indonesia: culture & economic development. Baltimore: John Hopkins Univ. Press.

Slade, P. (1954). *Child Drama*. London: University of London Press.

Stanislavskij, K.S. (1944). *En skådespelares arbete med sig själv* [An actor's creation of Self]. Stockholm: Fröléen.

Ting-Toomey, S. & Oetzel, J. (2001). *Managing Intercultural Conflict Effectively*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Toffler, A. (1970). *Future Shock*. London: Bodley Head.

Toffler, A. (1980). *The Third Wave*. New York: Morrow.

U.S. Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry (1978). *Power and authority in adolescence: the origins and resolutions of intergenerational conflict*. New York: F.A.P. Publication.

Way, B. (1967). *Development Through Drama*. Harlow: Longman.

Wight, A. (1970). Participative education and the inevitable revolution. *Journal of Creative Behavior*, *4*(4), 240.

Wight, S. (2004) Australian Schooling: A History of Social Control. Retrieved from:
http://www.home-ed.vic.edu.au/AERG/AustralianSchooling.htm

Witkin, R.W. (1974). *The Intelligence of Feeling*. London: Heinemann.

Witkin, R.W. (1989). Expressivist Theories of Art and Ideologies of Arts Education. In M. Ross (Ed.), *The Claims of Feeling: Readings in Aesthetic Education* (pp. 24-32). Lewes, East Sussex: Falmer.

4 Adolescent conflicts and educational drama

Dale Bagshaw, Rosemary Nursey-Bray and
Ken Rigby

4.1 Secondary schooling in Australia

Australian schooling has been in a long and uneven period of transition. Prior to 1960, the British colonial legacy left Australia with educational systems and structures that privileged traditional pedagogies and transmissive schooling structures. These were mainly behaviouristic and mechanistic, aimed at producing a pliant and socialised work force. Teachers, then as now, covered a diverse range of ideological attitudes and capabilities, and many teachers and some administrators worked towards humanising the curriculum and centring it on learning rather than teaching, but change was slow. Since the 1970s there has been a rapidly increasing attitude shift towards education for change and an increasing emphasis on learning rather than been taught.

In the past four decades there has been steady evolution towards more transformative and humanistic education. The current schooling scene is still relatively standardised, although under the Australian Federal government system the seven individual states are each responsible for education. There was a half-hearted attempt to develop a national curriculum in the 1990s, and evidence of this is present in the subject syllabi of most states, along with local curricula forms and structures.

There are a number of separate educational management systems in each state. The largest providers are the state governments, which operate a fairly centralised and unified system of free schools in each state, funded partly on a state and partly on a federal basis. In some states all state schools are co-educational; others provide a mix of co-educational and single sex schools. (There is a lively contemporary

debate in Australia about the relative advantages and disadvantages of single-sex schools for both boys and girls.) The state schools are located according to population and in some states, but not all, parents can elect where they send their child.

The 'private' educational sector is comprised of a series of smaller education systems. Some schools, including many of the most prestigious and 'academic' schools, are independent and fee-paying, though they are also subsidised by federal funds. The largest of several Christian church-based systems is the Catholic education system. The Anglican and Uniting Churches also operate a range of schools, many of them long-established, like many of the growing band of other churches. All of these charge varying fees according to need and are also subsidised by the federal government. All of them prepare students for the Senior (Year 12) examinations run by independent boards of senior school studies in each state. All except the most extreme Christian sects also take a full part in developing and teaching to the various states' Years 1-10 Curriculum.

The relative popularity of state and private schooling tends to be dependent on the political climate. Ten years ago, the Catholic system was declining, with many schools closing. Recently, especially in the term of the current federal conservative government, more generous funding has enabled the private sector to expand, offering smaller classes, more individual attention and more resources and bringing renewed growth and the building of new schools.

In Australia, schooling is compulsory from Year 1 (6 years old) to Year 10 (15 years old). Some states are moving towards a preparatory year (5 years old) and all states have well-developed pre-school programs. Years 11 and 12 constitute the senior level, after which students can progress to a university or other forms of further education. Each state has a separate senior examination system, and schools offer a wide range of individual subjects within that, which count variously towards university matriculation or tertiary entrance scores, according to the state.

A major change taking place at the moment is from a system of pedagogy and assessment based on the achievement of pre-ordained objectives in the areas of content and skills, to a system based on the identification and measurement of competencies and key competencies, and the reporting of learning outcomes. Because the political rhetoric emanating from successive state governments invariably stresses 'the

194

basics' ('the three Rs' - reading, writing and arithmetic), and more recently, 'technology', the arts are rarely privileged or promoted as central to the curriculum. However, the parallel forces of employers wanting creative and imaginative employees, parents wanting confident and articulate children, and the community needing a workforce with social skills and resourcefulness, are all helping subjects like drama to take their place within the curriculum. The demand for 'literacy' (reading and writing) is giving way to notions such as 'multi-literacies', and renewed interest in concepts such as multiple intelligence and contextualised learning.

4.2   The cultural context

There have been numerous failed attempts to define an Australian national identity. Australia is a vast continent comprised of multiple identities. It is the second most multi-cultural country in the world (to Israel) with diverse cultural values, varying from State to State, from city to city, suburb to suburb, from rural to urban areas and from indigenous to non-indigenous populations. Australia has been a pluralist society since European colonisation with significant cultural differences based on class, religious heritage and gender, as well as ethnic origin, be it Anglo-Celtic, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Chinese (who migrated to Australia in the 1800s during the gold rush), Germans who migrated in the 19th Century or one of the many ethnic groups which has arrived in Australia in the post-World War 2 period.

The indigenous people in Australia – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders - in the main distinguish themselves from other Australians and comprise many different language groups, which are linked together by a sense of belonging to a particular locality and to extended family. On all indicators, indigenous people emerge as the most disadvantaged group in Australia (Taylor, 1993). They have suffered from a history where some European colonists initially treated them like animals, killing many and disrupting or totally destroying some tribal groups; where many of their children were removed and placed with white families and institutions and vast numbers of people were alienated from their families and their land. This has led to a loss of identity and spiritual and cultural heritage, loss of contact with the land and loss of dignity and self-respect for many Aboriginal people. Aboriginal self-

determination and the strengthening of Aboriginal family and kinship is seen to be central to the survival of the Aboriginal culture (Bourke, 1993). For more than a decade, Aboriginal people in Australia have been calling for sovereignty by empowering local communities and tribes to carry out their own work (Dsouza, 1994). In spite of government rhetoric about promoting 'reconciliation' between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in Australia, the current conservative Commonwealth Government still refuses to say 'sorry' for prior transgressions, which is seen by many as the first, necessary step towards healing.

Postmodernist thinking would see attempts to define or categorise an overall Australian or South Australian cultural identity or context for this study as futile and artificial, but in the main the dominant discourses reflected in the States' laws and policies are liberal, egalitarian, male, white, 'Western' or Anglo Celtic, and middle-class, with capitalism and economic rationalism dominating the state and federal governments' economic agenda. Hofstede (1980) in his analysis of the dominant cultural characteristics of forty independent nations placed Australia low on 'power-distance' and 'uncertainty avoidance' and high on 'individualism' and 'masculinity'.

There is considerable diversity between the Government funded State education systems in Australia and also diversity *within* each school in each State, for example between the wealthy independent schools and the poorer State schools, or between the Catholic, Independent and State schools in different localities.

The next section will describe some of the unique history of the developments in drama in South Australia, which have influenced drama education in schools. South Australia was the only State in Australia to have been settled in the 1800s by 'free settlers' (rather than convicts), in the main from England, Ireland, Scotland and Cornwall, and from the beginning of European colonisation has enjoyed a national reputation for being 'liberal' and 'progressive' in many fields, including education and the arts.

4.3   The South Australian sub-project

Since Federation in 1901 there have been six States in Australia and two Territories. South Australia was the first State in Australia to have a written drama curriculum. Both educational drama and conflict management are well-established fields in Australia, but the South Australian DRACON project focussed on something relatively new for our State - the linking of educational drama with the field of conflict management in the classroom.

There were two overall aims for the South Australian project – first, to ascertain the perceptions, experiences, nature, prevalence and hurtfulness of conflicts between students from Year 9 students in a range of metropolitan secondary schools in South Australia. The second aim was to discover whether culturally relevant skills for dealing with conflict in a positive, constructive way can be imparted to adolescent school children through the active medium of educational drama.

First, this chapter will provide a brief overview of developments in the educational system in South Australia in relation to drama. We will also provide a brief overview of relevant research that has been conducted in Australian and South Australian schools to provide a picture of what South Australian schools are dealing with in relation to conflict.

Second, we will outline the first stage of the Adelaide DRACON project, which involved conducting focus groups and a survey of Year 9 students in a diverse range of Adelaide metropolitan schools (fourteen in total). Here we obtained adolescents' views of the nature of conflicts in these schools and the way that they were experienced and handled. Teachers and counsellors were also interviewed.

Third, we used the research from stage one to provide information for stage two of the South Australian DRACON project. Conflict researchers and drama educators from the University of South Australia used this information to test the effectiveness of educational drama as a method for imparting conflict handling skills to adolescents in one of the metropolitan public secondary schools surveyed. We are grateful for the guidance of John O'Toole from the Brisbane DRACON team.

4.4   Schools and Drama in South Australia

In Australia from the 1970s onwards, the arts became more and more a focus in national life and particularly in education. South Australia has always been in the forefront of moves to develop the arts in all sectors of the community. However the pendulum of support for the arts has swung from one extreme to another as the years have gone by.

In 1971, the recommendations of a Committee of Enquiry into the education system of South Australia included a concern for the individual child and the opening up of the education system to a variety of ideas (Karmel, 1971). Subsequently the Dunstan Labour government in South Australia formulated new education policies. Dunstan had a personal passion for the arts and education and in 1972 was instrumental in the establishment of the State Theatre Company of South Australia (SATC) as a statutory body with a Youth Activities branch. Helmut Bakaitis, the Director, was an exponent of the Drama-in-Education (DIE) practice of Brian Way and Dorothy Heathcote and instituted DIE projects, teacher workshops and the development of youth theatre.

During the 1970s, 80s and well into the 90s, training in drama and in educational drama methodology was offered in South Australia at Flinders University and at the Teacher Training Colleges that subsequently became Colleges of Advanced Education and finally amalgamated into the University structure. Flinders University, one of three Universities in Adelaide, offered a professional training for theatre practitioners as well as general drama courses. A Degree in Educational Drama was developed at the University of Adelaide. The third University, the University of South Australia offered courses that focussed on teacher training and Community Drama. Programmes of Children's Theatre were presented, particularly at the University of South Australia. 'Expressive arts' training was offered to students preparing to be teachers in primary schools.

In 1977, the Schools Commission and the Australia Council published a document remarkable for its support of the value of the arts in a school curriculum - *Education And The Arts: National Report.* It was informed by the increasing body of literature published in America and Britain during the 1960s and 1970s and influenced by practitioners who were trained in the techniques overseas and who were now training teachers themselves. The Report concluded that:

The arts…. mirror and reflect society. They order ideas and feelings into communicable statements which, because they unite intellect and emotion, constitute a unique way of knowing… [They] are a means of communication... They … make possible understanding of and sympathy for different versions of reality. (Para 1.7.)

In 1977, the South Australian report on *Education and the Arts,* published also by the Schools Commission and the Australia Council, described in some detail the vigorous activity in the arts for young people in this State.[19] By the end of the 70s it had been recommended that all children had exposure to the arts both as students and audiences. An *R-12 Drama Curriculum Framework*, based on techniques derived from Way and Heathcote, was published by the Education Department of South Australia in 1978 to aid teachers in this area.

For those people concerned with education, rather than training, the 1980s started well in South Australia. In 1981, the South Australian Department of Education published *Into the 80s, Our Schools and their Purposes* in which the qualities of personal development and creativity, social and intellectual skills seem to have priority over the acquisition of employment-related skills. The Departments Priorities were: literacy and numeracy, communication, skills for social living and problem solving skills with emphasis given to communication, tolerance and cooperation and an appreciation of different cultures and ethnic groups (section 8). It is important to note here the recognition of Australia as a pluralist multicultural community that would benefit from educational approaches that facilitated societal integration.

In 1981 the South Australian Youth Arts Board (SAYAB) was set up to promote participation in the arts by young people. It was, and remains, the only organisation in Australia set up specifically for this purpose. The 1984, *Action: Education and the Arts* document, published by the Commonwealth Department of Education and Youth Affairs, praised South Australia's commitment to the arts in education. South Australia had established drama as a matriculation subject in 1983.[20] The document described successful South Australian experiments, particularly the institution of Carclew as an arts centre for young

---

[19] The South Australian Report *Education and the Arts* came out before the federal report and, judging by the similarity of arguments offered, may well have influenced federal findings.

[20] In 1984 Drama was presented by only 160 students; this grew to 400 students in 48 schools in 1985. Figures supplied by S.A. Senior Secondary Assessment Board (Alison Siliakus.)

people involving cooperation between the South Australian Department of Education and the arts, artists and the community.

A body blow to the arts in education was given in the late 1980s with reform of the curriculum to strengthen Australia's schools in a changed economic environment. 'Competency Based Training' emerged in the early 90s - an approach to education based on the acquiring of employment-related competencies, and subsequent credentials (Marginson, 1993). The climate of opinion into the 90s was not as supportive of the development of the arts for young people as it had been. As cost-cutting measures, the Educational Drama degree at Adelaide University and the Drama Major at the University of South Australia were discontinued. Drama remains at Flinders University and professional studies are supported by the Helpmann Academy. 'Expressive arts' are still taught to prospective primary school teachers.

By the end of the 90s all but one of the subsided theatre companies for young people had lost their funding. There was, however, a growth in Youth Theatre companies, each with a small staff of professional facilitators. However, various recent initiatives show that the arts are again becoming more important as a focus in education. Youth and the Arts have come into priority focus with the Australia Councils *Youth and the Arts Framework,* published in 1999. A strategy for Arts Education in South Australian Schools 2001-2006', called ArtsSmart, is in place, which recommends placing the arts at the centre of the learning environment in the belief that comprehensive systemic engagement in the arts by children and young people as active participants and consumers enriches their ability to learn, express, explore and communicate.

At present drama is taught in South Australia in all primary schools and high schools in accordance with ArtsSmart policies. Drama at matriculation level is offered at a majority of high schools, both in the private and public sector. Communication skills are a focus in this examination. It is emphasised that the study should lead to the development of confidence, cooperation, consideration, the ability to work with others along with tolerance and understanding of the view of others.

South Australia, then, has been at the forefront of the development of the arts, and especially of youth arts, in Australia. The 'Dunstan Decade' gave a particular focus to the arts and education in this State, as does the biennial Adelaide Festival, the complex of buildings comprising the Festival Centre, and the presence of the biennial 'Come

Out!' Festival for children, recognised internationally as an example of best practice. The establishment of an arts centre for young people and the South Australian Youth Arts Board, unique in Australia as a discrete funding body for Youth Arts, demonstrate the continuing importance given to youth arts in this State. The need to train more drama teachers has also been recognised.

In summary, in South Australia there is now a recognition that the arts are of vital importance, particularly for the young, as vehicles not only for creativity, cultural and personal development but as a means of communication leading to social cohesion and understanding, crucial in a multicultural society.

4.5   Adolescent conflicts in South Australian schools

There is a lack of longitudinal data about the nature of conflict in Australian schools to indicate whether or not aggressive forms of conflict are increasing. However, there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that there is an increase in serious behaviour problems that teachers have to deal with, including bullying and sexual harassment (Australian Government, 1994; Martin, 1994). Recently, a number of Australian researchers have argued that dominant masculine discourses are contributing to aggressive behaviours in school, in particular among boys (Collins, 1999; Connell, 1995; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998).

The increasing concern for children whose behaviour is problematic for teachers has been described as an international and national problem (Widdows, 1996). In 1994, the Australian Governments "Sticks and Stones" Report (Australian Government, 1994) identified the "enormous impact" violence has on students, with school suspensions increasing rapidly. To date, the only aspect of school-based conflict that has been researched in a detailed, systematic way in Australia is bullying (Rigby, 1996, 2002).

Australian studies have suggested that destructive conflict is occurring in schools between students and students, students and staff, and can be caused by and/or involve parents or other "outside" forces not directly connected to the school (Australian Government, 1994, Kenway, Willis, Blackmore & Rennie, 1997). An earlier South Australian study found that 48 per cent of teachers in disadvantaged schools reported "serious" or "very serious" discipline problems at their schools

compared with 16 per cent at other schools (56% of schools in the Northern area of Adelaide have a concentration of such schools) (Adey, Oswald & Johnson, 1991: 17). Teachers reported that they did not know what to do about the problem. Other evidence suggests that hindering others, racial abuse, sexual and sex-based harassment, some verbal abuse, physical aggression and physical assault are common in Australian schools (Australian Government, 1994; Bagshaw, 2004).

In South Australian schools, the reactions to conflict can be rigid, authoritarian, impersonal and bureaucratic. Approaches to school discipline are often crisis oriented and many schools are not sufficiently resourced to address the causes of the unwanted behaviour, especially those public schools located in disadvantaged areas (Thompson, 2001; Bagshaw, 2004). However, schools are ideal places for children and young people to learn about respectful behaviours, including cooperative approaches to conflict management.

In 1996, the South Australian DRACON project team organised a seminar involving 30 participants from educational settings, universities and schools (including representatives of the State Government, Catholic and Independent Education Departments in South Australia). Participants indicated that drama teachers in South Australian schools are often asked to deal with conflict situations through drama, but reported that there was little knowledge available to guide teachers, and teacher education and training in the South Australian universities did not adequately prepare them for this task. The same seminar participants also indicated that Year 9 is generally the most conflict-ridden year in secondary schools, which was confirmed by subsequent interviews with school counsellors in the 14 schools canvassed in our research.

4.6   What adolescents had to say about conflict

With a small grant, the Adelaide project was conducted in two phases during 1997 and 1998 and directly involved a total of 798 students (652 completed the questionnaire and 146 participated in focus group discussions). Year 9 students were selected from single-sex and co-educational schools from the State, Catholic and Independent secondary education sectors in South Australia. The range of type of school and socio-economic status of student background was accommodated

in the study. In total the survey sample was composed of 197 boys and 243 girls from co-educational schools and 92 boys and 120 girls from single sex schools. The purpose of the more structured questionnaire was to obtain additional quantitative and qualitative data about the nature, incidence and sources of conflicts at school.

4.6.1 Focus group research

Research aim

The central research question addressed in Stage 1 was 'what is the nature, incidence and the perceived sources of conflict at school for students in Year 9 in secondary schools in metropolitan Adelaide?' The overall aim of this stage of the study was to examine the prevalence of aggressive behaviours among Australian school children; the reported harmfulness of different types of peer behaviour; the styles of conflict handling used and the similarities and differences in the behaviours and reactions of girls and boys.

The schools

The schools selected by the administrators from the three education sectors for the Focus Group research included at least four (two State and two non-government) known to have 50% or more students receiving financial assistance from the government because of poverty. These four schools are located in Adelaide areas where there are high numbers of:

1. low income households,
2. young people as a percentage of the total population,
3. people born overseas (in particular South East Asia),
4. people who are unemployed or workers in trade occupations,
5. one parent families with dependent children (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1997: 26).

The other two schools were non-government schools with students drawn from middle class families in the main. All schools had a mixture of students from culturally diverse backgrounds, including Aboriginal students.

Research methods

Information was initially obtained through seventeen Focus Groups with 146 students from Year 9 in seven metropolitan Adelaide schools, which assisted in the subsequent development of a questionnaire, administered to further groups of Year 9 students (mean age of 14 years) in a further set of seven schools.

To ascertain students' perceptions and experiences of conflicts in schools, the researchers conducted seventeen single-sex and mixed-sex Focus Groups (N=146 students) in a total of seven schools (Kreuger, 1994; Morgan, 1988; Stewart & Shamdasini, 1990). Five co-educational schools were drawn from each of the educational sectors - State (2), Catholic (1) and Independent (2), and two single-sex schools from the Catholic sector.

From interviews with a school counsellor or Year 9 coordinator from each of the schools involved, background information was subsequently gathered about the demographic characteristics of the student population and the types and nature of disputes presenting to counsellors and/or teachers for assistance[21]. These reports were consistent with those of the students.

The students were chosen at random for participation in the Focus Groups, with an average of 10-12 students in each group. There was an attempt to reflect an equal balance of gender in the mixed-sex groups and across the single sex groups within a school. The group sessions were recorded using a combination of audiotapes, which were transcribed; two observers made detailed notes.

Each Focus Group session ran for 90 minutes with the facilitator using a structured list of questions. The purpose was to ascertain from students' experience their perceptions about:

- the sources or causes of conflicts at school,
- the nature of the conflicts,
- the level of seriousness of the conflicts,
- the frequency of the different types of conflict,
- the bases and balance of power between the parties to the conflicts,

---

[21] Lisa Dolman, a research assistant to the project, interviewed a counsellor or a Year 9 coordinator in each of the schools involved.

- the fairness of conflict management approaches and outcomes,
- the feelings generated by the conflict - type and intensity,
- whether the conflicts were resolved and how,
- the nature of the outcomes,
- gender and cultural differences in the management of conflict,
- what could be done at school to improve the handling of conflict by students and others, such as teachers and school counsellors.

The observers' notes and audio-tapes of each session were analysed, using a combination of an ethnographic summary and systematic coding via content analysis, identifying patterns or themes. Typical or illuminating quotes were noted. The content analysis of the transcripts of the focus group discussions identified fifty kinds of negative treatments experienced by students in the schools involved. A questionnaire was then constructed using this list.

4.6.2 Findings from the focus group research

The conflicts between peers at school reported in the focus groups varied in severity and intensity between the different schools, but there were elements in common across all schools, regardless of the socio-economic and cultural background of the student population. These were also reflected in the findings of the questionnaire. In summary, a number of themes were identified from the focus group research, some of which are summarised in Table 4.1.

Theme A: Gender and physical aggression

Conflicts experienced by students involved a variety of aggressive behaviours. Some of these were expressed in face-to-face situations, sometimes physically, as in physical fighting and sometimes verbally, as in name-calling. In some cases the aggression was expressed indirectly, as in excluding people and spreading hurtful rumours, in particular in conflicts between girls. There was a strong impression from the reports of conflict that physical violence was more commonly experienced in some schools than others, and especially in schools in areas of low socio-economic status.

Table 4.1. Students' experiences of conflicts in South Australian schools

Theme A	Gender and physical aggression
Category A1	Physical aggression between boys
Category A2	Physical aggression between girls
Category A3	Use of weapons by boys
Theme B	Gender and verbal and relational aggression
Theme C	Race and ethnicity as a source of conflict
Theme D	Responses to conflicts in schools
Category D1	Peer mediation
Category D2	Teacher responses
Category D3	Conflict as fun
Category D4	Unsupervised conflicts as dangerous
Theme E	Conflicts involving extended families and communities
Category E1	Conflicts involving the community
Category E2	Conflicts involving extended families

Category A1: Physical aggression between boys

Focus group members often spoke at length in an animated way about their experiences of observing physical aggression between students, in particular between boys. Here are some of their observations about fights that boys get into in schools:

> Maybe people are not game to stop fights - if you stop a fight then every-one will say you are a 'wuss' or something like that, so everyone stands around and does nothing - just watch - even if their friend's getting hurt on the ground. Even if a boy tries to break it apart then other people will try to bash him up.

Category A2: Physical aggression between girls

Physical violence between girls was highlighted by some of the boys:

> If there's a girl fight its normally heaps serious … they don't care - if someone's got a broken arm they won't stop or anything ... they keep go-ing. Last term a girl was on the ground and had a blood nose and the

206

other girl was still beating her head. Girls haven't learnt the rules - boys will stop and wait until the other boy gets up again.

Thus, despite generalisations made by most members of the focus groups that boys tend to use direct physical aggression and girls more indirect verbal and relational aggression - for example, "girls are bitchy, boys are punchy" - there were reports from two schools of serious incidents involving physical violence on the part of girls, a theme that seemed to fascinate some of the boys as it transgressed gender norms.

Category A3: Use of weapons by boys

Although the possession of firearms by students in Australia appears to be rare, most students in the Northern suburbs schools expressed concern about the existence and use of weapons, in particular by boys. These included knives, "knuckle busters", chains and machetes and in one case a gun. The more serious cases of violence involving the use of weapons were seen as taking part outside the school but the presence of weapons at school frightened some students.

One guy got caught with a gun, yeah like guns. There's other ones that just bring a lot of friends. We see people fighting with "knuckle busters" on a lot and we see knives used in fights. Someone brought a gun to school and got busted with it. It is pretty scary. Someone said it is as bad as America.

Theme B: Gender and verbal and relational forms of aggression

Verbal and relational forms of aggression did not attract as much attention as the more spectacular acts of physical violence. Yet some students described verbal abuse as serious and more hurtful than physical aggression as it left a mark on their self-esteem. Gender role stereotyping was dominant, with girls being described as "bitchy" and more inclined to be both the perpetrators and targets of verbal abuse than boys:

Girls go more emotional than boys. They don't hide their hurt like boys, they just bring it all out.

Theme C: Race and ethnicity as a source of conflict

Some conflict was reported as taking place between racial groups, in particular in the more disadvantaged Northern suburbs schools:

Last term there was a really big fight between two different races like, and Security were brought in. The …'s [an ethnic group] bring on the heavy artillery like "numb chucks", "knuckle busters". There's always Security guards at our school - like there's always one culture against another culture.

Theme D: Responses to conflicts in schools

Category D1: Peer mediation

In recent years peer mediation has been promoted as an effective approach to helping students to handle conflicts constructively in Australian schools. We were therefore initially surprised by the feedback from many of the Year 9 students in the Focus groups that peer mediation did not work for them, until we got a grasp of the serious nature of some of their conflicts.

Some students in the Focus Groups had been trained as peer mediators in primary school. One school had a long history of implementing and encouraging peer mediation and anti-bullying strategies. Boys from this school, however, did not think peer mediation to be appropriate in Year 9 for different reasons:

Programs don't survive…

Programs like anti-bullying, peer mediation - you don't worry about them. They might work for a term but not for long.

The fights are too serious…

Its OK for little kids - but if two boys have just had a fight and we have them in the same room we would not be able to hold them back, and with girls you would just get into a big argument.

They want to retain control…

We're past it now, we're getting too old for that - we have our different ways of dealing with conflict. … We (boys) don't like talking about the problem, especially when we've just had it out on each other. …We prefer as students to sort it out by ourselves, face-to-face, with no suspensions or anything, without anyone interfering, like teachers. The teachers make the rules, like 2 detentions etc. - but it makes people do it more.

Trust is important ...

> Sometimes you don't want a teacher to come in and help you because you might get into trouble, especially if the teacher doesn't like you.

> I would rather a friend try and help me.

A group of girls from a school in a neighbouring area who were trained as peer mediators shared the boys' views of peer mediation:

> No, it made it worse. One person didn't come. It was pretty hard. The next minute they're all fighting. It got physical.

And at another school:

> Peer mediation? We have done it at school - students when they are mediators take sides. Sometimes the kids would pretend to have a play fight in front of one of the peer mediators and the peer mediators would get really annoyed and sent them to the teacher and they got detentions.

In a non-government middle-class school in a different area a group of girls also outlined their reasons for distrusting peer mediation:

> … trust issues are a problem amongst peers… you need someone a bit older, you know, you need that gap 'cause the people a bit older have already been there, so they've seen it … but if they're someone our age they wouldn't know what's going on, and someone too old has probably forgotten anyway

Mediation itself was not seen as the problem and was acceptable if used by counsellors, teachers or an older student.

Category D2: Teacher responses

Some students felt that teachers needed to improve their conflict handling skills and should at least be good role models for students:

> About 25% of the teachers are nice and listen, but some teachers go overboard and forget they were kids once - they give advice like "why don't you just walk away. … Some teachers are bad models.

Teachers were described as acting inappropriately in some situations to stop the aggressive behaviours:

> Teachers come and just yell and pull people apart - drag them to the office and try to talk to them separately. They give you a detention to the offender and say "do not do it again".

However, they were mostly seen as unable to do anything to prevent or stop conflicts:

> Fights happen whether or not teachers are around. Teachers have a hard time breaking up fights - everyone blocks the teacher's view and they can't get into the middle. A couple of years ago a student actually hit/assaulted a teacher and he fell down and another teacher came in and got hit by the kid who was actually fighting.

> Teachers can't do much. Most of the kids don't care a rat's arse if they are suspended. Can you imagine one person trying to control twenty people like us? In one room?

Some teachers also felt that they could do little to help. For example one teacher interviewed in this project stated:

> You can't resolve conflict often when it occurs in the classroom - it doesn't work because you've got some of them all falling out of their chairs laughing themselves stupid, you've got others in the back getting into it. The difficulty with resolving conflict isn't so much the people you need to be concerned with, but its the audience. There's nothing more exciting than knowing there's going to be a brawl at lunch time – its like going to the footy or something, and the worst thing that can happen is if someone finds out there's going to be a fight or a brawl or a screaming match, and stop it. Its like taking their tickets away – they get really shitty.

One teacher/counsellor felt that the impotence of teachers to deal with conflict was made worse by the increased emphasis on students' rights:

> We've gone overboard with all this harassment and feeling free stuff. You've only got to look sideways at a kid and its "you're harassing me" … they'll accuse and abuse staff. The minute there's a hiccough or a slight problem its everyone rushing out to do what's supposedly legally right. So what we've got now is great lines of kids with grievances about staff, other kids, other kids' parents, we've got parents coming in with all these grievances and no-one's talking to each other.

She concluded:

> I'd say the general attitude amongst the staff is that we've lost our clout ... that why try, its not going to work. They feel they've just got to go in, put their blinkers on, shove on their ear muffs and get on with it and just

thank god they're going home at the end of the day … we're totally pow-
erless.

Category D3: Conflict as fun

Students generally saw some conflicts as an entertaining aspect of
school life, especially when physical fights broke out:

> We all usually follow the crowd and look for the fight.

Most students in all schools admitted to enjoying watching a physical
fight as long as the people involved were safe.

Category D4: Unsupervised conflicts as dangerous

The scene of the more serious kinds of conflict tended to be in the
schoolyard rather than in the classroom. As one student remarked:

> Conflicts are more serious in the schoolyard than the classroom … in the
> classroom it doesn't turn out really bad because there's always teachers
> there.

Theme E: Conflicts involving extended families and communities

Category E1: Conflicts outside the school

Students reported that conflicts of a serious nature sometimes took
place outside the school. For example:

> The fight usually continues after school at the railway station. Other peo-
> ple join in from outside - anybody who wants to fight. Usually one person
> gets off the train and tries to stop it. Most of the time its one-on-one fight-
> ing - punching, kicking, head-butting. It involves weapons, whipping
> with chains. People do get hurt - depends on how quickly its broken up -
> there can be pools of blood. There are about 2 huge fights a year and lots
> of little ones.

There was a realisation that the extension of the conflict to the commu-
nity posed a real danger:

> Better to sort it out in the school 'cos its safer in the school and gets bro-
> ken up a lot easier than outside the school. There's always a teacher on
> yard duty. Security guards are around at the end of the day.

Category E2: Conflict involving extended families

Sometimes the conflicts spread so as to involved families, in particular fights involving Asian or Aboriginal students in the Northern suburbs schools:

> Relatives, friends of relatives and families get involved – its all organised. In the area every school gets involved in fights through family connections.

The focus group research illustrated the kinds of conflict and violence involving adolescents taking place in schools in metropolitan Adelaide and the reported harmful effects of conflicts on some students. In spite of the suggestions that verbal, relational and indirect forms of abuse were the most prevalent forms of abuse, especially for girls, the focus group participants focussed more on discussing physical conflicts in their reports. Physical conflicts between boys and also between girls were graphically described. It was easier for them (and obviously more enjoyable) to talk about physical fights, which some suggested were fun to watch and relieved the boredom at school. Many participants admitted that they enjoyed watching a physical fight, as long as they were in control and safe from harm, although the levels of physical aggression in some schools is generally frightening for students. There were indications that verbal and relational forms of abuse were viewed and experienced as harmful, but for boys in particular the personal effects were much harder to discuss with a small group of adolescent peers.

Aggression between students was seen as varying in seriousness according to where it took place. Aggressive acts in the schoolyard were described as more serious and unmanageable than those in the classroom. Aggression outside the school, often involving non-students as well, was seen as the most serious of all. There was evidence that conflict between students at school extended into conflicts involving relatives and friends in the wider community. Some conflicts were described as occurring along racial lines. In general, students attending schools in low socio-economic areas reported more violent responses to conflicts.

A recurring impression from the focus groups was that boys felt under pressure from peers to behave in a tough, aggressive manner, seen as befitting a male, and that their ways of reacting to conflict were

212

strongly influenced by the expectations of others. This is consistent with the view that hegemonic masculine discourse encourages violent behaviour and that its impact may not be limited to the behaviour of boys (Collins, 1999; Connell, 1995; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998).

Generally, students believed that teachers' responses to conflict were ineffective, a point supported by teachers who were interviewed, and that peer mediation is unsuitable for their age group.

Having gained a picture of the nature of the conflicts experienced by adolescents in schools from the students in the Focus Groups and from interviews with several school counsellors and teachers, attention then turned to examining in more detail the reports of aggressive acts and their consequences from individual students in a survey, using a questionnaire methodology.

4.6.3 Survey research

A survey of adolescent students was conducted to discover (i) the nature, frequency and reported hurtfulness of negative treatments they received from others at school and (ii) the kinds and frequency of the conflict handling approaches they employed at school. The questions used to elicit relevant information were based, in part, on what had been learned through preliminary investigations with the Focus Groups.

The sample of students consisted of by 289 boys and 363 girls from private, state, co-educational and single-sex schools. All of them were attending Year 9 classes (the second year of Secondary schooling in South Australia). Their mean age was 14 years. The questionnaire was administered in classrooms and answered anonymously in term 3 in 1998. Care was taken to ensure the anonymity of respondents and schools was protected.

The nature of negative treatments experienced at school

Some fifty negative treatments were listed in the questionnaire and students were asked to say how often they had been treated in each of the ways. The first question we addressed was whether the responses of students enabled treatments to be grouped in some ways. Typically, researchers have included 'physical' and 'verbal' as sub-categories of aggressive behaviour. Alternative terms have been used to describe a third category. These have included 'indirect' (Bjorkqvist, 1994) 'so-

cial' (Underwood, 2003) 'social manipulation' (Mynard & Joseph, 2000) and 'relational' (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). The term 'relational aggression' has been used to describe aggressive behaviour where the primary aim was to damage or destroy the target's relationships. We opted for the three categories in our study, 'verbal', 'physical' and 're-lational,' because these appeared most appropriate in describing the first three factors that emerged from a statistical analysis of responses to items answered by the respondents in our survey. The analysis gave us three factors containing three items similar to those reported in an earlier study conducted in England by Mynard and Joseph (2000). It proved possible for us to identify 10 items within each of the three categories, which were statistically closely related to each other and relatively unrelated to items in other categories.

The experience of physical aggression

At least half the students in our sample had experienced some form of physical ill-treatment from their peers during the year. The most common ways in which students had been ill-treated physically were through being hit, tripped, kicked, having things thrown at them and having their possessions hidden or moved. Being threatened with a weapon and being touched sexually against one's will occurred much less; even so, more than 10% of students indicated that they had been treated by their peers in these ways. Details of the extent to which students reported having experienced physical aggression from their peers are given in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2. Percentages of students reporting on frequency of negative physical treatments by peers at school

Physical treatment	Sex	Frequency of treatment			
		Never	Sometimes	Often	
I was deliberately hit (P1)	M (286)	39.2	48.6	12.2	***
	F (340)	75.3	20.9	3.8	
I had things thrown at me (P2)	M (283)	43.8	45.9	10.2	***
	F (340)	59.7	33.5	6.8	
I was pressured to fight with someone (P3)	M (284)	66.5	27.8	5.6	**
	F (341)	88.0	10.0	2.1	
I was kicked (P4)	M (287)	63.1	28.6	8.4	***
	F (338)	80.8	15.7	3.6	
I was tripped (P5)	M (287)	57.5	34.5	8.0	**
	F (338)	70.7	23.7	5.6	
I was threatened with a weapon (P6)	M (280)	80.6	15.3	4.2	***
	F (340)	95.3	4.7	0.0	
I was slapped across the face (P7)	M (287)	83.6	11.8	4.5	
	F (340)	83.8	13.5	2.6	ns
I was touched in a sexual way against my will (P8)	M (288)	88.5	6.3	5.2	**
	F (339)	88.5	10.3	1.2	
My possessions were hidden or moved (P9)	M (288)	56.4	36.6	7.0	
	F (339)	63.0	34.6	2.3	ns
I was spat at (P10)	M (286)	78.0	17.5	4.5	
	F (340)	85.0	12.4	2.6	

Note

Significance of gender differences in this and the following tables assessed by chi-square: * =.05; ** =.01; *** = .001; ns= not significant (p>.05)

The experience of verbal aggression

Most students reported that they had in fact been ill-treated verbally by another student. The most commonly reported means took the form of teasing, being sworn at, called names, joked about and being "paid out," that is, subjected to a hurtful treatment because of something they had allegedly done. At least half the students reported that someone had "picked arguments" with them and said unpleasant things about their appearance. Substantial proportions of students (about a quarter) re-

215

ported that they had been threatened with harm at school and labelled in ways they did not like and "put down" because of their hobbies or interests. Further details of the extent to which students experienced verbal aggression is given in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3. Percentages of students reporting on frequency of negative verbal treatments by peers at school

Verbal treatment	Sex	Frequency of treatment			
		Never	Sometimes	Often	
I got teased about	M (284)	16.2	72.9	10.9	
something (V1)	F (341)	15.2	76.0	8.8	
Somebody picked an	M (285)	26.7	63.9	9.5	
argument with me (V2)	F (342)	35.1	54.7	10.2	
Jokes were made at my	M (284)	28.9	62.3	8.8	
expense(V3)	F (339)	36.3	54.0	9.7	
Unpleasant things were said	M (285)	42.8	46.3	10.9	
about my appearance (V4)	F (338)	38.8	50.0	11.2	
I was threatened with	M (280)	64.3	19.6	6.1	***
harm at school (V5)	F (336)	79.5	15.8	4.8	
I was "put down" because of	M (286)	57.7	35.3	7.0	
my interests or hobbies (V6)	F (340)	64.1	32.1	3.8	
I was sworn at (V7)	M (283)	12.7	51.6	35.7	
	F (334)	18.6	50.6	30.8	
I was called names I	M (280)	35.0	48.9	16.1	
didn't like (V 8)	F (334)	35.0	53.3	11.7	
People labelled me in a	M (275)	67.3	27.6	5.1	
way I didn't like (V9)	F (335)	57.9	35.5	6.6	
I was "paid out" (V10)	M (270)	23.0	61.5	15.6	
	F (334)	25.4	57.2	17.4	

The experience of relational aggression

About half the students had experienced at least one form of relational ill treatment during the year. The most common was experiencing a breakdown in communication with someone, as when someone quit talking to them or avoided or ignored them. Other relatively frequent occurrences involved the spreading of rumours and lies. Substantial

numbers (over 30%) reported that people had tried to hurt or embarrass them by breaking up their friendships, staring at them or excluding them from groups. Less commonly, there were reports (from 10-20% of respondents) of receiving harassing phone calls or of people being persuaded by someone to "gang up" on them. Details of the extent to which students experience relational aggression are given in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4. Percentages of students reporting on frequency of negative relational treatments by peers at school

Relational treatment	Sex	Frequency of treatment		
		Never	Sometimes	Often
Lies were spread about	M (287)	62.7	32.4	4.9
me (R1)	F (340)	50.6	43.2	6.2 **
My secrets were told	M (286)	75.9	20.6	3.5
to others (R2)	F (341)	45.2	44.6	10.3
Rumours were spread	M (281)	63.0	31.0	6.0
about me (R3)	F (339)	50.7	43.1	6.2
Someone stopped talking	M (284)	55.6	39.8	4.6
to me (R4)	F (337)	28.8	59.6	11.6 ***
I received harassing	M (288)	86.8	9.0	4.2
phone calls (R5)	F (343)	74.9	20.7	4.4 ***
I got excluded from	M (288)	75.7	20.5	3.8
a group (R6)	F (340)	68.8	27.4	3.8
Somebody persuaded a	M (284)	82.4	14.1	3.5
group to gang up on me (R7)	F (340)	81.2	14.4	4.4
I was continually stared at	M (284)	72.9	20.1	7.0
by somebody (R8)	F (340)	52.6	35.0	12.4 ***
I was avoided or ignored	M (286)	65.7	29.7	4.5
by people (R9)	F (340)	44.7	49.4	5.9 ***
Somebody tried to break	M (286)	72.0	22.0	5.9
up a friendship I had (R10)	F (343)	40.2	49.9	9.9 ***

What kind of negative treatments were experienced most often?

As we have seen within each of the three categories of negative treatment there was much variation in the frequency with which a particular form of aggression was experienced, for example, verbal teasing was

much more commonly experienced than verbal threats. But if one may generalise, it appears that for both boys and girls negative treatment by verbal means was experienced most. Physical and relational aggressions were much less likely to be reported.

Gender differences in reported negative treatments by others

Differences in the extent to which boys and girls were treated negatively by others were investigated in two ways. First, differences were examined on each of the 30 items given in Tables 4.2-4.4. The statistical significance of the differences are given in the above tables. Second, the three sets of items were treated as 10-item scales and differences on each of the measures were assessed, taking into account possible school differences, using a multivariate analysis of variance. This analysis allows one to separate effects due to school differences from effects due to gender differences. The results for comparisons of the responses of boys and girls on particular items can be summarised as follows.

Regarding physical ill treatment, on every one of the 10 items a larger proportion of boys reported being negatively treated by peers. On 7 of the 10 items the differences were statistically significant, that is highly unlikely to be due to chance. As far as verbal ill-treatment was concerned (that is, the most common form of ill-treatment) the differences were small and inconsistent in direction. On only one item – "being threatened with harm" - was there a significant difference, with more boys than girls experiencing this treatment. It could be argued that this particular item had decidedly physical overtones. Boys did not report a higher proportion of relational ill-treatment on any of the 10 items, and on 7 of the items girls were significantly more likely to report being treated badly in a relational manner, for instance, by their secrets being told to someone.

A second kind of analysis, taking into account possible school differences, provided supportive evidence for this finding, that is girls were in general more likely to report having experienced relational aggression, and boys were more likely to have experienced physical aggression from peers. No significant differences between boys and girls were found as far as experiencing verbal aggression was concerned.

We may conclude that boys were more likely to experience physical ill-treatment; girls were more likely to experience relational ill-

218

treatment; and boys and girls were equally likely to experience verbal ill treatment.

Comparisons between schools

Comparing schools on each of the measures of reported negative treatments produced one significant result. There was considerable variation between schools in the extent to which students reported being treated negatively in a physical manner. Students attending a school in the area with the lowest socio-economic status reported most physical ill treatment from peers. On other measures of ill-treatment the differences were not significant.

Bullying

One form of negative treatment that has gained much attention in recent years is bullying, that is ill treatment delivered by more powerful individuals or groups and targeting more vulnerable children. One criterion commonly used in Australia to assess its prevalence is the proportion of children in a school reporting being bullied on a weekly basis. In this sample, some 34% of boys and 26% of girls reported being bullied at least weekly. It should be noted that students were encouraged to include verbal and relational forms of bullying, such as exclusion, as well as physical forms. These figures are high by national standards (Rigby, 1997). They suggest that many of the adolescents in our sample saw others as taking advantage of their superior power to hurt them in some way. Even more disconcerting, a substantial proportion of the students, approximately 1 in 3, reported that they often (on a weekly basis) engaged in bullying others. This suggests that for many adolescents the use of forceful methods of dominating others is a common and for many an acceptable way of relating with less powerful peers.

Implications for conflict handling by adolescents

The most striking thing about the information we gained from the survey of the experiences of adolescents who were targets of aggressive behaviours is the remarkable extent to which their peers were subjecting them to ill treatment. More than half the respondents had been treated badly, i.e. physically, verbally and relationally. Almost one in three reported that they had experienced bullying on a weekly basis. A minority of students appear to have been particularly vulnerable to dif-

ferent kinds of abuse from peers. All this suggests that for a high proportion of students conflict in schools is not being handled well.

The results of the survey suggest that boys and girls are similar in experiencing the main kind of ill treatment from peers, which is verbal abuse. Hence, conflict-handling skills that prevent differences or disputes from escalating into wars of words must be given a high priority. Among boys especially we see a need to prevent conflicts from leading to physical confrontations; among girls, there is a particular need to prevent conflicts from taking the form of relational and manipulative forms of aggressiveness. However, we should be carefully not to essentialise gender or exaggerate gender differences: girls may sometimes experience and deliver direct or physical forms of attack; boys may become victims of relational aggression and find themselves excluded from groups or socially disadvantaged (Bagshaw, 2004).

The hurtfulness of aggressive acts

We were interested also in the extent to which students reported being hurt or upset by aggressive acts directed towards them. Students were asked how hurt they had been after being treated by a peer in a specified way. They could answer: 'not at all,' 'a bit' or 'a lot'. Only those respondents who had experienced the specified aggressive act were included in the following analyses.

How hurtful were the negative treatments? Clearly, it depended on the specific treatment. Being teased or sworn at was not experienced as being particularly hurtful. Having one's friendship broken up and unwanted sexual touching were seen as most hurtful by a large proportion of both boys and girls who had experienced them. But if one may generalise, it appeared that relational forms of ill treatment tended to be the most distressing; for example, being deliberately excluded, having one's secrets told, and having rumours spread about one. Details of the reported hurtfulness of each of the treatments are given in Table 4.5.

Gender differences in the reported hurtfulness of treatments

Gender differences in reporting being hurt by negative treatment were most evident. Some 21 of the 30 gender differences were statistically significant, and in each case it was girls who reported being more often hurt. However, contrary to what is sometimes thought, what tended to hurt or upset girls most, also tended to hurt or upset boys most. Thus "having one's friendships broken up" was reported as being the most

220

hurtful thing to happen by both boys and girls. The notion that only girls are upset by a deterioration in their social relationships – a myth promoted by boys in the Focus Groups – was shown to be untrue when we examined data obtained from individual boys and girls under conditions of anonymity.

Absenteeism

A further, more objective way of assessing the harmfulness of ill treatment by peers in schools is by examining the extent to which adolescents had absented themselves from school as a result of such treatment. The results are summarised in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6. Students' responses to the question: Have you stayed away from school because of conflict this year? Percentages of respondents

	No, I have never thought of doing so	No, but I have thought of doing so	Yes, I have once or twice	Yes, more than twice
Boys	71.0	19.7	4.6	4.6
Girls	54.1	30.6	13.5	1.8

Approximately one respondent in eight claimed to have avoided going to school because of conflict at least once during the year. Many more "thought of doing so". More girls considered staying away and actually did stay away than boys (15% compared with 9%). This may suggest that girls are more seriously affected by conflict at schools than boys, but there may be other considerations such as peer pressure on boys not to admit to being affected.

Conflict handling styles

It is well known that people react in different ways when they are in conflict situations, some in ways that help to resolve difficulties, some in ways that perpetuate or even escalate the conflict. In Chapter two we described Johnson's (1997) five conflict handling strategies that are commonly employed. He argued that although people may use different strategies on different occasions, they tend to have a dominant strategy, and he related each of these styles to a particular animal.

1. Problem solving (*owl*) is a cooperative strategy and aims to arrive at an agreement that meets the needs, goals or interests of all parties to a conflict, at the same time maintaining the relationship at the highest level possible.

2. Compromising (*fox*) is a cooperative strategy and involves finding "middle ground" in order to reach an agreement. It involves giving up part of one's needs, goals or interests and possibly sacrificing part of the relationship.

3. Forcing (*shark*) is a competitive strategy that places high importance on meeting one's own personal needs, goals, and interests regardless of the potential for damage to the relationship.

4. Withdrawing (*turtle*) as a strategy in conflict involves giving up on meeting one's own personal needs, goals and interests by avoiding the other person and/or the issue.

5. Smoothing (*teddy bear*) involves "keeping the peace" by giving in to the other party in a conflict in order to preserve a relationship.

The extent to which adolescent school children make use of these strategies in conflict situations has not hitherto been examined. It is unclear, for instance, whether adolescents tend to use a so-called 'problem solving style' more often or less often than a 'forcing' style. There has been uncertainty regarding gender differences in conflict handling styles. Given that males tend to act in a more forceful and aggressive way than females, one might expect boys to make use of a 'forcing' conflict handling style. Whether there are gender differences for the other kinds of conflict handling styles remains to be seen.

Johnson (1997) suggested that people acquire a dominant conflict handling style early in life. If that is so, one would expect that by the time children reach adolescence, the social environment would have little or no impact on how they seek to resolve conflict. Children in different secondary school environments might therefore not be expected to differ appreciably in their conflict handling styles. On the other hand, if school children are influenced by the social ethos of their school, one might expect differences between schools in the extent to which students employ particular conflict handling strategies.

In summary, the aims of the study of conflict handling styles used by adolescents in the schools surveyed were to assess the conflict handling styles of South Australian adolescent students by:

- comparing the degree to which the students report employing the different styles,
- examining whether boys and girls differ in their use of the styles,
- examining whether there are differences between schools in the extent to which the different styles are used by students,
- examining the relationships between the use of conflict handling styles and (a) how students report having acted in seeking to help others in conflict and (b) the kind of help students would like to receive when they are in conflict with someone.

Adolescent Conflict Style Scale

The measure used to assess conflict-handling styles was the Adolescent Conflict Style Scale (ACSS). This is a 25-item unpublished scale developed by Rigby and Bagshaw. It consists of five sets of 10-items that were written to describe the kind of behaviour consistent with each of the conflict handling styles proposed by Johnson (1997). As far as possible, the items were those suggested in the course of the preliminary discussions in focus groups with Year 9 students.

Twenty-five items in random order were included in a questionnaire. Students were asked: "When you are at school and have a strong disagreement with a person of your own age on a matter which you care about, what do you do?" Students were asked to read through the items and indicate how they behaved by circling one of the following: "I never or rarely do this"; "I usually don't do this"; "I do this about half the time"; "I usually do this"; "I always or nearly always do this" Responses were scored from 1 to 5 in the direction of more frequently reporting the behaviour. Examples of items in each of the five conflict styles scales are given in Table 4.7. The questionnaire contained two additional sets of items:

- How students had helped others in conflict
- Six items were included about how students had acted in situations in which they sought to help others in a conflict situation. The following ways of helping were listed: listening, taking sides, taking messages between people, breaking up or stopping the conflict, trying to resolve differences, and bringing in someone to help, such as a teacher or counsellor. Students could answer to each of these items 'never,' 'sometimes' or 'often.'

- How students would like to be helped if they were in conflict
- Thirteen items were about the kinds of help students would like to receive if they were in conflict with others. These comprised the following: mediation, taking messages, talking to the other person for you, simply listening, counselling you, suggesting things, telling you what to do, deciding who is right and who is wrong, breaking up the conflict, punishing the guilty person, leaving you to sort the matter yourselves, telling your families, and taking your side in the conflict. Students could answer 'not at all', 'possibly', 'probably'.

Table 4.7. Sample items in the Adolescent Conflict Handling Style Scale

Problem Solving:	I try to see the other person's point of view
Compromising:	I think to myself it's OK by me if we both win some and lose some
Forcing:	I try to win at all costs
Withdrawing:	I avoid them
Smoothing:	I give in to keep the peace

The reliability of the Adolescent Conflict Handling Style Scale

In view of the newness of the Adolescent Conflict Handling Style Scale, we examined whether the scales were 'reliable' in the sense that items within each scale were assessing similar and closely related characteristics. This was done using a statistical technique, which provides a measure of the consistency of responses given by a sample of respondents to a set of items. To be reliable, if a respondent scores high on one item he or she should score high on the other items. A statistic called coefficient alpha is computed to indicate the degree of reliability of a scale. The five scales were each found to have a satisfactory level of reliability. Alpha coefficient values ranged from .68 to .85.

Relations between scales

Scores on the Problem Solving Scale correlated with scores on the Compromising Scale; .68 for males and .66 for girls. This suggests that those who engage in problem solving also tend to engage in compro-

mise. Not surprisingly, problem solving and forcing were negatively correlated (-.41 for boys and -.17 for girls). This suggests that those whose dominant style is problem solving are disinclined to use force. The correlation is notably higher for boys, which suggests that girls may more often use both kinds of conflict resolution methods, perhaps depending on the situation. .

The use of the different conflict handling styles

The extent to which students report employed different conflict handling styles was examined by computing the proportion of students who reported that they 'usually', 'nearly always' or 'always' responded in a particular style when they were in conflict with someone. This was done using the responses given to the five representative items given in Figure 4.1.
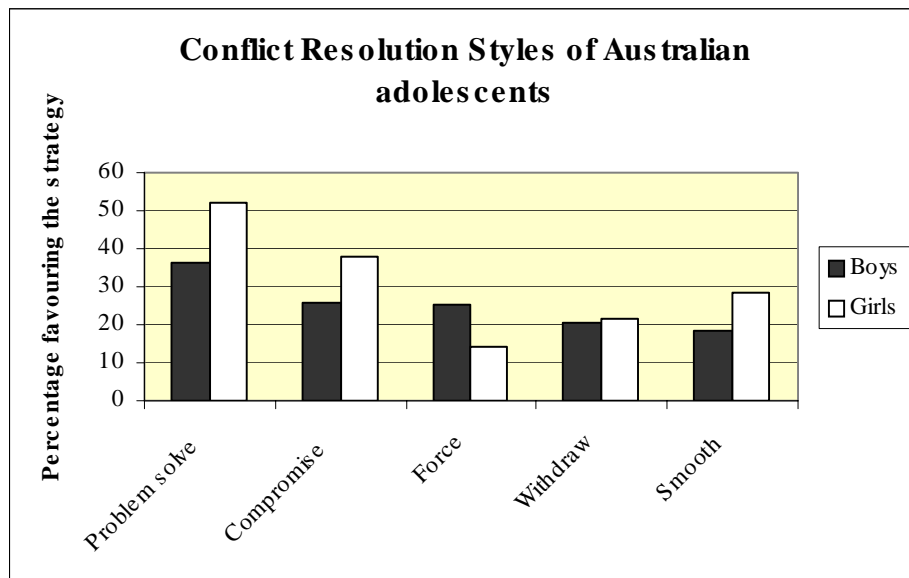
Figure 4.1. Conflict resolution styles of Australian adolescents

It appears that at least 20% of the students commonly used each of the styles. The most commonly used were compromising and problem-solving. About 30% of students reported using one or the other. A substantial proportion of students indicated that they often used less desir-

able ways of dealing with conflict, such as the use of force and withdrawal; approximately 20% indicated that the use of force was their dominant style and a similar percentage used withdrawal.

Gender differences in the use of styles

The results in Figure 4.1 suggest that there are gender differences among adolescents in the use of strategies to resolve conflict. Thus girls employ problem solving, compromising and smoothing strategies more often than boys, and forcing strategies less often. There appears to be little difference in the extent to which withdrawal is used by boys and girls.

A further way of examining the question of gender differences is to examine mean scores on each of the sub-scales for boys and girls attending the same school. In this way we can control for differences between schools. In each of the five schools the mean differences between boys and girls on four of the sub-scales are in the same direction: that is, girls consistently score higher on problem solving, compromising and smoothing and boys score consistently higher on forcing. Only on withdrawal are there inconsistencies. In two schools boys scored higher; in three schools girls scored higher. On this evidence, one cannot say whether boys or girls are more likely to try to solve a conflict problem by withdrawal.

Differences in conflict handling styles according to school attended

Because of the sex differences and the fact that in some schools the proportions of boys and girls in the samples differed considerably, a more complex form of analysis was needed. Multivariate analyses were used to separate the effects of school and sex and also take into account inter-correlations between results for conflict handling styles. Results indicated that there were, in fact, significant differences ($p<.05$) between schools in the extent to which students employed four of the styles. These were compromising, smoothing, forcing, and withdrawing. This suggests that the school ethos and other frame factors (e.g. school size, school budget, teacher density) may help to determine the kind of conflict handling style that children use, although effects from the different kinds of communities from which schools draw their students cannot be discounted.

226

Implications of conflict handling styles for helping others

Some 96% of the respondents indicated that they had tried to help someone in a conflict situation. The most common help was listening (89%) followed by trying to resolve differences (80%), then breaking up the conflict (76%), taking sides (72%) taking messages (65%), and lastly bringing in help, e.g. a teacher or counsellor (42%).

Each of the conflict handling style scales was correlated with the degree to which students reported having helped others in the specified ways. Helping responses were coded as "never" (0); "sometimes" (1) and "often" (2). Correlations ($p < .05$) with scores on the items describing how students had helped others were used as indicators of what people high on specific conflict handling styles were likely to have done.

The pattern of results is summarised in Table 4.8. It should be noted that the correlations upon which the following generalisations are based, though statistically significant, are not high and that there can be many exceptions to the rule. Nevertheless, a meaningful pattern of results emerged from the analyses.

Table 4.8. Relationship between helping behaviours and high scoring conflict handling styles

Reported ways of helping others in conflict	Problem solve	Com- promise	Force	With- draw	Smooth
Listening	More likely	More likely	Less likely		More likely
Taking sides			More likely	More likely	
Taking messages			More likely	More likely	
Breaking up conflict	More likely	More likely			More likely
Trying to resolve differences	More likely	More likely	Less likely		More likely
Bringing some- one in					More likely

It is clear the high problem solvers and high compromisers are similar in being more inclined than those who score low on the measures to have listened, to have broken up conflicts and tried to resolve differences. High smoothers are much the same as high problem solvers and high compromisers, except that that they appear more likely to have brought someone in to help.

High Forcers are very different from low forcers in that high forcers are less likely to have listened or to have tried to resolve differences, and more likely to have taken sides and taken messages. High withdrawers are like forcers in that they have taken sides and taken messages more often than low scorers, but are not more likely than low scorers to have not listened and not tried to resolve differences.

The kind of help students in conflict would like

Before examining whether conflict handling styles were related to the kind of help students wanted when they were in conflict with someone, we examined the sort of help students in general would want. The most popular forms of help wanted, as indicated by the percentage of students reporting that they would probably or definitely like that kind of help, was: "simply listening to you" (66%). This was followed by "suggesting things you might do to solve the conflict" (59%), "talking to the other person for you" (45%) "mediating" (44%), "stopping or breaking up the conflict" (43%), "telling you what you should do" (41%), "punishing the guilty person" (29%), "taking messages between you" (25%), "deciding who is right and who is wrong (26%), and "telling your families about it" (23%).

The relationship between conflict handling styles and the kind of help wanted

To discover whether conflict handling styles were related to the kind of help wanted, correlations were computed between scores on the conflict styles measures and scores on indices of the kind of help students thought they would like if they were in conflict with someone. Many of the correlations were significant, though, in general, low. But again they provided a meaningful pattern of results and these are summarised in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9. Relationship between desired help with conflicts and high scoring conflict handling styles

Desired help with conflicts	Prob-lem solve	Com-promise	Force	With-draw	Smooth
Mediation	More likely	More likely			More likely
Messages taken			More likely	More likely	
Someone to talk to the other person	More likely	More likely			More likely
Simply listened to	More likely	More	Less likely		More likely
Be counselled	More likely	More likely			More likely
Have things sug-gested	More likely	More likely	Less likely		More likely
Be told what to do	More likely				More likely
Someone decides who's right			More likely		More likely
Stop or break up conflict	More likely	More likely			More
Punish the guilty person	Less likely		More likely	More likely	
Leave you to sort it out			More likely		
Tell your families				More	
Take your side	Less likely		More likely	More likely	

We can again see a similarity between the high problem solvers, the compromisers and the smoothers. High scorers on each of these meas-ures are more open than low scorers to mediation, and more likely to welcome having someone talk to the other person, being listened to, being counselled and having the conflict stopped.

Similarities can also be found between the high forcers and high withdrawers. They both appeared to be keener than others to see the guilty person punished, have messages taken for them and have someone take their side.

Of some interest are the ways in which high scorers on particular dimensions differ in a unique way from the low scorers:

- Problem solvers are less likely than low scorers to want someone to take their side and less keen on seeing the guilty person punished.

- High forcers are unique in being less desirous of being listened to or to having things suggested to them.

- High withdrawers are unique in being more in favour of the families of those in conflict being told about it.

Discussion of conflict handling styles

This aspect of the study has demonstrated that the five conflict handling styles suggested by Johnson can be measured with an acceptable degree of reliability among young adolescent students. However, some of the measures are not independent of others. This is evident in the moderately sized correlations between some of the measures and also in the finding that some measures have many of the same correlates with indications of past behaviours and how they would like to be helped. Notably, students with a dominant problem solving style problem tend also to engage in compromising and smoothing, but not in forcing.

It was noted that the more positive styles of responding were evidently more commonly used than negative styles, although here we should recognise that some students may have wanted to appear more positive than they actually are. The school environment appears to have made a difference to the styles students use. There were significant differences between the schools on four of the five conflict handling styles being practised. This is an encouraging finding, as it suggests that improvements in the school environment or ethos may result in the employment of more positive ways of resolving conflict.

The gender differences were, in general, not surprising. It was confirmed that boys were more prone to use force as a strategy and girls to engage more in problem solving, compromising and smoothing. However, contrary to the stereotypical view that girls avoid conflict, there were no consistent differences between boys and girls as far as withdrawal was concerned.

230

The conflict handling styles were related to how students say they have behaved in the past when they have sought to help somebody in a conflict situation. There is a particularly strong contrast between those whose style tends to favour problem solving, compromising and smoothing on the one hand and forcing on the other. The former tend to have a history of behaving in ways that are helpful in resolving conflicts, for instance by listening and trying to resolve differences, while the latter, the high forcers, have more often behaved in ways that are generally counterproductive, as in taking sides and not listening.

The kind of help adolescents want when they are in conflict also seems to depend on their conflict handling style. High problem solvers, high compromisers and high smoothers are more open to mediation, want to be listened to and counselled. By contrast high forcers are keener to have people take their side, and are less interested than others in hearing suggestions about how the conflict can be resolved.

Finally, in view of the similarities between the correlates of some of the conflict handling styles, it may be asked whether a set of five styles is too many. It is true that some are closely related and have similar correlates. However, there are indications that the different styles can be differentiated. Although high problem solvers are similar to high compromisers and high smoothers in a number of ways, they appear to be different in their tendency not to want others to take their side and not to want to see the guilty punished. These qualities are important in avoiding an escalation of conflict. Similarly, although high forcers are in some ways like withdrawers - for instance they are both more likely to favour wrong doers being punished - the high forcers are unique in being more in favour of being left alone to sort things out and being more disinclined than others to have others listen to them. They would appear to maintain a uniquely tough façade that makes it difficult for them to be helped.

Conclusions

The survey of aggressive behaviours experienced by students provided valuable information that enabled us to assess the extent to which adolescents are treated in negative ways by their peers at school. Clearly a large proportion of adolescents are regularly implicated in painful altercations with their peers. These can take a wide variety of forms: physical, verbal and relational. It is evident that for many students conflict is not being handled in a positive manner.

The survey of conflict handling styles suggest that some students' predominant styles are positive, that is, they involve problem solving and/or compromise approaches. However, a substantial number of students use negative or counter-productive methods, especially when using methods of forcing and/or withdrawing. There was also evidence that the styles identified in this study were, in fact, related to how students had behaved in conflict situations and how they would like to be assisted if they were in conflict with someone. Finally, the fact that schools differed significantly in the extent to which their students practise positive or negative methods of handling conflict suggests that the school environment may be crucial.

This analysis helps us to recognise more clearly the distinctive features of alternative conflict handling styles as practised by adolescents and the strengths and weaknesses associated with those styles in bringing about successful conflict handling. We drew on this information for the next part of our study where we introduced the five styles of conflict handling to Year 9 adolescents through the medium of educational drama.

4.7   The classroom study

The second stage of the South Australian DRACON project analysed the effectiveness of teaching adolescents to handle conflicts in a cooperative manner through the medium of educational drama in a secondary school in metropolitan Adelaide, South Australia. How education and training in conflict management can best be provided to students in secondary schools was the central issue. Prior research conducted by the authors had indicated that peer mediation strategies may not be appropriate for some adolescents, in particular for Year 9 students. The suggestion being tested in this study was that conflict education and literacy can be provided through the medium of educational drama.

Introducing adolescent's to Johnson's (1997) five styles or strategies of conflict handling through the medium of drama was central to the research. Johnson's typology of styles has two underlying dimensions. He assumed that we are concerned about two things in a conflict with others:

- getting what we need or want and/or

- the relationship with the other person.

The five basic conflict-handling styles, which we have previously outlined can be categorised as competitive or cooperative. Each person uses more than one style, depending on the situation they are in. However the hypothesis is that we usually have one style we use most, particularly in a crisis, or in an argument with people we are close to.

4.7.1 Research methodology

The aim of this stage of the South Australian DRACON sub-project was to study drama-in-education approaches to teaching and learning co-operative conflict handling strategies, involving Year 9 students in a secondary school in metropolitan Adelaide. By choosing to work with a difficult class, which initially presented with subgroup conflicts, it was also possible to study the effects of the learning process on both the individual class members and the groups.

The school

A large school located in a low socio-economic area in the Northern suburb of Adelaide agreed to participate in the research. Half the students in this school come from disadvantaged backgrounds with one third of students from non-English speaking backgrounds. According to studies by Adey, Johnson and Oswald (1991) and findings of the prior research conducted by the authors, it is schools with these demographics that are predominantly reporting escalating problems with conflict.

The participants

During planning meetings with teaching staff from the school, the students in the assigned Year 9 drama class were described as "difficult" - often uncooperative, seemingly disinterested in drama, boisterous and at times hostile. Initially there were nineteen students in the class - eight boys and eleven girls. They had been in this drama class for one term (term 3) and during this time the teacher had been unable to engage them in any meaningful way. The teacher indicated that some students in the class had chosen drama as an "easy" option.

Two conflict researchers (the project co-ordinator and a co-researcher) and two drama facilitators were directly involved with the students, and two other members of the DRACON team acted as con-

sultants. The drama facilitators took alternate classes and the conflict researchers designed and implemented the research strategies and acted as observers and recorders, occasionally facilitating small group activities and giving conflict theory input to the drama teachers and students as needed. The school drama teacher chose to observe and to support the researchers by monitoring attendance and completing other administrative tasks. The researchers began work with the class at the start of fourth term in 1998. The commitment was for two 100-minute sessions a week, for a period of eight weeks.

The research focus

Verbal abuse was considered to be an appropriate focus for the educational drama sessions as it had been identified by Year 9 students in the school in a prior survey as the predominant source of conflict. Prior research in a range of secondary schools (including this one) had identified that verbal abuse between adolescents at school was common, was often ignored by teachers, can be more hurtful than physical abuse, can continue for a long period and was difficult to handle. It is important to reflect that verbal abuse has also been identified by many victims of domestic violence in South Australia as being the most destructive form of abuse in the long term (Bagshaw, Chung, Couch, Lilburn & Wadham, 2000).

Research method and techniques

As manifestations of human behaviour, conflict issues and drama posed potential ethical problems and demanded sensitivity, trust and confidence among the participants. Participation in the project was informed and voluntary with formal permission sought from the University of South Australia and the Catholic and State Education Departments and from the schools, students, parents and teachers involved.

Educational drama approaches to be tested included a range of drama exercises, improvisations, and role-plays involving conflict situations typically experienced by students at school, especially conflicts involving verbal insults or abuse. The emphasis was on enabling students to develop their own conflict scenarios and to practice different styles of handling conflict, drawing on their experiences and creativity.

An action research framework was employed, allowing the researchers to work collaboratively with the participants and to constantly to

234

evaluate the process and modify activities. It involved "the application of fact finding to practical problem solving in a social situation with a view to improving the action within it" (Sarantakos, 1998: 7). The process was fluid with continuous evaluation and feedback between the researchers and participants, through the medium of diaries, informing each stage in the development of the project.

Various research techniques were tried to ascertain their usefulness. Research techniques used included:

- focussed observation using descriptive techniques. One observer/recorder described the exercises and techniques used and student responses to each exercise and the overall session;

- participant journals for recording impressions immediately following sessions. The rationale was to identify changes in understanding that may be attributable to the educational drama work. The students were asked to write briefly about three things for each session: what they enjoyed, what they did not enjoy and what they learned;

- pre- and post- questionnaires designed to ascertain changes in the target group's attitudes to conflict;

- video-recording of the drama activities, which was introduced in session five and used as a tool for ongoing critical reflection and for evaluation in the final session.

Each session was designed to introduce drama activities that facilitated the exploration of key concepts linked to conflict management. Most of the concepts were introduced in the earlier stages and were centrally important to the development of the group - in particular trust, cooperation, listening, empathy, nonverbal communication, feelings and status/power. The key order of introduction of the concepts was contingent on the stage of the group's development. Simple handouts were supplied, either at the beginning or at the end of the session, along with a brief discussion of the concept explored and how it related to the students' experience. Drama exercises were designed to reinforce these concepts.

Students were then introduced to the five strategies for handling conflict identified by Johnson – withdrawing, smoothing, forcing, compromising and problem solving (Johnson, 1997). Drama activities were designed to facilitate student exploration of the effect of each strategy,

and to identify the potential destructive and constructive elements of each.

After each session the team would debrief - share perceptions of student involvement, review the journal entries, evaluate the relevance of each drama activity used on the day, discuss personal responses and effects and plan the next session. The data collected was assessed and analysed using a reflexive approach (Gergen & Gergen, 1991; Mauthner & Doucet, 1998), which appreciates and incorporates the effect of the researchers' participation in the process, without assuming expert status. Through this understanding, the data from student feedback and researcher observations were contrasted in order to formulate ongoing and final evaluations.

4.7.2   The drama process

Week 1

The research team's first priority was to build a collaborative relationship with the students based on trust and mutual respect. The team used their first names with the class in an attempt to establish a sense of democracy. It was assumed that cooperation would be facilitated by less formal personal relations than are usual between students and staff in schools.

In *Session 1*, the project coordinator and co-researcher introduced the project and implemented a pre-test. "Warm-up" and group building exercises were used to engage the students with each other, with the researchers and with the project. Initially, members of the class were hostile, distrustful, undisciplined and disrespectful towards the team. They had studied drama for ten weeks before the team's arrival. It had been assumed that they would be an integrated class, familiar with each other and their teacher and having some basic understanding and experience of drama techniques, particularly in improvisation and role-playing. This was not the case; in fact a great deal of resentment and resistance seemed to have accrued during the prior term.

From the beginning, the students positioned themselves in three distinct sub-groups – Group A (the boys, which included a sub-group of twin boys who were quiet, serious, tidy and clearly experienced in drama techniques), Group B (a smaller group of Shy, "Geeky" girls) and Group C (a larger group of more confident, "Cool" girls). Within

236

these sub-groups each student appeared confident, but when isolated from others in their small group, confidence waned, in particular among the Shy girls. It was very difficult to get individuals to interact with students from the other sub-groups. For example, in the first few weeks, most Cool girls were unwilling to introduce other class members who were not in their sub-group, or to work in pairs or a small group with a Shy girl.

In order to ascertain their willingness and ability to engage in a drama activity, the students were invited to form three single-sex groups to discuss the differences between the way boys insult each other and the way girls insult each other. They were then asked to devise a scenario taking the role of a person of the opposite sex and to act out a typical conflict involving that same-sex group. Each group worked with one of the researchers or the teacher in rehearsal and devised imaginative, amusing and insightful scenarios. However, when asked to perform for the larger group, the boys participated, but both groups of girls froze.

The knowledge gained from this first encounter provided the researchers with a basis on which to proceed. The Team would have to start from scratch. However perhaps a difficult class like this one, antagonistic and dysfunctional, was exactly the kind of class that might benefit from some help with techniques of conflict resolution? The students made it clear that they resented the written work by refusing to listen to instructions, loudly protesting and disrupting each other. However, in spite of this, their journal entries reflected that most were self-conscious about speaking or performing in front of their peers and most enjoyed learning about "the differences in the way boys and girls insult each other".

Sessions 2 to 8 were formulated expressly to build cooperation and basic drama skills. The Team described again the idea behind the DRACON project. It was important to restate that the Team were looking to the students for guidance as to what exact shape the program would take. In the second session, the students engaged first in exercises that demanded individual action, such as walking in their own space. Then they worked in pairs, for example mirroring each other's behaviour and role playing a master/servant scenario. This was followed by an observation game that required the cooperation of the whole group. Some of these exercises - like 'Touching Kneecaps' were deliberately framed to be amusing. They were also framed to lead the

class towards attitudes, disciplines and skills necessary for drama: co-operation, concentration, observation, reacting to a lead given by someone else, communicating without words.

Most participated enthusiastically and journal entries reflected that they were having fun.

It was much more fun than other lessons we have had.

Week 2

Unfortunately *Session 3* was held in the Dance Studio, an allocated room totally unsuited for drama, highlighting the importance of physical context. Sound echoed and reverberated; there was a hard, vinyl-covered floor, mirrors and walls with barres[22] attached. Students reacted by being loud and boisterous, uncooperative and disrespectful to the researchers and to each other. Journal entries were negative, summed up by the statement: "I thought today's lesson was boring".

A problem presenting to drama staff was the difficulty of timing sessions and therefore planning effectively. Exercises that might on average take half an hour could be thoughtlessly raced through in five minutes by the students - or take an hour and a half where instructions had to be repeated many times and students had to be constantly pressured into concentrating, cajoled and helped with ideas. In fact planning at all was problematic; the best approach seemed to be to come to class with a lot of ideas ready - and proceed flexibly with whatever seemed to interest the class. It seemed crucial to emphasise to members of the class the reality of the Team's desire to work in ways that were relevant to their needs and in areas they would find pleasurable, and that the Team had no desire simply to impose structures from 'above'.

The priority for *Session 4* was to confront the students about their disruptive behaviour. It was pointed out that the success of the project depended on the cooperation of all students. The drama facilitator established some basic group norms and made it clear that if the students did not wish to participate, the researchers would happily withdraw from the project. This proved to be a turning point - the students realised that they had the power to terminate the project and the power to shape it. Evidence of a shift was provided when a student, well known

---

[22] A barre is a horizontal bar dancers hold on to when doing their exercises.

for being late and disruptive, entered the classroom more than half an hour late. He was asked to apologise to the class for interrupting their activity and refused to do so - choosing instead to storm out. Rather than support him (which they had previously done) the students ignored him and chose to continue with their activity.

At this stage in the process the drama facilitators were beginning to explain the rationale behind the drama exercises and games. The leader of Group C began to question both the project and the process, indicating a genuine interest. By answering her queries the facilitator was able to address some of the questions that others had not been confident to ask. Her growing enthusiasm and acceptance of the project exerted a strong influence over the class in general and particularly over 'her' group, which was the larger and more confident girls' group. Student journals began to reflect dissatisfaction with class members who continued to cause disruption.

> I don't really like the fact that most of the class still haven't started to stop being all embarrassed and just do the activities.

> I learned that if the whole class gets involved everything works better for everyone.

Week 3

During *Session 5* the Team introduced the video recorder into the class, who seemed generally comfortable about being filmed. It was felt that a video would be a bonus as a record and as a tool for communication and feedback. The idea was also put forward that the video could be used to realise an end product for the project; the students were invited to give this proposal some thought. This proved another turning point. The students were clearly excited at the possibility of 'making a film.'

By this session a pattern of activities began to be established. The facilitator would begin with warm up exercises which were at times fast and involved the whole group - such as an Irish Jig - or slow and meditative allowing for individual reflection. Both approaches served to promote participation and large group cohesion. The Drama facilitators had noticed how physically active the boys liked to be; vigorous 'warm-ups' seemed popular. Some of the girls were enthusiastic dancers. The Irish Jig was danced with pleasure by both sexes. Students were not put in the potentially embarrassing position of opposite gender

partners. Alternate dancers were 'apples' or 'oranges'. An added factor in the success of the Jig was perhaps the fact that the Irish 'River Dance' had recently played in Adelaide to great acclaim and had been televised. The students related to the 'glamour' and 'macho' quality of this contemporary performance. Facilitators acknowledged the necessity of offering opportunities for energetic activity in future classes and the attraction for students of engaging in exercises they felt to be 'with it.'

The final exercise in this session involved the groups making up a story where a bad event was followed by good. This was preceded by the telling of the story of the Good Samaritan. The students enjoyed this and did it well. The boys devised a battle between England and Scotland - a piece of real Dance Drama - and fought in a stylised way, inventively using small plastic table tops as shields and the legs as swords or clubs, sometimes in slow motion with admirable discipline until (one presumes) the 'good guys' won. Interestingly this was the only piece not handled naturalistically.

The Team felt that some headway had been gained during this session. The dance had been a success in focusing and expending energy and building interaction. The class seemed nearer to grasping some of the techniques of drama; they had enjoyed improvising a play. The 'Shy' girls had begun to contribute more and the 'Cool' girls had begun to accept them.

To date the focus had been on building relationships, establishing trust, developing confidence and encouraging cooperative behaviour. In *Session 6*, the researchers began to explore concepts relevant to conflict – cooperation and competition, recognising and naming feelings. A page of cartoon faces expressing different emotions was used as an amusing stimulus. Handouts describing how one expresses feelings verbally and non-verbally through tone of voice, facial expression, eye contact and touching were discussed. Drama activities were introduced to enable students to explore these concepts – for example an arm-wrestle exercise, acting out feelings, and theatre sports. The students were still reluctant to contribute to large group discussion, however the journals indicated that many were recognising the importance of "teamwork" and "cooperation".

> I learnt that if everyone cooperates more and doesn't compete with each other then the group works better and is much more enjoyable.

240

Week 4

Session 7 introduced a communication exercise and a 'trust walk' on the school grounds that tested the relationships between some students. Student journal entries identified the value of trust.

> I enjoyed doing the trust activity. It was a bit scary to do but it was still fun.

The students were improving but still finding it difficult to listen to and follow instructions. They were unwilling to admit to the gaining of any knowledge. Any attempt to reflect on the meaning of exercises was met with resistance. Perhaps they were in fact learning nothing that they knew how to recognise or quantify. The Team had noticed that the class were in fact beginning to learn how to interact with each other. What discussion did occur indicated that there was an increase in both their willingness to participate and their understanding of concepts. There was a growing sense that the students were beginning to trust the Team.

The class decided they would eventually like to devise short plays in groups, showing how a certain conflict was resolved. These would be video-taped as an end product to the project.

By *Session 8* the group dynamics were altered by the suspension from school of the two most disruptive boys in the class. Their absence saw a shift in the behaviour of the rest of the boys from indifferent participation to enthusiastic contribution. Although the small groups still operated autonomously, there was greater class cohesion. Students were beginning to take an overt and constructive interest in the activities of others outside their sub-group. In this session the drama facilitator explored dimensions of conflict through discussion of contemporary plays, which led into group discussion about the students' own experiences of conflict. A communication exercise later required the students to devise a scenario which demonstrated a conflict situation but in which the dialogue was fixed and restricted.

All the students devised scenarios that clearly demonstrated the power of non-verbal communication. They all acted out their particular scenarios confidently and watched the work of others respectfully. Some were also willing openly to discuss the knowledge gained, risking ridicule from others. Trust was beginning to manifest itself in changed attitudes and behaviour. All students, even those consistently fearful of being required to participate in public performance, reported enjoying the exercise.

> I enjoyed getting up and acting out a scene involving conflict without going psycho killing each other.

> I sort of enjoyed performing our play - I am getting more confident.

Most clearly identified that they had learned about the importance of non-verbal communication

> I learnt how to read how people are feeling.

At the end of these preliminary sessions the Team felt that there had been an appreciable growth in cooperation and interest and a considerable improvement in drama skills and discipline. The students' behaviour was still a problem but their listening skills and willingness to contribute were significantly enhanced.

Week 5

Sessions 9 to 13 concentrated on concepts of conflict management and play-making.

In *Session 9* an attempt to organise an exercise that required students to work in pairs was challenged by a student. Her protest was supported by many in the class. This provided the facilitator with an opportunity to demonstrate further that the students could influence the direction of the project and significantly altered the group dynamics. Increased communication and cooperation across sub-groups began to emerge.

This session was designed to explore the related concepts of status and power. The students were required to develop a scenario around the abuse of power - called 'The Worm Turns'. Students were given prepared cards with some suggested power combinations - student/teacher, mother/father, child/parent - but took the initiative to create some imaginative scenarios beyond the choices offered. They demonstrated that they understood the concepts and were taking charge of their own learning. Members of the Team helped provide ideas and structures. The 'Shy' girls created a court-room scene where there was a confrontation between Lawyer and Client. The girls giggled but were prepared to show their play to the others. The boys were unable to maintain a dialogue but got their point across in a player/referee altercation at a soccer match. A school counsellor/student interview was presented by the 'Cool' girls. The other 'Cool' girls were children playing off Mum and Dad against each other. The Twins presented a humorous scene

242

where through a misunderstanding a policeman harasses a 'suspect' - who turns out to be the pizza delivery boy.

Student journal entries for this session were much more informative than previously. There was overwhelming support for working on 'plays' and for being able to choose whether they worked in small groups or pairs. Some reflected that they "enjoyed performing in front of everyone and working in pairs", whilst others commented that "we should be able to go with as many people as we like". From this point on the students made an effort to listen to instructions and took responsibility for their actions.

Weeks 6 to Week 8

The final sessions were devoted to the preparation and presentation of role-plays that required each small group or pair to develop a scenario (involving verbal insults or abuse) to demonstrate different conflict handling styles or strategies. Students were introduced to the five conflict handling strategies and identified their own dominant conflict style by completing an exercise from Johnson (1997: 229-249). The students related with amusement to Johnson's animal archetypes' which proved very effective in illuminating the approaches described.

Students were given simplified handouts and explanations in class to assist them to understand the concepts. The class had experienced or used most of the conflict strategies but had not previously been able to label them. However, they were initially unable to demonstrate an understanding of the strategy of problem solving, or an ability to apply it. It was explained that each of the strategies could be appropriate for a particular situation. However it was agreed that in most conflict situations between peers at school, the cooperative strategies of compromising and problem-solving have the potential to generate the most satisfactory outcomes for everyone involved, as they preserve the relationship(s) and attempt to satisfy everyone's needs and goals.

The students chose to work on developing their own role-plays in small groups, with the Twins opting to work together as they wanted to expand on their 'The Worm Turns' scenario. Despite a suggestion that previous scenarios could form the basis of a final piece of drama, most of the students decided to create new conflict situations. Each group developed its own sets, organised props, devised scripts and successfully demonstrated the different styles of handling conflict in various scenarios.

In *Session 10* the children began to develop their scenarios for the final presentation and some groups showed 'Work in Progress'. For example the 'Cool' girls and two boys scenario was as follows:

> Two boys and a girl are sitting on the school oval: Wayne, Chuck and Amelia. Another girl, Rachel, approaches angrily. Rachel is angry with Wayne who had been going out with her but had also secretly taken out Amelia. Obliged to make a choice between the girls, Wayne prefers to go off with Chuck. (This was a witty and interesting approach, perhaps designed to test the acceptance of the Team, as the hint of homosexual preference was present.)

The Team helped students to develop their ideas by giving feedback and contributing suggestions. It was pointed out that most of the scenarios used 'Shark' or 'Turtle' techniques to solve the conflict. Could students explore other approaches? Most of these scenarios were very short and basic. Students clearly did not understand how to 'flesh out' the skeletons. From this point individual members of the Team (including the researchers) worked with each group as a drama facilitator, using improvisational techniques and discussion to help the students develop the plot and structure of the scenario and enriching the dialogue and characterisation. All groups (especially the 'Shy' girls, who needed perhaps the boost in confidence that this can bring) were keen to 'set' their plays and use costume and props. The 'Shy' girls relied on a formally written script more than the others who were relaxed about improvising precise words around a carefully structured scenario.

Many changes occurred in this period including the dissolution of the sub-groups, initiated by two boys and two of the Cool girls (Group C) electing to work together on a scenario. All students opted to help students from other groups by volunteering to be 'extras' in each other's plays. They also acknowledged and included the research staff, asking for support and feedback on their ideas. They all demonstrated a marked increase in self-confidence and were not afraid to present their ideas for public scrutiny.

> I enjoyed being able to have the freedom to make up a short performance with our own ideas.

All the students, even those who consistently reported hating "doing plays" and "performing in front of the class", wrote in their journals that they enjoyed developing their play and rehearsing for their final

244

performance. After several rehearsals each sub-group performed for the rest of the class. They performed with confidence –

> I really enjoyed performing the play and I think we did it well.

In addition, each scenario demonstrated that they had understood and responded to the requirements, which were to devise a typical scene to illustrate a conflict involving verbal abuse or insults, and to demonstrate various styles or strategies to handle the conflict. The journal entries continued to reflect learning about conflict, cooperation, expressing feelings and "how to work together and not stuff around".

In the final scenarios devised by the students, where conflict was the subject of the drama, they were each able to experience different aspects of conflict and to experiment with different strategies of conflict handling.

The end products had developed considerably from the initial scenarios. The plays were set innovatively using rostra and other resources of the Drama room. The students had gone to a lot of trouble to construct props and found appropriate costumes on their own initiative.

Each small group performance was videoed and the edited video was played back to the students on the last day. Following this, students were videoed as they interviewed each other in pairs (*vox populi* style) asking two questions:

- What style of conflict did you demonstrate in your play?
- If you were to demonstrate a problem solving style, what would you have done differently?

Responses to these questions demonstrated an improved understanding of key conflict management strategies and concepts. The students were all able to identify the conflict strategies that they used in their role-play. Those who had used withdrawal, forcing or smoothing strategies were also able to describe more cooperative approaches they could have used, involving the use of compromise or problem-solving. This ability had not been evident in earlier sessions.

A special session was arranged in the last week to review the edited video, to thank the students for their participation and to present them with a specially prepared certificate of attendance. All students made a special effort to attend and the mood of the group was positive, cheerful and cooperative, in marked contrast to the first two sessions. In this and

the previous session, oral feedback given to the researchers by students (in front of their classmates) indicated that their confidence levels had increased and that they appreciated learning about conflict through drama, especially through devising their own scenarios. They spoke of growing confidence, having fun, learning different conflict solving methods, improved acting skills and improved communication skills. These examples of their final journal entries illustrate the potency of drama as a medium for learning.

> I learnt about different ways to loosen people up so that they aren't shy.

> I learnt how to communicate better and how to resolve conflicts more civilised.

> I learnt how to bow and curtsy and how to use different problem solving methods during conflict.

> I learnt confidence I never had and how to be myself a little more.

Members of the Team felt that they had made great progress in transforming a dysfunctional class of children, with separate and conflicting sub-groups, into a viable and cooperative drama class with increased conflict literacy. This had been achieved by using strategies to establish egalitarian staff/student relations, which built trust, and by persuading the children that they genuinely had a crucial role in the structuring and development of the project; their needs and interests were the priority. Various techniques were used to encourage cooperation between the sub-groups and these also empowered students to take charge of their own learning.

The drama facilitators were flexible in their approach, willing to adapt to the preferences of the class. Exercises were devised that allowed for the expression of physical energy, that concerned contemporary issues, were 'with it,' exciting and amusing. No pressure was exerted to form or break up existing groups; some melding occurred naturally as class cohesion improved. The making of a video of the final performances, a permanent record, was an effective stimulus to students to present a worthwhile production of which they could be proud.

It seemed clear to the Team that at the conclusion of the project interpersonal understanding and friendship had begun to grow between members of what had been discretely separate groups in the class. The

indications were that this improved understanding could lead in general to more pleasant social relations in the future between members of the class.

4.7.3 Discussion

This pilot project was ambitious given the time frame and the difficult and large student group involved and the conflict between the three distinct sub-groups. However, the observed shift in levels of attentiveness and self-confidence in the individual students and the cooperation between the sub-groups was profound, given the high level of disruptive behaviour initially displayed. Action research strategies enabled the research team to respond flexibly to the needs and interests of individual students and to affirm their abilities, thereby gaining their respect and trust. They appreciated the confidence that was placed in their ability to be self-directed - "I enjoyed having a choice on what we wanted to do - not having the teachers choose what we have to do". This finding is not surprising, given the push for autonomy typically displayed by adolescents at this stage of their development.

During the first few sessions the students' behaviour was challenging. They tested boundaries and tolerance levels by either arriving late, refusing to be involved, or by being disruptive and disrespectful to other students and to the drama facilitator. This behaviour was challenged by the drama facilitator and it was from this point that the journals became more informative and useful. One student who had previously written negative, monosyllabic responses now disclosed a difficulty – "sometimes I didn't understand what he [the drama facilitator] was talking about".

The journal sheets were designed to elicit student feedback immediately after each session - what they liked and disliked about the activities engaged in and what they had learned. Despite their general reluctance to write about each session in their journals, (e.g. "the only thing I didn't like about this term was writing the feedback at the end of the lesson"), the information they provided over time provided useful material for ongoing and final evaluations. This was the most important action research tool used, as the students were often reluctant to verbalise their ideas and opinions in front of each other. Information gained from observations and the journal entries was used to modify and shape each session. Oral feedback in the final session indicated that the stu-

dents' ability to influence the project was considered to be a very important aspect of their experience.

It was valuable to record focussed observations of each session, as evaluation of the student feedback in journals needed to take into account the context of the session. For example, the large group's behaviour and reported feelings of dissatisfaction in session three could not have been adequately explained without reference to the unsuitable surroundings.

The use of written pre- and post-tests as a research strategy was inappropriate with this group of students. They initially registered their protest at being required to complete written work by providing misinformation and very little comment in the pre-test questionnaire. The students were still not comfortable about completing the post-tests at the end, complaining that they hated writing. The post-test results were inconclusive, indicating little or no shift in attitudes to conflict or verbal abuse. In both the pre- and post-test, when asked about their attitudes to another student being called hurtful names, half claimed it was of concern and the other half that it did not concern them. Similarly there was no significant fall in the numbers of those who admitted to being perpetrators of abuse to other students, nor any evidence of a shift in attitude to this practice. The pre-test and post-test findings, however, did not tally with the feedback in the students' personal journals, with the observer's notes, or with the oral feedback given by students in the *vox populi* interviews with their peers and in the final session.

The use of the video as a tool for evaluation and feedback was invaluable with this age group. They encouraged its use and were very keen to view themselves performing. On reflection, the video would have been more effective than written tests as a tool for evaluation. Given the students' aversion to writing and to completing tests or questionnaires, it is posited that individual student interviews could have been videotaped before and after the project. The recording of *vox populi* interviews between the students was an effective way of ascertaining the students' understanding of the different conflict handling styles, but without a benchmark it was difficult to measure changes in attitudes to conflict over time.

This exploratory research project demonstrated the potential for educational drama to engage adolescents in problem solving and cooperative action. Although the project was limited to one class in one

school (making inferences difficult) there were strong indications that drama is an effective medium for introducing possibilities for change by widening the experiences of adolescents and allowing them to explore conflict, and its resolution, from a variety of perspectives.

4.8   Overall conclusions

Conflict plays an important part in the lives of South Australian school-children. This was evident from the comments of students in focus groups and the subsequent survey conducted in this study. Some schools were located in communities where there are high levels of aggression and violence, and where members of the community are involved in the conflicts at school. These schools cannot be expected to implement conflict management strategies and programs in isolation - broader, structural issues need to be addressed for a lasting change in attitudes and behaviour to occur. Macro-level strategies for conflict management, involving families and the broader community, may be more appropriate in these areas. However, in the current political and economic climate in Australia, which is contributing to the increasing marginalisation of some schools and communities, this will be both challenging and difficult.

Conflict in South Australian schools gives rise to substantial numbers of students being subjected to hurtful forms of aggression – physical, verbal and relational. We need to pay attention to adolescents' comments about their experiences of conflict at school and the sort of helping strategies they need. Adolescence is a time when young people begin to form intimate relationships with their peers and are striving to create an independent, adult identity (Stern & Newland, 1992). It is typically a time of turmoil when the adolescents test themselves, their relationships with other people and the boundaries of those relationships (Hayman, 1998). It is important to provide early intervention and prevention strategies that will assist them to deal constructively with conflicts that arise in these relationships. A range of strategies will be needed.

It is clear that adolescent students use a variety of conflict-handling styles - some constructive, such as problem solving and compromise, and others that are likely to produce negative outcomes for individuals, groups and the school community at large, such as forcing and with-

drawing. It is a matter of concern that substantial numbers of students are using negative styles in South Australian schools.

Peer mediation may be helpful for less serious conflicts involving adolescents in schools, at the micro-level. Teachers, counsellors and students would benefit from learning the skills. However, some Year 9 students in our study indicated that peer mediation is not always a useful strategy nor acceptable for their age group, especially where the conflicts are serious, where there is an imbalance of power and forcing styles are being employed.

Drawing upon the understandings derived from what Year 9 students in this study told us about their conflict experiences in a range of schools and how they seek to handle conflict, we believe that drama-in-education has an important role to play with this age group as a strategy for teaching conflict literacy and conflict handling skills. In this study we have demonstrated that with a difficult 'out of control' class in a disadvantaged school there are indications that educational drama can provide a creative medium for the teaching of constructive conflict handling skills to individuals and for the development of cooperation between groups.

References

Adey, K., Oswald, M. & Johnson, B. (1991). *Discipline in Schools: A Survey of Teachers: Survey No. 1: Teachers in Metropolitan Adelaide*. Adelaide: University of South Australia.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (1997). *Adelaide ... A Social Atlas*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia. ABS Catalogue No. 2030.4.

Australian Government (1994). *Sticks and Stones: Report on Violence in Australian Schools* (Report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training). Canberra: Australian Government Printing Service.

Bagshaw, D. (2004). *Verbal abuse and adolescent identities. Marking the boundaries of gender* (PhD Thesis). Melbourne: The University of Melbourne Library.

Bagshaw, D., Chung, D., Couch, M., Lilburn, S. & Wadham, B. (2000). *Reshaping Responses to Domestic Violence*. Canberra: Partnerships Against Domestic Violence and Department of Human Services.

Bjorkqvist, K. (1994). Sex differences in physical, verbal, and indirect aggression: A review of recent research. *Sex Roles,* (30), 177-188.

Bourke E. (1993). The First Australians. Kinship, Family and Identity. *Family Matters,* (35), 4-6.

Collins, C. (1999). The School Gender Game Narrows Choices and Behaviour. *Refractory Girl,* (53), 18-21.

Connell, R.W. (1995). *Masculinities*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

Crick, N.R. & Grotpeter, J.K. (1995). Relational aggression, gender, and social-psychological adjustment. *Child Development*, *66*(3), 710-722.

D'Souza, N. (1993). Aboriginal Child Welfare. Framework for a national policy. *Family Matters,* (35), 40-45.

Gergen, K. & Gergen, M. (1991). *Research and Reflexivity*. London: SAGE Publications.

Gilbert, R. & Gilbert, P. (1998). *Masculinity Goes To School*. St Leonards: Allen & Unwin.

Hayman, S. (1998). *Living with a Teenager*. Great Britain: Mackays of Chatman.

Hofstede, G. (1980). *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work Related Values.* Newbury Park CA: Sage.

Johnson, D.W. (1997). *Reaching Out. Interpersonal Effectiveness and Self-Actualisation.* (6th Ed). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Karmel, P. (1971). Education in South Australia, Report of the Committee of Enquiry into Education in South Australia 1969-1970. Adelaide: Australian College of Educators.

Kenway, J., Willis, S., Blackmore, J. & Rennie, L. (1997). *Answering Back: Girls, Boys and Feminism in Schools*. St Leonards: Allen & Unwin.

Kreuger, R.A. (1994). *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*. Newbury Park: SAGE Publications.

Marginson, S. (1993). *Education and Public Policy in Australia*. London: Cambridge University Press.

Martin, R. (1994). Violence in Australian Schools. *Criminology Australia, 6*(1), 16-19.

Mauthner, N. & Doucet, A. (1998). Reflections on a Voice-centred Relational Method: Analysing Maternal and Domestic Voices. In J.

Ribbens & R. Edwards (Eds.), *Feminist Dilemmas in Qualitative Research: Public Knowledge and Private Lives* (pp. 119-146). London: SAGE Publications.

Morgan, D. (1988). *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research.* Newbury Park: SAGE Publications.

Mynard, H. & Joseph, S. (2000). Development of the multidimensional peer-victimization scale. *Aggressive Behavior, 26*(2), 169-178.

Rigby, K. (1996). *Bullying in Schools - and what to do about it.* Melbourne: Camberwell.

Rigby, K. (1997). What children tell us about bullying in schools. *Children Australia*, *22*(2), 28-34.

Rigby, K. (2002). *New perspectives on bullying.* London: Jessica Kingsley.

Sarantakos, S. (1998). *Social Research* (2nd Ed.). South Yarra: Macmillan Education Australia.

Stern, M., Van Slyck, M. & Newland, L. (1992). Adolescent Development and Family Dynamics. *Mediation Quarterly, 9*(4), 307-322.

Stewart, D.W. & Shamdasini, P.N. (1990). *Focus Groups: Theory and Practice*. Newbury Park: SAGE Publications.

Taylor, J. (1993). Aboriginal Australians and Poverty. (1993) *Family Matters,* (35), 46-47.

Thomson, P. (2002). *Schooling the Rustbelt Kids. Making the difference in changing times*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

Underwood, M.K. (2003). *Social aggression among girls.* New York: Guilford Press.

Widdows, J. (1996). Drama as an agent for change: Drama, behaviour and students with emotional and behavioural difficulties. *Research in Drama in Education, 1*(1), 65-78.

5 Creative arts in conflict exploration

Latif Kamaluddin and Janet Pillai

5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to outline the action-orientated studies and the ensuing results carried out in the Malaysian Drama and Conflict (DRACON) Project in the state of Penang, Malaysia, 1995-1998. Although the Malaysian project was interdisciplinary and comparative and required specialists with competence in two fields: educational drama and conflict resolution, it related to a wider sphere of disciplines especially art and cross-cultural communication. Both educational drama and conflict exploration are well-established fields, but this project focused on something relatively new, using a multi-arts approach to conflict exploration within the cross-cultural setting of Malaysian schools.

Educational drama in Malaysia carries a slightly different connotation in that it is not confined solely to the medium of drama. In fact educational drama in all of Southeast Asia is grounded in the Asian performance concept of 'total theatre' that does not discriminate between the arts as separate categories but integrates literary arts, visual art, dance, drama and music into the umbrella term 'theatre'. Educational drama in Malaysia is distinct from its western counterpart in that it utilises a wide range of art forms in the creative process.

A history of migrant settlement has given Malaysia a unique multi-cultural and multi-ethnic population. Each of the various ethnic groups possesses a rich and distinct culture, manifested in a variety of symbols, rituals and ceremonies, dialects and lifestyles. Culture and religion are perceived by some as being definitive norms that should be adhered to. As such, methods of conflict analysis and handling needed as far as possible to take into consideration cultural and religious sensitivities.

The main Malaysian DRACON study was confined to adolescents from three national secondary schools; one all male school, one all female and one of mixed gender school, all having a balanced ethnic ra-

tio. The schools were located in the urban centre and the population was mostly from working class families. When working with adolescents in these schools the Malaysian DRACON team was acutely aware of the need to consciously take into account the complex variables of its population as these variables constitute the building blocks for more meaningful and relevant conflict handling education and praxis.

The focus of research of the Malaysian DRACON team was to examine the potential of educational drama as a framework within which to test and develop new modes of conflict exploration and conflict literacy. The Malaysian DRACON project, which spanned the period from 1995-1998, was structured into three research cycles. The report and results in this chapter addresses all three research cycles.

5.2   Background - cultural context

Malaysia is both multicultural and multi-ethnic with a predominantly Malay population and a sizeable population of Chinese, Indians and other ethnic minorities who came originally as traders in the 17th and 18th century and later in larger numbers as migrant labour brought in by British colonisers. Malaysia also has indigenous groups who make up a minority.

In the early 19th century Malaysian schools set up by British colonisers were segregated according to ethnic groups, language of the mother tongue being the most divisive factor. However, independence and the policy of nationalisation encouraged some integration in the form of a national language and a national education system. The Malaysian DRACON study had to take into account the cultural dimensions of its multi-ethnic society.

Table 5.1. Structure of the DRACON project

Research Cycles	Activity	Duration	Age	Participants
5. <u>Cycle 1: 1995</u> 6. Exploration of creative-arts exercises/processes and how it might relate to conflict handling.	Creative arts program	24 days	10-16	10 boys; 10 girls
7. <u>Cycle 2: 1996-97</u> 8. a) Survey of adolescents' understanding of conflict. 9. b) Testing creative-arts exercises and processes as intervention tools in conflict exploration. 10. c) Testing for significant changes to participants' conflicts (before and after conflict exploration workshop) 11. d) Application: 1997 12. Transfer of promising creative-arts exercises to school counsellors.	Survey Creative arts workshop Conflict exploration workshop Quantitative survey Open ended survey Teachers workshop	1 day 2 days 2 days 1 hour 1 hour 10 days	16 yrs 30-50 yrs	30 boys; 30 girls (the same) 30 boys; 30 girls (reduced) 17M 17F (the same) 17 boys; 17 girls (reduced) 12 boys; 14 girls 20 mixed gender
13. <u>Cycle 3: 1998</u> 14. Devising and testing the efficacy of theatre-in-education in enhancing conflict literacy among adolescents.	15. Focus group enquiry 16. 17. Pre/post performance survey	1 day 1 day	16-17 yrs	20 boys 25 girls 300 mixed audience

255

Although the majority of schools tend to be multicultural and multi-ethnic each of the various ethnic groups has distinct cultural and religious practices. Generally individuals are socialised to fit the cultural and religious mould, or feel safe and secure doing so. The pressure, however, to adhere to ethnic or religious norms while adapting to the Malaysian collectivist culture is a precarious journey that all Malaysians negotiate. As an example, some students receive advice from religious teachers that they should seek religious counselling instead of the 'secular' counselling that is offered by the school counselling unit.

Though culturally diverse, Malaysians do share a common aggregate of values and attitudes framed by their common environment. In a collective culture such as that found in Malaysia the 'we' orientation supersedes 'I' orientation, emphasising accommodation, compromise and consensus in an attempt to sustain unity.

The early feudal history of Malaysia and the consequent 'divide and rule' practised by colonisers and later by the independent government has also resulted in a social, institutional and political milieu that is authority-centred, seniority-based and paternalistic. Malaysians are schooled in a culture that is vertical and places a high premium on high power distance. Dominating values include vertical loyalty bonds, consciousness and respect for authority, low individualism, group orientation and avoidance of conflict situations.

MALAYSIAN CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

High Power Distance	Low Individualism	Low Uncertainty Avoidance	Middle Masculinity
Paternalism	Collectivist orientation	Acceptance	Polite, indirect
Deference	Normative expectations	Harmony	communication
Obligations	Relationship orientated	Nurturing	Affective rhetoric
		Non-confrontational	
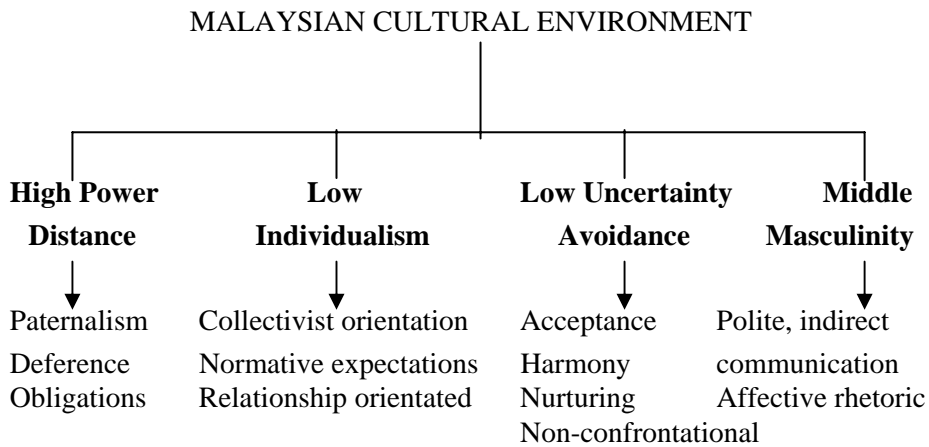
Diagram 5.1. Cultural values and attitudes in a Malaysian context (adapted from Hofstede, 1980)

256

In the area of conflict handling, there is almost an absence of mediation in Malaysia. Rather than working with all parties of the conflict simultaneously, most efforts depend on an individualized problem-solving counselling approach that places a high premium on relationship building. The conventional counselling model usually employed, whether religious or secular, tends to be based on saving the face of the one party and advising the party on acceptance, sharing and group harmony.

Given this background the team felt that attempts at developing conflict literacy in a multi-cultural school context should be projected beyond the individual ethnic group taking into account the cultural sensitivity of the Malaysian collective. The project attempted to focus on a procedure that would work for all ethnic and religious groups.

5.2.1   The education system in Malaysian schools

Malaysia has 12 years of compulsory education consisting of 7 years (age 6-12) of primary schooling and 5 years (age 13-17) of secondary schooling. Academically inclined students proceed to two years of pre-university or one year of matriculation and on to university.

The Malaysian school system dates back to 1910 when the British set up English medium schools many of which began as mission schools. By the mid 1930's, after the colonisers opened the doors in Malaya to large numbers of foreign labour, Malay, Chinese and Indian vernacular schools (which use pupil's own language as medium of instruction) were established at primary level. Chinese and Indian vernacular schools emulated education in their mother countries. Secondary vernacular schools were later set up in the 50s.

After the country attained independence in 1957 the education system in all states was nationalised resulting in the management and expansion of schools being taken over by the federal government. The missionary and vernacular schools opted to be absorbed into the national school system with the exception of some Chinese vernacular schools that resisted the nationalisation policy and retained their independence. Since independence, access to education has been expanded with hundreds of new national schools set up in areas of growing population density. Between 1987 and 1998, the number of national primary schools increased by more than 400.

To produce a national citizenry and an economically relevant workforce, all national schools at secondary level were expected to adopt a single medium of instruction (the national language, Malay) and all curriculum and examinations came under federal jurisdiction. However Chinese and Tamil schools at primary level continue to teach in their respective vernacular. State education departments served merely as conduits of federal policy and serviced administration at the local state level. The previously missionary and vernacular schools that opted for nationalisation retained some independence in minor areas of management.

Besides national schools there are a small number of private schools. Privately managed schools are of two main types; vernacular private schools, those who resisted the nationalisation policy, and corporate-run private schools, a new phenomenon, growing in number.

Vernacular private schools are managed by a board of trustees and are privately funded. At the secondary level, only Chinese vernacular schools, generally known as Independent Chinese Schools, remain in operation.

Corporate-run private schools are a relatively new phenomenon in the larger cites. Managed by private corporate funds and charging high fees, these schools practice the national curriculum alongside foreign qualifying exams for entry into overseas universities.

The ethnic composition of schools remains an issue of great contention, which is rarely addressed in the public arena. The student population of previous mission schools (English medium schools now turned national) have retained their multi-cultural and multi-ethnic profile. Ethnic segregation is less obvious is these schools where English remains a dominant language outside the classroom, and often is the mother tongue of this diverse population, a legacy of colonisation especially in urban areas.

The newer national schools, which make up the majority of schools, cater to the larger population. Reflecting the demography of the area where the school is located, new national schools in rural areas are predominantly Malay. In urban areas, there is a more mixed ethnic composition but Malay students still make up the majority. Coming from less westernised backgrounds, students in these schools tend to socialise mainly within their own ethnic groups and speak the dialect language

of their own ethnic sub-group during non-formal activities in schools and after school hours.

On the other hand, the student population of previous Chinese and Indian vernacular schools now turned national-type, are predominantly of a single ethnic group. While enrolment in Tamil national-type schools is declining, the Chinese national-type school is becoming increasingly popular as higher educational standards and cultural identity becomes a priority among the Chinese community.

The national school system at an official level avoids highlighting cultural diversity. National identity is a priority and is emphasised in a curriculum which reinforces local history, the use of the national language, pledges, anthems, the celebration of non-ethnic events such as teacher's day, children's day, national day etc. The cultural socialisation of children in national schools is left to parents and to the ethnic community so that all rituals, ceremonies and other cultural manifestations are celebrated within the familial and communal environment outside of school. There is a distinct separation between school and social life.

While the previously missionary and vernacular schools (now nationalised) remain single gender schools, the newer primary and secondary schools set up after the nationalisation policy and the private schools are of mixed gender.

The Malaysian school curriculum is primarily information heavy with a strong emphasis on cognitive learning. Economic, political and social demands determine the present focus on 3R's (reading, writing and arithmetic) for primary education and science and technology for secondary education. Dissemination of information is fettered to an exam-orientated system, which favours the banking method over creative expression in teaching and learning.

Paternalistic consensus-seeking postures tend to predominate among the administrative strata and policy makers. In the school hierarchy, students are at the bottom of the pyramid, teachers higher up and school heads at the apex.

Schools are graded unofficially according to achievement criteria. Except for a small number of working class children, upper and middle class children tend to make it to the better national schools due to their privileged environment. The Malaysian study was confined to the low achieving, working class, national-type schools. Children in these

schools tend to adopt western values at a superficial level, but in reality are more bound to their ethnic and religious practices and the collective Malaysian mentality.

5.2.2   Educational drama in Malaysia

The British through extra-curricular activities such as drama clubs and literary societies introduced the modern concept of drama in schools. While visual art has always been offered as a legitimate subject, and more recently music, drama has never been given a place in the official curriculum. Drama in schools suffered an even greater setback when national-type schools did away with literature as a subject. Extra-curricular drama activity was a rarity retained only by the previously missionary-type schools. A mild increase in drama activity can be perceived only recently since the year 2000, when literature was reintroduced as a subject and greater emphasis given to the study of English language.

As a consequence of this negligence, drama found its life outside of the official curriculum in what was termed school drama, drama as extra-curricular activity within school and in young people's theatre or children's theatre, drama by children outside the school. As a reaction to 'school drama' that never ventured beyond the staid conventional staging of scripted works, young people's theatre (outside the schools) experimented widely, devising new forms, working in unconventional spaces and developing pedagogy.

Young people's theatre in Malaysia and indeed in a number of Southeast Asian countries is a relatively new phenomenon spanning about 30 years. In Malaysia theatre for young people emerged in the 70s, pioneered by individuals Elizabeth Cardosa, Zainal Latiff and Janet Pillai, who were graduates from the Performing Arts Department of Universiti Sains Malaysia. These pioneers, (including the older Vijaya Samarawikrama, drama lecturer in the Mara Institute of Technology in the 70s) fired by the political tide of de-colonisation popular at the time, played a significant role in the development of a pluralistic model for Malaysian children's theatre. They experimented to develop a model for children's theatre that would take into account the developmental stages and the cultural context of the child. Creative, play-oriented, egalitarian and democratic methods, adapted from various Western schools of psychology were incorporated into the play-making

process while content and performance conventions were adopted from local traditional theatre.

Traditional theatre in Malaysia performed outdoors in more rural settings, is based on the concept of 'total theatre' that integrates several art forms in performance. The major genres include opera, dance-drama, storytelling and puppetry where movement and mime, music and song move the action along, supported by narrative derived from an oral tradition. During the period of de-colonisation, the 'verbal' orientation of British influenced school drama gave way to the visual and aural orientation of traditional theatre. Mime, dance and stylised movement, games, song and chant derived from traditional sources carried the action. Improvised dialogue replaced written literary pieces. The formal stage was abandoned while set and costumes were hand-crafted from materials found in the environment. In exploring modes of expression that ranged from the kinaesthetic to the musical, to the visual, young people's theatre discovered a model which managed to escape the rigid, formal, linguistic and logical modes of expression advocated in schools but instead gave room to children's need for spontaneity, play, imagination and creativity.

By the early 80s it was evident that young people's theatre, following in the footsteps of contemporary adult theatre in Malaysia had stylistically grounded itself in the Asian concept of 'total theatre'. The concept of total theatre, which is characterised by an integration of the arts, was later absorbed into the development of educational drama in Malaysia. Adopting the multi-arts approach, educational drama engaged the varied media of drama, music, dance and the visual arts for purposes of self-reflection, expression and communication.

Educational drama modes such as process drama and creative drama were a phenomenon of the late 80s, which emerged from the process of devising productions 'with' children and also from workshops toured by the Philippine Educational Theatre Association (PETA). Forum theatre and theatre-in-education (TIE) which was performed by youth or adults for young audiences only emerged in the early 90s. Young Theatre Penang is an example of a company, which devised and toured several TIE projects in Penang schools to help children negotiate issues such as sexual abuse, healthy relationships and the dilemma of working part-time while schooling. Educational drama in Malaysia adopted the pedagogy of the political theatre of Brecht and Boal and adapted its methodology to the concept of 'total theatre' (Boal, 1979). Multi-arts

techniques were often used as practical tools to elicit issues and insights from focus groups, which were then used to devise performances for young audiences. Devised drama has become common practice in Malaysia since scripted drama for young audiences are a rarity.[1]

In the Malaysian DRACON study, the term educational drama therefore carries a slightly different connotation from the Australian or Swedish context. This localised version of educational drama served as a pedagogical model within which to study, test and develop new modes in conflict handling and conflict literacy. In the devising process as well as in performance, Malaysian educational drama engages a range of art forms as information seeking, learning and communication tools.

5.2.3 Management of conflict in Malaysian schools

The guidance service that was begun in Malaysian schools in the 60s emphasised vocational and academic guidance. This service however was confined to the state departmental level and only became a service offered in schools in 1968. In the 70s the alarming increase of drug abuse among students forced the Ministry of Education to extend the objectives of the guidance service into the area of drug abuse prevention. A Cabinet Report in 1979 in its review of the educational policy in Malaysia, strongly recommended the provision and upgrading of guidance service in all schools covering all aspects of guidance needed by students such as enrichment activities, crisis counselling, corrective services for disciplinary problems etc. This led to the introduction of the counselling component in school guidance services together with other related developments such as individual and group counselling services and the training of peer counsellors.

In 1995, national budget approval was given for the appointment of full-time counsellors in secondary schools. Even so students' utilisation of counsellors since then is not very encouraging and depends largely on the personality of the counsellor and the perceptions the students have of the counselling service. Going for counselling generally carries

---

[1] The only active period of scriptwriting for children can be traced back to the post-independence 60s when nationalist-orientated teachers (the most literate of the population) continued to promote the spirit of nationalism through language and literary efforts.

a stigma. One is likely to be ridiculed or looked upon by one's peers as 'having problems' if one is seen to be voluntarily seeking a counsellor's help. It can also imply that one is in trouble with the school authorities and has been compelled to see the counsellor. In actual fact, counsellors are expected to intercede in the case of disciplinary problems, but school counsellors or their opinions are often by-passed, resulting in the student being punished rather than counselled.

High Context Cultures (e.g. Malaysia)	Low Context Cultures
Affective rhetoric	Factual rhetoric
High collective normative expectations	Low collective normative expectations
Group orientated	Individual orientated
Avoidance attitude	Confrontational attitude
Concealing attitude	Revealing attitude
Suppression	Expression
Collaboration	Competition
Shame	Guilt
Indirect action	Direct action
Third party intervention	One-on-one
Nurturing role	Professional role
Intuitive	Rational
Ambiguous, indirect strategies	Open, direct strategies
Face and relationship orientated	Action and solution orientated
Flexibility in action plan	Time specific action

Diagram 5.2. Characteristics underlying conflict handling and counselling in low and high-context cultures (adapted from Hall, 1976)

The Malaysian counselling situation in schools is closely associated with discipline management and the delivery of 'good advice'. Coun-

selling in schools deals with unilateral conflict handling, which is with one party only rather than both parties of the conflict. Persons of power and position decide the enforcement of norms and rules in a counselling situation. This approach is not well received by school-going adolescents. There were a variety of reasons for this approach. The school avoids providing helping relationships for personal problems involving conflict related parties outside the school such as family, community or friends. Secondly, counsellors in Malaysian schools function within a high power-distance cultural environment where the high premium put on paternalism and deference certainly impinge upon the manner in which conflict is handled, using a more top-down regulatory mode.

It was quite a challenge to the Malaysian team to attempt a more collaborative mode of conflict handling where facilitators helped participants explore and negotiate their own values, interests needs and strategies rather than react to those generated by others within an atmosphere sensitive to and conditioned by hierarchy.

The team believed that educational drama could offer a non-threatening entry-point into the traditional school counselling arena and the medium of creative arts could give young people an opportunity to locate, investigate and negotiate a personal topography of conflict in a manner which is emancipating and empowering and yet non-confrontational. These factors strengthened the case for the introduction of a conflict literacy instrument tailored to suit the Malaysian school situation. The Malaysian team was interested to develop conflict learning for adolescents that was more dialogical and democratic, one that was based on volunteerism, character building and relationship building.

Due to the bureaucratic and collectivist perceptions of the educational establishment, there was a tendency in Malaysian schools to view the DRACON experiments in creative conflict exploration as being beyond the structures of common educational practice.

5.3 Research methodology - the three Malaysian studies

Aim

The focus of the three Malaysian research studies was to examine the potential of specific multi-arts exercises used strategically as intervention tools within the framework of process-orientated educational drama to explicate conflict among school-going adolescents.

The following leading questions directed the inquiry process on the compatibility of educational drama models and conflict handling models and also the potential of multi-arts as a mode of conflict exploration in the Malaysian school context:

- Do specific procedures in process orientated creative arts (e.g. warm-up, text analysis, composition, presentation) coincide with some specific procedures in conflict resolution (e.g. alliance-building, disclosure, mapping and ventilation of conflict)?

- Which arts exercises may best serve as intervention tools in the process of conflict exploration? Are there specific tools for specific functions?

- What are the effects of the creative arts process on the affective/cognitive attitudes of the participants towards their own conflicts?

- What are the personal responses of the adolescent participants, school counsellors and the artist-facilitators to this creative-arts approach?

- What are the appropriate conditions for the creative-arts process with respect to procedure, cultural adaptations, setting or context and target group?

Action research methodology

Since the exploration and mapping of conflict was to take place through the experiential or action-orientated process of creative arts, the Malaysian study opted for action research, a reflection method that is more holistic than categorical. A Malaysian team consisting of an educational drama practitioner as team leader, a researcher from the field of conflict handling and four artists (a dancer, a musician, a visual artist

and a dramatist) as interventionists or artist-facilitators, undertook a formal, collaborative research process.

This participatory form of action research called for the testing of creative arts exercises in the field, as well as data collection in the form of reflective writing from all participants, i.e. researcher, artist-facilitators and the adolescent sample. Data collection would centre on recording the 'meanings' created by participants in the creative arts process and the 'meanings' created by the researcher as he witnesses this process.

Qualitative enquiry: Consonant with the focus of our enquiry, the process of 'reflective practice' (Schön, 1987:4) was chosen to investigate the issue of creative conflict handling in an educational drama setting. Schön suggests that competent practitioners 'reflect-in-action' when confronted with indeterminate situations by improvising creative problem solving on the spot, after which they might 'reflect-on-action'. The latter refers to thinking about, discussing and analysing one's practice in order to plan improved action, which is in turn executed and monitored.

In Research Cycle 1 and 2, artist-facilitators were involved in the process of making art with the participants in the field using artistic techniques. Through a heuristic-like process they attempted to test if specific procedures in process orientated creative arts coincided with specific procedures in conflict handling. The researcher also served simultaneously as a conflict mediator on the team to guide on matters relating to conflict handling procedures and concepts.

The artist-facilitators acting as co-researchers, used an autobiographical mode of recording. After carrying out creative projects with the target population of adolescents, they wrote descriptively about their experience, documenting the procedure, specific exercises used, expected and actual response, problems encountered and personal conclusions on the process. The product from this research mode was a thick description of the journey of the research by artist-facilitators and a documentation of case studies.

The researcher was involved in open observation, qualitative data gathering, debriefing and analysis. Throughout the three cycles of the action research, the researcher used a multi-modal approach to data gathering, relying on personal knowledge, analysis of the creative process, cues from non-verbal signals, expressive variations in the process

266

of creating art works and discernible patterns arising from process and product. The researcher recorded meanings and intuitive feelings and new ideas as they emerged and added this information to what was already known by him. From the analysis of this data the researcher ultimately attempted to highlight some fundamental aspects of process orientated creative-arts and its potential contribution to conflict exploration.

Educational drama research invites its participants to reflect on their journey, that is, the art-making process. Drawing from personal construct theory, Harri-Augstein and Thomas (1991: 87) refers to this reflection process as mirroring. By reflecting on the construction process, on improvised problem solving and the artistic outcomes, understanding emerges of one's own processes and that of others. This process calls for the all participants (researchers, facilitators and adolescent participants) to address personal and group tensions and contradictions while creating art. It also calls for all participants to subject their present assumptions and beliefs to experimental action.

Contrary to research based on quantification and then generalisation; the artists' reflective enquiry looks for individuality, the unique case rather than the general condition. The researcher then generalises on these case studies. As such the creative model formulated cannot be viewed as universally applicable, but is relevant to the particular Malaysian context. Good cases would expose both the solutions and the mistakes or reservations that make up the reflexive journey.

Quantitative enquiry: Although quantitative research was viewed as too technical and rationalist to deal with meanings created through the senses, quantitative methods were used in Research Cycle 2 to measure and categorise objectively the impact of 'meanings made by these artistic intervention modes' upon the adolescent participants. Quantitative inquiry was carried out by a clinical psychologist who used questionnaires and an open-ended survey to collect data. It must be stressed that the purpose of this was merely as a reinforcement of subjective data collected by the observer/researcher.

5.3.1   An exploration of creative arts exercises and processes

Design of Research Cycle 1

Research Cycle 1 in 1995 focused on surveying creative arts exercises and processes used in an educational theatre program entitled *Teater Muda*[2] and how it might relate to conflict handling. The main task put to the research team was to develop a procedure to engage students in the exploration of conflict using the process orientated framework of the existing educational theatre program. The following areas of concern were studied:

- Can conflict be explored through creative movement, visual arts and drama?

- Can a formalised creative arts procedure be applied as a conflict exploration procedure?

- What intervention strategies and techniques are used to engage the students in conflict exploration?

- How do students deal with their real conflicts using the arts?

The aim was to observe if process orientated creative arts might be potentially used as an indirect intervention procedure in conflict exploration. The researcher basically observed drama, music, movement and visual arts techniques used by artist-facilitators to elicit information and negotiate action related to conflict. Two consultants (in the theatre and conflict field) were involved in external auditing and providing suggestions for new action plans in relation to theoretical considerations and further research.

 The artist-facilitators worked with a small focus group of children on social/personal conflict issues arising in the contexts of home, school and leisure. The sample group consisted of 20 children of mixed-gender, aged 10-16 years. The multi-ethnic sample group, which ranged from working class to upper middle class were from an urban area. The children volunteered as participants in the *Teater Muda* program. However, in this particular module of *Teater Muda*, creative arts

---

[2] *Teater Muda* is basically a creative arts program for young people that emphasises spontaneous process and artistic product. Both process and product are viewed as a continuum, so that making good art means learning to comprehend and communicate content (in this case, conflict situations) effectively. *Teater Muda* incorporates aesthetic and social learning.

exercises were used as a tool to explore and map the conflicts of these young participants.

Initially the 20 subjects were exposed to all the art forms to provide them with vocabulary and artistic skills for expression and communication. Participants could later choose one particular medium of art to explore and present their conflict. The following creative arts procedure was executed sequentially over 6 months, in two 3-hour sessions every weekend:

- Building a working context.
- Building vocabulary and skills in the language of art.
- Disclosure of a conflict situation.
- Articulation of emotion and behaviour related to conflict via the arts.
- Mapping the conflict journey from one emotional state to another.
- Communicating i.e. re-presenting the problem in performance.
- Feedback/Evaluation.

To build a working context of co-operation and trust, we executed exercises comprising of warm-ups, ice-beakers, and interactive and collaborative games, following which the young participants were introduced to vocabulary and skills in the areas of movement, visual arts, sound and drama. A range of techniques from each of the art forms was used sometimes separately and sometimes in conjunction with each other to achieve self-disclosure of conflicts. These included, improvisation, memory recall, observation, imaging, brainstorming, simulation, role-play, storyboard, problem posing and problem solving.

The young participants moved on to articulate the emotions related to their conflict, using object manipulation and aural, physical, dramatic and visual exaggeration or abstraction to express strong emotions. In the next stage, we used composition skills such as playwriting, choreography, directing and art-pieces to re-conceptualise and map either fragments or the whole of individual/group conflicts.

Finally participants incorporated conflicts that had the potential to be generalised into a joint presentation. Using physicalisation, dance, masks, costumes, sets and props etc., aspects of the conflict such as issues, characters, motivations, contexts, feelings, perceptions and actions were explored and dramatised.

Results of Research Cycle 1

The young participants responded well to the primacy of artistic mediums such as movement, sound, dramatisation and manipulation of 3-dimensional objects as new vocabulary. Younger children aged 10-13 years were able to release themselves better physically and emotionally than the 14-16 year olds who were concerned with 'self-image'. From these general medium, participants moved to the more discrete medium of dance, music, play building, the design and construction of sets, costumes and prop to depict dramatic conflict situations.

The use of multi-arts vocabulary opened up a large range of communication mediums (besides language) for the participants to articulate their emotions and behaviour. For example, when representing real conflicts that occurred in a school context, participants communicated by using detailed character dances to reveal attitudes, atmospheric music and sounds to paint moods, and dramatic manipulation of sets and props to show emotion and tension as described in the final presentation below.

We also integrated the use of the arts significantly in the different segments of the procedure, from disclosure of conflict to communication of the conflict and its components (content, parties, feelings and attitudes). As an example, young participants chose comic storyboard to narrate the development of events in the schools conflict, body sculpture to display the attitudes of parties in conflict, and manipulation of objects, exaggerated movement as well as percussive sounds to displace their emotions or to express the intensity of their emotions.

It seems that the adaptation of the procedure for play building to conflict exploration worked quite well. All play building is basically concerned with the reconstruction of conflict situations and the components of conflict. Although the procedure when adapted for conflict exploration mirrored the current status of the conflict (latent, emerging or manifest) it did not attempt to transform the real conflict by resolving issues. Instead it allowed the real conflict to spiral using fiction to bring it to a conclusion.

When working with real-life conflicts, participants were motivated to go beyond the stereotype and to explore the tense relationships between characters, in depth. This was in sharp contrast to the stock situations, stock characters and melodramatic emotions enacted by the participants when presenting imaginary conflicts in a fictional context.

Younger children were quite comfortable with 'fragmented' articulation of their conflict situation while the older group were more concerned with the logic of cause-and-effect. Both groups displayed an aversion to dealing with their emotions directly in a confrontational manner. They opted for various forms of displacement by using:

1. an object as a focus of strong emotions,

2. aural, physical, visual or dramatic exaggeration,

3. abstraction in the form of symbolic visuals or movements.

This could be related to the general Malaysian cultural tendency to avoid direct confrontation of emotions or persons in conflict situations.

Certain strategies and techniques used in the process of eliciting creativity, worked better than others. The dance facilitator discovered that task-orientated or problem-solving methods were more successful than demonstration in engaging the young participants in the vocabulary building process. Demonstration, e.g. how to use the limbs for expression, only encouraged imitation. Open-ended tasks e.g. find five exaggerated means to express emotions with the limbs, encouraged subjects to interpret the task more openly and to explore action more creatively.

Spontaneous exercises were able to harmonise the subconscious and the conscious feelings. This was obvious from the depth of expression achieved in some exercises such as newspaper sculptures, object manipulation, and body sculpting. In newspaper sculptures, participants, in an intensely quiet atmosphere, used memory recall to picture the details of their conflict situation then spontaneously proceeded to tear, twist, roll and crush piles of newspaper to create a sculpture to express their deep emotional state.

The ability to elicit information spontaneously however often depended on the skill of the facilitator to be able to draw upon, adapt or devise appropriate techniques that engaged the participant on cognitive, intuitive and emotional levels simultaneously. In this first phase of the research facilitators were sometimes insufficiently prepared or unskilled in the use of spontaneous techniques. Artist-facilitators sometimes faced difficulty in applying 'reflection-in-action' techniques such as verbal side-coaching or improvisation during a physical exercise to help the young participants negotiate an intense or difficult situation

smoothly, or to change the direction of a planned but unsuccessful exercise.

The last step of the educational theatre program showcased work-in-progress and finished creative pieces by participants. In articulating their school conflicts, their chosen medium was a dramatically structured movement performance incorporating music and manipulation of objects depicting a day in the classroom that traced their various conflicts as a student collective. The issues included the trauma of waking up late for school, struggling with heavy schoolbags, punishment by prefects, dealing with bullies, the wrath of the teacher, apprehensions of a new student, the tension of exams etc. In this fictionalised narrative dance, characters used highly exaggerated and repetitive signature movements and gestures (such as dragging feet, pointing, falling etc) to express their status, attitudes and emotional states. Objects such as desks were constantly manipulated and rearranged in the dance to depict the atmosphere of chaos, confusion or rigidity, which plagued the classroom in different conflict situations. Characters also used body sounds (clapping, stamping, slapping body parts) and pulsating music as a powerful way to express emotional states such as fear, anxiety, frustration etc. The showcasing of this creative piece using the metaphoric language of art provided a safe yet powerful way of projecting and ventilating their experiences of conflict situations in school.

While participants found it difficult to articulate verbally their understanding of the conflict in the final question-and-answer session, their engagement in the reconstruction and re-presentation of the shared conflict in an artistic presentation disclosed their grasp of the components of conflict clearly enough.

Conclusions of Research Cycle 1

Research Cycle 1 revealed effective learning of conflict handling constructs via the overlapping of dramatic tension and real tensions when conflict is re-presented in educational theatre. The successful integration of the arts in the different segments of the procedure, from disclosure of conflict to communication of the conflict indicated that a multiarts approach might be more advantageous than a single arts approach when dealing with the intricacies of different conflict components.

Pedagogically, intervention styles that were directional, facilitative or spontaneous, empowered the young participants to make their own inquiry into conflict and to be informed by their own making (experien-

tial learning). The problem-solving approach also encouraged young subjects to inquire deeper, and motivated them to process information. These intervention styles seemed better able to engage young participants as opposed to instructional or demonstrative intervention styles used in conventional counselling or conflict handling.

The spontaneous displacement and articulation of intense emotions through physical enactment and other artistic modes also allowed the 'affect' (inner unexpressed feelings) to break through consciousness and become realised. This sets up a dialectical dynamic between cognition and affect and allows for a harmonising between the subconscious and conscious. This dynamic is lacking in formal conflict handling which is limited to verbal conversation where focus on the affective is repressed.

The conflict researcher decided that in the next research cycle should focus on the task of extrapolating conflict handling components from dichotomised realities of the metaphorical/actual, the symbolic/meant, narrated time/real time, the acted space/experienced space and the content/context. In short, how can we use fiction to reflect on reality in formal conflict handling?

Research Cycle 1 raised several questions that helped to frame the research problem in Research Cycle 2. Were these two models of presentation (educational drama and conflict handling) compatible? The structure and dynamics of the 'procedure' in this educational drama program seemed to parallel the structure of certain problem-solving counselling models. If the procedure was compatible how could it be adapted into conflict handling structures and how could this benefit conflict handling? How much weight should conflict handling give to creative-arts techniques? How does one create anchor points and construct building blocks with this procedure and these techniques?

5.3.2 Design and testing of a creative-arts procedure for conflict exploration.

Research Cycle 2 carried out in 1996 was composed of a qualitative as well as a quantitative enquiry, both of which are documented below. The aim of Research Cycle 2 was to test for improved methods of conflict exploration modes using creative arts, and to attempt to integrate

process-orientated creative arts into a conflict-handling model. This phase sought several improvements over Research Cycle 1:

- To discover the potential use of specific creative arts exercises in building specific conflict handling skills.
- To measure the effectiveness of the creative process on the participants' perceptions of their conflict and of the 'other' party.
- To introduce an alternative approach to conflict handling within the school system.

Design of qualitative enquiry

The sample population consisted of 16-year-old teenagers from three major ethnic groups mostly from low-income and lower middle-income group. A total of 60 students participated; 20 from an all-boys school, 20 from an all-girls school and 20 from a mixed gender national school in Penang state.

All adolescent participants in the three schools were asked (using an open-ended questionnaire) to identify for themselves if they had a conflict. Those who identified positive were briefed on the research i.e. a creative arts approach to exploring their conflicts. They were given a choice to participate or to withdraw.

Two student counsellors from each of the three schools were invited to observe the project and to provide feedback. Based on the assessment of the student counsellors' response to the research project, the research team hoped to follow up with short-term training for counsellors to provide them with an expanded vocabulary of intervention.

The design in this enquiry focused on studying the compatibility of process orientated creative arts and conflict handling so as to be able to formulate an analytical framework based on the link between structured reality and social reality.

The procedure used in Research Cycle 1 was replicated albeit with more detail and participants were evaluated several times during the procedure. Another difference was that participants were not allowed to incorporate fiction in the presentation phase as in Research Cycle 1.

The research concluded with an evaluation by all participants (subjects and artist-facilitators) on the efficacy of the multi-arts approach. Group debriefing and evaluation sessions were carried out in an informal manner to gauge the impact of the creative arts workshops on their

attitude to their conflict situation. Consistent with the democratic methods used, facilitators also took the opportunity to share information about the strengths and failings of their fellow facilitators and opened themselves to self-scrutiny and group feedback.

Research Cycle 2 was divided into two parts. The first session was a skill-teaching workshop conducted over two days on the sample group from each school. Creative arts such as drama, visual arts, dance and music were introduced to all the adolescent participants as mediums of expression and communication. The second session was a conflict exploration workshop also conducted over two days where participants were asked to choose any one or a combination of mediums to explore their conflicts.

Skill teaching workshop: Skill teaching was aimed at developing a vocabulary of verbal and non-verbal expressive skills. The workshop was structured to begin with warm-ups, introduction of the basic vocabulary of specific art forms, and how to combine the vocabulary to compose a whole picture.

The skill-teaching workshop comprised of sequential exercises where each exercise was matched to certain objectives. For example, initial warm up exercises such as breathing helped the participants to develop body awareness and allowed the facilitator to gain access to the level of subjects' comfort/discomfort zones.

Adolescent participants were then schooled in the expressive potential of different art forms e.g. movement exercises such as 'mirroring' and 'flocking' were used to explore power relations, percussion was used to express mood and feelings, line embellishment in comic drawing to elaborate on feelings and reactions of a character.

The segment on composition was aimed at teaching how an art form could be used to structure, give context and re-present dramatic content. This mapping of the narrative came to light in the skill-teaching workshop with exercises like music and lyric composition, story telling, scripting, postcard drama and forum theatre and choreography. The adolescent participants were finally acquainted with preparation, rehearsal and performance routines.

Conflict exploration workshop: The workshop commenced with sensitising the adolescent participants to the workshop philosophy and methodology. The artist-facilitator explained to the sample population that they were free to identify the context of their own problem situa-

tions and determined what values, needs or interests were involved in relation to the conflict and the feelings that were triggered as a result. Emphasis was placed on what they perceived as the central theme of their conflict and the dynamics of its escalation

The exploration workshops began with warm-ups enhancing group cohesion amongst participants and as a trust and confidence building platform.

Secondly, to help adolescent participants with problem identification, techniques such as memory recall, writing lyrics, body portraits and comic images were used. To help them sequence the course of their conflict, comic storyboard, dramatization and story telling were employed as diagnostic tools.

Exercises employing projective and modelling techniques such as sculpturing with newspaper, movement with props and providing thought bubbles for comic images were used to explore the intra-personal dimensions of the conflict such as feelings and attitudes. Psycho-dramatic techniques such as presenting the self as protagonist/antagonist in drama and dance were used to disclose and elaborate on the behaviour of protagonist/antagonist during the conflict. Improvisation, 'postcard drama', 'joint scripting' and 'duet movements' provided the opportunity to ascertain and explain the interpersonal dimensions of the conflict.

Finally participants composed and presented short works. These presentations were intended as a form of ventilation and were also aimed at exposing adolescent participants to the general contours of conflict topographies of each individual case. Participants were given the opportunity to reflect upon the nature and state of conflict generating situations and on their positions as actors in the conflict.

The exercises introduced in the exploration workshop also exposed participants to how composition and choreography could be used to highlight theme, character and mood.

Results of qualitative enquiry in Research Cycle 2

The results below comment on the procedure used in exploring conflict via the creative arts and the various techniques or strategies employed along the way as intervention tools. The results highlight the efficacy of different art mediums and the applicability and potential of specific arts exercises as intervention tools in conflict exploration (see Appendix 1).

276

Arts Exercises as tools for Warm-up and Alliance building: The artist facilitators used many common warm-up and relationship building exercises. The exercises routinely used for vocabulary building, sensitivity training and ensemble building in drama and movement, proved to be useful as preparation for the conflict exploration process and skills training in conflict handling. The exercises brought to light the reality of the body and its connections to thoughts, emotions and feelings which in terms of conflict relate to inventory building i.e. the mental and emotional baggage that one carries around with oneself and its physical manifestations. The application of these exercises to conflict handling training is briefly documented in table form (see Appendix 1).

Arts exercises as intervention tools for disclosure, articulation and ventilation of conflict: The sample group who participated in the skills workshop had reduced significantly from 60 to 34 when the conflict exploration workshop began, and to 26 by the second day of the conflict exploration workshop. One reason for this was that a number of participants were unwilling to explore their conflicts. It can only be speculated that this was perhaps due to discomfort or fear of exploring deeper or doubts as to where it was all heading.

From the table below it can be observed that the most popular medium for conflict exploration chosen by the 34 subjects was visual arts followed by drama. Music was less popular and movement the least popular with adolescents.

Table 5.2. Participant's choice of creative arts in conflict exploration workshop

Participants		Visual Arts		Music	Movement		Dramatisation	
Male School	15	*7	+5M	*6M	*1	+2 M	*1	+2M
Female School	11	*6	+1F	*1F		+2 F	*4F	
Mixed School	8	*1M	+1M	*1M		+2 F	*2F,	+2M
		*3F		*1F				+1F

Note: * Students' first choice of creative arts medium
+ Student's additional choice of mediums

Selected exercises from drama, visual arts, movement and music medium are highlighted below. The application of these exercises to con-

flict handling training is also briefly documented in table form (see Appendix 1).

Dramatic medium: The researcher noted that in introducing story telling, students were allowed to become the 'owner' of their own conflict stories - an important station in the endeavour for empowerment in conflict resolution. This exercise also allowed for problem identification and the identification of the central actors in a conflict process i.e. the protagonist and antagonist.

The drama-facilitator observed that drama enabled participants to present the characters in the conflict with more experiential emotional and psychological depth than was possible in the visual arts. Participants used key words, phrases, gestures, posture, and behaviour to clarify their emotions and situations. Often, they began with a 'still' (solo postcard) that was later activated using improvisation or other means.

'Under-distancing' techniques such as 'memory recall' (private detailed recollection of a conflict) and 'posturing exercises' (recollection and enactment of postures that expressed attitudes and emotions of protagonist and antagonist) helped participants to embody self and the other and the accompanying opinions, values and emotions. Under-distancing means bringing oneself closer to the real experience and over-distancing refers to the separating of oneself from the real experience (Scheff, 1981). 'Over-distancing' was achieved when participants were reminded to use the elements of drama and to use themselves and their lives as basis for drama in the posturing exercises.

Elaboration of feelings, attitude and behaviour of the 'protagonist' (the adolescent himself/herself) were explored in solo and composite improvisations. The researcher commented that these improvisation exercises with body language and minimal text were geared towards enabling the participant to consciously perceive the protagonist and antagonist's reactions to conflict. Depending on the information uncovered the conflict resolution practitioner could safely gauge the intensity of engagement on the conflict spiral and the type of intervention that could be employed in the helping relationship.

Role reversal exercises together with the aid of joint scripting aimed at exploring the dynamics of interaction in the conflicts as well as heightening perception and participant's creative response to conflict situations. In order to ensure that a certain degree of empathy was achieved, role reversal was introduced where the adolescent participant

278

played the 'antagonist' as well. Scripting provided a useful opportunity for participants to uncover information on conflict, such as the escalation process or to explore the relationships in a conflict. This could be done individually (solo-scripting) or in connection with others (joint scripting).

'Postcard drama' was used to share and to present conflict scenarios. Another significant outcome of postcard presentation was that it demonstrated to the students the possibility of using sequencing as a scenario-building tool. Putting together elements of a conflict in succinct choreographed pictures is significant in terms of perception building and reality testing.

Postcard drama exercises facilitated the construction of a storyboard or plot in picture form, which, in terms of a conflict map allowed for a chronological enactment of real-life conflict scenarios. Since role making and distancing and reversal were involved, participants were allowed an insight into what could be termed as subjective and objective image building, a crucial ingredient in conflict resolution with regards to the formation of enemy images.

Forum theatre techniques were skilfully utilised to explore conflicts in private and public space in the context of specific relationship dynamics. The resulting interaction between actors and audience threw open the entire spectrum of the "party dimension" of conflict mapping i.e. the roles and positions of actors. Defining the parties in a conflict may appear at first glance to be self-evident. However, not all actors are visible or are necessarily the main protagonists.

Forum theatre exercises alerted the researcher to the possibility of a multiplicity of roles that actors may take on in a conflict. These included real participants, apparent participants and focal participants, 'advocates' and 'representatives', 'advisors', 'scriptwriters', 'cheerleaders' 'supporters' and the general audience. Forum theatre was an effective conflict exploration tool also in that it sensitises us to the fact that actors move in and out of role - a fact that often leads to changes in the dynamics of a conflict resolution. Besides functioning as a disclosure and context development, forum theatre actively contributed to an alternative avenue for ventilation, information flow, feedback practice and repertoire building.

The drama-facilitator believed that when participants enacted their conflict, they seemed to derive emotional satisfaction which may have

served as a form of ventilation. This level of satisfaction was related to the level of 'truthfulness' achieved even in the most modest gestures. Some participants opted for individual or duet exploration of their conflict while others preferred their conflicts to be explored within the shared context of forum theatre.

The drama facilitator added that exploration of the antagonist was difficult for participants and was met with much resistance. It is normally difficult for the protagonist to examine an issue from the antagonist's point of view, and in this circumstance it was exacerbated by asymmetric conflicts where one party (parent, teacher or principal) was in a more powerful position. In Malaysia, high power distance does not leave much room for negotiation in conflict situations and so the protagonist might see no point in empathising with the antagonist as he/she is in a powerless position anyway.

Visual arts medium: The researcher reported that comic drawings served as an excellent projective technique where the comic characters represented the self and other parties. The narrative approach of the comic strip allowed for a sequential recall of the conflict journey from inciting incident to escalation. The art of using lines within single frames to exaggerate action and feelings, helped participants elaborate on the attitude and the behaviour of conflict parties. Thought bubbles succinctly articulated thoughts and feelings of the protagonist. This helped the participant in conflict to be aware of his/her own mind. Guided work on comic strips could help participants look beyond problem identification into decision-making and possible solutions.

The feedback of the visual arts facilitator tallied with that of the researcher that the most popular and comfortable form for most participants was comic drawing because of familiarity with the form. It was useful in both the identification and amplification phases. The frame-by-frame sequencing of events, the identification of main characters and their dominant feelings provided detailed information on the conflict. Participants felt safe drawing for themselves. Elaboration on incidences, amplification of feelings and visualisation of different characters' perspectives were also clearly illustrated through word bubbles or picture bubbles emanating from a single frame.

'Newspaper sculptures' according to the researcher's observation was another projective technique, which bordered on the therapeutic. Adolescent participants sometimes used the process of tearing, crushing folding to vent suppressed emotions and the process of sculpturing pa-

280

per to express their perceptions of the conflict. While some created symbolic sculptures, others created more literal images and scenarios with the newspaper. The visual arts facilitator commented that although newspaper sculpture was not as popular with participants, the few who used this form experienced a sort of catharsis through intra-personal disclosure, displacement and ventilation of negative feelings.

'Body portrait' where a tracing of the body outline (in a preferred posture) filled with icons/symbols depicting needs, fears, desires, interests makes for a very private diary where the participant is willing to disclose part of self, or subconsciously discloses self image. The researcher suggested that this exercise could also be used consciously to brainstorm and prioritise areas of confusion. However the artist-facilitator reported that body portraits were least subscribed to. Perhaps its holistic approach of analysing the problem within a live-sized tracing of the body provides too wide a scope for detailed exploration of conflict. In the skill-teaching workshop, participants enjoyed this exercise in brainstorming the self, yet found it extremely time-consuming.

Creative movement medium: In creative movement, body and feelings were seen to relate to space and energy in the contact of partner and group work. Exercises thought to be relevant for conflict exploration included spontaneous improvisation and solo and duet sequences and group choreography.

Participants initially underwent a memory recall exercise which then lead to the dramatisation of the scene recalled either in solo, duet or group using spontaneous improvised movement. In terms of conflict exploration, the movement-facilitator viewed this as problem identification and emotional ventilation.

To encourage empathy, the participants were asked to create a solo sequence as the antagonist and later a duet featuring both protagonist and antagonist, but, from the antagonist point of view. The movement facilitator believed that creating a solo sequence featuring the protagonist and later a duet sequence featuring both protagonist and antagonist, helped participants become aware of the dynamics of interaction.

The observer-researcher concluded that conflict exploration could be dramatically enhanced by using creative movement exercises that provides for the point of view and all accompanying emotions to be changed within the conflict event. In a rationalistic problem solving approach to conflict handling one seldom sees or experiences the par-

ticipant switching from protagonist to antagonist, from conflict core to conflict periphery.

The final phase involved the re-choreographing of an entire scene highlighting the beginning, middle and end of the conflict. Keeping the pitfalls of linear conflict projections in mind, the researcher-observer still argued for the use of this technique in that it permits the fluid movement along a conflict spiral with purposefully punctuated stops for microanalysis and in-depth exploration. Choreography sessions such as these might prove to be a useful method in structuring "play-back" moments in an evolving or matured conflict scenario.

The creative dance segment experienced the most problems in terms of participants' reluctance to move due to preconceptions about 'dance' and also cultural inhibitions, where the Malaysian adolescent was reluctant to use his/her body too overtly to express themselves. The movement-facilitator reported encountering difficulty with the dance medium. When participants referred back to their emotions from the conflict situation to create movement, they often dramatised their conflicts using mime. Participants, she reports, lacked familiarity with movement vocabulary, had little trust in their bodies, and were often dominated by the thinking process. They were unable to express their true and hidden emotions via intuitive movements because of feelings of uncertainty, insecurity and self-consciousness. Their muscular and skeletal actions were controlled and inhibited by the knowledge that they must 'dance' to a learned style.

The facilitator attempted to explore more relevant entry points to conflict exploration than just resorting to 'creative dance'. As an example she found it more relevant to guide participants to explore movement first and later discuss the emotions experienced during the movement exploration. Alternatively the facilitator asked the participants to select intuitive movements, which were 'interpretations' of their emotions, and also allow intuition to interpret the emotion (in abstract movement) over space and time. Without the knowledge of learnt movement vocabulary, participants used more naturalistic or pedestrian gestures or stylised movements as their intuitive movement. Some of them managed to journey through this movement to a moment of truth, which the facilitator described as self-fulfilling for the participant.

Music medium: The researcher and music-facilitator both observed that the lyric writing and composition exercises were useful aids in identifying problems, characters and moods. The music-facilitator

noted that in the lyrics, hazy references and imagery provided a distancing that allowed for the release of 'secret' or private information. Extended pleas, advice or blame was often voiced through repetition of phrases and seemed to serve as a means of amplification as well. However, she added that she put the participants through a comic drawing session followed by a rewriting of the lyrics to obtain more detailed information on the conflict

Short rhythmic musical pieces based on key words and phrases were introduced to express specific emotions arising from problems faced at home or at school. This was done via group composition. The feelings were expressed through manipulation of the basic elements of tone, pitch, rhythm, dynamics and tempo on instruments and through vocalisation. Added to these were additional exercises geared to solicit expression of emotions through sung phrases superimposed over rhythmic patterns played on instruments. The music-facilitator commented that many participants treated playing music as ventilation, where feelings and emotions were displaced via instruments and voice. It was clear that they felt more comfortable resorting to music that they were familiar with such as pop songs and rap, and local forms of verse *dikir barat, boria, pantun* and *sajak* .

The researcher observed that since a group of young students from one particular school took very easily to presenting their problems through music, the idea of a musically translated expose of conflict scenarios might be potentially developed. He however forewarns that unless participants have a natural or learnt predisposition to this medium, working through music could prove to be very frustrating if not counter productive. As a solution to this the conflict resolution practitioners might want to experiment with key words and phrases superimposed on taped music of their choice.

Reflections of the school counsellors on the creative arts approach

Six counsellors responded to the questionnaire with all (but one) having been observers at all the creative arts sessions. They cited their reasons for volunteering as observers as wanting to explore other methods of communication with students, and techniques that could increase student's motivation levels and impact on development of the students especially 'in the social and emotional aspects'.

Counsellors were unanimous in their praise for the artist-facilitators whom they felt had impressive skills, were committed and efficient.

The majority of observing counsellors expressed that although artist-facilitators had a good rapport with the adolescent participants, they seemed initially reluctant, shy, defensive and hesitant of the workshop but their involvement grew as the sessions progressed. This suggests that warm-up exercises aimed at relationship building and trust between participants and facilitator needs to be emphasised as much as relationship building and trust among the participants themselves.

Although all teachers found the activities relevant to application in school situation, two respondents suggested that the activities needed to be adapted, one to the need of the specific school and another to gender suitability. Exercises they thought could specifically be used in their limited counselling premises included:

- Visual arts for individual counselling.
- Drama for group and peer counselling.
- Drama for training peer counsellors.

They saw the warm-ups and icebreakers as suitable bonding exercises in motivational courses. Teachers however could not relate well to the music and movement components, which interestingly are two areas of art practically absent from the formal/informal curriculum.

Problems arising from the qualitative enquiry in Research Cycle 2

When moving from the skill-training workshop to the conflict-handling workshop, the research team were confronted by a significant drop in participants. This problem could possibly have been resolved to an extent by taking more time to create an atmosphere of safety and trust with participants before moving into disclosure. Unfortunately, the conflict exploration workshop was too compressed.

There were ethical and artistic questions raised in relation to the structure of the interface between process drama procedure and the conflict exploration procedure. Any exploration of real experiences that may occur in process must be brought to proper closure. However, Research Cycle 2 dealt only with exploration of the real conflict up to the point of ventilation. Despite undergoing a debriefing and evaluation of the process and being provided with a list of counsellors and psychologists, closure was inadequate. Although the workshop succeeded in helping the participants to define their problem and ventilate their emotions, it failed to plan proper closure for the surfaced conflict. Artist-

284

facilitators expressed their discomfort about leaving the participants in a vulnerable and imbalanced position.

In retrospect the research team felt that there was an imbalance between the 'under-distancing' and 'over-distancing' techniques used to explore the conflicts, resulting in a failure to maintain aesthetic distance. Aesthetic distance is achieved when the individual manages to simultaneously maintain closeness and separateness to the experience and re-experience emotions but not be overwhelmed by them (Bullough, 1964). In process drama, aesthetic distance can be maintained by placing the real life experience within a fictional context. The provision in the procedure of Research Cycle 1, which allowed participants to play out their conflict in a fictional context in the final presentation, was more successful in achieving aesthetic distance. In Research Cycle two participants stopped at the exploration and ventilation of real feelings related to conflict, but were not led to deal with the conflict through fiction.

The artist-facilitators were insufficiently briefed on their role and responsibility in relation to conflict handling. While they succeeded in engaging the adolescent participant in disclosure, exploration and ventilation of emotions, they were not briefed on how to work on closure after dealing with these emotions. The conflict-handling workshop became uncomfortable at some points for the artists when disclosure by participants became intense or very personal. Facilitators felt uneasy about executing what seemed to be just 'a part' of a process and felt constrained by the conflict-exploration framework of the research, a discipline that they were not familiar with.

The artists felt unsure about where to draw the line so as not to drift into the area of therapy and they also expressed discomfort at having to subject their artistry as a tool in a process akin to art/drama therapy or counselling. They felt that the direction of their artistic explorations was limited by the lack of artistic vocabulary of the participants especially in the mediums of creative movement and music and also by the conflict handling agenda of exploration of real conflict only, which prevented them from moving into fiction.

The problems stemmed mainly from the design of the action research, which focused on the researchers' limited agenda and failed to take into consideration the participants' and artists facilitators needs and the creative arts process as a whole. Artist facilitators should have been briefed on conflict handling procedures, and thereafter called upon

to be involved in the design of the research. Similarly, participant's expectations should have been ascertained and given consideration in the design phase. Finally, to be true to the creative arts process, the procedure of Research Cycle 2 should have been designed beyond exploration of context and content to accommodate a representation of the information gathered in a fictional context.

Nevertheless, we realised that the perceived gap between conventional conflict work and the creative arts only existed out of ignorance or lack of exposure. Both sides were able to discover that they were actually talking about a shared language, using key words, phrases, gestures, postures and behaviour to clarify emotions and situations. Given the proper exposure and training all parties could use a combination of their 'skills language' to interchangeably investigate, identify and explore context and content of conflicts.

Design of quantitative enquiry in Research Cycle 2

Initially a definition and meaning of the term 'conflict' as perceived by the Malaysian adolescent was attempted, using a survey questionnaire. Conflict 'per se' is not translatable into any single term in the primary Malaysian languages. It is described according to the situation and the problem at hand, often using language that describes the feelings aroused in persons in conflict. This preliminary study carried out with 70 sixteen-year-old adolescents, settled on the functional definition of conflict as 'a composite of feelings' experienced while in a conflict situation.

In Research Cycle 2, only 26 sixteen-year-old adolescents from the total sample population of 60 were involved in the quantitative enquiry. They consisted of 6 females from an all-girls school, 6 females and 2 males from a mixed gender school and 12 males from an all-boys school who underwent the conflict exploration workshop. The sample was multi-ethnic and from working class backgrounds.

A quantitative enquiry conducted by a clinical psychologist was worked into the procedure of the qualitative enquiry. Using the functional definition of conflict as perceived by the adolescent participants, the quantitative investigation proceeded to look for significant changes in the 'composite of feelings' related to participants' conflicts before, during and after they explored their conflict using creative arts.

In trying to make the connection between aesthetic and psychological processes, the investigator conceptualised his research question as 'what effect does the creative process have upon the conflict of the subjects?' In formulating this question, the investigator focused only on the attitude aspect of conflict as subjectively perceived by the participants via their feelings. Feelings related to the participants' conflict situation were measured on a rating scale. At regular intervals before during and after the creative process of intervention, participants were asked to record feelings related to their conflict situation. A statistical analysis of the data was made available together with the results of a subjective questionnaire, intended to uncover change in modes of thought and feeling rather than specific behaviour.

Participants were asked to recount a current conflict and to report feelings related to the conflict, the intensity of each feeling and level of understanding of their conflict while engaged in the one week conflict exploration workshop, changes in the participant's feelings towards the conflict and changes in their understanding of the conflict were measured.

The overall generalised intensity of their conflict was derived from a composite score on the reported intensities of each feeling, which was recorded prior to creative arts process (Time 1), after the creative arts process (Time 2) and after the evaluation process (Time 3).

Time 1 Questionnaire – Before the conflict exploration workshop, subjects were presented with a form, which requested them to report a current conflict situation, feelings related to it and their level of understanding of the conflict situation

Time 2 Questionnaire – After subjects had selected one or more of the creative arts mediums and used the medium to explore their conflict, they were presented with a form to report on the current status of their feelings, the intensity of each feeling and their level of understanding of the conflict.

Summary Stage Questionnaire – Prior to termination subjects were administered a series of open-ended questions. This reflective component requested subjective answers on participants' choice/opinion of important elements in the workshop and the effect these had on their conflict situation and on themselves. In addition, subjects were asked to evaluate subjectively changes in intensity of feelings and perceived level of understanding of the conflict.

Time 3 Questionnaire – After the summary stage exercise, subjects were required to fill in a form reporting on the current status of their feelings, the intensity of each feeling and their level of understanding of the conflict.

It was hypothesised that the means between Time 1 and Time 2 would be expected to show an increase in the exploration workshop which deals with identifying the conflict issues and tracing the course of the conflict, magnifying attitudes and emotions. It was also hypothesised that the means between Time 1 and Time 3 would record a decrease as subjects' intensities of feelings related to the conflict would drop as their understanding of the conflict and the ability to express these feelings through the arts mediums increased.

Results of quantitative enquiry in Research Cycle 2

It was hypothesized that the results would show an increase between phases Time 1 and Time 2 since this phase dealt with identification of conflict, magnification and intensification. However, the results went in the other direction. This could be due to the fact that in personal reports to facilitators, some subjects stated they were unable to identify with the feelings and the needs of the antagonist. Another explanation is that identification, magnification and intensification might in itself be therapeutic, i.e. it assists in ventilating feelings resulting in a decrease of the intensity levels of feelings related to conflict.

Table 5.3. Changes in intensity of feeling across time

Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
6.41	5.75	4.50

As can be seen from the table there was a highly significant decrease in self-reported intensities of feelings between Time 1 and Time 3, after subjects combined the creative arts process with evaluation (i.e. the Summary Stage Questionnaire).

This reflective component of evaluation or debriefing combined with the creative arts seems more effective than simple using the creative arts alone as a tool. However the decrease in intensity of feelings here could also be due to intra-personal changes attributed to attitude

changes, conflict evaluation changes or other developmental changes not addressed in this project.

A comparison of Test 2 and Test 3 also indicated a decrease in intensities of feelings. This clarifies that the combination of creative arts and the summary questionnaire is more effective together than simply using the creative arts alone for conflict handling. However since the qualitative summary questionnaire (reflective component) cannot exist without the practical workshop component, we can say that the creative arts experience seems to have much more impact when reflected upon. Since as a matter of principle, the creative arts as used in process orientated models necessarily involves an evaluation component, the results confirm the view that a 'complete process' of creative arts used as a tool for conflict exploration can be significant.

No statistically significant changes were recorded in subjects' understanding of their own feelings and their ability to express their feelings. Although differences were anticipated, no differences were found between the sexes in changes in intensity of feelings or in their levels of understanding of conflict. The results suggest that males and females were equal to the tasks demanded by the creative arts process in terms of applying skills learnt to conflict exploration. Perhaps the interest and motivation of the volunteer participants who remained through to the end of the project masked inherent sex-differences in the normal population.

We hypothesised that intensity of feelings and levels of understanding of conflict would be negatively correlated, but no such statistical correlation was found. When we inspected the participants' Summary Stage questionnaire we found the expected strong negative correlation change between 'intensity of feeling' and 'understanding of conflict'. Most subjects reported that they felt a significant decrease in conflict feelings and were able to better understand their conflict.

Results of Summary stage Questionaire in Research Cycle 2

At the completion of the conflict exploration workshop, an evaluation session was carried using a subjective questionnaire. The open-ended questionnaire facilitated personal reflection on the process, the conflict itself, the school counselling service and personal changes. A summary of answers to selected questions from the subjective questionnaire are listed below:

1. Analysis of areas of conflict showed a higher rate of reports among girls regarding conflict situations with parents (particularly related to divorce, violence or alcoholism). Male and female participants reported equal number of school related problems such as academic problems, problems with teachers, bullying and friendship problems.

2. When participants were asked if they felt they understood their conflict better after the conflict exploration process, sixteen answered affirmative, citing the following as helpful factors:

   - working and rehearsing on the details of the conflict,
   - thinking deeply and in sequence,
   - ability to express feelings.

3. Five participants answered negative citing discomfort with the approach and inability to express as obstructions.

4. When asked what they gained from the process, the most common answers were

   - an increased sense of calm (5 participants)
   - ability to express feelings (9 participants)
   - focus and think clearly (8 participants)

5. When asked how they would handle other problems, only a few answered the question with replies ranging from seeking counselling, using creative arts, analysing or avoiding the problem.

6. When asked what caused the change (if any) in their overall feeling of conflict, some cited

   - the intensity of the exercises
   - intervention by facilitators
   - increased understanding and clarity of problem
   - expression and reduced feelings

The above summaries are very much in keeping with the findings in the quantitative survey. Yet a re-evaluation of instruments used to gauge directional change should be a main concern. Although the rigor of quantitative methods is not in question here there may be a strong case for qualitative methodology and its efficacy in research of this nature. It may be that qualitative analysis (rather than quantitative scores) is more

suited to measuring feelings. The qualitative questionnaire enables reflection and fosters more cognitive processing and self-evaluation.

5.3.3 Transfer of creative arts exercises to school counsellors

Design of application of Research Cycle 2 (1997)

Going on feedback from observing counsellors and subjects that the creative arts approach to conflict handling, could be a valuable counselling asset in schools, the research team collapsed the findings into a 10-day intensive course for 20 full-time school counsellors. Counsellor training began with warm-up exercises focused on relationship building and reorientation by a conflict mediator (who doubled as researcher). Secondly, the trainers focused on the transfer of promising techniques from Research Cycle 2, specifically drama and visual arts techniques. Both were conducted by an educational drama practitioner. Lastly, the counsellors participated in a workshop led by a clinical psychologist to help them make the link between counselling strategies, process orientated creative arts and problem solving models of conflict handling. At the end of this workshop counsellors were guided to apply a combination of the above approaches on a case study from their school experience.

Results of application of Research Cycle 2

All counsellors participated in the entire duration of the workshop. However approximately half the counsellors found it very difficult to take a critical re-look at basic assumptions and standard techniques of counselling and to release their set beliefs and ideas about a helping relationship. Many counsellors enjoyed the warm-up and alliance building games but became very self-conscious about expressing themselves through the artistic media of drama or visual arts. This was despite the fact that the counsellors who observed Research Cycle 2 rated drama and visual arts exercises positively. Due to the negative feedback from the adolescent participants towards music and dance, these exercises were not introduced to the counsellors training at all.

Counsellors were set a task of using any of the techniques learnt as part of their counselling strategy when they returned to the school situation. However, after a month all the counsellors reported not to have

applied any of the techniques and were not interested to return for a feedback session.

We concluded that at ground level school counsellors were not receptive to the action-orientated creative-arts approach to conflict handling. Counsellors probably found the levels of sharing, participation and empowerment awkward when they returned to the school context because these conflicted with the high power-distance relationships and consensus seeking postures, which predominate in the school system. The counsellor would find it very difficult for example to help a student to explore a personal problem, tackle issues beyond the school boundaries, or orientate the student towards problem solving. Such a helping relationship would be tantamount to 'taking a personal interest in a student', 'destroying teacher-student hierarchy' and 'instigating independent thinking'.

Just as school counsellors were uncomfortable about incorporating the creative-arts into their traditional counselling mode, creative-arts facilitators in Research Cycle 2 had also expressed discomfort at having to integrate their methodology into a conflict-handling model. It seems that in any attempt to introduce new working methods to a group, the ideology, agenda and aims of the working method needs to be clarified, discussed and accepted by all parties. It might be necessary to make adaptations in the design of the working model in order to allow all parties to develop a sense of ownership, investment and returns.

5.3.4 Enhance conflict literacy using Theatre-in-Education

This final phase of the Malaysian DRACON research project focused on using Theatre-in-Education (TIE) and an accompanying educational kit to teach conflict literacy to an adolescent population.

To define conflict Malaysian teenagers often use language that describes the feelings aroused in persons in conflict. In the 1997 Malaysian study on teenagers, conflict was understood and measured in terms of its emotional impact on adolescents. In line with this functional definition 'managing emotions' in conflict situations was made the thematic focus in the TIE. Emotional management here looks the emotional reactions in conflict situations and how to harness interpersonal and intra-personal intelligences to handle emotional reactions arising in conflict situations.

Aim of Research Cycle 3(1998)

The study was aimed at evaluating the suitability of an educational drama form, Theatre-in-Education (TIE) and an attached educational kit in providing information on the elements and dimensions of conflict and the management of emotions in conflict. The following research questions guided the study:

1. Is a TIE performance suitable as an affective and cognitive platform for analysis and reflection of conflict and conflict handling styles?

2. Can the educational kit make information on conflict amenable to learning and reflection for adolescents?

3. Can the interactive nature of TIE (where actors seek the advice of teenage audiences) help audiences build empathy and perception?

Design of Research Cycle 3

Collaborative research was undertaken by a team consisting of an educational drama practitioner as team leader, a researcher (from the field of conflict handling) involved in open observation, and four actor-facilitators involved in the research, devising and performance of the TIE.

The target audience for the ten TIE performances consisted of 1300 teenagers aged 16 and 17 years, from a multi-ethnic, working-class background. They were invited to view the performance within school hours. 300 of these students participated in the pre-performance and post-performance survey, while 45 of the 300 (15 from an all-girls school, 15 from an all-boys school and 15 from a mixed gender school) were involved as focus groups in the aesthetic enquiry on aspects of adolescent conflicts.

The research carried out over a five-month period consisted of several stages of preparation and execution:

• Identifying individual problems: Two and a-half days of enquiry by actor-facilitators on three focus groups (15 target audience teenagers per group) to collect case studies of individual problems experienced at workplace, school and home.

• Devising the TIE performance: The performance was devised by the four actor-facilitators based on case studies provided by the focus groups.

- Educational kit and TIE performance: Teachers execute a three lesson educational kit on conflict literacy containing exercises, games and discussions with the audiences before the viewing of the TIE performance in the school premises.
- Survey: Two different sets of questionnaires to 300 audiences to gauge their understanding of conflict before and after exposure to the educational kit and the TIE performance. Focus group enquiry on adolescent conflicts.

Focus group enquiry on adolescent conflicts

An aesthetic enquiry method was employed using creative arts techniques to gather information on various aspects of adolescent conflict. The information gathered was used to devise the TIE performance. These techniques included storytelling, improvisation, theatre games, role-play, forum theatre and writing exercises. Questions directing this enquiry were:

1. What were the values, needs and interests of the target audience?
2. What were the conflict issues and conflict types experienced by the target audience?
3. Who were the parties involved?
4. How did their conflicts escalate and what sort of adolescent conflict behaviour did they display?
5. What were the common ways in which these adolescents manage emotions or deal with conflicts?

The focus group enquiry was limited to obtaining information on school, home and work related conflicts. Students' personal conflicts at home, work or school were played out using postcard drama (a series of still scenes). Crisis scenes were animated through improvisation and role-play to show how they handled the situation. Participants later incorporated two other potential ways to handle the conflict situation. All in all they were expected to come out with a win-win, a win-lose, and a lose-lose outcome. A peer audience was asked to vote if they agreed, disagreed or were unsure about how the situation was handled.

Survey study

As a finally quantitative enquiry, we administered a survey questionnaire to a sample 300-target audience. The simple pre-performance

questionnaire was used mainly to gather information on adolescent conflict issues, their behaviour, attitudes, and feelings and how they dealt with the conflict situation. Questions were posed on types of conflict, negative feelings experienced during conflict, how they were expressed, what sorts of action were taken against the antagonist and a series of questions on empathy.

A post-performance questionnaire was used to discern the effectiveness of the TIE performance and its attendant educational kit in raising awareness about conflict and conflict handling. Questions posed were on types of conflict discerned from the drama, their understanding of the terms 'Stop, Look Go' and if these terms they applied in managing their emotions. There were additional questions on recalling a recent conflict and analysing their emotional reactions during the conflict. Observation of audience reactions during the TIE performance were recorded by teachers and also by the researcher who also referred to video documentation of all performances to further verify reactions of the audience during the performance.

Results of the focus group enquiry and survey on adolescent conflicts

The findings from the focus group enquiry were crucial for the actors in devising the TIE. In using creative arts with the focus groups, the dynamic components of conflict such as attitudes, behaviour, feelings and escalation process became very evident and helped the actors prepare their character with great accuracy.

Content of conflicts: Participants earlier stated through storytelling technique that they (high and low achievers) took on part-time jobs related to physical work that required no particular skills. But their post-card theatre improvisations disclosed that they often lost their jobs due to lack of industrial or communication skills. Most did not derive pleasure from their jobs but more from the money earned 'for personal spending'. Conflict parties were limited to themselves and the employer.

In the school, communication problems, teasing and involvement in negative activities often lead to misunderstanding or fights with peers. Poor results in school exams led to conflict with self and parents. Lack of recognition and respect from teachers was another source of conflict. The conflict parties therefore were between peers, between teacher and student or between parent and student. Allies, bystanders and victims figured strongly in school conflicts. Students would seek allies from

among friends on an emotional level but not to solve the problem. However. support from friends was viewed as important.

In the survey 59% cited communication problems and 50% (besides citing communication problems) cited lack of respect and recognition from others as a problem.

Feelings: In the survey 67% of respondents (especially female) quoted anger as the most common feeling associated with conflict followed by sadness, disappointment, and frustration, feeling of wanting revenge, regret, dissatisfaction and uneasiness.

In the focus group enquiry, the emotive component was given strong focus with males and females disclosing that they experienced many feelings simultaneously. Both genders were capable of developing negative feelings and distorted enemy images rather quickly.

Escalation of conflict: The focus group enquiry revealed that among females, escalation was slower and rarely reached a volatile stage. Among males, escalation of conflict was rapid. Fights were often instigated by the ritual of derogatory remarks (the ultimate being to mention one party's mother) or gestures. The resulting fights seem ritualistic and cannot be viewed as intention to destroy the other party but more of an expression or ventilation of emotions. Who won or lost in the fight did not seem to be related to who won or lost in the conflict.

Conflicts with teachers and parents were more drawn out often moving into debate and ending in a polarisation phase. The enemy image here was rather distorted.

Dealing with conflict: In the survey, females from the all-girls and the mixed gender school said they remained calm and released their emotions by listening to music or screaming in private. Males from all-boys school claimed they were more violent and aggressive in expression of angry feelings while males from mixed gender schools said that they exercised more restraint.

In the survey 62% respondents (more females) felt they took positive action while in conflict and were happy with their action while the rest of the respondents regretted the negative action they took. 30% said they 'sometimes' attempted to involve the other party when settling the conflict.

In the focus group enquiry conflicts among males were often manifest conflicts where males almost always resorted to fighting if they perceived they had been shamed or wronged. They found it difficult to

think rationally when angry and were more physically and verbally confrontational with peers. Among females, conflicts remained latent and feelings often transformed into extended moods. Females also expressed their feelings through sharing, talking about the problem with peers or adults.

Although the peer audience when watching the improvisation during the focus group enquiry chose to support confrontational and face-saving ways of dealing with conflicts involving adults, they admitted that if they were personally involved they would opt for suppression, avoidance or accommodation. Verbal abuse and complaints against adults were only released in private and hostility and tension remained at the level of feelings only, since the power distance between student and the teacher/parent/employer was high.

In the face of more powerful peers they opted for suppression or accommodation and in the face of less powerful peers they opted for confrontation or resistance. Compromise was reserved for equal peers or as a bargaining point with parents. Empathy for adults such as employers, co-workers, teachers and parents was very rare among male and female students.

Devising a TIE performance from the focus group enquiry

An interactive TIE performance and a related educational kit were employed for conflict literacy to be taught, learnt and experienced by the target teenage audience. Four fictional narratives were reconstructed from original stories enacted during the aesthetic enquiry. As an example, one conflict depicts the frustration of the supervisor of a fast food restaurant with a student waiter who has no skills but insists he is doing his best. Another scenario shows a student assistant caught in a situation of professional rivalry between two experienced colleagues.

An attempt was made to integrate the components of conflict with the components of drama. Components of the conflicts enacted and the conflict handling methods displayed were incorporated into the dramatic scenarios. The re-enacted scenarios introduced the concepts of manifest and latent conflict, and the impact of perceptions and emotions on conflict escalation.

The actors used stylistic techniques such as 'hot seat' and breaking into song to reveal subtexts such as the motivations, suspicions, attitudes and hidden feelings of the protagonist and antagonist. These were

intended to help audiences identify and empathise with the different viewpoints.

Interactive techniques were also used during the performance to distance the audience from the affective experience and engage them cognitively in conflict analysis. These included audience spinning a wheel of chance, which would randomly identify the type of conflict to be performed. After the audience attempted to explain the conflict type and locate examples of such a conflict type in their own life, the performance would begin.

Audiences also carried red (disagree), orange (unsure) and green cards (agree) which they could raise up at any point during the drama to indicate if they agreed, disagreed or were unsure about the way in which characters handled their conflict situations. At the end of a scenario the protagonist and antagonist attempted to convince the audiences to see and accept their point of view.

The education kit focused on the concept of 'emotional intelligence' and contained information on the components and elements of conflict, conflict process, the impact of emotions on conflict escalation and skills on managing emotions. The kit, in the form of written games, guided exercises and discussions was accompanied by notes for the teacher and was to be executed by the moral or religious teacher over three 40-minute lessons. It was hoped that the educational kit would provide the audience with an understanding of conflict and that they would be able to apply the information from the kit while viewing the TIE performance on conflict.

Results of Research Cycle 3

Survey results: The survey revealed that 55% of respondents were aware that the performance was about the components of conflict and how to handle conflict situations. However they could not name the styles used in the drama to handle conflicts.

In the post-performance survey, 78% of respondents displayed a moderate awareness of the theories of conflict displayed in the performance, but only 45% of respondents were able to apply these theories to their own conflict.

Of the respondents, 45% displayed high awareness, and 36% displayed moderate awareness of the "Stop! Look! Go!" method of managing emotions that was used in the performance. 38% of respondents

understood how they could apply the method to their own conflict situation.

In the survey, respondents state that the aspects of the performance that most attracted them were, in order of priority; the actors' emotions, types of conflicts enacted, lyrics and music and the outcomes and their consequences. Other theatrical aspects such as sets, costumes, programs and posters were not as significant to them.

The audience found it easy to identify with the characters during the dramatic and interactive scenes. However in the question and answer sessions before and after each dramatic scene when characters had tried to make the audience see their point of view, the audience was less engaged and held on to their own point of view. They also gave low ratings to the cognitive intervention techniques that required them to provide verbal opinions.

Observations of the Researcher: The researcher was critical of the pre and post survey stating that the survey method was not very reliable because questions asked were unable to measure the level of engagement of the audience in the performance and also because questions did not reflect information learnt from the kit. He also criticised the 'formal' nature of the questionnaire and suggested that a better way would have been to recapture conflict literacy via a post-performance problem-posing questionnaire similar to that designed by Cornelius and Faire (1994).

The TIE "Stop! Look! Go! spoke about conflict through intelligently construed dramatised roles and situation. Inside the drama, it was able to create authentic moments of conflict thereby codifying day-to-day conflicts on the level of the perceived real.

Being sensitive to the affective, the adolescent audience were able to spontaneously react to the 'needs, values, and interests' vocabulary introduced to them via the performance. At the end of each scenario, the characters barraged the audience with problem posing questions. This over-distancing, interactive technique leads the audience to take different positions from different standpoints.

The performance provided an active platform for participatory intervention where the usually passive recipient became actively involved in taking responsibility for their views, values and positions. This can be seen as empowerment in the concrete sense of the term – the climax of any transformation process.

"Stop! Look! Go!" successfully reintroduced a conflict language via dramatic and forum like interactions that made the conventional DASIE model (develop, analyse, support, intervene and evaluate) come alive, though only in a simulated setting.

Problems

The educational kit was well implemented only in schools where the teacher was briefed by the research team on the subject of conflict and emotional management as well as how to use the kit. Teachers who did not receive this briefing were reluctant to read the material themselves and even less motivated to execute the kit in class. In such classrooms the kit was handed out with little or no guidance, resulting in students obtaining very little or no information on conflict. This resulted in some sectors of the audience not applying information from the kit in the interactive parts of the performance. They reacted affectively rather than cognitively. It was obvious that teachers needed to be drawn into the agenda of emotional management. Both teachers and students needed more time to assimilate the topic and the materials.

Secondly, some of the questions in the survey questionnaire were not well designed. Questions in the pre-performance survey were unrelated to the post-performance survey and as such change could not be measured. Open-ended questions were very unpopular with male respondents resulting in a distortion in the final population sample.

5.4   Outcomes and implications

In our work with Malaysian school going adolescents who participated in the project we found that three critical dimensions were culturally relevant and had therefore to be sensitively handled so as not to encroach upon individual and group safe spaces. These were self-development, communication and conflict handling style.

5.4.1   Cultural implications

The Malaysian participants in Research Cycle 2 particularly tended to be uncomfortable with self-disclosure and methods that encouraged introspection and self-analysis as this was seen as an encroachment on the realm of the private and sensitive. Such methods that are person-
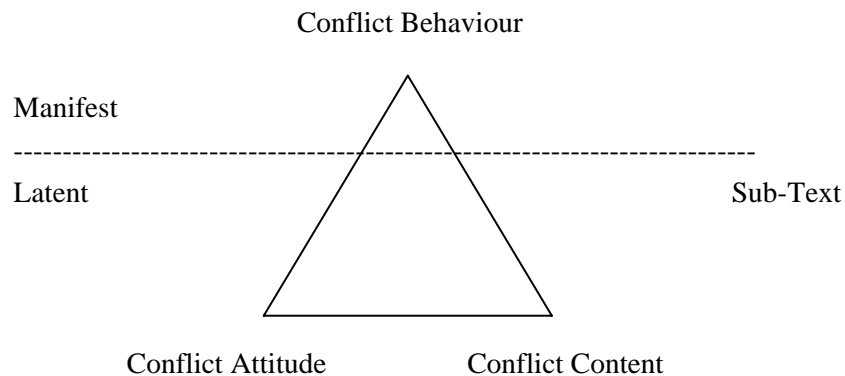
centred and orientated towards self-development, force the Malaysian subject into a position that puts them at unease in a society that is predisposed towards collective interests. In situations of strained human interaction, an audience receptive to collective interests could feel it was awkward and unbecoming to assert oneself. When there is an unavoidable need to express the centrality of personal power, direction should be provided in such a manner that the assertiveness is not viewed as being brash or insensitive, and does not provoke feelings of humiliation.

Communication using verbal forthrightness and linear disclosure did not go down well with our participants. Participants tended to be less overtly verbal. Instead, indirect messages took precedence over direct disclosures. Coded messages, modesty, even shyness was more dominant than assertive person-centred positioning, role clarification and clearly defined disclosure. There was a tendency towards controlled disclosure in conflict handling, clothing it in generalities and guarded phraseology, as communication in the Malaysian context is usually indirect, subtle and polite. Even the term conflict was not translatable into any single term. Instead affective, indirect rhetoric, describing conflict via a list of feelings experienced during conflict, was preferred to factual language.

When imparting skills, sufficient care had to be taken by artist facilitators to avoid unproductive assertive communication and to maintain the polite system of communication, emphasising face-maintenance procedures, respect for hierarchy, linguistic nuances, a gentle pace etc.

In the Malaysian school context, the adolescents' personal and family conflicts often remained at the latent level. The manifest and latent aspects of conflict may be compared to the *text* and the *subtext* of the drama and other art forms. Text, which refers to overt expression, is usually congruent with the concealed subtext that motivates certain communication patterns and actions. However for the adolescent Malaysian participants, their text (behaviour) on the social level was often incongruent with their subtext.

As a result, the more appropriate communication model for conflict exploration among Malaysian adolescents appeared to be one that favoured indirect modes of expression. For this reason the integrated multi-arts approach was most productive because it gave wider berth to participants to surface their subtext (latent conflict) using the metaphorical language of music, lyrics, visual images and movement.

```
                        Conflict Behaviour

        Manifest
                              /\
        -----------------------/--\-----------------------------
        Latent               /    \              Sub-Text
                            /      \
                           /        \
                          /          \
                         /            \
                        /              \
                       /_____\

            Conflict Attitude      Conflict Content
```

Diagram 5.3. The revealed and concealed in drama and conflict

In conflict handling styles among participants there appeared often to be a predisposition to avoidance and compromise and even suppression. Handling conflict often occurred in a "non-confrontation" manner. Positional power and authority centricity tended to predominate over personal. Paternalistic consensus seeking postures also tended to prevail. The power of the perceived and felt need for face maintenance and honourable reciprocity tended to be overwhelming. Given the collective orientation, collaborative consensus-building activities and compromise mode of problem solving are preferred approaches to conflict handling. This being the case, it was therefore imperative for DRACON practitioners to detract from "head on" conflict exploration modes.

Whilst, however there was a need to be sensitive to socio-cultural conditioning, it must be remembered that one is not to romanticise cultural conditioning. Conflict exploration is about self-confrontation where and when necessary. Culture is learned behaviour and can and should be relevant where and when personal volition might have to outweigh group affiliations in situations where affective change skills might sometime have to work in combination with cognitive change skills towards re-patterning intra interrelationship structures.

5.4.2   Implications for the school counselling system

The conventional counsellor-client setting appeared not to have worked well as authority and power relationships have made self-disclosure in

302

such surroundings "unsafe" for many a client. This was clear from the unwillingness of participants to take the role of the antagonist in asymmetric conflict situations. There is therefore a need to provide an alternative to the traditional system where power and position leads to the enforcement of norms and rules, in the counselling situation.

The integrated conflict exploration model, favouring group oriented, high collective situations helped counter conventional conflict resolution models, which tend to highlight individual oriented, low-context expectation. The integrated conflict exploration process further expanded the counselling continuum far beyond the assisted problem-solving situation into a non-clinical action orientated process. This provided a much welcomed alternative to the "talk" situation which many of our subjects found to be too confrontational as opposed to an "act" situation which permitted the development of a more comfortable forum for conflict exploration.

In order to successfully provide the integrated conflict exploration mode with a working context in schools, there must be more openness on the part of school authorities for the trying out of experimental conflict handling modes. Far too often the perception has been that such empowerment exercises "threaten" school stability. There was a need for a reappraisal of this attitude amongst school authorities. As it was, permission was granted for the Malaysian study to be conducted only after school hours.

Another problem area related to ascertaining counsellor suitability and client receptivity. Training exposure alone is hardly enough. Both practitioner and client had to be knowledgeable in the content, context and procedure of the creative arts and conflict transformation/resolution approaches. This is best done via long term education, training and practice in what might be construed to be a holistic integrated conflict exploration model, incorporating elements of conflict exploration, communication, therapy oriented disciplines and process oriented drama, creative movement, visual arts and music.

As mentioned earlier projects like these must be open to chronologically structured, discussion, evaluation and reconstruction at regular intervals. An auditing mechanism of this nature could take place in a variety of formats - between participants, between practitioners, between parents, amongst researchers and finally between the project team and other interested audience. There should also be regular evaluation/encounter sessions at the beginning, middle and end of each

303

project. These meetings should be documented as they could provide valuable feedback for further refinement and development of evolving practice sessions.

5.5   Conclusions

1995 - The first study focused on observing how the techniques and processes used in process orientated creative-arts might relate to conflict handling discourse. Creative-arts facilitators worked with a small focus group of children between age 10 -16 on conflict issues in the contexts of home, school and leisure.

Findings revealed that the exploration and mapping of conflict through an action orientated process such as the creative-arts provide added dimensions to conflict handling. The simulation of events through metaphoric expression (mostly non-verbal) allows children to objectively deconstruct a problem and also provides a safe platform for them to rehearse and re-examine creative responses to the problem.

1996 - The second study, attempted to integrate creative-arts procedure into a conflict handling model. Specific creative-arts exercises were applied as tools in the 'exploration phase' of conflict handling. The study sought to evaluate the suitability of these specific creative-arts exercises as conflict exploration instruments and to measure the effectiveness of the creative-arts procedure in exploring conflict.

The study revealed that combining the process-orientated creative-arts model with the conventional conflict-handling model might provide a possible interface between the affective and cognitive modes of conflict recognition. This interface can be seen to broaden the boundaries of conventional conflict exploration making it more participatory, more action orientated and more empowering. Empirical findings showed that process orientated creative-arts significantly decreased the intensity of feelings related to conflict in the exploration phase.

1997 – School counsellors were trained in some of the creative-arts exercises from the second study based on feedback from observing counsellors that the creative-arts approach to conflict handling could be a counselling asset in schools. The research team collapsed the creative arts approach to conflict exploration into a 10-day intensive course for 20 full-time school counsellors.

Approximately half the counsellors found it very difficult to critically examine their conventional techniques of counselling and their set beliefs and ideas about a helping relationship. Counsellors found the levels of sharing and empowerment in the approach awkward because it conflicted with the high power-distance relationships and consensus-seeking postures that predominate in the school system.

1998 - In the third and final study the research team intentionally embarked on a 'conflict literacy' project aimed at 16 -17 year olds. The study focused on using Theatre-in-Education to educate teenagers on conflict, specifically on managing emotions in conflict situations, while a survey was conducted to measure the effectiveness of using an educational theatre model to raise conflict literacy. The experiment successfully reintroduced conflict language via dramatic and forum-like interactions in a simulated setting of performance.

Participant reflects on process

Fictionalized reality   **Everyday reality**
Participant reconstructs
everyday/imagined reality

Manipulation of distance
from real experience by engaging
dramatic/artistic techniques
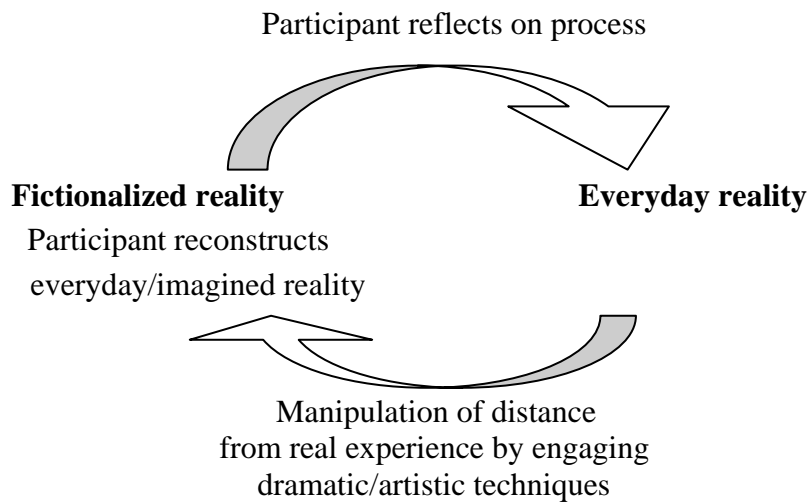
Diagram 5.4. Fictional context and real context

In the final analysis we can say that Malaysian adolescents responded positively to the wide range of mediums available for exploring and expressing human dynamics. However, the studies demonstrated that it was more comfortable to retrace a real conflict in a fictional setting and express issues, characters, feelings, and actions via visual images, non-verbal sounds, body language etc.

The interrelated use of multi-arts allowed for an integrated examination of subjects' conflicts. The simulation of events through metaphoric expression (mostly non-verbal) provided a safe distance for children to objectively deconstruct a problem and also a safe platform to rehearse and re-examine creative responses to the problem. In process-orientated art forms, participants develop a capacity to reflect on the process of interaction and transaction with events, people and objects within the fictional context to construct personally satisfying meanings. Such meanings are brought back into transactions within the real world.

The study revealed that combining process orientated creative arts approach with the conventional conflict-handling model or infusing the components of conflict into the creative arts process provided a possible interface between the affective and cognitive modes of conflict recognition. This interface was seen to broaden the boundaries of conventional conflict exploration making it more participatory (less 'talk' more 'action-orientated'), more empowering (playing projected needs and interests) more comfortable (moving from personal to group space), and safer (moving from real to fictional).

This led the Malaysian team to develop a process-orientated model that engaged the participant in various experiential, enrolments and reflective tasks that might explicate the exploration and disclosure of conflict.

The model postulates how key elements in play building such as locating the narrative, characters, action, setting and issue (experiential tasks) and key elements in dramatic structure such as identifying motivations and making them explicit through text and subtext in the presentational phase (enrolment and reflection tasks) indirectly underscored conflict exploration work.

The project has without doubt enabled conflict exploration to comfortably oscillate between personal space and group space in a manner that does not project self-disclosure as being "uncomfortable" to the subject. This stems primarily from the fact that self-empowered exploration is based on personal power and "shared" instances of it rather then on unequal power ratio (i.e. teacher-student).

As was evident from the analysis, the creative arts model of approach can be complementary to other conventional problem solving approaches by providing tools for participants to meaningfully engage in conflict exploration. The driving force in this study was the need to

"face conflicts head-on" using a creative method of diagnosis. Both creative arts and conflict handling work through text and subtext exposing parties' roles and the process of dialogue. Both models actively engage in facilitated or non-facilitated "naming of the world". By combining the creative and the problem solving approach to conflict, we had come up with the possibility of providing an interface between the affective and cognitive mode of conflict recognition. What did this mean in concrete terms for both practitioner and researcher and how might the interface prompt a re-look at the perimeters of conflict exploration practice?

Firstly, by integrating creative art modes and conflict exploration strategies one is exposed to an extended conflict exploration/creative arts representations platform. Secondly, one was offered a new look at helping relationships in conflict exploration and an expanded approach in the area of helping. Creative arts procedures also provide alternative mechanism to process orientated conflict exploration via play building along specific conflict engagement curves.

Creative arts oriented conflict exploration modes provided valuable aids in that they have been observed to function well in the enhancement of coping skills which include perceptual skills (problem identification and exploration), emotional ventilation skills (expression of feelings), stress management (tension reduction), and support networking skills.

5.5.1 Future research agenda

There still remain a number of queries and unanswered questions that have arisen out of the Malaysian DRACON project. These could constitute the theoretical, methodological and empirical topography of any future action research endeavours involving any further developments of the Malaysian DRACON project.

The most pressing issue should involve the review of assumptions made about the use of creative arts approach in conflict exploration and possibly even conflict handling in the context of the Malaysian school culture. For one thing the perception of school authorities that such 'empowering' methods threaten the stability of schools makes it difficult to integrate such working methods into the school system. This attitude also threatens counsellors' adaptability and client receptivity to these alternative methods. Are we to merely work within bureaucratic

307

and cultural constraints in schools or should one test the tolerance levels, even if this means threatening already existing predefined "safe spaces". Is the conservative atmosphere of Malaysian schools a suitable context for alternative style conflict handling, or should future research consider other institutions within the society?

Given the experiences of the Malaysian DRACON team with school counsellors, there is reason to believe that the conventional problem-solving model currently used in Malaysian schools requires serious rethinking, if not reinvention.Conflict literacy as implemented in the short-term Malaysian DRACON project achieved awareness raising but not permanent change in the counselling system, counsellors or clients. Long-term education in a holistic integrated model, which incorporates several fields such as communication, therapy, religion etc, is necessary. Future projects should incorporate longitudinal studies, For greater effectiveness to take place, prior reflection on the scientific value of making conflicts visible via the research instrument used would also have to figure in the equation.

The Malaysian experience also exposed the team to the question of developing more efficient instruments to measure the effectiveness of the use of the creative arts approach in conflict handling in secondary schools. Future research would have to focus on a tested and efficient measurement instruments that would allow for a measured mix of qualification and quantification. This could mean a critical evaluation of the survey research instrument used during the DRACON project or even the testing of a completely new instrument.

A number of empirical questions have arisen out of the Malaysian DRACON project and these have to do with conflict typology, conflict process, conflict literacy receptivity, facilitation techniques and intervention strategies. All these relate to areas that require more detailed observation, documentation and analysis. In relation to these problems a number of questions can be posed as indications of what future researchers would have to address. There is the question of suitability of a particular explorative mode to the type of conflict being handled. The model currently being experimented and developed oscillates between conflict exploration and the therapeutic. The question here is where does one draw the line? Future Malaysian DRACON should certainly not confine itself exclusively to exploration. Intervention procedures must be addressed more adequately. Can creative arts exercises applied to conflict handling be conveniently located in the school conflict han-

dling structure? Receptivity levels amongst students and teachers involved would require close scrutiny, in particular who (and why these persons) might feel comfortable/uncomfortable with specific facilitation process.

References

Boal, A. (1979). *Theatre of the oppressed.* London: Pluto Press.

Bullough, E. (1964). 'Psychical Distance' as a factor in art and as an aesthetic principle. In M. Rader (Ed.), *A modern book of aesthetics: An anthology* (3rd ed.). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Cornelius, H. & Faire, S. (1989*). Everyone Can Win – How to Resolve Conflict*. NSW Australia: Brookvale.

Hall, E. (1976). *Beyond Culture*. New York. Anchor Press /Doubleday

Harri-Augstein, E.S. & Thomas, L.F. (1991). *Learning conversations: the self-organised learning way to personal and organisational growth.* London: Routledge.

Hofstede, G. (1980). *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work Related Values.* Newbury Park CA: Sage.

Schön, D. (1987). *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers.

Scheff, T. (1981). The distancing of emotion in psychotherapy. *Psychology and Psychotherapy: theory research and practice*, *18*(1), 46-53.

Appendix 1

Selection of Creative Arts training exercises applicable to conflict handling

Physical Warm-up Exercises	Skills Training in Alliance Building, Body Awareness	Skills Training in Conflict Handling
Body and breathing checklist	Build concentration, focus and body awareness.	Sensitisation to comfort/ discomfort zones, energy levels in group, how breathing affects thoughts and emotions and vice versa.
Running, Jogging, Walking (stop and observe others at sudden intervals)	Build quick observation and interpretation	Sensitisation to communication patterning; relating to others and observation of non-verbal communication.
Sinking ship	Focus on psychological motivation and physical strategies.	Deconstructs bodily inhibitions and encourages individual strategy building and execution
Drama Exercises	**Skills Training in Drama**	**Skills Training in Conflict Handling**
Solo/Composite Improvisations Postcard	Scenario building	Disclosure, Role Distancing, Subjective and objective image building
Storytelling	Building narrative, Emoting	Ventilation, Ownership, Point-of-view
Joint Scripting	To solicit group input on common issues	Uncover relationships and escalation process Clarify conflict situation
Forum Theatre	To solicit different perspectives. Group participation	Ventilation Sensitisation to other views, party dimensions of conflict
Movement Exercises	**Skills Training in Drama**	**Skills Training in Conflict Handling**
Positive and Negative space	Innovative use of body, building co-operation	Sensitisation to attitude /behaviour towards others in inter-personal interactions
Dead-weight	Sensitisation to body contact, trust, responsibility.	Sensitisation to the act of providing support, understanding.

Choreography	Composition skills	Sequencing and Playback
Shoulder to shoulder Mirror Flocking	Responding and reacting. Give and take. Ensemble building	Mirrors interpersonal skills and power relationships. Indicator of comfort levels in shared space
Solo/Duet sequence	Explore the dynamics of relationships	Exploring intra and interpersonal dynamics of self and antagonist
Visual Arts Exercises	**Skills Training in Visual Arts**	**Skills Training in Conflict Handling**
Solo Comics Images	Highlight action, reactions, feelings	Amplification of attitude and emotions
Comic Storyboard	Building a narrative	Disclosure, Sequencing, Mapping
Body Portrait	Disclosure Brainstorm an issue	Disclosure, Ventilation Needs analysis
Newspaper Sculpture	Subtext analysis	Disclosure, Amplification, Ventilation
Music Exercises	**Skills Training in Music**	**Skills Training in Conflict Handling**
Lyric writing	Expression of theme/issue	Issue, character and mood identification
Rhythmical pieces	Introduction to basic musical elements	Expression and amplification of mood and feelings

6 Teenagers as third-party mediators

Mats Friberg, Anita Grünbaum, Margret Lepp,
Horst Löfgren and Birgitte Malm

6.1 Introduction

The Swedish DRACON project shares the same general research questions as the other country projects. Our aim has been to study how teenagers usually handle conflicts and to test if a combination of educational drama and conflict theories can enhance the understanding of conflicts and conflict handling approaches management among Grade 8 students. However, there are some characteristics specific to the Swedish approach. Here the focus has been on third-party roles, in particular the role of the mediator. Ultimately our aim has been to find out whether or not Grade 8 students would be able to take on the role of peer-mediators in real life conflicts by applying the drama methods learnt during the programme.

In the Swedish project we have addressed the following overriding questions:

- Are there basic styles for handling conflicts among teenagers?
- Is it possible to develop a drama programme that combines conflict theory with practical exercises in classes as developmental aids for learning?
- How can the programme be implemented in schools?
- Can teenagers learn to act as impartial mediators in conflicts?
- What kinds of measurements can be developed for studying the effects of conflict handling programmes?

By addressing the above issues we hope to contribute to further theory development within the field.

6.1.1 Historical and cultural background

Sweden is a technologically advanced country with a population of almost nine million inhabitants on the northern periphery of Europe. It is one of the oldest states in Europe and emerged as a Lutheran nation-state already in the 16th Century. There have been almost no religious, ethnic, linguistic or regional divisions until the recent immigration. Today about 15% of the population have been born outside the country.

Sweden has a long history of peaceful solutions to internal and external conflicts, although is was once the homeland of the Vikings and built an empire in the North in the 17th Century. The last international war Sweden took part in ended in 1814. Sweden belongs to the Nordic community – together with Norway, Denmark, Iceland and Finland – which has developed a strong tradition of mutual co-operation and negotiation between sovereign states, which is almost unique in the world. Since 1995 Sweden is also a member of the European Union.

Sweden has gone through major internal transformations such as liberal and democratic reforms, industrialisation and the creation of a modern welfare state without violent revolutions or internal wars. The last violent uprising occurred in the 17th Century. A pattern of peaceful change emerged early based on open channels of communication between a strong bureaucracy, other elite groups and freeholders. Sweden never had a feudal social system with serfdom, as was the case on the European continent. Bulks of the peasantry were freeholders and represented in the parliament since the 15th Century. Thus, there was at the same time a strong tradition of state intervention from above as well as a strong tradition of local self-determination and popular participation from below.

The present era in the political life of Sweden originated in the 1930s when the labour party began its long period of political dominance. Capital, state, labour and land entered into a "historical compromise" and the foundation was laid for the building of an industrial welfare state.

Industrial Sweden was at its peak around the year 1960 if measured by the percentage of the labour-force working in the industrial sector (45%). Many indicators today point to Sweden as being one of the most post-industrial in the world. The bulk of the population work in the service sector (70%) and only 27% remain in the industrial sector.

Sweden was once described as a prototype of modern society (Tomasson, 1970). It was found that certain modern values such as progress, technology, science, secular rationality and democracy were even more pervasive in Sweden than in America, while the following values were less pronounced in Sweden in comparison to USA: achievement, moral orientation (in judging others), neighbourliness ethics, material comfort, freedom, patriotism and individual responsibility. The following values were equally dominant in the two countries: the work ethic, efficiency, equality and external conformity.

The same study argued that certain values have been very prominent in Sweden, at least since 1900 and particularly since the 1930s. These values tell us what distinguishes contemporary culture: empiricism, malleability of institutions, legalism, scientism, privacy, proper performance, caution, abhorrence for violence, quality, nature and relating to the world.

Another study (Daun, 1989) lists psychological dispositions of the Swedes. Among others the list includes shyness, independence, conflict avoidance, honesty and emotional self-control.

The mentality of the Scandinavians cannot be described without referring to a famous literary formulation by the Danish-Norwegian author Axel Sandemose. Behind the celebrated Scandinavian egalitarianism he sees the mechanisms of envy and grudging as described in the so-called 10 laws of Jante. In general, these laws emphasize that you should not believe that you are better than anyone else. Jante is the Scandinavian form of "downmanship".

A more positive interpretation of Swedish egalitarianism would be that people pay attention to the needs of others, that they feel certain empathy with their fellow citizens and particularly with the weak. Thus they are reluctant to put their needs above the needs of others. This interpretation gets some support from Hofstede's finding that Sweden is the most feminine country in a worldwide sample of fifty countries (1997). Swedish culture promotes the "feminine" value of nurturing rather than the "masculine" value of achievement. Feminine values such as taking care of people and nature, helpfulness etc have been institutionalised in the Swedish welfare state, in government aid to poor countries, in high standards of environmental conservation and in the belief that "small is beautiful". It is also a fact that Swedish women have a strong position in Swedish society and culture, particularly in politics where female representation has reached almost 50%.

314

Sweden is also a "low anxiety country" (Daun, 1989: 119). Levels of inner tension and stress are relatively low. Therefore there is less need to express strong emotions and aggressiveness. This finding is in harmony with the findings of Hofstede that Sweden is low on "avoidance of uncertainty". The value of safety from the cradle to the grave has been institutionalised in the Swedish system to such a degree that Swedes are able to tolerate quite a lot of uncertainty, ambiguity, deviance and dissent. There is also a basic belief that conflict and competition can be dealt with constructively through direct negotiations and democratic procedures. "Compromise" is a word with many positive connotations in the Swedish language.

Some value patterns are very stable, such as the egalitarian feminism of the Swedes, while others are rapidly changing. Economic growth and material standards of living have reached such a peak that young people in particular now give increased priority to non-material values such as individual freedom, self-expression and new experiences. These needs are difficult for traditional schools to cater to, as they are to some extent still modelled on industrial production. Here is perhaps one of the explanations regarding the present malaise in Swedish schools, evident in absenteeism, vandalism, bullying, stress and various psychosomatic ills. There seems to be a widespread sense of alienation among teenagers in schools today.

The transition from a modern to a post-modern society has created a widening gap between different generations (Inglehart, 1997). Respect for authority, a Lutheran work ethic and religious faith are important to the grandparents' generation. Responsibility, solidarity and achievement are important to the parents' generation. Leisure time, freedom and new exciting experiences are important to those born in the 1980s. Television and entertainment have formed this generation; they want to have fun. If asked about their priorities they say that they would like to have a comfortable life full of pleasures and exciting experiences. Bearing this in mind, several questions of an educational nature arise: How do you teach students who like to have fun who want to decide for themselves and who don't automatically accept the authority of the teacher? What is learning by having fun? Can drama be one way of teaching particularly appropriate to a post-industrial school system? Will it be fun to learn conflict literacy through drama? These were some questions of special interest to the Swedish DRACON team.

6.1.2   The Swedish school system

The Swedish school system comprises compulsory as well as various types of voluntary schooling. The compulsory school programme is directed to all children between the ages of 7-16 years, although parents may request that their child start school a year earlier, i.e. at the age of six. Public education is free; parents and students are not required to pay for meals, transport, teaching materials or health services related to schooling.

The Swedish Parliament and Government determine the guidelines, national objectives and curriculum for the public education system. The Swedish School Act stipulates that all children and youths have equal access to education, regardless of social status, economical situation or gender. Consideration is also given to students with special needs.

In 1991 Swedish municipalities were given total responsibility for the administration of schools in their own areas. In order to carry out various municipal activities money is provided from local budgets. In other words, statuary directives such as curricula, timetables and criteria of assessment provide a framework within which municipalities and schools can develop their own profiles and modes of practice. Local school plans (with descriptions of organisation, funding, development and assessment) are thus adopted in the different municipalities. These, together with the statuary objectives mentioned above, constitute the local work plan, which is drawn up by the principal in consultation with teachers and other school personnel. Among other responsibilities, the principal has the specific task of drawing up, executing and evaluating a work plan condemning all forms of abuse among students and staff.

Schools and pre-schools in Sweden are aligned to three main democratic assignments. Firstly, as an integral part of conventional schooling, the student should be taught basic democratic values. Secondly, students and staff in the schools themselves should also actively participate in a democratic process, encouraging participation and enhancing empowerment. Thirdly, it is the responsibility of the schools and pre-schools, in co-operation with the home, to foster students to become democratic citizens and to function as responsible members of society where values such as solidarity, equal opportunity and equal rights are fundamental. It is their task to actively counteract all types of deviant behaviour such as racism and bullying.

Regarded as a whole, these three assignments should be able to enhance an overall democratic awareness among students. In schools where daily relations are complex and dynamic, learning to treat others with respect and showing empathy becomes part of an on-going process of learning to apply democratic values in practice. Focussing on and learning how to prevent bullying and other forms of violence at an early age should in the long run also be of benefit to society as a whole. Schools and pre-schools thus have an important task in helping to counteract all types of abusive treatment.

According to a recent study in Sweden approximately 10% of students in the comprehensive school reported that they are bullied, half of them by schoolmates and half of them by teachers (Eriksson, Lindberg, Flygare & Daneback, 2002; Skolverket, 2000). The frequency of bullying in school has increased over the last years.

Ways in which fundamental democratic values such as these can be utilised and enhanced through drama programmes in schools and how these relate to previous and present curricula will be discussed in the following section.

6.1.3 Drama and conflict handling in Swedish schools

Theatre has been used to enhance learning in Swedish schools since the 16th Century. In 1571 the first curriculum stipulating the use of theatre in both Latin and Swedish was introduced to a small elite of boys (Lindvåg, 1988: 63). However, it was not until the beginning of the 20th Century – the Century of the Child - (Key, 1996) that the modern history of educational drama started to take form.

Drama in Sweden has developed along two significant lines. One has its origins in folk literature, children's literature and children's theatre. The other can be found within the school system, where ideas of equality and the right of every child to develop and express him/herself through "learning by doing" has been inspired by Dewey's reform pedagogy. Recent research has shown that reform pedagogy and drama in a modern sense was used in girls' schools already at the beginning of the 20th Century (Hägglund, 2001).

Olenius, a librarian in Stockholm, started extending storytelling into pantomimes and dramatised folk tales and books for children. After visiting Ward, Burger and Robertson (leaders of children's theatre) in

the U.S.A. in 1947, she returned to Sweden full of new ideas and with a burning need to fulfil them (Lindvåg, 1988). She organised "Our Theatre" which comprised 14 municipal (still existing) children's theatres in the Stockholm area. Here children could perform for one another. Olenius also started an education for children's theatre leaders, the forerunner of contemporary education for drama pedagogues. She introduced creative dramatics at a girls' school in Stockholm and at several summer courses for teachers during the 1950s. Teachers who participated in these courses were the ones who later continued to develop drama in schools and influence curriculum planning. Key and Olenius both expressed the view that art experience is everybody's democratic right (Lindvåg, 1988: 276).

During the Second World War preparatory work was done in order to influence the increase of democracy in Swedish schools. In 1946 The School Commission clearly stipulated that schools, being the tools of a democratic society, should train every pupil in critical thinking. This should be done as a vaccination against "mental pestilences" (SOU, 1948:27: 4).

The democratic potential and different perspectives of drama in relation to four national curricula (Lgr62, Lgr69, Lgr80, Lpo94) have been analysed by Sternudd (2000). The value of drama pedagogy is generally connected to the *artistically oriented perspective*, i.e. supporting the development of dramatic creativity, language learning and bringing literature to life. The 1962 curriculum (Lgr62, 1964) also stipulates a *personal development perspective* of educational drama, i.e. understanding the relationships between individuals, groups and society and of dynamic processes and decision-making in human interactions. In the 1980 curriculum (Lgr80, 1982), an additional perspective is mentioned – *the holistic learning perspective*. Here dramatic imagination is used as a learning tool in an attempt at human problem solving with universal significance. "Swedish language and drama pedagogy" is described as being "the communicative didactic tool, which needs to influence all subjects in school". The 1980 curriculum is the document that gives the use of drama pedagogy in Swedish education the strongest support.

In contrast, almost all texts related to the use of drama and the value of drama methods in education have disappeared from the1994 curriculum (Lpo94, 1994). Although drama as a subject is introduced as a voluntary activity for Grades 7-9, drama pedagogy and its four perspec-

tives are reduced to being an instrumental function of the Swedish language. Sternudd demonstrates the fact that the democratic potential of drama is implicit in all the four curricula but is never defined due to its complexity. Despite its current importance and close connection to the basic value system of Swedish school policy there is a total lack in every curricula of the *critically liberating perspective*, i.e. investigating power relationships in society.

Taking these statements into account the development of educational drama in Swedish schools can be interpreted as being on the decline. However, the potential of drama pedagogy as well as the combination of contemporary and social trends makes the situation for drama in education appear less pessimistic than that presented in the current curriculum.

Wiechel (1983) emphasizes an inter-disciplinary view of drama and has constantly advocated the use of drama as a multi-medial language in education. Drama in Sweden is looked upon as being a total integration of progressive pedagogy and dramatic art form, as a pedagogy of experience involving the whole human being in the aesthetic learning process.

The interest among teachers for drama methods connected to conflict handling has been influenced by different kinds of social needs in schools. Drama has been used in primary and secondary schools for preventive conflict work since the 1970s. Variations of Forum theatre – i.e. the critically liberating perspective of drama – can be said to be the drama method most widely used. Byréus (1990, 2001) has adapted the method of Boal to suit work with Swedish teenagers, combining value clarification and Forum theatre. In the middle of the 1990s gender research resulted in a focus on the need to create space for the silent girls. As a consequence of the normative problems in schools a new subject - ”life knowledge” - has been introduced; each school produces its own curriculum and may choose drama as an activating method within the new subject. The current advent in interest for norms and morals emerges from the alarming alcohol and drug situation among teenagers.

Most drama methods used to prevent conflicts in schools work on an indirect generalised level, although some teachers have developed and use direct intervening methods. Lelkes (1996), starting from relieving conflicts with puppet theatre, tried out a creative conflict solving method among students aged 9-12 years. Actual conflicts among the students are dramatised and acted out in front of a video camera. While

looking at the film, the students raise ideas about how to solve the conflict. A small group of trained teachers use psycho-dramatic techniques in direct conflict handling. One of them, Westblad-Dicks (2000) has described how such work may be executed among young students in conflict with each other.

Pikas (1998) has devoted his research to group violence and bullying, developing methods for teachers and students in regard to mediation. He calls his methods the Shared Concern method (SCm) and All Can Be Mediators (ACBM). The training of mediation is built on essays about conflicts and conflict handling written by the students. The mediation sessions are videotaped and discussed. Pikas comments critically on the dramatisation of conflicts, which he looks upon as exaggerating feelings and disturbing the focus on win-win solutions. He suggests starting directly with shuffle diplomacy and mediation.

Every school is obliged to develop its own anti-bullying programme. When it comes to research on and development of peace education, Malmö School of Education in Sweden maintains a unique position due to the work of Bjerstedt (1995) and his colleagues. Several doctoral theses have been produced. In one of them, Utas Carlsson (1999) examples from peace education are combined with drama methods used in Grades 4-6. In spite of the fact that Pikas and others have been active since the end of the 1960s, training in mediation is practised to a limited degree in Swedish schools. One reason may be that too many teachers still lack knowledge and training in mediation. Many student teachers are critical of an education they contend prepares them badly for being able to handle conflicts and bullying in schools.

Swedish upper secondary school has been compulsory since 1994 and comprises different programmes (Lgy94, 1994). The aesthetic programme quickly proved popular among young people, and dance and theatre programmes are increasing annually. Sweden has a reputation for good municipal Schools of Music, providing opportunities for interested children and youths to develop and enhance their musical abilities. These schools are slowly becoming more culturally oriented and have started to offer a range of other art forms, such as drama, theatre and dance.

In teacher education where drama courses are available, there is an increasing interest for Forum play and other drama methods that can help conflict handling in schools. Almost everyone involved in pre-school, with preparatory work among six-year olds or in leisure-time

activities, have some kind of education in drama. Within ordinary teacher-training programmes, student teachers for the other age groups are given little information about drama. Today, further education in drama for teachers can be obtained at several regional Universities. The current national teacher-training programme (introduced in the autumn of 2001) offers opportunities for future teachers to choose drama as a subject.

Preparatory courses in drama and theatre are given at several Folk High Schools (a Scandinavian form of adult education) in addition to the vocational training of drama pedagogues that has been offered since 1974. The Education of Drama Pedagogues (lasting 2-3,5 years), being the only education for specialists in drama and theatre, provides training for work with all age groups and with the four drama perspectives. Although the professional corps of drama pedagogues is small, it has had a widespread and significant influence on drama activities in and outside schools in Sweden.

The use of drama in nursing education and health care has increased due to research in the field (Lepp, 1998; Ekebergh, Lepp & Dahlberg, 2003). This is also the case in other areas of vocational training, e.g. among social workers and psychologists. Between 1995-2001 seven Swedish dissertations have dealt with drama in education, thus hopefully contributing to raising its status.

During the 1990s the political climate encouraged the growth of independent schools, which have since then greatly increased in number. Schools in Sweden today are able to choose a specific profile in regard to school activities. Due to this, drama can be found as both a compulsory as well as a voluntary subject on certain school timetables. The first step towards establishing drama as a school subject may have been taken.

6.2　Students' basic strategies for handling conflicts – a survey study

In order to learn more about typical conflict situations among Swedish school children prior to designing specific drama exercises, a first study was carried out in Grade 7 of the compulsory comprehensive school. Students were interviewed about how they understood conflicts and

about typical conflicts they experienced at school, at home and in their leisure time. They were also asked how they usually tried to solve conflicts with schoolmates, teachers, parents and friends. On the basis of these interviews a questionnaire was designed with open-ended questions as well as questions with fixed alternatives.

There are a number of international studies that indicate that untrained students of all ages rely on withdrawal (avoidance) and suppression of conflicts. These studies also indicate that a lot of conflicts that occur in schools remain unresolved. Johnson and Johnson (1996) found that strategies used by untrained students are (a) withdrawal and suppression, (b) force/coercion and intimidation, and (c) distributed (win-lose) negotiations. Before training, students often leave conflicts unresolved. After training, students should be able to increase their repertoire and develop as well as apply more effective strategies for handling conflicts. Thus, it is not only types of conflicts that are of interest to this study but also different ways of handling conflicts.

Students who have not received conflict resolution and peer mediation training rarely use integrative negotiations. Johnson and Johnson (1996) claim that the most important learning strategy for students is to use integrative negotiations in which joint benefit is given precedence over personal gain. Students' strategies for resolving conflicts after training is of great interest to the present study and for the DRACON project.

The first study in Grade 7 showed that many students did not know very much about the concept of conflict and alternative ways of conflict handling. Interviews with teachers and headmasters confirmed this; they admitted that formal education about conflicts and conflict resolution was uncommon. In spite of the fact that this is a daily problem in most schools, teacher-training courses give it little attention.

There were some rather big differences between boys and girls. More often boys are involved in conflict situations such as teasing and serious fighting. Another typical situation is that older boys frighten or threaten younger ones. Boys were reported to have more conflicts with teachers. Girls were more concerned about students who disrupt lessons and students who lie or spread false information about others.

Typical conflict situations at home included helping with domestic chores (especially the children's room), what time to come home in the evenings and about doing homework. Boys more often reported con-

322

flicts about coming home too late and girls more frequently reported conflicts concerning clothes. Girls were more concerned about failures of friendship due to the disclosure or betrayal of secrets. They also had problems deciding jointly with friends what activity to follow. Another conflict involved somebody else spreading false rumours or lies about them.

Many questions focused on students' reactions in conflict situations. We asked them how they handled conflicts in three different situations: with classmates and friends, with teachers and with parents. The items were constructed on the basis of the results from interviews. The students were asked how frequently they applied different kinds of solutions.

Analysis of collected data in the first study shows a rather consistent picture of how students in Grade 7 cope with their conflicts in different situations. Of special interest to the DRACON project is the result that assistance seeking and third party solutions were rather rare. This in view of the fact that one of the main aims of the project is to develop strategies for third-party interactions, as well as negotiation strategies so that these will become more frequent.

Marking the Millennium, 21st Century research studies carried out in the field of drama and conflict confirm that conflict handling is one of the most important skills of life needed today. Swedish schools do not have adequate strategies to trouble shoot in areas concerned with conflict situations. Many students are exposed to harassment of various kinds. Violence in schools seems to increase and become more severe every year (Fjellström, 1998; Skolverket, 1999).

> There are certain results in the survey, which indicate that the climate in schools has worsened. The teachers are mainly responsible for conveying this picture: almost one teacher in three states that he or she has witnessed increasing problems with violence, victimisation and racism, and almost half of them perceive an increasing problem with shortcomings in ethics and morals (Fjellström, 1998: 148).

Swedish schools have anti-bullying programs. However, there is doubt as to whether these programmes are so efficient that they can provide enough support for students in times of need. Lantieri and Patti (1996) talk about a new vision of education. The goal is to "improve the social and emotional competence of children by teaching these life skills as part of their regular education" (ibid: 6).

Aim of the survey study

The main aim is to study general, basic ways of handling conflicts among Swedish students at the higher level of comprehensive school. The aim is also to study differences between boys and girls concerning both the structure of strategies and the frequencies of using these strategies. In a follow-up study the intention is to use a causal model to test the relationships between teacher competence, school attitudes and self esteem on the one hand (independent variables) and conflict handling strategies on the other (dependent variables).

Method

Lantieri, Roderick and Ray (1990) have developed a so-called conflict tree in order to show different ways of handling conflicts. Their model has been further developed by Ankarstrand-Lindström (unpublished paper). Taking this model as a starting point, the purpose was to construct items on every branch of the tree, collect new data from a sample of students and through factor analysis try to get a better understanding of basic strategies for handling conflicts. This study was carried out in April 1998.

Students were asked to answer how they usually handled a conflict with classmates in school or with friends in their leisure time. Data was collected from 13 schools and from 48 different classes. Over 1200 students answered the questionnaire, approximately 900 from Grade 8. The statements were presented in a Likert-form with the alternatives "almost never", "seldom", "sometimes", "often", and "almost always". At the same time a questionnaire was distributed to the same students, in which questions were asked about the teaching and learning situation at school and the students' school adjustment. This was done in order to be able to relate students' conflict handling strategies to teacher competence, social relationships and school adjustment.

Factor analysis (principal component analysis) was carried out and on the basis of the outcome a second-order factor analysis was done. Finally, an alternative factor analysis using LISREL was carried out (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1999) in order to deepen perspectives on some of the conflict handling factors.

A new study was carried out in October 1998. The most appropriate items from every factor in the previous study were kept and some new ones were added - 61 statements in all. A study by Thomas and Kil-

mann (1975, 1977) inspired some new items. Data was collected from 5 schools and from 30 different classes. 674 students of 721 were present the day data was collected. Thus, only 6.5 percent were absent. Internal missing responses were few. Although only five schools were chosen, we consider this to be a fairly representative sample of Grade 8 students in Sweden. Should the results be similar to that of the previous study, this will be an indication that the results are reliable and that we have a good understanding of Grade 8 students' self-assessed conflict handling strategies.

Results

Analysis of the statements about conflict handling in the two studies showed very similar results. Although there are some similarities with factors in the model by Lantieri et al., the outcome in this empirical study seems to be more simple and distinct.

Three factors were found which all showed variations of aggressive behaviour. These are: *physical aggression, psychological aggression*, and *displaced aggression*. The three factors which include statements of aggression could be labelled confronting alternatives. Three variations of avoidance could also be identified. These were named *wait/ignore/withdrawal, hide/mask,* and *postpone/avoid person*. Four fronting factors were found: *give up*, *win-win/co-operate/ compromise, assistance seeking/third party* and *self-blame*. A second-order factor analysis showed three components very clearly: confronting, avoidance and fronting.

In the second study we used an improved questionnaire and thus the reliabilities of the different factors have also increased if the instrument is used to form scales. It is quite possible to use the instrument to study how frequent different ways of handling conflicts are used for students in the same age group as in the sample.

In order to gain a better understanding of the relationships between the items in the questionnaire, Lisrel-analyses (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1999) were carried out to test the measurement model in the three main factors. The analyses showed that the instrument could be reduced to 38 items and still maintain acceptable reliabilities when measuring the 10 factors.
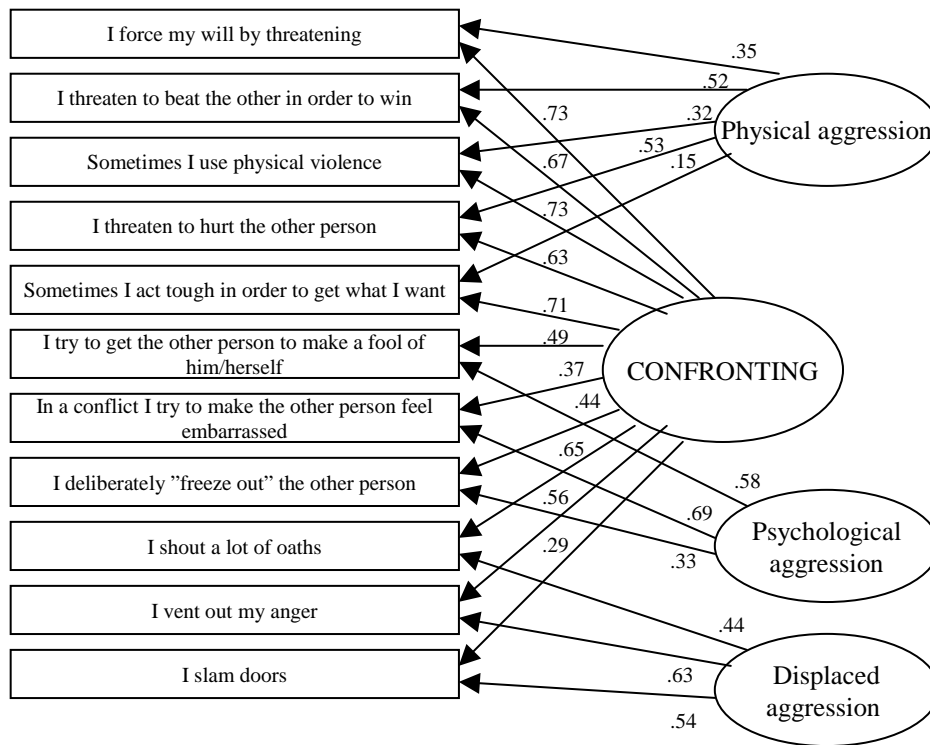
Figure 6.1. Confronting measurement model (Chi-square=44; df=32; p<.08; RMSEA=.030; GFI=.98)

Under confronting behaviour we found, besides the general aggression factor, three specific factors as earlier: *physical aggression, psychological aggression*, and *displaced aggression*. The reliabilities were fairly high: .89, .72, and .78 respectively. If all items are used to measure the general confronting factor the alpha coefficient appears to be .86.

Under the general avoidance factor three specific factors could also be identified. The first specific factor is defined by the words *wait, ignore* and *withdrawal* and consists of six items. Cronbach's alpha turned out to be .81.

The second specific factor can be understood by the words *hide or mask*. In Study 2 hide and mask appeared as two different factors. Three items are found here with a scale reliability of .72.
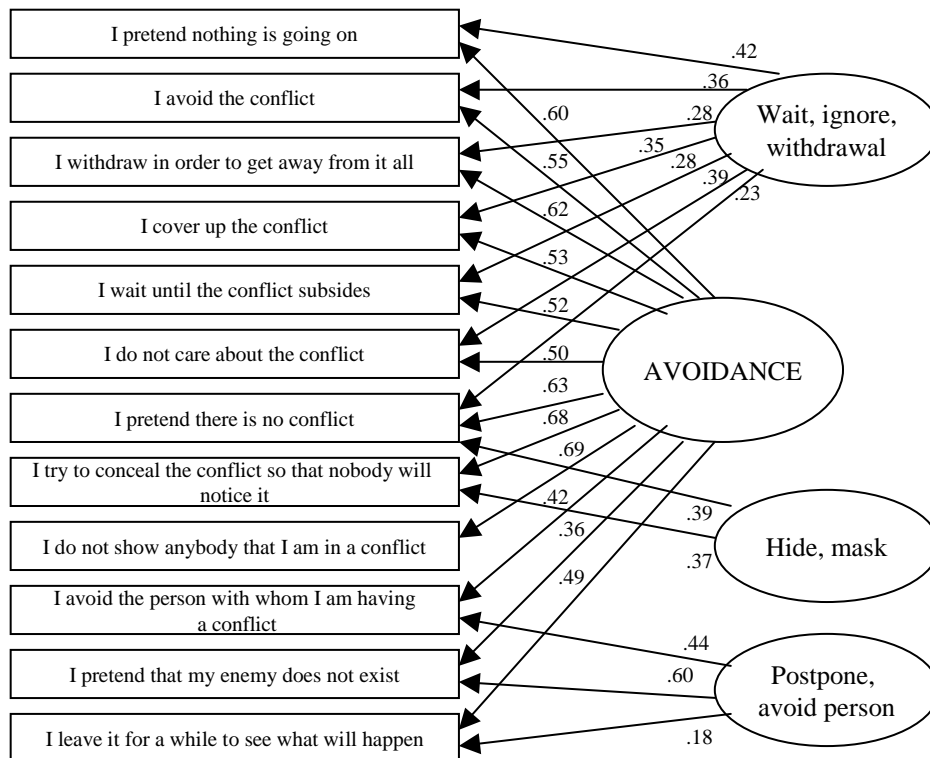
Figure 6.2. Avoiding measurement model (Chi-square=68; df=40; RMSEA= .032; GFI=.98)

The third specific factor is called *postpone or avoid person* and includes three items. The reliability analysis showed an alpha coefficient of only .60. If all items are put together into an avoidance scale the alpha is .84.
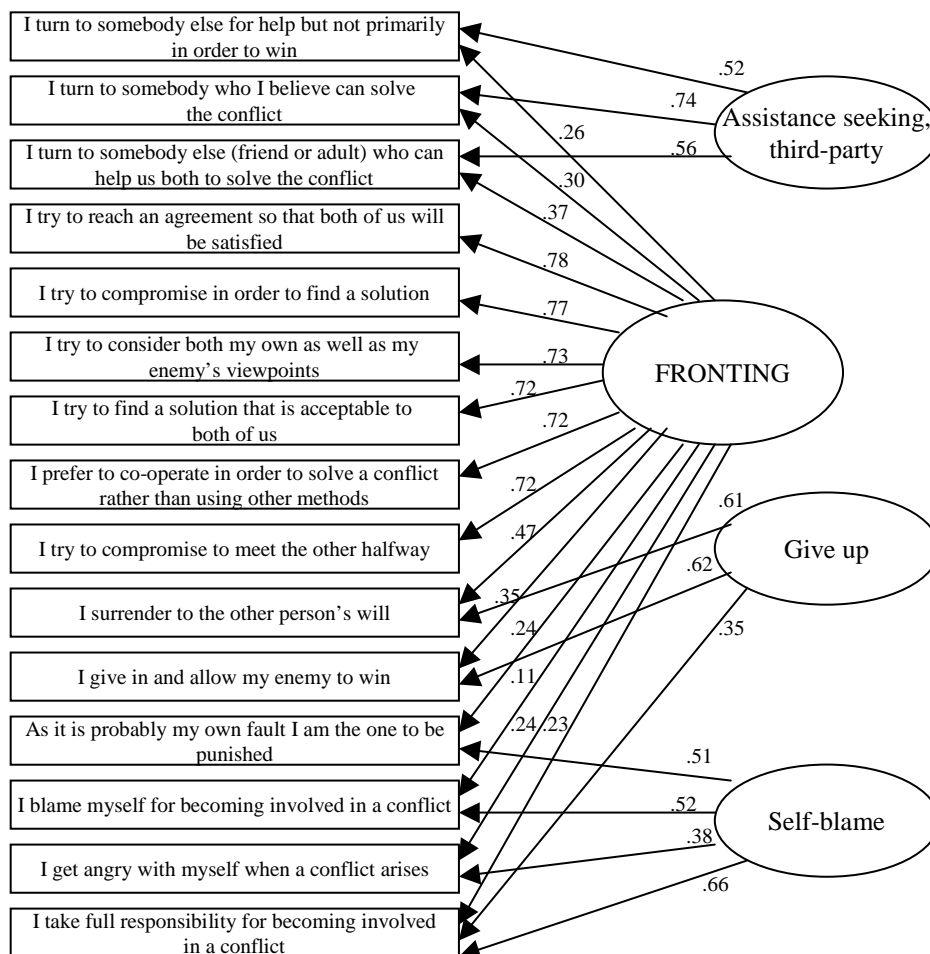
Figure 6.3. Fronting measurement model (Chi-square=130; df=78; RMSEA= .032; GFI=.97)

The third main factor of how students handle conflicts is called Fronting. It is a way of acting, however not aggressively. Also here we found three specific factors. These three factors are called *give up* (alpha=.70)*, assistance seeking/third party* (alpha=.72)*,* and *self-blame* (alpha=.67)*.* The fourth specific factor in the model in Figure 6.3, *win-win/co-operate/compromise* (alpha=.88) did not turn up as a specific factor. Instead, items belonging to this domain define for the most part the general factor. If all the 15 items are summarised into a scale, the reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) is .85.

328

Frequencies of different conflict handling strategies

One of the aims was also to study differences between boys and girls concerning both the structure of strategies and the frequencies of using these strategies. No differences could be found regarding the structure of strategies. Some differences could be found, however, when frequencies were studied.

There are three differences between boys and girls that are fairly large. A big difference becomes evident, as expected, concerning physical aggression and threats. Girls more seldom use this kind of strategy. As many as one third of all girls say that they never use any of these kinds of aggression mentioned in the test items. Instead, girls more often use some kind of fronting behaviour. The difference is big on items measuring win-win/co-operative/compromising behaviour.

Table 6.1. Differences between boys and girls regarding conflict hand-
ling strategies

| Factor | Boys, N=338 | | Girls, N=336 | | Eta-square |
	Mean	Std. dev.	Mean	Std. dev.	
Physical aggression	2.21	0.89	1.48	0.61	0.17
Psychological aggr.	2.42	0.91	2.01	0.90	0.05
Displaced aggression	2.48	1.09	2.57	1.13	0.00
Wait, ignore, etc.	2.58	0.80	2.52	0.78	0.00
Hide, mask	2.45	0.88	2.48	0.84	0.00
Postpone, avoid	2.52	0.80	2.68	0.83	0.01
Give up	2.15	0.85	2.31	0.90	0.01
Win-win, etc.	2.86	0.79	3.42	0.83	0.11
Ass. seeking, etc.	2.45	0.91	2.72	0.89	0.02
Self-blame	2.16	0.72	2.37	0.71	0.02

Another difference worth observing is that of psychological aggression. Girls do not use this strategy as much as boys do.

All other differences are rather small. Within the DRACON project we want to improve adolescents' strategies in conflict situations, try to

further reduce the frequency of confronting behaviour and stimulate the use of win-win/compromising strategies and third-party solutions.

In a follow-up study we were interested in studying the relationships between teacher competence, school attitudes and self-esteem as determining factors in conflict handling strategies. Of special interest to the project is to study the relationships between these three school factors on the one hand and the three styles of confronting and two styles of fronting behaviour on the other hand. Gender is also included as an independent factor. A number of indicators of teacher competence have been summarised into seven sub-scales: discipline and structured learning, subject knowledge, teaching skills, social competence, positive attitudes to students, feedback and individualised teaching and fairness. Attitudes to schooling have been measured using four indicators, as has self-esteem.
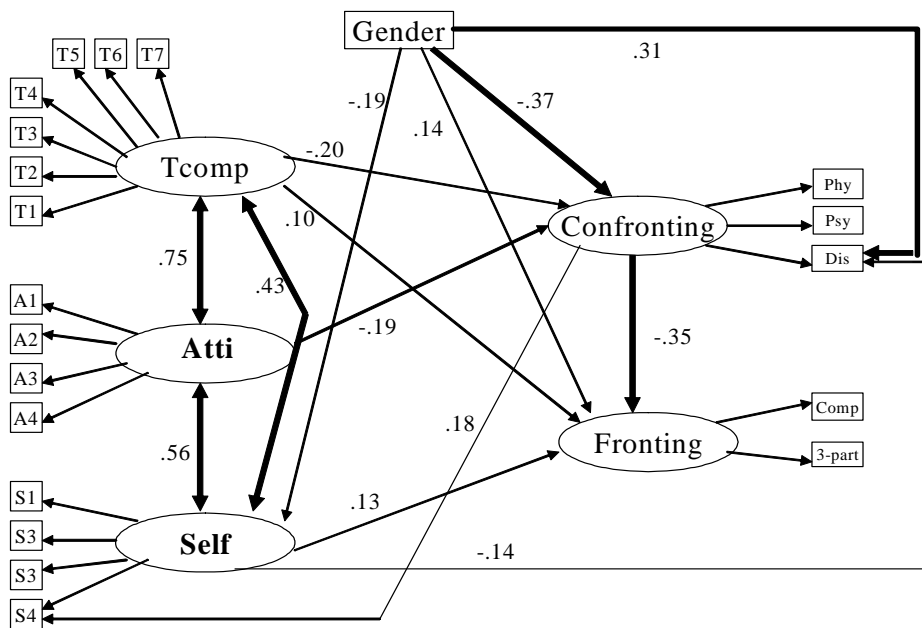

Figure 6.4. Result of a LISREL-analysis (N=551; Chi^2=179.4; df=106; RMSEA=.035)

There are clear causal relationships between teacher competence, school attitudes, self-esteem, gender and ways of handling conflicts.

The more positive students attitudes to schooling and teacher competence are, the less likely they are to display aggressive behaviour. In the same way, highly rated teacher competence and positive self-esteem among students result in more compromising behaviour. Obviously there is a negative relationship between confronting and fronting behaviour.

Girls display less confronting behaviour. When they act aggressively, this takes the form of frustration. Girls are more willing to compromise. Boys display greater self-confidence. Both boys and girls with low self-esteem tend to act with frustration in conflict situations.

The three factors teacher competence, school attitudes and self-esteem are highly correlated (as indicated by the two-sided arrows).

Discussion

In Swedish culture, conflict handling where violence is used to reach one's goals, is regarded as negative. As avoidance does not solve a conflict, it is also regarded as negative. The way handling conflicts are evaluated is, however, culture related (Allwood & Friberg, 1997). Contrary to Swedish culture, in Malaysia avoidance is accepted as a proper way of handling conflicts, although avoidance is sometimes suitable in a Swedish context. In Sweden we do not encourage avoidance, rather we prefer compromise-oriented strategies. However, avoidance is rather frequently used.

Within the fronting domain, two of the specific factors, *give up* and *self-blame*, can not be considered as adequate ways of handling conflicts, at least from a Swedish perspective. Swedish adolescents do not very often use assistance seeking and third party solutions. It may be strange that self-blame shows up together with items measuring compromising behaviour. However, it is a way of acting in a conflict situation and considering this, it is understandable that the factor shows up in this context. Boys and girls have somewhat different preferences when they find themselves in a conflict. Boys display more aggressive behaviour while girls more often use compromising alternatives.

The consistency in the study's results indicates that we have adequately covered the main ways of handling conflicts. The measuring instrument developed seems to be a very useful questionnaire in order to study the frequency of adolescents' conflict handling strategies. It is also useful as an evaluation instrument in experimental settings with

programmes aimed at improving adolescents' conflict handling strategies, aimed at developing third party and other solutions involving compromise and negotiation. The follow-up study has subsequently shown that students' conflict handling strategies are related to teacher competence, school attitudes and self-esteem.

The above survey study is based on self-reported data, i.e. the students' answers in writing; not on observations of real conflict situations. Due to the consistency of our results, we consider them to be reliable.

6.3   The DRACON programme – an action research approach

The Swedish DRACON project focuses on third-party roles, in particular the role of the mediator. Our ultimate aim has been to find out whether or not Grade 8 students, with no previous training in drama or conflict handling, would be able to take on the role of peer-mediators in real life conflicts by applying the drama methods learnt during the programme.

Constructing this type of programme for the training of mediators takes time. It has to be developed through an evolutionary process whereby each new trial needs to be corrected in view of errors made in previous trials. We performed six such studies before a final programme was developed.

Action research involves taking action to improve practice and systematically studying the effects of the action taken. In the practice setting, problems are described, possible solutions are identified and implemented, and then the process and outcome of change are evaluated (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). The goal is to generate practical knowledge relating directly to the problems specific to a setting. Practitioners are then able to learn about their practice in that setting and implement change in order to improve their practice.

Each study consists of a programme integrating drama and conflict work in a comprehensive classroom process. The programme aimed at accomplishing the following pedagogical tasks in a logical sequence:

1. To teach drama literacy, i.e. getting the students involved in and familiar with the language and ways of drama.

2. To use drama as a way of teaching conflict literacy, i.e. the basic concepts of conflict theory.

3. To use drama and conflict literacy to provide the students with opportunities to learn constructive ways of conflict handling both as direct parties as well as third parties (enhancement of the conflict competence of students).

4. Specifically to use drama and conflict literacy to learn peer-mediation.

5. Finally, to use peer teaching as a way of learning peer mediation.

In addition to developing and implementing a programme, the aim was also to study the pedagogical process by using different kinds of measurements. We wanted to know how the students' involvement and understanding of the languages of drama and conflict developed during the whole drama process and if there were any long-term effects of the programme both on the individual level and the level of the class itself. An important research question is to discern whether or not there are any critical moments in the pedagogical process at the group level. We were also interested in getting information about typical student conflicts and the ways these are handled by the students. Will the students themselves develop more constructive ways of handling conflicts simply by exploring a number of different strategies in conflict role-plays? Will the results of the classroom studies correspond to the findings of the survey study presented above?

It is important to realise that in our iterative approach with six research cycles everything evolved gradually, the programme as well as our research questions and our measurement techniques. As the six cycles spanned over a period of four years (1996-2000) the evolutionary process was also much affected by parallel processes in Malaysia and Australia.

The six studies aimed at the development of a class programme constitute only the first phase (Phase I) of the action research study. It was followed by a second phase (Phase II) starting in 2001, in which efforts were made to implement the programme in two schools. We wanted to know if the programme worked well when made compulsory and taken over by the schools themselves. This phase required much more attention in regard to decision-making structures and selection of schools and classes. Under what conditions would it be possible to create a

long-term commitment to the DRACON programme in the school and would it work well under the new conditions?

Table 6.2. Main focus and content in the process of developing and implementing the programme in schools

Study	Focus and content
	Phase I. Developing a programme in the class
1	Design and try-out a preliminary programme (including forum-theatre and self-confrontation).
2	Adding teaching of conflict literacy by lecturing.
3	Developing conflict literacy by reflecting on the role-play (that is to say by integrating the two languages).
4	Adding training of peer-mediation.
5	Study if and how the programme works with teachers.
6	Further develop the programme with teachers and relate drama exercises more explicitly to conflict management.
	Phase II. Efforts to implement the programme in schools
7	First step in implementing the programme at Linden School (one class).
8	First step in implementing the programme at Birch School (one class).
9	Second step in implementing the programme with the involved teachers from Linden School and Birch School.

6.4   Developing a classroom programme

The first phase in our study was to design a programme for dealing with conflicts through drama work and to test if the programme works in a few school classes. This resulted in six studies.

6.4.1   Six classroom studies

The first study was a single-day workshop with university students in 1996, supervised by five researchers within the field of conflict-management, drama and education. The participants attended a five-month conflict resolution course and this study was conducted two

months into the course. The students displayed more knowledge of the language of conflict and less knowledge of the language of drama.

Table 6.3. Participants involved in the DRACON process in phase I

Study	School	Year	Days	Participants	Female/Male
1	Univ	1996	1 day	Univ. stud.	14/10
2	Pine	1998	3 days	Grade 8 stud.	6/11
3	Linden	1998	5 ½ days	Grade 8 stud.	10/2
4	Linden	1999	5 ½ days	Grade 8 stud.	4/5
5	All-Swe*	1999	5 days	Teachers	11/0
6	All-Swe*	2000	5 days	Teachers	14/2

   * = teachers invited from the whole of Sweden

Self-confrontation using video-recordings was new to our study. The second innovation was a modified form of Forum-theatre, focusing on third-party interventions. The students' showed great involvement in the conflict-related plays and the process of self-confrontation and video recording was successful. We also experimented with other methods of data gathering such as diaries and field notes.

The next study (Study 2) was extended into a three-day programme with Grade 8 students. This programme was carried out in 1998, under the supervision of three researchers. Here the teaching of conflict literacy was introduced into the programme.

Pine school is situated in the suburbs of an industrial town and has a predominantly working-class population. Drama, especially role-plays, was able to captivate the interest of the six girls and eleven boys and during the exercises they displayed concentration, motivation and involvement. They were however less interested in reflecting over and discussing the programme. From this, the Swedish team concluded that conflict literacy should not be taught in the usual cognitive and teacher-centred way. Every time the teenagers were forced into this kind of situation their interest faded.

Several of the conflict situations in the role-plays were related to conflicts between teachers and students. Our intervention at this school raised some ethical issues as the role-plays revealed some rather serious

teacher-student problems in the class (these are explained further in the chapter on Ethics).

Data gathered from Study 2 consists of video recordings, diaries, field notes and paintings. Interviews conducted four months after the programme were added in order to find out if the programme had had any lasting effects. This was done in an attempt to develop evaluation instruments for forthcoming studies.

Six months later Study 3 was carried out at Linden School, in a town with a predominantly middle-class population. At this newly built school the environment seemed positive and pleasant. The group consisted of volunteers from Grade 8, ten girls and two boys, some of which had experience of drama. Since our specific interest was to derive the theory of conflict from reflections on relevant drama exercises, the programme was extended to five (half) days. The students enjoyed drama and performed a successful presentation for the whole Grade 8 class. Most of the plays constructed by the students were related to conflicts at home with parents or with friends. Linden school students experienced many cordial interactions, were concentrated and showed an interest in the subject.

Study 4 was conducted at the same school as in Study 3 (Linden), with five boys and four girls as volunteers. A presentation of the programme had been given to the students two weeks prior to the study. The five-day workshop, with the weekend in-between, made the process less stressful for the participants.

The fifth day focused on the training of peer-mediation. This implies teaching teenagers about the roles they can take in different conflict situations, and particularly about the role of the impartial non-coercive third party. Interestingly, the students seemed open for understanding the role of the mediator after four days of drama work. Some students had already tried the role spontaneously in the preceding forum plays.

Teaching peer-mediation was an innovative experience. The students experienced a sense of achievement and fulfilment through participation in the programme.

For future development and use of the programme it was essential to involve adult participants (Study 5). The participants, mainly drama-pedagogues and teachers, took part in the same programme as the 8th Grade teenagers in Study 4. The main aim was to study how the programme worked with teachers, as they would be responsible for manag-

336

ing the programme if it became integrated in the school system. The programme proved a great success - on a professional as well as personal level. However, our impression is that the students learn the content of the programme even quicker than the teachers. Teenagers tend to simplify the theories and grasp the underlying structure more easily. The programme was applied a second time with other adult participants over a period of five (whole) days. Study 6 was carried out in the same way as Study 5, with only some minor changes.

The programme has thus shown itself to be applicable to both teenagers and adults.

6.4.2   Description of the programme

The DRACON classroom programme consists of the following stages:
1. Stage I   Building a positive working environment.
2. Stage II Learning the languages of drama and conflict.
3. Stage III Constructing and performing conflict role-plays.
4. Stage IV Interventions in role-plays (video-recorded).
5. Stage V Self-confrontation and analysis of video-recordings.
6. Stage VI Role-playing peer-mediation.
7. Stage VII   Peer teaching (added in Phase II, Implementation of the programme).
8. Stage VIII Evaluation.

The programme starts by building a working environment and recreates this context every morning by different warming-up exercises (Stage I). Each day is similarly structured – sitting on chairs in a circle so that everyone can see each other. The day ends in the same way by writing diaries and listening to each individual describing his/her experiences of the day. A working contract concerning work principles has to be agreed upon early in the programme. As personal conflict experiences are disclosed, the participants need to feel assured that their conflicts will not be discussed outside the group.

As a starting point for learning conflict literacy (Stage II), the students (in groups of four or five) are asked to describe a conflict they have personally been involved in. When the conflicts are described, everyone in each group paints something related to what they remem-

ber about the conflicts of the others. These paintings are exhibited and used for analysing the kinds of roles different parties take in a conflict situation, as well as to ascertain the power balance in conflicts (i.e. symmetrical or asymmetrical conflicts).

At the end of the first day the students (in groups of four or five) plan and act out conflict situations concerning school, family, leisure time or other kinds of conflicts. They are asked to change names and not to play themselves in order to distance themselves from real life. The material provided by the improvisations is used with the aim to enhance the understanding of conflicts (Stage III).

On the second day, one painting from each group is chosen and analysed in detail, so that different levels of conflict can be revealed. The ABC-theory is introduced. Several short role-plays (in pairs) about typical conflicts that teenagers experience are focused on, in view of how conflicts escalate. From the basic reactions on fight, freeze and flee (FFF), additional perspectives are gained by relating the work to five different conflict-handling styles symbolised by five animals: the lion, camel, tortoise, fox and owl. A sequence of role-plays exemplifying the different conflict styles are executed and discussed.

During the third day the concept of third party is introduced by a non-verbal statue exercise in groups of three. A modified form of Forum Theatre is introduced (Boal, 1979). Instead of focussing on the oppressed person in the play, third-party interventions are applied. Basic groups of four or five students construct a role-play where the conflict escalates from contradictions about the content (C) via negative attitude (A) towards negative behaviour (B), stopping when the situation is at its worst. The role-play is rehearsed and performed in front of the class. After every conflict play, questions about who the actors were, what the conflict was about and how the conflict escalated are directed at the audience. After this analysis the acting group gets advice from the audience on how to clarify their performance. The third day ends with video-recordings of the rehearsed plays and by looking at the films together.

On the fourth day the experiment with third-party interventions starts and each intervention is video-recorded (Stage IV). The rules for the interventions are that everyone in the audience can stop the play at any time, take the role of one of the subsidiary actors or outsiders or of an invented but possible person (e.g. a neighbour) and act in the conflict in order to de-escalate it. The other parties in the play re-

act/respond in the way they believe their role-person would have done in real life. As long as the students have ideas about third-party interventions they are encouraged to act them out and each intervention is video-recorded.

Table 6.4. Description of the programme, DRACON session 1-12

DRACON Session	Content	Stage
1	Getting to know one another Verbal contract Painting a conflict Different parties in a conflict	I, II
2	ABC-model – escalation and de-escalation Symmetric and asymmetric conflicts	I, II
3	Continuing the ABC-model FFF-theory Role-plays in couples related to Basic Strategies for Handling Conflicts	I, II
4	Conflict styles: lion, turtle, camel, fox and owl	I, II
5	Third-party sculptures Role plays: escalated conflicts - videotaped	I, II, III
6	Interventions in the conflicts - videotaped	I, II, IV
7	Analysis of video-recorded interventions in conflicts	I, II, V
8	Analysis of four different third parties. Preparation for mediation	I, II, V
9	Training in mediation in a fictive conflict	I, II,VI
10	Preparation for peer teaching in Grade 7	I, II,VII
11	Peer teaching in Grade 7	I, II,VII
12	Evaluation – closure.	I, II,VIII

The next step is the analysis of all the interventions. By looking at one intervention at a time a kind of self-confrontation becomes apparent (Stage V). The aim of self-confrontation is to enable the students to understand, through reference to their own experiences, what kinds of third-party intervention that promote a win-win solution. As a problem-

solving conflict style does not come easily to teenagers, many interventions are necessary before the students realise that the third party needs to be neutral and not allied to one of the principal actors provided the conflict is a symmetrical one.

The fifth day is devoted to mediation (Stage VI). It starts with exercises about status in relationships, effects of body language (Johnstone, 1979) and training in active listening, followed by two dramatic situations played by the supervisors about two neighbours in a dispute about a garage building. In groups of three they try out a mediation session and take on the parts of the two neighbours and a neutral mediator. Lose-win, win-lose and win-win solutions are discussed.

As described earlier, the final programme was developed during the six studies carried out between 1996-2000. Stage VII (Peer teaching) was inspired by the Brisbane team and added in Phase II; it was not tried in Phase I.

The last session is devoted to different forms of evaluation such as diaries, paintings etc. Proper closure of the programme is important, as is a satisfactory leave-taking of one another (Stage VIII).

The programme was developed from one day to a period of five days. In Phase II we wanted to implement the programme in schools during a whole school term: it therefore seemed suitable to divide the programme into 12 sessions with each session lasting for 100 minutes.

6.4.3   Analysis and discussion

The Swedish project uses almost all the methods of documentation described in the introductory chapter. So far, video-recordings of role-performances have turned out to be the major source of data for drawing conclusions about the nature of teenager's conflict handling, and diaries the major source for analysing students' involvement in the process.

The DRACON process described above offers many opportunities for introducing indicators at different stages of the classroom process. Effect-measures require tests before and after our interventions. Ideally, the following stages of measurements could be used in DRACON work with the presented programme (Table 6.5).

We have not reached more than about half of the potential measurements described in the table above. The reason for this is that the pro-

gramme evolved slowly and was not readymade from the beginning. The following analysis is based on four different sources of data: diaries, paintings, video-recordings and post-interviews.

Table 6.5. Ideal scheme for measurements at different stages of a classroom study

Point measurement	Data-gathering	Measured variables	Method of analysis
Choice of schools and classes	Interviews with headmaster and teachers, questionnaires, sociometrical test of class (only performed in phase II)	School and class variables, such as catchment area, teaching models, frequency and types of conflicts, attitudes, structure of class	Background analysis
Classroom process in general	Observations, diaries, paintings	Student involvement and understanding	Process and effect analysis
Students conflict stories	Written stories and audio recordings	Properties of conflicts	Type and frequency analysis
Conflict role-plays	Video recordings	Properties of conflicts	Type analysis, process analysis
Interventions in conflict role-plays	Video recordings	Properties of interventions	Type analysis
Self-confrontation	Audio recordings (not performed)	Intentions, strategies and perceived effects of interventions	Type and process analysis
Peer teaching	Video-recordings, diaries (only performed in Phase II)	Effectiveness of teaching	Effect analysis
After the programme	Interviews and questionnaires	Effects of the programme	Effect analysis

Analysis of diaries

The aim of using diaries was to describe how "drama in training" is individually experienced by students in Grade 8. The analysis of data is based on student diaries written during their participation in the drama

programme. Ten minutes were set aside for diary writing and the diaries were collected after each day's training session. All the student diaries have been carefully documented in Studies 2, 3 and 4.

Diary instructions were used to encourage the students to write down their thoughts, reactions, feelings and experiences from the drama experiences throughout the day. The reason for using instructions was based upon positive experiences from a previous study in nursing education as well as the desire for an openness that would capture the participants' direct, spontaneous and immediate experiences.

In the Swedish DRACON project the motivation to use diaries was to get the students to work through different experiences, develop a reflective standpoint, develop the ability to document events as well as be able to share the data material with others.

Participants from three student groups (Study 2, 3 and 4), a total of 38 students (20 females and 18 males) wrote diaries. Participants in Study 2 were students from Pine School, situated in the suburb of an industrial town with a predominantly working-class population. Participants in Studies 3 and 4 were students from Linden School, situated in a town with a predominantly middle-class population. As the students had different backgrounds, and the content of the programme is different, the data collected has been handled and analysed separately. The same categories have been used in both schools. As the programme was developed in Study 4 the analysis will focus more on this study. It is important to note that it is the student's experience that has been categorised, not the person.

Three different categories of content emerged: *positive expression*, *negative expression* and *reflection*. Within these categories, sub-categories have been constructed that represent qualitatively different ways of experiencing the drama programme.

The first category, *positive expression*, concentrates on the positive experiences of the students and their participation in the programme. The sub-category "the programme is fun", illustrates what, how and in which way the programme has been a positive experience for the students. For example, acting out a play before the camera and participating in different group activities during the session, is perceived of as being fun.

> I had so much fun today acting on stage and participating in other activities. It is nice to work in a group. (Markus, Day 1)

342

> Today was very interesting. It was the most enjoyable day. The other days have also been fun, but today was a hit. The whole week has been a lot of fun… (Fanny, Day 5)

The second category, *negative expression*, focuses on negative experiences. There are no negative expressions related to the fifth day, which is the final day of the programme. Some examples from the sub-category "the programme is boring" are as follows:

> It was nagging and boring, but we enjoyed the play. (Cecilia, Day 1)

> … I think there were too few games. It was too serious. (Karen, Day 2)

The sub-category "theory is boring", contains general negative expressions related to theory. Students prefer more to have more role-plays and games and lesser theory.

> … I would like more role-plays and games. I think it is boring when we sit and talk! (Karen, Day 1)

> We watched the film we had recorded. Then we went through things on the blackboard. That was a bit boring. (Elin, Day 4)

The third category, *reflection*, includes experiences of how the students have reflected on the content of the programme, i.e. on the languages of drama and conflict. Some students make suggestions as to what they would prefer to be included in the programme, e.g. performing a play. One student is surprised that her feelings have been positive although the content has been about conflicts. In addition, the sub-category "reflection on the content" contains statements such as:

> It has been fun today, but I expected a play with a manuscript. We have been able to do things together today which is good. The short plays were OK but I think we should create a play together and then perform it. My thoughts about today are that it has been fun, although a little tiring so that it has been difficult to concentrate… (Cecilia, Day 1)

> I regret that I went to the mathematics class instead of being here during the whole session to create and solve conflicts. (Gustav, Day 1)

The following statements are about the sub-category that expresses reflection on the understanding of the languages of drama and conflict, such as getting to know each other better by sitting in a circle talking.

Several students express the view that they have learnt a lot during this period.

> Today we worked in many groups, created different drama performances and learned how to manage different conflict situations, for example avoiding or starting a fight. (Elin, Day 2)

> … I participated in a mediator training programme and an imaginary trip to Stockholm. It was informative, educational and fun… (Gustav, Day 5)

The contents of the diaries indicate the ways in which the researchers have succeeded in building up a functioning classroom context. By reading the diaries after each drama session the drama pedagogue is given important information, knowledge and indications as to how the students have experienced the content. This information is used in planning for the next session. Sometimes students disclose feelings and thoughts that are not evident during the drama session. This may give the teacher a greater understanding as to the motives and behaviour of a specific student; it may also give the teacher ideas of how to alter some of the content of the programme. Some students wrote down rather personal thoughts as well as drew pictures and sent greetings to the teacher. Generally, girls wrote more in their diaries than the boys.

Analysis of the diaries from Study 4 indicates that it is possible to integrate the languages of drama and conflict and that co-operation between the researchers from drama as well as conflict handling is a desirable requisite towards this end.

Based on the diary analysis from the three studies, the pedagogical implications can be described as follows:

- Most students enjoyed the warming-up exercises, games, constructing plays, theatre, video-recordings and public performance, but found conflict theory difficult, sometimes boring, of least interest and therefore hard to concentrate on.

- The students preferred working in small groups and choosing their own participants. Working with friends in groups gave them more courage.

- Three days were very short for the process; some students never found time to understand the programme fully. Five (half) days including a weekend break are more desirable in order to develop the process in a satisfactory way.

344

Analysis of video recordings

To date video recordings constitute our main source of data. As indicated above they give us a lot of information about the spontaneous conflict behaviour of Grade 8 students as well as whether or not the students learn something from participation in the drama programme. Video recordings can illuminate questions such as:

- What are the typical parties in students' conflicts?
- What are the conflicts about?
- How do they escalate?
- What are the most common conflict handling strategies?
- Do students learn more constructive ways of handling conflicts by trying different types of interventions in conflict role-plays?

We have found drama to be an excellent method of eliciting information about teenager's conflicts. When a safe space has been developed the students are more than willing to report on their conflicts in a drama context and to display properties of the conflicts in role-plays. However there are strong reasons to believe that they still censor some of their most sensitive conflicts. Despite this they are willing to disclose information about fairly serious conflicts, for instance violent conflicts between teachers and students, provided the class-teacher is not present in the room.

Two conflict handling styles are dominant: the lion, who is concerned only with reaching his own goals in a conflict situation and the turtle, who avoids conflict. The styles of the camel (adapting to the other), the fox (compromising) and the owl (searching for win-win solutions) are not as common. Even those who behave like camels would like to be lions! This also seems to hold for some girls: "We have to fight in order to be respected!"

The socially favoured style in Sweden is compromise, which is generally believed to be an ideal way of handling conflicts among adults. Grade 8 students seem to be at a critical turning point in their lives. They are at the point of discovering the limits of an egocentric approach in social relations, focussing mainly on their own interests, which leads to power struggles in conflicts. At this point the potential for a tremendous increase in social competence is possible. The DRA-CON programme can speed up this process by letting the students ex-

periment with the lion style, playing the lion against all the other styles and studying the outcomes.

To the extent that the role-plays chosen by the students reflect real-life conflicts, the video-recordings show that anger, violence and name-calling are common in adolescent conflicts. The conflicts are of two kinds: symmetrical and asymmetrical. In an asymmetrical conflict there is a power imbalance between the top dog and the underdog, e.g. teacher-pupil or parent-child relationships. The issues in this type of conflict are often authority and freedom. Interestingly enough violence is often perceived as being initiated by the top dog. This can be explained by the fact that the conflicts have been selected by the under-dog (the teenager). Symmetrical conflicts often occur between three or more peers. The issue often entails "teasing" or "talking trash about the other" with coalition formations of the type "two against one". In symmetrical conflicts, anger, violence and name-calling occur frequently.

How do Grade 8 students act if they are given the opportunity of intervening and taking a role in a conflict that is unfolding in front of their eyes? In general they act differently in symmetrical and asymmetrical conflicts. In the latter type they often take the role of a subsidiary actor and form an alliance against the top dog (teacher, parent, older sister or brother). Most of the time their action reinforces the power struggle and escalates the conflict contrary to their own intentions as well as to the instructions given. They are more successful in dealing with symmetrical conflicts, i.e. peer conflicts. The few cases when they spontaneously take the role of a neutral third party occur in peer conflicts where they sometimes manage to de-escalate the conflict by diversion tactics: "Let us do something else instead!"

Analysis of post-interviews

In order to understand the experienced effects of the drama programme, eight students (three girls and five boys) were interviewed by an independent researcher[3] (Study 4). The interviews were taped and transcribed. The texts were analysed with reference to *the meaning of the student's experience of participation* during the five-day programme.

---

[3] A summary of an interview study by Karin Dahlberg (1999) from an unpublished paper entitled "Student's experiences of participation during the five-day programme".

The first interview question was related to what the students remembered from the drama situations, i.e. from their participation in the DRACON classroom process.

It is difficult to conclude with any certainty whether or not the students have really grasped the meaning of the exercises. Sometimes they repeated phrases and words they learned during the exercise. However, at specific times and with particular exercises they were able to describe the meaning. As one boy said, they learned "how to react" in situations of conflict. One girl described the theoretical information they received about "the conflict stair". During the interview she explained that the conflict was about a certain issue, and that the conflict could escalate or deescalate. Another girl said that she was surprised to hear that conflicts work that way. "I have never thought about that before". She was however able to make connections between her own lived experiences and the conflict situation.

Another girl described a play where there was an owl, a camel, a tiger and a turtle. From this play she learned that it is valuable if a third person, "an owl", comes into the picture, and helps the first two people to solve the conflict. If there are only two involved in the conflict, it is easy for one to take over, for them to shout at each other, or one of them to run away. The owl can help them to listen and talk to each other.

It is evident that the drama experiences were very pleasant and fun for all eight students. When we talked about something sad or something they did not particularly like, they brightened up and smiled when they suddenly remembered a certain role-play or some other drama exercise. Pleasant memories of the drama exercises can also be related to the fact that they all liked the drama teachers very much. All the interviewees had something positive to say about them.

Some of the students said that the drama exercises helped them get to know each other better and in new ways. One of the boys said that he had made friends with someone he didn't consider it fun to be with previously.

Trusting one another is important for everyday life as well as for the outcome of the drama exercises. One kind of exercise that touches upon this issue is the talk about conflicts. One girl explained that they were expected to choose a conflict situation from their own lives to present to the group, in order to be able to reflect upon it afterwards. This was

not easy to do; the girl said that it was a good thing that the group had an agreement that whatever happened, it would not be discussed with anyone outside the group. Having a group contract, she said, was important. It made her feel safe.

An important question is, of course, if the drama programme in any way has affected these students. It is natural to wonder whether or not they have been changed/transformed in any way. Have they, for example, become better at handling conflicts after partaking of the drama situations?

According to the students there seems to be a new kind of understanding of conflicts. They recognize events in a new way after the experience of the drama exercises. When learning more and acquiring new knowledge they have had to revise what they previously learned. They frequently spoke about the knowledge they had now acquired, which they would be able to use in the future. However, the students themselves are unable to give specific examples of any changed situation at school after the completion of the drama programme.

6.4.4 Conclusions - Phase I

In Phase 1 our intentions have been to develop a well-functioning programme in order to increase teenagers' capacities for handling conflicts, to examine what kinds of conflicts teenagers usually have and whether or not drama can be used in order to help teenagers understand the nature of conflicts.

In our studies we observed that theoretical studies are seldom experienced as fun by this age group. However, the DRACON schoolroom process engages the students in direct drama work as well as in reflections about conflicts presented through drama. Drama is experienced as fun and drama permits learning by having fun. In one week an ordinary class can reach such a high level of understanding the nature of conflicts that some students are able to perform well as peer mediators in conflict role-plays. The involvement of the students usually increases over time. Also, students who have low status in the class may turn out to be good at drama. As such, drama offers them the unexpected opportunity of being seen and appreciated by their classmates.

Of relevance has been to discover whether or not drama can be used as a method of learning skills that students can apply to real life con-

flicts. If a student participates in the DRACON programme, will it change the way he/she deals with his/her own conflicts after the programme? Will it transform the class he/she belongs to or even the school? On this point our data is inconclusive. Post-interviews from Pine School (Study 2) indicate that many of the students did not understand what the programme was about. Although we were able to elicit some information about their conflicts, it should be noted that their answers (when asked about what they had learnt), are not completely unambiguous. One of the girls' in the post-interview described how she, due to new knowledge gained, was able to manage a conflict with her mother in quite a new way. Taking into account that Study 2 comprised only three days of teaching about conflicts, the outcome seems promising.

The students at Linden School (Studies 3 and 4) gave a completely different picture. They frequently spoke about the new knowledge they had acquired but gave no real indication that their behaviour in regard to conflicts had actually changed. The pre-and post-questionnaires showed no differences but this can be because of the insensitivity of the measuring instruments. In one of the post-interviews a girl describes how to act as a mediator, but cognitive understanding does not guarantee transference to real life.

Conclusions and lessons learned from Phase I can be summarised as follows:

- During the first Phase (Study 1-6) we developed and tested a step by step programme, aimed at teaching teenagers about conflicts and conflict handling through the use of drama. When critical moments in the classroom process became evident, changes in the content or in the order of exercises were made.

- The students became increasingly satisfied as the different studies progressed. The programme was elaborated until mediation was concluded in Study 4. An overall conclusion of the post interview (Study 4) was that the students gave a very positive picture of the drama experience. When asked to tell about their experiences they exclusively mentioned positive ones. Their bodily expressions during the interview supported this understanding as they all looked bright and alert when talking about the drama meetings. It is worth noting that the students were free to choose between participating in

Studies 3 and 4 or to do ordinary schoolwork. That this choice was voluntary seems to have influenced the positive outcome.

- We have been able to register great congruence between the kinds of conflicts the teenagers have chosen to dramatise and the ones frequently represented in the survey study.

- The students have succeeded in becoming familiar with the drama language, enhancing their interest in dealing with different ways of de-escalating conflicts. They have learnt from their own experimenting through interventions in conflict plays.

- The students have shown an increasing understanding of conflicts and a growing awareness of constructive conflict handling and peer mediation. To a limited degree it has been possible to prove long-term effects on an individual level. This has not been possible on the group level, due to a lack of relevant measurements as well as to the small amount of students voluntary participating in the programme.

- The programme has proved to be advanced enough to succeed in teaching teachers and drama pedagogues about conflict handling in a satisfactory way.

6.5   Implementing the programme in two schools

The possibility of testing and implementing the programme in schools appeared in the beginning of 2002 (Phase II of the action research study, see Table 6.2). Two schools were chosen: Linden School (Study 7) and Birch School (Study 8). Study 9 involved running the programme with teachers at these schools. The aims of Phase II were:

- To make the programme a whole class approach spread over a whole school term (compulsory attendance of students).

- To add peer teaching to the programme.

- To evaluate the effects of the programme by pre- and post testing on an individual, class and school level (questionnaires, interviews, sociometric data etc).

- To identify some conditions for successful implementation of the programme in schools (by comparison and reference to how implementation has been carried out in two fairly different schools in our study).

- To implement the programme in a whole school, making the school responsible for the management of the DRACON process after introduction of the programme in one class.

It should be emphasised that the programme differs from the earlier ones (Phase I) in several important ways. Firstly, it was spread over a whole school term. Secondly, peer teaching was included at the end of the programme. Thirdly and most important, participation was intended to be compulsory for all the students in the selected class.

The programme was re-organised to be taught during 12 sessions à 100 minutes, including one session to prepare and one to implement peer teaching. As mentioned earlier, the programme consists of eight (VIII) stages (see section 6.4.2). As peer teaching (Stage VII) in Brisbane had proved so successful, it was added in Phase II as an additional tool.

In the earlier studies (Phase I) students had been recruited more or less on a self-selected base. Would the positive results obtained during conditions of voluntary participation be maintained during conditions of compulsory participation? The reader is reminded that we are here working with students who have little or no previous training in drama and conflict handling.

6.5.1 Background and preparation

Two schools were chosen, Linden School and Birch School. Linden School seemed at first to be a fairly successful school with a good working climate. We chose this school due to previous positive experience; the headmaster, who had some training in drama, supported the DRACON programme strongly. We therefore thought that implementation in this case would be easier. The school is situated in a town with a predominantly middle-class population.

In a northern province of Sweden twenty-six schools were offered to take part in the project. Only two schools were seriously interested and willing to accept the conditions for participation. One of these was chosen as it included Swedish students as well as students from recently immigrated families. The population of the catchment area is predominantly working class. The school had already experienced and been able to solve some problems concerning students' conflicts, absentee-

ism, aggressive behaviour etc. We expected the implementation of the programme at Birch School to be more difficult than at Linden School.

Table 6.6. Participants involved in Phase II

Study	School	Year	Time	Participants	Female/male
7	Linden	2002	12 à 100 min	Grade 8 stud.	3/11
8	Birch	2002	12 à 80 min	Grade 8 stud.	5/4
9	Linden + Birch	2002	5 days	Teachers	11/5

In both schools the DRACON team started with a meeting with the headmaster, who accepted the following agreements:

- The school should be committed to the DRACON process for at least two terms and not be involved in any similar project during this time.

- After consultation with relevant actors (staff, parents and students) the school board would be responsible for the selection of one Grade 8 class for a DRACON programme/process of 12 sessions à 100 minutes – the programme/process to be directed by the DRACON team.

- The headmaster and the class teacher should be responsible for scheduling the programme in an appropriate way with respect to localities, timing and other facilities. The programme should be integrated in the regular curriculum and not compete with other subjects chosen freely by the students.

- The school staff and the students should be available for interviews and other forms of data collection.

- One staff member should assist the DRACON team during the first term.

- The school should be able to conduct the programme independently in all Grade 8 classes during the second term, with supervision from the DRACON team.

- The staff involved should take part in DRACON courses in order to be able to conduct the DRACON programme on their own.

The schools

Birch School is a small school situated north of Stockholm on the outskirts of a middle-sized industrial town. In total there are 260 students including only one class for every grade for students 6-15/16 years old. The staff consists of 25 teachers and a school counsellor employed as a consultant. The majority of the teachers in Grades 6-9 had more than 10 years of teaching experience and enjoyed working together. At Birch School every teacher seemed to know every child and there was a high degree of social control and direct conflict handling in the classrooms and corridors.

Linden School is a rather big school including several classes for every grade for students 6–15/16 years old. In total there are 516 students. The staff consists of 34 teachers, 3 headmasters, a school counsellor and a school nurse as consultant.

In order to gain understanding of the structural preconditions and to gain assurance that the agreements for the project were accepted, interviews were conducted before the programme started at both schools.

At Birch School the headmaster, the class-teachers (one female and one male) and the school counsellor were interviewed. It was decided that the school hostess should give assistance during certain sessions. However, the female class teacher offered to assist if there appeared to be a need for it. The two class teachers strongly supported the DRACON project, as did the headmaster who declared how important the social climate in the classroom is for learning. He stressed the responsibility of the school to intervene when signs of bullying appear and to train conflict handling as a compulsory feature in the school. Although the school had good relations with the parents, his opinion was that it was unnecessary to involve the parents in the project. The parents and the Parent-School organisation were therefore not informed, as was the case at Linden School. At Birch School there seemed to be a stable and good school climate.

At Linden School we started with a planning and information meeting with the school managers. Even at this school, the managers expressed a strong commitment to participate in the project. After the introduction we conducted an individual interview with the headmaster and the school counsellor as well as a focus-group interview with teachers related to the DRACON class. As there where two Grade 8 classes the headmaster had decided which of the two would participate.

353

Unfortunately, both the class teacher and the students felt that they were forced into the project. It was decided that the school counsellor was the one to assist the DRACON sessions. In spite of several meetings with parents and teachers, where information about the DRACON project was given, a negative attitude and several logistic problems (schedule and classroom) continued to occur. Furthermore the DRACON sessions were competing with lessons chosen freely by the students. These problems were not solved and a DRACON team meeting was held. We however decided to continue as we thought there was still much to be learned from this study, e.g. under what conditions the DRACON programme might or might not work.

The classes

The class at Birch School consisted of fifteen students, eleven boys and four girls. Six of the boys were immigrants – three from former Yugoslavia; the others were Kurds from Syria, Turkey and Iraq. The group of immigrant boys influenced interaction due to their numbers and their sense of group loyalty. According to the class teachers there was a hierarchy among them, especially in the group of Kurds, but this was not evident during the DRACON sessions. All the immigrant boys participated frequently. At Birch School when conflict styles were focused, signs of interests in expressing ethnical dilemmas appeared for the first time in DRACON Sweden. One subgroup consisted of three Swedish boys with different kinds of diverging behaviour and with a seemingly low self-esteem and low status. One of them was exposed to different kinds of negative comments from the others. Another boy was very unwilling to participate but did so, however complaining most of the time. One of the girls was absent from every DRACON lesson except one, when the female class teacher accompanied her. The remaining small group of three girls kept together but were not afraid of interacting with the boys.

The class at Linden School consisted of twenty-four students (nine girls and fifteen boys). A couple of the boys had problems with absenteeism and they participated as they wished during ordinary class as well as in the DRACON class. There was one subgroup of students with intellectual interests who seemed to dominate the rest. The students were of the opinion that the climate in the classroom was already good, and acted strongly against participation in the DRACON project. This influenced their attitudes negatively. They expressed opinions

such as: "Why didn't you ask us if we were interested in DRACON or not?", "Some of the drama exercises are only for small children " and "We can't learn anything new about conflicts that we don't already know by participating in DRACON". However, the students were fully engaged in most of the role-plays and video recordings despite massive negative attitudes, which evidently contradicted their behaviour in practice. We therefore believed for a long time that their attitudes would change. However, the situation did not improve, the logistic problems got worse, some of the students dropped off and we were given information about a bigger management crises going on at the school. At the eighth DRACON session it was decided to make the remaining sessions (9-12) voluntary. Out of twenty-four at the outset only nine students completed the programme and participated in mediation training and peer teaching (sessions 9-12).

The programme with peer teaching

The programme as described in section 6.4.2 was used, this time with peer teaching. With some help from the staff the students organised a peer-teaching lesson at both schools. All were involved in some kind of teaching activities. At Birch School the class was divided into two groups, with 40 minutes teaching in each group. After an introduction with games and improvisations about conflicts, the students were eager to demonstrate mediation for the two (half) classes of 7 graders. At Linden School three groups with three students in each performed three times à 30 minutes. Each group had prepared a specific programme including, for example, the ABC model, games and mediation. The nine voluntary, interested students could successfully complete the programme by demonstrating peer teaching to smaller groups of Grade 7 students.

Measurements

Instruments for testing the outcome of the programme were improved compared to the ones used in Phase I. Three questionnaires were developed - built on the ones used to extract information about different kinds of conflicts and conflict handling among teenagers. Four typical conflict situations in school were described and combined with open questions about how the student would intervene or whom he/she thought ought to intervene in the conflict. The students had to fill in the three questionnaires and answer a fourth about conflict situations prior

355

to the programme. The third and fourth questionnaires were repeated and used as post-tests in order to find possible effects of the programme. In addition to these forms of data we kept the descriptions of the working process in the classroom, students' diaries, pictures, video-tapes of conflict role-plays and interventions. Interviews with the students took place some months after the programme was completed.

Teacher training

The described problems in Linden School to execute a compulsory programme, made the DRACON team decide to stop their efforts of implementation at Linden School. However, three staff members together with staff from Birch School voluntarily participated in a five-day workshop, where they experienced the programme under the sane conditions as the students (Study 9); one difference being that the teachers were given time for pedagogical and methodological reflections and discussions. The teachers from Birch School intended to accomplish implementation of the programme in a Grade 8 class during the coming year. The workshop was held one week after the end of the school term. A majority of the teachers had no former training of drama and conflict handling.

6.5.2   Analysis and discussion

The schools

As mentioned earlier, at Birch School there was a total commitment to the project from the headmaster and his staff. Agreements about schedule, assistance and technical support functioned without any problems. At Linden School the starting point was positive, but due to communication problems on several levels from principals, the class teacher, students and parents, the school never reached a general acceptance of the agreements for the project. As Linden School had earlier successfully been involved in two studies, the DRACON team had expected the new study to function in the same way. The way DRACON was organized and the lack of information beforehand from the headmaster was, according to two of the students (written evaluations), not that good. Advice given by one of the students was that "the DRACON team should ask and inform the class before and make sure the whole class is involved". In spite of the fact that parents and students where

well informed beforehand at Linden School, there were nevertheless complaints about lack of information. At Birch School the headmaster and the teachers decided to start the programme without prior consent from the parents, as the programme was considered to be a natural part of the school curriculum. None of the parents at Birch School complained. This could be due to the fact that the students at this school come from different social and cultural backgrounds. In addition, the school is smaller and student-teacher-parent contact is more frequent.

The classes

The diverging opinions and underlying conflicts between teachers and the headmaster at Linden School created some kind of parallel process between the students in Grade 8 and the drama and conflict researcher. As soon as participation became voluntary, students at Linden School became interested in taking part and in solving problems with logistics. But why then did the students carry on protesting? An explanation can be that teenagers demonstrate their autonomy and use provocations until parents and teachers become irritated and feel powerless. "They struggle for autonomy through resistance", explains Guggenbühl (2003: 12). For the students at Linden School it was important to demonstrate their autonomy by refusing to "be forced" into the project.

At the two schools there were differences in the students' linguistic skills. At Linden School none of the students had problems expressing themselves fully in Swedish. This was not the case at Birch School. Some of the students at Linden School were extremely interested in theories and it was easy for them to comprehend, connect and give examples from their own lives. Positive parts of DRACON according to several students at Linden School is that you learn a lot and that you learn new things. One student (boy) writes: "We have learnt the idea and usefulness of it ourselves". The interesting thing is that this student had previously expressed a very negative attitude towards the project and specifically to learning about conflicts. He had told the conflict researcher to go to Afghanistan if he was interested in conflict handling, because the students in the class weren't.

At Birch School two of the male students with relatively low classroom status made some constructive problem solving interventions in conflict plays. Furthermore, these interventions may be looked upon as an indication of the possibility for students with low positions in the class to show new sides of their personal capacity through drama. The

357

three girls as well as some of the boys became more and more active during the programme and interaction between the subgroups developed. In spite of these observations and other changes of behaviour and interaction in the classroom, most of the students did not perceive any changes. Nor did the teachers appear to have noticed any positive changes in the classroom. At Linden School the students and the class teacher maintained that the social climate in the class was good from the beginning and was thereby not influenced by the programme.

Programme with peer teaching

It seems to be valuable for the students to get the DRACON programme spread over most of a term instead of compressing it. Extension in time gives many natural possibilities to repeat conflict theories. On the contrary, several weeks without DRACON lessons disturb the continuity of the programme and might affect the teaching and learning situation negatively. The Swedish programme may well be executed during 12 sessions à 100 minutes as planned. Smaller changes due to the situation in the class may be necessary, for example the need for using different kinds of games.

During the first three sessions at Birch School much had to be learnt about the rules for the DRACON work. Although the attitudes of the students were amiable, there was a lot of physical restlessness in the classroom giving rise to different kinds of challenges expressed by some of the boys (both immigrants and Swedes). It took more time to clarify rules (listen to each other and speak one at a time) and to establish safe space in this class, where participation was compulsory, than in the voluntary groups of students in our earlier studies.

It is more difficult to motivate students who have not voluntarily chosen to take part in the DRACON programme. However, most of the students in all our studies liked to plan and perform conflict plays, especially in front of the camera. With one or two exceptions, the students at Birch School appreciated the lessons as fun. The students at Linden School valued the programme from a more utilitarian point of view compared with the students at Birch School.

The peer teaching session appeared to be a successful way of finishing the programme in both classes. The students had to recapitulate the content of the whole programme before they could choose what they wanted to teach the Grade 7 students. This challenge stimulated them while planning and carrying out a programme for peer teaching. They

freely chose mediation and thereby could confirm their learning about mediation via peer teaching. One student at Linden School was acting as a trained teacher while conducting peer teaching. In an amazing way he used dialogues, demonstrations, drama activities and examples of conflicts between himself and his siblings while teaching peers in Grade 7. At Birch School particularly, one girl and one boy surprised the class teachers by assuming the responsibility for leadership.

Third party interventions

One of the aims of the Swedish DRACON programme was focussing on students as third parties in conflict situations, as a starting point for learning about the role of the mediator. One hypothesis is that as teenagers are normally self-centred, they have limited possibilities of seeing themselves as helping third parties in conflicts. By experiencing new role behaviour in conflicts plays, ideas about how to handle conflicts in real life may be evoked. Another hypothesis is that students learn about conflicts easier when they study conflicts from the safety distance that third party roles give. A third hypothesis is that developing civil courage may develop parallel to a growing understanding of the importance of impartial third party interventions.

At Linden School the students constructed four conflict plays with several interventions. For example, two girls verbally abused each other, and the second intervention showed a win-win solution. Another play showed a conflict between a teacher and a student in the classroom. In the third play boys from Grades 8 and 9 were standing in a lunch queue. A few older and bigger boys (Grade 9) started pushing forward in the queue. The first intervention showed supporters and more physical fights with the older boys. Then several authorities, a teacher and finally impartial interventions where tried out. The fourth and last play was about girls betraying and changing friends. After several interventions a boy made an intervention as an impartial friend.

At Birch School the students conducted a total of 10 interventions in three conflict plays. The most common type of intervention was as authorities (2) or as powerful allies to one of the parties (3). A couple of interventions were made as supporting peers or a teacher trying to stop the conflict before it erupted (2), one demonstrated a totally surprising solution and two students made impartial interventions. For example, the last intervention at Birch School was made in a conflict between two Palestinians in aggressive dispute with a Jewish person by one of

the immigrant boys. He clearly demonstrated impartial mediation by separating the parties and questioning them one at a time. This intervention was a regular example of mediation and may be looked upon as an example of growing awareness.

In all the nine studies there are examples of participants making non-authoritarian impartial interventions. After several attempts with third party interventions as authorities (teacher, headmaster etc), as supporter or allied, the students started to understand the dynamics of third party interventions and experienced the fact that impartial mediation often resulted in win-win-solutions. We want to emphasize that this is a crucial part of the students' learning process. They have themselves discovered the possibility and importance of mediating in conflict handling in order to come closer to a win-win solution.

These patterns of impartial interventions that appear after several attempts by the students are clearly evident in both schools and have also been observed in our earlier studies.

Gender influence on the outcome of the programme

Gender has not been specifically focused on in the Swedish programme, although gender differences are evident both in the survey study and in the kinds of conflicts boys and girls have chosen for their conflict plays. For example, the conflict plays that boys construct quickly escalate into physical fights. They seem to like to participate in as well as to observe physical fights. At the same time they sometimes get scared, which has been expressed in some of the pictures made during the programme. Boys have a natural need for controlling their bodies and of measuring their power. As there is often a lack of physical contact both with parents and partners during the early teenage period, this may also be one of the reasons for the interest in physical fights. The conflict plays girls are interested in focus mostly on relationships such as problems with friends, gossiping and conflicts with mothers. They often include verbal insults but the plays rarely end in physical fights (Eriksson, et. al, 2002).

Drama in Education tends to be somewhat biased towards a female area of interest. In our studies, where participation has been voluntary, females have been in the majority, which may have influenced the positive attitudes towards DRACON. In Studies 7 and 8, where participation was compulsory, boys were in the majority. This probably influ-

enced problems of learning the rules (Birch School) and the intense protests towards being "forced" into the project (Linden School).

Post-tests at Birch School

In order to discover the eventual effects of the DRACON lessons, different kinds of data were collected. Prior to the start of the DRACON programme the students answered several questionnaires, as has been mentioned earlier. These included written statements that the students were asked to relate to. One of the questionnaires concentrated on statements having to do with school attitudes, self-confidence, student and teacher relations and social relationships in the class. In yet another questionnaire the students were asked to answer how they "in fact" reacted to conflict situations, compared to how they thought they "ought to" have reacted. In yet another questionnaire the students were presented with four different conflict situations. They were asked, in writing, to suggest how to stop, as well as how best to handle, each of the conflicts.

After the completion of the programme the students were once again asked to answer the latter questionnaire as well as the questionnaire on how one ought to react in conflict situations.

Due to the fact that relatively few students were involved in the DRACON programme, it is difficult to ascertain any significant differences between pre- and post tests. Regarding the questionnaires where the students were asked to suggest, in writing, how conflicts could be solved, there were some differences before and after the programme. Although more students still put their trust in authority, i.e., that the teacher or principal should solve any conflicts that arise, there were several other suggestions as to how these problems could be solved. For instance, the number of suggestions where mediation, negotiation and discussions were mentioned as solutions had increased. There were several suggestions where students themselves took responsibility in order to solve conflicts. They express a need to talk more with each other about the conflict that arises.

> Zlatan (before): The teacher should tell the student that he's not allowed to do that.

> Zlatan (after): The student's friend's can more easily speak to him about the problem. They can explain…

Results do not say anything about how the students would have reacted in actual situations. That they have expanded their repertoire to include negotiation and compromise, is however evident.

Diaries

As described earlier we had problems getting all in the class from Linden School involved in the whole programme (session 1-12). However, the students who took part only in sessions 1-8 wrote diaries. While analysing these, no new category or sub-categories could be found. However, towards the end the sub-category "The programme is boring" is represented more frequently.

We decided to analyse the diaries from the nine students who took part in sessions 9-12 separately. We found the same categories as those described in Phase I. However, the category "Negative expressions" was not represented. A new sub-category had been created "To teach is fun and instructive". This sub-category is related to the category "Positive expressions" and emerged during the last session with peer teaching. One example from this sub-category is as follows:

> It was fun today. It seems as if Grade 7 understood what we talked about. Now, at the end, I understand that I have learnt quite a lot through the DRACON project. I think this will be useful for me later in life (Cecilia, girl, session 12).

These statements express the fun experience of teaching, as well as the informative side when students suddenly get insight into what and how much they know about conflict handling. Several diaries include statements about the learners from Grade 7. Surprisingly they were active, quiet, concentrated and learned fast and easily according to the students in Grade 8.

When analysing the diaries from Birch School the same categories as earlier were observed, although the sub-categories were somewhat different. For example, there are no expressions related to the sub-category "Theory is boring". However, the sub-category "The programme is boring" is represented by one student who uses some strong expressions:

> This is damn boring! (David, session 1) I hate DRACON = true! (David, session 6)

Negative expressions are mostly concerned with disturbance due to restless behaviour and lack of respect for the rules. A new sub-category was created "Disturbing behaviour spoils the programme".

> Today there has been a lot of disturbance and noise. Nobody has been able to concentrate. Some did nothing and are just sitting there – that's boring. (S, girl, session 5)

Although disturbances are experienced as leading to boredom, one boy looks forward to the next session:

> I have been feeling good. It is a pity that somebody spoiled a bit of the instruction. I look forward to continuing working with conflicts. (A, boy, session 5)

Analysis of the diaries from Pine School indicates that the students appreciated the programme as long as classroom order was on an acceptable level. They had a lot of fun and liked to plan and perform conflict plays in front of the others.

Interviews

After about six months, project members not actively involved in the programme conducted follow-up interviews with the students. The interviews consisted of 12 open-ended questions, thus providing room for discussion. The students were asked to recount what they remembered about the lessons they had participated in, whether they had learnt anything new and if they had been able to utilise these experiences afterwards. They were also asked about specific content matter in the lessons and what their reactions to these had been.

Most of the students at Birch School remembered quite a lot from the DRACON lessons, even though they did not always remember why they did certain exercises. Some of the students said that they had hardly learnt anything, nor had they been able to utilise their experiences to any greater extent. Others, on the other hand, said they had learnt a lot about the nature of conflicts, the role of the mediator, the importance of listening to others and how to stop a fight. Some said they got new ideas and mentioned that they think more now, before they react.

Many of the students at Birch School described mediation as "talking to each other". Although most of the students successively experienced the exercises as enjoyable, they were not that interested in theo-

retical explanations. In view of this, the schools need to follow-up on the theoretical parts of practical situations when these occur during conflicts. Most of the students had not noticed any new changes in the way in which the class functioned now, compared to before the DRACON programme. A few however, say that things are calmer now and that one speaks out more about problems that arise.

They give many examples of what they enjoyed during the lessons. Peer teaching, although at times difficult, was mentioned by most of the students as that which they enjoyed the most. Other things they experienced as difficult were, for example, being the centre of attraction, performing in front of others and an unruly class.

At the end of the interview at Birch School each student was asked whether he/she had anything to add. Those who did were positive, stating that they had understood the importance of the exercises and that they appreciated the contents.

> I've been able to use it. It's somewhere in my brain and one uses it, although one isn't really aware of it. I used to be really nasty before. (Student D)

At Linden School interviews were conducted 6 months after the programme, with the nine students who completed the programme. Analysis of the interviews indicated that seven out of nine students had an astonishing good comprehension of the cognitive aspects of the programme. They remembered the conflict theories that had been presented and three of them could describe them in detail. They showed a good understanding of mediation and five reflected on conflict styles and what kind of animal style they themselves mostly used. Four of the students were able to discuss which kinds of conflicts that may be difficult to manage, in a more complex way.

The students specifically mentioned mediation between the neighbours as fun (6) as well as peer teaching (6). Two girls expressed themselves rather positively and one boy was extremely positive to the cognitive content as well as to the drama method. One student could explain in detail how he had been able to use this new knowledge when mediating between a younger brother and sister.

Interesting differences in the outcome are evident between the two schools. In spite of all the problems at Linden School, the interviews clarify that the students who voluntarily chose to participate in the pro-

ject gained a good cognition and understanding of conflict management in all the aspects studied during the project. One of the boys successfully acted as a mediator between brothers and sisters (Study 7). At Birch School, where the programme ran smoothly, the cognitive outcome is more uncertain. The difference may to some degree be explained by the social and intellectual differences between the two classes. The students at Linden School were motivated for theoretical studies, while the students at Birch School worked hard to pass exams in order to be accepted for upper secondary programmes. The outcome at Birch School connects more easily to social and emotional than to cognitive development. The fact that students try to solve conflicts by talking instead of fighting (Study 8) indicates some kind of social learning that influences conflict handling.

Training of teachers – Study 9

It takes twice as long to process the whole programme with teachers compared to with students in Grade 8. Obviously adults need more time for discussing conflicts, conflict theories and role-playing. Some of the teachers had difficulties with de-roling and with distancing themselves from real life situations. Feelings of anxiety where expressed when conflicts were dramatized. One year after the teachers from Birch School participated in the DRACON programme they had not started to execute the programme in a Grade 8 class as was agreed to, although they still plan to. Several teachers wished that their training had preceded the training of the class.

6.5.3   Conclusions - Phase II

The first two aims of Phase II - making the programme a whole class approach spread over a whole term and adding peer teaching – was fulfilled. We managed to make the programme a whole class approach spread over 3-4 months with a compulsory attendance of students. Adding peer teaching to the programme turned out to be a success. Our ambition to evaluate the effects of the programme by pre- and posttesting gave useful information only to a limited extent, due to the relatively small sample. The data gathering tools used in Phases I and II (classroom observations, diaries, pictures, videos and interviews) still appear to be the most adequate.

The aim to implement the programme in a whole school and make the school responsible for the continuing management of the DRACON process after introduction of the programme in one class seemed the most problematic part. At Linden School we had to finish the project due to organizational problems and at Birch School the teachers did not try the programme in spite of teacher training and support from the headmaster.

Teachers need to understand and apply the theoretical as well as practical aspects of the DRACON exercises. We made a mistake not to train the teachers before we executed the programme at both schools and another not to involve the class teachers from the outset.

The programme seems to be too advanced to be comprehended during one single week by teachers with neither education in educational drama or in conflict theories. Finding ways of implementing the DRACON programme in a whole school context still remains to be done. In order to do this, several conditions are needed, the most important as follows:

- Support from the whole school, headmaster and school staff.
- A shared interest in DRACON among teachers, students and parents.
- Decision from the school board whether or not the programme should be compulsory or voluntary.
- No competition between the programme (12 times à 100 minutes) and other subjects.
- A written agreement about the conditions for implementing the project.
- Training of teachers prior to the start of the programme in the class and continual guidance of teachers during the execution of the programme.

6.6 Overall conclusions

At the beginning of this chapter we stated our aims and formulated some overriding questions. Here follows a brief summary of our findings and accomplishments.

Our empirical research started by studying if there were some general basic strategies among Swedish teenagers. Although our data is

based on students' answers to questionnaires and not on direct observations of real conflict situations we are convinced that we have captured some typical ways of handling conflicts. It is possible that these strategies are not limited to the age groups we have studied, but are valid for both younger children and adults. We have also been able to show some substantial and interesting relationships between teacher competence, school attitudes, self-esteem, gender and ways of handling conflicts.

Our intention was to develop a programme that combined conflict theory with practical exercises; i.e. developing aids for learning for implementation in schools and classes. In turn, successful implementation necessitates the need to further educate teachers to carry on this work. Of special significance to the project has been to develop third-party intervention and to find out whether or not Grade 8 students, with no previous training in drama or conflict handling, would be able to take on the role of peer-mediators in real life conflicts by applying the drama methods learnt during the programme.

Six cycles were developed during four years and carried out before the final programme was completed. The final programme was then implemented in two schools and evaluated. Analyses from diaries, video recordings and post interviews show that the programme has had many positive effects. The students became increasingly satisfied as the programme progressed and was continually improved. They have succeeded in becoming familiar with the drama language, enhancing their interest in dealing with different ways of de-escalating conflicts. Obviously, they have learnt from their own experimenting through interventions in conflict plays. Also, the students have shown an increasing understanding of conflicts and a growing awareness of constructive conflict handling and peer mediation. Adding peer teaching to the programme turned out to be a success. In other words, we are satisfied with the final programme, it's applicability and it's significance for education in our schools.

Our experiences from weekly courses with teachers are also positive. They have been very enthusiastic and have taken part with great pleasure and delight. However, it is doubtful whether or not teachers, after a course such as this, are sufficiently prepared for leading drama activities in their classes. The DRACON programme can perhaps be considered too advanced to be comprehended during one single week by teachers with neither education in educational drama or in conflict

367

theories. Hopefully a programme for further teacher education can be designed in order to stimulate teachers to use drama in conflict handling courses in schools in the future.

Implementation of the DRACON programme in schools has proved difficult due to several organisational factors. Careful planning and preparation are necessary in order to maximize effects of the programme. A genuine commitment and sense of responsibility from school leaders and teachers are essential, as is positive attitudes from parents and students.

As we were interested in mapping students' learning processes as well as evaluating the programme as a whole, we have developed different kinds of measuring instruments, such as questionnaires, interviews, diaries and video recordings. The measurement instruments we have developed in our studies can be useful for future research related to conflict handling programmes in schools.

What the DRACON team in Sweden has accomplished so far can be summarised as follows:

- Mapping the conflicts and conflict handling styles of teenagers in Sweden.
- Integrating (advanced for teenagers) conflict theories with drama pedagogy in an educational programme.
- Creating a step-by-step programme with a specific focus on third party roles and mediation.
- Demonstrating that teenagers can gain new knowledge about conflict handling by participating in the DRACON programme.
- Supplying adult participants with new knowledge about drama in education and conflict handling with the help of the DRACON programme.

References

Allwood, J. & Friberg, M. (1997). *Culturally Conditioned Models of Conflict Resolution: A comparative analysis of Malaysia and Sweden*. Göteborg: Padrigu.

Bjerstedt, Å. (1995). *Kreativ konfliktlösning och fredsundervisning* [Creative conflict resolution and peace education] (Särtryck och

småtryck, 841). Malmö School of Education: Department of Educational and Psychological Research.

Boal, A. (1979). *Theater of the Oppressed.* London: Pluto Press.

Byréus, K. (1990. 2001). *Du har huvudrollen i ditt liv. Om forumspel som pedagogisk metod för frigörelse och förändring* [You have the leading role in your life. Forum play as an educational method for liberation and change]. Stockholm: Utbildningsförlaget Liber.

Daun, Å. (1989). *Svensk mentalitet: ett jämförande perspektiv*e [Swedish mentality: a comparative perspective]. Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren.

Ekebergh, M., Lepp, M. & Dahlberg, K. (2003). *Reflective learning with drama in nursing education – a Swedish attempt to overcome the theory praxis gap.* Unpublished paper.

Eriksson, B., Lindberg, O., Flygare, E. & Daneback, K. (2002). *Skolan – en arena för mobbning* [The school – an arena for bullying]. Stockholm: Skolverket.

Fjellström, C. (1998). *Trots hårdnande klimat trivs elever och lärare i skolan* [In spite of a worsening climate students and teachers get on well in school]. In: Vem tror på skolan? [Who trust in school?]. Stockholm: Liber Distribution.

Guggenbülhl, A. (2000). *Pubertät-echt ätzend. Gelassen durch die schwierigen Jahre.* Freiburg im Breisgau: Verlag Herder.

Hofstede, G. (1997). Cultures and organizations: software of the mind. New York: MacGraw-Hill.

Hägglund, K. (2001). *Ester Boman, Tyringe Helpension och teatern. Drama på en reformpedagogisk flickskola 1909-1936* [Ester Boman and Theatre at the Tyringe Helpension. Drama at a Progressive Education Girls´ School 1909-1936)] (Studies in Educational Sciences 47). Stockholm: HLS Förlag.

Inglehart, R. (1997). *Modernization and Postmodernization.* Princeton: University Press.

Johnson, D. & Johnson, R. (1996). Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Programmes in Elementary and Secondary Schools: A Review of the Research. *Review of Educational Researc*h, 66, 459-506.

Johnstone, K. (1979). *Impro: Improvisation and the theatre*. London: Faber & Faber.

Jöreskog, K-G. & Sörbom, D. (1999). *LISREL 8.30*. Lincolnwood, IL: Scientific Software International.

Key, E. (1996) *Barnets århundrade* [The Century of the Child]. Stockholm: Informationsförlaget.

Lantieri, L., Roderick, T. & Ray, P. (1990). *Resolving Conflict Creatively: A draft teaching guide for alternative high schools*. New York: Educators for Social Responsibility Metropolitan Area.

Lantieri, L. & Patti, J. (1996). *Waging peace in our schools*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Lelkes, E (1991,1996). *Dare to ask. Dare to listen. A book about creative problem solving* Täby: Leva konsult, Eva Lelkes.

Lepp, M. (1998). *Pedagogiskt drama med fokus på yrkesmässig växt. En studie inom sjuksköterske-och vårdlärarutbildningen* [Drama with focus on personal development and professional growth: A study carried out in nurse training and nurse tutor education]. (Dissertation). (Studia psychologica et Pedagogica, 13). Stockholm: Almquist & Wiksell International.

Lgr62 (1964). *Läroplan för grundskolan* (2 uppl.) [1962 Curriculum for the Compulsory School]. Stockholm: Skolöverstyrelsen.

Lgr80. (1982). *Läroplan för grundskolan.* [1980 Curriculum for the Compulsory School]. Stockholm: LiberLäromedel.

Lindvåg, A. (1988). *Elsa Olenius och Vår Teater* [Elsa Olenius and Our Theatre]. Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren.

Lpo94 (1994). *Läroplanen för det obligatoriska skolväsendet och de frivilliga skolformerna* [1994 Curriculum for Compulsory Schools]. Stockholm: Utbildningsdepartementet.

Pikas, A. (1998). *Gemensamt bekymmer-metoden. Handbok för paradigmskifte i behandling av skolmobbning* [Shared Concern method]. Uppsala: Ama dataservice.

Skolverket (1999). *Läget i grundskolan 1999* [The situation in the compulsory comprehensive school 1999]. Stockholm: Liber Distribution.

Skolverket (2002). *Relationer i skolan – en utvecklande eller destruktiv kraft* [Relations in school – a developing or destructive power]. Stockholm: Skolverket.

SOU 1948:27. *1946 års skolkommissions betänkande med förslag till riktlinjer för det svenska skolväsendets utveckling* [1946 School Commission's Report]. Stockholm: Allmänna förlaget.

Sternudd, M.M.F. (2000). *Dramapedagogik som demokratisk fostran? Fyra dramapedagogiska perspektiv – dramapedagogik i fyra läroplaner* [Educational Drama as a means of fostering democratic values? Four perspectives of educational drama in four curricula] (Uppsala Studies in Education 88). Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Uppsalaiensis.

Streubert, H. & Carpenter, D. (Eds.) (1999). *Qualitative research in nursing: Advancing the humanistic imperative* (2nd Ed.). Philadelphia: Lippincott.

Thomas, K.W. & Kilmann, R.H. (1975). Interpersonal conflict-handling behavior as reflections of Jungian personality dimensions. *Psychological Reports*, *37*, 971-980.

Thomas, K.W. & Kilmann, R.H. (1977). Developing a forced-choice measure of conflict-handling behavior: the "MODE" instrument. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 37*, 309-325.

Tomasson, R.F. (1970). *Sweden: prototype of modern society*. New York: Random house.

Westblad-Dicks, M. (2000). *Hantera livet i skolan* [*To handle life in school*]. Göteborg: Gothia.

Wiechel, L. (1983*). Pedagogiskt drama. En väg till social kunskapsbildning* [Drama in Education. A way of gaining social knowledge]. Lund: Natur och kultur.

Utas Carlsson, K. (1999). *Violence prevention and conflict resolution. A study of Peace Education in Grades 4-6.* (Studia psychologica et pædagogica, 144). Malmö: School of Education, Department of Educational and Psychological Research.

7　From DRACON to Cooling Conflicts to Acting Against Bullying

Bruce Burton, John O'Toole and Anna Plunkett

7.1　Background

This chapter describes a programme of ongoing action research into the combination of drama techniques and peer teaching in a whole-school, curricular setting, aimed at empowering students to take control of their own and their school's conflict management agenda. It represents the first six years of work associated with the DRACON Project by Griffith University Centre for Applied Theatre Research, Brisbane, Australia.

7.1.1　Drama in secondary schools in Queensland and New South Wales

Drama is a strong and popular subject in senior schools in a number of states, particularly in Queensland, with two Universities producing about forty drama specialist teachers a year. In NSW, drama has been longer established in schools, but is only just in process of acquiring status as a full university entrance subject. However, there has been considerably less drama teacher education in NSW, especially relative to its larger population (7 million, as opposed to 4 million).

In both states drama is categorised within the Arts Key Learning Area, along with Music and Visual Arts, Dance (another newcomer to the secondary curriculum) and sometimes Media or Design. Notionally, all those subjects have parity now in the syllabuses – in Queensland there is a new Arts syllabus that is just being implemented. In reality, music and visual arts have long and thorough establishment within the schools – though the commitment to the arts of schools is

patchy. In primary schools (Years 1-7 in Queensland, 1-6 in New South Wales) drama is as yet barely taught on a coherent and developmental basis either as a subject or as a method within the curriculum. Some individual teachers use drama regularly. The majority approve of it, welcome it in their classroom, but do not feel they have either the personal knowledge and skills, nor the institutional support, to teach it.

Drama tends to be as popular in private schools as in state schools, and was actually established earlier in the private sector, in Queensland at any rate. Some prestigious academic-oriented private schools tend to view it as a necessarily civilising balance to the science and maths that are their staples, or a useful way to deal with the 'non-academic' students. State and Catholic schools in low socio-economic areas see it as a way of giving their students self-esteem, of broadening their horizons, and of giving them a means of imaginative self-expression. Perhaps surprisingly, drama is also popular in the evangelical church schools, which are concerned with self-esteem too, and which manage to harness drama's anarchic and questioning tendencies to their own agendas.

7.1.2   Conflict and conflict management in schools

Conflict in schools is a major source of concern at all levels. All schools have conflict management programmes, and in Queensland it is an expressed concern of the Policy Section of the Department of Education.[1]

A particular contemporary focus of concern is bullying – reflected in many policy documents and statements by systems. There is also intense concern in Australia with boys under-performing in schools, which has been linked with conflict issues (e.g. Connell, 1998; Hawkes, 2001). Another area of particular focus in schools is intercultural conflict. Australia is now one of the most multi-cultural nations in the world, especially in the major cities where the great majority of people live – one fifth of all Australians' parents were born elsewhere, the great majority with non-English-speaking backgrounds.

---

[1] As expressed in the successful Linkage Grant application to the Australian Research Council for extension of DRACON work, 2002-4. Griffith University/Education Queensland Policy Section.

This change from a homogeneous, monolingual and mono-cultural society has happened quickly (it is only forty years since the White Australia Policy was rescinded, and thirty five since Aborigines were given full citizenship). The potential for inter-ethnic conflict has also been imported – Australia has taken many refugees from Vietnam, from Cambodia, from the Balkans. Old racial tensions exist too from earlier waves of immigration – Caucasian/Aboriginal, Caucasian/Chinese, British protestant/Irish catholic, and Greek/Turkish. Teenagers have been identified (Australian Government, 1994) as the most racist age group in Australia, but also among the most negotiable. Again, the systems have set up mechanisms to deal with these. In NSW, the Department of Education and Training set up a Multi-Cultural Programs Unit, which produced a Whole School Anti-Racism Program. That in turn was the mother project for this DRACON Project, 1999-2001 (Cycles 4 – 5).

Many studies, including that carried out within the Adelaide Project of the DRACON programme (see Chapter 4), have confirmed that students are concerned about conflict but often feel powerless to deal with it. Early work within this project showed that students can readily identify and are concerned about four categories of conflict within the school and its community:

- conflict within their families – both child/parent and child/sibling,
- conflict among themselves and their peers – especially boy/girl, difference of grouping, bullying,
- conflict between children and teachers,
- inter-racial and inter-cultural conflict.

These four categories emerged and were identified through discussion and questionnaires as the key dimensions by the students in the second year of the project, and successive years' research have confirmed that these are indeed the four categories, with some refinement of the categories – for instance, conflict with teachers was found to be the least mentioned and generally least concerning of the categories at all levels. Conflict with siblings tends to recede in importance – as reported - with age, while conflicts with parents becomes a much more reported factor as students near school leaving. None of this is unexpected, but it is important, as the students' levels of concern were used to drive the subject matter of the *drama work*, and were also a key factor in the *peer*

teaching that were the twin pillars of the Griffith Project. (Older students had to focus on the kinds of conflicts being reported by their juniors, rather than those they might be more likely to be dealing with themselves.)

Most secondary schools have staff whose duties include managing and resolving conflict. These are usually not the teaching staff. The 'front line' is the Guidance Officer, who is available for pastoral care and to deal with student problems as well as careers. A Deputy Head usually also has some responsibility, under the rubric of discipline or student management. Depending on the socio-cultural profile of the school, other staff may be employed with this responsibility in particular settings, such as an Aboriginal Liaison Officer.

Conflict management policies in schools are thus normally top-down, and usually of two orientations:

1. Reactive – their purpose is to solve existing conflicts that have occurred (usually the Guidance Officer or the Deputy Head).

2. Preventative – to avert the likelihood of conflict (including personnel such as Aboriginal Liaison Officers, and co-curricular conflict management programmes).

Following numerous pre-project discussions with principals, education officials, guidance officers and teachers and study of school policy documents, a number of largely implicit assumptions appeared to us to underpin conflict management in schools:

- Conflict is best unacknowledged until it becomes manifest: to let sleeping dogs lie is better than potentially fomenting trouble by calling attention to it - this is particularly true in inter-cultural conflict, as Coyle and French (1996) draws attention to.

- Conflict is seen as beyond and outside the school curriculum. Conflict in the classroom is the job of the teacher to solve if possible, or to refer to the Deputy Head if not immediately resolvable. Conflict management does not appear normally as part of the curriculum, though it may be touched on in English, Human Relations or Studies of Society and the Environment.

- Adults know more and know best – and are the natural agents of conflict resolution.

7.1.3   Peer teaching

Methods are being tried in schools to make the management of conflict more democratic, particularly peer mediation. Though widely used in primary schools, its results are equivocal, and it is proving less successful in secondary schools. Early in our project we had considered using some peer mediation, but we were deterred by the surprising findings of the Adelaide DRACON project (see Chapter 4.6.2.), reinforced by the major American study of Powell, Muir-McClain and Halasyamani, (1995). These findings can be summed up by saying that many conflicts in schools do not respond easily to appeals to authority, for reasons of student culture and of the imbalance of power that is often integral to conflicts. Peer mediation seems to some students just to impose another level of authority figure, one whom they perceive as not having the experience or skills to address serious conflicts.

However, peer teaching, a different practice entirely, is necessary to introduce here in some detail, as it became a primary dimension of the Griffith Project. The use of peer teaching to enhance learning is an established practice, which has been used extensively in primary and secondary schools, in the field of sports coaching, and in a range of other formal and informal learning environments. Although peer teaching can involve students of the same age teaching each other, or even younger peers instructing older students, the most common and successful application in schools has involved older peers teaching younger students.

There has been considerable research into the effectiveness of peer teaching in schools as educators search for more effective ways of engaging students in their learning (e.g. Bilson & Tiberius, 1991). These studies have found clear and convincing proof that peer teaching can be an extremely effective tool for improving learning in the classroom. Peer teaching has been shown to be valuable in a wide a variety of subject areas and teaching environments, and four major educational benefits have been identified as apparent in all these settings (Svinicki, 1991).

In particular, the benefits of peer teaching for those doing the teaching were identified by Rubin and Herbert (1998) as: an increase in both social and intellectual awareness; significant gains in empathy; the clear recognition that they could change habitual patterns of behaviour; and finally, that peer teaching empowered the students, increasing their sense of mastery and self-esteem. They conclude that it would be hard

to think of another method that would enable so much intellectual, social and personal growth.

Other research has focused on the effects of peer teaching on the students being taught. This research has produced clear evidence that teenagers often learn more effectively from their peers than from traditional, teacher - centred instruction. Simmons, Fucks, Fuchs, Mathes and Hodge (1995) found that this was particularly evident with students with low academic achievement and learning difficulties. Whilst the students in the study being peer taught showed much higher levels of literacy and comprehension, there was no significant difference in classroom behaviour between them and the students receiving traditional, teacher-centred instruction.

Despite clear evidence that peer teaching in curricular contexts is extremely effective in both enhancing learning and empowering students, there is little evidence of its use in the curriculum in conflict management, though recently the practice of bringing in peers from outside, to give advice and teach about e.g. drug use, violence and other matters pertaining to conflict has been growing. . In particular, there is no evidence in the current literature on conflict in schools nationally or internationally that peer teaching has been empirically tested as a mechanism to address cultural conflict or bullying. The Swedish DRACON team has recently embraced peer teaching, partly after drawing their own conclusions from their research, and partly after observing the Brisbane project in action.

7.2   The project and its research methodology

This project really has two starting points, which together provided an auspicious pretext for the Brisbane team to concentrate seriously on an area familiar to educational drama specialists: conflict in the students' lives and students' stories of their conflicts. These, drama teachers often address piecemeal in individual classroom implementation, but previously they have not been studied in depth in Australia.

7.2.1   Genesis of the project

In 1993, the Chief investigators of this project were approached by the Director of the NSW Whole School Anti-Racism Program (WSARP),

then being finalised. An experienced drama teacher herself, she had identified a number of possibilities for the extensive use of drama in anti-racism programmes in schools that were outside the scope of WSARP – though a little drama had been trialed successfully. Together, between 1994 and 1996 we developed a major research and development project, initially for the Northern Territory, then NSW, but in both cases the funding fell through.

In 1996 we were invited to join the DRACON Project on Drama and conflict resolution (as it was initially entitled) in schools. The preliminary preparation and reading for the above project had already focused our drama thinking on issues of conflict and harmony. Under the aegis of DRACON, and with a small Faculty of Education grant from our university we made a start to investigate what we believed were new approaches to conflict management in schools using drama.

7.2.2   Research premises

We approached the project design with a number of underlying hypotheses, that we used as premises to drive the research:

- Educational drama techniques have considerable potential to motivate and assist students to understand the causes of conflict including its cultural aspects – to coin a phrase, to create 'conflict literacy'.

- Conflict literacy would assist students to manage their own conflicts, and mediate in those of their school community – the extent of transferability of the learning into practical application in their own lives became a major criterion for success of the project.

- Drama is more appropriate for learning in conflict management than in direct conflict resolution – we believed that the twin demands that drama makes on its participants, for empathy and distance, both make it normally unsuitable for use in direct conflict mediation and resolution in school contexts.

- Students could be empowered to take over some responsibility for the management of their own conflict individual and communal agendas in school.

7.2.3   Research aims and questions

Our aim has been to investigate whether drama can contribute significantly to conflict management in secondary schools on a whole school basis, and particularly whether it can assist in empowering students to take more responsibility for their own and the school's conflict management agendas.

From the start we had a generic vision for the improvement of conflict management through conceptual understanding learned through drama. However, we waited to see where our early experiments would take us before formalizing our aim. This is why we chose action research as our method. This aim had clarified by the beginning of year 2, with the introduction of the empowerment motif and the peer teaching.

As is typical of action research, the Griffith programme has had a number of main research questions emerging at various times in its six-year life. The following three questions have remained constant throughout:

1. Can educational drama be used to create conflict literacy - understanding of the nature, causes and structures of conflicts, both social and cultural, which are characteristic in schools, and reveal to students the ways these conflicts are handled both in schools and the wider community?

2. Can a pedagogy centred on drama and theatre techniques empower students themselves within the curriculum to take responsibility for the conflict management agendas in their school community?

3. Can whole school communities of differing socio-economic and cultural natures be empowered through drama and theatre strategies to manage and sustain constructive conflict management agendas in their own schools?

Initially, we also included a fourth question:

4. Can drama directly encourage and develop conflict management and mediation strategies within schools, eg through the Guidance Officer network?

However, the project has not had the means or scope to set up new systemic structures for conflict management, and that question has remained unexplored.

Prior to experimentation with peer teaching in cycle 2, we added the question:

5. To what extent can peer teaching structures reinforce and enhance the learning in conflict management through drama, and democratise the teaching?

Then, for our work with the NSW Multi-cultural Programs Unit, we added a sixth:

6. To what extent can school students be encouraged to deconstruct cultural stereotypes and construct a multi-cultural perspective through drama strategies, and what effect does this have on their management of cultural conflict?

Following the first six years work, two further questions have been added for the project's continuation in 2002-4:

7. What is needed for the professional development of teachers in teaching conflict literacy and management through drama?

8. How can school policy at both systemic and individual levels be influenced to enable democratic structures of conflict management and peer teaching to operate flexibly and naturally in schools?

7.2.4 Basic research parameters

DRACON's terms of reference were to investigate conflict with adolescents in schools, which prescribed that the research would be done in secondary schools. In the first instance, the financial limitation of having a small internal grant meant that the work would need to be carried out in one school, on a small scale, and locally in Brisbane, Queensland. There were a number of local schools, some with excellent drama programmes and potentially interested teachers. However, the research would need both school and systemic approval to go ahead. There was a possibility of funding and support for a wider programme relating specifically to inter-cultural conflict, to be funded by the NSW Multi-cultural Programs Unit of the state Department of Education and

Training, but this was uncertain. Application would also be made to the Australian Research Council, but this was even more uncertain – with arts education projects very rare recipients of funding from this source. As it transpired, both these sources have provided on-going funding for expansion and development of the project.

The project started with just the two authors as the investigators. However, from the first year two other key researchers have been involved – the classroom teacher involved in the first year's research, and one of our pre-service students, who was co-incidentally doing professional practice in the classroom at the time. Both became involved in the project, the teacher as the first Key teacher, and the student as a formal research assistant.[4]

7.2.5 Research design

Participant, interventionist action research was virtually dictated as the main research method, both by the project's aims and the limitations and uncertainty of the funding, and therefore the future research parameters.

A problem had been identified – deficiencies in the conflict management programmes in schools.

A vision had been conceptualised – to empower students to manage and mediate in their own and their community's conflicts.

As experienced drama teachers with considerable experience in exploring conflict through drama, the chief investigators were well-placed to be participant-researchers. The fact that there were two of us – then later four - also permitted some measure of ethnographic observation, though at some time each of us was involved directly as participants in the programme.

These two parallel Ph.D. studies are moving towards completion at the time of writing:
- Ms Morag Morrison, the class teacher of the Key Classes used in 1996-1998, is investigating the use of the elements of educational drama in the project work during that period.
- Ms Anna Plunkett, who has been the senior research assistant from 1998, has concentrated on the cultural components and implications of the project.

7.2.6   Research methods

The project has created and applied a series of successive cycles of intervention to introduce and develop drama techniques within curricular settings, which may provide effective conflict mediation strategies school-wide. These action research cycles were designed to answer the research questions in order to address the problem and the vision, in terms of the needs of the schools and their students. For each cycle, ethnographic research methodology was used to accumulate and analyse the data necessary to evaluate the impact of the project on individuals and natural groups.

In all, two thousand one hundred and forty students participated, or – since the project worked on a whole-class basis – ninety-nine classes in twenty-two schools. The majority of the project work was carried out by Year 11 drama classes, Year 8 or 9 English classes, and Year 5 and 6 primary classes, though all Years from Year 3 to Year 12 are represented (see Table 7.1).

A range of methods of data gathering and analysis has been used, mainly qualitative, including extensive interviews with informants from all participant groups (project classes, teachers etc) and active stakeholders (administrators, parents, community members etc.). Journals and diaries, school assignments, video and sound cassette records, informal questionnaires and surveys were also used.

For interviews the selection process and interview type varied, and each of these instruments threw up different and useful kinds and patterns of response. In some cases all students in the class were interviewed; in others, five students selected jointly by the class teacher and the research team; in others, focus group interviews were held; in others, specific students identified by the research team. A small number of the latter were followed up, at intervals varying from one week to six months –in four cases four years later, in one case both two and three years later.

In all, the interview process comprised:

   35 teachers
 149 Key Class (senior drama) students
 128 Focus Class (junior secondary) students
  90 Relay (primary) students
  20 focus groups – 4 of teachers, 4 of community groups and 12 of students.

Pre-project questionnaires were administered to most participants, as follows:

```
  82 teachers
1236 students
```

These were primarily intended to provide data to guide the research team in structuring the project, and to provide material for the peer teachers in devising their own work for their client groups. Accordingly, only limited collation has been undertaken, and no attempt to draw coherent conclusions on numerical grounds. A large percentage of the student questionnaires were administered by the peer teachers themselves to their younger student colleagues, and were therefore unavailable to the research team – but very valuable to themselves. However, the team did collate and examine 635 student questionnaires. In terms of questionnaires to identify the kinds of conflict experienced by students in secondary schools, the survey work being undertaken by the Adelaide and Swedish teams was ample for our needs and very helpful. The survey data we gathered tended to confirm that, and have proved very useful to this project in identifying trends and particular concerns.

Video records have proved to be both extremely valuable anecdotal records, and extremely frustrating. It was quite impossible to arrange for classes to be video-ed in any systematic way – in any case, for some classes a video would have been an intrusion that would affect the work. Much of the video is poor quality, and the nature of the drama work meant that most of the audio is indecipherable and the discussion lost. All of it suffers from the problem of the transformative mediation Transforming live action into two-dimensional media has further problems, that professional film-makers solve by multi-camera work and editing… which of course further transforms the 'truth' of the original action. All our video resources involved the reduction and selectivity inevitable with one camera, including one point-of-view, no-peripheral-vision and no record of the dynamic energy of the real event. Nevertheless, close analysis of sections of class action have proved immensely valuable to the research team, and revealed aspects of behaviour, classroom relationships, language use and paralanguage that could not be identified live from observation or from written reflection. In all the team scrutinised over thirty-five encounters from twenty-one class groups.

It was intended to use a range of quantitative measures, formal questionnaires, and, progressively, longitudinal records to test elements such as the kinds and amounts of conflict identified within classes by students, the success of the programme across whole schools within the cluster, and in comparison with other schools and other conflict management programmes. However, the Project's limited and varying resources, combined with the distance factor and the lack of capacity to mount such data-gathering in most schools – where the *Cooling Conflict* Coordinator's role was an unrewarded add-on to normal duties - meant that such material is sketchy. In any case, we were more concerned with the qualitative data that could not be numerically reduced. These were, primarily, the students' and teachers' perceptions of the project; the students' explicit understanding of conflict concepts; their ability to articulate them both in terms of the project; and in their own terms the students' sense of the difference (if any) the project made in their approach to conflict.

The data has been analysed on an ongoing basis in terms of identifying grounded theory that would lead to further developments of practice. Some summative analysis of the data has been done, particularly to establish the cultural effects of the project, and how the use of particular dramatic elements affected the students' learning.

7.2.7   The action research cycles

The Project comprised six cycles (see also table Table 7.1). A further three are currently being undertaken as part of a follow-up project, *Acting Against Bullying.*

In 1996, we decided to start *Cycle 1* by instituting a small-scale cycle of action research (contextual identification, planning, observation, reflection and evaluation, then re-planning) within one class, teaching drama and conflict concepts. This was primarily to address research question 1 (Can educational drama create conflict literacy?).

In 1997, a grant from the Australian Research Council enabled us in *Cycle 2* to expand the project and incorporate four other classes and peer teaching, which had been foreshadowed as a possible strategy in *Cycle 1*. This continued addressing question 1 and added questions 2 and 4 (Can drama and/or peer teaching empower students in conflict management and democratise the classroom?).

384

In 1998, it had been hoped to develop two parallel cycles. One would change the focus and drama techniques - extending the work in the first school into a community theatre setting, to start addressing question 3 specifically (Can drama empower whole school communities in conflict management?). The other would expand the drama and the peer teaching and locating it in a different cultural and socio-economic milieu, to address questions 1,2 and 3 together.

Funding for the second not being forthcoming, only the first of these cycles *(Cycle 3)* took place this year, though it was not long delayed.

In 1999, *Cycle 4,* a slightly revised version of the cycle proposed for the previous year was implemented in a new, socio-economically and culturally quite different school, with for the funding agency the primary purpose of developing a useable set of teaching materials. The project was expanded to incorporate primary schools for the first time. research question 6 was added to the investigation (Can drama affect the cultural aspects of conflict?).

In 2000, a two-year large grant enabled us to both expand the project into a number of new schools *(Cycle 5)* and place greater distance between ourselves as researchers and the participants in the schools, using the materials as primary resource, rather than ourselves as teachers. All five research questions were invoked in this section.

In 2001 *(Cycle 6)* we extended the programme into a number of new schools and permitted two major innovations: the primary schools were structured into the main programme, and the central drama techniques were consolidated into one common drama teaching structure. This cycle continued to investigate all five research questions.

In 2002 – 2005, following completion of the NSW experiment, and the continuation under their own steam of the programme in an expanded number of schools, from 2002 - 2004 the project moves to Queensland for *Cycles 7-9* with another Australian Research Council grant, and a quite different focus, aimed at addressing research questions 6 and 7 (the policy implications, and teacher professional development).

7.2.8   The selection of students, teachers and schools

The reasons for our selections are explained in the detailed description of the cycles. A specialist drama elective class at senior or near senior

level in each school (15-16 years old), known as the Key Class, starts the process. As peer teaching is introduced, a larger number of junior classes (Years 7-9: twelve - fourteen year olds) are added, known as the Focus Classes. These we stipulate should not be drama classes, but could be learning e.g. English, Social Studies. In Cycles 4 and 5 primary school classes (Years 5 and 6: nine – eleven year olds) are added to the peer teaching, initially known as Relay Classes, now First Relay Classes, since for Cycle 6 a second tier of Relay Classes (Years 3 and 4: eight – nine year olds) have been added to complete the peer teaching.

Selecting the teachers has formed an important, but problematic, element of the programme, with their effectiveness a major factor in the smooth running of the programme. This was to some extent true of the effectiveness of the learning, though not nearly as much as we expected – in several cases the ineffectiveness of the teachers may actually have had a beneficial effect on the learning, and certainly the autonomy of the students. Some of the teachers have chosen to take part, with varying degrees of willingness – one or two have proved consistently resistant, doubtful or antagonistic, even after volunteering. Some, particularly the primary teachers, were self-selected, because they were 'attached' to the desired class. No teacher has been forced to participate.

The schools were all chosen on the basis of the high school. The primary schools were all feeder schools for the high schools involved in the project. The prime selection criterion was the school's willingness to participate. This was to prove problematic, as the Principal had to be willing, but in some cases urged the programme on teachers who were initially less enthused – in two cases that included the Key drama teacher, in several the *Cooling Conflicts* Co-ordinator, and frequently the Focus class teachers. All schools also had to have a drama teacher willing to be the Key teacher, and a senior Drama programme.

Other criteria included the geography – a range of inner-urban, suburban, outer-suburban and rural; the socio-cultural and racial mix; the socio-economic profile; the gender profile (in cycle 5 two girls-only schools were included, and in cycle 6 two boys-only).

7.2.9 The teaching of conflict literacy

From the start our aim was to develop conflict literacy, using drama - and after Cycle 1, peer teaching and drama combined. In the manner of

action research, a number of conceptual approaches to conflict and mediation were trialed especially in the first two or three cycles. A number of key concepts proved valuable from the start, a few were abandoned and others included. By cycle 4, the following concepts formed the basis of the theoretical content that we wished the students to understand. In addition, the drama work was intended to give them a thorough (because experiential and three-dimensional) knowledge of the dynamics of conflict.

- Conflict derives from clashes of *interests*, *rights* and *power*.
- Not all conflicts are destructive - *conflict can be healthy*.
- The central participants in the clashes of interests, rights and power are known as the *protagonists*. To each protagonist, the person or persons with whom they are in conflict are their *antagonists*.
- *Misunderstanding* based on *assumptions*, and *stereotyping often fuel conflicts*. Cultural conflicts are often fuelled by stereotypes based on recognition of *difference* without recognition of *commonality*, combined with fear or ignorance of the perceived difference.
- Conflicts have three identifiable *escalating* stages: *latent*, *emerging* and *manifest*:
- *latent*, when there are present underlying conditions of potentially conflicting interests and rights, or attitudes of misunderstanding, but these have not yet led to conscious clashes,
- *emerging* or brewing where some, but not all, of those affected by conflict are aware of it,
- *manifest*, where the clashes of interests, rights or power are there for all those affected, and outsiders, to see.
- Conflict naturally tends to *escalate* because of the emotions involved, and *de-escalation* has to take account of the emotional conditions as well as the clashes and misunderstandings.
- Some conflicts need third-party intervention, or *mediation*.
- Mediation is often best undertaken by *separating* the parties, and *finding what can be conceded or negotiated* away from a moment of confrontation

7.2.10 Drama techniques

The drama techniques used were very varied in Cycle 1, although from the start we used a range of mainly improvised and role-play structures – except for Cycle 3, where the Key Class developed and performed a piece of Community Theatre in Education.

For Cycles 2, and 4-5, the range of techniques was consolidated into basically two standard classroom drama approaches:

1. Process drama is based on the experiential role-play of conflict situations, and is developed through a series of improvised scenes involving the whole class simultaneously as the characters in the situation.

2. Forum theatre is based on the preparation of scenes of conflict, acted out in front of other students as audience, who are then invited to intervene in the scene to try to resolve the conflict.

Both these structures were taught to all the Key Classes; each group then made the choice to use one or other of the forms with their Focus Class – and in Cycle 5 this was used with the Relay Classes.

The advantages and disadvantages of the two forms had been getting clearer in the evaluations of each cycle. Our instincts were confirmed with the assistance of the participating teachers at the end of Cycle 5, who coherently and consensually identified Process drama as the more difficult technique for the students (and themselves) to both grasp and manage effectively. However, while they perceived Forum Theatre as much simpler and clearer to manage, they felt it tended to stay superficial, in terms of the students' understanding, compared with what the students could get out of process drama if they did manage to understand and handle it. This tallied with our own perceptions, that few of the students really grasped the complex forms of Process Drama. Conversely, we were concerned that Forum Theatre as practised tended to the superficial because the students were encouraged to intervene with insufficient background and in the heat of the confrontation – which would, furthermore, be actually encouraging bad conflict mediation practice.

For Cycle 6 we therefore re-designed the Drama component of the programme, consolidating the two techniques into a hybrid, Enhanced Forum Theatre. This was based on the simpler structure of Forum Theatre, but incorporated several key features and conventions from

388

Process Drama. As will be seen in the detailed description of Cycle 6, this has not proved yet proved itself conclusively, although in a number of other experimental trial runs of the new hybrid, it has proved both successful and easy to manage.

Enhanced Forum Theatre uses the basic structure of forum theatre developed by Augusto Boal of actors performing a play about oppression and then inviting the audience to intervene in the role of the oppressed person to end the oppression. However, in the enhanced version, each play is structured in three scenes, which clearly depict the three stages (latent, emerging and manifest) of a particular conflict This allows the students to construct plays which identify and develop conflicts in a clear and systematic way. The conflicts are based on the actual experiences of the students, but fictionalised and distanced by the 3-scene structure and the input of the participants in each group. To ensure that the conflicts being explored are substantial and complex, there must be a compulsory time lapse of at least one week between scenes. This emerged as necessary when it was observed that the students frequently chose flashpoint conflicts, and perceived the three stages of conflict as being immediately consequent on each other, which hindered their ability to accurately identify the three stages, or reflect on the process of escalation.

Furthermore, members of the audience may intervene to take on the role of any of the characters in the play, not just the protagonist - since these plays are about conflict, not oppression. This is a far more realistic approach to conflict management, as very often the protagonist is powerless to influence a conflict, but others not so directly involved may be able to manage the conflict effectively.

The Enhanced Forum Theatre plays are controlled by a 'Joker' or master of ceremonies, as in Boal's model, and are performed twice through before the Joker invites any interventions. However, a number of key process drama techniques are also introduced into the performance of enhanced forum.

- *Forum Hot Seating:* At any stage after the first two performances, any character from the play can be put in the 'hot-seat' and questioned by the audience to explore their background and motivations. The actor playing the character must sit and answer the question from the audience in role as that character. The Joker can invite the

audience to hot seat a character, or members of the audience can stop the play and request a hot seat.

- *Forum Thought Tracking*: Here a scene is frozen and the Joker or a member of the audience asks one or more characters what is in their mind at that moment. If necessary, every character in the scene can be asked to speak their thoughts aloud. Once the play has been performed twice without interruption, any member of the audience can request thought tracking in any scene.

- *Forum Role Circle:* After the second performance of the play, a drama technique known as role circle can be used to further develop the characterisation and the conflict situations. The Joker or the audience asks the characters questions relating to the conflict. The play can also be stopped during a further run-through and the audience can ask different characters about their involvement in the particular scene being played. A role circle involving characters important to the conflict but not previously seen could also become part of a intervention. The actors in the Enhanced Forum Theatre would take on these roles and answer the questions.

- *Beyond The Forum:* This is a further step, perhaps the most important extension of the principle of forum theatre, which is designed the meet the problem that conflicts can seldom be solved neatly or easily by a single intervention. In fact, teaching students that it is necessary and appropriate to intervene in moments of direct confrontation is not necessarily good conflict resolution and mediation theory and practice, particularly where the interveners do not have a clear and thorough understanding of the basis and roots of the conflict – what is at stake in terms of *rights, interests* and *power…* which is the situation in the forum theatre situations – the hot-seating helps, but we wanted to stress the notion that the preferability of finding a COOL environment for intervention and mediation, and that barging into a conflict can be bad practice. Usually, mediation involves working with the antagonists separately, outside the scene of the conflict, trying to identify with them what can be traded to de-escalate the conflict. Once a piece of enhanced forum theatre has been worked a number of times without resolving the conflict, the Joker divides the audience into sub-groups and explains that each group should target one of the characters in the conflict for mediation. The group then decides who might be in a position to mediate with that character or intervene at another point in time, and how

and when to approach that character and mediate their involvement in the conflict. Further scenes are set up at the behest of the Joker to try out these mediation techniques.

This enhanced forum theatre process has proved a very effective way for the peer teaching to operate. The older class uses the technique themselves to learn about conflict, and then they identify conflicts likely to be of concern to their younger peers – in the case of the Key Class this is invariably through administering a questionnaire and discussion with the prospective Focus class students. Using this as a basis they devise one or more pieces of EFT, which they use to begin the peer teaching. They then help the younger students to construct more pieces of forum theatre for enactment in the class, so that the younger students are clarifying their understanding of the conflict concepts and simultaneously practising the techniques. They then leave, and the younger students in their turn, with their teacher prepare forum theatre pieces for their target peer group. Sometimes these new peer teachers too meet the younger group in advance or give them questionnaires to let them identify their conflicts of concern. The techniques are sometimes simplified as the process descends through the primary school.

7.3   Implementing the programme

The programme has been continuously implemented from 1996 until 2003 (the time of writing) and is continuing. The full measure of the action research, and the range and diversity of the schools involved, may be seen from the following table. Because of the large number of schools involved, from which the data, the accounts of practice and the witnesses' comments have been drawn, we decided that to give each school an identifying pseudonym as the Adelaide and Swedish chapters have done would further complicate the reader's task, so where relevant, we have defined them in terms of their profile.

Table 7.1. Chronology, population and action research cycles

Cy-cle	Year(s)	Location & High school	Classes	Res. qq.	Notes
1	1996	Brisbane urban co-ed	Year 11 Drama	1	Small-scale action research, one classroom
2	1997	As above	Year 11/12 Drama 4 x Year 9 English	1,2, 5	Expanded research, peer-teaching introduced
3	1998	As above	Year 11/12 Drama	3	One-class community theatre-in-education project
4	1999	Rural NSW co-ed (+ feeder school)	Year 11 Drama Year 9 Aboriginal Studies Year 8 English 5 x Year 6 primary	1,2, 5,6	Revised 1997 cycle in contrasting school and introducing primary peer-teaching
5	2000	Sydney 4 schools 2 x urban girls 2 x outer-suburb co-ed (+ feeder schools)	4 x Year 11 Drama 7 x Year 8 English 1 x Year 9 English 1 x Year 7 English 1 x Year 5 primary 2 x Year 6 primary	1,2, 3,5, 6	Large-scale implementation, given programme handbook, researchers one-step distanced
6	2001	Sydney As above + 2 urban boys, 1 urban co-ed 1 rural co-ed (+ feeder schools)	5 x Year 11 drama 1 x Year 9 Drama 1 x Year 10 Drama 1 x Yr 12 English 2 x Year 7 English 2 x Year 8 English 2 x Year 8 HiSE* 2 x Year 8 Maths 1 x Yr 8 HPDPE# 1 x Year 9 HiSE	1,2, 3,5, 6	Continued and further expanded implementation, full incorporation of primary schools, consolidated drama technique
7-9	2002/3 2004 2005	Brisbane Brisbane + Queensland regional As above + Qld rural		7,8	Switch to investigating teacher professional development and schools policy change.

* essentially, history

\# essentially, health and physical education

7.3.1 Brisbane 1996 – one urban high school

Cycle 1, the pilot DRACON research programme, was established in a Brisbane High School in 1996. As lead teachers, with the class teacher, we experimented with drama techniques and structures for teaching about the causes of conflict, and ways of mediating and managing conflicts in the lives of the students.

In order to give the project every chance of success, as our initial participants we selected as our Key Class a senior drama class in a performing arts high school on the following principles:

- As they were drama students we speculated that they might be particularly able and interested in empathising with protagonists in conflict: "stepping into others' shoes".

- We expected them to be comfortable with and competent in using drama techniques to explore conflict.

- We identified a class of high achievers in a specialised school strongly supportive of drama and with a coherent and effective school conflict management strategy, and an exceptionally competent drama teacher experienced in the particular drama techniques we were intending to implement.

The senior drama class of 29 students (the Key Class) was involved in an exploration of conflict as part of their senior syllabus work, centred on Greek tragedy, for one school term: ten weeks, of approximately three classes of 45 minutes each. This was limited by the time available and the unit content, in terms of the students having difficulty relating the causes and nature of classic tragic conflicts to their own domestic conflicts and vice versa; moreover, the constraint that Greek tragedy is emphatically unmediated limited our attempts to teach mediation understanding.

However, the results of this pilot clearly suggested that drama was a good way of teaching students to understand the causes, nature and structures of conflict. Even in this first year, evidence of the students applying this understanding to their own lives started to emerge. The following was typical of nearly 50% who without prompting mentioned real conflicts that they had considered in the light of what they were learning:

> If I know there's going to be an argument with my mum, I'll just walk off, and I'll just think of a few things to say, and then I'll come back with a few different points. And I've talked to my sister about it and stuff like that. She's in Year 9. I've used some of our techniques on her - thinking of things she could say to a student instead of going in fighting.

7.3.2 Brisbane 1997 – the same high school

The results of Cycle 1 suggested to us that there was a possibility of expanding the work to have a positive influence on the conflict management throughout a school. For Cycle 2, in 1997, funded by an Australian Research Council Small Grant, the team was anxious to add another dimension, with the intention of empowering the students to take over their own conflict management agendas. During Cycle 1, some of the students had very effectively peer-taught their classmates techniques that they had previously learned. During the evaluation of Cycle 1 we considered the possibility of using peer teaching on a large (i.e. class-based) scale. We used the same school and Key drama teacher.

Although the constraints of the syllabus in Cycle 1 had hindered the full implementation of our plans, we still felt it was important that the work was carried out within the normal curriculum - initially within the syllabus work for the Key Class, then broadened to include other "Focus Classes". The Key Class students were split into four groups, and each group trained to implement the same drama techniques and conflict concepts with one of four classes of younger, non-drama students. The group size was based on our belief that the students would appreciate the opportunity all to be involved, but would need the reassurance and support of their fellows – and that this would outweigh the difficulties of team-teaching – in terms of split focus etc.

We had decided that it would be strongly preferable, in the interests of working towards a 'whole school approach' that the Focus Classes should not be drama classes, so that the project could not be seen to be the territory of the Drama teachers, but should infuse the whole curriculum. We started to identify many curricular areas within English, Study of Society and the Environment, Human Relations Education, Aboriginal Studies, especially, where exploring concepts of conflict could be incorporated naturally.

Fortunately, a Key Class could be found with a flexible drama unit, highly appropriate to the work: 'Political theatre and drama', where improvised drama techniques could be explored again. Even more fortunately, and quite fortuitously, the proposed Focus Classes - year 9 English classes – were to study a thematic unit called "conflict resolution" at just the right time of the year! In Cycle 2, the Chief Investigators in collaboration with Key Class students and teachers implemented and evaluated drama techniques to 1) develop understanding of the causes of conflict and its cultural components, and 2) train the students in the basic demands of mediation.

The four Focus class teachers were given a one-day in-service workshop by the Project team and their drama colleague. Two of them expressed strong initial resistance to or doubts about both the use of drama and peer teaching.

A Key senior drama class (including some of the 1996 students) spent an entire term studying conflict and its dramatic possibilities, learning about conflict and experimenting with mediation within the safe, fictional but realistic models that drama provides. During this period, four major categories of conflict were identified, through the drama work itself, and sets of questionnaires that were administered to the Key Classes and the peer (Focus) classes – peer conflicts, family conflicts, conflicts with teachers and administration, and cultural conflicts

A number of forms of drama, including process drama, forum theatre and play building were used in developing students' understanding of conflict. Two groups then chose Process Drama, two Forum Theatre, to develop work for the younger students. Each group met their class in advance and administered a questionnaire to them, and discussed conflict, in order to identify the particular topics and contexts of conflict that the younger students were most concerned about. They then prepared enough work for five sessions of peer teaching, spread over a fortnight. this at least was the theory; in practice, as the students were not experienced teachers, they usually prepared enough for about one or two sessions, and then had to rapidly regroup and/or improvise).

The Key Class groups were very nervous prior to the teaching. The Focus Class teachers were also anxious, prepared to intervene to save their classes. In the event, all the classes went off without a hitch; there were virtually no instances of misbehaviour at all during the fortnight. This is quite untypical of year 9 students. Instead they were enthusias-

tic, co-operative and participated in everything willingly. Where the Key Class students became stuck, they invariably found their way out – one or other would come to the rescue. An interesting observation we made in several classes was that Key Class students who had taken a back seat in the planning and initial contact gradually grew in assertiveness and leadership. It was the year 12 students who had led all the planning, and initiated the first peer teaching – in three of the four classes, it was Year 11 students who ended up the team leaders. The exception was in one class where an exceptionally capable year 12 student ended up coming back the following week for the next two sessions and teaching them solo, including such difficult techniques as teacher-in-role, while the Focus Class teacher looked on admiringly. Those non-drama Focus Class teachers, of which two had initially expressed serious reservations, all ended up extending the drama work with their classes. Most important, there were a number of significant effects identified in the interviews with all the Key Class students, selected students from all the Focus Classes, and the questionnaire used with one class:

- strong evidence of the Key Class students having reinforced their own learning by having to teach it to other students,

- further evidence of the Key Class students applying their learning to their own real-life conflicts,

- evidence that the Focus class students had learned quite accurately the basic concepts about conflict from the Key Class students,

- explicitly stated evidence that the Focus Class students had felt that being taught by their peers was in this context preferable to having teachers, because the Key Class 'teachers' were much closer to themselves, and better understood their problems, attitudes and conflicts,

- strong evidence that the Focus class students had both enjoyed the experience and felt they had learned from it. In the questionnaire, every student expressed strong approval for the peer teaching, and all except one expressed at least approval for the drama; even that student said s/he hated it but felt s/he had learned a lot from the peer teaching.

We are confident of all these effects, as they were strongly and multiply corroborated by the interviews, participant and spectator observation,

with few dissenting voices. A few examples from this cycle are given later in the chapter.

In our evaluation of this cycle, consideration was given to the possible downward extension of the project, with the Focus Classes peer-teaching primary students. We felt it was also time to expand the project beyond the very protected walls of School H1, with its Performing Arts focus, its helpful and flexible administration, its relative freedom from major contexts of social conflict and its exceptional drama staff.

7.3.3 Brisbane 1998 – the same high school

Timetable restrictions and limited resources prevented this expansion of the project in 1998. Instead, for Cycle 3, the research team explored a new cycle of research, to discover whether the Key Class learning might be able to be applied in the broader school community - beyond its gates. A Key Class (again incorporating some of the 1997 students) identified and researched a community group with specific conflict problems, then devised and presented to them a piece of participatory theatre, scripted and directed by a British Theatre-in-education director, Dr Steve Ball. The community group they chose was very close to home - senior school leavers in three other local schools. This project had little direct scrutiny from the research team, though it features significantly in the Ph.D. research still being finalised by the class teacher (see appendix **xx**). However, it did establish that this was at least a practicable structure, with feedback from performers and audience alike being strongly positive.

All three cycles of this Brisbane Pilot project were documented and analysed through researchers', observers' and participants' journals, extensive interviews with participant students and teachers of all groups, and attitudinal questionnaires. The preliminary findings identified the use of drama as both motivating and illuminating for students, with an overwhelming majority of Key and Focus groups indicating they wished to extend their responsibilities in managing the school's conflict agenda, and over 50% of the 1997 Key Drama class explicitly identifying how they were applying their new understandings about conflict from the pilot in their own school and home lives.

There had been very few negatives, and in the end virtually no mitigating results. However, the school was specially chosen for its strongly affirmative multi-cultural and conflict resolution agendas, and

drama's high status in the school. The team felt it necessary to give the drama and the peer teaching a tougher road-test.

7.3.4   New South Wales – two rural schools

This is the point where our DRACON project came together with its other progenitor, the NSW Whole-School Anti-Racism Project (WSARP). The continuation and extension of the peer teaching that had been planned for 1998 was instituted in 1999, with a consultancy grant from the NSW Multi-Cultural Programs Unit of the Department of Education and Training. Our action research method was essential here, since the consultancy required not research, but the production of materials and resources, which could be integrated into the WSARP. We were able to chronicle and evaluate the process of developing the materials, and simultaneously continue the data gathering interviews, journals, video etc. that we needed for our continuing research into the interaction of peer teaching and drama in the teaching of conflict. We made a number of changes from 1997:

- We added the proposed next stage, of the Focus Classes preparing and teaching primary children. This meant incorporating the feeder primary school into the project as well as the selected high school.

- We sought to withdraw from the day-to-day teaching of the project, to give the Key and Focus Class teachers the opportunity of using the materials by themselves.

- We extended the one-day in-service that in Brisbane we had held for the Focus Class teachers to two days residential in-service, and invited all the staff who might be involved directly or indirectly. Nearly twenty came.

There were other major differences from Cycle 2:

- We deliberately chose a school with a quite different socio-economic and cultural profile from the original school – a rural school rather than urban, with a much lower socio-economic character, and instead of a broadly multicultural student body, a bi-cultural population consisting of a white Anglo-celtic majority and a significant Aboriginal minority.

- The school had had a very bad reputation for Aboriginal/Caucasian racial conflict, which it was trying hard to live down, teachers and students.

- The Key Class was a very timid group of 12 (later 10) students, all girls (though the school was coeducational), with serious absenteeism.

- The Key Class teacher, though competent and experienced, had no experience of any of the Process Drama or Forum Theatre techniques we were using.

- The two Focus Classes consisted of:
  1. One Year 9 Aboriginal Studies Class, with about half the students Aboriginal.
  2. One year 8 'English' class, which had been specially constructed for us (though we tried to resist this) out of those thirty students that had the most serious conflict problems in the Year.

The overall results were similar to Brisbane, as we had hoped, and to some extent the expanded peer teaching worked successfully. However, as anticipated, there were more problems than in the Brisbane School. The school administration was equally positive, and the expanded in-service meant that the school community and particularly the other teachers were more informed and very supportive. However, the most serious problem was chronic absence – staff and student - and the resultant loss of both understanding and motivation that occurred periodically. The Key Class students were prone to extended absence, and sometimes there were fewer than four out of the ten in class. In addition, the Key Class teacher had serious family illness, which resulted in him abandoning the project to the students' own devices, or relief teachers who were not briefed. Being at a distance, we were not able to intervene often, though we did make approximately weekly visits - sometimes all three of us together, sometimes only one together with the research assistant. On at least three occasions our observation was that our interventions effectively 'rescued' the project at the Key Class level, and our presence tended to keep the project on task and schedule. The results of the Focus Class peer teaching were very positive. For once there was no absenteeism among the Key Class (a characteristic that we were to see repeated several times in later cycles with students with similar behaviour patterns). The two Key Class students who had

been consistently present and who had led the preparation work – two students with high achievement – were in fact unavoidably absent on other school business. In their absence other previously quieter and less contributive or more resistant students took over calmly and efficiently, and surprised us all (another scene we were to see repeated almost consistently in later cycles). Their reflective responses indicated that the experience, like Cycle 2, had significantly reinforced their own learning about conflict. The Focus Classes participated with the same whole-hearted enthusiasm as the Brisbane Focus Classes. Changes of behaviour were observed especially in the Aboriginal Studies class, with a number of normally withdrawn students taking part assertively. We had anticipated problems with the 'special' Year 8 class. These did not eventuate at this point, as the students on the whole regarded it as an honour to have been chosen for the project. Post-facto interviews established the same pattern of approval and a sense of having learned useful knowledge that would assist in their personal lives.

The second tier peer teaching really caused serious logistical difficulties that threatened to derail the project, but also gave us the biggest surprises. The problem was again absence, teachers only this time. The Aboriginal Studies teacher, who had been immensely enthusiastic throughout, found himself frequently absent, leaving the students to their own devices for most of the proposed preparation lessons. This necessitated another intervention from us. The year 8 class appeared to have had no teacher at all assigned to them. Sometimes they did not even have a teacher in the room. Again, a rescue intervention from us in the form of two brief preparation sessions was needed. The peer teaching itself might have been calculated to make the teaching more difficult: five groups of year 6 and 7 students, from two different schools, each group numbering from forty to sixty students, were given to the two Focus Classes, who taught in turns, each for an hour. Neither Focus Class had their teacher present (through the whole day we were the only adults present). To our astonishment, the students coped, and managed to complete the peer teaching. No results are available for what the primary students learned, but informally their responses were positive. The significant effects were on the peer teachers themselves. All the Aboriginal Studies students took an active and willing part in the peer teaching, and managed their sessions without intervention, and with another complete reversal of expected leadership – culturally interesting patterns of Aboriginal communication could be observed. Af-

terwards, several expressed that the sessions had changed their way of thinking about conflict, and about each other.

The Year 8 Class was more inconsistent. Some of the students, principally nine out of the eleven boys, showed little motivation and contributed minimally. The class was effectively run, in both its sessions, by the two most seriously disturbed students in the school, both girls on the brink of expulsion, who managed the whole event and the over-large primary group with confidence, high intelligence, resourcefulness, co-operation and teaching skill. We were forced to make one intervention, toward the end of the first session, to rescue them. They did not make the same mistake in the second session. At times they were clearly frustrated with their less co-operative colleagues, but rose above that. For these two children at least, the programme was a life-changing experience. Follow-up studies - both immediately after the event and up to three years on, including interviews with the students, their teachers and the school administration - confirmed that the students' behaviour changed in school and out, their whole orientation to school and teachers changed, and they became positive and popular members of the school community, and much less violent and instinctual in their response to conflict.

At the end of the project, we were strengthened in our belief that the combination of peer teaching and drama was a powerful and empowering pedagogy. We were also concerned that we had had to intervene considerably more than we had wished, and the logistical difficulties of schools now appeared as a major potential problem, along with an apparent inconsistency of approach by teachers. However, we were not able to establish the full picture of the teachers' capabilities and the effects of their absences.

The knowledge gained by the research team was channelled into the production of drama-based, reflective practitioner research materials to be implemented state-wide and used for further projected research within the DRACON Project. These materials, entitled the *DRACON Handbook*, provided the resources for the next stage of the project.

7.3.5   Sydney - urban and suburban schools

A major Australian Research Council grant was obtained to continue the research and to expand it into a number of urban Sydney schools, four high schools and their feeder primary schools, in 2000 and 2001.

Two of these were girls' schools, and in middle-class areas; two of them were working-class outer-suburban co-educational schools. This entailed the construction and testing of the drama / peer teaching and conflict management programme in a new design to meet the diverse needs of a range of school research sites. The programme was implemented in a selected cluster of Sydney schools chosen for diversity in socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. The implementation was carried out within the standard school curriculum by the researchers and school colleagues.

Many major features that had been gradually established in Brisbane and Northern NSW were retained and consolidated. The three-phase programme lasted about one and a half terms.

- In Phase 1 Key senior Drama classes in each school were introduced to conflict management and mediation theory through drama techniques.

- In Phase 2 The Key Drama classes worked with Focus Classes of junior secondary students, either all year nine or year ten, helping them to develop effective drama-based responses to conflict situations.

- In Phase 3 The Focus Classes themselves practised what they had been taught, and taught the concepts, using the drama techniques that they had learned, to classes of year 5 and 6 primary students, which were now named 'Relay Classes'.

- The drama techniques used were process drama and forum theatre, with Key Classes being given the option of choosing either for their own peer teaching.

- The programme was preceded by a two-day in-service, where the philosophy and conflict theory were presented and the drama techniques were demonstrated, to the teachers and allied personnel, including the regional consultants (see below).

There were a number of key differences, too, mainly designed to cope with the greater distance and the resultant difficulty of the action research team being available.

- A DRACON Co-ordinator was appointed in each school, at the level of Deputy Head, to be responsible for facilitating the project's logistics within the school

- The regional multi-cultural and performing arts consultants (advisory personnel, usually seconded teachers) were involved, and became important liaison personnel between the department, the research team and the schools

- A local (Sydney) research assistant was appointed, an experienced teacher who would be able to intervene when necessary as well as gather data – this was a direct outcome of our concern about the vulnerability of the programme when not directly operated by ourselves.

In general terms, this year's cycle corroborated and added to the observations of previous years in nearly all respects.

The Key, Focus (and this year, Relay) Classes all took place, with some measure of success – with one exception. All levels of students were uniformly positive about the programme – with that one exception. They enjoyed the drama and the peer teaching, and they felt that it had helped them understand about conflict. Some identified that they attempted to use what they had learned in their real conflicts. There were some notable individual transformations, particularly observed this time among the Key Class students. The school principals and administrations all approved of what they felt the programme had achieved – though some had kept a closer eye on that achievement than others.

Absenteeism was a problem, of teachers and students. In all cases the students turned up in full for the peer teaching sessions, and contributed, even if they had barely attended the preparation sessions. The school timetable often produced difficulties, which in a few cases mitigated the full implementation of the programme. The majority of the teachers needed support and interventional help, this time mainly from the new local research assistant, and occasionally from the Brisbane team on visits to Sydney.

Significant new outcomes and observations included:

- There was some resistance and/or obstruction from Key Teachers. One had volunteered for the programme, then obviously regretted it, did not implement most of his Key teaching, except where forced to, and appeared to be trying to turn his students against it. Another was notable for her frequent absence, which was mirrored by the students. The teacher also deflected the students' attention from DRA-

CON on to other projects, and created division in her class between those favourites she believed could do it, and those she clearly indicated could not.

- A third teacher, preparing the students for working in Focus Classes with extremely inexperienced and anxious teachers, expressed to the research team his support throughout, but was also absent a lot, and evidenced and later admitted a belief, visible to the students, that the peer teaching would not work

The peer teaching of all these Key Classes was observably successful: The first Key Class were highly motivated and supported by the Focus Class teacher, who happened to be a drama specialist, and by the team – one of us and the local research assistant made frequent visits. The second Key Class all turned up to the peer teaching, and carried it through with skill and a very surprising amount of conflict understanding, given their own interrupted training; to our observation, the group of favourites were significantly inferior in their teaching to the group she had written off as incapable. The third Key Teacher was surprised to discover that his students actually managed to carry out the peer teaching without intervention. His concerns about the Focus Class teachers were better founded. One of these, a year 8 class with very low self-esteem as a class, was further disadvantaged by a very long hiatus before their Relay teaching, and lost motivation entirely. With the agreement of the research team, and their own relief, this class was pulled out of the Relay teaching. Some later expressed regrets.

Perhaps the biggest continuing problem was the communication with the schools. The protocol was established that the research team would communicate with the schools through the DRACON Co-ordinator and the Multi-cultural consultants. The second of these worked well, and the consultants became an important part of the whole programme – and very supportive of it. In only one of the cases, however, did the DRACON co-ordinator structure the work. This was compounded by erratic official communication with the schools (none of the teacher had personal e-mail, or a personal school telephone), and sometimes by unreliable response by the Key Teachers.

An ongoing problem was the difficulty of getting the teachers to consult the *DRACON Handbook*. The importance and comprehensiveness of this document was stressed at the In-service and constantly dur-

ing the visits. However, anxious teachers frequently consulted the team about matters that were explained within the document. This document was clearly laid out, but rather bulky and not user-friendly in design layout. This reluctance to consult the handbook was particularly evidenced in the Key and Focus Teachers' lack of confidence and skill in teaching the drama techniques. The research team was surprised by all the Key Teachers' lack of experience with the drama techniques – and in some cases with drama itself and its place in the curriculum. The local research assistant was forced to design an assessment task to fit in with the year 11 curriculum, gratefully used by several.

An innovation in this cycle was a feedback day with nearly all the participating teachers, and selected Key and Focus Class students. This produced much useful and considered data, which resulted in a number of changes being implemented in the following cycle.

7.3.6   Sydney and Central NSW schools

At this point the Programme was re-titled *Cooling Conflicts*, partly to avoid confusion with other DRACON projects, such as that in South Australia. However, informally, many of the participants continue to call it DRACON.

In Cycle 6, the number of schools was doubled. All four of the Cycle 5 High Schools, and their feeder primary schools, volunteered to continue with the project for a second year. In three cases the Key Teacher changed, and many of the Focus Classes were also from different areas. In one school, the two Focus Classes became the new Key Classes (setting a precedent, because they were only years 9 and 10, not senior classes). In addition, at the request of the Industry Partner, four new high schools joined the project, each with one or more feeder primary school. This enabled us to fill some of the gaps in school criteria. Two boys' high schools were added, with very different socio-economic profiles. A very small inner-city high school was added, with known and severe socio-economic and socio-cultural problems. A rural school was added.

There were three major changes for this year's cycle, on the advice of the teachers and Educational Department personnel. Two of these were structural:

- The full incorporation of the primary school Relay Classes, from the beginning of the year – and the in-service. This was to give them full ownership of the programme, and help them to be fully informed throughout.
- The extension of the peer teaching to include the Relay Class as peer teachers, of second tier Relay Classes of Year 3 and 4 students. Indications from their and our observation of these students were that when properly taught by their elder peers, the Relay Class children were entirely capable of understanding the conflict concepts, and implementing the drama techniques. They should therefore be given the same opportunities for reinforcing their own learning through peer teaching as the other students – and in addition give younger students still the opportunity of experiencing the drama and the concepts.

The third was academic:

- The range of drama techniques used throughout the project was consolidated into 'enhanced forum theatre', comprising the basic structure of forum theatre, but enhanced by a number of process drama forms and conventions. The more complex process drama techniques were normally to be restricted to the Key Class's initial learning phase.

Further changes were made, to attempt to improve the communication channels, and to try and give the teachers more support with less direct intervention from us.

- The Handbook was updated, clarified and simplified, particularly the new module on the consolidated drama technique.A module was added to the Handbook for the new schools, spelling out their responsibilities in terms of logistics and administrative support.
- Direct access by telephone to the participant teachers was negotiated.
- The role of the multicultural consultants was clarified and embedded in the programme, and both these consultants and the performing arts consultants involved in the programme were encouraged to take a more active part in assisting schools in making the arrangements necessary to facilitate the peer teaching.

406

- The In-service programme was fine-tuned and modified, to offer the teachers more effective initial input, and more definite information.

7.3.7   Brisbane, regional and rural Queensland

With the receipt of another major ARC Grant for 2002 – 2005three further action research cycles, Cycles 7-9, are being implemented. The design of this research has evolved mainly as direct results of the work to date as new problems have presented themselves, that must be solved if the progress is to be sustained in the empowerment of school students through peer teaching and drama.

Two significant new research questions have emerged:

7. What is needed for the professional development of teachers in teaching conflict literacy and management through drama?

Clear evidence emerged from the project so far that a large proportion of teachers have none of the basic skill, knowledge and confidence to use either drama or peer teaching effectively. Many of them are also unable to find ways of incorporating either within their normal curriculum, even though the syllabuses appear to provide opportunities. This lack of confidence and competence, together in some cases with problems within their context, also seems to have rendered many of them incapable of implementing drama or peer teaching from teaching manual or brief in-service workshop. The research team has noted that while for the students the project has been democratic and empowering, for the teachers, ironically, it has been imposed top-down (on all but the very first Brisbane Key teacher). The in-service professional development model chosen for investigating this question has been chosen as one that incorporates the teachers from the outset in their own classroom, as joint decision-makers with the trainers.

8. How can systemic and individual school policy be influenced to enable democratic structures of conflict management and peer teaching to operate flexibly and naturally in schools?

This has arisen from the research results (see below) that indicate that there were many institutional and structural constraints on the success of the DRACON project, in spite of the support of almost everybody

involved, including students, teachers, school principals and administrators, systemic managers and consultants and the local communities.

The research team is again carrying out this research with an Industry partner, in this case the Policy Branch of Education Queensland (the state Department of Education). The Branch has requested a third research focus and a new question:

9. Can the combination of peer teaching and drama to investigate conflict also empower school students to deal with bullying?

The project entails a series of professional development workshops for a range of teachers in the pilot schools (in 2002 one trial school, in 2003 four more have been added). This is organised on a five-stage model first developed by a Drama Education Project in Brisbane, and evaluated as a highly effective professional development model (Ball, 1982). Then an anti-bullying programme is introduced by these teachers. Students are trained in drama techniques and peer teaching focused specifically on countering bullying rather than conflict management. The Department is as aware as the researchers of the problems inherent in the current top-down policies of conflict management, both at systemic and school levels. It is monitoring in this project what is needed to enable rather than hinder the application of policies that are grassroots-based, engage the students wholeheartedly, are whole-school in their implementation, and operate within the curriculum rather than being co-curricular and/or managed by the school administration.

7.4 Implications and outcomes

Even at this interim stage, a number of discernible implications and tangible outcomes have emerged.

7.4.1 Positive outcomes

The central finding of the research has been that in each phase of the programme the students appear to have been significantly empowered in dealing with conflict and cultural harmony.

Teachers, school managements, parents and the students themselves have endorsed the impact of the drama and peer teaching. In terms of

increased personal understanding, high sustained motivation and the active voluntary engagement of a high proportion of participants in active approaches to their own conflict mediation.

The questionnaire and interview data strongly confirmed that the students involved in the project believe drama is an effective approach to teaching conflict management

Teachers, students and observers noted that the students overall learned the explicit concepts of conflict and its management, and more broadly also that they also gained an understanding that they had choices in conflict situation, and that those choices each had consequences.

The first outcome to note is the level of understanding and affirmation achieved by the bottom level of the project – i.e. those students who received peer teaching, but did not have the opportunity themselves to peer teach younger students. In a post-Project written questionnaire administered to 128 Year 5 students one week after the project, 95% were able to recall the three stages of conflict; 89% found the drama fun and 66% found it helpful in explaining and expiring conflicts; 80% wished they had had the opportunity of peer-teaching younger students; and 80% indicated that they had learned how to manage their own conflicts better.

The interview and questionnaire comments from Year 5 Relay students in other schools overwhelmingly corroborated these statistics:

> Latent is when you are talking and arguing, emerging is when it gets more serious, and … oh yes, manifest is when you start punching and hurt somebody emotionally and physically very badly.

> In Cooling Conflicts I learned to control my temper and not be a bully, and I know what it feels like.

> When I first arrived I was shy and courageless, my heart was beating so fast I felt like I was going to faint, but when I did the activities I had so much courage.

One Focus Class teacher noted:

> The [Year 8] girls even went to the Principal and asked to extend the programme, and they were thinking about some really mature concepts such as tolerance around mental health issues and things like that.

However, one of the key findings of the research has been that the students learned most about conflict through their role as the teachers, rather than the subjects of the learning. It was when they functioned as peer teachers with younger students that they fully understood the stages of conflict and the role of drama in allowing them to explore conflict management in a safe environment. Many of them also reflected on the whole experience of peer teaching in terms of what both groups had learned.

> 'cause it's a new thing - you learn heaps and I loved teaching the grade 9's...good to see them learning things, picking it up... they learnt different ways to deal with conflict and recognising the signs' [Year 11]

> Having worked with the Grade 9s from school, it helped me - cos I always never see age difference to be a problem at all - I'm starting to realise that I actually do know more than them - they want to learn from me. So I've taken the teaching, and the basic understanding of conflict is extremely helpful in my relationship with William [her partner], actually - because I can see what's happening. Yes...because we're getting into a squabbly stage and we know its just because, its just the conflict.[Year 11]

> Um - personally, for me, it got to the stage where we'd finally got the idea planted into their heads and they were just starting to understand it when our time with it ended. If we'd had, like, a couple of extra days with them - it might fully have been a complete success. But it was successful - it made them realise a few things about conflict and some of the situations people have and things like that. It's a good stage

> to teach them, actually, because they learn that the world doesn't revolve around them. [Year 11]

Perhaps most importantly, a proportion of the students have actually applied what they had learned directly in their own lives. This proportion was as high as 50% for some of the Key Classes. In a typical example, 'Laura', a senior girl, had been involved in serious conflict with her mother and had left home for a while. In interview, she explained how she had returned to the family home and used conflict management to diffuse conflicts with her mother. Laura described how she used to "forum" her behaviour in her own mind to decide how to deal

410

with a particular conflict. She would also point out to her mother when their conflicts were moving from emerging to manifest. Other quite typical comments include:

> I've started to define conflict better for myself at home and in school. I can see something happening and say 'hey, that's a latent conflict – look out' or 'we're into a manifest conflict – better butt out of this'. [Year 11]

> Yes, I've got more out of it in real life. My parents are talking about separation – it's a bit tense in our house at times. So I've started thinking 'there's trouble brewing' and I've started using the words in the house. I said to Mum: 'You've got some trouble brewing', or 'latent conflict'. [Interviewer – Did she understand?] I don't think she knew what I was talking about! [Interviewer – Did it have any effect?] I didn't see any – It was too tense! [Year 11]

> I've talked to my sister about it. I was using some techniques on her and asking her if it would help - she was very helpful in that way so she even understands a little bit of it too. Just by me understanding what I do to create conflicts, that has stopped a lot of fighting at home. Yeah, if I know there's going to be an argument with my mom I'll just walk off and I'll just think of a few things to say and then I'll come back with a few different points I can say instead of my bad temper. [Year 11]

The application of DRACON learning to students' lives was not, however, confined to the Key Classes. Numerous interview and questionnaire responses mention it:

> DRACON worked so many times on my mum and dad [Year 8]

> Interviewer: Have you noticed any changes in your friends and classmates that were involved in the Project?

> Student: Yep. Instead of yelling at each other they talk through it and that, and try and work out their problems. The people that were doing the Project they sort of don't get into fights as much as what they did before they started it. [Year 9]

Students identified as troublemakers or otherwise disaffected in their normal schooling often emerged as the natural leaders and the most committed participants in the programme. A detailed case study of one of the Cycle 4 students referred to earlier, showed that she transformed

her behaviour completely during the course of the project. The Year 8 girl concerned was violent and uncontrollable, performing very poorly in her studies, and was under threat of expulsion. At the end of the project, and nine months later in a follow-up study her behaviour and attitudes had totally changed. She was no longer at risk of expulsion, she was performing much better in class, and she had consciously changed her behaviour and her friends to avoid conflict situations. The girl herself, her mother, the Principal of the school and the teachers all attributed this transformation to her involvement in the Project. In Cycle 6, almost the same was observed from a student with a very similar profile – and coincidentally the same forename!

Both these students were observed to take leadership roles both in the drama work – where both showed flair - and in the peer teaching. However, and more surprisingly to us, some of the leaders in the peer teaching were students who had been apparently very passive or even resistant to the drama work. Two Year 11 students in Cycle 5 in initial interview showed hostility to their schooling in general and their drama teacher in particular, and announced that they would not be taking part in the Project, as they were intending … "*to be out of here before it happens*". Though their participation was severely affected by absenteeism and their deteriorating relationship with the drama teacher, who made no secret that she had little time for them, somehow they had learned enough to (both of them) turn up on the day of the peer-teaching, and confidently and articulately lead the whole session. Both are shown on the teachers' training video, accurately explaining the concepts and skilfully leading the drama work – and both subsequently stayed on to complete their Senior Certificate, ascribing this explicitly to the Project, and take a mentoring role in the Project the following year.

Increased confidence and assertiveness have been frequently observed in the peer teachers.

> Teaching was a real challenge, it was really good - just the way that you had to earn their respect and you also had to - it was like you were in charge - it was your own project, it was your responsibility. Yeah, it was real good - to actually have a really, I don't know the word, really important responsibility. [Year 11 follow-up three years on]

Another student shown on the video is an Aboriginal Year 9 student from Cycle 4. During the preparatory work in the class, and throughout

412

all the peer teaching sessions by the Year 11 students she did not once speak, nor take any active part, nor indicate any interest. When her own class was peer teaching, she was sitting passively at the side, until a keen and rather over-confident male colleague lost control of the group he was teaching, which quickly descended into undisciplined misbehaviour. She quietly but swiftly intervened, firmly pushed him aside and took over, calming the group, explaining articulately what they were supposed to be doing, and organising them – and her colleagues - for the next fifteen minutes. Afterwards she was not able to articulate why she had done this, nor her commitment to the Project – "*I just sort-of knew it had to be done*". However, according to her teachers she became more assertive and confident in class, and six months later put her name down for the school musical, even for a principal speaking role – and did ascribe that to the confidence she had gained from the project.

There were some particularly interesting cultural discussions, among students from a wide diversity of ethnic origins, which showed that both peer teacher and peer student were engaged in sensitive and thoughtful discussion and learning reinforcement. Here, in a brief moment from a long, absorbed discussion, a Year 5 student honestly and intelligently confronts the racism he has experienced and he is affirmed by his year 8 peer teacher, who is thinking her way through it even as she responds confidently and reassuringly.

> Year 5 boy (Chinese Origin): Some boys were teasing me and I get angry…
>
> Year 8 teacher (European origin): Why were they teasing you?
>
> First boy: Like I'm dumb…and… [he pauses and looks embarrassed]…
>
> Year 5 girl (Chinese origin): … or … we are Chinese
>
> Teacher: Yeah that shouldn't really happen
>
> Year 5 girl: It does to us
>
> Teacher: It does happen, it's a big issue now with Chinese, but you guys are just the same as us, and racism I feel is the worst type of conflict, it's just so slack. But also…pardon?
>
> First Boy: This thing happens to other people too?

> Teacher: Yeah anything - it can happen to different people. All con-
> flict always comes down to the same thing. People are different –
> you know, everyone is different, and

> First boy: If everyone was the same life would be SOOO boring.

> Teacher: Exactly, life would be boring if people were all the same.

A feature of this, and of many similar encounters observed in the pro-
ject, is the articulacy of the students.

At a macro level the research from the Cooling Conflicts project
clearly indicates that the project had considerable success with the par-
ticipating students, in a range of schools primary and secondary. This
success was in terms of their understanding, and in terms of changes of
behaviour, particularly improved conflict management, at least at the
individual level.

The observations, questionnaires, interviews and videoing conducted
in the Sydney schools involved in the project have strongly confirmed
that the outcomes above have already emerged across all schools and
age groups. Most of the students and teachers in every school have
been very positive about the whole project, and have confirmed that
there has been valuable learning about conflict through drama. The data
also clearly indicates that students feel a real sense of empowerment
and competence as a result of their involvement, and that the teachers
are very aware of this change.

The students in the primary schools surveyed have responded in
precisely the same way. They overwhelmingly identified the experience
of being taught by Year 8 and 9 high school students as extremely en-
joyable and exciting. Almost without exception they also stated that
they had learned effectively about conflict management from the Focus
Class students. They were frequently able to articulate clearly the spe-
cific conflict and mediation concepts that they had been taught. An
added outcome for some Relay Classes was the opportunity to visit
their local high schools and to do the *Cooling Conflicts* programme
there. The teachers and students from these primary classes noted how
exciting this was for them, giving them a sense of belonging and help-
ing to de-mystify the high schools concerned. The students from the
Relay Classes clearly confirmed in interviews and questionnaires that
their FOCUS peer teachers had been successful in their teaching. They
particularly identified the enthusiasm and enjoyment that was generated

414

by the peer teaching. The FOCUS students were fully aware of this response, and acknowledged it as crucial in the increased self-esteem generated by the programme.

This DRACON project has produced consistent confirmatory evidence that peer teaching generates genuine understanding in learners, highly significant reinforcement of learning in the peer-teachers, and empowerment of both to deal with cultural and other conflicts.

One of the strengths of peer teaching that has been constantly observed and commented upon by the students is that the peer-teachers actually understand the learners' conflicts better than their teachers, because they are so much nearer to the learners' concerns, which preoccupied themselves only two or three years ago.

The DRACON research clearly suggests that students, especially secondary school students, are likely to become competent at dealing with conflict in their own lives if they empowered to do so by confronting it through drama and then teaching what they have learned to their peers.

7.4.2   Negative outcomes and constraints on the research

Conflict understanding:

When you fight, all you see is smoke and fire. You don't think of the terms 'manifest, latent and emerging' [Year 8]

Not really, because you don't think of the three stages while you're fighting. [Year 11 and Year 5 – identical words]

Peer teaching:

Nothing –NEVER teach Year 5 kids! [Year 8]

I loved it, though some people were very rude… I don't think all the kids understood. [Year 8]

The Project:

No it hasn't helped. Now, because of this project, I don't have friends. [Year 8]

Though the overwhelming majority of the interview and questionnaire data was enthusiastic about the drama and supportive of the project, not surprisingly the project was less successful for some students. Most of the reservations expressed the students' disappointment at the Project's perceived lack of effectiveness in dealing with real conflict. A smaller proportion expressed unhappiness with aspects of the peer teaching – a notable few of the peer teaching encounters did not go as smoothly as the norm, with the younger students taking the opportunity of the encounters to misbehave with their elders. The final comment above would be deeply worrying if it were not unique – the research team regrets that we were never able to follow up this bleak summation to find out why the Project went so wrong for that student.

Despite the success of the programme overall, there have been some serious problems and constraints which made the research problematic at times and have lessened the effectiveness of the programme.

In terms of the actual collection of data, the tyranny of distance has made the on-going research and consistent collection of data extremely difficult. In the 1999-2001 cycles of the programme the research sites have been located in another state from the Centre for Applied Theatre Research. In the case of the 2000-2001 Study, the Sydney schools are 1000km away from the researchers. This has made it impossible for the researchers to be on-site for most of the project, and necessitated the use of Sydney-based research assistants, who had to be identified, trained and then replaced in a number of instances during the life of the project. The recording of data, particularly interview and video material, also proved in some cases to be extremely expensive and difficult to obtain. Access to schools and to the students and teachers in them, required considerable negotiation, which often failed in the end due to busy timetables and resistance from teachers and administration. Communication protocols between the schools, the researchers and the Education Department and its officers were often complex and inefficient. These communication problems also hampered the enactment of the programme itself. Obtaining research data was further constrained by a number of practical problems related to the projects themselves. A few teachers proved to be ineffectual, and even hostile to the programme, and this seriously impaired the implementation of the programme and the collection of data.

The researchers and research assistants were forced to make a number of interventions, including taking over and teaching the classes to

demonstrate the techniques, to keep the project operating - most frequently in 1999, but occasionally in 2000 and 2001. Two Key teachers in 2000 did not believe that the Key Class would be able to carry out the peer teaching, and were only prevented from cancelling it by the researchers' intervention. In both cases the Key Class, though poorly prepared, did rise to the occasion. However, some Focus class students at one of these schools compared the key teaching they had received to the peer teaching they had themselves delivered (under the guidance of a much more enthusiastic and able teacher) rather disparagingly. Other teachers, whilst enthusiastic about the programme, did not have the drama methodology to implement it. In 1999 this entailed the Focus class training of one group being taken over completely by the researchers. In one 2000 Focus class, a combination of unconfident and ineffectual teaching and a very long delay in organising the Relay class peer teaching, led to the students losing all motivation for the project, and that peer-teaching episode being cancelled. This, however, was the only instance of a failure to complete the peer teaching in twenty-four peer-teaching lessons or sets of lessons, over four years. The researchers noted the point (see also 7.3.7. – a matter to be addressed in Cycles 7-9) that while for the students the experience of DRACON was empowering and democratic, for the teachers, particularly the Focus teachers, it was imposed, in a top-down fashion that left some of them feeling powerless, under-skilled and under-resourced.

7.4.3 Cultural implications of the project

Many of the conflicts explored throughout this project have had cultural implications in both broader and narrower senses. This was partly because of the nature of the conflicts school students encounter anyway, and partly because during Cycles 4-6 the project was working in conjunction with a Whole School Anti-Racism Program (which also coloured the operation of the other cycles). One consistent principle of the project was that all the conflicts explored should spring directly or indirectly from the students' experience and ideas. This had implications for the cultural elements of the project. Even in the work with the WSARP Project, although inter-cultural conflict was the major focus, this was deliberately not privileged, but dealt with as it arose, as part of the 'natural order of conflict'. The Multi-cultural Programs Unit accepted and supported this principle. Racial conflict is an issue identified

by students in their interviews, but is not the most significant form of conflict in their lives, although particularly in 1999 many of the student-devised dramas centred on racial conflicts between Aboriginal and Caucasian people – perhaps this was reflective of the social tone in their own community. However several students stated that this project taught them about racism and what they can do about it, which is an interesting response given that the researchers did not aim to make racial conflict an explicit focus – it was explored metaphorically, obliquely and indirectly.

One of the most important findings of this study was the fact that the quality of student engagement cannot be measured only by physical participation. This proved particularly true where there were cultural barriers to active involvement in the work. In 1999, for instance, several Aboriginal students were extremely passive during the early stages, making no contribution to the work, either vocal or physical. The researchers misread this lack of activity as the students being uninterested. The opposite was true – the students were intensely committed to learning about conflict through drama but were participating in a manner, which was culturally appropriate for them. Because these students were permitted to participate in their own way at their own pace, they were able to develop the sense of self esteem and expertise which allowed them to actively intervene in the forum theatre stage of the work. The girl described above, who actually took over the peer teaching of the primary students from a group of white boys who were out of their depth and expertly and confidently taught the year six students observed by a large group of adults, later revealed that her intervention had been instinctive. We identified this as an example of what Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi (1988) identifies as "flow", where a person becomes so engaged in an experience that their usual limitations, fears and anxieties are transcended.

The students brought their own cultural agendas into the drama work, and it then flowed out into the resulting group understandings, sometimes benevolently, sometimes more ambivalently. One student in the 1998 Theatre in Education project graphically illustrates a benevolent outcome. A Bosnian refugee, he was deeply concerned in assisting his parents and himself adapt to his new country. Although his brief in the play building process was to take and work with conflict stories gathered from the potential audience, he imposed his own story into the mix - aided by the fact that some of the other 'target' young people had

418

raised similar issues. This became a part of the final performance, showing a type of conflict characteristic of a lot of inter-cultural conflict experienced within families, in that parents often tend to cling to the values of their country of origin whilst children are eager to adopt Australian ideals. The research team was approached separately by two Bosnian audience members at the conclusion of the performance. They told us that they had experienced very similar situations within their own families. In fact, one of the students went so far as to say that the scenario presented mirrored his family exactly. Immediately following the performance in interview, the boy who had imposed his story appeared to have strong reservations at the amount he had disclosed, and was unwilling to discuss the issue in interview. However, three months later he had re-evaluated his position and now appreciated the performance project as liberating for him.

Somewhat more equivocal responses to the challenges that the drama made to cultural and racial stereotypes were occasionally observed. In 1997, a piece of forum theatre was devised based on an experience of racist abuse in a basketball team that had been suffered by a black student in a Focus Class, and the class was invited to intervene as the protagonist. Though sympathetic to the protagonist, none of the white students were willing to actually take the black boy's part - though they tried to urge some other black students in the class to step in, in their place.

In the Focus and Relay Class interviews from 2000, many of the Focus Class students commented on the cultural implications of the programme in terms of increased understanding. One student defined it as "you get to learn about what racism in all about, what you can do about it and how to avoid getting into trouble with the opposite race" - an interesting comment as at no time was racial conflict an explicit focus of the programme. The younger children tended to see the programme in terms of conflict generally.

7.5   Conclusions and projections

There have been a number of very tangible and practical local outcomes to the project. Firstly, in the participating schools, the students and administrations now have access to a large number of trained reflective practitioners, both teachers and students. In addition, the

schools have the opportunity to develop a coherent and sensitive approach to conflict and cultural harmony, both in the schools themselves and in the local communities.

The NSW Project is continuing to be supported by the Department, and continues to expand, with four new schools introduced per annum. Though some of the original schools have fallen by the wayside, many are continuing in one form or another. A 2003 follow-up to one of the Cycle 6 schools revealed that the Project has survived the withdrawal of external support, in-service and funding, but has mutated, so that it has become embedded in the Year 6-7 High school induction programme and subsequent Year 10 mentoring. The teacher also reported that some of the new Year 7 students had experienced the initial Relay teaching in Year 5, and were still quite familiar two years on with the terminology and using it in normal interaction:

> Miss! Miss! There's a conflict happening over by the pool! [As the teacher started to scramble to her feet:] Don't worry Miss, it hasn't got to manifest yet.

The Project is starting to have repercussions in other areas. In 2002 the Department organised a major conference of Multi-cultural education, and used a demonstration of enhanced forum theatre from four of the *Cooling Conflicts* schools as a centrepiece. Enquiries have been received from Youth Drug awareness leaders and adult education organizations, as well as conflict management and peace education programmes overseas, in USA and UK.

The long-term outcomes and significance of this project could have considerable implications in a number of other fields. For example, drama methods are already used in industry training in fields ranging from medicine to business management. In addition, new developments in conflict mediation dispute resolution and counselling training will be of particular interest to Law, Business and Counselling professions. Moreover, this will add to the growing body of research literature on the effects and effectiveness of drama methods in learning and in the pedagogy of schools.

The work is ongoing.

References

Australian Government. (1994). *Sticks and stones: report on violence in Australian schools*. Canberra: Australian Government Printing Services.

Ball, S. (1982). *Brisbane South Region Drama Project: an evaluation.* Brisbane: Queensland Department of Education.

Bilson, J. & Tiberius, R. (1991). Effective social arrangements for teaching and learning. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning,* (45)*, Spring,* 87-109.

Connell, R. (1998). Teaching the boys: new research on masculinity and gender strategies for schools. *Teachers College Record, No 2.*

Coyle, S. & French, D. (1996). *The NSW Whole-School Anti-Racism Project.* Sydney NSW: Dept. of Education and Training.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. & Csikszentmihalyi, I. (1988). Optimal experience: psychological studies of flow in consciousness. Cambridge: CUP.

Curriculum Corporation, The (1996). *The arts in Australian schools*. Melbourne: The Curriculum Corporation.

Hawkes, T. (2001). *Boy oh boy - How to raise and educate a boy*. Sydney NSW: Pearson Educational.

Powell, K., Muir-McClain, L.& Halasyamani, L. (1995). A review of selected school-based conflict resolution and peer mediation projects. *Journal of School Health*, 65(10), 426-432.

Rubin, J. & Herbert, M. (1998). Peer teaching - model for active learning. *College Teaching, 48*(1), 26-30.

Simmons, D., Fuchs, L., Fuchs, D., Mathes, P. & Hodge, J-P. (1995). Effects of explicit teaching and peer tutoring on the reading achievement of learning-disabled and low-performing students in regular class-rooms. The Elementary School Journal, 95(5), 387-408.

Svinicki, M.D. (1991). Practical implications of cognitive theories*. New Directions for Teaching and Learning, 45*(30), 27-37.

8 Conclusions

Dale Bagshaw, Bruce Burton, Anita Grünbaum,
Margret Lepp, Horst Löfgren, Birgitte Malm and
John O'Toole

In the preceding country chapters each research team has presented research related to specifically national concerns. In this concluding chapter we use, as our starting-point, the overall aims and research questions of DRACON International in an attempt to integrate our findings and discuss future implications within a broader perspective.

8.1 Overall aims of DRACON International

The main purpose of our research has been to develop an integrated programme using conflict management as the theory and practice, and drama as the pedagogy in order to empower students through an integrated, school-based programme to manage their own conflict experiences in all aspects of their lives.

The overriding research questions for the whole project are as follows:

1. What are the most common types of conflicts among adolescents? How do they perceive their conflicts and how do they behave in typical conflict situations?

2. How can adolescents explore their own conflicts through the medium of drama?

3. Can the development of relevant drama methods and programmes in schools improve adolescents' capacities for handling conflicts?

4. How resilient are these drama methods and programmes? Will they function under troublesome conditions, such as in "problem" classes, and in ethnically divided schools?

5. Can the same or similar drama programmes be used for school-teachers and counsellors to stimulate their participation as facilitators in the drama programmes?

6. Under what conditions and to what effect can the drama programmes be implemented in a whole school? Can they be taken over and run by the school itself and under what conditions?

7. What kind of observations/measurements can be developed for studying the long and short-term effects of drama programmes?

8. What are the effects of different background or contextual factors (national and ethnic cultures, school systems etc) on the design and outcome of the field studies?

These questions will now be addressed in turn, based on the descriptions, findings and reflections of each of the research teams. Although the overall aims have been the same, each country team has had its own specific aims. Research within the countries has involved different age-groups, ranging from primary to high school, with the main focus on adolescents. Although most of the programmes have been directed towards conflict management, we have tried to help the students develop a competence, which can be termed conflict literacy. Where possible, we have tried to implement the DRACON programme into the regular school curriculum.

8.2   Results and implications

1. What are the most common types of conflicts among adolescents? How do they perceive their conflicts and how do they behave in typical conflict situations?

Typical arenas for conflict are the family, schools and leisure time activities. Conflict situations at home included helping with domestic chores (especially the children's room), what time to come home in the evenings and about doing homework. Boys more often reported conflicts about coming home too late and girls more frequently reported conflicts concerning clothes. Girls were more concerned about failures of friendship due to the disclosure or betrayal of secrets. They also had problems deciding jointly with friends what activity to follow. Another

conflict involved somebody else spreading false rumours or lies about them.

In all our studies there were clear gender differences, in regard to types of conflicts as well as ways in which to handle them. Boys tend towards direct confrontation whilst girls are more indirect and covert and prone towards compromise. In cases where girls show aggressive behaviour, it is often because of frustration. Girls tend to suppress their anger which can then erupt, accompanied by strong emotions. In Sweden this took the form of frustration and negative reactions to things rather than to persons.

In Adelaide, boys were more prone to use force as a strategy and girls to engage more in problem solving, compromising and smoothing.

In Brisbane students' conflicts were related directly to their own concerns. Conflicts among peers were most dominant among junior secondary students, conflicts with teachers were dominant among primary students and rare among older students, whereas conflicts with parents and students were most dominant among older students. Conflicts with siblings were just as frequent among all age groups.

Dominant recurring causes of conflict were inter-cultural conflict, racism and racial stereotyping, gender, power imbalance and bullying. In Adelaide most of the student's insults focused on gender and tended to be homophobic and misogynist. Gendered insults were common within the sexes as well as between the sexes and were more common than racist comments. These therefore were the focus of the drama work. Most conflicts, especially bullying, related to same-sex issues.

There are cultural distinctions between the participating countries in regard to soliciting information from students concerning kinds of conflicts and the ways in which they handle these situations. In Sweden and Australia it is possible to acquire direct information from the students, whilst Malaysian adolescents tend to be uncomfortable with self-disclosure and methods that encourage introspection. Malaysian students prefer face-maintenance procedures, respect for hierarchy, linguistic nuances, a gentle pace etc. Malaysian adolescents favoured indirect modes of expression. The integrated multi-arts approach was most productive to illicit information about how the students perceived conflicts.

In several different samples among upper secondary students during several years the Swedish team used questionnaires to study how stu-

424

dents react and act in conflict situations, as well as how they wished they had acted. Results of the analysis from different samples show very similar outcomes. The consistency in the various studies shows that we have adequately covered the main ways of handling conflicts. There are three clearly defined strategies for handling conflict: confronting (aggressiveness), avoidance, and fronting (compromising/negotiation).

Adelaide reports similar results in their use of different conflict handling styles, some constructive, such as problem solving and compromise, and others that are likely to produce negative outcomes for individuals, groups and the school community at large, such as forcing and withdrawing. It is a matter of concern that substantial numbers of students are using negative styles in South Australian schools. In Adelaide it was possible to identify three different types of negative treatment experienced at school: verbal, physical and relational aggression.

2. How can adolescents explore their own conflicts through the medium of drama?

We found that when interest in conflicts and drama is developed in a group, frightened and unwilling students changed from "I hate doing plays performing in class" (as one of the students in Adelaide expressed it) to gradually becoming involved in improvising and performing in front of their school-fellows. In the long run it has been easy to get students interested in learning more about conflicts because drama combines playfulness with serious involvement in questions that affect every teenager.

While students found it difficult to articulate their understanding of conflict verbally, their engagement in reconstructing and re-presenting conflict in an artistic presentation disclosed their grasp of the components of conflict clearly enough. Each session was designed to introduce drama activities that facilitated the exploration of key concepts linked to conflict management. Drama activities were designed to facilitate student exploration of the effect of each strategy, and to identify the potential destructive and constructive elements of each.

Where personal conflicts were disclosed and offered for use in the class-work, they were always distanced, fictionalised and de-personalised, usually through drama techniques. They were also consolidated with other conflict situations before they could be used in the drama.

425

In introducing storytelling, students were allowed to become the owners of their own conflict stories, which is important for empowerment in conflict resolution. The students were more comfortable retracing a real conflict in a fictional setting and expressing the stages of the conflict and the feelings in action.

Peer teaching is an effective method of teaching about conflict management. In Brisbane, younger students consistently reported that the older students understood their conflicts better than teachers or other conflict management systems in the schools, and that they trusted and enjoyed the learning. Peer teaching is a very effective method of reinforcing the peer teachers' learning and often of augmenting their self-confidence. The combination of drama and peer teaching have a marked beneficial effect at least on the two generations of participants, particularly in forming informal 'buddying' networks, and stopping bullying and stand-over of primary school students coming up into the secondary school. In Brisbane there have been many examples of personalised relationships and support of younger by older students in the wake of the programme.

In Malaysia, creative arts procedures worked best when focused on the reconstruction of conflict situations and allowed the real conflict to spiral using fiction to bring it to a conclusion. When working from real-life conflicts, participants were motivated to go beyond the stereotype and to explore in depth the tense relationships between characters. This was in sharp contrast to the stock situations, stock characters and melodramatic emotions enacted by the participants when presenting merely imaginary conflicts in a fictional context. In Malaysia, the creative arts process provides a possible interface between the affective and cognitive modes of conflict recognition, making it more participatory and action oriented.

In all our projects, adolescents willingly explored their own conflicts through drama. The drama activities recognised the students' need for "*safe space*", while at the same time taking cultural conditions into consideration.

3. *Can the development of relevant drama methods and programmes in schools improve adolescents' capacities for handling conflicts?*

The analysis of our study shows that students involved in the DRACON project have gained new knowledge and understanding on several levels:

- *a social level*: getting to know each other in new ways, developing feelings of fellowship, empathy and respect, expanding their listening capacity, understanding the importance of co-operation and skills such as listening to others,
- *an aesthetic level*: finding creative ways of expressing feelings and thoughts,
- *a cognitive level*: discovering new understandings of the nature of conflicts and the different ways to handle conflicts, different perspectives on life and society.

However, it is difficult to know to what extent the students' knowledge of conflict handling techniques has influenced their real-life situations outside the learning context, although we have a few examples of such effects.

In Brisbane at least a dozen life-changes have been observed and reported that have been ascribed fully or mainly to the project. Data has been collected from nearly five thousand children in over fifty schools over nine years and a considerable and consistent bank of corroborated evidence has been built up. Students themselves constantly reiterated assertions of personal behavioural change and better management of conflict. In Adelaide students also commented on how their learning had improved their relationships with peers at school and at home.

Even if there have been improvements in the ways students say they react in conflict situations, and we have seen how they have expanded their conflict repertoire, more data from real life situations is needed in order to conclude that the DRACON programme has assisted them to handle conflict situations in more creative ways.

In Malaysia it has been possible to improve perceptual skills (problem identification and exploration), emotional ventilation skills (expressions of feelings), stress management (tension reduction), and support networking skills.

4. *How resilient are these drama methods and programmes? Will they function under troublesome conditions, such as in "problem" classes and in ethnically divided schools?*

In order to secure the success and resilience of the DRACON programme, certain conditions need to be adhered to: students' voluntary participation, support from the school staff and parents, well-organised

DRACON lessons and, at best, a facilitator trained in both drama and conflict theories.

Brisbane found the ambience of the school to be a vital factor in students' confidence to deal with conflict. Where there is an atmosphere of interest generated by the staff generally, even those not involve in the project, the results seem to be stronger.

The Adelaide study has demonstrated that with a difficult "out of control" class in a disadvantaged school there are indications that educational drama can provide a creative medium for the teaching of constructive conflict handling skills to individuals and for the development of co-operation between groups. The programme was flexible and the team took into account the comments students made in their journal entries to ensure that students' issues were identified and dealt with. The focus was on verbal abuse which was previously identified as being problematic by students in the school. The drama and conflict techniques broke down the barriers between groups which were based on gender and status in the gender hierarchy, and assisted students to treat each other with more respect. The students appreciated having free choice to participate and the ability to control the content of their plays. However, in future programmes in schools such as these it will be important to have the involvement of at least one teacher who is skilled in teaching drama and who also has an interest in learning about conflict handling strategies.

Working with different ethnic groups as such, need not be problematic, due to the democratic nature of drama. However, if there are antagonistic ethnic differences within the group these manifest themselves in role play. Problems occur when role play moves from creative fiction and into harsh reality.

The Swedish DRACON programme has been found to be resilient under the following conditions: if the students have a free choice to participate, if the class-teacher, the headmaster and parents supports the programme, if the logistics and practicalities for the DRACON lessons are well organised, and if the facilitator is trained both in drama and in conflict theories. Under these conditions the programme also seems to be useful in ethnically divided classes. For "problem classes" the programme may be too advanced. A standardised programme like the one used in Sweden is not directly applicable to a problem class. The drama lessons need to be conducted in accordance with the Adelaide model, i.e. each session needs to be planned and adapted to the needs of the

group. Progression is directed by the emotional and cognitive development of the group as a whole. Basic communication skills are a prerequisite for drama literacy.

As the Malaysian school authorities perceive "empowering methods" as threatening the stability of schools, there are problems implementing such methods in schools.

5. *Can the same or similar drama programmes be used for schoolteachers and counsellors to stimulate their participation as facilitators in the drama programmes?*

Experience has shown that teachers and school counsellors can benefit from the same drama programmes. In Sweden the programme worked well with the adults, although it took twice as long to process compared to the students. Many participated positively and enthusiastically. However, when it came to applying their theories in practice, there was ambivalence, especially at the outset. The teachers expressed feelings of being uncertain of how to lead the drama exercises and how to deal with the conflict theory. In Sweden especially, teachers' perceptions of security are related more to competence through knowledge of the subject rather than other personality related competences.

In Malaysia, counsellors found the levels of sharing and empowerment in using the approach awkward, because it conflicted with the high power-distance relationships and consensus seeking postures that are predominant in the school system. The counsellors felt "unsafe" taking the role of the antagonist in asymmetrical conflict situations. They also probably found the levels of sharing, participation and empowerment awkward when they returned to the school context. Nor were they very receptive to the critically reviewing the standard techniques of counselling or to release their set beliefs and ideas about a helping relationship. There is a need to provide an alternative to the traditional system, where power and position leads to the enforcement of norms and rules.

DRACON courses for teachers and counsellors have, in most cases, lasted one week or less. It has probably been too optimistic to expect teachers and counsellors to run a successful programme after only a short period of in-service training. It requires a certain amount of drama competence and knowledge of conflict theory to facilitate our DRACON programmes.

*6. Under what conditions and to what effect can the drama pro-
grammes be implemented in a whole school? Can they be taken over
and run by the school itself and under what conditions?*

If the conditions described under question four are adhered to, and the
whole school supports one of the DRACON programmes, we believe
the programme has good chances of succeeding. However, it is impor-
tant that teachers receive training in both the language of drama and of
conflict on a regular basis.

In Brisbane the project has been embedded within the normal school
curriculum. The goal has been to change the ethos of schools by creat-
ing new networks of understanding and support. The programme has
had its most conspicuous successes where a larger body of the staff was
informed and engaged as well as those actually participating. Attempts
have been made to fit the programme into different subjects (the most
successful were English and Health and Physical Education). Problems
arise when teachers were not always willing or imaginative in their
integration of the programme in the curriculum.

Due to the bureaucratic and collectivist perceptions of the educa-
tional establishment, there is a tendency in Malaysia to view the
DRACON experiment at creative conflict exploration as going beyond
the structures of common educational practice.

In Sweden the programme seemed to be too advanced to be compre-
hended during one single week by teachers with neither education in
educational drama or in conflict theories.

*7. What kinds of observations/measurements can be developed for
studying the long and short-term effects of drama programmes?*

In the DRACON project, we have used different forms of self-reported
data, such as questionnaires, videos, diaries and questions requiring
problem solving. Self-reported data can sometimes be biased and in
several situations less reliable. In Brisbane, however, large bodies of
self-reported data proved to be corroborative, based on teachers report-
ing incidents/comments, peer-teachers doing the same and parents mak-
ing observations about their child's behaviour.

In order to be able to analyse how students behave in simulated con-
flict situations, video-recorded material from drama exercises were
collected. Observations of students during lessons and breaks were
used and interviews with students and their teachers conducted.

430

Due to the fact that we seldom have randomised groups in effect studies, pre- and post-tests are needed in order to study differences between groups that have participated in the programme and those that haven't.

The instruments we have developed have shown high validity and reliability, although the duration and number of students in some cases have been too limited to give clear results. Studying the effects of a Drama programme such as DRACON requires that the programme be applied during a longer period with more classes and schools, as has been done in Brisbane. Despite varying durations of programme implementation, most of our measurements and observations show that we have been able to influence students' alternative ways of acting as well as increase their awareness in conflict situations.

The Swedish team used measurements related to short-term effects, such as questionnaires with fixed alternatives to statements (related to how students usually react in conflict situations), open questions (pertaining to student intervention in conflict situations), field-notes, students' diaries, video-recordings of role-plays, and interviews with students and teachers.

The Adelaide team used focus groups and questionnaires to understand the students' perceptions and experiences of conflicts in schools and, on the basis of the findings, designed a flexible DRACON programme which focused on verbal abuse which was identified as a serious problem in schools. For the DRACON programme the team used written pre- and post-tests, journal entries for each session, observation sheets, videos of the plays and videoed student evaluations, where students interviewed each other about what they had learned. The written pre- and post tests were unreliable, as students were initially resistant to completing anything requiring written work. The Adelaide team felt that it would have been more effective to ask students to interview each other on video before and after the programme, as they responded well to this medium. In particular, students responded well to the *vox populi* style where one played the role of a television interviewer (using predetermined questions).

Measurements related to long-time effects would take into consideration the frequency of reported incidents of various forms of conflicts where either teachers or school leaders have been forced to take some kind of action.

8. What are the effects of different background or contextual factors (national and ethnic cultures, school systems etc) on the design and outcome of the field studies?

As drama work provided a value-free platform for exploring cultural conflicts, students were able to explore their attitudes focussed on fictional contexts without feeling threatened. In this context it was noted that many students expressed positive changes of attitude on cultural matters, including new insights into the experiences of others, and a willingness to accommodate difference (Brisbane). Two other important observed outcomes were a growing self-confidence in public as well as a greater acceptance within the class or school group of their cultural specificity. No significant examples of increased racial tension or cultural conflict were found.

8.3   Concluding remarks

Working nationally within each country as well as collaborating on an international level, sharing experiences and discussing theories has resulted in extensive and varied research material. Although the focus has been on the main aims of the DRACON project, different areas of interest have been explored in the different countries by the local teams. In this way a wider perspective has been provided which we hope may prove beneficial in cross-cultural contexts.

The main intention of DRACON International to bridge the fields of drama and conflict management, we believe, has been an innovative and important move in the right direction. Theories of conflict have provided the framework and given support to practical implementation through drama in schools. Positive collaboration and the sharing of a common goal are necessary for lasting and meaningful implementation of the programme.

An integration of drama and conflict theories in teacher-training programmes is a pre-requisite in order to secure future implementation and stability of programmes such as DRACON. New competences need to be developed in order to cope with the increase in aggressive behaviour among students in schools. Teachers should be allowed more autonomy over their practice; continual personal and professional development is necessary for attaining higher competence and quality.

432

The school of tomorrow needs to focus on goals such as promoting conflict literacy, empathic competence, respect for the individual and democratic values. With a holistic approach to life-long learning, the school has an increased responsibility for social training, upbringing and educating the "good" citizen. Methods such as experiential learning and problem solving enhance individual development. Society today is characterised by multi-cultural settings, inter-cultural education, gender socialisation, and a "glocal" (global and local) perspective. In this world of constant change, adolescents need to learn to solve conflicts in creative ways.

We hope that the theories and practical experiences described in this book will encourage and inspire others to realize the significance of empowering students to handle conflicts. In this way they learn to acquire social skills, develop social competence and are thus able to cope adequately with conflict situations in their daily lives.

When adolescents gain insight into the thoughts and actions of others, they at the same time gain a deeper understanding of themselves. Learning to handle conflicts constructively becomes not only a private (local) concern but should be able to permeate into all walks of life, contributing in the long run, to a more democratic and just society.

Appendix – Drama

PREAMBLE

It should be noted that drama in the DRACON Project takes many forms and serves a number of very different purposes. The exercises, techniques and strategies in this appendix have all been used in the project, but they must be used with care and in appropriate contexts. They include games for ice-breaking or warming a group up; exercises for creating focus; exercises for developing drama and theatre skills, both physical and intellectual. They also include the central drama techniques used with classes to build up understanding of conflict and conflict management, and to explore methods of mediation and conflict resolution. Some of these are in themselves simple, but are used in combinations that fulfil particular purposes in the national projects; others are more complex and work organically, or are designed specifically for their particular context.

(A=Adelaide, B=Brisbane, M=Malaysia and S=Sweden)

Warming-up exercises/ Icebreakers building	*Tension reduction, support building, creating safe space, alliance/ensemble*
Handshake/greeting (M)	Walk around randomly, stop and greet anyone. Repeat in many different ways, energy levels, emotions.
Whisper in ear (M)	B continuously executes instructions whispered by A into B's ears.
Flocking (M)	The group shadows the movements of one leader over space and transits smoothly to shadow a new movement by a new leader.
Shoulder to shoulder (M)	Walking as a pair shoulder to shoulder with A leading B slowly around the room, stopping and starting together. For a group, work in a horizontal line without a leader.
Run and stop (M)	Run or walk briskly (to the command of different speeds/rhythms), stop and start again in a different direction on cue.
Sinking ship (M)	Try to become the sole survivor on a ship by pushing everyone else out of the circle.

Same sequence game (B)	In changing sizes of groups (1-4) a circle, a star, a stretch and a scrum are formed as quickly as possible.
Clumps (B)	Groups of 4-6 form shapes such as a pineapple, a horse etc., then form new groups with particular shapes.
Touching body parts (B)	While moving around, participants - when called out - touch hands, elbows, knees, fingers, backs etc.
Touching kneecaps (A)	Try to hit the kneecaps of others without being hit yourself.
Greeting/handshake (S)	Shaking hands (right/left) with everybody as quickly as possible.
African handshake (S)	Ordinary handshake combined with a grip around the thumb.
Name circle (S)	Number 1 tells her/his name, 2 tells the names of 1+2, 3 the names of 1+2+3 etc .
Names in alphabetic order (S)	Everybody placed in alphabetic order in a circle. Names repeated in chorus.
Gingerbread hunting (S)	Pairs holding each other with free arms in bows. A is hunting B (one of the pairs). B can be saved by clasping a free elbow. The third person on the other side is then free to hunt.
Reversed gingerbread hunting (S)	As above, but the third person directly reverses to the role of hunter.
Hurricane game (S)	Groups of 3, where 2 form a roof over a 3rd. A person in the middle tries to steal a place and calls out "person" (the 3rd under the roof moves to another house) or "house" (the roof moves away to form a new house) or "hurricane" (all blow away).

Building focus:

Body and breathing checklist (M)	Stand still and check different parts of the body on given cue, becoming aware of tensions, rhythms, directions, shape etc.
Relaxation (B)	Take a deep breath, hold your breath, relax arms (back, legs) while quietly breathing out.
Visualisation (B)	Visualise lying on a warm beach, sense the sun and wind, hear the sound of water etc.
Circle of attention (B)	Focus on a single spot, widen the focus of attention within a metre around the spot, widen the attention to the whole room.

Giving and receiving (M)	Player in centre projects an emotion by throwing a ball back and forth to each person in the circle. Throwers say "I give" and catchers say "I receive".
Back to back (M)	Sit/stand back-to-back, control and manipulate each other's body by taking on each other's weight.
Dead weight (M)	A dead-weight body is moved smoothly by 3 others to the other end of a room using creative means e.g. lifting, dragging, rolling.
Trust circle (M)	Person in the centre of the circle falls stiffly and slowly in any direction, is caught by the person in the circle facing him and is pushed towards another person in the circle.
Walk around the room (A)	Changing directions, adding movements etc.
Find someone in the room … (A)	While moving around the students look for a person and ask questions to find a person that coincides with a description given by the teacher.
Interview in pairs (A)	Introducing the partner for the whole group in the circle.
Random counting in circle (A)	Looking at the feet, random counting from 1-20 one at a time. Starting from the beginning when two say the same number.
Dances (A)	Group dances like a jig, a pavane.
Making rhythms to a poem (A)	Finding ways to rhyme a poem (in groups).
Trust walks in pairs (A)	One blindfolded, the other leading the way.
Mirror (B. M.)	Working in pairs A mirrors the movements of B and vice versa, a) sitting b) standing c) moving around .
Stop-start (S)	All move around. When someone stops, everyone stops.
	When someone starts, everyone starts. Rhythms, movements, words can be introduced by the starter and mirrored by the others.
Active listening (S)	In pairs tell a story about a happy/sad memory from last summer. The story is retold by the partner.

Basic drama and conflict skills	*Giving form to feelings and thoughts, relation building, conflict identification*
Changing chairs (S):	
- All who ….?	Sitting on chairs in a circle. When one person in the middle calls out (e.g.): "All who wear blue jeans…", everybody with blue jeans including the person in the middle rush to find another chair.
- All who have had a conflict …?	As above, but questions about conflicts with parents, teachers, peers etc or about smoking, cleaning up etc
- ABC-salad	As above, but everyone gets Attitude, Behaviour or Contradiction as a personal word to react to when called out by the person in the middle. Conflict signals that all have to find other chairs.
Identifying feelings (S)	In turn, groups of three pick a piece of paper with a secret feeling. On a signal from the leader they turn around miming the feeling for the audience, who try to identify it.
Sculptures:	
Negative and positive space (M)	A creates a shape with his/her body allowing B to pass through, followed by B creating the next shape for A to pass through.
Image theatre (M)	Recreating a sequence of frozen images of pair or group scenes.
Freezes/sculpturing (B. M.)	Working in pairs A is sculpted by B in a series of images as freezes. Swap. A five second piece of movement (e.g. the accident) begins and ends with a freeze.
Postcards from Paris etc (A)	One group asks for a postcard, another group produces it with their bodies.
Frozen picture (A)	Groups present pictures of "nasty" feelings.
Machines (B)	Groups with numbers 1-6(8) form machines, one after the other, taking positions and repeating machine-like movements.
Changing sculptures (S)	Groups of 3 are numbered 1,2,3. Number 1 takes a position to be held for a while, number 2 adds a new position. When 3 are in the statue, 1 moves out of it and takes up a new position etc.
Third party sculptures (S):	
a) Sculpting	As above. Number 1 takes a position in a conflict, 2 reacts and takes an opposing position. Number 3 makes two changes in order to de-escalate the conflict. Changing roles twice.
b) Showing	The groups choose one of the three situations to show slowly step by step.

c) Verbalising	The groups of 3 add one sentence for each party in the chosen conflict and show the situations as short improvisations. Discussion about third party intervention.

Improvisation:

Creating objects (B)	In pairs, A mimes the use of an object, B mimes using it.
	A mimes sculpturing a statue, B mimes changes, A adds further changes. Discussion about the "statue".
Creating scenes (B)	Groups of 4-5. The first takes a posture or mimes doing something. In turn the rest add to the scene until everybody is active.
Space jump (B)	Groups of 4-5. The first steps in the middle saying or doing something. The next and the following in turn try to totally change the action and location. They exit in reverse order.
Meeting different feelings (S)	Two groups secretly decide about one feeling each. The leader suggests a surrounding such as a classroom, a disco etc. The two groups confront each other with their decided feelings.

Characterisation:

Character walks and talks (B)	Everybody walks around taking on the body and movement of characters named by the teacher. At the signal "Talk" every-body role talks with the nearest person.
Bus stop (B)	In turn everybody takes on a character and walks up to a bus- stop talking to each other in roles while waiting for the bus.
Emotion memory (B)	After a pause for relaxation, everybody tries to recall a happy event or something frightening from their childhood and re-enacts the experience.
Multiple role-game (B)	Standing in a circle, the teacher asks a person about a name, addresses the next person with that name and asks for age (12-20), continues to ask questions to be answered in roles about background, problems etc.
Role-play (M)	Replaying characters from real-life situations.
Role-play (A)	Groups of boys or girls act with reversed gender roles in a situation about verbal abuse.
Foreign movie (A)	Acting a conflict in pairs with another pair as the voices.
Improvisation (A)	In groups, inventing stories where a bad event is followed by a good and improvising the situations.
Short script (A)	Interpretation of some short sentences for person A and B to be acted in front of the class.
Body language – role play (S)	Half of the group act high status, the other half low status, while meeting at a party (a shop, a restaurant etc). Role reversal.

Playmaking/Composition	*Conflict exploration*
Solo postcard (M)	Participant freezes in a posture to capture the emotion, action of a character studied and rehearsed earlier.
Group/composite postcard (M)	Participants enter one after another and freeze in postures related to previous actors, presenting their individual experiences on a similar theme or situation.
Story-telling (M)	Write or tell the details of what happened in a situation.
Freeze frames improvisation (M)	Participants develop three freeze frames/ group images and later improvise each frame.
Solo scripting (M)	Participant writes out conflict situation in dialogue.
Group scripting (M)	Participants take on various roles in a conflict situation and co-write the dialogue.
Master and servant improvisation (A)	Bashes with a balloon to keep the hierarchical order.
Role-plays about asymmetric conflicts (A)	Planning and acting out situations where the power balance shifts.

Painting a conflict (S):

a) Conflict telling	In groups of 4-5, one at a time tells a story about an experienced conflict.
b) Painting	A piece of paper with a name in the middle is handed around, so that the others can paint something from the conflict told by that person.
c) Exhibition	Paintings exposed on the wall are presented. Questions allowed, but no critical comments.
d) Role-play	Each group chooses one or a mixture of described conflicts, plan a role-play and perform it.

Role-play in pairs (S):

a) Focus at different steps of escalation	Instructions for conflict role-play between teacher/ student, peer/peer, brother/sister, parent/teenager are given and played by everybody at the same time in the middle of the room.
b) Focus at de-escalation	De-escalation of one of the conflicts above, planned and performed in pairs in front of the class.

Process Drama techniques:

Teacher-in-role (B. S.)	The teacher takes a part and acts together with the students.
Whole class role-play (B)	A crowd scene, where something happens that affects every-body.
Role circle/official meeting (B.S.)	All in the group take on roles as people who know a bit about the conflict - neighbours, friends, family members etc.
Hot seat/interview (B)	A character (may be a teacher-in-role) is interrogated or given advice.
Multiple role/empty chair (B.S.)	Several participants or the whole group operate/act as one person.
Role-playing in pairs (B.S.)	The same situation – a family scene or a slander between two people - is played simultaneously by all the participants in pairs.
Teacher narrative and time jump (B.S.)	Introduction of the story to be investigated or time jump between scenes.
Letter (B)	Writing a letter as a character in the story, individually or in groups.
Thought tracking (B)	Characters playing roles can be frozen and asked to express inner feelings and thoughts at a particular moment.
Performance re-enactment (B)	After simultaneous role-play, groups are asked to perform what happened for the whole class.
Dramatic reconstruction (B)	Members of the group become actors in a docu-drama and are asked to reconstruct the key moment of the story.
Symbolic re-enactment	Instead of presenting the situation naturally, it is presented in symbolic form – through mime, masks, movements, rituals etc.

Conflict styles - role-play (S):

a) Family building	Four or five groups decide on family roles, names, ages, professions etc. The family members decide secretly and individually where they want to spend the summer holiday.
b) Conflict styles	Groups receive a paper with pictures of a lion, camel, turtle, fox or owl. Discussion in the groups on what kind of conflict style their animal symbolises (with some help from the teacher).
c) Meeting – "pure" families	Each group, in turn, play their family meeting about the holiday with everyone sticking to the conflict style for the family.

440

d) Meeting – mixed family	One person from each family role-plays the same situation together.
e) Analysis	Analysis of the conflict styles and the outcome of the different role-plays.

Forum theatre (M):	Groups decide on an issue, brainstorm content, assign a protagonist and antagonist to improvise a situation to air the issue in the presence of an audience.

Play-building 1 – the Headline technique (B):

Step 1	Groups (6) decide on a theme that involves conflict and appoint a narrator/scribe.
Step 2	Writing the first paragraph of a newspaper report, finding a juicy headline and preparing a news photo (freeze-frame).
Step 3	Using a frozen photo the narrator reads the headline and the paragraph. The scribe writes down questions about the photo.
Step 4	Choosing a particular character central to a problematic question to be the protagonist, back-grounding the conflict by "hot-seating" and improvising a key moment in the escalation of the conflict to the manifest stage.
Step 5	Choosing one of the situations for further exploration into Forum theatre or working on all of the group contexts.

Playbuilding 2 – Confessions (B):

Step 1	Participants in pairs: each shares with their partner a personal true story of unresolved conflict, which the partner must re-tell to the teller <u>in the first person</u> as convincingly as possible. They then decide on one of the stories, and agree on which half of the story each of them will tell, in the first person.
Step 2	The pairs are brought together into groups of 6, 8 or 10, and each pair in turn re-tells 'their' story, without revealing the story's originator until the end. When all stories in the group have been told, the group then chooses one of them which will be the basis for developing a play or piece of forum theatre.

Step 3	Each member of the group then adds **one** fictional detail to the story – this is crucial: 1) to distance the story from the originator by fictionalising it; 2) to complexity the story to make it better drama; 3) to give the group ownership of it.
Step 4	The group transforms the story into a play, which they will normally perform themselves, then casts and rehearses it. (See below, enhanced forum theatre).

Playbuilding 3 – Multiple role circle (B):

Step 1	The class stands in a circle - the leader in the middle selects a student at random and asks "What's your name". The student responds with a fictional name, and everybody in the group becomes that person.
Step 2	The questioning continues with group members at random being asked questions, to which they must respond immediately and consistently, without contradicting anything previously stated, that firstly develop the character and background.
Step 3	When a clear and consistent character has emerged, the leader asks questions that lead into a situation of conflict, e.g. "What were you doing at the fight on the beach?" These should be open enough for the group to invent and develop the situation. A story of conflict with a clear protagonist will emerge.
Step 4	If the group is unused to this technique, the exercise may need to be tried a few times before a believable scenario emerges. If the group is experienced in drama, a group member or members may be invited to lead the questioning.

Enhanced forum theatre (B):

This is the central drama technique of the Brisbane Project, and is a coherent package, which needs to be carried out in full.

Step 1	The class stands in a circle - the leader in the middle selects a student at random and asks "What's your name". The student responds with a fictional name, and everybody in the group becomes that person.
Step 2	The questioning continues with group members at random being asked questions, to which they must

respond immediately and consistently, without contradicting anything previously stated, that firstly develop the character and background.

Step 3	When a clear and consistent character has emerged, the leader asks questions that lead into a situation of conflict, e.g. "What were you doing at the fight on the beach?" These should be open enough for the group to invent and develop the situation. A story of conflict with a clear protagonist will emerge.
Step 4	If the group is unused to this technique, the exercise may need to be tried a few times before a believable scenario emerges. If the group is experienced in drama, a group member or members may be invited to lead the questioning.

Enhanced forum theatre (B):

This is the central drama technique of the Brisbane Project, and is a coherent package, which needs to be carried out in full.

Step 1: Playbuilding	A conflict scenario is derived from real life or fiction, and fictionalised into a play in three scenes, depicting 1) latent, 2) emerging, 3) manifest conflict, with scene 3 finishing in an unresolved confrontation.
Step 2: The First Performance	The acting group selects a host or Master of Ceremonies who introduces the play and controls the forum. The actors enact the three-scene play, without interruption.
Step 3: The Second Performance	Enhancements: before the second performance, the Host invites the audience to 'hot-seat' one or more characters – to ask questions of the actor in role, to discover important background details, or the character's motivation, opinions or attitude. They then enact the play a second time, with the audience invited to stop the action at any time to 'thought-track' one or more characters, and the actor in role must try to express what the character is thinking at that moment.
Step 4	The Forum: When the play is performed the third time, the audience is invited to intervene: at any point where they believe a character could de-escalate or resolve the conflict, they can stop the action and step into the role, while the actor stands aside. The play continues according to the inter-

	vention until the problem is resolved or the intervention breaks down or escalates the conflict.
Step 5: Scene Four	Important extension: since few forums will resolve the conflict realistically, the audience is invited to construct alternative scenarios nominating a character from the situation who might be best placed to de-escalate or resolve the conflict. The actors try out these scenarios as 'Scene Four', with the audience able to discuss or reflect on their effectiveness.
Step 6	Whether or not the conflict is resolved in the Forum or during one of the 'Scene Fours' the MC leads reflective discussion on the fictional situation and attempted solutions. This is where much of the explicit learning occurs.

Conflict play (S):

a) Four corner exercise	The participants go to different corners of the room, depending on whom they have had a conflict with that they are willing to share: 1. Parents, 2. Brother or sister, 3. Teachers, 4. Peers.
b) Story-telling	In groups of 4-5 they tell each other about the conflicts. They choose one of the conflicts or combine elements from two.
c) Planning	After generalising the conflicts by changing names and surroundings they decide on the different parties, casting, dramatical structure and ending.
d) Playing	Every group performs their conflict play in front of the others.
e) Reflection	Actors questioned after each improvisation; reflection on how far the conflict was escalated - C,A,B. The actors are given advice from the audience on how to clarify the role-play.
f) Third party interventions	Conflict play is used as a modified Forum Theatre with third party interventions instead of role reversal with the oppressed party. The interventions are video taped.
g) Analysis	With focus on the person who did the intervention, an analysis of the outcome of every third party intervention is made. Which conflict style was used by the third party? Did the intervention escalate or de-escalate the conflict?

444

Mediation play (S):

a) Performance	Win-lose solutions of a neighbour conflict concerning a garage are performed by the leaders in two scenes demonstrating power imbalance due to alliance building and results in the conflict being brought to justice.
b) Mediation	After information about how to execute impartial mediation the students (in groups of 3) act as the two neighbours and an impartial mediator.
c) Analysis	Discussion and conclusions about mediation.

Community Theatre in Education (B. M.):

Adult actors/trained students devise drama from research on adolescents and perform to a target audience using participation techniques. **NB This is a complex process, and the steps below are only a brief indication of the process, which should not be undertaken without experience, training and appropriate resources and logistical support.**

Period 1

Step 1	Identifying the context and the audience.
Step 2	Research.
Step 3	Improvising.
Step 4	Refining and scripting.
Step 5	Considering the audience.
Step 6	Devising audience participation.

Period 2

Step 1	Casting.
Step 2	Rehearsals.
Step 3	Performance.
Step 4	Post-performance discussion.

Selected readings

Boal, A. (1979). *Theatre of the Oppressed.* London: Pluto Books.

Boal, A. (1992). *Games for actors and Non-actors.* London: Routledge.

Boal, A. (1998). *Legislative Theatre. Using Performance to Make Politics.* London: Routledge.

Bolton, G. (1992). *New Perspectives on Classroom Drama.* London: Simon & Schuster Education.

Grünbaum, A. & Lepp, M. (2005). *DRACON – Drama, konflikthantering och medling i skolan* [DRACON – Drama, conflict management and mediation in schools]. Malmö, Sweden: School of Teacher Education.

Johnstone, K. (1981). *Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre.* London: Methuen.

Kamaluddin, L. & Pillai, J. (1998). *Drama as a Conflict Handling Method.* Final Research Project Report. Penang: Univeriti Sains Malaysia.

Nursey-Bray, R., Bagshaw, D., Halliday, D. & Mykyta, M. (2000). *Sharks, Turtles, Owls or rat-Bags?* Adelaide: University of South Australia.

O´Neill, C. & Lambert, A. (1982). *Drama structures. A practical handbook for teachers.* London: Hutchinson.

O´Toole, J. & Burton, B. (1999). *The Dracon program*. Brisbane: Centre for applied Theatre Research, Griffith University.

O´Toole, J., Burton, B. & Plunkett, A. (2004). *Cooling Conflict*. Pearson Education Australia.

Spolin, V. (1973). *Improvisation for the Theatre.* London: Pitman.

Way, B. (1967). *Development through Drama.* London: Longmans.

Presentation of the authors

Dale Bagshaw

Ph.D., Associate Professor, Director of Conflict Management Research and Postgraduate Studies, School of Social Work & Social Policy, University of South Australia; Vice-President of the World Mediation Forum (2000-2005) and founding President of the Asia Pacific Mediation Forum (2001-2006). Has been teaching mediation for more than 20 years in Australia, Europe and South East Asia and has researched and published widely in the areas of mediation; gender, violence and conflict in schools; family violence and family and child practice. Project leader of the South Australian DRACON team 1996-2005.

Bruce Burton

Associate Professor of Drama at Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia. Has been working and teaching in drama education and youth theatre for nearly thirty years, and is the author of a number of standard Australian drama textbooks for schools and colleges. Formerly Dean of Professional Practice in the Faculty of Education, he has a particular interest in reflective teaching and learning, and working within schools systems with the arts, and in youth theatre. Member of the Brisbane DRACON team 1999-2005.

Mats Friberg

Ph.D., Associate Professor, Senior lecturer, Department of Peace and Development Research, University of Gothenburg, Sweden. Member of the Swedish DRACON team 1994-2004.

Anita Grünbaum

M.A., Head of the Drama Department (retired since 2002). Education of Dramapedagogues, Storvik, Sweden. Special areas of interest: experiential learning in vocational learning, drama didactics and cultural

development, drama pedagogy/psychodrama. Member of the Swedish DRACON team 1995-2005.

Latif Kamaluddin

Ph.D., Associate Professor, Magister Artium (Munich), Diploma in Conflict Resolution (Uppsala), Diploma in Sikh Studies (Khalsa College, London), Diploma in Schuessler's Biochemic Therapy (Walsall, U.K.). Member of the Malaysian DRACON team 1994-2004.

Margret Lepp

Ph.D., Associate Professor, Senior Lecturer in Health Sciences Pedagogy, Borås University College, Sweden. Special areas of interest: ethnographic research, drama in health care education, professional development of health care personnel and teachers, internationalisation of health care education. Member of the Swedish DRACON team 1994-2005.

Horst Löfgren

Ph.D., Professor in Education, Malmö University, Sweden. Special areas of interest: research methodology, advanced statistical analysis, foreign language learning, conditions for immigrant children and working conditions in schools, teacher competences. Member of the Swedish DRACON team since 1995, project leader of the Swedish DRACON team 2001-2005.

Birgitte Malm

Ph.D., Senior Lecturer in Education, Malmö University, Sweden. Special areas of interest: philosophy of education, authenticity, personal and professional development of teachers, life history research, teacher competences, Montessori education. Member of the Swedish DRACON team 2001-2005.

Rosemary Nursey-Bray

MA in Drama Studies, Ph.D. focussing on theatre for young people. Has taught drama in high schools in Britain and Africa and has lectured in aspects of Drama at the University of South Australia. She acts as a

448

consultant in Drama to high schools and has published articles in various journals. Member of the South Australian DRACON team 2002-2004.

John O'Toole

Professor of Drama Education at Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia. Has been teaching and working in drama, theatre and education for over thirty years, on five continents, and has amassed many standard publications on drama and theatre education, both personally, and in collaboration. Director of Publications for the International Drama/Theatre and Education Association, and a published playwright, specialising in the field of young people's theatre. Member of the Brisbane DRACON team 1995-2005.

Janet Pillai

Lecturer at the School of Arts, University Sains, Malaysia. Theatre Director at the Five Arts Centre and the Young Theatre, Penang, Malaysia. Areas of interest/specialization are children's theatre and educational theatre. Member of the Malaysian DRACON team 1994-2005.

Anna Plunkett

Teacher in Sydney. Worked on the Brisbane DRACON Project, initially as a teacher education student on practice in the initial Key School, then as Research Assistant and Senior Research Officer on the Brisbane Project, from 1997-2002. Completed her Ph.D. on the cultural implications of DRACON in 2003. Member of the Brisbane DRACON team 1997-2002.

Ken Rigby

Ph.D., Adjunct Professor (Research) at the University of South Australia. Employed as a teacher for ten years in Primary and High Schools in England and Australia before becoming a lecturer. Over the last fifteen years he has become the leading Australian researcher on issues of school bullying and has published widely in books and academic journals. Member of the South Australian DRACON team 2002-2004.