CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction:

This is a story of the journey of one teacher and a group of children over a period of two years, as practical strategies for dealing effectively and positively with conflict were implemented within the curriculum. It is also the story of an ongoing inner journey, an encapsulation in time of a process which began for the teacher long before the implementation of this particular program and which hopefully will lay seeds that will enable the children to see value in a path of self-transformation.

Nobody lives without conflict at some point in their lives but most people do not see this as a productive or positive experience. Strategies for getting along with one another at both the interpersonal and at the group and societal levels have concerned human beings since the beginning of time. They have ranged from killing the other (person or civilisation); to pretending the other does not exist; from giving in for the sake of ‘peace’; to turning the other cheek.

My personal strategies for dealing with conflict in the past (and to a lesser extent still today) have been sometimes to explode with rage, it no longer being socially acceptable to kill; or to withdraw until the situation ‘sorted itself out’; or to pretend that there was nothing wrong. Most of us use one or all of these strategies most of the time. However, when I began to look at what was happening within me as a result of these strategies, none of them truly worked. Peace, or the resolution of the real conflict, was
rarely the result either for me or for the other parties involved. Illusions of harmony were there certainly, but always there remained undercurrents of unexpressed conflict.

The early stages of this personal search for positive responses to conflict, both outer and inner, had little impact on my style of teaching. My authority in the classroom was final: I was responsible for the behaviour of the children, therefore the children must do as I say without question. They ‘learnt’ and were well-behaved but had little understanding of their own inner wisdom and their ability to choose for themselves appropriate behaviours and disciplined responses to learning. Today I no longer believe I am responsible for a child’s behaviour, good or bad, but I am responsible for creating an environment within which they can explore appropriate reactions to a range of situations and learn to understand processes of interpersonal interactions. My personal beliefs now consciously impact on my approach to teaching.

The specific catalyst for this move from an inner personal journey towards a practical application of conflict resolution techniques in the classroom came from a three day inservice course on Peer Mediation run by Richard Bodine and Donna Crawford. It was inspiring and illuminating and led me to believe that maybe it was possible to use the endless bickering of children as the basis for understanding conflict resolution within their reality and so lead them to being able to transform this bickering into positive outcomes. The initial idea was that perhaps instead of dealing with the petty squabbles as quickly as possible and then getting on with the ‘real work’ - mathematics, language, science - the ‘real work’ was to spend time developing peacemaking behaviours which would then impact on all aspects of their life while at the same time providing a positive learning environment.

Instances of name calling, hitting, pushing, and a general lack of respect for others’ needs and possessions are constant among children’s interactions. I could choose to pretend they did not exist until they were forced on my attention; I could scapegoat one
or two children as the source of the ‘problem’ and put them on detention constantly; I could use my adult authority to arbitrate and solve problems as quickly and painlessly as possibly. In all such responses the hidden curriculum is clear: adults are the skilled operators and children need someone else to solve their problems. In reality, these responses neither empower them nor give them responsibility. Perhaps I needed to look for another approach that would allow them to learn the skills that would help them solve their own problems. I no longer felt it appropriate to take on the pupils’ problems and impose a solution; it was time to develop a teaching program that supported and facilitated the pupils’ ownership and resolution of their conflicts.

This study, therefore, is grounded in the experiential, everyday reality of the classroom: the short, repetitive squabbles and struggles of a group of children and their teacher as together they focus on the polarity of the potentially creative or destructive power of conflict.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

In a group of Class 4 pupils generally characterised by conscientious work habits and pleasant behaviour, there was a consistent pattern of interactive problems: petty bickering and ‘bitchiness’, teasing and name-calling, tormenting and ‘stirring’, mild in nature, that without teacher intervention would usually escalate into unhappiness or fighting. Such behaviours can cause hurt and disrupt the work or social environment as well as interfere with the learning environment of the classroom. One approach to dealing with this irritating state of affairs was to turn it into a positive learning experience by developing a formal program which would aim at teaching the children to understand and then to deal with these situations. This would enable students to become self-disciplined and capable of working without external enforcers of good behaviour (which range from gold stars to adult approval) and would also involve them
in learning to be responsible for resolving their disputes themselves. The overall purpose of the program would be to develop the skills of conflict resolution and in doing so develop what are really the skills of ‘quality’ interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships. To wait until these children are adults requiring hours of expensive therapy to help them deal with the wounds and hurts of childhood would appear counterproductive. In a world where increasing conflict is Headlined daily and communication is technologically faster and more efficient but human contact is often painful, fraught with tension and misunderstood, any program that aims at keeping the hearts and minds of children open to the other must be of benefit.

This project then is based on the beliefs:

- that interpersonal and intrapersonal skills can be developed that will give the students tools of lasting benefit
- that children need to be taught the skills of conflict resolution; that they can learn skills that will enable them to deal responsibly with their own problems
- that conflict resolution is experiential and interactive and that conflict is a transformative force whether we like it or not and it works powerfully on students to either enrich or narrow their focus
- that it is possible to reduce the levels of physical and verbal violence in the classroom
- that positive interpersonal skills can enhance the learning environment.

Arising from these beliefs, this thesis will outline a program of learning aimed at helping the children develop skills and attitudes that will provide a basis for more productive conflict resolution. It will explore the literature on which the program is based and place it within a theoretical construct. Finally it will analyse the experiences of both pupils and teacher as they progress through the program (and their lives) and will suggest some lessons for future programs dealing with interpersonal conflict.

1.3. Overview of the Project

As a background to the development of the program, a literature review was undertaken in which the nature of conflict, moral understanding and development, the impact of
personality on the handling of conflict and the current state of peace education programs were explored. Clearly, peace education programs have a history almost as long as that of conflict. The role of the individual in the peace-making/breaking processes, however, is a relatively recent addition in psychological literature and has yet to be focused on in the development of peace education programs. These ideas will be defined and developed in Chapter 2 where key terms and issues as discussed in the literature will be highlighted with particular reference to the main thrust of the thesis.

This thesis revolves around a program *Peaceful Warriors*, a part of the Personal Development Curriculum over a two year time span for a group of pupils. The title of the program was inspired by Dan Millman’s story for children: *Secret of the Peaceful Warrior* (Millman, 1991). The program, designed for implementation from the beginning of term 2, 1996 to the end of term 3, 1997 is eclectic in nature and has developed as a combination of personal practices which grew from a number of short inservice courses specifically geared to the learning of conflict resolution skills and to the acquisition of personal development techniques based in meditation and emotional release practices.

For the program to be effective, three sets of skills were deemed essential. Firstly, basic conflict resolution and mediation skills are obviously critical given the aims of *Peaceful Warriors*. However, alongside these specific practical skills, techniques of emotional understanding and release were also considered important. So secondly, students need to learn how to deal with both their own and others’ emotions if they are to begin to understand the other, to “walk in another person’s shoes”. Although ‘managing emotions’ is always listed as a skill in conflict resolution, more important is the underlying ability to recognise, understand and come to terms with those emotions. Without this understanding, there is a tendency to a mechanistic response which can continue to mask what may be at the root of the conflict. When emotional buttons are pushed, skills and techniques that are not strongly grounded in stability and
understanding quickly disappear. Therefore a separate program focusing on this area is essential for the survival of any mediation program. Thirdly, in addition to these skills, meditation helps the children develop an inner awareness that will contribute to the inner stability needed to be an effective mediator as well as helping them develop the willingness to be part of any conflict resolution process.

Thus the program developed out of reflection on this base. It drew from a number of commercial *Peace Education* and *Conflict Resolution* programs designed for children, including:

- Bodine, Crawford and Schrumpf: *Creating the Peaceable School*
- Fugitt: *He Hit Me Back First*
- Pearson and Nolan: *Emotional First Aid for Children*

Its implementation relied heavily on teaching/learning techniques from best classroom practice and aimed at involving the pupils in an interactive, heuristic learning setting with the use of:

- cooperative games, lessons, role plays etc.
- mediation and co-counselling skills
- stories, for example: *The Way of the Peaceful Warrior* by Dan Millman
- class discussions

Finally, any program is heavily influenced by the 'hidden curriculum'. Here the school culture and its problem solving attitudes, the way the adults in the children's lives respond to conflict and the media influences that surround them all play their part in the effectiveness of such a program.

The nature of the school is discussed in depth in chapter 4, along with background information on the children and their families. What is clear in a program such as *Peaceful Warriors* is that it cannot be compartmentalised into a timetabled structure. While there is a formal program to be followed, much of the learning and teaching takes part incidentally and permeates the classroom climate by its very nature. Further, the
teacher’s own actions and reactions within the classroom take on an even greater significance as part of the ‘not so hidden’ curriculum as together we focus on interpersonal relationships, emotional understanding and conflict resolution.

1.4. Methodological Context

The methodological position taken in this study is that there is no separation between the research and the practice. The constant observation and monitoring of the experiences of the teacher, students and parents as the program unfolds is the foundation of the research, clearly falling into the approach known as action-research, with a leaning towards the artistic approach to qualitative research as discussed by Elliot W. Eisner. As he points out: “the major source of data emanates from how the researcher experiences what it is she attends to” (1981, 8). Here, the basis of ‘knowing’ takes a variety of forms. The significance of an incident cannot be known in advance as it can change over time. The subtle implications of action and speech are often only available to one sensitised to the specific context under observation. In this Eisner concurs with Strauss and Corbin’s requirement for theoretical sensitivity on the part of the researcher, referring to the ability of the researcher to have “an awareness of the subtleties of meaning of data” (1994, 41). In this study, the children and the teacher are active partners in the research and any theoretical conclusions which may emerge must be ‘grounded’ in their experiences as they take part in the implementation of the action. What is of concern in this study is illustrating possible significant, common human interactions by focusing on a particular group of people in a particular setting. In this approach, what is looked for is a general theme in the particular. By subjecting what is unique in time and space to detailed inspection it is hoped to discover insights that may transcend the limits from which they arose.

Data generated during the program have been collected in a number of ways. Most of the information comes from tapes of class discussions, notes on the interactions of
children, and teacher observations. Comments from parents, a student teacher who observed lessons over a three week period, and the students themselves are also important.

What develops from subjecting this data to the coding processes of grounded theory is a complex web of interrelationships which do not necessarily lead to a core category but more towards a greater understanding of the circularity and constant repetition of key material and responses (ie to the stabilisation of a different vibration of interaction between myself and the students) with flashes of intuition from individual children occurring at seemingly random moments. In other words there does not appear to be a linear progression from conflict to no conflict but rather the establishment of a matrix of ideas from which the participants could choose (or otherwise) to deal with the conflictual elements of behaviour. Choice appears to depend on a number of variables: personality, vitality and/or parental support all play a part in how each of us is able to tune into and operate out of this matrix of ideas, as does maturity, understanding, sensitivity and the ability to communicate.

Thus the analysis of the material could be considered as analogous to the analysis of contrapuntal music. There are several strands in the process each important in its own right and each assuming a leading position at times but each dependent on the others for the final quality of the performance. The program and its assessment is essential as the critical intervention tool. The journey of the children as one polarity of the interactive process contrasts and compares with implications for my own teaching practice, growing out of personal reflections on the total process and my own journey. Placing these specifics in a broader context is another important strand to weave into the resulting composition. Within this process there is less a path of cause and effect and more an overall pattern of harmonisation of interlocking lines.
1.5. Significance and Limitations of the Study:

A primary interest in developing the program was in learning to do my job better. As Burns points out (1994:301), the action researcher is:

not immediately concerned with adding more ‘truth’ to that body of educational knowledge which appears in articles and books. The action researchers are interested in the improvement of the educational practices in which they are engaging - how to do their jobs better.

In many ways, for me it is a form of in-service training which will give me new skills and methods and heighten self awareness in relation to my interaction with children. Because of this aspect of the research, at times it is essential to move from the more formal academic style into writing in the first person. Such a stylistic approach acknowledges the very personal nature of the program and its basis in the human and personal development of all those involved in it. Also of importance was the potential for making a contribution, albeit on a small scale, to the ever increasing necessity of conflict resolution.

As in any action research, any conclusion can apply directly only to the particular. However it may be proper to draw implications for other situations and future developments in peace education. It is desirable that the program will impact on this particular problem in such a way that would enable a whole school program to be developed, although it is quite possible that the nature of the school will limit the success of the program in terms of it being extended outside the classroom. Obviously, any contribution to the transformation of conflict into a positive outcome is of value no matter how small or confined the sample. If students can begin to develop the skills and understanding to walk the path of non-violent action, then they are a gift to the world. It is not an easy lesson and requires that we recognise the guns in our hearts as clearly as we see the guns in the Middle East.
1.6. Ethical Considerations

Because of the nature of this project the permission of each participant and his/her parents and of the school was sought. This requested participants to agree that observations and recordings of specific lessons/discussions, examples of pupils' work and information collected through interview and survey could be used as part of the thesis. In order to protect the identity of individual children, all names have been changed in this report.
CHAPTER 2

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

“And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe” (Exodus 21: 23-25)

“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.... Repay no one evil for evil.... If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceable with all.... If your enemy is hungry feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink.... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (Romans 12; 14-21)

2.1. Introduction

In developing a program based on conflict resolution, this thesis draws across a range of fields and literatures, requiring starting bases relating to an understanding of conflict itself, of the personalities, beliefs and world views engaged in the process, of views of peace, of principles of cooperative learning and living, and of the development of a range of curriculum approaches variously termed “peace education”, “conflict resolution” or “peer mediation”. This chapter looks at the literature which underpins such bases. It also acknowledges that in putting together the foundations for a program that crosses so many fields of study, belief systems will be called into play to justify the approach to developing the program Peaceful Warriors. Thus this chapter goes beyond a simple review of the literature to a justification for the approach taken.

2.2. The Nature of Conflict

“Conflict ... just is” (Crum, 1987:49)

The word ‘conflict’ comes from the Latin conflictus, meaning a ‘striking together with force’. It has a complex range of interpretations from inner individual turmoil to open
warfare between societies. It appears everywhere, like an underlying theme throughout human history. Today, most of the major dilemmas of the late twentieth century relate to issues of conflict and its counterpart, peace, often referred to as issues of good and evil. They are the warp and weft of daily lives; it is impossible to pretend they do not exist. Peace and conflict are global and local, internal and external. No-one is untouched by these issues.

For conflict to occur there need to be just two elements be they individuals, groups or societies. Its fundamental structural pattern consists basically of two factors. Clearly, many more elements may be involved. Many conflicts appear complex and insoluble but the essential element is that of duality. Ideally there appears to be no reason why two elements cannot coexist harmoniously and yet this is rarely and momentarily the case. We forget, as Darwin points out "that the birds which are idly singing around us mostly live on insects or seeds, and are thus constantly destroying life" (in Bloom, 1995: 23). The two elements come into conflict at a very basic level as survival needs are met and when these needs are in any way threatened, conflict escalates. The initial motivation for conflict is that the other will take away or prevent in some way the fulfilment of basic needs. With the complexity of the human being and the increasing confusion and manipulation of needs and wants, the inevitability of complex conflict patterns is heightened. This perception is critical to the viewpoint of Baron and Greenberg (1990:485) who state that "opposing interests, it is widely agreed, lie at the core of most conflicts". They suggest that awareness of the conflict is an important element in conflict generation and they make an important point in that it is necessary to view conflict as a process, "a complex series of events over time that both reflect external conditions and in turn affect them." (p 459). In Thomas’ conflict model (in Baron and Greenberg, 1990), once awareness of the conflict exists, both parties experience emotional reactions to it which are crucial to the course of the developing conflict. Baron and Greenberg (1990) point out later that there is considerable evidence to suggest that conflict in work settings often stems from the relations between
individuals and their personal characteristics, a view endorsed by Forsyth (1990). For him, the personal characteristics of the individuals involved are one of the three main mechanisms that lead to conflict, the other two being competition over scarce resources and the use of threatening and contentious influence strategies. That there will never be enough to go around is an inevitable outcome of Darwin’s “…therefore only the fittest will survive”.

Conflict has been the subject of myth and legend, of religious debate and philosophical argument for centuries. Humankind seems either to hold in its collective memory the existence of a Golden Age where people lived for eons in harmony and plenty or to look forwards towards a future Utopia (earthly or heavenly) and attempt to explain the current warring condition of the earth and its peoples in terms of a flawed nature expressed in mythological story. Even the gods themselves are flawed. The old Persian god Apsou and his wife Tiamat, who flowed silently and companionably side by side for eons, had their peace disturbed by the noisy revels of quarrelsome great-grandchildren. Osiris was killed by his brother Set for the sake of a kingdom. The Greek deities squabbled interminably on the heights of Mount Olympus and frequently interfered in the affairs of men, creating still further havoc and dissension. Zeus, king of the gods, did not like humankind and sought, via Pandora’s dowry, to introduce strife, dissension, jealousy, regret and many other of the dark emotions to plague the lives of men and women. If the gods themselves cannot live in peace, what hope has humankind? Bloom (1995) gives a new slant to the Christian myth of Lucifer, thrown from heaven for aspiring to the seat of God then conquering humankind through the temptation of Eve. He contends that:

Evil is a by-product, a component, of creation. In a world evolving into ever-higher forms, hatred, violence, aggression, and war are part of the evolutionary plan ... Lucifer is the dark side of cosmic fecundity ... Nature does not abhor evil; she embraces it. She uses it to build. (1995:2)
An eastern conception is that of the ancient Chinese complementariness as represented by yin and yang. This duality is integral to all life, physical and spiritual. Together they form harmony. Conflict exists when yin and yang are out of balance, where one element fails to recognise the other and dominates or replaces it. Here again is the concept of the flawed nature, one that is out of harmony with itself and its environment. Here we see the paradox. Duality is essential to conflict and also essential to harmony.

This is in contrast with the classic Darwinian viewpoint of the survival of the fittest, the flourishing of one group at the expense of others which is often considered to be at the basis of human nature. If we could relate this ‘animal instinct’ underlying human behaviour to the complementarity principle underlying yin and yang, we could follow the law of nature, to seek and find harmony through the acceptance of the yin-yang pattern in conflict. This view is reinforced by Crum when he says (1987:2) that by applying the Darwinian concept to all human affairs we have reinforced the scarcity myth with the concept of competition at all levels of life, believing that somebody always has to lose. However, the only thing that is really scarce is our willingness to consciously change our directions and thinking before a crisis hits. Unlike Bloom’s (1995) picture which embraces the traditionally Western view of an evolutionary path of growth to a more perfect state, this eastern concept stresses balance - the waxing and waning towards each pole in turn.

Again, Crum (1987:49) agrees with this viewpoint. “Nature uses conflict as its primary motivator for change, creating beautiful beaches, canyons, mountains and pearls.” He points out that “conflict is natural; neither positive nor negative, it just is.” Referring back to the initial definition of “a striking together with force”, it is interesting to note that there is nothing here that points to the inevitability of a negative outcome. It simply refers to two elements coming together strongly. It seems important therefore to attempt to separate concepts of peace and conflict from concepts of good and evil. The conflict issue is one of process, of how such events are handled and resolved.
Negative connotations and connections of conflict with evil tend to hamper processes of resolution.

No one believes that conflict does not exist. Perceptions of the source and nature of conflict can be seen to be dependent on two critical factors - an individual’s conceptions of the creation and manifestation of the world and of human nature (Crum, 1987). In other words, how an individual makes sense of her/his experience of the world without and the world within influences how conflict is understood and dealt with, whether it is to be avoided at all costs, whether it is essential to win or whether it can be seen “as a gift of energy, in which neither side loses and a new dance is created” (Crum, 1987:49).

2.3. The Human Condition

We must build a picture of the human soul that works. Not a romantic vision that Nature will take us in her arms and save us from ourselves, but a recognition that the enemy is within us and that Nature has placed it there. (Bloom, 1995:4).

What it is to be human defies simple definition. The complexity of individual human beings and their links with the environments in which they find themselves has led not only to a range of interpretative philosophical positions but also to a wide variety of belief systems and lifestyles.

The individual human is often seen as a two-fold being. For traditional Western religious thought, the duality of body and soul became the classic position of the Christian church after the Eucumenical Council of 363 A.D. Our physical bodies provide the foundation and means for the mind or soul to interpret and affect the world in which we interact.
Our nature is so multi-faceted and paradoxical that it cannot be captured in words that represent single, simple categories. Myths are required to contain and embrace the richness of human nature...We are snakes with wings, worms that can fly. Reptile-like, we slink close to the ground and are mired in the mud of our animal nature and the muck of our cultural prejudices. Yet, like birds, we are also of the spirit, capable of soaring in the heavens, transcending at least for moments, our narrow mindedness and sinful proclivities. (M. Scott Peck, 1987:172)

Another view of the individual human being and his relation to the world comes in the writings of the Austrian philosopher, Rudolf Steiner. In his view, human beings continually link themselves with the things of the world in a threefold way.

Thus man is citizen of three worlds. Through his body he belongs to the world which he also perceives through his body; through his soul he constructs for himself his own world; through his spirit a world reveals itself to him which is exalted above both the others. (Steiner, 1933:20)

For Bloom (1995), the human condition is characterised by conflict “built into our physiology” (p 331). For humankind “our need for each other is not only built into the foundation of our biological structure, it is also the cornerstone of our psyche” (p 63) Many studies of animals and humans have shown that isolation produces depression, illness and early death. “Closeness to others can heal. Separation can kill.” (p 61). On the other hand, the old saying “All the world is queer except me and thee, and even thee’s a little queer” also has a sound basis in human experience. In the chapter entitled “Us Versus Them”, Bloom draws the picture of the white blood cells in the immune system scouring the body for intruders. All the cells of the body have an imprint. Anything without this imprint is immediately assaulted. Human beings, he claims, operate in like fashion. He enlarges on his point by drawing on the work of Margaret Mead who says that:

Every human group makes a simple rule: thou shalt not kill the members of our gang, but everyone else is fair game. Each group says that all humans are brothers and declares that murdering humans is out of the question. Most groups,
However, have very strange means of defining who is human. (in Bloom, 1995:73)

It is clear that the way in which an individual understands himself in relation to his world has a big impact on the development of conflict. In some closed environments where there are shared values and strongly held belief systems such as the Amish society, the relationship between the individual and his context is more likely to be harmonious and the relationship between their society and the rest of the world one of mutual respect. Other closed societies, like some resurgent fundamentalist religious groups, while they have strongly held belief systems, are considerably less tolerant. Here, Bloom's point that the human condition is characterised by the identification of the individual with a group which then allows other groups to be considered not quite as human or even sub-human is pertinent. Being "a member of the wrong team can be fatal." (p 75). It is essential that as individuals of the late twentieth century find themselves in an increasingly global environment, to survive and flourish they have to learn how to live harmoniously even when they have different beliefs, value systems and world views or when they are jealous, annoyed, angry or frustrated. It is imperative to make clear the distinction between holding different beliefs and values from neighbours and acting in positive/negative or constructive/destructive ways. As the chorus of the children's song points out:

And folk become our neighbours or our family or friends
When the oneness of the world you understand
And the East for your neighbour is another's neighbour's West
It depends upon just where you stand. (Tillman, June B. 1991:82)

2.4. Psychological Possibilities

Know thyself and thou shalt know the universe and all the gods
(on the portal of the Delphic Oracle)
From the late nineteenth century onwards, a new way of talking about the human condition began to emerge. In building a ‘picture of the human soul that works’, the behaviours and reactions that form the ‘business of being human’, individuals now known as social scientists and psychologists began to observe how humans operate and from these observations attempt to theorise about the unobservable - “Why do people behave like that?” From observable phenomena, these theories try to explain the ‘human identity’, often described as personality. But what is personality? How does it develop over time? Is it biological in origin or is experience critical? What makes a healthy personality? Can it be influenced or changed? This is a vast field of study of which only a brief selection, pertinent to the nature of conflict and how individuals deal with it, can be undertaken here.

Personality refers to an individual’s unique constellation of consistent behaviour traits (Weiten, 1989:424). A personality trait is a durable disposition to behave in a particular way in a variety of situations. Thus personality is the complex set of tendencies to behave in particular ways which imparts a distinctiveness to the individual. Most approaches to personality assume some traits are more basic than others. These fundamental traits determine other more superficial ones. The debate surrounding the identification of core or central traits and their source, or how and why we are who we are, is a heated one with psychologists reluctant or unable to agree on what constitutes personality. Current psychological theories fall into a number of categories of which the psychodynamic, behavioural, humanistic, biological and constructivist approaches are the most important. A critical element of the debate lies in the orientation of each perspective towards the fundamental question “Does the person construct reality or does reality construct the person?” (Monte, 1995:24)
2.4.1. Inner and Outer Reality Constructs the Person

For the psychodynamic theorists it is the inner and outer reality that shapes the human personality. Deep within each individual are unconscious motivations and needs which not only influenced behaviour but were themselves subject to constraints of the external world. What exactly is the primary unconscious motivator and how it is affected by interaction with outer reality differs radically for each psychodynamic theorist. For Freud, the personality is a threefold structure containing the id, the ego and the superego. The id is the primitive, instinctive component that operates according to the pleasure principle, the reservoir of psychic energy housing the raw biological urges which demand immediate gratification. It is primitive, illogical, irrational and fantasy orientated. The ego is the decision-making component that operates according to the reality principle. It mediates between the id and the external social world and delays gratification until appropriate situations and outlets can be found. It behaves 'properly'. The superego is the moral component of personality incorporating social standards of right and wrong. In his theory there are three levels of awareness - the conscious, the preconscious and the unconscious. It is the unconscious forces that most influence behaviour. The id's desire for immediate gratification triggers internal conflicts with the ego and superego. These conflicts play a key role in Freud's theory as he assumed that behaviour is the outcome of an ongoing series of these internal conflicts. He believed that people's lives are dominated by conflict and that individuals career from one conflict to another. Conflicts centring on sexual and aggressive impulses are especially likely to have far-reaching consequences as these areas of life are subject to more complex and ambiguous social controls and are thwarted more regularly. Most internal conflicts are quickly dealt with but these can go on for years and are often played out entirely in the unconscious. This leads to the arousal of anxiety and the development of many kinds of defence mechanisms: rationalisation,
repression, projection, displacement, reaction formation, regression and identification. Freud asserted that the basic foundation of an individual’s personality has been laid down by the age of five and that the psychosexual stages of childhood leave their mark on the adult personality. Significant conflict in later years are replays of crises from childhood, often taking the form of fixation or a failure to move from one psychosexual stage to the next.

Rejecting the sexual emphasis of Freud, C.G. Jung believed that the unconscious consists of two layers. There is the personal unconscious in which is stored material not in conscious awareness because it has been repressed or forgotten and the collective unconscious, which is a storehouse of latent memory traces inherited from people’s ancestral past, shared with the entire human race and containing the “whole spiritual heritage of mankind’s evolution, born anew in the brain structure of every individual” (in Weiten, 1989:432). Here are found the archetypes, which are “emotionally charged images and thought forms that have universal meaning” (in Weiten, 1989:433). Jung was the first to describe the introverted (inner-directed) and extroverted (outer-directed) personality types.

Introverts tend to be preoccupied with the internal world of their own thoughts, feeling and experiences. They tend to be contemplative and aloof. Extroverts tend to be interested in the external world of people and things - outgoing, talkative and friendly instead of reclusive (in Weiten, 1989:434).

Jung also believed that people need to fulfil their potential to be psychologically healthy, an idea that was further developed when humanist theory emerged in the 1950’s.

Striving for superiority was the foremost source of human motivation for Alfred Adler (in Weiten, 1989). This striving was a universal desire to adapt, to improve oneself and to master life’s challenges. It often involved compensation, where efforts to
overcome imagined or real inferiorities were made. Excessive inferiority feelings could lead to personality disturbances created by overcompensation - the classic inferiority complex. He found that there was often unconscious self-deception in people where concern for appearance was more important than reality. Adler was the first to assert the importance of birth order as a factor governing human characteristics, a manifestation of his emphasis on social environment in shaping personality. He states that “human nature includes a unique social interest - an innate sense of kinship and belongingness with the human race” (in Weiten, 1989:43)

2.4.2. External Reality Constructs the Person

Like the psychodynamic theorists, the behaviourists come from the point of view that reality constructs the person. However, they also believed that internal personality structures could not be observed, therefore, it was useless to speculate about private, unobservable cognitive processes.

The practice of looking inside an organism for an explanation of behaviour has tended to obscure the variables which are immediately available for a scientific analysis. These variables lie outside the organism, in its immediate environment and in its environmental history ... The objection to inner states is not that they do not exist, but that they are not relevant. (B.F. Skinner in Weiten, 1989:436)

In his work, B.F. Skinner focussed on how the external environment moulds covert behaviour which is fully determined by the environmental stimuli and viewed an individual’s personality as a collection of response tendencies that are tied to various stimulus situations. People acquire stable response tendencies through experience, through learning, through environmental consequences. Reinforcement, punishment and extinction determine people’s patterns of responding. When responses are followed by favourable consequences, they are strengthened and as our response tendencies are always being strengthened or weakened by new experiences, personality

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development becomes a continuous lifelong journey. Thus there is no need to break it into stages or to give importance to early childhood experiences. Skinner presents a mechanical, deterministic, non-cognitive view of personality where responses happen mechanically without conscious participation. However, his principles of operant conditioning were never meant to be translated from his animal experiments to form a theory of human personality. Nevertheless his ideas have had widespread coverage in areas of behaviour modification and child rearing practices.

Coming from a different viewpoint but belonging to the position that external reality shapes behaviour, recent research in behavioural genetics supports the idea that personality is largely inherited, that personality is to a large extent determined by a person's genes. Genetic blueprints shape the contours of personality, which are more influenced by genetic diversity than they are by environmental diversity. It appears that a shared family environment has surprisingly little impact on personality. "Why are children in the same family so different from one another?". Researchers have only just begun to explore this perplexing question. Home environments are not homogenous. Gender, birth order and temperamental differences between children evoke different styles of parenting.

One psychologist whose multileveled model of behaviour ranges from genetics to social psychology is Hans Eysenck. As a behaviourist attempting to measure quantifiable, empirical aspects of personality, he developed a theory stating that the central nervous system (CNS) is the seat of personality functioning and that research in many areas show that people can be reliably distinguished into introverts and extroverts.

Introverts are 'stimulus shy' because they are acutely sensitive to incoming stimulation as if their brain arousal levels were chronically high. Extroverts are 'stimulus hungry' because they seek and easily process intense stimulation as if their brain arousal levels were chronically low or inhibited. (Monte, 1995:778)
Jung had earlier asserted a hypothesis that personality is based on the introvert/extrovert polarity. However, Eysenck was at pains to point out that this concept has a 2000 year history in philosophy, medicine and psychology. The following two paragraphs are a brief summary of this history taken from Monte, 1995, pp. 780-785. Galen (AD 130-200) and Hippocrates both developed a temperament theory of personality and human conduct systemised into a coherent fourfold typology. In Galen's theory these were related to four body fluids. An excess of one of the four was said to determine the emotional temperament of the individual. Thus the predominance of blood gives rise to the sanguine temperament (volatile, optimistic, easy-going), that of black bile leads to the melancholic temperament (sad, depressed), of yellow bile to the choleric temperament (angry, fast moving, dominant) and of the phlegm to the phlegmatic temperament (slow, lethargic). Kant (1724-1804) further developed the theory of the temperaments by giving groups of verbal trait descriptions for each category.

However in manifestation the categories cannot be mutually exclusive. An explanation of individuality seems best served by a combination of qualities from the four domains. Wundt (1832-1920) modified and reorganized the four types according to the degree to which each contained the variable dimensions of *emotionality* and *changeability*. Eysenck believed that these early observers were essentially correct in their descriptions of personality.

....what these various philosophers, physicians and psychologists were doing was to look for uniformities of conduct in the lives of the people whom they were able to observe and reduce these uniformities to a description of a category of continuous type. They made no attempt to formulate specific theories about the formal structure which was so well described in their word pictures, and they made no attempt to demonstrate by experimental or statistical means the accuracy or otherwise of their hypotheses. (Eysenck in Monte, 1995:788)
In this ancient tradition, he found potential for contemporary investigation into personality. To do this he devised experimental and statistical tests, developing and extending experimental situations first propounded by the Russian physiologist Ivan Pavlov (1849-1936) to provide a physiological explanation of the classical temperaments in the responsiveness of the central nervous system.

Also following in the footsteps of Galen, Hippocrates, Kant and Wundt was the German philosopher and educator, Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925). He said that the personality or the soul nature is expressed in the temperament of the human being.

A particular temperament mode is on the one hand, one of the peculiar patterns used by an individual when transforming into physical reality what lives in his soul as a form of thought, feeling or will impulse. On the other hand one particular temperament mode shows the specific pattern by which the individual receives impressions of the surrounding world and transforms them into the facets of his soul life. Thus the transformational action works in two directions - from the soul life outwards and from the sense world inwards. (Lissau, 1983:10)

As man and the world, macrocosm and microcosm are intimately connected with one another, so the working of the elements is a starting point to penetrate the quintessence of human nature. Right up to the beginning of the last century, hermetic and neoplatonic philosophers were concerned with the elements and their impact on the human psyche. Characteristics are explained as the result of the way the four elements are 'tempered' within each person. 'Earth', 'air', 'fire' and 'water' are mingled differently; the predominance of one or another will create a different temperament - melancholic, sanguine, choleric and phlegmatic. However, “nothing is fixed because the reality of the temperaments belongs in the world of time - 'tempera mentis' - the timing of the mind.” (Lissau, 1983:11)

A melancholic is only a melancholic because the melancholic predominates in him; for fundamentally everyone is endowed with all four temperaments. Under certain circumstances a melancholic is also phlegmatic, in others he is sanguine
and again under others, choleric; the melancholic temperament simply predominates over the other temperaments ... the other temperaments remain in the background. (R. Steiner, in Lissau, 1983:116)

2.4.3. The Person Constructs their Reality

Theories emphasising the concept of the self as an active agent in charge of its own destiny began to emerge in the fifties as a reaction to the determinism of both the psychodynamic and behaviourist models. Under the heading of humanistic theory, a wide variety of viewpoints emerged, ranging from phenomenological to existential. What links them is the belief that people are not passive participants but that they actively seek out and process information about their environment to maximise favourable outcomes. Bandura, (in Weiten, 1989) cognitive behaviourist, believed that personality is shaped through learning. According to his theory, what operates is reciprocal determinism, where internal mental events, external environmental events and overt behaviour all influence each other. A person's response is critically influenced by others, called models. In fact, many response tendencies are the product of imitation. Children learn to be assertive, conscientious, self-sufficient, dependable, easy-going etc. by observing others behaving in these ways. A variety of personal factors (aspects of personality) govern behaviour. The most important of these factors is self-efficacy - the belief that ability to perform certain behaviours should lead to expected outcomes. For Bandura, humans are neither master of their own destiny nor hapless victims buffeted about by the environment.

For Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, self-actualisation was the key to personality. Rogers viewed personality structure through an individual's self-concept, his own mental picture of himself which included beliefs as to nature, unique qualities and typical behaviour. A critical concept was that of incongruence or the degree of disparity between self-concept and actual experience. Everyone experiences some incongruence;
the crucial issue is how much. Psychological health is rooted in a congruent self-concept, based on a sense of personal worth, which stems from a childhood saturated with unconditional affections from parents and others. As people (children) have a strong need for acceptance, affection and love, so childhood experiences promote congruence or incongruence. People are often resistant to information that contradicts their self-concept. However, self-realisation through sensitivity training, encounter groups and exercises for personal growth can widen both subjective perceptions of the world and the personality structure, eradicating incongruences developed in childhood. Maslow viewed the self-actualising person as an example of the healthy personality. He believed that human needs are organised in a hierarchy and the lower needs must be satisfied before the higher ones are activated. People are driven by a need for self-actualisation, which is the need to fulfil potential. "What a man must be, he must be" (in Weiten, 1989:46). He described the self-actualised person as one who is accurately tuned into reality and at peace with himself. He found that they are open and spontaneous and that they retain a fresh appreciation of the world around them. Socially, they are sensitive to others' needs and enjoy rewarding interpersonal relations. However, they are not dependent on others for approval or uncomfortable with solitude. They thrive on their work, and they enjoy their sense of humor. They have 'peak' experiences more often than others (profound emotional highs). They strike a nice balance between many polarities in personality - they can be child-like and mature, rational and intuitive, conforming and rebellious.

Glasser (1984) believes that behaviour always represents the best choice to satisfy the need at the time unlike the stimulus-response paradigm whose perspective is that behaviour is caused by someone or something outside the individual. Along with our basic survival needs, we have, as essentially biological beings, psychological needs which are also part of our genetic code. These are:

- The need for belonging - fulfilled by loving, sharing and cooperating with others
- The need for power - fulfilled by achieving, accomplishing and being recognised and respected.
- The need for freedom - fulfilled by making choices in our lives.
- The need for fun - fulfilled by laughing and playing.

(in Bodine et al, 1994:5)

Although these needs are the same for everyone, the behaviours that individuals choose to satisfy these needs can be very different because of the unique experiences of each since birth. Each person has memories of behaviours that have fulfilled needs. These pleasurable memories constitute a quality world. This quality world, made up of perceptions of what is most enjoyable, becomes the standard for individual behaviour choices. People behave differently because their quality worlds are different. To satisfy needs, individuals must be able to sense what is happening both within and without themselves and to 'behave' in order to get their needs met. This means acting upon the world and upon the self by doing, thinking, feeling and involving the body (sweating, illness etc) which are the four components of the total behaviour generated in the effort to get what is wanted. Glasser believes that individuals have almost total control over the doing component of behaviour, some control over the thinking component, little control over the feeling and none over the physiological component of behaviour. People can therefore choose to change the way they do things, making changes in the other three components inevitable. Thus in any situation there is a choice to behave differently and to choose to do something more effective to satisfy our needs. The fact that although individuals are driven by the same psychological needs, wants are unique is critical to both the generation and understanding of conflict. Driven by individual genetic instructions, humans will inevitably experience conflict. Sharing commonalities and respecting differences will help restore balance.

Within this framework of the individual who can construct his/her own reality, also lies constructivism. Here the paradigm is one of concept development and deep understanding where stages of development are best understood as constructions of active learner reorganisation as opposed to the results of maturation. Unlike the theories of the behaviourists and the psychodynamic theorists, implied in constructivism:
Thus, as von Glasersfeld (in Fosnot, 1996:5) points out:

Knowledge, then, could be treated not as more or less accurate representation of external things, situations and events, but rather as a mapping of actions and conceptual operations that had proven viable in the knowing subject’s experience.

Learning is therefore construed as “an interpretive, recursive, building process by active learners interacting with the physical and social world” (Fosnot, 1996:30).

2.4.4. Personality and Peaceful Warriors

“For now I create a new heaven and a new earth!” (Isiah 65:17)

There are so many theories of personality each striving to unravel the mystery of the human being, each developed by different personalities. Humanistic theory emerged in the 1950’s like a backlash against the behavioural and psychodynamic views of Skinner and Freud, both of whose theories were considered dehumanising. One view considered humanity to be dominated by primitive animalistic drives; the other view was dominated by a dependence on animal research and a tendency to fragment the personality. Humanism considered that both the ‘mechanistic’ and ‘dominated by desires’ approaches failed to recognise the unique qualities of human beings with their potential for personal growth and self actualisation. In summing up the theories depicting human agency, Monte (1995:844) says

Psychoanalysis and behaviourism fall on the side of having reality shape us. Humanism sees us as shaping reality. And social cognitive learning theory has the best of both worlds: We shape and are shaped by the changes we introduce
into reality. The important point is that every theory, for better or worse, has something to say about personal mastery of the world and about our perception of that mastery.

In developing the program *Peaceful Warriors*, it was necessary to look at a personal viewpoint amongst the multitude of positions. From my personal experiences, I have a strong commitment to a belief in the power of the individual to change his/her world and his/her behaviour. Within me, I can sense the inner drives and unconscious motivations that focus the theories of the psychodynamic theorists. From observation I can see the temperaments delineate behavioural patterns and feel the possibility of biological determinants. Yet what underlies the program is the belief, in line with humanistic theory, that people can shape their own reality. In the words of M. Scott Peck: (1987:178)

> The most salient feature of human nature lies in its capacity to be moulded by culture and experience in extremely variable ways. Human nature is flexible; it is indeed capable of change. But such a phrase fails to do justice to the glory of human nature. Far better is the phrase ‘the capacity for transformation’. It is the capacity for transformation that is the most essential characteristic of human nature.

This ‘capacity for transformation’ is the essence of my understanding of the human condition. Linking back to the threefold human being described by Steiner (1922:20), when we focus on the body, we have a reality that constructs us. When we focus on the soul, we can construct our own reality. When we move beyond this to the spirit, we bring into awareness the active, creative, transformative principles that can change ourselves and thus the world. This thesis therefore seeks to extend the application of constructivist theory from cognitive development to the creation of a socio-spiritual atmosphere in the classroom where all social interactions, particularly those expressing conflict, heighten our awareness of conflict as a transformative power (Crum, 1987) and as “the most influential factor in the acquisition of new knowledge structures”. (Piaget in De Vries & Zan, 1994:21)
2.5. Historical Perspectives of Peace Education

"And let us bathe our hands in ... blood up to the elbows, and besmear our swords. Then we walk forth, even to the market place, And waving our red weapons o'er our heads, Let's all cry 'Peace, freedom and liberty!'" (Shakespeare, Julius Caesar)

An understanding of and a personal position on the human condition and human personality provides one of the bases for Peaceful Warriors. The project, however, does not sit in an historical vacuum. Attempts to educate the young with ideals of peaceful coexistence are found throughout the history of education. More specifically, in modern times with the advent of widespread compulsory schooling, the question of social education has been built into all mass education curriculums. This section will explore the tradition of peace education into which the program Peaceful Warriors falls.

Despite the fact that the philosophical origins of peace education in the Western tradition tend to be pluralist and draw from various intellectual and cultural traditions, there are a number of recurring themes (Catholic Education Office, 1986). Cosmopolitan ideas and peace related ethical concerns of earlier centuries provide a framework from which the current trends take their impulse. Various schools of thought such as the Greek Stoics, the early Christians, the Civitas Hippocratica and scholars like Constantine and Erasmus outline ideals and learning experiences for the young that are global rather than chauvinistic or ethnocentric in perspective, that are concerned with the rights of others and that place a high value on caring, compassionate and humane ethical standards rather than an uncritical acceptance of physical violence and war. These centres of learning however impacted only on a small number of people. World-wide far more unconscious forces appear to be at play. It is ironic to observe on the one hand that the Roman Empire, by force and bloodshed
brought an unprecedented mass of squabbling city states and tribes together ... and during the years between Augustus and the imposition of Christianity under Constantine ... introduced pluralism, an easy-going attitude that allowed widely diverse cultures to live peacefully side by side ... Rome had been an oppressor ... but also a source of nourishment and peace. (Bloom, 1995:324-325)

while on the other hand, the impulse of Christ, whose message is one of peace ....

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons and daughters of your father who is heaven, for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. (Matthew 5: 43-45)

came, during the fourth century A.D. to develop a wide gap between ideal and practice in the Christian church, which was to impact throughout the coming centuries in the violence of the Crusades, the horrors of the Inquisition and the arrogance of the missionary movement as well as constant internal splits and schisms.

Educating for peace, rather than its achievement as an aftermath of war remained the province of the few. Bishop Comenius (1592-1670) believed that universal education would mean universal peace. He proposed universal schools, books and teachers and, among other institutions, a College of Light to supervise the schools of the world (Lawson, no date:2). The French philosopher of the Enlightenment, Condorcet asks:

Is not the violence of our passion often the result either of habits that we have adopted through miscalculation, or of ignorance of how to restrain them, tame them, deflect them, rule them? .... will not...a system of education built upon a deeper knowledge of our moral constitution render common to almost every man... habits of an active and enlightened benevolence, of a fine and generous sensibility? (Condorcet cited in Catholic Education Office, 1986:120)
Even with the gradual increase of widespread schooling during the late nineteenth century and the implementation of compulsory schooling early this century, most proposals for the education for peace were still-born with only isolated prophetic voices and movements keeping alive the ideals of a tradition which, while beginning to flourish in the second half of the twentieth century, still remain far from universal.

With the division of responsibilities of church and state, of family and school, it appears that until recently ideals of peace were considered (often erroneously) the province of the church, and concepts of personal development if they existed at all belonged in the family context. State-run schools were educating for citizenship and social responsibility based on nationalism or notions of allegiance to an Empire. They were looking to achieve conformity to what each national group considered acceptable social behaviour: to teach children to be good Australians, good Germans, good Russians and so on, and to fight for what they believed in, ie king and country. Schools were not educating for a citizenship whose moral imperative would drive an individual to choose the right way to react to external realities. It was for the Church or the family to instil such values. Formal and informal curricula at least until very recently were rarely congenial to lessening prejudices and building international understanding. Schools largely tended to promote chauvinistic values and textbooks were full of racist, sexist and militarist propaganda. Patriotism was embedded in national school systems. German schools pre World War II were an extreme example of this but no country including Australia was without its nationalistic bias. Peace education at this time was concerned with removing nationalistic bias from school textbooks. (Lawson, no date:6)

Countries and schools which made an effort to introduce a more international dimension were at best *ad hoc* and isolated. One prominent figure was Maria Montessori who believed that
if large numbers of children are brought up in accordance with some version of education as controlled freedom (such as the Montessori Method) peaceful adults will emerge who will bring about peaceful social change.” (Lawson, no date:8)

Even as recently as 1974, “peace education was an extremely diffuse movement still in a very nebulous state” with tendencies to include any organisation that promoted peace and “any alternative or progressive initiative in education” (Lawson, no date:12-13). Peace researchers were keen to find an integrating approach to identify important substantive issues and give a theoretical basis for this new, rapidly expanding interdisciplinary area.

It is clear that no one monolithic model of peace education would be appropriate: “such an approach would be inherently unpeaceful” (Lawson, no date:15). Nevertheless a broad definition encompassing key approaches was necessary. While UNESCO defined peace as “a problem of the minds of each individual and peace education as the building of a sense of peace in the minds of people” (in Bjerstedt, 1990), Stephanie Duczek attempts a more comprehensive definition.

Education for peace attempts i) to sharpen awareness about the existence of conflict between people, and within and between nations; ii) to investigate the causes of conflict and violence embedded within the perceptions, values and attitudes of individuals, as well as within the social, political and economic structures of society; iii) to encourage the search for alternatives, including non-violent solutions, and the development of the skills necessary for their implementation (in Lawson, no date:14).

For Adam Curle, the first holder of the Chair of Peace Studies at Bradford University, peace was defined “as a matter of relationships, whether it be between two people or groups or nations getting on well together”. It is important in such relationships that there is more than an absence of overt violence (negative peace) and that issues of what Galtung calls ‘structural violence’ (ie social justice) are addressed in order that genuine peaceful relationships can be developed (positive peace). Curle was writing during the
nineteen seventies and it was during this time as theorists attempted to bring shape and cohesion to the study of peace that peace education moved from the alternative, pacifist-orientated progressive schools into mainstream state education.

In some cases it has meant:

introducing a separate subject, Peace Studies into schools... Far more common, and to some more alarming, is the view that peace education means bringing peace perspectives into the existing subjects of the school curriculum at all age levels. This latter view remains the dominant view of peace education today. (Lawson, no date: 14)

Thus the challenge of peace education in schools is to develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills which are needed in order

- to explore concepts of peace both as a state of being and as an active process.
- to enquire into the obstacles of peace and the causes of peacelessness, in individuals, institutions and societies.
- to resolve conflicts in ways that will lead toward a less violent and a more just world.
- to explore a range of different alternative futures, in particular ways of building a more just and sustainable world society. (Hicks, 1988, p.8)

It would be clear to any teacher at this point that both a theoretical base and a practical application relating to the age and maturity of the child is of great importance. Most current child development theorists point to the changing ability of the child to absorb differing amounts and types of information at different times. The skills, attitudes and knowledge necessary to achieve the objectives of peace education appear at first sight to require a high level of conceptual reasoning. As Straughan points out “the ability to reason in general rather than particular terms, and to adopt a detached, impartial viewpoint appears to develop relatively late” (1982:107) a viewpoint widely held amongst a number of educational psychologists and philosophers (Steiner 1981, Richardson 1977, Piaget 1969, Kohlberg, 1987). Children get into conflict long before they are capable of a ‘detached, impartial viewpoint’, thus a developmental approach would appear to be essential in any peace education program.
If we look at Hick’s (1985) requirement for the knowledge component of the curriculum, it is clearly aimed at the student who has developed independent powers of reasoning - the student

- needs to focus on differing concepts of conflict and peace as states of being and as active processes;
- needs to look at contemporary conflict situations from the personal to the global;
- should look at examples of individuals and groups who actively work for peace or, alternatively, for conflict;
- should explore key issues concerning war and the nuclear threat and understand differing viewpoints on defence and disarmament;
- must study justice and power from the knowledge of a variety of applications;
- needs to look at the effects of discrimination based on gender, race, religion etc;
- needs to be able to participate effectively in environmental politics;
- must be able to look at a range of alternative futures, possible and preferable, and know that they are capable of bringing about necessary changes.

However, alongside the development of the knowledge component other resources were developed which focussed less on the acquisition of a large amount of conceptual knowledge and more on the development of the skills and human qualities that lead to a non-violent resolution of conflict. One of the earliest of these programs is *A Manual on Non Violence and Children* (Judson, 1977) where the emphasis is on non violent action.

The *Non-violence and Children* program is about actively introducing five elements which interweave to create an atmosphere conducive to peaceful action.

- Affirmation acknowledges and appreciates the best in another human being and because there are positive qualities in each person, everyone can be affirmed.
- Sharing feelings, information and experience breaks down the sense of isolation and empowers people with alternative models for handling conflict.
- A supportive community creates an ambience in which everyone can work together and contribute to the solution of problems.
- Problem solving practice builds confidence and skills, where giving up is less likely.
Finally, enjoying life keeps people from being bogged down in difficult issues and more able to think and act creatively in solving conflict. (Judson, 1977:1-2)

The book is compiled primarily for adults who wish to develop non violent attitudes and skills in children. Each of the elements is developed in a section in which information is interspersed with individual's experiences and activities of various kinds.

Here, as in Helping Young Children Understand Peace, War and the Nuclear Threat are found ways in which the “so-called ‘egocentric’ and ‘concrete’ thinking of the younger children begin to be addressed” (Straughan, 1982:107). In particular Chapter 4 of Helping Young Children Understand Peace, War and the Nuclear Threat has a curriculum approach entitled ‘peace education’ which provides some basic principles, each of which is supported by classroom practices. For example, in helping children to expand their understanding of war and peace, it is suggested that activities are initiated to make peace as concrete as possible and help children beyond the stereotyped images of war. When two children argue, the indications are to help them to see each other not as the enemy but as two individuals with different perceptions who also share a desire for friendship.

From these beginnings the increasingly dominating reality of the concept of the ‘global village’ and the interdependence of the world on issues such as the environment, food, trade, arms limitation, employment etc gave widespread urgency to an age-old problem: that we can cooperate and not compete, that we must find a non violent way to deal with our differences, that we must pay more than lip service to the ideal of peace. This has been the basis of a proliferation of "how to" articles and books in peace education. Over the last ten years the issues of peace education have had widespread coverage in our schools yet it seems that verbal violence, theft, bullying, vandalism, harassment and physical violence have either increased or become more overt. The situation remains as Lister remarked in 1981 that “peace education in terms of practice is a rare
and exotic plant … conspicuous by its absence in the prosaic life of ordinary schools” (in Lawson, no date:14). Even peace education programs compiled by the NSW Department of School Education despite widespread grass roots support from teachers, fall victim to political party conflicts as nearly one thousand pages of peace education resource booklets disappeared in a curriculum review following a change of government (Lawson, no date:22). The current K-6 Personal Development Syllabus (December, 1992) does not refer directly to peace education at all. Content strand two develops sequential modules around interpersonal relationships stemming from the initial premise that “one of the strongest and most basic of all human needs is the need to relate to other people” (p 107). Under the heading ‘Communication’ the practice of various conflict resolution skills are suggested with some brief ideas as to how these might be taught in the classroom. However, despite the paucity of indications from the Board of Studies, the peace education movement at a practical level in the classroom has begun to take shape with the development of key behavioural processes which define how each child learns to handle conflict positively out of her/his own individual style.

2.6. The Main Approaches to Peace Education

There are four interconnecting approaches to teaching the skills, knowledge, attitudes and values which define peace education in the nineties with an increasing emphasis on the practical, day-to-day skills necessary for coping with a world fraught with conflict. The notion that dealing with one’s own conflicts is a prerequisite to dealing with those of the world has begun to take root and permeates teaching methods. It is hoped that dealing with the particular has a kind of osmotic effect but the emphasis in much of the literature is on adapting basic ideas and skills to specific needs and situations. The four approaches are:

- developing cooperative learning skills
- developing skills for dealing positively with bullies
• developing conflict resolution skills
• developing peer mediation skills

As the skills are developed, knowledge, attitudes and values are all transmitted as part of the process. What is critical about teaching these interrelated skills is that concrete everyday situations immediately connected with the child’s daily life can be used to pass on what is needed. It is clear that peace education is less about knowing and more about being and doing. Content particularly at the child’s level becomes less important than the process and the internalisation of that process.

One aspect of the process that has become increasingly significant for me as the program proceeded was the role of the adult. Those concrete everyday situations immediately connected with the children’s daily lives intimately involve their relationship with me as teacher and as individual both at a class level and with individual pupils. Scherer (1992) believes that adults and the ways they handle conflict are an essential link in the success of any conflict resolution program. They must master the skills of cooperation and peaceful conflict resolution if they are to teach these skills to children. Modelling effectively is very important. "If you haven't mastered the techniques yourself, the kids will think you're patronising them" (Scherer, 1992:14). This view is strongly supported by the humanist psychologist Bandura (in Weiten, 1989) when he asserts that a person’s response is critically influenced by others called models and that children learn their characteristic modes of behaviour by observing others behaving in these ways. Other writers not specifically concerned with conflict resolution also indicate that the 'proper' role of the teacher is “to embody the public skills, sensitivities and forms of understanding that he is trying to pass on to others” (Peters, 1971:14). Straughan points out that

Obviously the ways in which teachers behave towards each other and towards pupils can have a powerful influence upon those pupils' own moral attitudes, as can such factors as school organisation, its rituals and traditions. (1988:14)
The reality of this has meant an increasingly vigilant self reflection as I observed my interaction with the children. Both as a group and as individuals they each called forth a different response in me as I taught, helped and encouraged them to deal with their/our issues.

2.6.1. Developing Cooperative Learning Skills

And the Lord said to the Rabbi, "Come, I will show you Hell."

They entered a room where a group of people sat around a huge pot of stew. Everyone was famished and desperate. Each held a spoon that reached the pot but had a handle so long that it could not be used to reach their mouths. The suffering was terrible.

"Come, now I will show you Heaven," said the Lord after a while.

They entered another room, identical to the first - the pot of stew, the group of people, the same long spoons. But there everyone was happy and nourished.

"I don't understand," said the Rabbi. "Why are they happy here when they were miserable in the other room, and everything was the same".

The Lord smiled. "Ah, but don't you see?" he asked. "Here they have learned to feed each other."

*Hearts That We Broke Long Ago*  Merle Shain (in Crum, 1987)

Cooperative learning is the deliberate teaching of social skills in a supportive environment where children learn with and from each other. There is a common goal with joint responsibility for completing the task. The tasks are designed so that one or two children cannot dominate the group or do all the work. (Palmerston District Primary School)

This is one definition of cooperative learning and yet if “our need for each other is ... the cornerstone of our psyche” (Bloom, 1995:63) and the key to peace lies in relationship as Curle suggests, then an even broader understanding is necessary.
We learn and relearn the importance of relationships in communicating and working together ... We are social beings ... Learning to work collaboratively is not limited to teaching a small set of skills in a social skills program ... cooperative learning permeates everything we do. It is a way of life and the heart of a school curriculum. (Hill, 1992:2)

This would indicate that peace education can only be taught as an interactive process and that cooperative learning is a foundation stone to the whole process. As we saw earlier, for conflict to occur there need to be just two elements so as soon as we come together in a group the potential for conflict exists. As our different personalities begin to interact the propensity for conflict hovers and yet it is in this dynamic state that the keys for effective learning together are also to be found. If one of the major aims of peace education programs is to have children become capable of working through conflict positively, then one of the skills they must make their own is an ability to work and play cooperatively which involves learning to share ideas and feelings as well as toys and to use shared knowledge to solve problems cooperatively. This is part of everyday life, not an ‘add-on’ to ‘conflict resolution time’. This means that children need to learn ‘beginner’ skills such as not all talking at once, making eye contact when listening, making space for others, keeping hands and feet to oneself, becoming aware of body language, eliminating put-downs and using quiet voices and people’s names, all of which underpin the more complex skills of negotiating, mediating and reaching consensus.

In *The Mouse, the Monster and Me*, Palmer (1977) suggests a number of strategies to help the young child be assertive, neither a monster nor a mouse. *Kids Can Cooperate* (Crary, 1984) focuses on problem solving skills that teach children how to cooperate. Aimed primarily at parents with quarrelling children, it puts forward the idea that a child who can think of several ways of getting what he/she wants will display more socially acceptable behaviour than one who has only one or two ways.
The benefits and principles of cooperative learning are listed in the introduction to *Games that Work* (Hill, 1992). They have been well documented by Cohen (1990), Slavin (1989) and Johnson and Johnson (1990), all in Hill (1992).

- Cooperation leads to higher achievement.
- Cooperative learning facilitates deeper levels of understanding.
- Cooperative learning is fun.
- Cooperative learning develops leadership skills.
- Cooperative learning promotes positive attitudes to school.
- Cooperative learning promotes self esteem.
- Cooperative learning is inclusive learning.
- Cooperative learning brings about a sense of belonging.
- Cooperative skills are the skills of the future.

Hill also contrasts the principles of cooperative groups with more traditional group structures. A cooperative group builds in positive interdependence where everyone has an essential role to play. There is a common group goal unlike the traditional group where individuals set their own goals or compete with one another. Cooperative groups tend to be of mixed ability and diverse personality as opposed to the more homogenous groupings of tradition. Traditional groups tend to reflect the observation of Margaret Mead “thou shalt not kill the members of our gang but everyone else is fair game” (in Bloom, 1995:73). The cooperative group seeks to go beyond this ‘primitive’ response to see conflict as an everyday event where dissension and diversity become an indicator for collaborative negotiation (Scherer, 1992) and celebration (Crum, 1987).

This was the background which made cooperative learning such an important part of the *Peaceful Warriors* program.

### 2.6.2. Developing Skills for dealing with Bullies

"You are getting strong - but there's always going to be someone stronger. I once told you that running isn't the answer; well, neither is fighting. If you hurt someone else, it only makes you the bully. The true warrior is the peaceful warrior."

*Secret of the Peaceful Warrior*  Dan Millman
Bullying is a form of conflict prevalent in schools. "According to self reports, one student in five in Australian schools aged between 9 and 17 years is bullied at least once a week" (Rigby, 1995:3). Any strategies for dealing with conflict must concern itself with this issue. To begin, a definition of terms is needed. As Rozycki (1994) points out "few topics generate more interest than violence in our schools and few topics generate more profound confusion in both preachment and practice". No schools will admit to the condoning of violence yet schools have great difficulty making "morally critical distinctions between rough play, mock fighting, sexually exploratory conflict, intimidation, coercion and assault". What one person calls assault another describes as 'boys being boys'; what one person hears as verbal violence chargeable as offensive language another takes for granted as a norm. Prince Alfred College School Community has a policy which defines harassment as "ongoing verbal and/or physical attacks against a person. It includes intimidation in all forms. It is done with intent to disrupt physically and/or emotionally". This is followed by a comprehensive list of behaviours which constitute harassment including hitting, punching, jostling, pushing, spitting, threatening others, using offensive names or abusive language, putting others down, writing crude notes, spreading rumours, deliberate exclusion, extortion, and repeated use of offensive gestures.

One of the critical issues in violence prevention and conflict resolution is the use of punishment for inappropriate behaviours. In particular the use of corporal punishment, sometimes called 'violent' punishment, needs to be briefly addressed. This is a highly emotive issue of which detailed discussion in this paper is not relevant except to point out that with corporal punishment conflict is not resolved at all; it is simply punished by someone more powerful. Here the issue of the adult as role model is an important one. In terms of conflict resolution, the question is what exactly is being taught by attempting to stop inappropriate behaviours with physical punishment? In as much as reducing violence is an intended outcome of any program, corporal punishment could
be seen as one end of the spectrum to peer mediation. Rozycki (1994) claims that most children he encounters care less that the punishment is corporal than that it is just and also points out that non corporal punishment may be cruel, unjust and ineffective. He observes that schools that strive to remove 'violence' from their environment often do not achieve an educational improvement but rather the loss of the inevitability of punishment in which any action is permissible and where students who fight to protect themselves from a bully are often given the same punishment as the bully. The hidden curriculum becomes: he who is strongest wins or she who attacks first has the advantage. The eternal discussion around environmental and hereditary influences and what they are, play a role in approaches to student violence prevention. If the community's understanding of the nature of childhood is that children are 'creatures of sin' (Ryan, 1994) then corporal punishments and their ilk will be considered normal. When any form of childhood misbehaviour is considered a "symptom of some deep-lying trouble which needs expert treatment" (in Ryan, 1994) and is most likely caused by dysfunctional behaviours in the adults close to him/her, counselling is likely to take the place of any form of disciplinary action. Thus the school community's view on human nature directs the style of dealing with the issue.

Bullying has been a widespread problem in schools for years (Rigby, 1995). It tends to be less overt than violence and accompanied by threats of retaliation if reported. Schools have been attempting to deal with the issue in many ways and with various degrees of success. One clear action plan which exemplifies much of the work done in this area comes from the Scottish Council for Research in Education. *Action against Bullying* (1991) and *Drawing from Experience and Supporting Schools Against Bullying* (1993) set out a sequence of steps for developing a whole school policy on bullying. They include defining bullying and bullying behaviour; looking at the secrecy and silence surrounding bullies and ways of recognising bullies and victims. Each of these aspects is accompanied by scenarios for use as discussion starters. Guidelines are given on the development of the whole school policy. The plan also focuses on
involving non-teaching staff and families in tackling bullying and includes scenarios and case studies designed to highlight the two key messages: first, bullies are nurtured in secrecy and silence; and second, bullies and victims do not fall into stereotyped shapes and sizes. An active school policy which empowers individuals to deal positively with bullying behaviour is the single most effective message a school can give to bullies.

2.6.3. Developing conflict resolution skills

“Studying peace through nonviolence is as much about getting the bombs out of our hearts as it is about getting them out of the Pentagon budget......... If peace is what every government says it seeks, and peace is the yearning of every heart, why aren't we studying it and teaching it in schools?”

McCarthy (1992:6)

In schools we give daily practice to mathematics and language skills; to be an elite sportsman or musician requires hours of practice and yet when cooperative or nonviolent behaviour does not happen by osmosis or from a few simple lessons we either give up or blame someone else. We live in a world where the majority believe that we must fight for peace with the weapons of war although we only need reflect for a moment that if this approach had been effective we would have eliminated conflict long ago. If society is serious about developing peace, we need to give time and energy to teaching and learning whatever skills and attitudes it takes to get the results we want.

One of the classic books on conflict resolution is Everyone Can Win (Cornelius and Faire, 1989). Because this book synthesises key skills and processes from a wide variety of sources in conflict resolution to illustrate the method by which all parties to a dispute can win, the twelve tools on which the process is based are quoted in full. (Cornelius and Faire, 1989:8)
1. **Win/Win:** everyone’s needs are respected.
2. **The Creative Response:** problems are turned into possibilities.
3. **Empathy:** communication tools build rapport. Hear how it is on the other side. Listen so people will talk.
4. **Appropriate Assertiveness:** attack the problem not the person. Say how it is on your side. Talk so people will listen.
5. **Cooperative Power:** defuse power struggles. Build ‘power with’ the other person.
6. **Managing Emotions:** fear, anger, frustration and hurt can be handled wisely for effective change.
7. **Willingness to resolve:** recognise personal issues clouding the picture.
8. **Mapping the Conflict:** chart all the factors involved to build a common vision.
9. **Designing Options:** design creative solutions together.
10. **Negotiation Skills:** effective planning and strategies to reach agreement
11. **Mediation:** help others to understand each other and build solutions.
12. **Broadening Perspectives:** see the problem in its broader context and in an expanded time frame.

All approaches to conflict resolution use these skills in some form or another. Fisher and Ury (1981) state in their introduction: “Conflict is a growth industry. Everyone wants to participate in decisions that affect them; fewer and fewer people will accept decisions dictated by someone else” (p. xi). Their methods for *Getting to Yes* (1981) predate those of *Everyone Can Win* but follow a similar pattern.

For the purposes of this study it was necessary to look at how educators have translated these skills of conflict resolution into a format suitable for children of different ages. Cutrona and Guerin (1994) suggest that a conflict resolution curriculum that “emphasises sharing feelings, self-affirmation and cooperation is ideal for K-3, focusing on anger management, creative problem solving and negotiating works well with 4-6 grades; and violence prevention and peer mediation models are appropriate for 7-12 grades”. Schmidt and Friedman (1985, 1991) have written two books for classes 3-4 and 5-9 in which they adapt key skills for the different ages. Using role play (skits, role reversal, puppetry, simulations), visualisation, stories, body movement (games, drama, music, dance) they provide the teacher with a range of material to teach students to understand and deal with the forces that shape behaviour. For Schmidt and
Friedman (1985, 1991) the teacher is critical in making the program live in the hearts of the children.

Another approach is that developed by Johnson and Johnson (1979) and Deutsch (1993) in which the work of Lewin (in Maruyama, 1992) in formulating cooperative goal structures is extended into a model of conflict resolution. In practical terms this model seeks to make the conflict a positive experience for the students by teaching them skills to argue effectively and to go through a role reversal stage where they must argue for the opposing side.

Tom Roderick (in Bjerstedt, 1990) began working with conflict resolution by asking teachers how they wanted to work. They found that the teachers’ main concern was interpersonal conflict within the classroom so training began at that point. The program was based on staff development in the area of personal conflict resolution.

We feel that this is absolutely essential. If you just hand a peace curriculum to teachers, it will probably have no effect at all ..... When teaching conflict resolution, we find that we need to begin by helping people find ways of dealing better with conflict in their own lives, including the way they handle their anger - We're dealing with very basic things here. (in Bjerstedt, 1990:39)

2.6.4. One step further - developing peer mediation skills

For most schools discipline procedures require the presence of an adult to arbitrate and to stop inappropriate behaviours. Even in the teaching of cooperative learning skills and classic conflict resolution procedures, the adult is seen as the skilled operator. When this is the case we teach students that they need someone other than themselves to solve their problems; they are neither empowered to help themselves nor responsible for their actions. However, it is important that students become self disciplined and
capable of working without external enforcers of good behaviour so that they become capable of solving their own problems.

Much of the most recent literature around teaching peace education skills focuses on peer mediation programs. Peer mediation has been defined as a "process for resolving interpersonal conflicts with the help of a trained impartial mediator" (Cutrona and Guerin, 1994:100). These writers also believe that involving peers in the mediation process defuses potential violence and focuses on prevention rather than punishment. The programs are considered to be proactive when students are taught to manage their own conflicts without violence and are now the fastest-growing type of conflict resolution program being implemented in schools (Shepherd, 1994). These programs empower students to deal with their own problems and to monitor their own and their peers' behaviour (Johnson et al., 1992). They are based on a foundation of applied conflict resolution (Stomfray-Stitz, 1994).

One of the most comprehensive programs is that of Bodine, Crawford and Schrumpf (1994) outlined in Creating the Peaceable School. This program begins with the need to establish a classroom climate conducive to conflict resolution. These preconditions to the peaceable school lie in the setting up of a cooperative ambience and a non coercive attitude to student management. A rights and responsibilities document for the school community is considered of great importance as is the concept of discipline rather than punishment. This foundation is followed by training the pupils in understanding the nature of conflict and peace and peacemaking. The mediation process is then laid out clearly with the role of the mediator defined, their characteristics and tasks specifically set out in detail. The mediator is impartial, listens with empathy, is respectful, is trustworthy and helps people work together. The mediation process involves six steps: agreement to mediate, gathering points of view, focussing on interests, creating win-win options, evaluating options and creating an agreement. Negotiation and group problem solving follow similar guidelines but with different
groupings of people. The emphasis throughout this manual is on pupil/pupil interaction once the appropriate classroom climate has been established.

Two other detailed programs for training student mediators are *Mediation Training for Teenagers* - a trainer's manual published by the Conflict Resolution Network, Australia and *The Cool Schools Peer Mediation Programme* published by the New Zealand Foundation for Peace studies, 1992. Both outline a number of sessions, each of which teach one or two skills essential for mediation and involve handouts of basic information, skills teaching using role play, cooperative games, sharing circles and weekly evaluation. Similar characteristics for the mediator are outlined by Cutrona and Guerin (1994). The mediator listens to each person's story, clarifies the issues, facilitates the brainstorming for solutions, helps evaluate the solution and puts any agreement in writing. Included in the training are group exercises of differing combinations, private work, role plays and teacher directed activities. Standard training typically lasts 20 - 24 hours. Most mediation programs are aimed at age ten upwards. In the *Peacemaker Program* introduced by Johnson *et al* (1992), all students are taught to negotiate their own conflicts and all students are taught to mediate constructive solutions to classmates' problems. All students take turns at being the official mediator for the day. They emphasised the importance of overlearning so that peaceful responses become automatic. The *Cobble School Program* (Allen, 1993) points out that as student disputants describe actions, hurts, interests and anger, the mediators learn to communicate that all parties to the conflict must accept responsibility for their actions, understanding further that these actions have consequences for themselves and others. To resolve disputes in real ways, the disputants must tell the truth about their behaviour and recognize its consequences for the other parties to the conflict. Through the training student mediators learn that they are not solving the great problems of global life, but are focused on immediate, painful, specific instances of daily life that they help others resolve using a defined model of a mediation process. Testimony from teachers and administrators shows that student mediators develop a more altruistic
disposition and become more capable of seeing the school as a community of diverse interests. They also master various skills which carry over into their personal lives.

2.7. Does it work? Can we teach students to be ‘peaceable’?

All programs of peer mediation claim successful outcomes. However, these claims "are based on intuitive insights rather than on research evidence and have undergone no systematic evaluation" (Cutrona and Guerin, 1994). They also point out that if the programs do not become part of the ongoing curriculum they will not survive the implementation period. Nevertheless it would appear that many students improve communication, active listening and problem solving skills and the process can have all-round benefits. Shepherd (1994) cites a program, the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program in New York City that benefits 1,200 teachers and 30,000 students annually. Stomfray-Stitz (1994) lists a number of successful System-wide and State-wide programs. Johnson et al (1992) prepared for their Peacemaker Program by collecting data on its need and then investigating whether it worked. Types and frequency of conflict were noted as were methods of resolution. After implementation of the program there was a dramatic decrease in referrals to adults for arbitration.

Another viewpoint is expressed by Richard Migliore (1994). He invites all 'experts' who develop strategies for teachers to teach students to resolve their conflicts without violence to spend time - lots of time - in the classroom and see what happens to conflict resolution strategies in a situation "when the button clicks" (Migliore, 1994:64). He gives a very graphic example all teachers will recognise. Students having attended any amount of excellent conflict resolution lessons will switch at the flick of an eyeball from someone they don't like, to retaliation and the only conflict resolution method that will work (temporarily) is the teacher's "Stop it". When reminded of the alternatives, the student replied "I don't want to hear that bull" and was on the suspension list next day, a solution preferable for many students to the 'wimpiness' of the alternatives. The click
of the button "has the power to completely transform a nice, polite, well-spoken child into a violent, nasty, primal being". The need to act on one's fury is so strong that consequences are irrelevant. The only curbing factor is fear - of being beaten badly and at that point the presence of an adult becomes meaningful. 'Stop me before I hurt him' provides a way out with honour.

2.8. Conclusion

The formal program, *Peaceful Warriors*, grew from a coalescing of this background of reading into the nature of conflict, the human condition and peace education issues coloured by my own personal experiences and reflections. It is idiosyncratic and impressionistic as I delved into an area that both fascinates and provokes anxiety. It is clear that many of the programs available are based on a rather simplistic humanist psychology in which each person is an active agent in charge of his/her own destiny who with the help of a few skills will be able to deal with most of the conflict in their lives. However, if we look at the sheer complexity of the views of the human condition and of the development of the individual personality, then solving conflict or more appropriately using conflict as a tool to a positive outcome that celebrates diversity and difference is a challenge of enormous magnitude.

One can teach children a mass of information, without teaching them to use that information: and one can teach them how to do all sorts of things, without teaching them to do those things on appropriate occasions ... Nevertheless if (moral) education is not to remain a wholly 'theoretical' enterprise ... (it) cannot consist simply of the transmission of knowledge and skills ... (Straughan, 1988:110/112)

This links us back to our earlier discussion on the human condition and the forces that underlie personality. Strategies for winning the war on violence must take these psychological states into account. If we can build a picture of our own soul that works, that begins to understand why each of us behaves as we do, then both the possibility of
wanting to behave differently in conflictual situations and the belief in one's ability to do so become viable alternatives. As we, the children and I, began to watch our responses in difficult moments, we became increasingly conscious of our ability to choose other more harmonious inclusive options with which we could shape a reality where conflict was a creative act. We were also made aware of just how often we behaved in less than positive ways even when knowing alternative behaviours. Despite the fundamental humanist/spiritual orientation of the program, I was constantly reminded to take account of the strength of the inner realities and biological determinants that contribute to our reactions.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

As stated in the introduction, the methodological position taken in this study is based on the belief that there is no separation between the research and the practice. The constant observation and monitoring of the experiences of the teacher, pupils and parents involved in the program as it unfolded is the foundation of the research. While developing the program at the back of my mind was the growing idea that the program itself was not going to be enough. The development of skills of various kinds would only be a small part of the whole learning process. While there was a program of formal learning of skills and understanding, of equal significance was the “hidden curriculum”, as the different environments in which each individual is placed impact on their relationships. As Grundy points out (1987: 42), “the curriculum is that which the students experience in the learning environment”. One of the most testing aspects of the program was going to be how I responded to conflict in the classroom, how I dealt with inappropriate behaviours and what I did when my ‘authority’ was challenged. A critical element of this program would be self-reflection and my ability to change my personal practices in line with the principles of the evolving program. In other words, my ability to create an environment where the children could face conflict without fear and articulate their feelings about behaviours that cause them distress safely, was extremely important. Conflict is an interactive process and both my actual experience and my reflection on that experience as it pertained on one level to the interactions in the classroom and on another level with the wider social and cultural context in which the
children and I find ourselves, would be of relevance to the final assessment of the program.

This study then, took an idea and developed it into a program for a group of Class Four children. It was then implemented over an eighteen month period and assessed as a piece of action research based on a case study. Techniques of grounded theory are used to identify and highlight key categories of experience but the outcome of a final core category leading to the statement of a 'grounded' theory did not emerge and was not expected to emerge, given the nature of the study. It is hoped that the study will not only solve a practical problem in the classroom but will add to the small but growing number of programs designed to deal with the daily confusions and discomforts of conflict. As with any good teaching, the experience will not only deal with immediate issues but will provide a basis for later growth and development. If we can help our students deal proactively with their own conflicts now then as adults they will have skills which may have a wider impact on their families, community and the world around them.

3.2. Action research

Action-research in education has been defined by Kemmis and Grundy (in Burns, 1994:293) as:

A family of activities in curriculum development, professional development, school improvement programs and systems planning and policy development. These activities have in common the identification of strategies of planned action which are implemented, and then systematically submitted to observation, reflection and change. Participants in the action being considered are integrally involved in all of these activities.
It is grounded in two essential principles: improvement and involvement (Grundy, 1987:142) and it is the arena of human interaction and practice which form the sites for investigation and improvement.

Burns (1994:294) further defines it as a total process, in which a 'problem situation' is diagnosed, remedial action planned and implemented, and its effects monitored ... The focus is on a specific problem in a defined context and not on obtaining generalisable scientific knowledge.

The term was first used by the social psychologist Kurt Lewin who developed a cyclic model which clarified a number of sequential stages in an evolving action-research study (in Burns, 1994). As it is these stages combined with the development and refinement of the process as outlined by Grundy (1987) that drove this piece of work, it is important to look at these stages in some depth.

The cyclic model involves seven stages which move from identifying a critical issue or situation which becomes the focus of the action research, through fact finding and literature review phases to clarification of a possible way forward; followed by implementation and evaluation leading back to a new understanding of the original critical situation.

3.2.1. The Lewin-Grundy model

Stage 1 concerns the formulation of the general idea perceived as critical in an everyday teaching situation: a situation the teacher wishes to improve. Thus, in this present study the 'problem situation' and the defined context are conflictual behaviours arising from the daily interactions of fourteen children and their teacher as together they
journey through the school year. The initial idea came from a number of sources, indeed from a kind of gelling over a period of years, of different mostly ad hoc off-the-cuff responses to the ubiquitous squabbles of children referred daily, hourly to the adult teacher/authority for arbitration. While the children were working well at their 'lessons', they always expected adult intervention in order to deal with their peers around instances of name calling, hitting, pushing and a general lack of respect for others' possessions and needs. I had become unhappy with my method of dealing with the situation which was to use my adult authority to solve issues as quickly and painlessly as possible. It was my observation that children always saw themselves as the victims in these situations, even those who apparently initiated the inappropriate behaviours, although in most cases it was impossible to tell where the incidents began: hence the apt title of Eva Fugitt's (1983) book: He hit me back first. The children were unable or unwilling to be responsible for the actions they took and felt disempowered in all situations of conflict whether they reacted with aggression or withdrawal. Certainly my solving the problems for them lessened neither the number of instances nor the pupils' dependence on me for help. I began to wonder about the long term impact of this dependence and of children with little awareness that they have choices in the way they respond in such situations. Following a sequence of workshops with the Conflict Resolution Network (a network of people with a common commitment to conflict resolution, cooperative communication strategies and related skills that provide workshops, resources, schools development programs and other related activities) and reflecting on my own personal experience, it became clear that many adults also have little awareness of their ability to choose their responses in conflictual circumstances and thus also feel victimised. My own difficulty with my responses became painfully clear:

I am unhappy with the way I deal with inter-student conflict. Are there more effective ways to help students deal with their issues?
Stage 2 involves fact finding in order to describe fully the situation as the beginning point to understanding the options. In the present study the most significant process in this fact finding was self-reflection. As a teacher of many years experience, I was only too familiar with the troubles of young children. They are axiomatic to our daily teaching life. What this stage did was begin to clarify and identify the amorphous feelings I had around my need to change my role in classroom conflict resolution. Early in this process my preoccupation remained with the development of a skills’ based program. However, lurking in the back of my mind was the as yet unacknowledged thought that more was going to be needed; that a transformation of my way of operating could be the key to the creation of a different kind of learning space in which the required skills would be able to flourish as an interactive process.

Concurrent with stage 2, a review of the research literature was undertaken which constitutes stage 3. This review was then related and synthesised with the ‘real’ situation in which the teacher finds herself. In fact, while there was a significant analysis of the relevant literature before the formal program began, the literature which pertains to this study is vast and wide-ranging. Ongoing reading and reflection on the reading consistently impacted on both the application of the program and on self-analysis as I sought to understand more fully exactly what was happening in the classroom and the best ways to make a wider range of processes and choices accessible to all involved. While the initial focus in the literature review was on conflict resolution and peer mediation, it eventually broadened into looking at the fundamental beliefs underpinning the human condition which must be behind any conflict resolution program.

On the basis of this reading, fact finding and self-reflection I formulated a general plan based on the following assumptions:

- Children can be taught the skills of conflict resolution; they can learn skills that will enable them to deal responsibly with their own problems.
• Conflict resolution is experiential and interactive and is a transformative force whether we like it or not. It works powerfully on students either to enrich or to narrow their focus.

• It is possible to reduce the levels of physical and verbal violence in the classroom and that interpersonal and intrapersonal skills can be developed that will give the students tools that will be of lasting benefit.

• For these skills to be effective, three techniques are essential:
  • Mediation and conflict resolution skills
  • Techniques of emotional understanding and release, ie the ability to deal with one’s own and others’ emotions
  • Meditation techniques that develop an inner awareness that will contribute to the stability needed to be an effective mediator and to engage in any conflict resolution process

Stages 4 and 5 include the gathering of information needed to test and refine the general idea and the selection of research procedures, including discussion and negotiation among interested parties. It is at this point that the ethical issues of the study are addressed. The initial ideas for this program had, early in 1995, been discussed at meetings at school as a proposal for a kindergarten to year 12 program. However it became clear that this was not going to be feasible. Therefore it was decided to develop a program for a class of fourteen nine-year-old children and the initial ideas were adapted accordingly. It was first discussed with parents at a meeting on November 27, 1995 and then at a second meeting early in 1996. Further discussion took place with several copies of the proposal being made available for the parents’ perusal. Parents were asked to contact me if they had any problems with their child being part of the program. As the ideas for the program had been well received at both meetings, it was not anticipated that there would be any objections, and there were none.

The school was also given a copy of the proposal which was to form part of the Personal Development and Health program for 1996/7. Approval was given to proceed. Finally, the program was discussed with the children and their participation requested and given. They were also happy to have their class meetings taped on the proviso that issues discussed remained confidential to themselves and me unless specific permission was sought from the individuals concerned to release what had
been said. For reasons of confidentiality, the names of all children and adults referred to in the thesis have been changed.

Stage 6 of the action-research process involves the implementation of the therapeutic plan. This includes both the skills training program and the methods of data collection and analysis that will be used to evaluate the program.

In action research generally there is concern about dealing with action in a holistic sense and thus capturing as much as possible the flavour of interactive nuances. To study the processes of human action in the classroom it was important to find a means that would accurately record what was happening and could be reproduced later as a text to be interpreted and reflected upon. The major data collection process involved a field diary, in which was recorded observations of both individual children’s behaviour in the classroom and playground and reflections on their reactions to the process and their ability to internalise and act out of the teaching. Class discussions on issues the children and/or I wished to discuss were taped and transcribed. To get as clear a picture as possible, triangulation was considered desirable, thus the parents were invited to comment on the process via an open-ended questionnaire with one parent/teacher interviewed in depth. The children also gave a written response to a sequence of questions designed to elicit their perceptions of the process in which they had been taking part. Finally a student teacher who worked with me in the early stages of the program wrote two reports, twelve months apart, detailing her observations and reflections on the program.

Also implicit in this stage is the development of insight into the practices under investigation. Here the action research spiral most effectively captures the processes that were planned, acted upon, reflected about, revised, replanned, reviewed, observed in action, pondered over and agonised about. What constitutes the process of action
research is what Grundy call “a number of ‘moments’ which are reciprocally related to one another” (1987:145). She further elucidates (pp 145-6):

These are the strategic moments of action and reflection. These moments are both retrospectively and prospectively related to each other through two organisational moments: planning and observation ... This continuous retrospectivity and prospectivity of the action research process meant that it is not a linear methodology, beginning with plans and ending with the evaluations of actions taken along the way. It is, rather, a cyclical process in which participants act strategically in the light of developing understanding. So it is that those involved in work of this kind tend to speak of an action research ‘spiral’ with each cycle leading naturally to the next through the relationship of moments ... (There is a) reciprocal, but not deterministic, relationship between action and reflection. (see Figure 1)

![Figure 1: The Action Research Spiral (Grundy,1987:145)](image)

_In Stage 7 the data is interpreted and an evaluation of the project is written up in the form of a case study._ The process of interpretation and analysis of the data in this case
was aided by the use of grounded theory techniques but it was important to remember that the relationship between action and reflection was primarily reciprocal, not causal. A grounded theory approach to analysis enabled a coding and categorisation of the recorded ‘moments’ invaluable for the reflective process but ultimately it was not relevant to seek for a core category or develop a grounded theory. What was sought here was the authentication of the participants’ attempts to change the way in which learning about conflict occurs, to change the ambience of the classroom and to develop a web of interrelationships that worked towards a greater understanding of the problem area and ultimately the wider social and cultural network in which we choose to live.

### 3.3. Grounded Theory

One of the tools for the interpretation of the data generated from this program was the application of grounded theory techniques to develop concepts from the descriptions of the phenomena observed.

Grounded theory is

\[
\text{... one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomena it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to the phenomenon (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 23-24).}
\]

Thus any theory so developed is grounded in the experience of the people with whom one is working and with whom one is an active partner in the research.

Of critical importance in collecting data for this purpose is the concept of theoretical sensitivity. This
refers to the personal quality of the researcher. It indicates an awareness of the subtleties of meaning of data. Theoretical sensitivity refers to the attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and capability to separate the pertinent from that which isn't (Strauss and Corbin, 1994: 41-42).

This sensitivity comes from a number of sources, including the researcher's personal and professional experience, her knowledge of the literature pertaining to the field and wider and from the systematic analysis of the data. However, the researcher must be careful of taking theories or categories from the literature or elsewhere as it is possible that this may inhibit the accurate and objective analysis of the primary data. The 'heart' of the grounded theory process is the coding procedures.

Coding represents the operations by which data are broken down, conceptualised and put back together in new ways. It is the central process by which theories are built from data. (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:57)

Strauss and Corbin identify three levels of coding, leading to a final 'core category' using two basic analytic procedures, the making of comparisons and the asking of questions. Level 1 involves the conceptualising of the raw data. By this is meant taking apart segments of the initial recorded observations and ascribing to each discrete incident a name which represents a phenomenon. Comparison with other incidents leads to similar phenomena being grouped together. Having applied these conceptual labels and identified particular phenomena in the data, these concepts are further grouped in a process called 'categorising'. The naming and development of categories is important to the process of open coding. The name of a category

... must be a more abstract concept than the one that it denotes....The important thing is to name a category, so that you can remember it, think about it, and most important of all begin to develop it analytically.....When you develop a category, you do so first in terms of its properties, which can then be dimensionalized. .....are important because they form the basis for making relationships between
categories and subcategories. And still later between major categories. (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:67-70)

Having broken the data into bits to open code it, the next step “puts the data back together in new ways by making connections between a category and its subcategories”. This process Strauss and Corbin call axial coding. Here the focus is on specifying a category (phenomenon) in terms of the conditions that give rise to it; the context (its specific set of properties) in which it is embedded; the action/interactional strategies by which it is handled, managed, carried out; and the consequences of those strategies. (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 97)

Using the following paradigm model (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 99)

\[(A) \text{Causal Conditions} \rightarrow (B) \text{Phenomenon} \rightarrow (C) \text{Context} \rightarrow (D) \text{Intervening Conditions} \rightarrow (E) \text{Action/Interaction Strategies} \rightarrow (F) \text{Consequences}\]

we link subcategories to a category in a set of relationships.

Finally we come to selective coding, the basis for which was developed during the axial coding phase. Five critical steps are taken during this process, although it is important to remember that they do not necessarily take place in lock-step sequence. "In reality one moves back and forth between them". These tasks are:

- explicating the story line
- relating subsidiary categories around the core category by means of the paradigm
- relating categories at the dimensional level
- validating those relationships against data
- filling in categories that may need further refinement

(Strauss and Corbin, 1994:117-118)

This is the final stage in connecting the raw data with a theory. Whilst it appears a long and complex process, Strauss and Corbin (1990: 110-111) remind us that
...reality, alas, is complex.... In developing a grounded theory we are trying to capture as much of the complexity and movement in the real world that is possible, while knowing we are never able to grasp all of it.

At this point it is essential to make a commitment to a story line, starting with a general descriptive overview and moving to a conceptualisation. This is the core category. As in all the other steps, this category is arrived at by asking questions and making comparisons. It must also be developed in terms of its properties and dimensions. Being the "heart of the integration process" it is essential that all categories, by means of the paradigm model relate to it. "The core category must be the sun, standing in orderly systematic relationship to its planets." (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:124).

During this whole sequence of processes from the initial open coding to the creation of the core category, what is being developed is a web....

... a network of conceptual relationships....It is very important to identify these patterns and to group the data accordingly, because this is what gives the theory specificity....To systemise and solidify connections we use a combination of inductive and deductive thinking, in which we constantly move between asking questions, generating hypotheses and making comparisons.... The data are now related not only at the broad conceptual level but also at the property and dimensional levels for each major category. (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 130-133)

At this point one can validate one's theory against the data, best done according to the authors by memos laid out either graphically or narratively. From here it is possible to make statements of relationship and verify them. The researcher is not looking for exact matching all the time. Indeed such cases as do not fit the theory can be useful indicators of change and require the analyst to check earlier steps to determine reasons for the discrepancy. Once the theoretical framework has been formulated, it is important for the analyst to go back to the categories and fill in any missing detail. This gives "conceptual density" and increased "conceptual specificity" to the study.
Particularly important for this present study was bringing process into the analysis. Strauss and Corbin (1990:143-144) define process as

the linking of sequences of action/interaction as they pertain to the management of, control over, or response to, a phenomenon. This linking of sequences is accompanied by noting: (a) the change in conditions influencing action/interaction over time; (b) the action/interactional response to that change; (c) the consequences that result from that action/interactional response; and finally (d) describing how those consequences become part of the conditions influencing the next action/interactional sequence....Process is an elusive term, one that is not easily explained.....yet it is very much there in the data, a part of any empirical reality.

Change is crucial to process. In this particular study, change is planned and a necessary condition of the research; thus it will be important to look at the properties of change itself, its form, shape and character as it impacts on the developing program. Strauss and Corbin identify two main ways of conceptualising change in grounded theory studies. One can see stages of development with explanations as to how each evolved or one can see it as flexible and non-evolutionary like waves responding to changing conditions.

Primarily this present action research is a study based on a program aimed at the improvement of the interactions of members of a class based around everyday conflicts. In studying this interaction it is important to capture the evolving nature of the events, what keeps the interaction going and what stops it. During the interactional sequence, responses are influenced by broader conditions than those manifesting overtly at the time. These broader features are part of what Strauss and Corbin (1990:158, 166) refer to as the conditional matrix, defined as:

an analytical aid, a diagram, useful for considering the wide range of conditions and consequences related to the phenomenon under study. The matrix enables
the analyst to both distinguish and link levels of conditions and consequences ... The matrix is operationalised by tracing conditional paths. Tracing paths involves tracking an event or incident from the level of action/interaction through the various conditional levels, or vice versa, to determine how they relate. This is done in order to directly link conditions and consequences with action/interaction.

A final important tool for a grounded theory study is theoretical sampling. This must be directed by the three types of coding procedures used and is also influenced by the researcher's theoretical sensitivity. Sampling needs to be cumulative and consistent. At the beginning of the study data is gathered from a wide range of pertinent areas in order to generate categories. As the categories are developed and saturated with material, data collection needs to become more focused while retaining flexibility. It is essential to the grounded theory method that "sampling (is done) on the basis of the evolving theoretical relevance of concepts". (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:179). Sampling should be continued until each category is "saturated", ie until nothing new seems to be emerging, the categories are dense and the relationships between categories are well-established. Testing the theory constantly against the data is of crucial importance. Without saturated categories, that is adequate sampling, any theory will remain weak. It is important to mention that at this point Strauss and Corbin (1990:191) make it clear that:

... we are not attempting to generalise as such but to specify. We specify the conditions under which our phenomena exist, the action/interaction that pertains to them, and the associated outcomes or consequences. This means that our theoretical formulation applies to these situations or circumstances but to no others.

What is being developed is a substantive theory, not a formal one. To formalise the theory would require the phenomenon to be examined under many different types of situations and conditions. However, the action researcher has a different primary purpose (Burns, 1994:301):
They are not immediately concerned with adding more 'truth' to that body of educational knowledge which appears in articles and books. The action researchers are interested in the improvement of the educational practices in which they are engaging - how to do their jobs better.

3.4. The Case Study

Burns (1994:312-313) describes the case study as:

typically involving the observation of an individual unit....*It must be a bounded system.*

....The case study is the preferred strategy.....when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real life context. In brief, the case study allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events.

Cohen and Manion (1989:150) point out that case studies are:

....'a step to action'. They begin in a world of action and contribute to it. Their insights may be directly interpreted and put to use; for staff or individual self-development. Their peculiar strength lies in their attention to the subtlety and complexity of the case in its own right...Case study data, paradoxically, is 'strong in reality'...

Human subjectivity can be a problem in case study research as the key process of data collection is observation. In this particular study, participant observation is the primary data collection method. Here the observer is the teacher engaging in the activities she is setting out to observe. While this has inherent advantages,

.... the investigator is able to discern ongoing behaviour as it occurs and is able to make appropriate notes about its salient features ... a more intimate and informal
relationship is developed with those he is observing ... (Bailey, cited in Cohen and Manion, 1989:128)

the criticism that a participant observer can be impressionistic and biased needs to be heeded, although it could also be pointed out that apparent weaknesses are sometimes strengths. The uniqueness of each case study with its idiosyncratic complexity can convey insights which go beyond the specifics of the situation. Nevertheless, it is pertinent for this researcher in particular, fascinated, obsessed and sometimes completely demoralised by the magic of conflict to beware of the inability to divorce her preferences from the clear reporting and analysis of the data observed and collated.

3.5. Summary

Given the general direction, needs and scope of this research, the most appropriate theoretical framework is provided by a case study of action research with the analysis of text and transcripts following the procedures of grounded theory. In many ways, the whole evolution of the problem and the hypotheses for action which have developed over many years of personal self development work in the area of conflict management were related to the action research paradigm. The 'stages' leading to the decision to implement an actual program in the classroom were certainly not sequential but part of an ongoing cyclic, even spiralling chain of incidents in my life. Because of conflictual events which had an impact, not always positive, on the direction my life has taken, I became very interested in the nature of conflict, its expression and its metamorphosis which in turn led me to look at how I deal with conflict in the classroom, teacher/student and student/student. I have come to believe that it is important to create an environment in the classroom in which children can become aware of an inner wisdom out of which they can guide their daily actions. As Eva Fugitt (1983:3) points out:
Children today are caught in a confusion of choices: they are confronted with the most fundamental questions of values and purpose: "How do I choose?" "By whose authority do I choose?" "What happens when I choose?" Such choices are frightening, for they require the child in a sense to create his own identity.

So the initial idea for this study in action-research has arisen from a long process of analysis, self-analysis, reading a wide variety of literature - philosophical, educational and fiction, observation of children and adults in conflictual situations and in-service programs in developing skills and tools to deal with conflict. It is difficult to know what came first. However, as Burns (1994:297) points out:

The process of analysis is an endless one, but in action research it must be interrupted for the sake of action.

Thus this thesis aims to analyse both the curriculum process and program as well as the personal development of the teacher over a period of two years using the aforementioned data analysis procedures. The study addresses the following research questions:

- **Are there effective ways of teaching students to deal with conflict?**
- **What is the role of the teacher in the process of teaching students to deal with conflict?**
- **How is the impact of such a program assessed?**

As part of this process, it became a study of a pedagogical process in which the set of desirable skills to be taught to the students by the teacher underwent a transformation. Action came to be directed more towards changes in behaviour of both students and teacher as the teacher systematically examined her own practice through processes of reflection which enabled her to both monitor and mould her teaching and move towards a transformation of work practices. As Freire points out it became increasingly a process in which "the teacher is no longer merely the one-who-teaches, but one who is
himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in their turn, while being taught, also teach” (in Grundy, 1987:122). In this case, the ten/eleven year old students remained largely unconscious of their teaching role; nevertheless the impact of their responses over the two years of the study as we together tried to make sense of a complex and sometimes contradictory and painful process to any transformation that took place was significant. Clearly, the teaching process came to reflect the constructivist paradigm quoted earlier where learning is construed as

an interpretative, recursive, building process by active learners interacting with the physical and social world. (Fosnot, 1996:30)

3.6. Limits of Research

It has already been clearly stated that the primary purpose of the action researcher is to improve if not transform their personal work practices. Thus the research is significant primarily to the person intimately engaged in the study of their own work as the children and teacher together confront the problems of their relationships. However, in this specific case study, through the use of sensitised observation of a particular classroom, through telling the vivid stories of fourteen children and their teacher as they laugh, cry and fight their way through two years of living, what is unique in time and space can hopefully convey insights that go beyond the specifics of their situation. Action research requires a knowing that goes beyond the one dimensional to where the nuances, delicate balances and subtle complexities are sought for and valued, where the fragrance of each individual is respected and there is an awareness that the group interacting can create something beyond the individual. There is a great deal of nontechnical and philosophical literature from the Bible to Gandhi to fairy stories and children's literature of all kinds in this field. However the gap between literature and action and experience is often wide. To 'walk one's talk' is probably the greatest
challenge of all and the only really effective way to create a learning environment that allows a transformation of consciousness to take place.
CHAPTER 4

THE SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL SETTING

FOR PEACEFUL WARRIORS

4.1. The School

Korowal School was founded in 1978 based on the philosophical principles of Garry Richardson as outlined in Education for Freedom (1985). Richardson could be described as a millionaire philanthropist with a particular interest in developing a philosophy he calls ‘human-centred’, described in detail in his other book, Love as Conscious Action (1994). Korowal is one practical application of this philosophy in action. Briefly (see Appendix A for a more detailed description of the practical philosophy of education at Korowal), a human-centred school endeavours to create an environment where teachers have the possibility of learning to work practically with love and the consciousness necessary to apply it to the education of the pupils.

The key statement in human-centred philosophy is to learn to work consciously with love from one’s own centre. Love in this context manifests itself as commitment to the welfare of the other, irrespective of the emotions involved. Implicit in human-centred philosophy is its capacity to evolve, develop and be worked with. The practice of education at Korowal comes out of the experience and insight of the teaching staff working in the context of this philosophy. (Korowal Education Council, 1997:4)

The school administration reflects the notion of school-as-community, where teachers are co-responsible for educational issues within the school and through their shared experience develop the philosophical base which underpins all educational decision
making. The staff are thus co-responsible for educational issues at the school, which is administered by two independent Councils. The Education Council consists of all full-time and some part-time teachers of the school and is responsible for formulating and implementing educational policy as well as for appointing teaching staff. There is no principal. The authority and responsibility normally held by a principal is given to the Education Council which appoints its own members and its executive (consisting of a school coordinator, and a primary and high school coordinator). These positions are held for two-three years and carry a time allocation but no salary increase. The second council, the Administrative Council is elected by the members of the school and acts as a Board of Directors. It is responsible for all financial and legal matters, including setting fees and approving expenditure and staffing levels.

Korowal is a coeducational non-denominational school of about 260 students in classes from Kindergarten to the Higher School Certificate with one class at each year level. It has been specifically designed for educational and artistic excellence. Each classroom is spacious with large windows overlooking bushland and well equipped with sink, wet area, storage spaces, double blackboards and other necessities of teaching. Musical instruments and high quality craft materials are always available as well as high quality coloured pencils, crayons, paints and paper. The integration of artistic and formal work begins in kindergarten and continues throughout the school. Art in all its aspects - modelling, music, drama and so on is considered critical in order to maximise brain function by involving both the logical thinking processes of the left hemisphere of the brain and the artistic intuitive activity of the right hemisphere.

Because of this approach to teaching, Korowal attracts parents that are keen for their children to develop their artistic potential as well as their academic skills. There is an overwhelming majority of white Anglo-Saxon children from basically middle-class professional backgrounds. The school could be described as an homogenous educational community of parents, students and staff all looking for something greater
than that which the larger and more impersonal state schools appear to offer. Class sizes are small, with an average of twenty-four per class. In the primary years the class teacher commits to working with a class for three-four years; in the high school one teacher is the class guardian for four years. This enables the development of close working relationships with both student and parents.

4.2. Classroom Structures, Organisation and Approaches

The idea that it is important to educate the whole person - the head, the thinking or intellectual realm; the heart, the feeling or artistic realm; and the hands, the doing or active realm - is well documented in literature on the Steiner schools (Harwood, 1967; Spock, 1978; Steiner, 1954, 1965, 1967, 1976, 1981, 1995) and is also an important part of both the overt and hidden curriculum at Korowal. The abstract mental processes of thinking need to be enlivened by the feelings and strengthened by the will. Working consciously with the different balance of the three areas as appropriate for different ages is integral to the way lessons are presented. However the fundamental vision of the threefold organisation of the human being, body, soul and spirit (Steiner, 1970, 1981), and the expansion of this knowledge of man into comprehensive detail as it pertains to practical application in the classroom are not part of Korowal’s praxis.

What has been adopted and adapted at Korowal are most of the forms and structures which were developed to put this knowledge of the incarnating human being with his/her evolving consciousness into daily practice in the classroom. The Morning Circle, the Main Lesson, the understanding of the development of consciousness from child to adult, and the value of the close relationship between teacher and pupil built by retaining a class for a period of years all come from the Steiner tradition as does much of the content of the curriculum and its relevance to the spiritual and emotional as well as the intellectual developmental stages of the child.
4.2.1. Continuity of Teaching

Each Korowal teacher is responsible for a class for several years. It is believed that this continuity means relationships of depth can be nurtured, special needs and problems followed up, insight into individuality developed and respect, trust and love grow through daily interaction. In the primary years the class teacher becomes the child’s natural authority and builds a security in life which later becomes confidence in his/her own powers of independent judgement and action. The teacher is particularly responsible to parents for the progress of their children and the continuing relationship he/she builds enables intimate assessment and guidance of each child’s personal and academic development. Meeting the children’s needs over a number of years requires a constant personal striving on the part of the teacher, also part of the critical ethos of the school.

Learning to work practically with love necessitates growth in consciousness. This can be achieved in education by teachers engaging consciously in self-development in the context of their work. (Education Council, 1997:4)

The group of children I worked with for the duration of this study (1996/7) I first began to teach when they were in Class 2 (1994). As part of a job-share position, I taught them from 11.30-1.30 on Thursdays and from 9.00-1.00 on Fridays so that when I came to teach them full-time at the beginning of 1996, we were all familiar with one another’s ways. It was expected that I would remain with this class for three years from Year 4 to Year 6.

4.2.2. The Morning Circle

As described in The Practical Philosophy of Education at Korowal (see Appendix A), one of the most basic ways in which Korowal recognises the individual within the
group is the use of the circle: a formation which immediately gives a sense of group and reflects the equality of each individual member. Each morning, students in each class from kindergarten to Year 6 join hands and form a circle upon entering their classrooms. In terms of the hidden curriculum the Circle, of which I am one member, demonstrates that each person is an integral part of one whole group which will work consciously, cooperatively and respectfully together.

**The essence of the MORNING CIRCLE**

is a ritualised circle space for the exploring of polarities.

**DIAGRAM 2**

There is usually a verse or opening song (or both) that acts as a form of reverence, ritual or ceremony. It serves to focus attention towards being together in the classroom and being in control of our individual selves. It sets the tone, the ambience for the day. The class and I always began the morning circle with a particular song. For the first three terms of Year 4, 1996, it was *Morning has Broken* by Cat Stevens. Term 4 and terms 1 and 2, 1997, it was *One World* by R.W. Tysoe and for the last two terms of the year, the song was *Honour the Earth*, words by Shirley Murray and music by Judith Clingan. These songs are specifically chosen for their content (see Appendix B). As the singing starts the children finish off their playing and join hands, creating a
circle. This drawing-together song is followed by a sequence of activities designed to
develop not only skills but also qualities within the children. Thus the essence of the
morning circle is a ritualised circle space for the exploring of polarities (see Figure 2
above) designed to appeal to and utilise both left and right brain activity, differing
approaches to learning and to help the children balance individual needs and group
activity in an artistic form.

4.2.3. The Main Lesson

The morning *main lesson* aims to meditatively immerse the teacher and the student in
the essence of a subject and work with it every morning for four - five weeks in order
to appeal to all levels of a child’s experience. It is:

> the pivotal part of the day in Steiner schools, which have proved the value of this
sustained approach in practice for more than sixty years.....(when) a particular
theme is developed daily for an hour and a half over a period of three-four weeks,
an extraordinary breadth and depth can be given to the material studied: it is
possible to develop the many-sided approach to its fullest possible extent.
(Richardson, 1985:191).

It follows the *morning circle* with which it is integrated by the use of poetry and song to
highlight the material being taught in the *main lesson*. For example, in an Australian
History *main lesson* entitled ‘Men, Mining and Merinos’, the children learnt a variety of
Australian folk songs and bush ballads during their *morning circle* time.

The main lesson has a number of objectives:

- to integrate formal and artistic work. This provides harmony and
completeness for the children and enables the achievement of right-left brain
hemisphere balance essential for effective learning
- to create a penetrating focus and totality of experience
- to create a mood not constantly obliterated by rapid transitions to unrelated
subjects
• to improve and extend the children’s concentration span
• to be able to respond to each subject’s own inner laws and structures; to study it in depth and in breadth
• to maintain enthusiasm
• to keep an individual record of *main lesson* studies. Each child works in his/her own book, amplifying, condensing, restating, transcribing: actions that encourage and reinforce the learning process. Illustrations, appropriate lay-out, illuminated letters, decorative borders and colour are encouraged to touch the artist in each child and create pride in beautiful work
• to introduce the work at the most appropriate time to meet the optimum inner response of the child. One of the basic tenets of Korowal and the Steiner schools is that children deserve time to be children. They are complete human beings in themselves, not uniformed adults and the curriculum recognises that they possess a different form of consciousness which the teacher may penetrate through empathy, intuitively entering into the child’s world. Through a number of stages the child’s consciousness metamorphoses into that of the independent, thinking adult.

The consciousness of a child is a developing thing. It grows and matures year by year ... it is not rational. In Western societies rational consciousness does not normally make its appearance very strongly until the beginning of adolescence, with what Piaget calls the stage of formal operations. Young children do not think in rational, logical or analytical modes ... The greatest single error that modern education makes, arises from the attempt to impose rational and adult forms of consciousness upon the developing child at much too early an age. (Richardson, 1985:23-24)

• to make use of forgetting in the consolidation of learning. As Richardson (1985:194) points out:

... unless we can forget something on the level of our conscious mind, in some way it cannot be consolidated properly on the unconscious level ... The main lesson system enables forgetting to take place. Something is worked into intensively for a period, then it is left to lie fallow, during which time the unconscious consolidation I am speaking of has the chance to occur. When the subject is taken up again at a later stage, it will be found that whatever has been forgotten can be recalled with relative ease and that the child now has a greater capacity to deal with the subject on a higher level.

The curriculum of the Steiner school strives to balance two polarities:
His (Steiner's) educational work remains half-way between two poles, one of which concerns the child's physical, mental and spiritual development and through the ages this changes only very gradually. The other polarity consists of the social and cultural background in which the children will have to live, and this second pole is liable to change more rapidly. Both poles must be fully appreciated by the educator ... When dealing with the younger pupils the curriculum must tend more to the first pole ... and more towards the second pole when teaching adolescents (Stockmeyer, 1969:4).

It is complex, rigorous, demanding and cumulative, designed to lead into world-wide perspectives and direct contact with the practical life of our day. Steiner-based schools throughout the world, including Korowal, adapt and interpret the indications given in order to bring about a relationship between the inner needs and development of the child and the social and cultural milieu into which she/he is born. To venture further into curriculum issues here is beyond the scope of this study.

4.3. The Children

At the beginning of the program, *Peaceful Warriors* (term 2, 1996), Year 4 consisted of fourteen children, six boys and eight girls, ranging in age from 9 to 11 years, with minimal behaviour and academic problems. Fourteen very different personalities (see Appendix C), they worked together reasonably well as a group with a strong boy/girl demarcation unless the activity was so compelling they managed to forget their gender. Games like 'King Ball' and cooperative activities such as the 'Treasure Hunt' which was part of the *Pen, Paper and Ink* main lesson are too exciting to be influenced by the particularities of who is in the group. In the *morning circle* work all the boys form one half of the circle, the girls the other half unless I intervene. This has remained consistent over the two years of implementing *Peaceful Warriors*. When I ask them to get their desks and chairs ready, they jockey for places within their gender groupings.
The small number of children in this class has both advantages and disadvantages socially. It can be difficult for children who do not find a special friend among the limited choices. However, it also prevents children from teaming up with a group of like minded peers and never having to deal in a close way with children they don’t feel comfortable with. In this group, they must learn to work through differences and hopefully come to a mutual respect and liking, a lesson invaluable for later life. These children are not deprived, underprivileged, troubled or trouble making. They come from secure backgrounds and yet all of them carry the familiar problems of how to deal with the inner and outer conflicts of daily life. The characteristic disagreements are constant as were the typical responses.

“Nobody wants to play with me.”
“Nobody likes me.”
“Everybody picks on me.”
“It’s not my fault.”
“I didn’t do anything.”
“He started it.”

It was with this diverse group of children in this comparatively idyllic setting that Peaceful Warriors was developed, designed to help them become more aware of their responses to situations of conflict and ultimately give them an empowering tool to enable them to move to resolutions of their own creation.

4.4. Fundamental Beliefs underlying the Program

I have a strong commitment to the underlying principles of Steiner education, to the understanding and respect for each child as a threefold being of body, soul and spirit, and the need for the teacher to address each aspect of this being that is the child in the appropriate way at the appropriate time. That this fundamental belief about the nature of the child guides and informs the structures of the school is implicit in the way I attempt to develop any teaching program although Korowal, as indicated earlier, while
appropriating the structures does not specifically connect child, curriculum and structures in the same comprehensive way that Steiner outlines. The development of relationships between children and teacher over a period of time was particularly conducive to the implementation of this program as was the already established *morning circle* which could then simply be appropriated when necessary for class discussion work.

However, in both the Steiner schools and Korowal, much of the work in conflict resolution is part of a kind of unconscious curriculum, imparted through story, with the teacher clearly the authority in the classroom. At the beginning of my teaching career (which was in a Steiner school) this was quite definitely also my position but, as I indicated in the introduction to the study, I have begun to question this authority, the way it was applied, whether it truly met the needs of the children and if there were other ways of sharing that authority while still remaining the adult in the classroom. While I was keen to explore alternative approaches to ‘authority’ I remain of the opinion that children, particularly up until about the age of twelve need to feel that a responsible adult is there to set boundaries and to guide the learning process. What became interesting to me was that it was the process of developing a curriculum for teaching the children to deal with their daily conflicts that led me to question my so-called ‘authority’ in the classroom and what its impact actually was on the children. It is possible that these alternative approaches to conflict solving are implicit in both the Steiner and Korowal philosophies but in practice it appears that teachers are reluctant to make them conscious. There is certainly no specific curriculum as such but then, neither is there from the N.S.W. Board of Studies. My observation of children was such that I came to believe that they needed quite a specific set of activities which helped to make conscious for them and which would enable them to articulate some of the difficulties which they frequently face in day-to-day interactions.
My philosophical position on the human condition is impelled by Steiner and other writers such as Peck. We are capable of transforming ourselves. However I acknowledge and remain aware that a large number of world-influencing psychologists have long held the belief that the personality is shaped by external reality and/or inner drives and know from observation of children and myself these realities strongly influence behaviour. To change oneself is not an easy task. My ideological position on conflict I share with Crum (1987:30), “that there truly is a magical quality about conflict which can call out the best in us, that which is not summoned under ordinary circumstances”. I frequently fall short of this ideal but firmly believe it is something to aspire to and choose it over the false calm that is so often mistaken for harmony. My belief, along with many proponents of Peace Education, is that we both can and must educate children for peace and that the most relevant way of doing it is to use the immediate, painful, specific instances of the children’s and my daily life as a focus for embracing and understanding conflict.
CHAPTER 5

THE PROGRAM: Peaceful Warriors

Against the background outlined above, the decision was taken to develop a program Peaceful Warriors, to be included within the framework of the PD/H/PE syllabus, over an eighteen month period. The experience of developing, implementing and evaluating the program within the framework of praxis developed by Grundy (1987) was to become the focus of the present thesis. As a result an interconnected set of aims was developed, linking the aims of the school program with the aims of the case study. Given the nature of the total project, the distinction between curriculum development and evaluation on the one hand and the requirements of the thesis on the other became at best blurred in the real sense of action and reflection that Grundy so well describes.

5.1. Focus Questions of the Thesis

The focus questions for this thesis which were developed in Chapter 3, are:

- Are there effective ways of teaching students to deal with conflict?
- What is the role of the teacher in the process of teaching students to deal with conflict?
- How is the impact of a program aimed at addressing issues of conflict to be assessed?

In order to contextualize such a focus, the program Peaceful Warriors was developed, with the following specific aims:

- to teach the children skills that will enable them to deal responsibly with their own conflicts
• to have them understand that conflict is a transformative force that works powerfully either to enrich or to narrow their lives
• to reduce levels of physical and verbal violence in the classroom
• to monitor and reflect on my own handling of conflict in relation to my role as teacher

5.2. An Overview of the Sources and Skills of the Program:

*Peaceful Warriors.*

To inculcate the fundamental skills required for the development of the ability to deal with conflict positively, the program had a formal and an informal aspect. Material for the formal program was drawn from six main areas:

• material from specific written programs: *Creating the Peaceable School, He hit me back first*
• cooperative games, lessons, role plays etc.
• the class discussion
• meditation, listening, emotional release work
• stories
• the hidden curriculum: modelling of adults, teacher/pupil interactions, and so on.

The formal program began with the ideal of two half hour lessons a week. These were the lessons where specific skills in conflict resolution, meditation and emotional release were introduced and practised, where stories were told and roles played and formats for dealing with issues were introduced. For a number of reasons (eg during the class camp, the class play, visits from Musica Viva, sickness) these formal lessons were sometimes reduced to one a week and occasionally missed altogether. However, in many ways the informal aspect of the program was being implemented all day, every day in the interactions between all of us in the classroom. In addition to the formal instruction, the tone of voice, the body language and general levels of energy all contributed to the ability of the children to absorb the message that peaceful solutions were possible for their problems.
5.2.1. Material from specific written programs

Creating the Peaceable School (Bodine, Crawford & Schrumpf 1994:4) presents a comprehensive plan for achieving the authors’ vision of a peaceable school.

Imagine a school or classroom where learners manage and resolve their own conflicts, both with and without adult assistance. Picture a place where diversity and individuality are celebrated ... a place where people listen in order to understand others’ viewpoints and perceive conflict as an opportunity to learn and grow ... a place where adults and children cooperated instead of acting aggressively or coercively ... a place that supports everyone’s rights and encourages everyone to exercise his or her responsibilities ... a place where peace is viewed as an active process, made day by day, moment by moment. This is our vision - our vision of the peaceable school.

From this a number of specific skills and understandings can be identified which needed to become central to Peaceful Warriors. These include:

- listening skills, including comprehension of the other’s viewpoint;
- skills of cooperation, involving the ability to work constructively with others in the group, including those who are not “best friends”;
- an understanding of the nature of rights and responsibilities;
- a growing range of appropriate responses in social situations;
- reflecting on the impact of aggression on resolving conflict situations;
- specific skills of understanding what is happening when a group of individuals has to function in harmony to achieve goals.

These skills and understandings became central to the formal program, for it was believed that they are not achieved simply by a process of osmosis. Children can be taught to listen empathetically, to get on better with their peers and so on. It was decided that Peaceful Warriors would tackle the question of developing interpersonal skills, self reflection and understanding of conflict head on, although these are areas of the curriculum often neglected.
Creating the Peaceable School (Bodine et al, 1994) served as a structural guide to the Peaceful Warriors program. As the authors indicate, it was necessary to adapt the content of the activities in the book to the student’s developmental level and experience, to change the language at times and to modify the degree of involvement as the students were guided through the different exercises and strategies.

He hit me back first (Fugitt, 1983) provided a practical guide to activities designed to develop children’s self-esteem and to change negative behaviours by activating internal processes within the child so the external authority figure loses her importance in maintaining discipline. From a background of psychosynthesis, the author develops processes which help both child and teacher stop and think about their reactions in conflictual situations and become actively involved in changing their behaviour. These processes arise from the four stages through which one may achieve freedom, self-realisation, and right relationship with others as suggested by Assagioli:

- gaining knowledge of one’s personality
- achieving control of its elements
- realising one’s true self - the discovery or creation of a unifying centre
- achieving psychosynthesis - the formation or reconstruction of the personality around the new center.

(Fugitt, 1983:4)

Both these books played a critical role in the inspiration and development of the Peaceful Warriors program in that they identified clearly the desirable skills and understandings necessary for a positive outcome. They also developed these skills and understandings sequentially so it was possible during the period of the project to build on and deepen previously acquired techniques and so reinforce the desired result. (Appendix D contains the Peaceful Warriors program overview; Appendix E a transcript from my Day Book; and Appendix F a content summary and a couple of sample lessons from source materials.)
5.2.2. Cooperative games and lessons

Since the focus of *Peaceful Warriors* was aimed at developing a peaceable classroom based on respect and cooperation many learning activities were designed to reflect this. This practice went beyond the *Peaceful Warriors* program into all parts of the curriculum so that these skills were being constantly developed. Almost every main lesson involved at least one group project where together the children had to come up with a finished product. Obviously these varied a great deal as to teacher input and length of time given to each venture. During the main lesson entitled *Crossing the Blue Mountains 1813 - 1997*, the children created illustrated maps of the Blue Mountains. Here the class was divided into two groups of seven; the instruction given was any combination of four girls and three boys. Once they had organised their groups (involving a considerable amount of negotiation on their part) each group had to cut from a large roll of paper, a length 1.5m by .75m, lay it out and plan their maps from Penrith to Hartley Vale. One map was set in 1900, the other in 1997 so each group had to research the appropriate illustrations and decide where best to put them. At the end of the main lesson this particular activity continued once a week until the maps were completed so it required a continued level of commitment to the group. After the initial enthusiasm a great deal of teacher input was required in both engendering excitement and dealing with a great number of petty squabbles.

At the end of the *Pen, Paper and Ink* main lesson which, apart from looking at the development of those three articles and the alphabet and writing, included codes and invisible ink, we had a treasure hunt with the prize a bag of gold-covered chocolate money. At this stage I was working with a student teacher and together we carefully chose four groups to balance out the varying abilities of the children so all groups would have as equal a chance as possible. Each clue was constructed so that all
children were needed for the answer. The excitement level in the classroom was amazing as different groups kept taking the lead. Here the working together except for a couple of instances was very intense.

Other cooperative lessons included:

- creating a marble run down the sandstone slopes adjoining the oval.
- transporting a ‘treasure’ that was extremely ‘heavy’: it couldn’t be lifted by the group (imaginatively speaking) down a specified section of stream in the nearby National Park, each group being given the same number of props.
- making models of a number of astronomical events such as solar and lunar eclipses, the movement of the zodiac and a star dial.

Two particular kinds of cooperative activity are the class play and the class camp each of which happens once a year. While these activities have been very teacher directed, they are extremely important in that they help the children learn to subject their individual needs to the needs of a greater whole. The Class 4 play was *The Bells of Lyonesse*, a musical drama created through narration and song. Each child had a section of narration and each child made at least one contribution to the percussion accompaniment and they all needed to remain actively focused throughout the performance because without their small part the performance would have foundered.

Class plays are an excellent tool for teaching children covertly the idea that a lot of people working cooperatively together can create a result far greater than an individual alone. Also for each performance a backdrop was created as a class project. With the help of a parent skilled in stage design, the children blocked out a large picture to cover most of the back wall and using huge brushes, painted it. While the result was excellent, as a cooperative exercise this came close to failing. With too many children needing to be occupied and needing skills to be taught by the parent, it resulted in my reduction to the teacher who shouts to keep control, the impact of which will be examined more closely in the analysis of the data and the impact of the program.
Camps, of course, are a different kind of cooperative exercise all together. First of all the children have to be able to put up their tents in groups of two or three, and pack them away again. Here freedom of choice was given as to tent partner(s) because each child would be very close to those others for several days. On the class camp (May, 1997) to the Warrumbungle Mountains, a long journey, wet weather and a very full program which required the children to be on time for several activities including star gazing and koala spotting, there needed to be a very high degree of cooperation. Much of this meant doing exactly what I asked when I asked for it. The class and I spent some time in discussion before the camp looking at this issue and its importance in terms of safety and group needs and came to agreements on behaviour. However, on a number of occasions, agreements were disregarded (David and Simon spent the entire first night talking despite repeated requests for silence and had to sleep alone for the rest of the camp) and the impact of the irritated, annoyed response will be explored in the data analysis and conclusions. A number of quotes from Andrew’s diary shows a saga of petty irritations.

**Monday:** ...We talked in bed for a while then we tried to get to sleep but Peter kept making funny snoring noises so it took ages to get to sleep. I had a bad night’s sleep and also there was a koala making a really loud snoring noise and Simon and David talked most of the night and they got in trouble.

**Tuesday:** ... On the way back from the top, me and David picked up all the rubbish we saw. Because we either didn’t play soccer because we dropped our apple cores, or pick up rubbish.

**Wednesday:** ... Then we played soccer with most of the class and Oliver chucked a tooshy on me. Then me, Oliver and David had to clean the dishes ... It was raining hard and I got soaked and on the way back to the bus Oliver and Simon kept pushing each other, trying to push in, then Oliver got tooshy and got Simon.

5.2.3. The Class meeting
The **class meeting** is an extremely important part of the program. Unless something urgent for discussion has come up, this is best incorporated twice weekly into the morning circle although sometimes preparing for other events like assemblies took over from this time (to the detriment of the program). As confirmed by both Glasser in *Schools without Failure* (1969:165) and Bodine et al. in *Creating the Peaceable School* (1994:11-12), the circle format is by far the most effective way of conducting these meetings. With any other format there are always some children who cannot see or hear which makes it impossible to establish full communication and thus an effective meeting is impossible. Also when I sit among the children as part of the circle, I establish myself as one of the circle albeit with different rights and responsibilities within the classroom structures. In fact this position of mine was discussed during one of the early classroom discussions when we debated first the need for rules for the class meeting and then rights, responsibilities and consequences of infringement within the classroom in general. The topics for the meetings can be suggested by the children or by me and have included areas such as feelings, the wise part within and how we identify it, friendship, bullying, fairness and many more. The class meeting is also used for disciplinary purposes. If for example Linda reports that Anna kicked her, she is asked to bring her problem to the next meeting and state it clearly in the circle. To further enhance their listening skills, another child is then asked to reflect what Linda has just said and ask Linda if she felt that she was heard. The process is then repeated for Anna and from there the children themselves usually come to some kind of resolution. For some of these problem discussions, the children are separated into gender groups. When Wendy first was being teased because David was ‘in love’ with her, she felt unable to cope with a whole class discussion so the problem was looked at within the circle of girls first and then, with her permission raised with the boys. One important aspect of the class discussion is their confidentiality. Whatever is said in the circle belongs in the circle and the children’s permission is always asked before a guest such as a student teacher joins in.
5.2.4. Meditation, listening and emotional release skills

At the beginning of Term 4, 1996, the children were taught very basic *Vipassana* breathing techniques. *Vipassana* is a process of self observation which concentrates the mind by learning to fix attention on the natural reality of the ever-changing flow of breath as it enters and leaves the nostrils. The leaflet, *Vipassana, a Meditation for Everyday Life* points out that

if we start to examine ourselves, we soon find that the mind often behaves in unhealthy ways. Something goes wrong for us, some unpleasant situation arises, and we find that the mind is liable to become full of anger, hatred or another reaction. ... Further, the tension within us starts infecting the surrounding atmosphere, placing at risk the happiness of others.

Observers carefully studying the problem within themselves noted that whenever a reaction occurred, the breath lost its normal rhythm and that there was a subtle sensation in the body connected to the mental reaction. They further found that by observing the breath and sensation objectively they could reduce the mental reaction and slowly develop a sense of inner balance.

This particular meditative technique was chosen on the recommendation of several Year 10 students who had found it helped them considerably in their daily lives. It was also simple, compatible with the direction of the *Peaceful Warriors* program and could be incorporated into the morning circle with ease. Originally it was to have been taught by a tutor from the Vipassana School in Blackheath. However, when all my organisational efforts in this direction failed after the initial contact and inservice they ran for the staff I decided to do it myself. At a very basic level it involves watching the breath as it enters and leaves the body, gently slowing the process so that the children become focussed on nothing else except their breath. With this I also slowly introduced the idea of a no fidget time. For two minutes all itches, aches and external stimuli were to be completely ignored with the concentration utterly held by the ingoing
and outgoing breath. This exercise takes a great deal of energy from all of us. However some of the children are now capable of perfect stillness as they stand quietly absorbed in their breathing. As the children became accustomed to this practice other elements were added. One of the activities in *He hit me back first* (Fugitt, 1983) is about looking for and tuning into the ‘Wise Part’ inside. Earlier in the year several formal lessons on this topic (see Appendix F) had been given so on some occasions when the children were quite still, it was suggested that they tune into their Wise Part, listening carefully to it with their breathing. On other occasions following the introduction of emotional release work, a suggestion was made that they use the outgoing breath to release any anger or sadness they may be feeling. In this aspect of the work there is no singling out of any child but a general direction for the children to adopt if they feel it to be appropriate. This practice has now been incorporated into the daily rhythm. The first fifteen minutes approximately of every day is as follows:

- singing into the circle - the words of the song focus on a positive relationship between the child and the world
- a verse for the term emphasising the beauty of the world in some way
- Salute to the Sun - yoga exercise
- 5 minutes breathing meditation
- the morning verse:

  I offer you peace  
  I offer you strength  
  I offer you love  
  I hear your need  
  I see your beauty  
  I feel your feelings  
  My wisdom comes from a higher source  
  I salute that source in you  
  Let us work together.  
  - Gandhi

These verses and this pattern are carefully chosen to highlight a positive relationship with the self and with others and to create an harmonious balance and stable start to each day. Children who come late are expected to wait until the end of the morning verse before they join us.
The ability to truly listen to others is critical in conflict resolution procedures. "Listening is a dangerous, courageous business ... which is why we are so good at avoiding it ..." (Hugh Mackay, Weekend Review, October 1-2, 1994). Hearing the ideas of another person always carries the risk of having to change our mind rather than the easier option of defending our own position. Listening skills need to be taught formally and practised daily. We studied the Chinese character for the verb 'to listen' which involves four elements - the ear, the eyes, the heart, and undivided attention to the person speaking. Keeping all this in mind several practices which work with the concept of the 'dyad' or 'listening pair' were incorporated into the program. This format was used to help develop empathetic listening skills by having the children work in pairs listening and observing one another's body language, tone of voice and ability to focus on the other's story. It is also a critical element of the reflecting process in class discussions and in mediation.

The emotional release work began with a class discussion on words to describe emotions or feeling words (Bodine et al, 1994:54/55; Fugitt, 1983:40/41) Out of this we decided to set up an 'angry' corner and a 'sad' corner. So the left hand back corner of the room is full of beanbags and cushions just waiting to be punched. I held the cushion for everybody to have a go at punching me - I'm sure many children build up suppressed anger around their teachers - and we had more practice turns while setting it up. Another thing the children said they liked to do when they were angry was to rip things up and throw things around. So there is also a box of newspaper in the 'angry' corner. We had one marvellous lesson here where we imagined something we were really angry about and ripped the newspaper to shreds all over the classroom floor and then played in the rubbish like in autumn leaves. It took quite a bit of clearing up but that was fun too. In the front corner of the room by the door, we built our sad corner. Here there is an enormous round drum into which the children can crawl and curl up in a foetal position. There are pieces of fabric to use as a pillow and also to drape over the doorway if desired. Everyone had a practice here also.
Another side to this work was the emotional release drawings. The initial source for this came from the book *Emotional First aid for Children* by Pearson and Nolan. An example would be *A Feeling Zoo* where we began with an imaginary visit to the zoo. While we were there, the children were asked to imagine what animal they most felt like when they were sad, to become that animal, to make noises like that animal, to feel the sadness of the animal. After fifteen minutes or so of being as immersed in the animal as possible, the children were then asked to draw their animal. To create as little disturbance as possible, their drawing book and crayons were set up beside where they were lying on the floor and there were clear instructions given to have no contact, verbal or otherwise, with another child. The whole process was to be done in complete silence as this came from the innermost part of themselves and while it could be shared with others at the end, the drawing itself was theirs and nobody else’s.

5.2.5. Stories

Specific stories were used to highlight certain aspects of dealing with areas of possible conflict. Stories have great value in enabling children to experience vicariously situations which otherwise may be too threatening to own. They can illustrate aspects of the inner self in such a way as to allow the more hidden aspects of the unconscious to reveal themselves gently. *Secret of the Peaceful Warrior* by Dan Millman, a story of courage and love, was used to highlight ways of dealing with bullying without bullying back. It was told as a story for the children to ponder on and as a basis for class discussion. *Dr Drabble’s Spectacular Shrinker-Enlarger* by Sigmund Brouwer and Paul Davidson is a story about name-calling and what results when two children laugh and point at other’s funny faces. From this story the children developed scripts and then used these scripts to put on a puppet show. Each story told to the children has a different purpose and a different medium is used for them to retell the story. (see Appendix G)
5.2.6. The hidden curriculum aspect

This part of the program is the most difficult to formalise as it involves primarily my behaviour in interaction with the children, my body language, my tone of voice, how I speak to each child, whether my actions and my teaching match. I believe this to have quite an impact on the program but one that is very difficult to assess. From observation it is clear that modelling desirable social behaviour is definitely not necessarily going to produce socially desirable behaviour. There always seem to be a few children in the class who simply do not catch on by this method and are out of harmony with the rest of the group. However if I teach a method of conflict resolution and appear unwilling to use these methods myself when needed then the children are very quick to catch on to the lack of truth in the method. In a wider context this is also going to relate back to their interactions with other adults both at school and at home. A consistent approach from the myriad of influences on each child is impossible and not really desirable as it is an open, flexible response to whatever comes their way that is being sought.

5.3. The Program Viewed Chronologically

Following this overview of the key components of the program, it is important to look at the program as it unfolded chronologically. As the program progressed, manifest behaviour was treated as both a cue and a clue to move forwards to new lessons and new behaviours and from these direct experiences, inferences could be made that were not overtly observable but gave meaning to the cultural web of the classroom. Here the data collection and the program together form those ‘moments’ that are reciprocally related to one another that Grundy refers to as “strategic moments of action and reflection ... (that are) retrospectively and prospectively related to each other”
(1987:145). The data collection needed to be as faithful as possible to the everyday reality of behaviour, representing it accurately in order to be both true to experience and comprehensible to others so that new action could be taken in the light of the understandings that were slowly developing in the participants. As a longitudinal case study over two years, there was a mass (or ‘mess’) of data, ‘strong in reality … begun in a world of action and contributing to it’ (Cohen and Manion, 1989:150) but very difficult to organise in contrast to statistical studies. Much information collected was impressionistic and as such carried the danger of subjectivity. Yet within this idiosyncratic and complex ‘mess’ lay the possibility of an intimate and deep connection with the topic of the thesis and the people involved in it that could transcend its uniqueness and provide insights beyond the specifics of this situation.

As a longitudinal case study, this program was implemented over a period of two years, 1996-1997. Focussing on the specific problem of children’s conflict in my daily teaching/learning situations in conjunction with a review of the relevant research literature, it became apparent that it was necessary to develop some skills before others, that there was a sequential pattern to the overall program. Therefore each term was given a particular focus, to enable a build up of skills and language concepts over time, the first term being primarily preparatory in that it mainly involved the discussions with parents, students and school as referred to earlier. However, while no formal implementation of the program took place, a considerable amount of informal observation was undertaken as I further diagnosed the ‘problem situation’ within its defined context of Class Four.

5.3.1. Term 2, 1996

The focus questions for term 2 revolved around the development of class rules.

- What do we need in place to make the class meeting work?
• What are responsibilities?
• What are rights?
• What is the relationship between responsibilities and rights?
• Do we need classroom rules?

A priority for the program was to begin the class meetings. For these to be effective a format which enabled each child to feel free to express him/herself and be heard was essential. As a starting point I used material from both Bodine et al’s *Creating the Peaceable School* (1995) and Glasser’s *Schools without Failure* (1969). Using discussion and demonstration, we explored the advantages of the circle format, a style of operating which fitted well with the familiar morning circle. We discussed how each member was equally responsible for communication and that communication had two faces - listening and speaking. It was not enough only to listen or only to speak. We looked at the impact of interruptions and sarcasm and criticism and decided that it was probably best at this stage to raise hands when you had something to say. We decided private conversations were not part of the class meeting, that all comments need to be directed to the whole group. Finally we practised the art of reflection. Each time someone in the group finished making a point, when appropriate, another group member summarised and clarified it before moving on to a new idea. This helped the children to begin to feel that they were heard.

With the class meeting established, we moved on to the understanding of the concept of responsibility as a behaviour. In small groups with sheets of newsprint, the children discussed and listed both chores and expectations of behaviour at home. We then resumed the class meeting format and extrapolated definitions of responsibility -

• something you are always expected to do
• a way you are always expected to act
• a way you are expected to treat someone else

Following this we began a class discussion on the concept of rights. Here we brainstormed and listed, first in groups and then in the whole class their privileges and
freedoms as students, gradually drawing the distinction between a privilege and a freedom and moving towards the idea that a right is a privilege that we always have. The next step was to understand the relationship between responsibilities and rights, that while a right is a guaranteed condition, enjoying it requires everyone to accept certain responsibilities. At this point, each child made a list of their personal rights and responsibilities leading up to the development of our class rules. Out of these discussions the children appeared to understand clearly the need for rules and the way our class rules would arise out of each person’s (including mine as the teacher) rights and responsibilities. Thus the real purpose of rules was to let everyone know their responsibilities and to safeguard the rights of all, to make clear the relationship between rights and responsibilities, that one does not exist without the other. We then spent a considerable amount of time discussing the most important rules for our class, what each one meant in terms of rights and responsibilities and the consequences of infringement (including being able to put me on detention). A final list was drawn up for the classroom and we had a ceremonial signing of the list to indicate that each of us was part of the process of the making of the rules, that we understood them and would abide by them to the best of our ability. (see Appendix H)

5.3.2. Term 3, 1996

The focus questions for Term 3, 1996 emphasised the building of self-esteem, choosing behaviours and the nature of conflict.

- Can children choose how they respond to a situation?
- Can children be taught to self-correct?
- How can I improve listening skills?
- What helps children feel good about themselves?
- What do the children understand about conflict?
- Can I introduce new concepts which become part of our daily interaction?
During this term, we did many lessons specifically geared at making the children aware of their strengths leading them to a stronger self-acceptance and awareness of the positive qualities of their personality and giving them an opportunity to feel good publicly about themselves. We looked at ‘Things I like about me’ and made what turned out to be a very long list of likeable qualities belonging to each child. Encouragement was needed at the beginning of this lesson; the children were reticent about acknowledging their strengths in front of others to begin with but as they began to feel safe, they loved it. There were lots of smiles and laughter. This was followed up with a lesson entitled ‘I can …’ Again, after the initial embarrassment admitting a liking for a physical attribute (‘I like my curly hair’ for example) the children really enjoyed doing this. It made them feel good about themselves. Another lesson in this section - ‘I can feel…’ opened up the realm of feelings and just how many ways it was possible to feel about different things. All feelings were legitimate. It was OK to hate, to love, to feel sad, to feel happy, to be angry, to be calm. In this context, we also worked on IALAC (I am Loveable and Capable) and Killer Statements (Fugitt, 1983:29). These are statements from others that help us feel good about ourselves or, alternatively, statements which hurt us and make us feel less than good about ourselves. This work on acknowledging feelings was a prelude to more detailed work in term 4 on emotional release.

From the book He hit me back first (Fugitt, 1983) I incorporated a number of lessons in this term dealing particularly with self-discipline and leading the children in the direction of realising that they can change the way they respond to a situation. One such lesson revolved around the magic question: “How does that help you?” (see Appendix F)

This is designed to help children recognise and take responsibility for their behaviour. It evokes the innate need for self fulfilment that lies deep within each child, breaking through the usual defences (p 19)
Whenever a child is behaving inappropriately simply asking “How does that help you?” and indicating that no verbal response is needed, just a moment of quiet, internal reflection, can have a strong impact on behaviour. Another was LIBK (p 23) or ‘Let it be Known’, a way of helping the children to become aware that they have choices, that by letting others know in an appropriate way what their needs were there was a strong possibility things would work out for everybody involved without a fight. By the end of this term, we had a number of questions that could be used for self-correcting, derived from the book *He hit me back first*.

Concurrently with the work on self-esteem building we had class discussions on conflict. That conflict is a natural part of life was emphasised; we looked at the basic needs of people (as defined by Glasser in *Creating the Peaceable School*, 1994)) and the causes and reasons for conflict. The children had great difficulty in understanding the origins of conflict in terms of unmet needs and different values (with a few exceptions). Fighting over limited resources was probably the most graspable of causes of conflict, although they understood being left out and the impact of teasing. I found that it was important to keep discussions concrete and personal. With any abstraction and conceptualisation the children became lost. Likewise they could see ‘hard’ responses (i.e. fighting) to conflict without a problem but there was a tendency not to perceive conflict at all if the response to it was ‘soft’ (i.e withdrawal). A principled response is still a concept that seems not real to them, an observation which reflects Kohlberg’s view (1987:23):

moral thinking requires more than the logic of objects; it involves the more subtle and complex logic of subjects, or other people’s viewpoints and claims. For this reason, moral and social development and education depend upon cognitive development and education but also require much more in the way of distinctly social, not cognitive experience.
During this term I also began using stories to illustrate different behavioural responses. *Dr Drabble's Spectacular Shrinker-Enlarger* is a story about prejudice and over a couple of weeks the children rewrote this in the form of a script and then acted it in groups using their puppets. Another story, *Secret of the Peaceful Warrior*, was told at the end of the term, simply to plant a seed in their minds that there are ways other than retaliation to deal with bullies and bullying.

5.3.3. Term 4, 1996

Term 4 focussed on emotional release work and the development of specific mediation skills. While there was no formal work on the issues of terms 2 and 3, there was a great deal of casual and informal reference to the ideas already covered. For example, attention would be drawn to class rules when necessary, self-correcting questions would be asked and self-esteem exercises done when needed.

Focus questions for this term were:

- Can I provide spaces to enable the children to release emotions appropriately?
- How can we look at emotional release work in the classroom?
- How can meditation be incorporated into our daily activities?
- How will children respond to these activities in a group context?

As referred to earlier the first thing we did this term was to set up an 'angry' corner and a 'sad' corner in the classroom. We found that beating up a cushion by yourself helped a little but to have a friend, or even better the person you were angry with, hold the cushion for you was the best way to release your frustration. When using the sad corner it was possible if the child wished to have a friend sitting quietly at the entrance. I have found that children often come out of this encircling space feeling a lot better than when they went in.
During this term we also did a number of emotional release drawings. Using ideas from *Emotional First Aid for Children* (Pearson and Nolan, 1991) I began by asking each child to imagine what animal he/she became when they were angry, sad, happy, frightened. For these lessons the children were lying on the floor with their eyes closed as still as possible and living into an internal world. Beside each of them were their drawing book and their crayons. After about 20 minutes of becoming their animal in its particular state which included sounding and moving like it, the children were asked to begin their drawing. It was emphasised that they should focus on their own picture and not look at what others were doing. It was their inner picture that was important.

Finally, during the morning circle we began to add the very simple Vipassana breathing exercise of watching the breath as it goes in and out the nostrils. From the beginning of the year we had already been working at centring ourselves in various ways from rocking forwards, backwards, sideways and then feeling the centre to imagining a ray of light from their own star that come down through the centre of their head, through their bodies and down between their feet to the centre of the earth. So standing still and straight in preparation for the morning verse was already familiar. To this we added watching the breath for two minutes of complete silence. Slowly over the term we reduced the level of fidgets, itches and distraction with a constant quiet emphasis that nothing outside them was of importance during these 2 minutes, that when they were truly focussed they wouldn’t even notice that itch or what the class next door were singing. At various times we worked with the release of frustrations, irritations and sadness on the outbreak. We listened to the silence and space within. Sometimes here we could contact the wise part inside for help. (This is how Eva Fugitt in *He Hit Me Back First, 1983* refers to that part within each human being that psychologists such as Jung call the ‘Higher Self’). The children appear to instinctively recognise that they have a wise part just as they also acknowledged that sometimes I have to be that wise part for them. Quite a responsibility!
5.3.4. Terms 1 and 2, 1997

The main goal of these two terms was to introduce the concept of mediation and to give the children a format from which to operate. Because term 1 was short and I knew that in term 2 we would be involved in a major performance in which all the children from classes 4, 5 and 6 would be taking part and by the last few weeks of the second term would completely dominate all lessons, I focussed on just the one concept. However there was constant continuation and reminders in various informal ways of the work already covered. Focus questions were

- How do I incorporate new children into the work already covered?
- Have I done enough background work to make mediation a relevant process?
- Is mediation a relevant process at this age?
- Am I achieving anything that I hoped for at the beginning of the program?
- Are the children enjoying the program overall?

The immediate problem at the beginning of this term was the integration of four new boys into a class that had lost three very cooperative children who had contributed a great deal to the program. Of these new children, three had learning or behaviour problems of various degrees including Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Asberger’s Syndrome. We began by revising the class rules and the rules for holding a class discussion. When we were all clear as to their import, the new children were asked to sign them and the others to affirm their relevance for the organisation of our daily activities. In fact much of this first short term was spent in revision of key concepts. The morning circle contained the daily watching of the breath as introduced the year before. We developed a very clear morning rhythm. I sang the children into the circle with our first song One World which was followed by a special verse We are the stars that sing. This was connected to the Main Lesson The Celestial Sky, an introduction to astronomy. After this came two rounds of Salute to the Sun, a yoga stretching exercise, a centring exercise of aligning the body so the children are standing straight and still and then we went into the breathing, letting emotions out on the breath,
focussing on the Wise Part within or simply tuning into the silence. Occasionally there were magical moments when the whole class was utterly silent and still together. From this space I brought them quietly back to the special morning verse of Mahatma Gandhi that we all say for one another -

    I offer you peace
    I offer you friendship
    I offer you love
    I hear your need
    I see your beauty
    I feel your feelings
    My wisdom comes from a higher source
    I salute that source in you
    Let us work together.

This introduction to the day is an integral part of the program and as earlier indicated children who come late are requested to wait outside until there is an appropriate time to quietly join the circle.

As a prelude to the formal mediation skills we revised the principles of conflict resolution, particularly the skill of active listening for which we did various role plays. We had a class discussion centred on the observation of David that ‘I don’t know if you can do anything about this but kids never listen to other kids’. We had another story, this time about lying, Dr Drabble’s Remarkable Underwater Breathing Pills, which the children summarised and illustrated in their books.

Formal instruction in the mediation process was the focus of term 2. Here the process followed was that laid out in Creating the Peaceable School: Section 4. To understand what mediation was we did a demonstration role play with Andrew and David who had been fighting about kicking the ball into the bush during a soccer game and Peter as the mediator with me directing the process. We then defined mediation as a communication process in which a third party helps people work together to resolve conflicts peaceably. We brainstormed what qualities the mediator would need to have to do the job properly.
• They would have to be impartial, respectful and trustworthy.
• They must be able to listen with empathy and want to help people to work together.

Over the next weeks, discussion and role plays were the tools through which the steps of the mediation process unfolded.

• All people in the conflict must want to solve the problem and agree to mediate.
• The mediator needs to gather points of view from both parties and focus each of the parties on their interests.
• The mediator must constantly listen, summarise, clarify.
• The process of brainstorming options then follows, working out from these options something that is fair to both and that both parties feel capable of carrying out.

The term finished with an outline of the process covered and understood by the children. The next step was to make the process an automatic part of their daily routine every time there is a conflict.

5.3.5. Terms 3 and 4, 1997

During these terms, we consolidated the learning that had taken place so far. Along with a lot of simulation work done either with the children or using their puppets, every real conflict that arose between the children we attempted to solve using this process of mediation. As the play was over, it became possible to spend more time on these issues so more guided imagery and emotional release drawings were done, at some of the girls’ request, as well as looking more deeply into self-esteem, self-awareness and self-correction issues. For example we looked at the different characters we are capable of displaying in different situations: Eva Fugitt calls these, sub-personalities. The last term, term 4, was one of reflection, summarising and observing results in order to bring this piece of action research to a close. A personal development program like this one never really comes to an end but it was essential to make a time for assessing what worked well and what could be changed to make the program more interesting and
more effective and what would be done again. So during these two terms, I concentrated on the focus questions of the thesis.

- Are there effective ways of teaching students to deal with conflict?
- What is the role of the teacher in the process of teaching students to deal with conflict?
- How is the impact of such a program assessed?

5.4. Data Collection Procedures

The primary data collection procedure was that of the participant observer. It began with a written snapshot of the class and the individuals that make it up, their strengths and weaknesses, achievement in the Key Learning Areas and brief comments on each personality (See Appendix C). The constant observation of interaction between myself and the children and the monitoring of the program in the light of that observation was essential. What is involved here is constant reflection on the teaching and learning taking place over seven terms in a program that is part of the Key Learning Area of Personal Development, Health and Physical Education but ranges widely over the teaching and learning processes of the whole day. The approach to the program is holistic with one of its key aims being its application to all other areas of the curriculum. Several collections of notes were taken from different sources to build as accurate a picture as possible. It was the responses from the children in particular, but also the input from the parents and the student teacher that helped to develop the reflexive relationship that I believed was critical to this program. The children and I worked with one another; it was not a program that I taught them.
5.4.1. Field Diary

Personal notes were kept of all observed and reported conflictual interactions between the children both during class and in the playground. This also included my comments as to individual’s ability to internalise the teaching and act out of it. There is a wealth of repetitive incident here. Part of this diary also included notes of my own reactions to the processes of the program and responses to questions put to myself as each term I assessed what was happening within the class. For example, apart from referring frequently to the focus questions of the study, I looked at:

• Am I drawing too much attention to some behaviours that might just go away? Are problems going underground because the children don’t want to discuss them?
• Are the children enjoying the program? Are they finding it boring? Do they understand what is being asked of them? Do they need to?
• What do I need to change in my behaviour? Can I make it work better? Am I modelling the behaviours I want appropriately?
• What is the impact when I play the authoritative teacher? When I lose my temper? Are there perceived contradictions between what I say and what I do?
• Am I truly hearing the needs of the children? How do I know?
• Can I, should I individualise the program more, depending on the personality of the child?
• Am I listening enough? Am I talking too much?
• Am I achieving what I set out to achieve? How will I know?
• In what time frame can I expect results? What form will results, if any take? Will there be measurable results?

5.4.2. Class Discussions

A number of class discussions particularly on the issues of teasing and responses to teasing were taped and transcribed. (see Appendix I for sample transcriptions). These were of great value in helping me to reflect on my own input.
5.4.3. Children’s Formal and Informal Responses

During term 3, 1997, towards the end of the program, the children were asked to write a couple of pages concerning their feelings about themselves and how they deal with conflict as a response to a sequence of questions that I wrote (See Appendix J). Informal responses were usually noted in the field diary and range from requests to do more emotional release work to body language eloquently suggesting utter boredom.

5.4.4. Parent and other Teacher Responses

An open-ended questionnaire was sent to parents and some teachers early in term 3, 1997. Eleven of the sixteen given out responded enthusiastically. One parent was interviewed in depth and the interviewed transcribed (see Appendix K).

5.4.5. Student Teacher Assessment

I was very lucky to have an able student teacher who became interested in the program work with me during term 3, 1996. She offered to write up her observations of what was happening in the classroom. The children thought she was wonderful and told her probably far more than they would tell me. We kept in touch and she returned to the school in term 3, 1997 to observe progress and write another profile as to the improvement or otherwise of classroom behaviour and interactions (see Appendix L for both profiles). We discussed whether or not she should interview the children but decided that probably their responses to her would be similar to those for me. It was probable that the children are most likely to give the response that they
think we want to hear so, apart from the two short written responses, we settled for indirect feed-back from the children.
CHAPTER 6

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM

6.1. Introduction

It was in implementing the program and collecting the data that the processes and value of the methodology were highlighted. There was constant modification of the initial program. What emerged over time was the clarification of a way of working which moved from something I prepared and gave to the children to something that was clearly a reciprocal process in which the children and I together confronted issues of relationship and conflict. We, the children and I, became active participants in the learning process, working with one another to create the next step we felt necessary to build the positive social environment we desired in the classroom. This process of change is documented in the field diary, from which it is possible to extract ‘moments’ of action and reflection that are reciprocally related to one another and from which it is possible to discern the organisational moments of planning and observation that led, in the way the program was implemented, to a kind of spiralling process as events in both the classroom and surrounding environment and in our personal lives impacted on the way we related to one another. In many ways the initial idea or program was like a stream that ebbed and flowed, sometimes gaining momentum, sometimes getting caught in an eddy but always with a sense that something larger than itself was there if we kept working with the process.
With this sometimes nebulous, sometimes intently focussed process oscillating through time, it seems appropriate to discuss the implementation of the program in two complementary stages. The first involves drawing on anecdotal material to highlight key issues that both constituted and constrained the work I was doing. The second stage became more formal and reflective as a critical consciousness and understanding of the teaching experience was sought for and developed in relation with current literature. In other words, it was important for me to develop personal understandings from the melange of experience and knowledge of the literature which could guide the future orientation of practice.

6.2. Characteristic anecdotes and personal reflections

6.2.1. From the field diary

A substantial part of daily life for the children, particularly early in class 4 seems to consist of short, repetitive instances of conflict.

23.4.96: Chris: “Andrew teased me because I said I would sit with David.”
Chris: “Simon, you hurt me. I don’t want to sit next to you”
Anna to Simon: “You like Carol” (The baiting tone of voice was probably the critical catalyst in this one as well as the boy/girl dynamic). Simon kicks Anna. Anna cries.

1.5.96: Simon stabs Linda with a pencil. Linda shoves back. Both upset.

2.5.96: Oliver: “Andrew kicked me”
Andrew: “Well, you kicked me in my arm”
Chloe: “Andrew called me an arsehole”

Such exchanges would take place several times a day, sometimes leading to considerable distress although the ability to ‘cope’ with such exchanges was clearly dependent on personality factors and defence mechanisms. It is highly likely that while
a great deal of these interchanges were reported to me, many would not be brought to my attention (according to literature on bullying, much of this kind of activity is covert and powerful injunctions are given to keep it that way). As I reflected on these numerous incidents, one observation clearly emerged and that was that all the children always perceive themselves as the victim. They always felt that what was done to them perfectly justified their reaction of hitting or teasing and that it was the other’s fault. The other person started it. Blame appeared to be very necessary to them except when applied to themselves. Even though I tried very hard not to apply blame, the children often felt blamed if I didn’t take their side. To move children away from the concept of blame towards self-responsibility was clearly going to be an important part of the program. I also mused on what appeared like constant projection of lack of self-esteem into the stream of teasing and name calling that went on. We spent, in the early part of the program, a considerable amount of time discussing “Please stop” as an approach to deal with teasing as well as developing a sense of empathy. After all, if you don’t like being teased, can you begin to feel how someone else feels when you tease them? However there were a number of incidents like the following one:

28.7.96: **Chloe (distressed):** “Oliver keeps calling me ‘Noddy’s girlfriend’ and he won’t stop”. Everyone who was playing heard Chloe ask Oliver to stop but this one had to come to me to be dealt with. However as part of the same discussion:

**David:** “When I ask Chris to stop teasing me, he does.”    And

**Chloe:** “Megan stopped calling me ‘Noddy’s girlfriend’ when she was asked.”

I had a short-lived sense of achievement at this point but it didn’t take long until I got:

6.8.96: **David:** “They’re all teasing me, saying I should be the skunk because I smell.”

With reference to teasing and associated behaviours, it was very interesting to observe during the lessons we had on ‘Killer’ and ‘ILIAC’ statements (Fugitt, 1983) how difficult the children found it to give one another positive comments and how easy it
was for some of them, in particular, Simon, Andrew and David to cynically ‘kill’ positive remarks. It seems that put-downs are far more acceptable to peers than being thought lovable and capable. Each child deep within wanted to be accepted as a lovable and capable person but there was no way any of them was going to offer that description to another child. On reflection, I wonder why we all, adults too, find this so difficult. Again it strikes me how easy it is to criticise and how difficult it is to praise intelligently and how important it is for me to find ways to deal with the children’s issues that always encourage and yet are discriminatory regarding inappropriate responses.

I frequently wondered if by giving the children permission to tell me these things, I was increasing the amount of whinging and moaning that took place. On the other hand, there were times when a child would complain to me of teasing or being hit or some form of perceived injustice and I would be so tired of what appears as a daily constant that unless I judged it to be truly serious I would dismiss the problem. My reflections here oscillated between knowing that for a child these issues are important and that the program being implemented required me to teach the children how they could help themselves and what as an adult I at times felt were such petty concerns: I simply could not bear another whinge and surely they had more important things to think about. I am sure that this oscillation between patience and irritation impacted on the program, adversely for some while others were possibly unconsciously aware of my struggle to heighten awareness around all social interaction in the classroom and thus learn from this experience.

Other kinds of incident revolved around a child’s inability to feel part of the group and how he/she articulates the problem. I had a parent, Kath, come to me and ask for a meeting with me and her husband Paul and daughter Megan, to discuss the tantrums her daughter was throwing around homework. She and her husband had split up and there were overt conflicts surfacing between the parents although Megan was working
well at school. Kath had been spending a lot of time with another parent of the class, Linda’s mum, Sally, whom she considered to be a co-parent and asked if Sally could come along as her ‘support’ person and Linda as Megan’s support person. By this stage I really wondered what was going on; it seemed like it was becoming a bit of a circus. Neither did I feel it my role to arbitrate between warring parents. I thought perhaps Paul and I needed support people also and made this suggestion. The fascinating thing that happened when we all met was that the issue of Megan’s homework was very quickly resolved and the major issue that emerged was Linda’s feeling that the other girls didn’t like her and her only friend was Megan. So we brainstormed some solutions and put into the program some self-esteem building games that had an immediate response although “not feeling part of the group” is a complex, major issue that arises for most of the children at one time or another and will never be solved overnight.

Another time I observed Megan very ostentatiously being by herself. As I was on bus duty that afternoon and she is the only one to catch that particular bus I carefully and gently asked her what was happening.

Megan: “Oh, I don’t really like anybody in the class. I don’t really want anything to do with any of them.”

Teacher: “How about Linda?”
Megan: “Oh, I used to like her but I don’t any more.”

I just listened and accepted what she said. It took about a day for this need to reject everyone to wither away and then she was back to her usual self but there is such pain in these processes of learning to be an individual in a group. It was also part of David’s rationale for fighting and being ‘over-the-top’ as he tried to make his way into the group. (See Appendix I, Friday, April 19, 1996)

As the program developed, I became more aware of my own responses to the children’s behaviour. I was teaching them to be aware of and find alternative responses
to conflict and yet there were times when I found that class behaviour or an individual child's behaviour was so unacceptable to me that I intervened as the authority and insisted that things happened the way I said without discussion. On reflection it seemed to me that this occurred in a number of situations. Sometimes it followed a class discussion about a future event. For example before we went on camp we sat down and talked about what kind of behaviour would be expected in this new environment very different to that of the classroom and we agreed on certain forms and the consequences that I could apply when these forms were breached. We also agreed that there were certain situations in which I should be able to expect an instant response to an instruction without question because of the nature of the situation such as potential danger when bush walking or being near the camp fire and so on. The children are understanding and happy to accept my responsibility for them in these situations.

Another kind of intervention frequently occurred during 'cooperative' lessons. These lessons, separate from the formal program itself, were often specifically designed not only to have an end product in keeping with some aspect of the main lesson, but also to highlight issues that arise when people work together to produce a joint project. There were some major rows in these lessons and I began to notice that instead of working through a conflict resolution type process and listening carefully to each party, I intervened as the 'authority'. I didn’t notice this at first and even after having noticed it many things seemed to get in the way of the process. Internal remarks such as:

- "I haven’t got time to go through all that now. We’ve got to get this piece of work finished. I'll sort the problem out quickly."
- "It's so boring for all the other children."
- "It’s obviously David’s fault. He never learns how to behave. I’ll just put him on detention. I’m so sick of him."

During the science main lesson *Earth, Air, Fir, Water* the class was divided into four groups each with the same number of props. Each started from a different corner of the room and had to build a marble run to a central bowl. It was a lesson they loved and after an initial discussion on group work where I pointed out that groups that spent their
time arguing would take longer to make their run ("That's right" said Robert). They went to work with great enthusiasm. All went well until the marble runs were completed when the whole class disintegrated into one giant petty squabble.

- "It's my turn."
- "No it's not. You've had a turn."
- "But it didn't work properly."
- "Too bad. You'll have to wait."
- "You've broken the run."
- "No I didn't. You did."

All the above multiplied by fourteen. I watched for a few minutes and it did not enter any head that there might be a better way of dealing with the problem. Each one of them wanted to have all the turns and thought everyone else had more than them. Fourteen victims. I had to intervene as the 'authority'. In an outraged tone, I ordered them to organise themselves so that it was fair without all the squealing and squabbling and interfering with other groups, to cooperate so that everybody had a go and not to grab everything for themselves first. Most of them managed to do this except Anna who went off and sulked. On reflection I wonder about doing it differently, if making a class discussion space and leading them to a solution through becoming conscious of their own experience would have been more productive. It would certainly have taken more time, taken them away from the marble runs with which they were totally preoccupied and finally there was no space, the room being dominated by the marble runs. Maybe the last is a 'cop-out' excuse!

Another similar situation occurred when as a class we made models of a pyramid and a Sphinx to complement our Main Lesson on Ancient Egypt, working in two groups of seven. Both these models had different techniques of construction so one group had to wait while the Design and Technology teacher went through the processes. Often one group had difficulty with what they were doing but were unable to get immediate help because the teacher was involved with the other group. At this point some members of the group invariably started doing 'imaginative' things to the model which upset the
ones that like to do things ‘right’. Or there would be a quarrel as to who was working on which bit. Or there wouldn’t be enough to do so some of the group would begin to look for ways to interact (‘annoy’) with the other group. To add to the general melee, Steven would be playing submarines in the materials of the project and shooting everyone at the top of his voice through his periscope. I have to say that this day put me off cooperative work for a while as I kept control simply by virtue of my adult authority. Conflict appeared in waves through the day with the children unable to recognise let alone use their skills to reduce it. It was obvious to me that these days had a destructive impact on the program and it was important for me to learn from this how best to involve the children in cooperative aspects of teaching that left room for a constructive handling of the differences that arose from these interactive lessons not a disintegration into chaos.

These situations, however, do lead me to consider the line between responsibility and authority as a classroom teacher and the development of skills required for group work and cooperative conflict resolution.

Finally I observed myself pulling a child into line loudly, clearly and angrily, of losing my temper on occasion. During the week beginning 12.11.96 David twice drove me to distraction. The first time he did not respond to a number of requests to get on with his work quietly and the second time he flatly contradicted a direction I had given regarding the clearing up of some tissue paper after the making of model hot air balloons. It seems to me that I do not yet handle his answering back and non-compliance appropriately and I have to ask myself what the impact of this is on the program. Even when there is no loss of temper, there are times when the tone of voice or the body language or even the content of the words carry a negative emotional movement and I wonder about the impact of this in terms of teaching children to become capable of dealing with conflict as a transformative rather than a destructive force.
In summary, then, from a preliminary look at the field diary, the following questions arose which guided my reflections and increasingly refined and directed the implementation of the program.

- Did we move beyond ‘blame’ and ‘victims’?
- Was empathy developed?
- Why are ‘killer’ statements more popular than ‘kind’ ones?
- What emerges as key issues for the children?
- How do the children act and react to the program?
- When do most of the problems occur?
- What is the impact of my intervention?
- What behaviours lead to my loss of temper?
- How do the children deal with that?
- Is it appropriate to intervene sometimes?
- Is conflict seen as something positive and transformative, as an energy for change?
- Do the children see change as desirable?
- Do the children deal with anger differently now?
- Does gender play a part in reactions to the program?
- Has there been a change in individual and class behaviour over the two years?

6.2.2. The program and adjustments over time

The starting point for the program came from two books:

- *He hit me back first* Fugit (1983)
- *Creating the peaceable school* Bodine, Strumpf and Crawford (1994)

To these sources, a great deal of supplementary material was added to expand, modify and adapt the program. This additional work came from personal experiences in conflict resolution, mediation, meditation and emotional release and was incorporated as and when needed. So, while I began with a very clear outline of what I intended to do, many of the details of the program were subject to revision as the children responded or otherwise to particular aspects. Three factors had a significant impact on program modification.
a) The children's response

When I first began the program in term 2 of 1996, there was so much exciting material to give the children that I overdid it. It was obvious that one of the first things that had to be done was to develop the format of the class meeting and a number of class rules so that we had a structure within which to work (see Appendix H). I also felt that it was important to begin working in the area of self-discipline and self-evaluation because these were personal skills that the children would need to enable the class meetings to work successfully so I began working from both the source books together - that is about one forty minute session a week on each. So one lesson a week for example would be on establishing the ground rules of the class meeting, another would be a discussion of goals, benefits and burdens (Fugitt, 1983, p.13). It quickly became apparent that this was too much for the children, that too much ground was being covered too fast so I decided to focus on the understanding of responsibilities, rights and building up a set of class rules.

I also found that I had to incorporate activities that I had planned for a later time earlier. Part of the focus of term 3 was on being able to choose an appropriate response to a situation and about building self-esteem. During term 2, there were a number of incidents of which the following is an example:

Andrew, when David stands next to him, moves ostentatiously away.
**Teacher:** “Why do you do that, Andrew?”
**Andrew:** “He’s so annoying”
**Teacher:** “Other people annoy you too.”
**Andrew:** “He’s more annoying”

It is probably only fair to point out here that everyone, including myself, for at least the first two terms after David’s arrival at the beginning of term 2, found him excruciatingly irritating. He appeared to have no social skills at all; he was 12 months
younger than most of the class but ‘gifted and talented’ particularly in the areas of language and art and could use his tongue to great effect in teasing. He was often able to articulate very clearly what was happening in class discussion but appeared totally incapable of translating his words into action. His behaviour, the moment he went out the door for morning tea or lunch disintegrated into pointed verbal abuse and physical punch-ups. In David’s second week at the school, a parent told me that Simon was in tears at home because David’s teasing was so bad he couldn’t stand it any longer. At this point I put the children into pairs for the week, ensuring that they sat next to someone they didn’t usually choose to sit with. Their task was, by the end of the week, to tell me something new and something they like about this ‘strange’ person sitting next to them. This was an exercise I had intended to do in term 3 but seemed critical to do at this point.

David was a child who had me seriously questioning whether I could implement the program with him at all. He seemed to generate in me the automatic ‘old’ authoritarian response. When later in term 4 we were discussing and working with the concept of the wise person inside and incorporating that idea into the breathing meditation, there were a number of occasions where I would say

“For those children who cannot find their wise part inside, I have to be their wise part for them”

and I would wonder if this was an excuse for my inability to deal with the constant squabbling that surrounded David other than by ‘picking’ on him as he felt I was doing. This was told me by his mother who was always supportive of what I was trying to achieve with him at school. There has however, been quite a change in David. I first noticed it towards the end of 1996 when a number of the boys changed from being totally irritated by him to feeling that I was being too hard on him. I found this response really interesting and kept watching my attitude to him as he still grated on every nerve. By terms 3 and 4, 1997 I found him at least as well behaved as any of
the other boys - he is extremely talkative - and in some ways more empathetic in dealing with our new, very challenging child, Steven. There has certainly been a transformation process going on in David.

One clear picture could be seen in a gender difference in the response to conflict. This was very clearly expressed by my student teacher, Kylie (see Appendix L).

Whilst I was on this practice, I observed many lessons about arguments in the classroom and how each responded to conflict. It revealed much about each child and their behaviours. For example, Nicola would react to an argument by walking away, whereas David would lash out and physically fight back .... In one particular lesson, Ann asked the children:

“Do you respond to an argument by fighting?”

The children were asked to rate their opinions on a scale of always, never, sometimes etc. They were then asked to explain their responses. It gave Ann a clear indication that on the whole the boys reacted strongly to altercations whereas the girls were more likely to withdraw and walk away. While we were aiming to calm the boys and teach them to react constructively to problems, it was also clear that the girls needed training in standing up for themselves.

There were individual variations in these responses but nevertheless a variation based on gender was observable.

Another very strong pattern was that of the ‘victim’. No one ever admitted to starting the conflict. Each participant always considered the other responsible for the row and that they had only reacted out of extreme provocation and therefore it was the other’s fault. A frequent observation when a child came complaining to me was that they were unable to see their role in the conflict without help. An example from the student teacher's report shows Anna coming to me crying because Oliver had kicked her, forgetting completely to mention that she had called him names continuously, not stopping when he asked, until Oliver could not stand it any longer.
The field diary is full of examples of ‘victim’ stories which, when referred to the class discussion process show a much greater complexity of interaction.

To summarise issues arising from observing the children’s response to the program and adjustments over time, the following questions helped to focus reflections and possible changes.

- How accurate is my observation of the children?
- What are my preferences? Do I have favourites?
- What are the kinds of responses I am getting?
- What behaviour changes are observable?
- Can they be attributed to the program?

b) Other School Activities

Extracurricular school activities were a constant disruption to the formal program although some of them involved lots of cooperative interaction and opportunities to put into practice skills learnt. Sometimes it was simply that there was a Musica Viva concert or some other performance scheduled for that time and rescheduling meant missing a mathematics or language lesson. At times I felt I was continually making judgements as to what was more important - fractions revision or emotional release skills and I believe that the program suffered simply from there not being enough time in some weeks because of interruptions. There were also other big events that took precedence over the program. In term 4 of 1996, the class gave a concert of poems and songs taken from the morning circle work throughout the year and also included a play in costume. A performance of some kind each year is an unwritten expectation of duties at the school and preparations for it no matter how tightly controlled play havoc with the daily classroom activities. At the same time, I believe the hidden curriculum aspect of a group of people working together to achieve a quality result that we couldn’t achieve individually is an important part of the informal aspect of the program. This happened again in term 2 of 1997 where the play, a music drama, took on much larger
proportions as it involved classes 4, 5 and 6. As I was the musical director for this production involving 64 children all singing and in costume, a lot of my energy and time was consumed with little left for other activities. This was particularly true of the last 4 weeks when it wasn’t only personal development that suffered - mathematics, language and main lesson also had a hard time.

It is hard to tell whether this school has more than its share of “extras” but it does appear that it is a rare week where there is not something other that the timetabled program happening from a mathematics competition to the Primary Schools Sports carnivals to Open Day to a French Intensive week to our yearly camps. These give space for plenty of interaction and conflict but not always much time to reflect and look at choices and develop alternative strategies. It is no wonder that such aspects of the PD/H/PE syllabus are ignored in favour of what are generally seen as the more important “basics”! Nevertheless the program was adhered to, modified and caught up when necessary so that by the end of the seven terms, certain skills and strategies had been taught, practised and thought about.

In summary, several questions arose which served to highlight the reflective processes around these endemic interruptions to school life which, in reality, constitute much of the daily life of the school year.

- What impact, if any, did the interruptions have on the program?
- Was there a balance between formal and informal aspects of the program?
- Did I respond adequately to the children’s needs when I changed the program?
- Was there enough in the program to be useful?
- Did I attempt too much?

c) My relationship to the program

I believe that during the implementation of the program there was a fundamental shift in my approach to the process. While I retained ‘the big picture’, I gradually became far
more involved in the interactive relationship that was evolving between the children and me and less focussed on what I was teaching the children. I personally feel that this change in me was critical to the ‘success’ of the program, difficult as such a thing is to measure. It has to do with a changing power relationship in the classroom. As the only adult in the classroom with fourteen, nine/ten/eleven-year-old children, I have a relationship of responsibility to them which requires me to provide them with a range of experiences leading to the acquisition of knowledge and skills in what the N.S.W. Department of Education and Training has decided are Key Learning Areas. I am the one who knows what they have to learn, hence I am automatically in a position of power as regards information. However, this particular program, Peaceful Warriors, I began to discover was not about information. It was not about giving material concerning conflict. It was about the immediate, painful, uncomfortable, living experience of conflict in the classroom from which I was not and could not be immune. For the experience to be authentic I had to participate in the actions and reactions, in the processes and decisions on a critical level as an equal with the children. They needed to see my struggles with these experiences in order to authenticate their own. I could never lose the responsibility I have for the children to be there for them but I had to give up the sense of power over them in the teaching/learning situation. I struggled with conflict too. I struggled with feeling like a victim and I struggled with aggressive responses which, while they fall short of physical violence, at times contained a destructive quality in the tone of voice that hurt.

6.2.3. The class discussion

Establishing the class meeting as a tool for the unfolding of the program was very important. Therefore during term 2 of 1996 effort was put into making this a natural part of the children’s way of dealing with issues. As background for introducing this strategy I began with the material in my two primary sources plus material from
Glasser's *Schools without Failure* (1969). The children adopted the process readily and most were prepared to offer their thoughts. Obviously some needed more encouragement than others and it was important to make sure that one or two did not dominate the meeting. In my observation, however, it appeared that the class was quite well balanced and that each child felt that if they spoke they would be listened to and their viewpoint would be respected by their peers. As long as the class meeting was kept short (about 15 minutes) the attention was held and could be extended if the topic generated enough interest. I had to be careful about gauging the interest level because if we went beyond it the meeting would rapidly descend into lots of little private conversations sometimes with cynical overtones and I did not want to defeat the purpose of what we were doing by pushing too hard.

Many of the class discussions were fascinating and I found that the children were capable of quite profound insights into issues. Unfortunately it was not possible to tape all our discussions (see Appendix G for transcriptions). Some of the best occurred as a spur of the moment situation in response to a child’s question, or a particular sad or happy occasion. Early in 1996 one of our year 12 students was killed in a car accident. When I returned from the funeral I found that Megan and Linda, the inseparables, had had a major row; one was in the sad corner and the other was sobbing her heart away in another corner of the room. I was not really in a fit state to deal with what I saw at that moment as a very petty ten-year-old problem so we sat in a circle and I started a discussion with a remark about how moved I was by the words of the girl’s father at the funeral; that he found it possible to have compassion and forgiveness for the driver of the car that his daughter was in. This was a discussion in which very little was said, there were many quiet moments and yet there was an openness and receptivity to an idea that was very foreign to them and this despite the fact that when I first arrived back in the classroom I was irritable and angry with their silliness until we made our circle. We did not discuss Megan and Linda’s problem at all. At home time I told them both that we would discuss it the next day if they wanted
to. When I asked Megan the following day what they wanted, she told me that
everything was OK. They had both decided during the night, independently, to forgive
the other.

Another discussion that elicited a lively extended time was one we had on ‘The Wise
Part Within’ (Fugitt, 1983). The children amazed me with their response to this
concept. Every child identified with it and had something to contribute. Quite a few
saw this wise part as their special animal and then Simon introduced the idea that he had
two animals in him, a wise one and a not so wise one that sometimes made him do
things that were ‘naughty’. This was very fertile ground with animated discussion and
insights into their own behaviour. This wise part has now become a daily reference
during the meditation time and is I feel a very valuable concept for the children to
internalise their own power and authority from which they can act rather than react. On
the debit side I have also overheard a small number of the boys, notably David use this
phrase rather cynically: “My wise part tells me to beat up Simon”.

I have also observed that the class meeting is an excellent tool for disciplinary
purposes. When a child tells me that they have been teased or when two of them have
been fighting, I now ask “Are you prepared to say that at a class meeting?” So far
nobody has ever refused and the issue is brought into the open, discussed and a
solution brainstormed. This process also works when we need to find ways of dealing
with students with challenging behaviours. When Steven joined us it was necessary to
find ways to cope with some very eccentric and sometimes frightening ways of
operating. It was complicated by the fact that Megan is his cousin. During one of our
early discussions on how best to care for Steven, Megan told us she felt that everyone
thought that he was her responsibility because he was her cousin. After talking it
through we were able to come to the conclusion that Steven was a class responsibility,
not Megan’s, that she was only responsible to the extent that she was a class member.
A number of discussions on how best to help Steven have led to a situation where the
children very happily volunteer in pairs to be Steven’s ‘buddy’ for the day, with these pairs rotating informally as need and fairness arise.

I have no doubts as to the success and importance of the class meetings. They are enjoyable for everybody and the students are enthusiastic. On the whole during meetings the children show maturity, tolerance and thoughtfulness providing the subject interests them and they do not go on for too long. They are a powerful tool for awakening the children to new concepts like empathy, compassion, tolerance of difference, equity and others. The student teacher Kylie (see Appendix L) observed:

Ann’s method of group discussions allowed anyone to bring forward an issue or concern which may arise either in the playground or classroom. It was evident that Ann wanted the children to tackle issues head on rather than bottle them up. Issues varied from anything like two boys fighting at lunchtime to class discussions about the innuendos related to the term ‘humpy’. An asset that has become a part of the conflict resolution work within the classroom allows students the freedom to honestly and openly state their position on a matter as they know Ann will treat them as equals until all the facts are presented...One of the most important elements of Ann’s teaching of conflict resolution is that she never treats them as inferior to her, but relied on them to develop group discussion rules and gave them the responsibility of upholding these rules. All of the children responded accordingly to these rules showing that they were mature and could cope with this responsibility.

I would agree with Glasser (1969:165) that

when children learn to express themselves thoughtfully and without fear, when they learn to listen and to take an interest in what others have to say, they have developed a skill that probably correlates with success in life more than anything else taught in school.

However I was also aware that, despite knowing and appreciating the value of class meetings, I had great difficulty over the period of implementing the program in keeping them going as a regular thing. I ‘faltered’ at times because I could not think of enough
topics of interest and I also found it difficult sometimes to maintain the flow of the meeting in the face of private conversations and cynical asides which on occasion infested the process and I would give up for a while. The use of meetings to deal with problems in the classroom continued to work well with the children very responsive to sorting out their personal issues in this fashion. Meetings for the purpose of thoughtfully responding to a topic of interest instead of having a clear direction and goal became subject more to a sporadic need or impulse; eg an observation from the staff that there seemed to be an increased amount of swearing in the playground would provide a topic for a discussion. The constant interruption of extra curricula activities and the need to rehearse for performances as outlined earlier also played a part in the breaking of the regular pattern of the meetings although this cannot be held entirely responsible.

As always during the reflective process, questions arose which served to pinpoint issues needing attention, enabling me to clarify constantly what I was attempting to do.

- What is the impact of the class discussion strategy on the program?
- Could it work better? Why? How will I do that?

6.2.4. Parents Responses

At the beginning of Term 3, 1997 I sent home a very simple open-ended questionnaire aimed at getting feedback from the parents. It took some time for these to come in. On talking to parents about it, some of them expressed difficulty in assessing what was actually happening in the program as their child rarely referred to anything that was happening at school. Nevertheless to the seventeen questionnaires given out, ten were returned. These include one from a parent who does relief teaching on the class when I am away, one from the school secretary who is also a parent of the class and one from a staff member who had made some observations about the way the children interact
during recesses while she was on playground duty. I also did one fifteen minute interview on the questions with a parent who is also a teacher at the school.

Of the ten questionnaires returned, all parents were very supportive of the program. Formal skills lessons (eg in mathematics) were important but these life skills were also integral to the children’s education. There were a number of comments referring to how pleased the parent was that conflict resolution skills were being taught in the classroom.

“I can’t believe this stuff is finally in schools now!”

Similarly another parent commented that while a lot of it seems consistent with general Korowal philosophy/teaching methods, possibly the conflict resolution and mediation formal sessions would not happen in the normal course of learning at Korowal.

Not many of the children had made comments positive or negative about the program to their parents; one of them expressed that she enjoyed the emotional release work, another that he didn’t like the meditation. One parent indicated that her daughter “...thinks the Stop! Rule is great. She is very keen on the role play situations of conflict resolution and the times it has been used to really resolve conflict.” Another parent also reported that her child enjoyed the conflict resolution training and tried it out at home. A third said “Megan likes the program and thinks she’s learnt the most about ‘conflict resolution with mediator’. However all those who responded felt that there had been a maturing change in their children that could be attributed to the program. Table 1 gives a summary of comments.
TABLE 1: Summary of parents comments on their children’s response to the program

- displays more confidence in doing new things showing her greater maturity and self esteem
- appears to be more tolerance and understanding between the children
- Anna has a great attitude and deals with others well. I feel this must in part reflect the work you are doing in the class.
- I like the way all the girls and often the whole class play and relate.
- there’s an “understanding” of communication and relationship roles, which Megan is verbalising
- cooperative style of the play showed some of the benefits of your work - to my observation the children were uncompetitive and joyful in their work together and that takes some doing!
- it is difficult to know how much is due to this particular aspect of your work and how much would have happened anyway, with you as teacher. I certainly have noticed the harmony and openness amongst the girls … Wendy seems very happy at school. It could have been more problematic given that Nicola left the class at the end of last year. I suspect that the program/your handling of the girls has made a difference.
- something I have observed in Class 5 children generally is a friendly respect towards each other, a lack of the strong competitiveness that seems to emerge at around that age. I have noticed it particularly in contrast to some of Class 4, especially re competitiveness. I would regard this normally as a sign of unusual maturity but I suspect it is attributable to your work with them.
- I think it will be easier to see over the years/decades
- Much of what the children are learning now will manifest in later life
- Of course we won’t get the pay-offs until they are much older
- My experience of talking about problems in morning circle is a valuable insight. They are clearly developing listening skills, thinking creatively about solutions, being subject to the scrutiny of their peers and subject to consequences without ridicule. I think being involved with the judgement and processing of their own actions gives a broad idea of justice and ‘punishment’ that is appropriate to the person as well as the act. By having boundaries and a firm hand I can see you have created a safe atmosphere for honesty even with discomfiture, without fear of ridicule and so an opportunity to feel their own response to what has happened. (from a parent who observed a class discussion session after the camp)
- The girls are invariably in a group that excludes no one. I find this unusual at an age where there is often teasing and exclusion. I also find it unusual considering the varied personalities and temperaments of the girls. They seem to resolve their differences and get on with playing. They seem to have a stronger desire to play together that to exercise power over each other.
I found the parents’ responses very heartening. While it is unlikely that any parent who sends their children to this school would consider the program unnecessary, it was helpful to know that the parents who replied felt that they could attribute the increased maturity of their children in part, to the program, particularly those aspects relating to relationship and communication issues.

### 6.2.5. The children’s response

I asked the children to write me a story about themselves using as a guide a sequence of questions I gave them (see Appendix J). From their responses, all the children appear to have an increased awareness of their role in conflict and a belief that the work done in class has helped them mature. Their ability to self-reflect shows considerable insight into the complexities of finding their way through both their own inner life and their interactions with others. The individuality of each child shines through along with their struggles to find acceptance with others.

### 6.3. Conceptualising and categorising the raw data

It was important to deal with this wealth of anecdotal evidence in such a way that authentic insights about the practices under investigation could develop. Here the grounded theory methodology was invaluable as the raw data could be broken down, conceptualised and put together in new ways that provided a reorganisation of the ‘moments’ which deepened the reflective process and enabled a recognition of some of the more unconscious and less immediate aspects of the process to become visible.

Thus Table 2 identifies concepts from the raw data that were then examined, compared, contrasted and questioned about in order to discover interrelationships that would
enable a further categorisation of the phenomena and greater understanding of the issues in question. Table 3 identifies these categories that arise from the initial categorising of the raw data.
**TABLE 2: Concepts identified from the analysis of field notes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Concepts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>being part of a group</td>
<td>irritating behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>name calling</td>
<td>teasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expressing emotions verbally</td>
<td>expressing emotions physically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>managing emotions</td>
<td>coping mechanisms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>group teasing</td>
<td>“They started it”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attitude to self</td>
<td>peers liked by child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ability to achieve</td>
<td>performance in KLA’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-esteem</td>
<td>sense of isolation form peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gender</td>
<td>cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘pecking’ order</td>
<td>pull of other activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parental support</td>
<td>emotional maturity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>age</td>
<td>personality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>being liked</td>
<td>response to me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my ‘buttons’</td>
<td>physical fights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dependence of teacher</td>
<td>choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knowing themselves</td>
<td>authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>withdrawal from situation</td>
<td>loss of temper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>impact of interruptions</td>
<td>other classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school response</td>
<td>expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘walking my talk’</td>
<td>human nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attitude to change</td>
<td>awareness of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the victim</td>
<td>the aggressor</td>
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<tr>
<td>belonging</td>
<td>feeling respected</td>
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<tr>
<td>freedom</td>
<td>resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>harmony</td>
<td>reactions</td>
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<tr>
<td>repetitive incidents</td>
<td>ability to listen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>power</td>
<td>hidden curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ability to internalise concepts</td>
<td>ability to focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appreciations of differences</td>
<td>escalation of situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from ‘fun’ to ‘too much’</td>
<td>responding to ‘Stop!’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recognising potential for conflict</td>
<td>use of sad/angry corners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inconsistencies in my responses</td>
<td>classroom structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>continuity of teaching</td>
<td>composite groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>children’s background</td>
<td>lack of behavioural problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>classroom management practices</td>
<td>intrapersonal skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>interpersonal skills</td>
<td>transformation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>class meetings</td>
<td>possibility of self-correction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>artistic component</td>
<td>internalising of meditation skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>incorporating new children</td>
<td>enjoyment of program</td>
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<tr>
<td>cynical responses</td>
<td>teacher directed activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>teams- cooperative/competitive</td>
<td>circle format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>impact of stories</td>
<td>modelling behaviours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>body language</td>
<td>response to Steven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher as learner</td>
<td>attitude to responsibilites/rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ignoring consequences</td>
<td>cultural milieu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fear</td>
<td>irrationality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“He started it”</td>
<td>“It’s not my fault”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Nobody likes me’</td>
<td>empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no beginning to conflicts</td>
<td>covert conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sense of failure</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 3: Categories arising from initial conceptualising of raw data.

- **Environment and background**
  - school and its philosophy
  - the parents and their influence
  - other children outside the class
  - classroom structures

- **Relationship to Self**
  - expressing and managing emotions
  - emotional maturity
  - personality
  - knowing themselves
  - ability to achieve

- **Overt Conflict Behaviours**
  - teasing
  - physical fighting
  - coping mechanisms
  - ignoring consequences - irrationality

- **Characteristics of Children’s Conflict**
  - don’t appear to have a beginning
  - victim mentality
  - like to apportion blame

- **Ability to Respond to Program**
  - attitude to change
  - ability to internalise concepts
  - acting from learned skills
  - changes in behaviour
  - understanding of own responses
  - awareness of choices of behaviours

- **‘Walking my Talk’**
  - inconsistencies in response
  - modelling appropriate behaviours
  - being the problem-solving authority
  - sense of failure
With the tables as a springboard, it was now important to meditatively immerse myself in them in order to put them together in new ways by making connections between both each one and its subcategories and between the categories themselves. To do this, the paradigm model of Strauss and Corbin (1990:93) was used. Looking at the phenomena in terms of its causal conditions, its context, any intervening conditions, what kind of action/interaction strategies were involved and consequences of these conditions/strategies, it appeared that the best way to build a web of relationships was to look at the children and myself and to follow our path as we link with the phenomena emerging from the raw data and the focus questions of the thesis. In a modification of this paradigm model, Figure 3 (see 6.3.5) was developed out of these categories with the purpose of clarifying reciprocal relationships and hidden influences which operated throughout the implementation of the program. It had become a complex, interactive, reciprocal situation into which the simple initial questions of the thesis led.

6.3.1. Characteristics of Children’s Conflict/ Overt Conflict

Behaviours

For further reflection it seemed that the categories which encompassed overt conflict behaviours and characteristics of children’s conflict, were the easiest place to start with their readily observable action/interaction patterns. In the early stages of the program, one could be forgiven for coming to the conclusion that teasing must be the favourite pastime of ten-year-olds. I was inundated with reports. Looking through the data for causal conditions would have to lead to the conclusion that from a child’s point of view it is always another person who teases. Very early in the process, I discovered that the most useless question in any conflict was “Who started it?” There was always an end, either emotional or physical hurt, but never was there a beginning. To look for a beginning meant apportioning blame and at least one child who thought the solution
was unfair. This was also apparent even when one child hit another or pushed another down the bank or threw a rock. They were always clear in their minds that the other child had driven them to the point when what they had done was the only alternative possible. Teasing was clearly a way of life, a response so automatic that the children appeared unaware that they did it, only that it was done to them. The response "he/she/they started it" was a universal reaction to any altercation. It appeared at the beginning of the program implementation as a characteristic response regardless of personality. Why this would be so links us back to theories on the nature of the child and human nature in general. It could be part of the establishment of the 'pecking order' postulated as 'natural' to human culture by Bloom (1995:195-202).

The context of children's teasing and fighting at times seemed as if anywhere, anytime, anyplace of interaction would be appropriate. The only time I could guarantee it would not happen was during quiet, behind the desk, individually structured work. One context in which some form of conflictual interaction was inevitable appeared to be certain kinds of cooperative work. These occurred when the individual didn't have the skills needed to work constructively with the group, when the group working was larger than four to five and when the task required to be worked on did not hold the interest of the whole group. These situations brought sharply into focus issues concerning my responses to conflictual moments in the classroom and the dichotomy between modelling appropriate behaviours and being the problem-solving adult.

It was interesting to note from the data that the amount of teasing and fighting reported to me over the last couple of terms was considerably reduced. It is obviously not possible to categorically attribute this to the program. However, if we look at another concept or subcategory in this area, that of 'coping mechanisms', it would be feasible to link this reduction in conflict to the development of new ways of handling being teased. By coping mechanisms I am referring to the ways in which an individual deals with situations that are difficult for them. From my observations and notes it would
appear that personality is the first factor in a response followed by learned behaviour in relation to gender. Initially the response was the characteristic ‘fight’ or ‘flight’ repeatedly referred to in the literature as the two common responses to conflict. Looking at these responses on a scale, at one end for the first three terms of 1996 there were Simon and David who fought constantly. David as the new boy was looking for his place in the group, looking to belong; Simon already insecure about his place in the ‘pecking’ order of the class was feeling threatened. David, always able to articulate what was going on, if apparently unable to do anything about it, once told me that it had ‘become a tradition’ to fight Simon. Simon’s mother recently reminded me that once when Simon wanted to leave because he couldn’t stand David’s teasing and fighting anymore, that I had said that if they can get through this antagonistic phase they would probably become good friends as they had a lot in common. To some extent this has now happened. They play and work together well although sparks still fly on occasion. At least the pattern has been transformed. Andrew’s response is to fight if necessary but he has immured himself behind a facade of ‘nothing really bothers me’ and is still capable of teasing hurtfully without allowing anything to touch him. Most of the others in the class prefer to withdraw from conflict, to walk away from the conflict feeling hurt but powerless to do anything about it. There is a similar continuum amongst the girls with Anna being the most able to shout and fight although here the fighting conflict response is far less frequent. The whole class had difficulty with what Bodine, Crawford and Schrumpf (1994) called the ‘principled response to conflict’. For them walking away was better than fighting or teasing back. However there is some evidence to show that teaching them to say ‘please stop that’ clearly and strongly when teasing is too much for them does work at least within the class.

6.3.2. Relationship to Self

Turning to the sub-category of expressing and managing emotions, here again there are properties which can be dimensionalised according to the personality and temperament
of the child and the teacher. A class discussion elicited a vast range of emotions connected to conflict which were subsumed into three categories - sadness, anger and fear. For each person, one of those categories of emotion predominated, the causes of which were way outside the scope of this study. However what began to emerge when looking at the context of the repetitive situations was that we could be considered sad victims, angry victims or frightened victims. I found this categorisation really interesting in terms of my actions and interactions with the children. My most natural response is probably the angry victim which could be connected to the obvious fact that I find the angry victim children ‘press my buttons’ more than the other children. In particular David epitomises this mode of operation and in doing so draws the most fiery and least conflict transformational processes from me. It seemed that the emotional category most ‘natural’ to the person influenced how they responded to conflict although sometimes it could be the emotional category of the moment that predominated. Thus children for whom sadness or fear was paramount in conflict would flee, although an interesting observation about some of these children was that they had a threshold beyond which they would turn and fight. Oliver, small, pedantic, hating to be upset, on a number of occasions would turn and fight boys twice his size when he was driven beyond his limits. The children called this ‘throwing a tooshy’.

Managing or expressing these emotions in appropriate ways was a key part of the program and as referred to earlier a number of strategies designed to intervene and alter immediate emotional reactions were put into place. Simply acknowledging that emotions exist, that we all have them and react out of them at times was a start. Becoming aware that emotions sometimes make us behave in a way that is not best for others or ourselves was also important. Recognising the power of an emotion to push us into behaviour that we feel unable to control and, what is more, don’t want to control, was a concept that gave both the children and me much to think about. There were several situations when the desire to fight and tease was much greater than any consequence the class and I had agreed upon.
“Andrew doesn’t care if he gets into trouble”

Where do all the conflict resolution techniques and the emotional release skills go when ‘the button clicks’ as Richard Migliore (1994:64) puts it. Often there were times when everything was smooth and harmonious and suddenly there would be a perceived insult evoking a powerful emotional response and all precepts and skills were overturned. It was of far greater importance to get back at the apparent instigator of the crime than putting into practice any learned behaviours. In these instances the children were quite skilled at waiting until I was otherwise occupied or not with them before retaliating so it was often hard to deal with directly. I could observe that something had happened from the regroupings that took place but unless there was a fight or one of them told me I had to accept their way of operating and continue to ‘over teach’ the skills as much as possible. These situations emphasise the fact that no conflicts are solved unless all parties recognise and want to solve them. I sometimes observed what appeared to be covert conflicts in the classroom in terms of subtle body language and tone of voice but when there was no response to asking during class discussion time if anyone had anything they wanted to discuss, it had to be left to the children themselves. Developing interaction strategies for dealing with a desire to have a fight or maintain the conflict regardless of consequences that are internalised and not reliant on externalised authority is I believe of critical importance in education. On a world scale here we have the processes of Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela as opposed to the suicide bombings of terrorists but on a microscale it is already apparent in the classroom when someone is ready to ‘destroy’ another in their need to be ‘right’. The tendency is clearly discernible in my own handling of the children at times and in their treatment of one another.

So far it would seem that there are dual responses to conflict. One is dependent on personality and relates to the overt behaviour manifested. The other is the internal
awareness of a lack of power, of being the ‘victim’. An important indicator of potential behaviour involves the relationship to self. Becoming aware of how they respond, understanding their response and being able to utilise this self knowledge is indicative of each child’s level of emotional maturity. At the beginning of the program, none of the children could separate themselves from their responses. Something happened, they reacted. Their reaction was directly related to and caused by the event, a way of behaving to be expected of this age group; self-analysis is not normative behaviour for nine-ten year olds.

6.3.3. Environment and Background

It is difficult here to separate factors leading to particular personal responses. To what do we attribute differing levels of emotional maturity, differing personalities and differing abilities to achieve? It is clear from recorded observation that a wide variety of individual differences exist here to the extent that each child and myself could form a separate category with properties and dimensions. All aspects of environment and background interact constantly with personality to produce a particular response. The categories of environment and background and relationship to self are potential intervening conditions that influence the ability to respond to the program. The school and its philosophy in many ways is an ideal background to a study of this kind. Yet there are factors that create obstacles. Individual relationships between teachers and classes are fostered and each teacher has a favoured way of dealing with conflict within the classroom that doesn’t always harmonise with that of the teacher next door. A whole school approach to this area has not been developed and from some staff is not seen as needed. This particularly affects the program when the children are upset because of teasing or conflict with children of other classes. These children have not been taught for example to reflect back the other’s point of view to enable a deeper listening; nor have they had such an intensive training in the assertiveness of “Please
stop doing that. It upsets me”. On the other hand, parents who send their children to this school are far more likely to welcome this approach to conflict resolution than those who choose traditional hierarchical structures and detentions for not wearing your hat.

Parents themselves obviously impact on the program. In some ways they are in a similar position to me in that my responses to the children both facilitate and constrain responses. Likewise it is with the parents except that their position is less conscious in relation to the specific program and their relationship with their children is closer, more emotional and possibly less subject to objective analysis. Here it is impossible and, moreover, impertinent of me to make any causal connections between behavioural responses at school as a consequence of parenting styles in the home although this will influence response probably in an unlikely and impossible to quantify manner. Some parents certainly had a greater familiarity with what I was doing than others because they sought to know. Others were happy that their children seemed happy and classroom relationships were working.

There were also classroom structures that both facilitated the process and related to the school and its philosophy. The practice of having the same teacher for a number of years is of great value in implementing a program of this kind because obviously the children can be observed in depth and there is time to develop the program in depth and make changes when needed. Being with the children most of the time also means that daily schedules can be adjusted so that when there is a critical need for a discussion or a mediation this can happen immediately. More indirectly the familiarity of the morning circle structure which was already in place before the program began facilitated the establishment of much of the ground work of the program. Constraining features here would have to be the constant interruptions of the formal teaching program for excursions, visitors, extracurricula activities as previously outlined which are a feature of this school. These definitely necessitated considerable readjustment of the program while providing ample opportunity for informal practice.
6.3.4. Ability to Respond to the Program

The whole analysis of this program creates a picture of interlocking circles, a picture which relates to the conditional matrix of Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.163) but rests more on a reciprocal than a deterministic framework. Figure 3 was devised to help illustrate this more clearly.

FIGURE 3
In observing one or two children in depth we can trace a kind of path which illustrates the complexities of intervening and causal conditions on interactive processes in relation to responses to conflict. We begin to see ourselves teaching one another, mediated by the so-called fixed world of the environment and background which is itself modified as our relationship with it is changed.

If we begin with the thumbnail sketch of the 20.4.96, (see Appendix C) Megan is competent across the Key Learning Areas although her skill level does not always quite match her imaginative creativeness. Her drawings are imaginative but lack attention to detail and can be very untidy as is much of her work. She loves drama, role play and dressing up and contributes actively and intelligently to class discussions. She has a tendency to feel left out and that nobody likes her or wants to play with her if she is not the centre of attention. She is tiny and small-boned with delicate features and wispy blond hair. There is a strong tendency in her to hypochondria and she takes her health very seriously although now (end of class 5, 1997) this tendency has dramatically reduced. (Her mother believes this is a response to input from a very close friend of hers and mother of another child in the class, Linda, who has worked with the girls in the area of self-esteem and self-assertiveness.) Megan came to this school at the beginning of Class 2 and took some time in settling in. Her parents are extremely supportive of the school and its philosophy and consequently work closely with me on any issues that arise. The school encourages and deems desirable this close working together of parents and teachers to create the optimum conditions for a child’s development. During the implementing of this program, Megan’s parents separated with a considerable amount of animosity, something which is still ongoing. Despite the deep love from both parents for their children, there was overt conflict taking place in the background to Megan’s school day and both parents talked to me at length about their concerns for the children during this difficult time particularly as Megan would at times throw tantrums at home. Both parents are keenly involved in self-development.
and self-analysis work so there is strong support for the way I am working with the children. At school there were no obvious behaviour problems from Megan who appeared to take things in her stride. One interesting comment during a class discussion on teasing (so it was not a direct reference to anything that was happening at home) was:

"I don't really think talking about things makes any difference."

This is despite her being one of the more articulate children in the class. During a class discussion soon after Steven joined the class, Megan, who is his cousin, pointed out that this did not make her responsible for his behaviour as many of the children had been teasing her because of it. Because of this we were able to establish that Megan’s responsibilities towards Steven were the same as any other class member.

Megan has a clear self-perception for a child her age. Responding to a sequence of questions about herself, she likes herself, although she is aware that at times when she didn’t do something she was supposed to do she didn’t like herself. When asked if she was ‘good’ or ‘naughty’ she replied “Both, because I’m not perfect”. ‘Good’ she defined as feeling happy; ‘bad’ as feeling frustrated. She felt she could choose to be happy by not taking everything seriously and that by just trying she could stop herself from being unhappy which she defined as not being liked or unloved. However, later on she said she couldn’t choose her feelings and then again that she could choose how she would feel when others called her names. Her written responses to dealing with conflict showed a level of maturity and understanding. If she was angry with a friend she would tell them how she felt and make up later. She was aware that fighting has the tendency to escalate and this annoyed her “because I have better ways of dealing with it"
Megan clearly shows an ability to respond to the program. She has illustrated an awareness of choice of behaviours and an understanding of her own responses. Her cultural milieu outside the classroom is one where there is parental conflict but there is also parental awareness of the importance of personal development and working through issues that reinforce and facilitate the personal development program of the classroom.

David’s situation shows a different personality, a different parental response and a different, though supportive relationship with the school and its philosophy. My thumbnail sketch of 20.4.96 was very brief (see Appendix C); he had only been in the school a few days. I noted that he was very young for the class being at least a year younger than anyone else but was academically gifted and talented. Within three days of his joining us there was evidence that the small group of boys found him irritating and he was going to have difficulty fitting in. His parents moved to the Mountains so he could come to the school. They didn’t know much about the philosophy but they like what they read in the school brochure and as David was having social problems where he was, they would give us a try. At the end of David’s first two terms with us my student teacher observed: “He has a habit of outbreaking with violent behaviour towards his peers and as a result has trouble making friends….. His biggest enemy in the class is Simon and not a day goes by when the two of them don’t conflict. David is always making others feel incompetent in the arts area as he excels but this also contributes to his feeling of not belonging.”

David’s parents also separated during this time although they still share the same house. His mother at times works long hours in the city, staying over with friends a couple of nights a week. She also at times feels unsettled in the Mountains preferring city life but wants David to have the education we offer. I have only met David’s father briefly. He appears as a shy, self-effacing man who cares deeply about his children and often takes David bushwalking during the weekend. David’s mother is always extremely
supportive of any measures I use to control David at school from the old authoritarian approach to the procedures of the program I try to implement with him. David himself, as I have mentioned earlier, is articulate about his own behaviour without necessarily having the maturity to act from his observations. He likes himself when he is happy and dislikes himself when he is bad because he can look back and see how silly he was when doing that thing. He believes he can choose to be happy by doing good things and not getting into fights and stop himself from being unhappy with mind power. He can work for five minutes without looking up from his work if “nobody’s picking on me or talking to me”. However later he says that he is in charge of himself and can choose to ignore someone who keeps talking to him in class. When he is angry with someone and fights with them, he feels “upset even though I really wanted to hurt that person” and he does try to “count to ten though I must admit I do hurt them sometimes”. Despite anomalies in responses and behaviour, it appears that over time this articulation of responses has led in David to an increased self-knowledge and the ability to modify his own behaviour to get what he really wanted which was acceptance from the class. He is also now a very responsive student in most areas with a strong desire to achieve highly.

In many ways the two detailed examinations of the interactions of personality, parental influences and attitude to the school and its philosophy are characteristic of the class. All these factors contribute to a melange of shared experience out of which it is possible to capture the essential potential of each of us for transformation. Change itself has properties that give it form, shape and character (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:150). While the study is a piece of action research with a desired goal and planned sequential intervention over time, the resulting classroom web of transformation is not straightforward. To conceptualise the process in stages or phases was possible in terms of implementing the program, but not in terms of specific results as the rate and scope of absorption of material is dependent on the intervening conditions illustrated above. What was sought was a changing approach to the inevitable conflicts of daily
life, to the complexities of a cocktail of personalities working, playing and sharing time together and so here we have a progressive process towards a state of action/interaction that is flexible, empathetic and of itself, in harmony.

6.3.5. ‘Walking my Talk’

The category I have code named ‘Walking my talk’ of necessity pervades the entire study. I frequently question who is the teacher and who the learner. The major source of data for the study emanates from my actions/interactions with the children. Together we have shared social experiences which impact on our learning. It is difficult to put a sequential process on many of the incidents of interaction. What exactly is an inconsistent response and what are its causes? Sometimes, when the class is unruly, at my instigation we sit in a circle and talk it through; at other times I have raised my voice and demanded, using my authority as adult in the room. The causal conditions are often buried in the subconscious mind. Self-knowledge, in these situations, is not a one dimensional phenomena but a hermeneutic activity of personal consciousness which requires constant self-awareness and allowing of vulnerability. There were times when I observed in myself a reluctance to be less than ‘she who must be obeyed’, a disinclination to be vulnerable myself to the processes I was teaching in case someone ‘took advantage’ of me. There were other times when pressure of time, of needing to get some other aspect of work completed led to the problem-solving authority taking charge. In other words, mathematics or language or some other demand took precedence over the needs of the heuristic model of conflict solving I was trying to teach. I quickly solved the problem for them so they could get on with what, by implication, became more important work. There were also children whose behaviour constantly irritated and with whom I simply lost patience and gave a command or put on detention. We did (and still do) have class discussions relating differences in behaviour and needs to the concept of ‘fairness’ which I feel has helped the children
begin to see and understand that consequences are connected to their own individual responses and relationship to the needs of the group, including me, as a whole. However the fact remains that some children press my emotional buttons more than others and effort is needed to watch this phenomenon and my processes of justification. At times, a sense of failure led me to consider abandoning the program - I wasn’t capable of doing it well, the class seemed louder and less responsive than usual, nobody appeared to be internalising anything, if David left it might just work - and these negative impulses led to a periodic hiatus in the program. Nevertheless a powerful inner certitude kept me returning to the core issues. As both the students and I struggled with the issues and slowly became aware of each others’ struggles, we recognised the problems in each of our experiences. The program became an impetus to encourage us “together to confront the real problems of our (their) existence and relationships” (Grundy, 1987:103).
CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and

IMPLICATIONS

7.1. Results: facts or fiction

To recapitulate, the focus questions of the thesis were:

- Are there effective ways of teaching students to deal with conflict?
- What is the role of the teacher in the process of teaching students to deal with conflict?
- How is the impact of such a program assessed?

The parents felt they could observe changes in their children as a result of the program. The children believed that the program had had an influence on their behaviour. These changes can be grouped together into a category which shows a level of maturity in dealing with interpersonal relationships not common at this age. When I refer back to the focus questions of the thesis and the aims of the program, however, I was looking not only for a changing attitude to and understanding of conflict but also a skill level capable of dealing responsibly with their own conflicts. To a large extent I was seduced by the claims of the published programs. Bodine et al (1994:1) present a comprehensive plan to achieve the following:

Imagine a school or classroom where learners manage and resolve their own conflicts, both with and without adult assistance. Picture a place where diversity and individuality are celebrated ... a place where adults and children cooperate instead of acting aggressively or coercively ... a place that supports everyone’s
rights and encourages everyone to exercise his or her responsibilities ... a place where peace is viewed as an active process, made day by day, moment by moment. This is our vision - a vision of the peaceable school.

Cornelius and Faire (1989:7-9) offer a “package of key skills” drawn “from fields as diverse as management and child rearing, psychology and the martial arts, personal development and critical thinking”. Using these “tools not rules, ... homes become self-esteem factories, schools transform into discovery stations, workplaces change into environments of mutual support and growth and the planet can achieve the cooperation of a global community”.

- Are these outcomes realistic or utopian?
- Is it simply inept teaching of the programs that results would appear to fall short of such extravagant claims?
- Is there something lacking in the programs themselves?
- Was it my idiosyncratic adaptations of and interpolations into other programs that had a detrimental rather than a positive impact?
- Is there anything else that could interfere with a more successful outcome?

7.2. Limitations of Results

It is very difficult to assess the impact of such a program. In the Peaceful Warriors program that I devised I was heavily influenced by the claims and the material provided by the above. The aims of the program elucidated this vision for me:

- that it is possible to teach the children skills that will enable them to deal responsibly with their own conflicts
- that conflict is a transformative force that works powerfully to either enrich or narrow lives
- that levels of physical and verbal violence can be lessened in the classroom
- that children can be taught interpersonal and intrapersonal skills that will be of lasting benefit
- that I can monitor and reflect on my own handling of conflict in relation to teaching children

Assessing the results by looking at the responses of the parents, student teacher, children and my own observations, I feel that the children do have the skills that will
enable them to deal with their own conflicts but they need to take another step. Their ability to apply these skills is as yet embryonic. They need more real life situations in which to trial these skills and greater support from the school community in general. A great deal of modelling, role playing and solving intra-class issues has been done. However the school as a whole, despite its high ideals, still clings to the idea of the teacher as the disciplinary authority so within the widespread culture outside the classroom the expectations are that the teacher will solve any problems usually with a talk, a detention and then a suspension. This makes reinforcement of the skills almost impossible. Also as seen in one of the discussions (see Appendix J, August 7, 1997) a number of the children tried their skills at home with little response. These tentative approaches from such young children need nurturing and cultivating if they are to flourish into independence and maturity.

The children did not see conflict as a transformative force at any time throughout the two years. Expectations in this area were in the realms of dream time ideals. To move from anger and/or anxiety as a response to conflict towards seeing conflict (or in the children's terms, teasing, name-calling, fighting and bitching) as an opportunity for personal development is asking a great deal from eleven year olds. If I am honest it still asks a great deal from myself. That they began to see sometimes that conflict closed off their worlds was a step in this direction.

A reduction in the level of physical and verbal violence in the classroom was an observable outcome although again this is hard to codify. It could have had as much to do with the way I set up cooperative activities as I learned through trial and error that some ways of setting up group work lent themselves to conflict more easily that others. The angry and sad corners probably had some impact here - certainly the children believe that these corners helped them to express their emotions more appropriately.
The major area where responses have been overwhelmingly in agreement is that the children have developed interpersonal and intrapersonal skills that will be of lasting benefit. This is borne out by a number of parents’ comments to the effect that “much of what the children are learning now will manifest in later life”, “of course, we won’t get the pay-offs until they are much older” and “I think it (results from the program) will be easier to see over the years/decades”. Even though the specific skills of peer mediation need much more practice and understanding, there has been a considerable improvement in the children’s ability to listen, empathise and self-reflect which manifests as an unusual maturity in the way they play together.

The children in class 5 could be said to be on a threshold. They have been taught to mediate their own conflicts but a number of their responses seem to indicate that many of them are not quite ready to do so. If the school ambience was such that it was accepted practice most of the class would likely be able to take the next step. However, as David pointed out when he has tried to mediate an issue in the playground, he was pulled into the fight and got beaten up himself. From the results of this study at this time it is not really possible to assess whether peer mediation programs for children of this age could be successful. It is my impression, however, that the potential is there although adult intervention would remain an important consideration. When children have the basic skills of mediation, the adult no longer needs to solve the problem for them or to apply sequences of consequences because the students can find their own solutions. My disciplinary role changed from one who applied sanctions to one who helped the children sort out their own problems and deal with rights and responsibilities. Consequences are really only needed when a child is unwilling to mediate.

Measuring changes in behaviour in this type of study can only be done through observation and given the variety of the human condition it is unrealistic to expect uniform changes. There was a dramatic change in the behaviours of David, for
example, as attested to particularly by the student teacher - there needed to be. At the beginning he had a very keen intellectual understanding of the processes but a complete inability to manifest behaviour that exhibited this understanding. Over time he has begun to internalise his knowledge and act out of it sometimes. There was less of an overt change from Andrew who really doesn’t want to move from his area of comfort although I sense a movement towards empathy within that is yet to express itself. A reasonable expectation of change implies that some of the skills imparted are becoming internalised and that the amount of input needed from me has lessened. A recent small incident provides an example of this. At the bus stop, Megan, Wendy and Anna were sitting talking together with Linda sitting some distance away by herself. I asked Megan why this was the case and she told me that Linda had been saying nasty things about her behind her back. “You know how to deal with it better than leaving her out, though, don’t you?” I asked. “Yes” she said and all three of them went up to talk it through with Linda. It was a very quiet quick interchange that was for me an illustration of just how far these children had come in being able to sort out their differences.

7.3. Relationship between *Peaceful Warriors* and Published Programs

When I began the program in the autumn of 1996, I passionately wanted the program to work. From personal self-observation, my enthusiasm was tempered with an underlying uneasiness that it wasn’t going to be easy and I had no real idea as to how I would know whether the program was working or not. If the claims of the published programs were correct, my classroom at least would be a haven in no time at all. This has not proved to be the case. However, if I look at my program in relation to published programs it is clear that my eclectic gathering of material is not reproducible in any way and I would have to question whether simply teaching the program as
outlined by Bodine et al (1994) without adaptation would not have produced ‘better’ results. Nevertheless the format of the *Peaceful Warriors* program was such that it did include all the basic skills of these other programs while providing an in depth development of some of the key skills.

I still need to be cautious in claiming the kind of success referred to by some of the core literature. As Cutrona and Guerin (1994) suggest there has been an improvement in communication skills and there has been an all-round benefit that shows both in the interactive web in the classroom and in the class peer group webs in the playground. However, this program in two years has not enabled the children to take the step away from adult intervention in most conflicts to being able to do it themselves. As Robert pointed out in a class discussion: “it’s OK to mediate with you in the classroom but it takes too much play time outside”. This could be because my adaptation of the programs included so much other material that not enough attention and practice was given to mediation skills *per se*. It could be that the children are simply not old enough yet and if either constant practice over the next few years is given or the skills are retaught at a later time after a dormant period, their impact will be more immediate and more easily absorbed into overt, natural behaviour. Certainly in my observation of this class, the children need adult input. As pointed out earlier, the kind of input has changed. I now help them to find a solution rather than imposing one but as they pointed out to me, unless I’m there they don’t listen to one another.

The *Peaceful Warriors* program was eclectic and idiosyncratic, responding to and influenced by children’s needs and school interruptions. It was strongly rooted in the everyday reality of school life. The process of implementation was interrupted, fast forwarded and backtracked as real life in the classroom wove its constant patterns. So much of the interpersonal work appears to need constant practice it was a temptation at times to stop and do listening skills, self-correcting skills or emotional release skills for weeks. Published programs are far more specific in their goals, eg conflict resolution.
skills or mediation skills, and there seems to be little time allowed in the training for the intrapersonal development that appears to me to be necessary for permanent change. “Getting the bombs out of our hearts” is tough; recognising that they are there in the first place is a hurdle. Cornelius and Faire (1989) as part of the Conflict Resolution Network offer a three day program which teaches the basic skills required to mediate and resolve conflicts. This three day workshop was given at Korowal with little lasting effect apart from some new jargon. Despite the uneven application and results of Peaceful Warriors, I believe that the introduction of a defined model of mediation process, unless it is strongly supported by ‘ancillary’ processes highlighting and emphasising all the skills required, is unlikely to survive the implementation period. I have doubts that the program I introduced, apart from the increased maturity of the students in their interpersonal relationships will survive into next year after I leave the school. There is no commitment to the mediation process as a means of solving disputes and therefore there will be no incorporation of relevant parts of the program into the ongoing curriculum. Schools that claim success in the implementation of peer mediation procedures are those where the conflict resolution and peer mediation skills are embedded in the entire curriculum and philosophy of the school like that at the Peter Board High School in North Ryde or many of the American programs.

7.4. Impact of ‘Human Nature’

When reviewing the literature on personality, the most striking observation is that it is extraordinarily complex and diverse. It is difficult to pin down the human being. While conflict on an overt level is easily observable, the process by which a human being engages in conflict appears impossible to source. Is it simply a response to external factors? Is a battle between the id and the superego taking place? Almost all the programs developed for dealing with conflict either ignored or made only superficial reference to sources of conflict within the human psyche. Their key orientation is that
of the humanist psychologists who rely on the potential of human beings for personal growth combined with a package of skills designed to change the external environment of the conflict and thus modify and change patterns of response. While this is an acceptable beginning, it is possible that programs need to pay greater attention to the impact of the unconscious in the influencing of the willingness and ability to resolve conflict. The theories of the psychoanalysts have much to offer on the source of conflict and our ability or otherwise to deal with it. A passing reference to the shadow self which is to be found in the twelve principles of conflict resolution is going to make little impact on internal change when some find it necessary to spend years in analysis dealing with this issue. Similar attention needs to be paid to the behaviourist viewpoint. Studies show that a child growing up in an environment of violence either in the home or in a war zone is likely to respond violently to conflict. The biological orientation is also an important one to consider. If both conflict and our need for each other is imprinted into our biological structure and is the cornerstone of our psyche as Howard Bloom (1995) claims, the “tools, not rules” have a positive, but limited application. Steiner’s belief that

human beings cannot avert themselves from the war of opinions, feelings and actions in the outer world of sense, unless they combat in themselves and settle inwardly the antagonism which would otherwise flow into the outer world ...

(1933:140)

reinforces this emphasis that without work on our inner life, our ability to deal with outer troubles is limited. He goes so far as to say

We might even describe the progress of human evolution as the diversion of the strife in the outside world to the work of harmonising the inner forces of man.”

(1933:140)
7.5. Two Critical Observations

a) 'When the Button Clicks' Syndrome

Richard Migliore (1994) writes of his experiences in a very different educational situation to the one I work in, an inner city high school in American as opposed to a small country school. Yet on a smaller, less overtly violent level, his story of Demetria resonates with my experience. It is the "Andrew doesn't care if he gets into trouble" response. There is a satisfaction in 'winning' that any number of detentions and suspensions doesn't deter. Migliore (1994:66) claims that this phenomenon is not isolated and it encompasses more than just the normal emotion of anger. The behaviour is pervasive in our inner-city schools and recurs thousands of times yearly. It is a severe problem with no simple answers, instilled by life in our inner cities.

It is not just life in inner cities that creates this response; it was clearly also a response from ten-year old children in an idyllic small school in the Blue Mountains. It is a response that needs understanding on a much deeper level and one that needs to be addressed in current programs.

In the early stages of preparing this program I had considered this phenomenon. Prior to reading Migliore's article, I had observed in myself a reluctance to resolve some issues. I had noticed that despite knowing that a willingness to resolve was a key factor in conflict resolution and despite having conflict resolution skills there were some conflicts I preferred to avoid. I wasn't going to beat the other person up but it really was much easier to avoid the situation and pretend there was no problem. It is the same issue that Migliore points out, just the other side - the flight as opposed to the fight response. It is why I included in my program in addition to the basic steps of conflict resolution and mediation, self-esteem building, emotional release work and meditation.
While the work in conflict resolution had a strong appeal to my idealism and desire to work for a better world at least locally, on a deeper level there was an awareness that it would not be as easy as giving the children a few tools.

b) The ‘Victim’ Mentality

There was one outcome that I could find no clear reference to in the literature although the title of Fugitt’s (1987) book, *He Hit Me Back First* indirectly refers to this phenomenon. It would seem that while the programs draw their psychological basis from a humanist perspective, the children perceive themselves as victims without any clear modes of behaviour that are empowering. They also seem to relate strongly to the ‘eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth’ response and don’t always feel that justice has been served if there isn’t a ‘punishment’. Even after twelve months of work and some positive results, any conflict pattern a pupil took on, withdrawal or fighting, they saw as a reaction to an external stimulus and it was this externally operating factor that was responsible for their response. Choosing a response from within, believing that they were capable of a different response and acting from that response were ideas they sometimes appeared to understood in discussion but did not relate to in their behaviour. In action each child was always the victim, even when he/she had been caught in a powerful negative response. It had been the only way to stop the invidious nastiness of the other person. Maybe children are behaviourists and program writers humanists! Maybe that is the goal of education - to transform a child from a creature of stimulus-response interactions to one who believes in his/her own potential to transform him/herself. Empowerment of the child in situations appropriate to his/her age and needs appears to be a difficult goal to achieve.
7.6. The Methodology Summarised

The *raison d'être* of this study grew out of a personal vision that conflict is a transformative force and that children can come to understand and work with conflict in such a way that their daily lives have greater freedom. In many ways the interactions of the children and myself at school create webs of significance spun by ourselves, the paradigm of constructivism. I have sought not only to illuminate and penetrate this classroom cultural web in relation to conflictual behaviours but also through intervention to change this space over time. These interactive webs are part of all ongoing human interaction so the format of the case study provided a bounded framework to a real-life context in which such a personal vision could be tested. Over a two year period of time, I was able to observe a group of children in a great number of different situations. It was also possible to gather pertinent observations from their parents. A highly motivated student teacher wrote two reports detailing her observations over a period of twelve months and the children themselves as the key participants in the case study were able to offer their insights into the process and the results. With so much descriptive detail available from the four sources the case study provided a vehicle to make the particular vivid. This was critical to an understanding of the multiple social realities from which each of us operates. As the study was interested in exploring relationships of conflict and what needs to be done to change them with an interpretive focus on each child and their idiosyncratic response to ‘fighting’, it became clear that the children were capable of understanding the mechanisms of conflict and using that understanding towards building a more harmonious web of connections. It is axiomatic that children change and grow, nevertheless within this format it was possible to isolate some of those changes and attribute them directly to the program being implemented.
7.7. Qualities and Processes of the Researcher

Monitoring and reflecting on my own handling of conflict in the classroom was an interesting and at times painful process. I believe that adults cannot teach this kind of program without aspiring to self-reflection and self-criticism and making themselves vulnerable to the children’s feedback. Class rules must be self-applicable, new modes of handling conflict must be part of the teacher’s canon of techniques if the program is to have integrity. There were times when I considered that I had failed, when I gave up the program several times in despair, sometimes because of an apparent inability to get the message across, sometimes because in my self-reflection I found my own responses so lacking in empathy and willingness to find alternatives to a traditional authoritarian control. The children were witnesses to this struggle and as one parent observed (see Appendix K) this in itself was a lesson for them. Teaching this program has been for me a gift in terms of personal development. I have had to watch my reactions carefully at all times, observing what and which children ‘make’ me behave in particular ways and to reflect as objectively as possible on the why. From this point of view it has been invaluable.

One of the essentials of this particular piece of research was the researcher’s obligation to be “self-examining, self-questioning, self-challenging, self-critical, and self-correcting” (Lincoln and Guba, 1990:54). Throughout the two-year implementation period it was necessary to be constantly vigilant as to my personal responses and their impact on the nuances of interaction in the classroom as well as in the objective (as possible) observation and examination of the children’s behaviour ranging from punch-ups to subtle changes in facial expression. To aid this process, both throughout the implementation period and more formally at the end of each term, questions were asked pertaining specifically to that term’s work in relation to the overall direction of the focus questions and aims of the study (see Appendix M). These questions and the issues they raised became the foundation of the next segment of work involving revision.
work, introduction of new material and assessment of needs. They also played a
critical role in the self-reflection and evaluation process that became increasingly vital as
the program evolved from something I did to the children to something we attempted to
do together. To be constantly aware of the need to develop sensitivity to the issue in
question, to hone the understanding of subtleties in the data, to draw out the pertinent,
to use developed skills and the literature appropriately, challenged all prior teaching
experience. A knowing was required that went beyond the one-dimensional to where
nuances, delicate balances and complexities were sought for and valued, where the
individuality of each child was respected and an awareness that the interactive space
creates a transforming environment beyond the individual. It was especially important
as the foundation of this particular study was primarily the experience of the teacher
with no separation between research and practice. Conclusions have been grounded in
the pupil’s and my experience as active partners in the research.

With an enormous amount of data generated over the last two years, asking questions
and making comparisons were key processes in making sense of the plethora of
everyday detail. Phenomena such as ‘withdrawal from situation’ or ‘escalation of
situation’ could be extracted and studied as to their connections with other phenomena
from which categories can be developed that name concepts such as ‘overt conflict
behaviours’. This enabled a regrouping of the data in order to see the context in which
it was embedded and further develop action/interactional strategies with which the
processes being implemented could be better defined. At this point in a classic
grounded theory study a core category would be explicated. In this study, however,
where goals are variables, the complexity of the network of conceptual relationships,
the systematic implementation of intervention over time and the strength and diversity
of intervening conditions like personality factors and parental backgrounds make the
explication of a final category or theory that is like the “sun, standing in orderly
systematic relationship to its planets” (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:124) theoretically
inappropriate. At this point, two years on, the key story is still that of a teacher and her
pupils together searching for solutions to the problems of discord. The analysis has given indications for further action, it has raised consciousness and shed light on processes of conflict resolution, it has explicated the fragrance of a classroom in action as it attempts to solve such issues, it has improved the quality of action within it and it has changed the nature of the relationship between pupil and teacher but a theory of conflict management in the classroom remains elusive.

7.8. Implications for further work

As a case study of action research involving a grounded theory analysis, this story has a number of implications. It is a story focussed on personal experience and personal vision. It sought to research the meaning and experience of a small number of people involved in the interactive network that that vision created over time. It was less a study in search of theory or law and more an interpretive analysis in search of insight into a major psychological and philosophical issue of our time, on a local personal level. In reflecting the intensely personal processes of the researcher it was geared to improving the educational practices in which she was engaged. Through the process of implementation the program became not a set of desirable skills imparted to the students but a complex and sometimes contradictory set of reciprocal states in which “the nature and quality of the action itself are more important than what is produced as an outcome” (Grundy, 1987:177). It belongs in the ‘think globally, act locally’ category of human endeavour in which a transformation of consciousness was facilitated by the nature of the content under consideration as it was worked upon through the mediating influence of the researcher.

A further interest was
to illustrate significant common human attributes ... by locating the general in the particular ... to shed light on what is unique in time and space while at the same time conveying insights that exceed the limits of the situation in which they emerge. (Eisner, 1981:7)

It is hoped that this study may engender a desire in the reader to find their own personal path into the area of conflict resolution, to inspire them with a sense that despite setbacks, apparent failure and less than utopian results, the power to make a difference lies in personal action and interaction. While it has never been an intention that generalisations should be drawn from this study, inferences could be made that may have applicability to a personal situation or context. In participating in vicarious experience it may be that the reader has a shared response that gives a framework and encouragement to act. It could also, if Korowal so desired, be used as a pilot study to initiate a whole school program in conflict management although this will be an unlikely result.

The issues of peace and conflict have fascinated me for a long time. The philosophical and psychological implications of the movement from the Exodus approach to those of Gandhi and his ilk are enormous. It seems to me to be one of the most important and complex areas of human interaction that exists. If students can develop the skills and understanding to walk the path of non-violent action, then they are a gift for the future. It is not an easy path to travel and requires that we recognise the violence in our hearts as clearly as we see the bombs, guns and land-mines throughout the troubled areas of the world.
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The Practical Philosophy of Education at Korowal

Korowal was founded in 1978 by Garry Richardson in response to interest in his book “Education for Freedom”. The philosophy described in the book as “human-centred” is encapsulated in the Memoranda and Articles of Association of the school:

A human-centred school is a school which endeavours to create an environment where teachers have the possibility of learning to work practically with love and the consciousness necessary to apply it to the education of the pupils.

1. Every human being is both a unique individual of inmeasurable value and a social being integral to the whole of humanity.

2. The fundamental basis from which education proceeds is the quality of the human relationship between pupil and teacher.

3. The purpose of education is to enable the whole person to develop in a balanced and harmonious way, both as an individual and as a member of human society.

4. To enable balance and harmony to develop naturally, the realities of quality - truth, beauty and goodness - need to permeate all aspects of education. This entails fostering in the student care and love of all things - including oneself - for animals, plants, the earth and all existence.

5. A child and an adult are identical in their infinite value as human beings; they differ in that a child’s consciousness is qualitatively different from the consciousness of an adult, and only gradually metamorphoses into adult consciousness in the course of maturation.

6. The curriculum of a school needs to be related to the child’s consciousness; it should be enriching and enlivening and provide nourishment for the child’s spirit. This necessitates that formal work be in balanced integration with the arts and learning with creativity.

7. In addition to the normal curriculum there is always a hidden curriculum - that aspect of education which reaches the child on unconscious levels. The hidden curriculum should be consciously designed to be in harmony with the school’s purpose.

8. Freedom is an ultimate goal of human endeavour, but freedom and responsibility are two aspects of the one reality. Freedom can only be obtained through developing self-responsibility and the self-discipline which this entails. Because the child’s consciousness is not mature, the teacher must provide the discipline the child needs to enable self-discipline to develop as maturation proceeds.

9. Learning to work practically with love necessitates growth in consciousness. This can be achieved in education by teachers engaging consciously in self-development in the context of their work.

The key statement in human-centred philosophy is to learn to work consciously with love from one’s own centre. Love in this context manifests itself as commitment to the welfare of the other, irrespective of the emotions involved.

Implicit in human-centred philosophy is its capacity to evolve, develop and be worked with. The practice of education at Korowal comes out of the experience and insight of the teaching staff working in the context of this philosophy.

Many of the forms and structures of Korowal’s practice are based on those of Steiner schools: the Morning Circle, the Main Lesson, the understanding of the development of consciousness from child to adult and the value of the close relationship between teacher and pupil. Much of the content of the curriculum and its relevance to the spiritual and emotional as
well as the intellectual stages of the child also come from Steiner education.

However, we differ in many ways from Steiner schools. Korowal is not founded on Anthroposophy or any other traditional system of belief. We are open to and draw upon many aspects of educational and psychological theory and practice, and always acknowledge the possibility of better ways of doing things. In this sense the school and its philosophy are still evolving, and must always evolve to maintain vitality. The following is a statement of ideas and practices which are not static, but which will continue to grow.

At Korowal we work to encourage the strength and development of the individual student at the appropriate stages of growth in all subject areas from kindergarten to the H.S.C. We also strive to incorporate within our creative ethos difference and diversity for students, parents and teachers. The school works towards excellence, acknowledging the individual development of the child, and utilising both hidden and explicit curricula. Korowal aims to foster a love of learning, a sense of community and to encourage an attitude of care and respect for all people and for all life.

Individuality and the Group.

Education at Korowal addresses itself to the development of the individual, and that individual’s relationship to other people, acknowledging the needs, rights and responsibilities of all. We aim to accept children for what they are and allow them to grow, knowing that the strength of society rests on the strength of its individuals. The self-knowledge developed by each child provides a platform to engage life, to achieve self-fulfilment and to contribute to the development of a humane and just society.

We place maximum value on positive concepts such as beauty, quality and effort, respect and tolerance, providing a counterbalance for negative concepts such as cynicism, prejudice, selfishness and indifference.

“Now as never before we need the imagination, the dedication, the creativity of everyone to get society through the massive transformation required for a planetary society.”

- Margaret Mead

We value the varieties of intelligence expressed not only through intellect and logic, but through art, music, drama, movement, language, imagination, perception and intuition. We encourage students to explore their potential, discovering strengths and weaknesses in themselves and others and becoming aware of frailty and weakness. Education at Korowal is a journey in which the development of self-awareness is paramount.

Graduating students are admired and cherished for their achievements by both teachers and peers. The expression of their talents is diverse, a reflection of the seeds sown in kindergarten and patiently nurtured throughout their schooling.

The Morning Circle.

Look to this day for it is life
The very life of life.
In its brief course lie all the realities and truths of existence:
The joy of growth,
The splendour of action,
The glory of power.
For yesterday is but a memory
And tomorrow is only a vision,
Yet today well-lived makes every yesterday a memory of happiness
And every tomorrow a vision of hope.
Look well, therefore, to this day.

- from the Sanskrit.

One of the most basic ways in which Korowal recognises the individual within the group is the use of the circle; a formation which immediately gives a sense of group and states the equality of each individual.

In Primary School Morning Circle is an essential part of the day. It is that time when,
upon entering the classroom a circle is formed and hands are joined, thus demonstrating that each person is an integral part of one whole group which will work consciously, co-operatively and respectfully together. There is usually a verse or opening song (or both) that acts as a form of reverence, ritual or ceremony. It serves to focus attention towards being together in the classroom and being in control of our individual selves. It sets the tone, the ambience for the day.

_Awake!! The sun is shining bright_
_It drives away the long dark night,_
_The moon and stars have gone to rest_
_The earth in softest green is dressed._
_Now we will open wide our hearts -_
_Of this great world we're all a part_
_And if we work or sleep or play,_
_Be with us, golden sun, this day._

_Sunny candles fade and die,_
_The morning spreads across the sky,_
_So lift up your hearts and gladly sing_ 
_The sun its light to earth doth bring._
_Now we will open wide our hearts -_
_Of this great world we're all a part_ 
_And if we work or sleep or play, _
_Be with us, golden sun, this day._

The High school day begins with a Morning Meeting. Students may shake hands, acknowledging the presence of each other and the teacher. Younger classes may recite a poem or sing a song together. There is less emphasis on ceremony, though this remains important, and more on establishing mutual respect, trust and openness within the group.

_Educating the Whole Person_

Development of the mind, feelings and will are aspects of learning that are considered in the structures and content of the overt and hidden curricula at Korowal. Effective teaching and learning occurs when the teacher deliberately works with thinking, feeling and will knowledge and sleep elaboration at the appropriate level for the student.

The intellectual, abstract, mental processes of thinking need to be enlivened by the feelings and strengthened by the will. Abstract thinking is not introduced too early to prevent it from dominating the feeling life and growing will of young children. As students grow older, of course, feeling and intuition need to be verified by investigation, factual analysis and logical thought. Understanding is deepened as sleep cycles allow learning to be absorbed into the very fibre of the child’s being.

Everything the student perceives has a feeling attached to it or creates a feeling. It is important for teachers to be conscious of the feelings they convey. Teachers must regard their subject most highly and teach with the greatest respect for the subject matter. In this way they build an ‘emotional bridge’ to the students. A love of learning so strongly founded can sustain the child into the more challenging years of high school.

Will is the ability to make things happen, to apply what has been learned. Will knowledge comes through repetitive activities such as reciting poems by heart and learning tables and is necessary for the education of the child as a complete human being. At Korowal daily, weekly and yearly rhythms provide a structure within which the child can orientate and unfold his or her will constructively. Eventually the outer structures are removed piece by piece and replaced with individual responsibility and freedom to become adults who have the inner strength and direction to achieve their aims in life.

_A Curriculum for a Developing Consciousness_

Children deserve time to be children. They are complete human beings in themselves, not uniformed adults. Our curriculum recognises that they possess a different form of consciousness which the teacher may penetrate through empathy, intuitively entering into the child’s world.

We know that children must be nurtured so they may enter the rational, more adult world with confidence as individual thinkers. If this is forced before they are ready, alienation from schooling and loss of the joy of learning may eventuate. Childhood must be left intact or natural development will become unbalanced.
“Youth shall dwell in the land of health, amid fair sights and sounds: and beauty and affluence of fair works will meet the sense like a breeze, and insensibly draw the soul, even in childhood into harmony with the beauty of reason”

- Plato.

Knowledge is acquired both consciously through intellectual stimulation, and unconsciously, through frameworks such as structure, atmosphere and feeling. This is enhanced through sleep elaboration. These two levels of learning are acknowledged in the content and learning experience of the Main Lesson in Primary School and Intensive Study in High School. They are designed to suit the consciousness of the child. The following developmental model is a guide to our view of this evolution.

In Kindergarten, Class One and Class Two the children have an inner world which is creative and spiritual: a world of feeling rather than thinking. Teachers nourish this by working with the imagination through fairy tales, and Aboriginal and native American legends.

Through Class Three and Four children become more vulnerable as they move away from their inner world. They need to build bridges between their inner and the outer world. Lessons become more practically-orientated with Main Lessons such as The Animal Kingdom, The Old Testament and Ancient Egypt.

In Classes Five and Six the children are growing more into self awareness, developing their sense of the world around them. Main Lessons such as Ancient Rome, “Sight and Sound” and “The Dynamic Earth” may be studied.

In Class Seven as they enter high school there is a sense of a new beginning, a change towards adulthood. Judgements are often black and white; reassurance is needed as boundaries are tested. Intensive Studies include The Renaissance, Fire and "Wish, Wonder and Surprise".

In Year Eight the vulnerability of adolescence is at its peak. Students may exhibit bravado, as cynicism and peer pressure dominate the individual. The teacher needs to be a strong, central role model for students in the face of conflicting values. Intensive Studies in Year Eight include the Food Chain, The Industrial Revolution and Environmental Studies.

In Year Nine there is insecurity as childhood is deserted and the uncertain expression of adult character begins to emerge. Parental values are often questioned as students strive to set their own goals and enter upon their own belief systems. Studies such as the First and Second World Wars, “Life is Balance”, “The Power of the Individual” and “Pygmalion” complement growing maturity.

In Year Ten individuality, responsibility and self confidence emerge. Students see a complex world of opportunities with humour and compassion and respond to the challenges offered by studies such as Astronomy, comparative studies in Literature and Religion, Government and Architecture.

The Senior Years often see a mature acceptance of adults, particularly parents and teachers. Independence and self-discipline are needed for self-directed work in preparation for the HSC and tertiary studies. This is the beginning of adulthood.

Quality and Values

We accept that any appreciation of values begins with valuing oneself. Self-esteem grows from a feeling of contributing in important and real ways. One must perceive and feel this for oneself. Only when the teacher brings quality into everything, every aspect of lesson preparation, presentation and relationships in the class, can children be expected to work with quality themselves. Inner quality or quality of effort is the most important. Quality of outcomes may follow but is not an end in itself. Everyone can find meaning in producing quality work.

In one of Alexander Solzhenitzen's books set in a labour camp in the depths of the Siberian winter he describes his work as a bricklayer, how he makes slight adjustments to each course of bricks as he goes along so that the finished wall is good and true. His act of working with quality despite the fact that the project is pointless and in face of the privations and cruelties of his exile, demonstrates that our need to produce quality work runs wondrously deep.

Classrooms, materials and lesson content should reflect this quality. Inspired by an involved teacher, students rise to the challenge of working with difficult problems or texts. Our curricula meet Board of Studies requirements but they do not set the agenda. They are the structures within which we do our real work.

Students who work with a teacher who teaches quality and who have shared quality work with others are happy to attend class and co-operate in the learning process. They enjoy coming to school, not just for companionship, but because they are fulfilling deeper needs, as
Solzhenitsen did when he felt worthwhile building a good wall. This allows them, as it did him, to feel a sense of power and hope.

And the teacher will feel privileged to have shared in the process.

**The relationship between teachers and students**

I offer you peace  
I offer you strength  
I offer you love  
I hear your need  
I see your beauty  
I feel your feelings.  
My wisdom comes from a higher source  
I salute that source in you  
Let us work together.  

- Gandhi.

Students are taught by the same teacher for several years. In the first few years the teacher is the centre of the class and the focus of the child’s experience of school. It is important to provide a warm and spiritually nourishing place for very young children in which love and nurture are central.

As the child grows in independence during the middle primary years the intense devotion of the infant child towards the class teacher develops into a deeper respect based on trust. The teacher is the role model, and must maintain the position of someone who sets the agenda.

By late primary and early high school years, as the student becomes more critical of the adult world the teacher’s challenge is to be strong enough to resist the natural explorative behaviour of children without crushing their spirits. Clear boundaries, within which they have the freedom to take responsibility for their learning and actions, must be held firm when pressed, offering security to the children.

In High School the class teacher meets the class each morning for the Morning Meeting, and follows the student from Year 7 to Year 10, but may only work with the class for a few hours each week as the curriculum is divided into specialist subject areas. Class teachers in high school have the duty to understand the nature of their students so that their advice and guidance can be trusted. The high school teacher aims to open doors for students: to engage their emotions by sharing insights, interests and experience; to engage their minds by presenting problems, and to develop will through mastery of skills and appropriately demanding work.

In Pathways, the final two years of school, the student selects a teacher as a mentor who is the special confidante, guiding and supporting the student through the demands of the HSC.

"If I force the child to see the world in the narrow patterns of my history and my perspectives, I lose the opportunity to be a true teacher"

- Bob Samples.

**Towards Love and Conscious Action**

"To transform the world, we must begin with ourselves. However small may be the world we live in, if we can transform ourselves, bring about a radically different point of view in our daily existence, then perhaps we shall affect the world at large, the extended relationship with others."

- Stephanie Dowrick: "Intimacy and Solitude".

Working consciously for a teacher means to work with love: to see beyond overt behaviour to the evolving person behind. This leads to self-understanding. The child may then learn that it is possible to respond rather than react. This is the beginning of freedom.

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This document was produced by the Education Council of Korowal School.  
February 1997.
APPENDIX B
Honour The Earth

words Shirley Murray
music Judith Clingan

1. God of the galaxies spinning in space,
   God of the smallest seed, our living source:
   yours is the gift of this beautiful place.
   let us care for your garden and honour the earth.

2. Careless and covetous, gross are out greed,
   taking the riches the garden provides,
   wasting its goodness, forgetting its needs,
   Let us care for your garden and honour the earth.

3. Forests and rivers are ravaged and die,
   raped is the land till it bleeds in its clay,
   silenced the birdsong and plundered the sea.
   Let us care for your garden and honour the earth.

4. Let there be beauty, and let there be air
   fragrant with peace, never poisoned with fear,
   freed from the plagues of pollution and war.
   Let us care for your garden and honour the earth.

5. Life is a holy thing, life is a whole,
   linking each creature and blessing us all,
   making connections of body and soul,
   Let us care for your garden and honour the earth.
It's the springs up in the mountains make the rivers of the
plain, That bring water to the cities as they seek the sea at
again, And the rivers fill the oceans and the oceans make the
rain, By the winds blowing over one world.

And folk become our neighbours or our family or
One World
2 There are people in the mountains and the valleys down below;  
There are people in the tropics there are people in the snow,  
Some are happy, some are homeless folk who have no place to go,  
But we all have to live in one world.  

**Chorus**

3 There are workers for their wages out in field and factory,  
There are fishers for our food supply in boats upon the sea;  
There are people still imprisoned in the cage of poverty  
As we labour for life in one world.  

**Chorus**

4 As the sun lights up the morning, and another day is found,  
It's a gift to all that's living, that the world still spins around,  
And the night is still the day but seen the other way around,  
As the sun shines upon this one world.  

**Chorus**

This song paints a broad canvas of the  
activities and resources of the world's people.  
Understanding each other depends on just  
where you stand!
18 Morning Has Broken

1. Morning has broken, like the first morning,
   Black bird has spoken, like the first bird.
   Praise for the singing, praise for the morning,
   Fresh from the word.

C

Em

D7

G

2. Where his feet pass, endings for verses 2 and 3

3. Mine is the sunlight, Mine is the morning,
   Born of the one light, E'en saw play,
   Praise with elation, praise every morning,
   God's re-creation of the new day.

C

G7

2,3, G7
APPENDIX C
A THUMB-NAIL SKETCH of EACH CHILD, APRIL, 1996

Nicola, ten years old, is a quiet, competent student. An independent reader, she is intellectually adaptable and insightful. (Later in the year she is to gain a place at Lithgow Primary School’s gifted and talented program) However, she tends to make do with a minimum of effort and is not particularly interested in detail or description in creative writing. She rarely contributes in class discussion, preferring to listen and watch and it is hard to gauge the impact of the discussion on her. Restraint is shown in avoiding difficulties and she remains unfurled and stable in most situations. She and Wendy have been inseparable for some time and they do not like it if they don’t sit together or are not in groups together. As a pair they can be very exclusive and Nicola can be unable to feel for another child who is left out - this is how it appears because of her behaviour although as she has never verbalised anything of an emotional nature in the classroom yet, this could be a misjudgement. She appears self-contained, concerned about obeying rules and introverted; she is not a leader. Set tasks and homework are completed on time and she is rarely distracted by others except for Wendy when occasionally they get the giggles and go on for ever. Like Wendy she has been at the school since kindergarten.

Wendy, ten years old, is an excellent student, competent in all Key Learning Areas. She likes to write lengthy stories and does so well; she loves to draw and pays great attention to detail in the illustrations. She works in a careful, concentrated fashion. Emotionally mature and disciplined, she is cheerful and resilient. Of the Nicola/Wendy pair, she appears to lead. She talks with confidence in class discussions but doesn’t speak often. Like Nicola, it appears that because they are comfortable with their relationship and have been so for a long time, they don’t seem to believe they have any problems and they have difficulty empathising with another child’s difficulty in making friends. They are two very well-behaved girls that never cause me any trouble (except for the occasional giggle feast) whose complacency I would like to see challenged. (It was to be challenged at the end of the year when Nicola left to go to Lithgow Primary.)

Megan is a very creative and articulate child. Her practical academic skills don’t always quite match her ambition but this rarely puts her off and she is always interesting and inventive. Her drawings are imaginative but lack attention to detail and can be very untidy as is much of her work. She loves drama, role plays, dressing up etc and is assertive and unconventional. Very quick and alert, she contributes actively and intelligently in class discussions. She has a tendency to feel left out and that nobody likes her or wants to play with her if she is not the centre of attention. She is tiny, small-boned with delicate features and wispy blond hair. An unusual feature is a strong tendency to hypochondria; she takes her health very seriously.

Linda is a competent child who lacks confidence. In class discussions or news time, she rarely volunteers information and if asked to contribute sits in silence, giving the impression of a rabbit in headlights. Barbara (the resource teacher) has said she is paralysed with fear. At the beginning of the year I tried gently insisting that she say something during news about her weekend, if only one sentence, but I quickly found that was counterproductive. It seems to be more a question of waiting and building her confidence by indirect means. She is not a leader, nor does she initiate in her work, usually getting her ideas from the child next to her. Low in self-esteem, she has had difficulty making friends; at the moment she is teamed up with Megan but I suspect she needs an exclusive friendship and while this suits Megan at the moment, there are potential problems here in the future if Megan wants a new close friend. A tendency to bitchiness (as most of the girls at one time or another), she is also prone to sulking and whining to me about what somebody has done to her. I feel she needs a lot of loving and assurance that she is OK. Linda is of just above average height, slender but sturdy. She has a pretty face with slightly sharp features, long straight nut-brown hair, probably the most
physically aware of the girls with a conventionally fashionable wardrobe. On camp she had more changes of clothes than anyone.

Carol is a delightful child, a little on the scatty side. Curly blonde hair, thin wiry build, average height, bouncy with a big smile and very affectionate, she is competent in all the Key Learning Areas. She is very chatty and friendly but always gets her work done, usually a bit untidily, sometimes carelessly. She is impulsive and carefree, quick and alert. Currently friendly with Jenny and Chloe, she is open to playing with anyone.

Jenny is a tiny, delicate girl with big, front teeth and long brown hair. She is fast learning and intellectually adaptable and does not let emotional needs obscure the realities of a situation. She is self-reliant and takes responsibility for her own learning. Like Carol she is socially adept and will play happily with anyone.

Anna is a very sturdy little girl, half Indian, with big brown eyes, long brown curly hair and brown skin, smooth as silk. She is potentially a very capable child academically, but has difficulty focussing. She never seems to get started with everybody else and always tries to give an impression of working hard to finish things when everyone has packed up and gone onto the next thing. Her concentration levels are low and she needs extra help with basic skills. Happy-go-lucky and warm-hearted on the whole, she loves drama and will take part very openly in class discussions, being quite up-front about her problems. She doesn’t have a particular friend in the class and sometimes feels that everybody is teasing her. Sometimes she lashes out at the others, swearing at them.

Chloe has white blond, straight hair cut in a bob, framing a pretty little face. She is of slim build and average height. She is competent and confident in all aspects of her work. Like Jenny, she does not let emotional needs obscure the realities of a situation and has shown a great deal of emotional maturity in relation to decisions she has had to make around her schooling. New at the beginning of the year, Chloe was immediately at home in the classroom and accepted by the other children. Verbally articulate, she joins in all discussions with intelligent, thoughtful contributions but doesn’t need to dominate.

Andrew loves sport and is very good at it, going on long cross-country treks with his dad. He is tall and slender with brown hair and eyes, a cheeky grin and is always in motion. A competent student, he loves maths and will focus completely during the maths lesson. He likes to be the furthest ahead in the maths book and will make careless mistakes through speed. He reads well but finds language work harder. “I don’t know what to say, I don’t know what to write”. He doesn’t contribute a great deal in class discussions; I think he believes they don’t really concern him. However he has a lot to say when he feels hard done by. Empathy is not strong in Andrew; he is tall, good at sport and maths and what else could one wish for! There is little feeling for others not so well off! He has a strong dislike of standing next to and working with girls which he has no hesitation about expressing loudly.

Small and blonde, Oliver always likes to do the right thing. He is very conscientious and concerned about rules. His work is usually finished quietly and quietly but he often needs to be told to go back and go over something or finish off this bit that he hasn’t noticed. He’s a bit like a little, old man, quite serious, quite anxious but also quite determined to have his say. He can feel quite strongly about some issues and is not frightened to speak up in class discussions and say his piece.

Simon, a beautiful looking boy with clear tanned skin, is strong and boisterous. He probably has the most testosterone in the class and is the closest to being a behaviour problem; he is never still or quiet, always making noises and bouncing around. A superficial observation of him in the classroom would deduce learning problems but this isn’t the case. He is very competent in all the Key Learning Areas and it is possible that his hyperactivity and inability to focus is holding back a very able academic competence. He has a remarkable ability to project his voice and a truly amazing singing voice - a rock star in the making. He has difficulty relating to the other children, who find him irritating and rarely chose to sit near him. I think he has a very sensitive and loving heart under all this which needs nurturing. He wants to be
‘good’ and to please and often asks for reassurance and when he feels he’s a bit over the top he reverts to a kind of baby talk. I feel he needs to be held close and he does respond to playful physical contact.

Sturdy and of average height with thick brown hair, Robert has great difficulty focusing on anything for even a short period of time. He is a competent child academically but his extremely short concentration span means his work is often unfinished or very scrappy. Occasionally he produces something of great sensitivity. He is very easily distracted and is often very silly, extremely talkative and noisy. If he needs to go to his locker, he is likely to fall over his chair, knock over someone’s pencils, kick open the locker door, stick out his bottom, dance a jig, make a funny face, sound like a kookaburra, come back to his seat, fall over his feet and then realise that he didn’t get what he went to the locker for. I’d love to video him for the funniest home movies - he is so unaware of his behaviour it is really funny but it does sometimes drive me to distraction. Underneath his clowning he is a sensitive child with poor self-esteem.

Peter, with the round baby face and sturdy build, is one of the few children I know who is really sensitive not only to his own problems but can empathise with the position of others and act to help them. A very open gentle child who is developing inner strength, he was very shy when he first came to Korowal at the beginning of Class 2 but is beginning to blossom and is sometimes quite mischievous. Academically he is a slow steady worker, finishing tasks conscientiously. He is very willing in class discussions to state his positions clearly and to listen to others and is a responsive and affectionate child.

New this term (Term 2, 1996), David is very young for the class - 7.11 - but tall and well-built for his age, although his face retains the chubbiness of the younger child. Tested gifted and talented, particularly in language and science areas, he appears academically able but it is possible he will have some difficulty fitting into the small group of boys. There is already evidence that they find him irritating.

At the end of term 3, 1996, Chloe left us to move with her family up the north coast. At the end of the year, Nicola moved to their farm in the Newnes Valley and joined Lithgow Primary’s gifted and talented program and Chris left us to go Blaxland Primary. At the beginning of 1997, the class was joined by four boys which has made a considerable difference to the class dynamic. These thumb-nail sketches come from observations made by the end of term 1, 1997.

John has really been at Korowal since kindergarten. He took leave of absence from term 2 1996 to go adventuring with his mother up the eastern coast of Australia and across to Alice Springs where he attended the local primary school. John is a natural leader - he just can’t help himself. When I recently taught the class how to play the game Race for the Cup he wanted to move everybody’s markers. He knew exactly what to do much faster than any of the other players. It is sometimes very difficult for him to hold back from doing everybody’s tasks - he is a very gifted child. Despite this he is the most popular child in the class, rarely angry, articulate, competent; one of those children it is a delight to have in the class.

James is older than the others, having already turned twelve. This gives me an age range of three years distributed over the fifteen children. James has reading difficulties but apart from that has fitted in very well. Having come from the Steiner school, he is familiar with the artistic work that integral to all that we do and very good at it. He is a quiet, sensitive thoughtful boy with a tall, slender physique and large brown eyes.

Charles is repeating year 5 here at Korowal. His mother was concerned about his level of maturity and also a number of other problems affecting his progress. He has been diagnosed ADD and is on daily medication. He is competent academically but has great difficulty making friends for reasons I find hard to see. He appears to choose to remain separate. Early in the year he spent a lot of time with Megan and Linda but at the moment is very much by himself.
He seems content; his mother says he is always happy to come to school and yet he does not join the other boys in their games. In group work he can be very talkative and contribute well but this is only when I have directed the groups and organised the activity. Outside this he is a loner.

Steven has had an enormous impact on the class, both positive and negative. He has ADD, Asberger’s syndrome and a conduct disorder that borders on emotional disturbance and each condition has an impact on the other in what his psychologist calls a co-morbidity of symptoms. If he forgets his medication in the morning, he is in chaos and the class with him. He is a very large, soft-fleshed boy of almost twelve with no social skills at all. He can be like a delightful four year old or like a dark adolescent, threatening to burn the school down and blow us all headless. He likes to spend time curled up in the sad corner (this is quite appropriate according to his psychologist) as he needs periods of withdrawal from the excessive stimulation of so many children. His maths and reading skills are at a reasonable level but he has difficulty applying the skills in any way. One very good class discussion we had when Steven was away one day hinged around David’s question - *How come Steven got away with more things than anyone else?* Here we looked at Steven’s problems and what each of them could do to help him. However any process of integration here is a long term one and whether we will really be able to do much at all as Steven enters puberty is going to be a soul-searching question.
APPENDIX D
# Peaceful Warriors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to teach the children skills that will enable them to deal responsibly with their own conflicts</td>
<td>listening skills, including comprehension of the other’s viewpoint;</td>
<td>Creating the Peaceable School,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to have them understand that conflict is a transformative force that works powerfully either to enrich or to narrow their lives</td>
<td>skills of cooperation, involving the ability to work constructively with others in the group, including those who are not “best friends”;</td>
<td>He hit me back first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to reduce levels of physical and verbal violence in the classroom</td>
<td>an understanding of the nature of rights and responsibilities;</td>
<td>cooperative games, lessons, role plays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to monitor and reflect on my own handling of conflict in relation to my role as teacher</td>
<td>a growing range of appropriate responses in social situations;</td>
<td>the class discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reflecting on the impact of aggression on resolving conflict situations;</td>
<td>meditation, listening, emotional release work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>specific skills of understanding what is happening when a group of individuals has to function in harmony to achieve goals.</td>
<td>stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the hidden curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(This Source material used throughout program)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Term 2, 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do we need in place to make the class meeting work?</td>
<td>developing self discipline, focus, concentration, will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are responsibilities?</td>
<td>understanding need for rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are rights?</td>
<td>understanding responsibility as a behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the relationship between responsibilities and rights?</td>
<td>experiencing group co-operation in problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do we need classroom rules?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term 3, 1996</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Can children choose how they respond to a situation?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Can children be taught to self-correct?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How can I improve listening skills?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What helps children feel good about themselves?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What do the children understand about conflict?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Can I introduce new concepts which become part of our daily interaction?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| - building of self-esteem                                   |
| - choosing behaviours                                       |
| - the nature of conflict                                    |
| - developing brainstorming skills                            |
| - developing discussion skills                               |
| - understanding co-operation as a behaviour                  |
| - emphasising possibilities of self-evaluation              |
| - understanding prejudice                                    |
| - developing self-awareness about role in conflict situations|
| - understanding retaliation                                  |

Story: Dr Dabble's Spectacular Shrinker-Enlarger

Story: The Way of the Peaceful Warrior
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term 1 and 2, 1997</th>
<th>Term 4, 1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are the children enjoying the program?</td>
<td>How can I incorporate new children into the work already covered?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the beginning of the program?</td>
<td>How do I incorporate new children into a group context?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am I achieving anything that I hoped for?</td>
<td>How will children respond to these emotions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age?</td>
<td>How can mediation be incorporated into our daily activities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is mediation a relevant process at this stage?</td>
<td>How can we look at emotional release work in the classroom?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have I done enough background work?</td>
<td>How can I provide spaces to enable the children to release emotions effectively?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Revision of basic principles towards learning to look inwards emotional understanding and acknowledgement.

The Wise Part Inside, From He Hil me back.

Developing awareness of the Wise Part

Emotional Release drawings

Learning to look inwards emotional understanding and acknowledgement.

Use of the Angry and the Sad cartoons

Watching the breach inside.

Activities in a group context.
PEACEFUL WARRIORS

A program to integrate the spiritual, emotional and spiritual qualities of each child so that they grow able of themselves to express a love of all existence and a power and energy for work.

This program takes as its starting point, activities from three different sources:
1. "He hit me back first" Eva Fugitt
2. "Creating the Peaceable School" Bodine, Strumpf and Crawford
3. "The Mouse, the Monster and Me" Pat Palmer

Format: 2 15 minute class meetings/ week
2  half hour special focus lessons / week

Class meetings:

1. Ground rules of class meeting revisited and extended
2. Responsibilities
3. Rights
4. Responsibilities and Rights
5. Rules

Week 1:
exercise 1a  self discipline and concentration
   materials: a covered tray of 12 small objects
   procedure: children to be given 30 seconds to look silently at objects which are recovered and then write or draw as many objects as they can remember.

exercise 1b  the above + group cooperation
   materials: 2 shoes boxes each with 25 small objects (different)
   procedure: groups of 4 or 5, 30 seconds to view contents of box silently, each group to compile list of items. each group has a few minutes to plan their approach, then 3-5 minutes to write their list. Discussion: what was their plan, how well did it work, what would they do differently next time? what did they learn? Repeat activity with second shoe box discussion as before. would they do it differently if they had a third chance.

PEACE EDUCATION PROGRAM

16-4
"He hit me back first" page 9
Area: Self discipline, concentration, focus, determination.
Comment: These exercises are designed to encourage the act of contration and the development of the will.
Media: A covered tray of ten or twelve objects such as a paper clip, rubber band, comb, bottle top, coin etc. Pencil and paper. Paper or cloth bag.
Procedure: The children gather around the covered tray. They are given 30 seconds to look silently at the objects remembrance as many as they can. When the time is up, the
tray is covered and they are given 3-5 minutes to write or draw as many objects as they can remember. Exercise is to be done silently as this helps them to concentrate.

requested 3 groups
Luke in tears because noone ever wants to be with him
Jake sets up table by himself and expects others to join him but in teh end has to move to the others
-discussion on ways of remembering
-photographing
-listening verbally in the head
-Erica, goes through a yellow spot between her eyes and then sees
-Luke, travels in the black space in his head and finds the objects

17-4
"Creating the Peaceable School" p.31
Purpose: To establish the ground rules of the class meeting
Procedure: Introduce the first four rules with discussion and demonstrations
1. the advantages of the circle format
2. each member is responsible for communication - listening and speaking
3. no interruptions
4. no sarcasm or criticism

Shanti sits by herself - Luke refuses to sit with Seb

18-4
"Creating the Peaceable School" p.47
Purpose: To experience group cooperation in problem solving, to extend earlier will exercise
Materials: Two shoe boxes with 25 assorted small objects eg. keys, comb, knife, match, paper clip etc.
Procedure: Class divided into groups. One chosen as class scribe by the group, each group will be given 30 seconds to look in the box and then they return to their seats to list the items they can remember. The groups are given a few minutes to work out a strategy for approaching the problem. After 5 minutes each item is held up and group lists consulted to see if the item is listed. Discuss how each group approached the problem. What was their plan? Did it work? Would they do it differently next time? What did they learn? Repeat with a different set of objects.

children loved these exercises, all heads together in circles totally focussed on remembering

19-4
"Creating the Peaceable School" p 31
Demonstrate and practise Rule 5
Each time someone in the group finishes making a statement, another group member summarises and clarifies it before anyone else goes onto a new idea.

class discussion: modelling - fascinating - real problems surfaced immediately - Shanti/Nikki
Luke/Jake/Seb - Jake - empathy needs to be developed.
I asked Shanti if she could handle what was happening and Caragh said immediately to Shanti "I'll help you"

Chris: Jake teased me because I offered to sit with Seb.

23-4
"He hit me back first"
Area: Goals, Self evaluation, self discipline, will
Procedure: Introductory discussion of goals, benefits and burdens

At this point I felt that working from the 2 books was to much for the children and I decided to focus on responsibility, rights and building a set of class rules first.

Chris to Luke: You hurt me, I don't want to sit next to you

goals etc. Jake and Luke have difficulties with being with the group, being negative, silly private conversations.


24.4 Seb sitting by himself

26-4
"Creating the Peaceable School" p35
Purpose: To understand responsibility as a behaviour
Procedure: Explaining the idea of responsibility. Class divided into groups and given sheets of newsprint.
1. discussion and list of chores expected to be done at home.
2. discussion and list of ways they are expected to behave at home
Discussion and drawing out from the class ideas to define responsibility
1. Something you are always expected to do
2. A way you are always expected to act
3. A way you are expected to treat someone else.

all the children appear to have daily and weekly chores. Most say they need reminding sometimes but they appear to know that these are their jobs and they must be done.

Report from Janet that when I went home last Wed. Luke was in tears because Seb was teasing him so much he couldn't stand it any longer.
- on excursion, some tension between the 2 - Wayne did a 15 minute trust exercise which he said worked very well. The kids got the idea and quickly trusted one another.

Seb looking for his place in the group.
Luke probably the least secure about his friendships.

30-4
"Creating the Peaceable School" p37
Purpose: To understand that a right is a guaranteed condition
Procedure: initial discussion of what is meant by privilege and freedom

discussion on teasing (taped)
Seb doesn't feel it modifies his behaviour at all
Erica would prefer not to discuss it - I'll leave the teasing discussions for a while.

morning tea after the discussion
Lucas in tears - Jake teasing him about his work
saw both of them together - Lucas also continuously negative about Jake's work
Luke: He's bigger, stronger and doesn't care so much when people tease
Jake plays more with the class 5 boys - very confident, always stands or sits a little
outside the circle or groups - doesn't often contribute

1.5 - no discussion today, class 5 visited during morning circle
Luke stabbed Nikki with pencil - Nikki shoved back

decided to focus on developing Rights and responsibilities before following up on
Goals and Benefits and Burdens

2-5
cont. of above
Brainstorming and listing, first in groups and then in circle format, their privileges and
freedoms as students.

(excursion with Wayne - discussion of aboriginal 3R's - relationship, respect,
responsibility)

Nikki - Jake kicked me, well he kicked me in the arm.
Eden - Jake called me an arsehole

6-5
cont. of above
Discussion and listing: Drawing the idea that rights are privileges that we always have.

Eden - Luke kicked my thumb back. I was just picking up the ball and he kicked up.

It seems clear that 10-15 minutes is the maximum time for concentration for these
issues. Beyond that, and lots of fidgeting goes on and private conversations become
harder to control.

9-5
"Creating the Peaceable School" p39
Purpose: To understand the relationship between rights and responsibilities.
Procedure: Review the definition of responsibility and the idea that rights are
guaranteed conditions. Discuss and emphasise the idea that, even though rights are
guaranteed conditions, enjoying rights requires everyone to accept certain
responsibilities. Group work: Each group to list responsibilities that correspond to
each of the rights listed.
Emphasis on: enjoying a right requires everyone to accept certain responsibilities.

*Jake not clear on differences between rights and privileges.*

10-5
cont. of above
Each student to make a list of personal rights and responsibilities.

*Need to revise concept of rights. Not all students have this clear.*

*Hartley excursion: queuing up - Jake to Seb - Well, you started it anyway (pushing)*
eden and Nikki pushing
*Seb tears up Luke’s game because Luke says mean things in the game*

14-5
Review of Rights and Responsibilities
Discussion of Table 1 (p 18 Creating the Peaceable School)
Getting book work up to date

*Seb still on the outer - noone wants to sit with him*

Class discussion
Friendship - see tape

16-5
Conclude Rights and Responsibilities leading up to the development of Class Rules.
*Children appear to understand the need for rules and their relationship to rights and responsibilities. Class Rules to be finalised next week along with what to do when someone infringes them.*
We brainstormed rules and discussed the rights and responsibilities involved in each.

*Jake  (Seb to stand next to him) moves away. Why ”He’s so annoying” me: Other people are annoying too. Jake - He’s more annoying.*

17-5 Class discussion: friendship (Tape 2)
*Next week, I will sit each child next to someone they don’t usually choose to sit with. Their task - to find out something new about them and to tell me one thing they like about the person.*

20.5 *Chris/Luke: All the girls are taking stuff from our cubby.*
*Nikki: You gave it to us.*
-No we didn’t
Class discussion the children reflected well (unfortunately the tape didn’t work) each reflecting the other’s story
decision - to return the sticks the boys brought down

20.5 *I put the children in pairs. They need to find something new and something they like about the other*
21-5
Rules (Creating the Peaceable School, p. 42)
Purpose: To learn that the real purposes of rules are to let everyone know his or her responsibilities and to safeguard the rights of all.
Procedure: Class discussion - a rule makes clear the relationship between a right and a responsibility. Choosing the 5 most important rules for our classroom and clarifying rights and responsibilities involved. Making the final list for the classroom.

Jake is blatant in his dislike of Seb - makes faces when he has to stand next to him, wipes his hand ostentatiously when he's held his hand - no empathy at all. He has quite a shell - doesn't care if people don't like him - secure in being tall, good at maths and sport - nothing else really matters.

Chris: Luke wouldn't give back my pencil so I wasted all playtime waiting for him to finish (I pointed out rule 3 to Luke)

Have completed 3 class rules - will see how they work all children have signed them to say they understand what they mean and will abide by them.

23-5
Cooperation is ... (Creating the Peaceable School, p. 44)
Purpose: To understand cooperation as a behaviour
Procedure: elicit examples of when each had to work with someone to complete a task. GAME: Groups of 3, facing one another, each with a clenched fist. Students shake their fists up and down together, counting 1, 2, 3, 4. On 4, each one puts out any number of fingers from 0 to 5. The goal is to put out a total of 11. They keep trying until they succeed. NO TALKING during the game. Next: 23 using both hands. Discuss activity. What made the activity difficult? What helped the group to succeed? Did you do better the second time? If so, why?
(postponed to next week - 28.5 - because of Police talks - which didn't happen and because of the PSSA on 24)

friendship discussion - see tape
Seb - still a constant irritation and rubbing raw
boys relationships very scratchy, particularly with Seb
girls are getting on very well

At this point, I'll move back to the will exercises of "He hit me back first" because before moving into the specific exercises for dealing with conflict I'd like the children to begin to realise that they can choose how they behave, that they can decide on their mode of behaviour or reaction to a situation.

28.5 Class discussion re Seb while he was away - see tape
general willingness to help - Jake seems to find him more annoying than anyone else

30.5 Cooperation exercises 2 groups of 3 boys and 4 girls cutting paper to shape for map Jake and Seb in same group Seb. Jake always makes a fuss when he has to work with me
30-5
cont. of discussion of goals: benefits and burdens.
Use of the goal sheet which we will try and use daily until the end of term.

3.6 Children sitting next to someone of my choosing - boy/girl - something new, something liked

4.6 Nikki dropped pencils on the floor so Jake and Luke kicked them around
   not allowed to borrow things - as per consequences of the rules

? Lesson on setting goals

17.6 Seb name calls Caragh

18.6 - discussions re consequences completed
   beginning to use - "How does that help you"

**Term 3 - SELF ESTEEM BUILDING**

UNDERSTANDING OF CONFLICT

23-7
Chinese character for the verb to listen
draw on board as the children watch
leading to class discussion Drawing done as a cover for their PD books

Seb: Luke was trying to push me down the out-of-bounds bank. I asked him to stop.
Chris: You asked him 3 times to stop. Luke said: No I don't want to
Alex: I also asked him
Jake: Before that Luke was fighting
Luke: I went away because everyone was teasing me. When I came back Seb started slapping me.

24-7
Things I like about me
Area: self-evaluation and self esteem building
Comment: helps the child's awareness of some of the positive qualities of the personality, gives opportunity to feel good about the self.
Media: class discussion leading to small group discussion, books and pencils
Once they got the hang of it, the children loved doing this - lots of smiles and laughter

25-7
"I can ...."
Area: as above
Comment: awareness of strengths leading to self acceptance
Media: individual lists, books and pencils
Again the students had no problems doing this and really enjoyed it - some initial embarrassment at first, at liking physical attributes
The "Getting to know me" questionnaire.

28.7 Eden: We asked Luke to give back Nikkis' bag of toys and he did

Eden: Lucas keeps calling me Noddy's girlfriend and he won't stop. Everyone heard her ask him to stop

You know what to do when it is children from the class

Seb: When I ask Chris to stop teasing me, he does.

Eden: Erica stopped calling me Noddy's girlfriend when she was asked.

Don't forget stuff on class meetings - Fugitt p. 20 + other stuff

WEEK 2

30-7
Conflict is:
Purpose: to learn that conflict is a natural part of life (60)
I had to define conflict- interpretation very literal. Need to work with areas where they were having direct problems - Chris and Seb on the train for example

31-7
Class discussion: Basic needs

Luke and Seb fighting - needed 2 discussions on teasing again (see tape)

1-8
IALAC and Killer statements (29)

I am constantly being told that Seb and Luke are fighting.

WEEK 3

Story: Dr. Drabble's Spectacular Shrinker-Enlarger (a story about prejudice)
Children to write their own script from the story to enact with their puppets

Seb: They're all teasing me, saying I should be the skunk because I smell.
6.8 - Seb: Luke deliberately tripped me. (Quality of Seb's voice is very whiny like I am a victim mode)
Shanti and Pippa - piggy back - asked to stop -- showing off

--I didn't do that, Alexander done that!
marble groups - worked well except for Nikki and Seb - Seb hit Nikki

7.8 - Chris: Luke won't let me play just with Alex (on tape)

8.8 Jake and Luke fighting

WEEK 4
12.8
Because of time taken finishing things and preparing for Open Day, I want to spend this week revising certain concepts
- self evaluation questions - How does that help you etc. and write them in books
good discussion but behaviour change very difficult
- killer and IILAC statements
good at killer statements- some cynical asides from Luke, Jake, Seb "killing" the IILAC statements
- scripts of the story Dr Drabble's Spectacular Shrinker- Enlarger are partially complete - complete and perform. Children worked really well together to write their scripts - had great fun doing this. I'm not sure how much empathy was developed

Seb and Luke - Seb ends up on the roof
Seb and Steven (year 6) Seb jumps onto railway tracks (no longer allowed to travel by train)
Seb: Luke won't let me draw what I want. - each doing their own picture for Lorena

15.8 Cooperative numbers
Luke grabbed Alex by the nose until he cried
16.8 Seb punched Luke - playing a game where he and Alex and Chris were pretending Luke wasn't there

Pippa, Erica, Nikki re Erica's wallet (from a parent)
either the girls are not telling me for some reason or they are telling their parents something different

Performance of puppet role plays excellent pity we couldn't video them
Group 1 left out "We know what it's like to be laughed at"

Group 1 Jake, Alex, Pippa, Erika, Nikki. Group 2 Maisie, Seb, Lucas, Caragh, Shanti

WEEK 5
19.8
revise concept of conflict and look at causes and reasons for it.
Acting out the 5 scenes (31) Creating the Peaceable School
The children have difficulty understanding the origins of conflict in terms of unmet needs and different values (with a few exceptions). Limited resources is quite clear. 'Hard' responses to conflict are quite obvious to them but there is a tendency not to perceive conflict at all if the response to it is 'soft'. A principled response is still a concept that is not really part of them.

**WEEK 6**

26.8
Do a conflict review re. p35. The children found this difficult. *I did most of the talking.*

*Pippa doesn't have conflicts!*

*Seb on basic needs: None of my conflicts come from this!*

28.8
revising, writing and drawing the above

29.8
limited time, money resources

**WEEK 7**

2.9
How I respond to conflict - See forms

5.9
Discussion - Hard and soft conflict options

*Alex in peer support: Luke and Seb are experts in conflict*

*Luke and Seb again*

*Seb: I can stop Luke if I stop winding him up. It's a tradition if you like.*

**WEEK 8**

9.9
Scenes of Conflict (Creating the Peaceable School) role play followed by discussion.

*Maisie really upset by the boys teasing her because Seb likes her in the afternoon a big class discussion on teasing -
-boys for playing with the girls
-girls - because boys like them.*

11.9 *Discussion re Seb's lunch box etc, leading to a final agreement (hah!)*

Later Seb found his lunchbox on the ground picked it up and left it open on the bench.

12.9
Conflict revision - writing up

*Some can't think of a conflict - Pippa*

*Chris: I haven't had one for a while*

**WEEK 9**

16.9
Story - Peacemakers and Peacebreakers. I first read this story to the children in Class 2 and it didn't have much impact on them then. It doesn't seem to have much now. It doesn't seem to relate to them somehow. Why?

19.9 Seb: Don't kick me or I'll kick you in the head.

WEEK 10
23.9
Class discussion on the Wise Part within p71 "He hit me back first" - they were extremely responsive to this concept
It needs to be quietly referred to again and again and again. I need to remind myself of this repeatedly re Sebastian.

24.9 Lucas kicked Shanti
Shanti had been chanting - cheat, cheat, cheat
Story to think about over the holidays - the Way of the Peaceful Warrior - Dan Millman.

TERM 4

1. Emotional release work
2. Development of specific mediation skills

EMOTIONAL RELEASE WORK
1. setting up spaces for release of anger - cushions, paper to tear, tree to hug
   sadness - use big round container for children to curl
   up in - cushion and fabric inside.
2. deep breathing daily + relaxation/mediation that leads to sound release
3. emotional release drawings once a week

WEEK 2
21.10
- breathing exercise - page 101
- humming bees 106
these two exercises every day

Tuesday - Speaking with crayons 68
Thursday - Introduction to Mediation

WEEK 3
28.10
Breathing as before + exercise page 103 - Feelings come out in breath.
Humming as before
Thursday - Sound Journey - p. 107

Discussion on expressing Anger and other emotions p. 58
Words to describe emotions. 54/55 - Peaceable School
Feeling words - p 40/41 He hit me back first.
This was a very good discussion. Children enjoyed this - also setting up angry and sad places
Alex: "I'm going to bash up my teddy bear"

29.10  Seb: I don't really care if I get into trouble
Jake: Seb was happy about bashing Lucas
Lucas threatened to push Seb off the cubby
All three to play together at lunchtime and report to me on how they went
-consequences for physical fighting

WEEK 4

4.11
-continue the work with feeling words
-each child has a turn punching the pillow as we finish setting up the angry and sad corners
-we all rip up sheets of newspaper and then play in it - newspaper to rip to shreds in the angry corner
-written work "I can feel ........... we develop a large vocabulary of feeling words as well as making sure children feel it is OK to have emotions.

Friday 8.11
cooperative work in developing a ball-run (Science ML.)
-total focus mostly
I pointed out that the groups that spend their time arguing take longer to finish
That's right - Alex
The last 10 minutes disintegrated into one big petty squabble - It's my turn etc.
in which I intervened as the 'authority' - organise yourself so it's fair without all the squabbling and squabbling and interfering with the other group. Talk about cooperating so everybody has a go, not grabbing for themselves - Shanti sulking.

This was the week of the concert so alot of time was spent on final preparations for choral singing, verse speaking and the play all of which require lots of cooperative effort.

WEEK 5

12.11
13.11 class discussion about teasing and fighting. I was able to make clear the fact that they all believe someone else started it and yet in reality they all played a part in the outcome
Seb. - twice in the week I have hauled him into line loudly and clearly - 1. when he did not respond to a number of requests to get on with his work quietly 2. when he flatly contradicted a direction I had given the class re clearing up the tissue paper
I do not handle his answering back appropriately yet. What is the impact of this on the program?
WEEK 6

19.11
Summarising and focusing on each of the principles of CR  p50 -70
- clarifying interests not positions  using role play with puppets.

Seb came in at lunchtime to punch a pillow
Jake and Chris came to hold it for him

Emotional release drawing
- The Feeling Zoo - The animal you are when you are sad - happy - angry

-add the wise part to the morning breathing - ray of light - star above your head
-silence - In that silence you may ask the wise part within you for the help you need.

20.11 Candlemaking
  candlewax scribble - children had a class discussion without about who did it and how to fix it up.


WEEK 7

26.11
Emotional release drawing - the feeling zoo - frightened  28.11

Children become quite absorbed in their pictures.
Instructions:  to focus on themselves not others - it is their inner picture - not to look at other's drawings
            to go totally inwards, not to interact at all - it is your journey

Seb - always looking to others
Jake - difficulty going inwards - kept his drawing well covered up colored it right in -
gree - kept his face covered up in his hands - hiding. Once he said I didn't have an animal, can I do something else - Yes.
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THE MAGIC QUESTION
"How Does That Help You?"

AREA: Self-discipline, self-awareness and act of will

COMMENT: The question, "How does that help you?" is designed to help children recognize and take responsibility for their behavior. It evokes the innate need for self fulfillment that lies deep within each child, breaking through the usual defenses. The adult is not the authority at that moment. The child is permitted to contact his own authority, to participate in the process of thinking, consciously choosing a behavioral response.

PROCEDURE: When a child is behaving in such a way as to disturb his own or class progress, quietly ask, "Tommy, how does that help you? You needn't answer, but just quietly go inside yourself and think about it."

OBSERVATION: Invariably when asked in this way the child will stop, think a moment and correct the behavior. Usually nothing else need be said unless the parent or teacher wishes to acknowledge the changed behavior with a smile or a thank you or some other appropriate remark.

I am continually amazed at the strength of this question. It has never failed to evoke some form of self-correction. I call it the magic question. Teachers often ask, "What if there is a negative response?" I can only answer that as long as I've used it, there has never been a negative response. However, it needs to be asked in a nonjudgmental tone and, like everything else, it can be overused and lose its magic. There is usually a silent response with a change of behavior, e.g., a child with a disruptive behavior may simply sit in silence for the rest of the period, or choose an appropriate action such as finishing a math assignment.

To expand individual awareness to group awareness the question may change to, "How is that helping the group?" or, "How is that helping your neighbor?"

One fourth grader who had been exposed to this question went on to the fifth grade still in need of much growth in self-discipline. Shortly after the beginning of the year the fifth grade teacher came to me and asked what he could do with Charlene. Her behavior was "driving him up the wall." It was suggested that the next time her behavior was disturbing he might ask, "How is that helping you, Charlene?" He later reported that he didn't know what happened, but it worked like a charm. When asked, she stopped, looked at him, thought for a moment, smiled and quietly went back to her desk and sat down. Though still dependent on external control for behavior modification, at that moment she was able to stop and correct the behavior with an internal decision.
Self-Correcting Questions

Is there another way of saying it?
If that continues, will it get you a benefit or burden?

How is that helping you?
Are you willing?
LIBK
Do you choose?

How does that help the group?
Check it out with the wise part within you.
LIBK
Let It Be Known

AREA: Communication, self-esteem, use of will.

COMMENT: This is a simple technique that the children enjoy. It is another way of helping them become aware of alternatives and choice of behavior.

MEDIA: Class discussion. Chalk board, chalk, eraser.

PROCEDURE: Several days before presenting the lesson, place cards with the letters LIBK around the room, on the bulletin board, on the door, on the teacher’s desk. Children become very curious. When introducing it simply say, “LIBK means Let It Be Known.” Write it on the board. Share with the children that we all have a right to let our needs and desires be known. This does not mean that we’ll always get what we want. It may not be possible at the moment, or it may not be best for us. However, we can Let It Be Known, or LIBK. When it is let known to other people in an appropriate way, there is an excellent chance that it will work out for us.

One day Sheila haulied off and slugged Lisa sitting in the desk behind her. Lisa began yelling and crying. A game of uproar had begun. I asked Sheila why she hit Lisa. She responded:

“She kept pushing her desk against mine.”
“That must have been annoying. Is there another way in which you could have let it be known?”
“Told you.”
“Yes. Another way than telling the teacher?”
“Could’ve asked her, but she probably wouldn’t stop!”
“Did you try?”
Shoulder shrug.
“Any other way?”
“Moved my desk.”
“Yes, that is another possibility. Hitting other people usually brings burdens. Think of other ways of LIBKing that will be acceptable to both you and the other person.”

Talking with Lisa uncovered the problem of not being able to see the board, leading to the desk-pushing episode. Looking at alternatives of Letting It Be Known so that both she and her neighbor could be winners helped bring about reconciliation.

OBSERVATION: We had been working on alternative ways of LIBK other than the usual yelling, name calling, hitting and pushing. We’d had class meetings, role playing, and written assignments on the subject. I continually evoked their awareness of choice by asking, “Is there another way of letting it be known?”, “Is there another way of saying it?” One morning while on yard duty I had resorted to using the old authoritarian method of yelling at some boys who were still playing after the bell rang. Kim, with some other girls, came laughing up to me, wagged a finger, and said, “Ah, ah, Mrs. Fugitt! Is there another way you can LIBK?” The delightful healing quality of humor brought an immediate change of attitude. We all laughed and shared a moment of closeness as we walked together. The children and I were both learning to self-correct and LIBK in more acceptable ways.
IALAC AND KILLER STATEMENTS

AREA: Self awareness and acceptance, feelings, self-esteem.

COMMENT: This exercise, based on the familiar IALAC story by Sid Simon, is designed to provide the student with the awareness of negative and positive statements and alternative ways of responding to others. It provides the attitudinal words, IALAC and Killer Statements that become a tool for self awareness and self-correction.

MEDIA: Story telling, chalk board, group discussion, role playing.

PROCEDURE: The teacher makes three signs, each sign progressively smaller than the one preceding (8½ x 11 is a comfortable size for the first sign). On each sign print the letters IALAC in large capitals. The paper used should be able to tear easily.

As the story begins hold the largest sheet of paper up under the chin.

IALAC¹

Once upon a time there was a little girl named Karen. She had a large sign across her chest with the letters, IALAC. All of us have this sign too. You have one and I have one, we just don’t always see it, but it’s there. Every night when Karen would go to bed she would look at her sign, give a big sigh, tuck it under her chin and go to sleep.

The next morning when she woke up she went to the bathroom and found the door locked. Her brother yelled at her, “Go away, stupid! It’s my turn and I can stay as long as I want!” (Tear strip off sign, letting strip fall to floor.) Karen sighed and went back to her room. As she struggled to make her bed she asked her big sister to help her. Her sister answered, “Why should I help you, baby! I have enough to do!” (tear strip off sign).

Karen went downstairs to breakfast. Her mother yelled at her, “Hurry up! You’re going to be late! What’s the matter with you! Pour the orange juice and don’t spill it!” (tear strip off sign). As Karen went to school she saw some friends at the corner and called to them to wait. They just laughed and ran on without waiting (tear strip off sign). As she hurried to catch up with them some boys came running behind her and pushed her down (tear strip off sign).

When Karen got to class everyone was yelling and the teacher got mad at them, saying, “All right, boys and girls, if this is the way you are going to behave we’ll just have that history test now instead of next Thursday!” (tear strip off sign).

(Continue in the same vein, going through the entire day at school, the play period after school and the evening at home up to bedtime. Make every contact a negative one and tear a strip off the paper sign each time a negative statement is made.)

That night when Karen got in bed she looked at her sign, (hold up the smaller sign) saw it was much smaller, tucked it under her chin, sighed deeply and went to sleep. The next morning Karen woke up and the day continued very much like the day before, with people yelling at her (tear sign), no one having time to listen (tear sign), everyone too busy to help (tear sign) no one seeming to love her (tear sign). That night her sign was very small. She looked at it, sighed deeply, tucked it under her chin and went to sleep.

Well, what can we do to make her sign larger? Let’s see what will happen to it if Karen had a day like this:
When Karen woke the next morning and went to the bathroom her brother was just finishing and said, "Hi, Karen, it's all yours!" (pick up piece of torn paper and hold under chin). As she was making her bed her big sister said, "Here, let me help you. Beds are kind of hard to make all by yourself" (pick up piece of torn paper, adding to previous piece). As Karen went to breakfast her mother said, giving her a hug, "Good morning, honey. Pour the juice and breakfast will be ready." As she walked to school her friends saw her and called that they would wait for her (pick up strip of torn paper).

When Karen got to class the teacher said, "You know, boys and girls, I've been thinking about that test I gave you and have decided that I wasn't very fair. How would it be if I just threw the test away and we talked about some of the things you need help with?" (pick up piece of paper).

(Continue the story, going through the same events of the day as told before, except this time change each negative statement to a positive statement, right up to bedtime.)

As Karen went to bed that night she looked at her sign which was larger and read, I AM LOVEABLE AND CAPABLE. She sighed happily, tucked it under her chin and went to sleep.

**OBSERVATION:** When this story was being told to a class of fourth graders one little boy jumped up and down and yelled, "Whooooooeeeee!" every time a "killer statement" was made and the paper was torn. He related completely to each killer statement. During the discussion following the story he said, "Every time someone said something mean to her it made her heart tear a little."

I asked the class to give some IALAC statements to list on the board. They had great difficulty in thinking of IALAC statements. They were then asked if they could list Killer statements. Killer statements are those that hurt us, cut us down, make us feel not okay. The children proceeded to fill two entire boards with Killer statements. They knew them well. After they had released all the Killer statements they seemed to be free then to list IALAC statements. I encouraged their thinking by asking, "How would you like to have it said?", showing a possible alternative.

The class then chose some of the situations listed and role played them. As the year progressed they became more comfortable with them and were able to stop and change easily.

They were encouraged to say, "Hey, you just tore my sign when you said that." I encouraged the recognition of the statements by asking, "Is there another way you can say it?" IALAC signs were made and worn for several days as reminders that they are indeed Loveable and Capable.

---

1Concept based on *I Am Loveable and Capable* by Dr. Sidney Simon, copyright 1973 Argus Communications, a division of DLM, Inc., Allen, Texas. Used with permission of the publisher. All rights reserved.
THE WISE PART WITHIN

AREA: Self-esteem, self-awareness, self-correction, act of will, choice, Transpersonal Self.

COMMENT: This is a technique designed to help the child get in touch with the part within him that is always in perfect harmony with life. The recognition of self as used in psychosynthesis, i.e., recognition of the "wise part" or unifying center of the self, is developed so that the child will have a tool or guide to help the process of making the best possible choice she/he is capable of making. It is through this awareness of self that self-esteem and sense of inner authority come. The basic purpose of psychosynthesis is to release or help release the energies of the Self.

MEDIA: Class Discussion

PROCEDURE: To introduce the concept of the Wise Part Within simply say something to the following effect:

"There is a wise part within all of us. There is a wise part within you. A wise part within me. A wise part deep within everyone you know. The wise part in you is so wise that it knows what is right for you far more than I. It is so wise it evens knows what is right for me and what is right for the group.

"One of the ways to get in touch with that wise part within is to sit quietly, take several deep breaths, so silently that you can hear the sounds in the next room. Breathe slowly, at your own rhythm. As you experience your body becoming quiet, you may wish to visualize in that creative place in your mind a lovely flower or a white fluffy cloud in a blue sky. You may visualize a diamond or a star above your head. Experience the silence. In that silence you may ask the wise part within for the help you need."

OBSERVATION: Assagioli calls it the Transpersonal Self. Jung calls it the Higher Self. James calls it the Deep Center. In an attempt to simplify a highly complex concept, to put it in the language of children, I call it the Wise Part Within. The children seem to intuitively know what is meant by these words and respond dramatically to them. I have often been asked by teachers, "What do parents say?" My response has been that I've never had a parent deny that his/her child has a wise part within him. I shared this concept and how I use it with the parents of my children. I led them in an exercise of getting in touch with the wise part deep within themselves. They responded, as did the children, with instant, intuitive recognition and acceptance of the concept, giving full support to teaching it to their children.
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Rights and Responsibilities

RESPONSIBILITIES ARE . . .

♦ Something you are always expected to do
♦ A way you are always expected to act
♦ A way you are expected to treat someone else

RIGHTS ARE . . .

♦ Guaranteed conditions
  (what you should always expect)

Enjoying a right requires everyone to accept certain responsibilities.
**My Rights and Responsibilities**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Write some of your own rights and responsibilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RIGHTS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITIES</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Example:</em> I have the right to be myself and be respected.</td>
<td><em>Example:</em> I have the responsibility to respect others, even if they are different from me.</td>
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</table>

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Understanding Conflict

**Origins of Conflict**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limited Resources</th>
<th>Unmet Basic Needs</th>
<th>Different Values</th>
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<td>Time</td>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td>Beliefs</td>
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**Responses to Conflict**

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<th>Principled</th>
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<td>Pushing</td>
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<td>Denying</td>
<td>Hitting</td>
<td>Respecting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Giving in</td>
<td>Yelling</td>
<td>Resolving</td>
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Words to Describe Some Emotions

Happy
Hurt
Excited
Lonely
Annoyed
Anxious
Powerless
Frustrated
Festive
Angry
Comfortable
Embarrassed
Sad
Courageous
Peaceful
Confused
Furious
Tense
Scared
Secure
Afraid
Terrified
Proud
Joyous
# Emotional Situations

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Write the emotions and the possible causes for them in the following situations. *Clue:* Basic needs for *belonging, power, freedom,* and *fun* are often involved in emotional situations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SITUATION</th>
<th>EMOTION</th>
<th>WHY?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your aunt just called to say your favorite cousin is coming to spend the weekend.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>You are angry with your best friend because he or she did something with a classmate and you were not asked to join them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your teacher is punishing you for something you believe is not your fault.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>You have just learned that your best friend’s father has accepted a job in another state, and the family is moving very soon.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have just been notified that your poster was selected to be your school’s single entry in the state contest for Earth Day.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
My Anger Situation

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Think about a recent situation in which you became angry, then fill in the following information.

I was angry with:

What happened:

The other person wanted:

I wanted:

I was angry because:
Rule for Expressing Anger

**THE RULE IS . . .**

Only one person can express anger at a time.

While the other person vents:

♦ Listen.

♦ Take deep breaths.

After the other person vents:

♦ Say, "I understand you are angry."

---

When emotions are known to both sides, the people in a conflict are better able to focus on solving their problem.
Mediation is a communication process in which a third party helps people work together to resolve conflicts peaceably.

THE MEDIATOR HELPS THOSE IN CONFLICT . . .

♦ Focus on the problem and not blame the other person.

♦ Understand and respect different views.

♦ Communicate wants and feelings.

♦ Cooperate in solving a problem.

Mediators are peacemakers.
Role of the Mediator

THE MEDIATOR . . .

♦ Is impartial (does not take sides).
♦ Listens with empathy.
♦ Is respectful.
♦ Is trustworthy.
♦ Helps people work together.

The mediator builds trust and cooperation, making mutual problem solving possible.
Steps in the Mediation Process

♦ Step 1: Agree to Mediate
♦ Step 2: Gather Points of View
♦ Step 3: Focus on Interests
♦ Step 4: Create Win-Win Options
♦ Step 5: Evaluate Options
♦ Step 6: Create an Agreement
Sample Mediation

STEP 1: AGREE TO MEDIATE

Hannah: Welcome to mediation. My name is Hannah.
Drake: My name is Drake. We are your mediators. What are your names?
Antonio: My name is Antonio.
Joe: My name is Joe.
Hannah: The rules of mediation are: Mediators do not take sides, take turns talking and listening—so don’t interrupt each other—and cooperate to solve the problem. Are you willing to follow these rules?
Joe: OK.
Antonio: Yes!

STEP 2: GATHER POINTS OF VIEW

Drake: Antonio, please tell what happened.
Antonio: Well, I was getting the last basketball out of the ball bin. I got there first. While I was asking some friends to play with me, Joe came along and tried to take the ball. He said he should get to play with the ball because he always does.
Drake: You were getting the last basketball to play with some friends, and Joe tried to take the ball. He wanted to play with the ball like he always does.
Antonio: Yeah . . . that’s what he did.
Drake: Joe, please tell your point of view.
Joe: Well, it was my ball because I always play with it. That is all I want to say.
Drake: Joe, you believe the ball was yours because you always play with it. Antonio, how did you feel when that happened?
Antonio: I was mad. He was being a bully. That’s why we got into a fight.

Drake: You were mad and got in a fight with Joe. Do you have anything to add?

Antonio: No.

Drake: Joe, do you have anything to add?

Joe: I wanted the ball, and I fought Antonio for it. He never lets me play on his team.

Drake: You never get to play on Antonio’s team, and you fought Antonio for the last ball.

**STEP 3: FOCUS ON INTERESTS**

Hannah: Antonio, what do you want?

Antonio: I want to play basketball with my friends.

Hannah: Joe, what do you want?

Joe: If there is only one ball left, I want it.

Hannah: Why do you want the ball?

Joe: I want to play basketball.

Hannah: Well, you both want the same thing. You want to play basketball.

Antonio: Yes.

Joe: Yes.

Hannah: So what’s going to happen if you don’t reach an agreement?

Antonio: Well, I think we’ll be rushing out early to try to get the ball from each other and end up in the principal’s office again for fighting.

Hannah: So you’re saying if you don’t solve the problem, you’re both going to be rushing out to get the ball and probably fight again.

Antonio: Yes.
Hannah: *Joe, do you have anything to say about that?*

Joe: Well, I think if we don't find an agreement we'll just always be arguing about who gets the ball and never get to play.

Hannah: *How would you feel if you were the other person?*

Antonio: I might feel left out. I didn't know Joe wanted to play on my team.

Joe: I would be happy to play on a team with my friends.

Hannah: *Both of you seem to want to reach an agreement so you don't fight over the ball. Both of you want to play basketball and be on a team with friends.*

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**STEP 4: CREATE WIN-WIN OPTIONS**

Drake: *Now it's time to create Win-Win options. We use brainstorming rules to create options. You may say any idea that comes to mind, but do not judge or discuss ideas at this time. Try to come up with as many ideas as possible, and try to think of unusual ideas. OK, suggest ideas that will help both of you.*

Antonio: Well, if we took turns—like one time he could get it, and then one time I could get it. We could keep going like that.

Joe: Well, I think that if there is only one ball left, we should just share it and play ball together.

Drake: *Remember to think of unusual ideas.*

Antonio: We could organize a team sign-up sheet.

Joe: We could have a tournament.

Antonio: We could ask the principal to buy more basketballs.

Joe: We could play indoor soccer. More people can play soccer.

Drake: *Can you think of anything else to do?*

Joe: Not right now.

Antonio: Me, either.
STEP 5: EVALUATE OPTIONS

Hannah:  OK, let’s think about all the options. Do you think any of these will work?

Antonio:  I don’t think the principal is going to buy more balls.

Joe:  I don’t think so either. I think it would be hard keeping track of taking turns and remembering who had the ball last.

Antonio:  Yeah, we might fight over whose turn it was to play with the ball. It would work to play basketball together.

Hannah:  Can you combine options?

Joe:  We could combine the team sign-up with the tournament.

Antonio:  We probably need to ask the principal if that would be all right.

Hannah:  Is playing basketball together and asking the principal about team sign-up and a tournament a fair solution?

Antonio:  It’s fair.

Joe:  Yes, I think so.

STEP 6: CREATE AN AGREEMENT

Drake:  How will you do it?

Antonio:  We could play basketball together tomorrow.

Drake:  When?

Antonio:  We could play at lunchtime.

Drake:  What is your plan for the sign-up and tournament?

Joe:  We can talk to the principal after school today. If he says yes, we can make the sign-up sheets for the teams and put together the tournament.

Drake:  Antonio, what have you agreed to do?
Antonio: I have agreed to play basketball with Joe tomorrow at lunchtime and to go with Joe to talk with the principal about the team sign-up and the tournament.

Drake: Joe, what have you agreed to do?

Joe: I will play basketball with Antonio tomorrow at lunch and go with him to talk to the principal, and make the team sign-up and put the tournament together if it’s OK.

Antonio: I’ll help with sign-up and tournament, too!

[Hannah and Drake shake hands with Antonio and Joe.]

Drake: Do you want to shake hands?

[Antonio and Joe shake hands.]
APPENDIX G
PJ: "Drabble!" "You're drabble!" "Well, I'm going to shrink the wrong button."

drabble: "Oh, no... I pressed the wrong button."

PJ: "Where's the watermelon?"

drabble: "I'm going to shrink the watermelon."

Ann: "You sure have shrunk it."

drabble: "What?"

PJ: "Where's annn?"

drabble: "I'm going to shrink the watermelon."

PJ: "You're drabble!"

Drabble: "I'm sorry, but I had my new invention called the Shrinking Machine to see if it worked."

Ann: "Are you laughing?"

PJ: "I'm just trying to see if your nose is going to grow."

Ann: "I can't help you up, and what are you laughing at?"

PJ: "When there were drabbles, they looked over there at that thing."

Ann: "Still!"
"Oh no, I must of run out of fuel!"

white "What does it run on?"

white "On those coffee beans!"

white "Not going any where looking like this."

white "Alright... well go."

white "Ho Ha HE Hi He Ho Ha Hi He ect"

white "Um can we have some um coffee beans?"

white "You sure can."

white "Aren't you going to laugh at us?"

white "No, we know how it feels."

white "I didn't need those coffee beans..."

white "Just teaching you not to laugh at people."
APPENDIX H
CLASS RULES

RULE 1: We will participate in learning. This means: I have the right to listen and learn and have the responsibility to let others listen and learn.

RULE 2: We shall respect others. This means: I have the right to be myself and I have the responsibility to treat others as individuals.

RULE 3: We shall respect people and their property. This means: I have the right to be safe in this school and I have the responsibility to make sure others and their property are safe.
APPENDIX I
Teacher: There appears to be a problem for the boys
Simon: inaudible - something about David
Teacher: David?
David: Well, you have to do what most of the group is and I was trying to do that and they wouldn't really do anything that I wanted to do like they were sort of mucking around too
Teacher: Would you like to reflect back what David was saying?
Megan: He's saying that he was trying to join in but they wouldn't let him
Teacher: Is that what David said?
Class: No.
David: inaudible
Teacher: That's what you meant, was it David. So Megan managed to read underneath what you were saying (laughter) because it's not actually what you said. OK So say it again Megan.
Megan: inaudible
David: ....What they were doing, they were doing it and I couldn't really join in with what they were doing.
Teacher: So I'll reflect that one. What David is saying is that Simon and Andrew were doing something that didn't leave room for him to be part of it. Does that sound right to all of you when I'm reflecting it back. Does that sound right to you David?
David: Yes, cos they started it and I was all left out and I had to join in and I had to sort of be a bit of a pain to barge into their thing. That's why they thought I was being annoying.
Teacher: So you felt left out so you had to barge in to be part of the group and you can see why they would have found that annoying. Yes, does that make sense? He felt left out, and can you hear this Andrew and Simon? David felt left out and in order to find a space within the group because I had asked you to work as a group of 3, he'd kind of barged in or pushed in order to try and be part of the group.
So we've got these two issues in the class. This one here and now one with David who's new in the class. Andrew would you like to say something.
Andrew: inaudible
Teacher: Andrew is saying - somebody reflect back what Andrew is saying
Robert: Andrew feels that David is always annoying him
David: I do understand that I am annoying
Teacher: reflect David
Carol: He understands he's being annoying
Teacher: So David understands that he's being annoying so maybe we can work with that so that David annoys Andrew less. Andrew, maybe there's something you can do to help David
Simon: He just does like really stupid stuff like makes up these really dumb comments.
Teacher: Somebody reflect Simon
Peter: He makes up these really stupid comments. Simon feels that he's makes a lot of dumb comments
Simon: No not me, David
Teacher: You never make dumb comments Simon?
Class: Yes
Teacher: I don't want to get involved in alot of who said this and he said that etc. The issue is that you find David annoying, but he is a member of our class and we need to find a way of working with him. David, are you happy with us working like this? You don't feel that they're getting at you. Well, what would you like to say to that?
David: They're sometimes annoying to me. They're kind of .... I didn't start annoying them. They started sort of getting to me.
Teacher: Somebody reflect David and how he feels about it
Chloe: inaudible
Teacher: And he said a couple of other things that are very important and very critical and that we need to hear.

Megan: He said that they won't talk to him and that they're teasing him.

Teacher: So we're going to have to leave the discussion here. I want you to think about your position on these issues. I want you to remember that David is new in the class and can you imagine how you felt when you came into a class when you were new?

Peter: I cried when I first came into the class.

(Everybody talking at once)

Teacher: What are we forgetting and who are the biggest offenders?

We're putting our hands up. To finish this discussion I want each of you to say how you felt when you were a new person in the class particularly those of you who have been new and weren't here in kindy. Put up your hand if you weren't here in kindy. Chloe, how did you feel when you first came?

Chloe: Scared

Teacher: Megan, what happened to you when you first came.

Megan: Inaudible

Teacher: I'll do the reflecting here. When Megan came she only knew one person - Jenny and she felt quite lost. She did know one person. Simon how did you feel when you came?

Simon: I felt OK because I knew John for a long time

Teacher: Peter?

Peter: Inaudible ... and I thought John was a girl. (much laughter)

Teacher: Peter was scared and Robert was his only friend and he thought John was a girl.

David did you know anybody at all when you came here?

David: Well not exactly when I stepped into the school.

Teacher: When you very first came, on the Tuesday of this week, did you know anyone to be friends with?

David: I knew Simon - Simon was my friend on the first day.

Teacher: I'm thinking about before you even arrived. Simon knew John before he even came to the school. Megan knew Jenny before she came to the school. Did you know anybody at all before you came into the school?

David: No

Teacher: You didn't. David didn't know a single person when he came into this classroom so do you think it's a good idea to feel what he might be feeling in trying to find his way around.

Simon and Andrew, I'm asking you to think of that and feel what it would be like. Oliver?

Oliver: When it was my first day in kindy I was very shy and I felt lonely ..... 

Tuesday 30 April, 1996

Teacher: Now I haven't managed to talk to David about this yet but yesterday three of the girls came to me, Wendy, Megan and Carol. Would you like to say what you said to me then please so David can reflect it back.

Wendy: Well David was teasing me

Teacher: Would you like to reflect what they said, David?

David: I was calling them names.

Teacher: Yes and what else? Megan, can you say it again?

(Inaudible)

Teacher: They have said that David was teasing them and calling them names. What would you like to say David?

David: Well, I wasn't

Teacher: You're saying that you weren't. Would you like to say the names that David was calling you. Maybe he doesn't see them as teasing.

Wendy: He was calling me mainbrain.
Teacher: He was calling you *mainbrain*. Would you like to repeat it back.

David: I was calling them *maizebrain*.

Teacher: You were calling them *maizebrain*. And what have you got to say to that? Did you say that? (Yes) Did you think that you were teasing them when you said that?

How did you feel when David said those things to you?

Wendy: I felt angry.

Teacher: How did Megan feel?

Megan: I felt really angry.

Teacher: Megan felt really angry. See if you can say, Wendy felt angry.

OK so how do you feel about what you said now.

David: They didn't like it.

David: That they didn't like it. But when you were doing it you didn't get that sense but can you see it now. So what kind of thing would you do now? What do you think would be a good way to behave now that you know that they don't like it?

David: Don't call them names.

Teacher: Do you think that you can do that?

Peter: When we were playing soccer yesterday the girls were calling us *goldilocks* and stuff like that.

Teacher: Would one of the girls like to reflect that back so that we know you've heard it.

Wendy?

Wendy: Peter said that we've been calling the boys *goldilocks*.

Teacher: And anything else? other names? OK Peter could you repeat that please, what you just said to Robert.

(inaudible)

Another girl repeat what was just said. Chloe

Chloe: They called him *karate kid* because he didn't want to be called *goldilocks* because he was angry.

Teacher: How did you feel when they started calling you names, Peter?

Peter: I felt sad.

Teacher: One of the girls. How did Peter feel?

Jenny: He felt sad. (general talking)

Teacher: Put your hands up if you want to say something. David?

David: I was called names too.

Teacher: You were called names too. (general talk about whether David was there or not. He and Simon were doing blindfold exercise with Paul). This is not a forum for private discussions. It's a forum for really working out what's going on. OK. Girls, now that you've heard how the boys felt what do you think could happen to your behaviour? Megan?

Megan: We could stop what we're doing.

Teacher: Do you think you will stop what you're doing. There seems to be a lot of this name calling going on at the moment. Andrew?

Andrew: I don't mind it.

Teacher: You don't mind it. (indecipherable discussion) OK Andrew doesn't mind it

Andrew: But that doesn't mean that you can tease ... the girls were going *goldilocks*.

Teacher: So the girls were standing in a little group like a gang of them (lots of laughter). So what is the impact of a gang of little girls (lots of laughter) - sounds funny now doesn't it. Let's go back to how Peter felt when there's a gang of little girls all shouting *GOLDILOCKS. GOLDILOCKS. (If you want to say something please put your hand up, remember our class meeting rules) Andrew?

Andrew: It was Robert being called *Goldilocks*.

Teacher: Robert or Peter or whatever. How did you feel when they began to do it? Did you think it was great fun.
Peter: No. At the beginning we did but as they kept on saying it over and over.

Teacher: So when it happens the first time it ....

Robert: It was fun the first time but all the other times it got a bit mean.

Teacher: Would you like to repeat that back? Jenny?

Jenny: It was fun the first time but all the other times it was getting annoying.

David: It's sort of a joke the first three times and then it starts to get annoying.

Megan: David is saying that it's like a joke the first time but it gets really annoying if it keeps going.

Teacher: How do the girls feel if the boys gang up and call them a name. Jenny? Carol? How do you feel if the boys go *maizebrain, maizebrain*. You might find it funny the first time. Are you going to find it funny the tenth time? (chorus of half yeses and noes) So you love being teased, Oliver?

Oliver: Don't mind sometimes.

Teacher: So let's look at the question like this. Being teased sometimes is fun and other times, as we can see from today, the girls got upset and annoyed by things David said. The boys, some of them got annoyed by this gang of girls calling out to them. How are you going to work out when the change takes place? What can you do to signal to another person that you've had enough and you don't find it funny any more.

Somebody: Say stop it

David: Just walk away.

Teacher: But what if you want to be part of the game? I mean when we go out on bushwalks you all want to play with one another. So how do you handle it, when you thought it was a joke the first time but the fifth time you're fed up. What do you think Oliver?

Oliver: Uuuummm. Ignore them.

Teacher: Suppose they keep on and on. Chloe?

Chloe: You can tell the teacher.

Teacher: You can tell the teacher. What else can you do? What can you choose to do?

Chloe: Tell them to stop.

Teacher: You can ask them to stop, can't you. If somebody turns around to you, suppose you're the person doing the teasing, if somebody turns around to you and says: Will you stop that. What are you going to do? Simon?

Simon: Stop.

Teacher: Really. (around the class) You're not going to stop, David?

David: I do stop sometimes.

Teacher: Well, why don't you stop all the time?

David: Because hardly anyone says stop to me. Normally they say it rudely like Shut up or something.

Robert: That's not rude.

Teacher: OK. David says he's not going to stop unless he's asked politely. What is your experience of asking people politely? (laughter) My experience when I ask you to do something politely is that you don't take any notice. If I yell and scream and throw a tantrum, then you stop. (laughter)

Someone: You haven't thrown a tantrum.

Teacher: It's pretty close sometimes. One day I will. OK. Now, can I ask you, I want to ask you a very serious question. If I bring to this group for discussion when somebody complains to me that somebody else has been teasing them or has done something not very nice or isn't being very nice and they tell me and then I bring it to our class meeting, does that make some people feel they're not going to tell me in future. Megan?

Megan: Yes it does make me feel like that.

Teacher: So does that mean you don't really want to deal with it. You'd rather not talk about it at all. What do you want to do about the teasing then?

Megan: I just want to shut it away and hope it never happens again.
Teacher: Do you think that helps it to stop?
Class: No.
Teacher: Is it too painful for the people involved to talk about it. David, how did you feel when Carol was upset about you teasing them. Do you mind it being talked about? Do you think it helps you to work on your behaviour?
David: It doesn't.
Peter: When I go to bed I put all my problems in a little bag and put them away in my cupboard.
Teacher: That's a very good idea, Peter.
Do you want us to not talk about teasing at all?
Robert: I don't know but I'd like to get it over with.
Teacher: What do you think we should do about teasing?
Class: Stop it.
Teacher: I'd like you to think about that for next meeting. What do you want us to do about the teasing?
Class: Stop, stop.
Monday 19 May, 1997

Teacher: Two things happened on camp that I think we need to re-discuss and they’re repeats of things that have happened many times before so we need to look at them and see what you think and what you’re going to do about it so it doesn’t keep on happening. The first one - there were a number of incidents where Oliver ended up in tears and in very bad temper. Is that correct Oliver? (yep) That’s the first thing that we need to discuss - how that situation ... that’s happened before and on listening to Mark telling me something that was happening on a bushwalk Oliver is in ... feels that when we talk about it, it helps for about a week and then all the teasing starts up again. Is that a fair comment Oliver?

Oliver: Yeah, well not all the time but sometimes it starts up again. Sometimes they forget about it (next bit is indistinguishable but lots of references to 'they')

Teacher: Who’s ‘they’?

Oliver: Sometimes its Andrew and Simon and sometimes its just one of them ... David does as well. Most of them ... And I kind of run off by myself because they’re all teasing me.

Teacher: Would somebody like to reflect that back please?

Simon: Well, he says that sometimes when we talk about we stop teasing for about a week and then it starts up again and sometimes its just a few weeks and it starts up again and he says that sometimes it’s me and Andrew or just one of us and sometimes he says we gang up on him and he just runs off by himself.

Teacher: Is that more or less what you said, Oliver?

Oliver: Yes.

Megan: Also after we’ve had some discussion about people I find that people just go off and start doing the same thing again and they just don’t take any notice of what we’ve been saying.

Teacher: So Megan is also finding that sometimes after one of our discussions people go off and they don’t take any notice of it and they continue to do exactly what was happening before. What are we going to do about that.

Steven: Punish people who ignore these conversations?

Teacher: Punish people who ignore these conversations. How?

Steven: Detention.

Teacher: Detention. Do you think that’s reasonable thing to do?

Megan: Well maybe they could do something that they really, really don’t like doing ... (inaudible)

Teacher: Maybe they could do something they really, really don’t like doing. Who’s they?

Megan: The people who don’t pay any attention to what you say.

Teacher: The people who don’t pay any attention to what I say. Who are these people who don’t pay any attention to what I say ... it’s not so much what I say is it? It’s what we say in the circle. Who are the people who don’t pay any attention to what is said in the circle?

David: Me, Andrew and Simon.

Teacher: Are you the only three?

David: Well, occasionally ... well, sometimes other people do it but its mainly me, Andrew and Simon.

Teacher: Andrew?

Andrew: I pay attention during the discussion but then I forget ... sometimes.

Teacher: You pay attention during the discussion but then you forget, sometimes. Simon?

Simon: I only do it sometimes. I usually remember.

Teacher: You usually remember.

Simon: Yes.

Teacher: Oliver? What do you feel?

Oliver: Um. I’m not sure. I mean ... I don’t know.
Teacher: Do you always pay attention to what is said in class?
Oliver: No
Teacher: Sometimes do you forget too?
Oliver: Yes
Teacher: And so what do you do when you forget.
Oliver: Sometimes they kind of like tease me and then I start teasing them .... (inaudible) so I tease back.
Teacher: So you tease back sometimes.
Oliver: Yes. But sometimes I just try to ... (inaudible) and sometimes I just get really mad.
David: Something about this thing on camp... what happened. Oliver also said that .. I think it was ... he said that they pushed him or something
Oliver: Yeah ... Andrew pushed me on the ground. (general agreement from the class)
Teacher: So Andrew pushed you over
Charles: On the walk he got pushed over (class tries to explain all at once)
Teacher: Excuse me. What’s happening now ... a lot of talking all at once. Andrew?
Andrew: Hmm?
Teacher: You were saying something?
Andrew: .... (inaudible)
Teacher: But what happened on the walk?
Andrew: Oliver was trying to push in front of Simon and Simon was ... well, he wouldn’t let him pass and then they started pushing each other.
Teacher: So one of the incidents on the walk was Oliver trying to push in front of Simon
Andrew: Yes.
Oliver: No...it started off when Simon stopped to tie his shoelace and I ran in front because I wanted keep up with the game they were playing... running and making noises or something and we were all doing it and then Simon would come up and push in front of me and I’d fall over or something and then we started pushing each other.
Teacher: So Simon stopped to tie up his shoelace and you tried to get in front of him ...
Oliver: No I ran to keep up with the others
Teacher: You ran to keep up with the others so you went in front of Simon which is a perfectly normal thing to do given that Simon had stopped to tie up his shoelaces but after that Simon, you then tried to get back in front of Oliver.
Simon: Yes
Teacher: Because you wanted to be up with the others. And was there room for everybody to be up there?
Simon: Yes
Teacher: So why should a fight start?
Oliver: Because he pushed me and then I pushed him and then ....
Simon: Because he kept trying to get back in front of me. And he was pushing me around.
Teacher: So both of you wanted to be in front of each other. Is that correct?
It sounds a bit funny now, doesn’t it?
Simon: It started out as a game, though. (general agreement from the children)
Oliver: It started off as a game but then it turned into a fight.
Teacher: It started out as a game and then it turned into a fight to such an extent that you were really crying and very angry and in a lot of distress.
Robert: I think the thing that caused it to be a fight was when Simon pushed Oliver down the bank (Robert is kind of laughing as he says this) and when Oliver pushed Simon into a shrub and when Simon got Oliver’s hat and started holding it.
Teacher: So at what point did it stop becoming funny?
Robert: When Simon pushed him and Oliver pushed Simon.
Andrew: They started pushing each other harder and they were falling over.
Teacher: And did anyone of you say “Stop”? It’s time to stop.
Simon and others: No
Teacher: It kept on getting worse and worse. How can you tell when something is no longer ... when it's been a game but it's gone beyond that edge when it's no longer a game and somebody is going to get really distressed? It could be anyone of you, couldn't it?
Simon: You can tell when it happens to Oliver because his face gets really red.
Teacher: So when Oliver's face gets really red, what do you do?
Simon: Stop.
Teacher: But do you?
Several of the children: No.
Teacher: So what's the problem there? Why don't you stop at that point?
Simon: Well, actually I do remember saying to Oliver - Stop pushing, stop pushing
Oliver: Then he started grabbing me and throwing me backwards.
Simon: Yeah, he didn't stop.
Teacher: So what are we going to do? Because Oliver I also heard that you were so upset by all the teasing that was in the classroom that you didn't want to stay here any longer
Oliver: Mum was saying I could go to another school but I don't .....  
Teacher: You don't want to do that? Is it because of the teasing here?
Oliver: Partly that but ... I mean I want to go but I like this school ... I mean I try to forget about the teasing (nearly in tears) but ...
Teacher: So I would be very upset and I think most of you would be very upset, wouldn't you, if somebody felt they needed to leave Koro wal because the other boys in this class had teased so much, particularly when we've been talking about it for ... how long?
Somebody: A year and a half.
Teacher: A year and a half. How long does it take to get a message across? Oliver doesn't very often come and tell me about being teased. Some of you come more often to tell me you’ve been teased. In fact, Simon you’re one of them that comes up to me quite often and says "So and so’s teasing me or so and so won’t stop when I say to stop" How does it feel like to you when that happens?
Simon: Not very nice.
Teacher: You don’t like it very much, do you?
Simon: I’ve felt like I want to leave the school because of teasing plenty of times.
Teacher: So you’ve felt like you’ve wanted to leave because of the teasing plenty of times too. Has anybody else felt like that? (Almost all the class put their hands up)
Anna has, Megan has, Linda has, David has, Charles has, Robert has a bit, Andrew has a bit. Do you think it would be different at another place? Why do you think another place might be better?
(inaudible)
Who’s been teased?
Simon: Who hasn’t?
Teacher: Who loved it? (laughter) So you’ve all experienced and felt what it was like to be teased. It doesn’t look like any of you enjoyed it very much, so who call me why they do it to another person? Robert.
Robert: inaudible
Teacher: They. Who’s they?
Robert: inaudible
Teacher: Try and talk about it from yourself - I do it because ...
Robert: Well, I do it because it doesn’t hurt me, it hurts the other person.
Teacher: You like to hurt the other person.
Robert: No but I think, it doesn’t hurt you so ....
Teacher: Teasing doesn’t hurt you Robert?
Robert: No, not when you’re are doing it (laughter)
Teacher: So when you do it to another person it doesn’t hurt you but when another person does it to you it hurts you. Can you put yourself into that other person’s shoes and feel … can you get a sense of what you feel like when somebody teases you is the same as when you tease somebody else.

Megan: Most people when they are being teased don’t ask you to stop and they just go and tell you and the other person doesn’t know that they’re teasing.

David: I’ll tell you why I tease people. It’s a bit like what Robert said but its also because normally in the group I try to show-off and see how many names I can call somebody.

Teacher: Can somebody reflect that please?

James: He likes to show-off and see how many names he can call somebody.

Teacher: David teases because when he’s in a group because it’s like showing off to see how many names he can call somebody … To impress the group. David, what if you’re by yourself and there’s a whole group somewhere and someone in that group is showing off seeing how many names they can call you … How does that feel to you?

David: Pretty bad

Teacher: You sure? Sure you don’t think it’s great fun? When someone’s calling you as many names as they can possibly think of so that they feel good about being in their group but you’re not in the group.

David: I don’t like that.

Teacher: You don’t like that. So you don’t like it so why do you do it to other people? … Can you all see what I’m trying to get you to feel. You don’t like it but you do it to other people. Why?

Steven: Because it’s fun.

Teacher: But it’s not fun when it happens to you is it. So I want us to try and remember that. So we’re going to have this discussion once a week from now on because it looks like you need to be reminded, don’t you think Megan. If we have these discussions, you all say that you don’t like it, you all go straight out the door and do it again … It’s a bit silly isn’t it?
Tuesday 26 August, 1997

Teacher: For Open Day we had to pack up our sad and angry corners. Do you think we should set them up again?
Class: mostly yes, a few no.
Teacher: OK. Why do we need them?
David: In case someone needs to go somewhere to feel really satisfied or safe.
Teacher: Who wants to reflect what David said? Wendy?
Wendy: If somebody needs a place to go to feel angry or to feel sad.
Teacher: Who’s used the angry corner? giggles -to be angry in - to beat up a cushion or ... giggles, silly comments etc. Do I need to remind you all of our class discussion rules. We’ll to back to the angry corner but I need to remind you all of our class discussion rules. Would you list the first one please John?
John: Don’t talk when somebody else is talking.
Teacher: Who’d like to reflect that?
Megan: Don’t talk when somebody else is talking.
Teacher: So that is one of the most important things isn’t it that we don’t interrupt other people and another one is that we don’t carry on our private conversations all of which have already begun to take place. OK. So who has used the angry corner when they’ve been angry about something? Have you found that it helped?
John: Well, it helped me to be less angry.
Teacher: And what did you do?
John: I beat up the pillow.
Teacher: And it really did make a difference?
John: Yes
Teacher: Megan did you say it didn’t help?
Megan: It did.
Teacher: It did help. How did it help you?
Megan: It didn’t make me angry any more.
Teacher: It didn’t make you angry any more. OK. Who hasn’t used it? Is that because you never get angry?
Andrew: No, I do get angry
Teacher: So what do you do Andrew when you get angry? (Simon: Bash them up)
Just a moment - what was Simon doing?
Simon and others: Interrupting
Andrew: I trip them over or something laughter
Teacher: So when you get angry you don’t use the angry corner, you trip the other person over?
Andrew: Yeah
Teacher: You think that’s a better solution for you?
Andrew: No.
Teacher: What do you think would be a better solution for you?
Andrew: Walk away
Teacher: To walk away. Would that get rid of your anger?
Andrew: Not really
Teacher: So what do you think might get rid of the anger?
Andrew: Not sure.
Teacher: You’re not sure. Do you think going into the angry corner and ripping some newspaper might help?
Andrew: Maybe.
Teacher: Why don’t you try it next time instead of tripping them. ... John would you swap places with Linda please. I’m sorry, Linda that we have to do this kind of thing but next time John it outside for 10 minutes. Does anybody else want to say anything about being angry or using the angry corner?
James: Well, if you have a sad corner and an angry corner why can’t you have just one and use it for both things?
Teacher: Somebody like to reflect that? That’s not a bad idea>
Anna: If you have a sad corner and an angry corner, why don’t you use just one?
Teacher: Was that accurate?
Class: No.
Teacher: Who would like to help the reflection?
Simon: He said instead of having an angry corner and a sad corner you could have one to do both things.
Teacher: Do you think that’s a good idea?
David: There could be one person angry who beat up the person that was sad if they go over there together and then there would be one angry person and one sad person in a fight. 
laughter from the class
-then the angry person would go and beat up the sad person.
Teacher: David is saying if there are two people, one angry and one sad, the angry person might beat up the sad person. It sounds very funny doesn’t but do you think it’s a possibility?
Class: Yes.
Teacher: It is a possibility, isn’t it.
Megan: And also like maybe like when they’re beating up the pillows or whatever, the person who’s sad just wants to be like quiet and they keep hearing the person beating up the pillows.
Teacher: The person who’s sad might just want to be quiet and they just keep hearing the person beating up the pillow all the time. Does anybody else have anything to say? ... So do you think we need to reaffirm if you like, the fact that we’ve got an angry corner and reset up our sad corner. Who’s used the sad corner when they’ve been sad? Oliver, can you recall that time?
Oliver: Oh, sometimes when I get teased a lot and I feel like... and I become really sad and Teacheroyed because it’s always happening, I sometimes go there and sit in there.
Teacher: Do you find it makes you feel a little bit better if you’ve been there quietly by yourself for a while?
Oliver: Yes.
Teacher: Who else has been in the sad corner? Simon? Do you want to say anything?
Simon: Not really
Teacher: Does it help you?
Simon: Yes
Teacher: Similar reasons to Oliver?
Simon: Yes
Teacher: Just to be by yourself for a little while and enclosed. Does the fact that it’s an enclosed space help?
Wendy: When I went in there it made me feel better because there was a note that said “Tell me jokes to make me happy” outside it and everyone was telling me jokes.
Teacher: That was good. So that really helped did it? Does it help to make .... What is the problem with you all? Perhaps I should just sit and whisper secrets to Andrew ... .
What about you and me, Anna? ... Everybody is consistently doing it around the circle. ... But is it fair if each of you around the circle is doing that kind of thing? Does that make for a good group discussion? ... Well. Let’s try and remember the group discussion, OK Because what’s happening is it destroys the flow of what we’re trying to talk about which is the sad and angry corner and how you feel about having them and whether we should continue having them
and when you also make silly faces and asides across the room, exactly the same thing happens, David. The cynicism makes it very difficult to do this kind of work sometimes. Anybody else used the sad corner? Carol.

Carol: I did once.

Teacher: Yeah?

Carol: It made me feel better.

Teacher: It did help you to feel a little bit better. Anna?

Anna: I used it once.

Teacher: You like having it in the room?

A few yeses.

Teacher: You all like having it in the room?

More yeses

Teacher: You think it’s a good thing to have in the room even if some of you don’t ever really use it.

Yeses.

Robert: It’s good to hide in.

Teacher: It’s good to hide in.

John: Sometimes people are sad and angry at the same time.

Teacher: Sometimes people are sad and angry at the same time. Anna?

Anna: Then they take some newspaper or a cushion into the sad corner.

Teacher: Then they could talk some newspaper or a cushion into the sad corner.

David: I think if they were sad and angry they should go into the sad corner because they’re sort of away from everybody else.

Teacher: David thinks that if they’re sad and angry at the same time they should go into the sad corner first because they’re away from everybody else. Do people agree with that?

Class: Yes

Teacher: What about if you were ... you go and beat up a pillow and get rid of the anger and then go into the sad corner?

Megan: It could work either way.

Teacher: It could work either way.

John: If you took a pillow into there ... there’s not much room to beat up the pillow.

Teacher: There’s not much room to beat up a pillow in the sad corner is there? (some private conversations here)

Simon: That’s what I was going to say but there’s enough room to tear paper in.

Teacher: There’s enough room to tear paper in

Charles: Somebody could hold the pillow at the front of the sad corner.

Teacher: reflects ... and you could punch it from the outside. Do you think that’s essential?

Class: No

Teacher: Do you think it might be better to do that in the angry corner first?

Class: Yes.

Teacher: Do you think maybe it’s a better idea to keep them a little bit separate and to deal with each emotion separately and recognise what is going on because it’s certainly true that you can feel angry and sad at the same time isn’t it?

Class: Yes

Teacher: And that’s sometimes a bit difficult to deal with isn’t it because you don’t quite know what to do, do you. You don’t know whether to fight someone or burst into tears. Who’s felt that? That they don’t know whether to fight someone or burst into tears. (most of them have their hands up) So maybe we could think about that situation and you could try going into the sad corner for a little while if that happens to you again and then go and punch a pillow or another time you could try punching a pillow and then going into the sad corner and seeing which one might work the best. So that gets rid of the emotion you’re feeling but if you’ve been angry and you’ve started fighting with somebody in the end you still have to work
out what’s the best for you and what’s the best for the other person, don’t you? Now in the last few weeks we’ve been doing quite a lot of simulated mediations. Is that something you do just inside the classroom or do you think it something … in fact some of you have taken it home and practiced doing some mediating work at home. Who’s done that? Megan, Jenny, James, Anna …

Anna: Well, I didn’t have anyone to do it with so I did it with my dog.
Teacher: You didn’t have anyone to practice with so you … laughter
Anna: Well, I did it with my bird and my dog but my bird kept on flying around the cage and it died. Teacher: What about when you have a row with your brother?
Anna: I don’t.
Teacher: You don’t ever have rows with your brother.
Anna: I only have them with Nancy.
Teacher: Well, she’d be a good person to try it out with.
Anna: Yees?
Teacher: Have you seen Nancy having a row with anybody?
Anna: Me.
Teacher: Not just you. Does she have a row with anyone else?
Anna: Well, Mum …
Teacher: She has rows with your Mum sometimes? Could you be the mediator, try working it with them.
Wendy: Sometimes when you try to mediate between people they don’t listen to you.
Teacher: Sometimes when you try to mediate between people they don’t listen to you.
Wendy: Yes. They’ll say like you’re stupid because you’re trying to do it.
Teacher: Have you had that experience?
Wendy: Well. I’ve seen it around.
Teacher: You’ve seen it happen have you?
Megan: Sometimes when I ask my Mum to mediate with her and Thomas she says Oh you shouldn’t get involved or whatever.
Teacher: When you try to mediate between your Mum and Thomas she says you shouldn’t get involved. Why do you think she might say that? What is one of the main rules of mediators? … the main thing that a mediator needs to be?
John: A peacemaker.
Charles: Somebody who doesn’t have anything to do with what happened.
Teacher: A peacemaker, somebody who doesn’t have anything to do with what happened … and what kind of personality, what do they need, what’s one of their most important skills?
John: A neutral person.
Teacher: They need to be neutral. They need to be impartial … was the word we used wasn’t it? Impartial. They don’t take sides. Do you think that your mother thinks that it might be difficult for you not to take sides in that situation? Maybe that’s why she finds it difficult. David, do you want to say something about mediation? Anybody else who’s tried? You tried, didn’t you James?
James: Yes
Teacher: What did you try?
James: Well when Mum and Nat were having a fight I tried but they didn’t want me to. They just wanted to fight.
Teacher: That’s interesting isn’t it, because when we went through all the processes of fighting and having mediators what was the one really important thing about the fight that has to happen in a way before anyone can mediate?
Child: The fight has to be stopped.
Teacher: The fight has to stopped and … the people who are fighting … ?
Jenny: Have to agree to mediate.
Teacher: Have to agree to mediate. If you've got two people who don't agree to mediate and don't want to mediate, who prefer to fight, there is not a lot you can do is there? But we did also look at what happens when people chose to fight and continue the fight. What happens? What have you noticed just within ourselves in the classroom? What happens when people don't want to mediate and want to continue fighting?

David: They become more angry and involved in the fight.
Teacher: They become more angry and involved in the fight.
Wendy: The fight gets bigger and bigger.
Teacher: The fight gets bigger and bigger.
John: One person loses, gets really hurt and gets teased.
Teacher: One person loses, gets really hurt and gets teased. Does anybody want to add anything else? OK. Let's remember those three things. Can we go over those three things again?
Simón: One person loses and gets hurt.
James: The fight gets bigger and bigger.
Jenny: The people who are fighting get more and more angry.
Teacher: So, given that you know that, do you think it's worth trying to mediate?
David: I've sort of tried to start a mediation but sort of ... they keep on fighting... you can't really get the right moment until the person walks away. That's what happened with Oliver. I was going to tell ... I was going to ask for mediation but there was too much teasing and everything and everything.
Teacher: You were going to ask for mediation ...
David: sort of asking to stop and see if someone else could mediate us.
Teacher: ... between you and Oliver?
David: No, between the boys and Oliver.
Teacher: between the boys and Oliver. What happened with that one Oliver?
Oliver: well, everybody was laughing at me and David was trying to stop laughing because I was just getting more and more angry and they were all laughing.
Teacher: When was this?
Oliver: The other day when last week on Thursday they were all teasing me about something ... how I threw the football and they all started yelling at me for the way I threw it.
Teacher: OK. And David tried to tell them to stop and mediated it.
Sebastian: I was teasing too but I stopped after a bit and tried to stop it when I saw it was getting out of hand.
Teacher: Does anybody else want to say anything about that situation?
Simón: Not about that situation. Sometimes when you try to mediate a fight, and you ask them to stop, they start beating you up. (Laughter and general agreement)
Teacher: So people start beating the mediator up when you try.
Megan: Sometimes when you try to mediate one of them tells you the story and the other one says Nooo that's not right, it was the other way.
Teacher: But as a mediator do you know how ... can you remember how to stop them interrupting so they reflect the first and tell that they'll have a chance to tell their story later. What do you think is the problem with the way you're trying to incorporate mediating into your playtimes? What do you think the problem is?
David: We're forcing them to mediate instead of sort of letting them choose to mediate.
Teacher: Would somebody reflect that?
Oliver: We're forcing somebody to mediate and not letting them choose.
Teacher: There is a possibility of it being forced. What else do you think would be a say of doing it?
Simón: Sometimes you don't want to because you want to keep playing.
Robert: They don't want to do it because it takes up time and you want to play.
Teacher: It takes up play time. What do you think would be a way of doing it if you can see that there is a problem between people and it would be really helpful to have a mediation and you want to go about it what do you think would be a good way to make it happen?
Simon: Calm them down.
Teacher: Can you calm them down?
Simon: Sometimes.
John: Sometimes its a bit hard to calm them down because like when they’re like hitting each other you try to pull them away and then they’ll just hit you and then they’ll just keep on fighting the other person so its hard to ...
Teacher: So sometimes its hard to just calm them down.
David: Maybe before we mediate we could put them in the corners.
Teacher: Before we mediate we could put them in the corners, one in the sad corner and one in the angry corner.
Jenny: Because they’ll be more calm.
Teacher: What about it any of you are involved in a fight at morning tea or lunch time or being teased like you were Oliver or anybody else, what about you come to me to start with and request a mediation and I’m quite happy to make time available during class for a mediation to take place. I want to get it to the point where I don’t have to be the mediator so if for example Oliver said there was a problem between him and some of the boys teasing him we could bring it to the class and I would say ... I think it would be good if Wendy mediated this one. Would you accept that? It wouldn’t necessarily take very long. We’d have Oliver’s story and we’d hear the boys story and Wendy ... because all of you know the process by now don’t you? You would have had time to come into the classroom and begin to sort it out. Do you think that would work better as a practice mediation? Do you think that’s worth trying?
Class: Yes.
Teacher: So if you bring something just very quickly to me I’ll say ... OK We’ll try that out first thing after morning tea we’ll have this quick mediation.
David: So do we sort of pick something that happened ....
Teacher: Yes. Well you want to do real situations where you’ve got into a fight don’t you? These ones we do in the classroom are good fun for practising but what do we really want to do?
Child: Stop the fighting.
Teacher: Well even sometimes not necessarily stop the fighting because sometimes fighting is not necessarily a bad thing but how we solve the fight is what we need to do. If we can solve the teasing between Oliver and the boys so both of you feel better afterwards and you know what the problem is then it will be easier. OK we’ll leave it there for today.
APPENDIX J
Please write me a two/three page story describing yourself. I would like you to write it as a story because you are reflecting about who you are and telling me about who you are and how you feel. You can include in your story:

1. What do you look like? - Do you like the way you look? What do you like and what don’t you like about the way you look?
2. What do you like doing best?
3. What don’t you like doing
4. Do you usually like yourself? Why?
5. Are there things you don’t like about yourself? What are they? Why?
6. Do you ever get angry? What makes you really angry? What do you do when you are angry? What do you do when someone is very angry with you?
7. What makes you feel sad? What do you do when you feel sad?
8. Can you choose how you feel? If you are feeling sad or angry, can you do something to make you feel happy again? If you can, what do you do?
9. How do you feel when people tease you? What do you do?
10. Do you tease others? If so, how do you tease them? Why?
11. Do you feel that what you have learned over the last year about conflict and teasing and mediation has helped you to find ways to cope when you are teased or angry or sad now?
12. Is there anything else you would like to say about yourself?
13. Do you find the sad corner and the angry corner useful?
14. Do you think you have changed much since the beginning of Class 3? If so, how have you changed and what do you think helped you to change?
15. Do you like the changes in yourself?
16. Do you think I follow the class rules? Do you think that when I get angry it is necessary or unfair?
Children's Stories

Megan: I am proud to be short for I know that it holds a great future, that future being a successful equestrian competitor. Having long hair gives me the advantage of doing interesting things with my hair. I like having small hands and feet, hands because I think I make wonderful things like sculptures and models. Feet because it is easy to find shoes to fit them. By my description I hope you can tell I like most things about myself. I mostly like myself because I like that I've become. I like to be alone and imagine about angels and flying horses doing tricks together. I get angry when people treat me unfairly. I get sad when I hurt physically or emotionally. I am sad when I miss someone or something. I hope others feel that I don't tease them. I'm pretty sure they don't feel teased ... But I can't tell how others feel. I would say I have learned different ways of dealing with conflict and how to help two people fighting. I find fun in listening to music and reading quietly to myself. I think it helps to have a place to go when you feel sad or angry. I have changed since my second year at Korowal. I've changed in ways like I understand things more clearly. I have more happiness in my life and more love. I love the changes in my life. It makes me feel more wanted and happy ... I think that Ann does her fair share of the rules and what she does is necessary but some of us don't understand how lucky we are to have a teacher like her.

Andrew: I have short brown hair and I am tall and thin. What I like doing best is playing sport. I get angry sort of easily, especially by my sister and when I get angry I normally trip the person that I'm angry with over. When someone gets angry with me I normally get angry at them. I feel sad when I've hurt myself because I can't play. Normally when I'm feeling sad I either watch TV or go to bed and then I normally feel better. When people tease me I get really angry and normally tease them back or fight with them. I also tease other people because they do something wrong or they really annoy me. I think that the conflict and mediation has helped me a bit to cope when I'm being teased. I think I'm fairly good at most sports but I'm not very good at writing or drawing. I don't think the sad corner and the angry corner are very useful because when you're feeling sad or angry you don't normally want to walk all the way around school just to go there. Since class 3 I've changed a lot. I'm a lot better at sport and all school work. I like how I've changed. I think Ann does follow the class rules but sometimes I think it's unfair when she gets angry.

Wendy: I have short brown hair that puffs out when it's dry. I have yellow-green eyes and short eyelashes. I don't have freckles or pimples on my face. My nose is not flat and stubby but it's not pointy. It's in between. I do like the way I look but every morning when I look in the mirror my face has changed. Sometimes I don't like the way I look and I get grumpy. I really like drawing people (I'm not very good at animals) I like playing soccer and writing long stories. I don't like tests because I get nervous. I don't like maths or spending too long inside learning. I love to be outside in the nature though you wouldn't think so if you just look at me quickly. I'm usually satisfied with school but sometimes I get irritated. I'm not much of an angry person; I've gone a long, long time without being angry at someone or something. When I'm angry I get angry at someone who only came over to comfort me. Then they leave and I feel guilty. Sometimes when I'm angry my family make me laugh and I can't find anything to be angry about any more. I always feel sad when I'm not included in something or nobody wants me around. When I'm sad I try not to let people cheer me up and when I'm happy I realise that it was stupid. From just making bad mistakes I've learned to try to appreciate my friends and other people and their feelings. I've tried to help and I get more friends that way. If I'm sad or angry I go somewhere quietly by myself but if I'm inside I feel squashed in and it doesn't help. Outside in the fresh air I feel powerful and I get happy again. I don't get teased much and I'm not really a teaser myself. Things I've learned in class about teasing has helped a
bit but I’ve figured a lot about how to handle teasing on my own. The sad angry corner is useful but I know I’d always rather be outside. I’ve changed really a lot in the last few years. I’ve understood more and experienced more and I think it’s a good change. I do think you follow the class rules. You can’t help it when you get angry, it is not fair or unfair it is not anybody’s fault.

**John:** I have short hair that used to be long. I have lots of hair on my arms and I’m 1m 54 tall. I don’t really like the way I look because I have too long arms and legs. I like the way I look because I have big hands which helps me play piano. I like reading, playing sport, especially cricket and basketball and doing maths. I don’t like doing spelling homework, writing a big story or washing up. I am fairly smart only I wish I knew certain things. I don’t like my big front teeth because some people tease me about them. Sometimes I get angry because people tease me so I walk off. When someone is angry with me I try to fight them off. I get sad when someone teases me then I walk off and find someone else to play with. Usually I can’t choose how I feel and if I get sad or angry I go and play a game on the oval to make myself feel happy. I feel sad when someone teases me. I sometimes tease and when I do I call them names because they call me names. What I have learned over the last year has helped me. I think the sad and angry corner help a lot not just for me, but for the class. I think I have become a better person from what Ann has taught us. I like these changes in me because it has helped me along the way. I think Ann follows the class rules but sometimes is a bit unfair.

**James:** I am middle size and I have brown hair. I don’t like the kind of clothes I wear but I like my face. I like athletics and writing. I don’t like maths, spelling or reading. I usually don’t like the thing I do because I don’t think people like me. I don’t like the kind of clothes I wear because they aren’t my fashion. I get angry when somebody calls me names. When I am angry I hold it in or I hit the person. I feel sad when my dog gets hurt but I hold it in. I can choose how I am feeling and when I am feeling sad or angry I go into my room. I don’t like it when people tease me. I try to hold it in. I have learned a lot about mediation and I think it has helped me. I have not used it but I have found that it helps the people that use it. I was not at Korowal since Class 3 but I have learned a lot in the way I look and think and my skills have improved. I like the changes in myself. They have helped me. I don’t always follow the class rules but most of the time I do and when you get angry it is mostly of a good cause.

**Carol:** I have blonde curly hair and blue eyes, long fingers. I am skinny. I like the way I look and I think I’m all right. I’m not pretty. I’m not ugly. I don’t like myself because I have too many freckles. I’m good at running and I like doing story writing. I don’t like doing maths. I sometimes get angry but mostly I like myself. The things I get angry at most is my sister or my mum or dad and sometimes my cat when she scratches me. Sometimes when I’m sad or angry I lie on my bed and read and sometimes I have a shower. When someone teases me I feel unhappy and go off by myself for a while and when I come back I feel better. Sometimes I tease others but not very often and I say when I tease someone that they can’t do one certain thing right. I think I am good at a lot of things and I am getting better at maths and I don’t tease people as much as I used to and I don’t get angry at people and I’m not getting as sad so much now and I think about a lot more things than I used to. I think the sad corner is useful. I’ve only been in the sad corner once and it made me feel better and I think the angry corner is good too though I’ve never been in it. I think I have changed since Year 3 because I’m growing up more and it helped me understand things better. I like the change and it makes me feel older. I think you follow the class rules and when you get angry it is necessary.

**David:** I don’t particularly like how I look. I mean I feel practically waist high in sick when I think about how I look. I don’t really like anything about my darkish green blue eyes but my hair is OK. My favourite things to do are to talk about things to people that understand what
I'm talking about and play video games. If people that understand what I'm talking about aren't around in the playground I normally play soccer, AFL or cricket. I almost always jolly about myself but I still feel bad about bringing fruit with jelly mixed with it to school for lunch. I like myself because I can crack jokes, be a dork and make people like occasionally. One of the things I don't like about myself is that I can't really help being gross and annoying so I seem to feel like an idiot to every kid in the school in some way. I'm either the toothless wonder, caterpillar boy or the dumbest soccer player in world. Because of all these things I'm occasionally angry or getting an angry from someone else. When I'm angry I normally bash up someone or cry. When I feel sad I'm always really sad. I don't think I've ever had a small, quiet sob for a long time. I don't think I can ever make myself happy again until I stop crying. I feel sad when people tease me but I'm very quick at kick-back insults. I also tease others when they do something like try to peg a stone at me and miss. I must say that the work in the classroom has made quite a big difference to the way that I deal with conflict. When I am angry or sad I do find that sad corner useful but I don't think the angry corner works. I think I have changed greatly since Year 3 but I'm not sure what these changes are. Yes, I do think you follow the class rules but I think it is fair for you to get angry.

Simon: My name is Luke. I like my eyes, it's sort of nice well that's what I think anyway. I think I look weird. I like doing sport. My favourite sport is ice-skating and I don't like shopping, playing the computer too much either especially when a friend is over. I sometimes tease myself but sometimes not like when I do stupid things. Sometimes I don't like myself when I tease people too much and when I get embarrassed I go all red and everyone starts teasing me. I mean it's not my fault, I can't help it. I get really angry when someone calls me names really loud and when I am really angry I go and hit the other person or walk away calling them names in my head or go to the angry corner in my classroom. I get really sad when my mum call shouts at me and sends me to my room. If I'm really angry or sad I can sometimes make my self feel happy again by thinking about something funny. When people tease me I would usually hit or kick them. I also tease other people by calling them names or something like that and I usually tease others because they have already teased me. I think mediation has helped me a bit over the last year. I have used the angry and sad corners a couple of times. I have changed since year 3. I think I have grown up a lot. Some of my changes are all right. Some are really good but most of the changes I don't like. I think Ann follows the class rules but most of the time when she sends you outside you haven't really done anything bad.

Anna: I like my eyes because they're so big. Swimming is my favourite sport. I don't like running because it hurts my knee. My brother makes me feel sad because he moved away and he was my best friend. I talk to my best friend pippa when I get sad. I can make me feel sad by thinking about my brother and my dad. When I get teased I don't normally take any notice because he or she is just trying to show off. Sometimes I tease other people but only if they've hurt me. Learning conflict mediation has helped a bit I think. The sad and angry corner are good. Since year 3 besides from learning heaps more from year 3 to year 5 the way I've changed is having a good teacher. I like changes in myself for some things. There are lots of things I don't like about myself like the way I walk, talk, write, laugh, draw, run, play soccer. I think you follow the class rules and when you get angry it's at the right times. I get really, really, really, REALLY angry with my parents for fighting. They can't even talk on the phone together, let alone see each other. It is so annoying. To stop me from feeling sad and angry is to eat chocolate. I like myself if I've done something to be proud of (Which isn't very often).

Oliver: I have short light brown hair. My eye colour is blue. I am very short for my age. I kind of like the way I look. I hate being short. Some of the things I like are holidays and bike riding. I hate English. I usually like myself. Yes I like myself because I think I am nice. No, I don't normally hate myself. Yes I get angry a lot when the other boys tease me. I normally just
I walk away but sometimes fight. I feel sad and annoyed at the same time when someone gets angry at me. When I get teased I try to forget it. No, I can’t choose how I feel. Yes I can sometimes. I try to think of something happy. I feel sad. I tell a teacher sometimes. I laugh at them. I don’t know. Yes it does. No there is nothing. Yes. I do. Yes. No I don’t think I have changed much. Yes I do. Yes I think you do. I think it’s unfair sometimes.

**Jenny:** Hello, my name is Jenny. I have long brown hair; my eye colour is bluey-green; I am short for my age; I have heaps of freckles and I’m pretty skinny. I don’t really like the way I look. I don’t like the way I look because I have so many freckles. I like the way my hair looks. Some of my favourite things are singing and going on holidays. I don’t like English. Yes, I usually like myself. I like myself because I can be nice. There’s not really anything I don’t like about myself. I do get angry. Sometimes when my friends are being mean to me I get angry. When somebody is angry at me I leave them alone. It make me sad when all the other girls in the class have a secret and they don’t tell Megan, Linda and I. I don’t do anything about it. I can choose how I feel. Sometimes I can change my feelings. If I’m sad I tell myself to be happy. Sometimes it works but sometimes it doesn’t work. I feel sad when people tease me. If they are teasing me I walk away. I don’t really tease people. What I have learnt helps. There isn’t any more I want to say about myself. I find the corners helpful. I think I have changed a little. I don’t know how I have changed. I like the changes. I think I usually follow the class rules. I don’t think it’s unfair when I get angry.

**Linda:** Hi, I’m Linda. I’m pretty tall for my age. Well. That’s what everyone says. My hair is dark brown and my eyes are olive green. I love dancing and drawing. I like the way I look. When you know, fairly ugly at most times but, yeah, I like the way I look. I hate the way my fringe hangs down in my face like little balls hanging on some string. Sometimes I do, sometimes I don’t. The only reason I usually like myself is because I can make people laugh especially Wendy but I suppose she makes me laugh as well. I don’t get too angry but I can but the only reason I get angry is when Ruth (two year old sister) always follows me everywhere I go and everything I do, she does too. I usually yell and scream but sometimes I just chuck a tantrum. When someone gets angry with me I say sorry and walk off. I usually turn up my music full blast when I’m sad to get rid of all the sadness. I usually can’t choose how I feel, angry or sad. I sometimes tease others by calling them a freak because they annoy me. I feel that conflict resolution and mediation works for when I’m sad or angry. Well, there’s nothing more I’d like to say about myself. The sad and angry corner ... I don’t know, I’ve never used them before but I think it might. I’ve changed a lot since class 3. I also think I’ve changed because of the teachers I’ve had. I like the changes in myself mostly. Well, sometimes you do and sometimes you don’t.

**Robert:** I’m fairly short. I’ve got short dark brown hair. My eyes are dark brown. My skin colour is pale and I’ve got lots of freckles around my nose. I like myself because of my dark eyes. I don’t like myself because of my height. The thing I like doing best is playing cricket and I don’t like doing homework because it takes up time for other things. I usually like myself because I go to a good school and I’ve got lots of friends. I don’t like myself sometimes because I’m not good at running. I get angry when I do something wrong and people yell at me. When I’m angry I go somewhere on my own. I do nothing when people are angry at me. I feel sad when people tease me. I walk off when people tease me. I can choose the way I feel. I can’t make myself happy when I’m sad. I feel bad when people tease. I walk off when they tease me. I tease others by calling them names. I do it because they normally tease me first. I sometimes follow the class rules. I think its unfair and necessary.
Dear Parents,

Over the last year or so, I have been systematically teaching the P.D. Program as I outlined to you at the Parent/Teacher night early in 1996 and again in 1997. We have covered areas such as self-esteem building, emotional release work, meditation and cooperative lessons as well as more formal lessons in conflict resolution and mediation skills. Some of the work has been done in specified lessons, much of it has been integrated into the morning circle and main lesson. While the program is ongoing, at this point I need some feedback from you as to how you feel your child (or others) has benefited or otherwise from this kind of work. I would be grateful if you could answer the following questions for me.

1. Do you support this approach to teaching? Or should I be spending more time on formal maths for example?

2. Could you reflect on any maturing change in your child that could be connected to what has been taught in the program?

3. Have your children made any comments about the program, positive or negative? If so, what were they?

4. Any other comments you could make on what you believe the children have been doing or on my teaching of the program or that could be helpful as feedback would be welcome.
27.6.97

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Conversation with Karen, Jenny’s mother: 19.8.97

Do you support this program or should I be spending more time teaching maths?
In terms of developing children I think its really important that they learn conflict resolution skills and mediation skills because although they might be skilled in academic areas, they’re still going to have to learn to work with people and interact with people in the environment regardless of how scholastic their abilities are so I’d actually say it should be a major component of what is taught in schools especially since schools are basically about establishing a community of children who learn and live together and who then go out into the world and make the world a better place and they need a lot of … and I think perhaps a lot of the problems that are happening and people are experiencing today is because that kind of social interaction wasn’t encouraged and certainly wasn’t facilitated in any direct way so its at least as important as maths if not ..?
At least as important as maths … I think its more important as a life skill to have those skills because maths, like any other skill you can go about it and learn and take up at different stages according to your need but everybody all the time needs to be interacting with other people so in terms of both their formal and informal relationships those skills are paramount. In terms of Jenny’s understanding when I broached that question with her, because she’s really excited by maths as soon as I offered her that option that she could do one or the other you could see the spark in her eyes thinking “Ooooo, could we?” and I also … and the interesting comment she had was “Oh I think its a little bit important but don’t you only need those skills if you’re a mediator? So she hadn’t actually …. So we spent some time talking about the fact that she needed to use those skills in a wider range of areas rather than just in the classroom which was something that obviously she didn’t get from the process. She just thought that it was something that you did in class and worked with

Oh that’s interesting. Good. I’ll work with that.
Yeah … it was an interesting … well I put it down a bit to her “well you only need those skills to be a mediator.” Her comment.
I’m being really positive about the fact all of these things are really needed.
That’s interesting because I have difficulty when the children say they have a problem with someone in another class I have to say that we need to deal with a little differently at the moment because they haven’t learnt the same kind of skills that we’ve learnt because they don’t necessarily learn to reflect back the problems and to allow the child to deal with the shift - so how to broaden it outside this classroom is something I’m going to work with.
And also really I suppose like everything else in schools it needs to be, especially such an issue as this, it really needs to have all the staff supporting it and everybody working to meet those needs but not only in terms of their work with children but also in terms of their work with each other. And everyone’s got to be able to identify that as a priority and that as being a problem too.

Do you think that is identified in this school as a priority or do you think that everybody has their own individual ways of dealing with problems and that’s how we work?
I think individual people have different ways of dealing with it although there’s some kind of unspoken kind of consensus but when it gets down to specific issues about specific events it sometimes gets quite difficult because different people handle those in different ways and not everybody …. Everyone’s perception’s their own, I guess and that not everybody sees that thing that you see as really important being significant. So in some ways there’s not an agreed upon … I suppose I learnt a lot about that with that bullying workshop too, identifying what is bullying, what is victimisation in terms of even things like exclusion but I really think its very important. It’s critical. I also think, I mean, the emotional release work is really important too.
I mean in terms of ... I mean I'd personally like to see more of that going on in the school. I think they've trialled it in some schools on the north coast and it's been really successful and also really successful in a proactive way of dealing with children who are under a lot of stresses whether that be either long-term stresses or short-term stresses.

Did Jenny say anything about the emotional release work as such?
I mean she's not a child really that does come home and tell you about what's going on in the classroom unless you specifically ask and specifically have something that you can ask about.

She was a child that when we did a lot of stuff on anger often couldn't state when she'd been angry and was inclined to say that she didn't have conflicts? Does that fit?
She's a very contained person and she's also had to ... in terms of like the family dynamic she's really had to absorb a lot of things a lot of the time because she's a competent, capable little girl with a sister who's got significant problems both emotionally and scholastically and so she's often taken a back seat and I think part of that back seat is sometimes (Difficult to pick up on tape) She certainly doesn't demonstrate being angry. She's probably gone to the bedroom in tears three times in her life.

She's also probably the one in the class most capable of mediating. She and John - the two most capable ...
She's done a lot of emotional release work too since a very young age and she goes through different ... and mean that's available to her if she ever wants it. I mean she's gone through a period recently where one of her friends has been going and invited her along and she's just been going because she's been going with the friend and that was the occasion ... and then she went through a time when she didn't really want to go and then at the moment I think she's quite ready to go again really.

Because the amount of emotional release work you can actually do in the classroom is fairly limited because you're doing it as a group thing not as a one-to-one and also I think you have to be careful to intrude as a class teacher too much unless there is a direct indication that something is needed. I thing you have to work more subtly, more covertly in emotional release work and allow the children ... if they are drawing a picture you just have to leave it open to draw what ever it happens to be and not really comment, whereas if I was therapist I could look at a picture and say this child needs to do this or this or this and then go ahead and do it on a one-to-one basis but I don't feel I can do that in the classroom. I have to do it more in terms of teaching like I think she needs to do more wet-on-wet painting because that would loosen her up.

And I think also, I mean, I suppose that's interesting in itself that school's a different setting and they have to exist here as individuals with whatever status or dynamic they have within a group and so often that ... I mean that's a very difficult thing to work on but that's part of the advantages of being at this school is that they have lots of opportunities to really work with colour. I mean a lot of the emotional release work from my understanding which actually draws me to it is that it isn't adults making psychological assumptions about children based on the fact that whether their tree has roots or leaves but that just through the experience of that activity they're going to benefit regardless of what the adult sees. So I think rightly so that really a teacher in the environment needs to observe and learn and take more in about that child but needs to do it in terms of the children so that it's not visible to them.

It's the only way you can do it in the classroom I think.
Because otherwise it's too much ... its almost too close isn't it, to be working with children on a day to day basis when they really probably just want to get on with it. I mean if someone sat next to you and said OK the colours of the clothes you're wearing today indicate x, y and z it makes you very uncomfortable and that's why people choose to go in and out of therapy sessions when they're ready deal with them whereas if they were just being judged on that all the time it would be really difficult for them to exist.

And that's why in the program you've got try and do so they more or less like what they're doing and they want to do it again so they don't actually see it as therapy as such,
they see it as playing with an emotion or ... just talking about it. I mean having the discussion about I can feel was one of the best discussion we had I think because then they could begin to list every single possible thing that they were capable of feeling and knowing that it was OK to feel all them ranging from irritation to rage to fear from a little bit of being frightened to a huge amount of being frightened or whatever it was. Just talking about ...

And really at a single stream school like this it also makes it more significant to do lots more work like that, when small groups are really defining what your personality is within that group. Because you can stop and begin to think about it a little bit more I think.

Can you reflect on any maturing change in your child that could be connected to what is being taught in the program?

She can identify problems without being specific to personalities sometimes, too. She can talk about noise levels or outrageous behaviours and separate that from like see that as a behaviour too and not necessarily tie it into friendship groups. She doesn’t necessarily come home and say “My best friend is always my best friend” and can see that some of her behaviour ... it has given her the ability to reflect on how people behave and how people behave in different circumstances. I mean I think that’s fairly mature. And she’s also starting to look at adults it that way too and I think too (Ooops, ouch yes, exactly) so I mean that’s really young. I think she’s going through a change period and they’re also highly concerned, prematurely I think with the emergence of adolescence and she seems to be competing with her sister at great lengths and also with ... her sense of self as ... through maturation with different people in the classroom because she is one of the younger child and also she’s a late developer so I think its a time when it does actually your sense of self but in some ways she’s been a lot more expressive about how she feels and what she’s likely to put up with ...

Do you think that’s a result of the program?

I mean its always hard isn’t it to identify what the variable is but it probably has given her a sense that that’s OK to do and perhaps she can experiment with the dynamic a bit more and be a bit more open about discussing how she feels about relationships within the family and how they change ... and it was interesting when she recently had a little outing with David and Simon and Anna and how she saw that and how she experimented with it and felt really quite comfortable but wasn’t comfortable at all with it being seen as anything other than a kind of friendship and she doesn’t really want to be ..... even attempt to be in some way flirtatious or isn’t comfortable ... she sees that in other people and she thinks that its not from them that they’re acting out what they’ve seen on television or seen older siblings engage in or something like that and she doesn’t want to take that on for herself at this point.

Does she feel comfortable about saying that?

Yes she feels comfortable about being where she is and who she is and when I just talk to you about it now I think that comes through this because she hasn’t always been as willing to discuss people’s motives or behaviour in a way that she’s more comfortable with now. And even when it’s sort of confrontational or she may not get the appropriate response from me.

It seems to be having more of an impact than I think!

It’s hard to know until you stop yourself and think about it, isn’t it

Yeah, you get days when they’re .... And you think Have I taught them anything or has my role modelling been so off that it’s been .... They’re picking up on different things ... you know ... Do one thing or behave one way and do something else ...

But even seeing that that’s the way you’re striving to behave, rather than you’re a perfect example of that. I think that’s an important thing for the kids to know that you’re trying to work towards

...are aware of a struggle going on. Some of the more mature ones are probably aware of that
But also that there is sort of like a code of appropriate behaviour too and I mean its difficult for them too because it may not be carried on in their home circumstances or even out onto the playground or even into their different negotiations with different teachers on the playground.
APPENDIX L
During this practice, I was fortunate enough to become involved in Ann’s research into a peaceful classroom and how to implement this both in the classroom and in the playground. While there was a marked difference in the behaviour in the children of class four, it was obvious by many of the responses from the children, that Ann had a long way to go.

Whilst I was on this practice, I observed many lessons about arguments in the classroom and to see how each responded to conflict. It revealed many about each child and their behaviours. For example, Nicola would react to an argument by walking away, whereas David would lash out and physically fight back.

Ann’s method of group discussion allowed anyone to bring forward an issue or concern which may arise either in the playground or classroom. It was evident that Ann wanted the children to tackle issues head on rather than bottle them up. Issues varied from anything like two boys fighting at lunchtime to class discussions about the innuendos related to the term ‘humpy’. An asset that has become a part of the conflict resolution work within the classroom allows students the freedom to honestly and openly state their position on a matter as they know Ann will treat them as equals until all the facts are presented. For example, on the 10.9.96 Ann sat down the class and waited as the class felt ready to explain to her and what the meaning was behind ‘humpy’. After a while David revealed that it was another term for sexual intercourse. Each child reacted by sniggering and shying away with embarrassment. Once Ann heard all the children speak who wanted to speak, she went on to speak very frank and explain the terminology that was being used. While it took a little while for them to take over the humour of it all, all the children grew from the experience.

As a teaching element, the conflict resolution lessons became a good foundation that the teachers could use as it gave us a profile of each students reaction to situations. For example, in one particular lesson Ann asked the children how they related to specific situations.

Do you respond to an argument by fighting?

The children were asked to rate their opinions on a scale of always, never, sometimes etc. They were then asked to explain their response.

It gave Ann a clear indication that on the whole the boys reacted strongly to altercations whereas the girls tended more to withdraw and walk away. While we were aiming to calm the boys and teach them to react constructively to problems, it was also clear that the girls need training in standing up for themselves.

From the way certain children acted towards their classmates, it was evident that they were in need of some help in the social respect. The program being implemented in the classroom was helping each child indirectly to realise and accept their faults without public humiliation. Through this strategy Anna was able to accept that she was very pushy and bossy and because her classmates were saying this in front of a teacher she knew she couldn’t lash out abusively and listened to some of the suggestions made by Ann and the other children. It was proven that a mediator is a valuable asset to conflict resolution.
A valuable lesson of everything that happens is the result of something else ie. Anna came crying because Oliver had kicked her but forgot to mention that she had called him names first to the point that he couldn’t stand any longer. Most of the boys have a problem with the opposite sex. They even go so far as to publicly acknowledge that they don’t like working with the girls. Two examples of this is Andrew in Italian when he had to work with Linda and David when he had to work in the conflict lesson with Anna. It was particularly interesting to watch the children in this particular conflict lesson as they each had to switch roles and play the opposite sex. Even though they tried to switch, most of the boys when they were meant to be girls, tried to dominate and still acted as boys whereas the girls were quite happy to adopt a boys role whether they thought they were being given a power role or not I don’t know. One of the most important elements of Ann’s teaching of conflict resolution is that she never treats them as inferior to her, but relied on them to develop group discussion rules and gave them the responsibility of upholding these rules. All of the children responded accordingly to these rules showing that they were mature and could cope with this responsibility. The only concern I have with the program is that a lot of the time I got the impression that the children were only saying what I think they thought Ann wanted to hear. This was the case except for David who was quite candid in explaining that the fighting that occurred between Simon and him had become ‘quite a tradition’. Even though each child in the eye of confrontation said that they would take the more constructive approach, the next day it seemed they were back again, doing the same things in the old approach. It will take a long while for Ann to get the ‘leopards to change their spots’.

The work on conflict resolution must be conducted by someone who feels really passionate about solving problems without violence but through talking them out. A program of this nature is important in a school that doesn’t have a discipline policy as it teaches students ways of dealing with conflict and preventing it before it occurs.

CLASS PROFILES
CLASS FOUR
KOROWAL SCHOOL

These profiles are being written with the conflict resolution lessons in mind.

David
Probably very appropriate for him to go first as he is probable one of the targets for the implementation of this program. He has a habit of outbreaking with violent behaviour towards his peers and as result has trouble making friends. Some of this can be attributed to the fact that he is two years younger than the others but also it is related to the fact that he can be stirred up very easily for the simplest of things. His biggest enemy in the class is Simon and not a day goes by when the two don’t conflict. David is always making others feel incomplete in the arts area as he excels but this also contributes to his feeling of not belonging. David needs social skills and has to learn how to respect others.
**Jenny**

Probably one of the cases where she needs to stand up for herself a bit more. She is often the mediator and bother about stupid fights that occur around her. She hangs around Anna who is a dominant person and this makes it a little easier for Anna because of Jenny’s easy going nature but Jenny needs to learn to stand up to her.

**Robert**

A lovely little boy who follows the other ideas of the boys so he can feel accepted. He is always willing to offer his side to the argument as he is always there but hardly ever involved from what I’ve noticed. Robert likes to tease others like Simon for sitting with girls but I feel that this is because he feels that that is what his friends want.

**Anna**

Another child who will benefit greatly from this program as she always sees herself as the victim in arguments never the one who caused it. Anna has a strong will and wishes that everything go her way or she will cry bloody murder. She loves the limelight and is always parading around, a trait which a lot of the girls don’t like about her. She is friends with Jenny but seems to not be very close with any of the other girls.

**Megan**

A frail, quiet little girl who never seems to offer anything in group discussion unless she is asked. At school she doesn’t seem to associate with the other girls yet on a Monday come to school telling of how this girl and that girl came over on the weekend. She acts very maturely and seems like she thinks some of the topics covered in conflict resolution are a bit trivial. Megan never seems to be amongst the arguments and just goes with the flow.

**Linda**

Also another girl who can gain a lot from these lessons who, like Anna, likes to have things go her way. She is very emotional and this gets on the nerves of the class ie. when playing games always squeals and carries on forcing the others to yell at her. Linda has a somewhat of a bitchy nature and this is an aspect that the other girls don’t like and tend to gang up on her. Linda is a very shy girl and it is rare to get more than two words out of her without the support of her friend Megan.

**Nicola**

A quiet girl who is liked by all and who is always amongst the problems but is never an offender or a victim. Her tower of strength is Wendy and she is really all Nicola is worried about. Nicola will only offer something in conversation if asked and it won’t be anything more than is required. Nicola is one child who could benefit from learning to be a bit more forward and opinionated.

**Simon**

Simon is a very outgoing boy who is often involved in the problems discussed in group discussions. Between him and David there is not a lot of room for anyone else. He is very strong willed and determined to stand up for himself. A good feature about Simon is that he is not afraid of playing with the other sex and will at the expense of being teased. A very sweet and caring boy.
Wendy
Wendy is confident and popular. She is not a trouble maker but can frankly explain the problems that occur and provide an honest account of the events related to the altercation. While Nicola is her best friend, it is obvious that she is not as dependant on Nicola as Nicola is on her. David has a crush on Wendy and she doesn’t like this very much as she is confronted with torment as a result of it.

Andrew
Andrew is a boy with a very strong chip on his shoulder. He is the main offender of ‘girl hating’. He refuses to touch, play or socialise with them. In group discussions Andrew is very quiet hoping to avoid questions being aimed at him. He is a bit of a stirrer in the classroom but in the playground chooses to hang around the older children and as a result, is not involved in most of these problems. Andrew knows the correct way of doing things and shyly admits and accepts the fact.

Carol
A girl who is liked by all and is very open in telling her opinion to the group and to pick out who she thinks is at fault. Carol is very friendly and will play with everyone but refuses to be bosses around and will stand up for herself.

Peter
A sweet young boy who also tells a story from his point of view with no problems at all. He is popular with boys and can be relied on to keep peace in most situations. He has had fights with David but who in the class hasn’t? Peter is very sensitive and is not afraid to cry in front of others and looks to Ann for comfort ie. when his puppy died. A good quality within him.

Oliver
Oliver is a cheeky boy in the way that he uses his baby face looks to get his own way. He has a tendency to sulk for things instead of ask for things. This hasn’t stopped him from having friends as he gets on with all of the boys. He does however have the odd argument with a classmate ie. David over whatever and claims that he is not at fault when sometimes he reacts in the wrong way ie. kicking Anna for teasing him.

Chloe
Chloe is a girl who is friends with everybody and is never involved in arguments. She always offers solutions in group discussion when all the facts have been heard and a resolution is being reached.
KOROWAL 1997
REFLECTIONS A YEAR LATER ON CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Since my practical session in 1996 at Korowal, many things have changed in what is now Class 5. The most obvious ones are the physical changes such as the new classroom and most importantly the loss of some students and the gaining of others. Peter, Nicola and Chloe have left the class and in their place are James, Charles and Steven, making a totally different impression on the class. In an effort to include everyone and to continue the work Ann had done with the class, she has had to change her direction slightly. Steven has a lot of problems with his health both physically and mentally so it seems and needs help in the playground socially etc. As a way of combating this she had created a ‘buddy’ system in the classroom where two students stay with Steven each day and look after him. There first day I went back to Korowal there was a discussion regarding Steven and the buddy system. Steven was away from school and Ann took the opportunity to ask the children’s reflections on how things were going. This is where I noticed a lot of the changes in the original members of the group. For example, it appeared that one year ago, students like David and Andrew wouldn’t have given Steven the time of day but now David’s responses to Ann’s questions seem so mature as if he’s relishing the responsibility bestowed on him. The same thing goes for the rest of the class.

Relationships have also evolved in the last year that a year ago, seemed quite unlikely. Simon and David seem to be great friends in and out of school. I noticed one day Ann was asking the children to pair up and Simon initiated the request to be with David. It appears that both of the boys are softening and are both benefiting from it.

Ann treats all of the students as adults which they like a lot. All of her questions end with a question, allowing the students to reflect and respond to the situation. An example of this is when they were discussing Steven and being teased in the playground, Ann didn’t just make up the procedure to take, she suggested guidelines and the children made it up.

At times during the lessons I have participated in, some of the old ways of the children came back which is only natural. A lot of the children have trouble still opening up and being ‘nice’ to the opposite sex. An example of this was on the 2nd September where we sat in a circle and said something we liked, physically or emotionally, about the person on our left. The students, especially Linda had trouble with this as it took her about ten minutes to think about one nice thing to say about Simon. In this exercise I was sitting next to Andrew and when Ann introduced it everyone looked at Andrew and sniggered “I wonder what Andrew’ll say about Kylie” This pressure also made it hard for Andrew to respond. As ‘like’ in the eyes of the children means boyfriend and girlfriend, when Ann said that they had to say something that they thought was beautiful about the other person, the whole class cracked up with shy giggles.

When I attended Korowal in 1996, there were a few lessons that Ann revisited in my time in 1997, one of which was the search for the wise part inside. This gave me
an idea of the developments of the students in the class and how they’ve changed. Last 
year, the children lay on the floor and imagined their wise part as Ann took them to 
their special pace for a while. This year, discussion preceded this about if there was a 
wise part and what it does for you. David questioned its credibility because he still 
does things wrong and knows it’s going to get him into trouble. Ann asked what it was 
that made him know he was going to get into trouble. He pondered for a while and 
accepted it. The students again were given time to meet their wise part and go to the 
special place and this was followed up with the children having to draw it. Their 
responses were very personal and individual. For example, James’s was a road leading 
to somewhere with a field of flowers and Anna’s was a house with her family in it and 
an angel who was her wise part. A lot could be assumed by these drawings but 
especially who has influenced and guided their decision making skills.

While this had had a very individual focus, most of the activities I observed 
have moved away from looking at themselves as in 1996 and have now looked at 
others and themselves in the big picture amongst others. The children have learnt about 
their own feelings, ideas and strengths so Ann is getting them to look at others in the 
same way. Two activities that illustrate this is the role play where a student in the 
group learns how to be a mediator and another activity where students make a board 
of themselves with windows that the others students have to fill in. Both activities 
were very successful.

The change in the students and their relationships is remarkable. I can’t help 
believing that the effectiveness of it wouldn’t have been so good in another setting. 
This sort of program needed to go over a year and Ann’s school is perfect for this type 
of education.
APPENDIX M
Questions asked during the implementation of the program

- Was empathy developed? Did we move beyond blame and victims?
- Why are ‘killer’ statements more popular that ‘kind’ ones?
- When do most of the problems occur?
- Does gender play a part in reactions to the program?
- What are responsibilities? What are rights?
- What is the relationship between responsibilities and rights? Do we need classroom rules?
- Can children choose how they respond to a situation? Can children be taught to self-correct?
- How can I improve listening skills?
- What helps children feel good about themselves?
- What do children understand about conflict?
- How can we look at emotional release work in the classroom?
- How can meditation be incorporated into our daily activities?
- How will children respond to these activities in a group context?
- How do incorporate new children into the work already covered?
- Have I done enough background work to make mediation a relevant process?
- Is mediation a relevant process at this stage?
- What is the impact of the class discussion strategy on the program?
- Could it work better? Why? How will I do that?
- Was there a balance between formal and informal aspects of the program?
- What is the impact of my intervention? Is it appropriate to intervene sometimes?
- What behaviours lead to my loss of temper?
- What is the impact when I play the authoritative teacher? Are there perceived contradictions between what I say and what I do?
- How accurate is my observation of the children? Do I have favourites? Do I pick on some?
- Did I respond adequately to the children’s needs when I changed the program?
- Was there enough in the program to be useful? Did I attempt too much?
- Can I provide spaces to enable the children to release emotions appropriately?
- Am I drawing too much attention to some behaviours that might just go away? Are problems going underground because the children don’t want to discuss them?
- What do I need to change in my behaviour? Am I modelling the behaviours I want appropriately?
- Am I truly hearing the needs of the children? How do I know?
- Can I, should I individualise the program more, depending on the personality of the child?
- Am I listening enough? Am I talking too much?
• What emerges as key issues for the children?
• How do the children act and react to the program? Do the children see change as desirable?
• Is conflict seen as something positive and transformative, as energy for change?
• Do the children deal with anger differently now?
• Has there been a change in individual and class behaviour over the two years?
• What are the kind of responses I am getting? What behaviour changes are observable?
• Can they be attributed to the program?
• What impact, if any, did the interruptions have on the program?
• Am I achieving anything that I hoped for at the beginning of the program?
• Are the children enjoying the program? Are they finding it boring?
• Do they understand what is being asked of them? Do they need to?
• In what time frame can I expect results? What form will results, if any, take? Will there be measurable results?
"PEACEFUL WARRIORS": A Case Study in Conflict Resolution Education

Thesis submitted as partial requirements for the degree of Master of Education (Hons) at the University of Western Sydney, Nepean

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2000
PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis,

and the best possible result has been obtained.
I knew
That if the fight must again be here
I will need better armour
Or greater love.

M Scott Peck

I wish to express my sincere thanks to my supervisor, Dr Mavourna Collits, former Head of the Department of Educational Studies, Faculty of Education, UWS Nepean, for the many hours she so willingly devoted towards the completion of this thesis, as well as for the guidance and support she provided.

Also my thanks to Associate Professor Beth Southwell for her contribution as co-supervisor.

All parents, students and colleagues whose assistance in its many forms I have enjoyed are very much appreciated.

However all responsibility for the content and conclusions of this thesis remains my own.
ABSTRACT

This case study began as a peer mediation program for a class of Year 4 students, implemented over an eighteen month period as part of the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education Syllabus. The program developed into a process that integrated skills development, an understanding of interpersonal interactions, emotional responses and self understanding. Using an action research model and analysis based in grounded theory it became an interactive, interpretative analysis of conflictual issues between student/student and student/teacher as together they explored a major psychological and philosophical issue, conflict resolution, on a local and personal level.

This thesis seeks to authenticate the participants’ attempts to change the way in which learning about conflict occurs, to change the ambience of the classroom and to develop a web of interrelationships that work towards a greater understanding of the problem area and ultimately of the wider social and cultural network in which we choose to live.
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