

Conflict resolution, peer mediation and young people's relationships

Who wants to know and what do they want to know?

Pupils and teachers at Hatch End High School, Harrow, chose 'relationships' as the topic for this review. They wanted to know what schools could do to improve young people's relationships with each other, with teachers and with their families. This is a key question for schools, policy-makers and pressure groups; there are currently programmes and initiatives on behaviour, citizenship, healthy schools and many other areas which have relationships at their core. Within that broad area, the team looked in more detail at school programmes that encourage conflict resolution and peer mediation.

What did we find?

We found evidence of some benefits for pupils of school interventions in conflict resolution, negotiation skills and peer mediation. Programmes that were studied were quite varied and included classroom based versus whole school initiatives; lessons delivered by teachers versus the use of outside staff; training integrated into academic curricula versus use of the social and personal education area; and use of peer mediation in some programmes. Studies tended to measure the effects that were 'closest' to the intervention - views about conflict,

understanding of what had been taught - rather than longer term and more 'distant' effects, such as pupils' confidence and ability to make better relationships. The programme that used teaching within an academic curriculum had good results. Some studies looked at the impact on reports of disciplinary incidents in schools and found a positive but limited impact.

How did we get these results?

First, we looked for research in secondary schools about young people's relationships and found a very varied set of studies. Within those we chose a small set of studies that addressed the question:

Do planned educational interventions in conflict resolution skills, negotiation skills and peer mediation improve young people's personal and social relationships?

We put together the results of 10 studies from USA, Canada and Australia. All were published after 1994 and all compared the results for pupils in these programmes with pupils not in the programmes.

What are the implications?

These are promising interventions that deserve to be rigorously tested in UK schools.



Where to find further information

For more information about the content of this review, or for more information about the EPPI-Centre's systematic review programmes, please contact:

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The results of this systematic review are available in four formats:

SUMMARY

Explains the purpose of the review and the main messages from the research evidence

FINAL REPORT

Describes the background and the findings of the review(s) but without full technical details of the methods used

TECHNICAL REPORT

Includes the background, main findings, and full technical details of the review

DATABASES

Access to codings describing each research study included in the review

These can be downloaded or accessed at <http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/reel/>

Reports published by the EPPI-Centre in April 2006.

The EPPI-Centre's reference numbers for the reports of this review are 1406R (Report) and 1406T (Technical Report). The full citations for the reports are:

REPORT

Garcia J, Sinclair J, Dickson K, Thomas J, Brunton J, Tidd M, the PSHE Review Group (2006) Conflict resolution, peer mediation and young people's relationships. Report. In: *Research Evidence in Education Library*. London: EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London.

TECHNICAL REPORT

Garcia J, Sinclair J, Dickson K, Thomas J, Brunton J, Tidd M, the PSHE Review Group (2006) Conflict resolution, peer mediation and young people's relationships. Technical Report. In: *Research Evidence in Education Library*. London: EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London.

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