

Teaching students to be peacemakers: Results of twelve years of research

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by David W. Johnson And Roger T. Johnson, University of Minnesota

Between 1988 and 2000 we conducted seventeen studies on the effectiveness of conflict resolution training in eight different schools in two different countries. Students involved were from kindergarten through ninth grades. Two approaches to peer mediation were studied--total student body and school cadre. The studies were conducted in rural, suburban, and urban settings. The training programs lasted from 9 to 15 hours in length. Eleven of the studies involved control groups. In seven of the studies, classrooms and/or controls were selected randomly from the school; in four studies students were assigned randomly to conditions. In nine of the studies teachers were rotated across conditions.

The findings indicate that students learn the conflict resolution procedures taught, retain their knowledge throughout the school year, apply the conflict resolution procedures to actual conflicts, transfer the procedures to nonclassroom and nonschool settings, use the procedures similarly in family and school settings, and, when given the option, engage in problem-solving rather than win-lose negotiations. The results further demonstrate that conflict resolution procedures can be taught in a way that increases academic achievement and that the adults in the school perceive the conflict resolution program to be constructive and helpful.

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