Educating Beyond Hate*

Morton Deutsch
Teachers College, Columbia University

Families and schools are the two most important institutions influencing the developing child's predispositions to hate and to love. Although the influence of the family comes earlier and is often more profound, there is good reason to believe that the child's subsequent experiences in schools can modify or strengthen the child's earlier acquired dispositions. In this paper, I shall outline a program of what schools can do to encourage the development of the values, attitudes, and knowledge which foster constructive rather than destructive relations.

First, let me note that many schools do not provide much constructive social experience for their students. Too often schools are structured so that students are pitted against one another. They compete for the teacher's attention, for grades, for status, and for admission to prestigious schools. Being put down and putting down others are pervasive occurrences. Many of us can recall classroom experiences of hoping that another student, who was called on by the teacher instead of us, would give the wrong answer so that we could get called on (and give the right answer).

In recent years, it has been increasingly recognized that our schools have to change in basic ways if we are to educate children so that they are for rather than against one another, so that they develop the ability to resolve their conflicts constructively rather than destructively, so that they are prepared to live in a peaceful world. This recognition has been expressed in a number of interrelated movements: "cooperative learning," "conflict resolution," and "education for peace." In my view, there are four key components in these overlapping movements: cooperative learning,

conflict resolution training, the constructive use of controversy in teaching subject-matters, and the creation of dispute resolution centers in the schools. I shall discuss each briefly.

**Cooperative learning.**

Although cooperative learning has many ancestors and can be traced back for at least two thousand years, it is only in this century that there has been development of a theoretical base, systematic research, and systematic teaching procedures for cooperative learning. There are five key elements involved in cooperative learning (Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec, 1986). The most important is positive interdependence. Students must perceive that it is to their advantage if other students learn well and that it is to their disadvantage if others do poorly. This can be achieved in many different ways - e.g., through mutual goals (goal interdependence); division of labor (task interdependence); dividing resources, materials, or information among group members (resource interdependence); and by giving joint rewards (reward interdependence).

In addition, cooperative learning requires face-to-face interaction among students in which their positive interdependence can be expressed in behavior. It also requires individual accountability of each member of the cooperative learning group to one another for mastering the material to be learned and for providing appropriate support and assistance to each other. Further, it is necessary for the students to be trained in the interpersonal and small group skills needed for effective cooperative work in groups. Finally, cooperative learning also involves providing students with the time and procedures for processing or analyzing how well their learning groups are functioning and what can be done to improve how they work together. In addition, it is desireable to compose cooperative learning groups so that they are heterogeneous with regard to academic ability, ethnic background, or physical disability.

Hundreds of research studies have been done on the relative impact of cooperative, competitive, and individualistic learning experiences (see Johnson and Johnson, 1983, 1989). The various studies of cooperative learning are quite consistent with one another, and with my theoretical
to transform the arena of conflict into one in which one's effective power is greater than one's adversary. Thus, if a bully challenges you to a fight because you won't "lend" him money and he is stronger than you (and you cannot amass the power to deter, intimidate, or beat him), you might arrange to change the conflict from a physical confrontation (which you would lose) to a legal confrontation (which you would win) by involving the police or other legal authority. Other strategies and tactics in win-lose conflicts involve outwitting, misleading, seducing, blackmailing, and the various forms of the black arts which have been discussed by Machiavelli (1950), Potter (1965), Schelling (1960), and Alinsky (1971), among others. The strategy and tactics involved in mixed-motive conflicts are discussed below. My emphasis is on the strategy of cooperative problem-solving to find a solution to the conflict which is mutually satisfactory and upon the development and application of mutually-agreed upon fair principles to handle those situations in which the aspirations of both sides cannot be equally realized. The strategy and tactics of the resolution of cooperative conflicts involve primarily cooperative fact-finding and research as well as rational persuasion.

2. **Become aware of the causes and consequences of violence and of the alternatives to violence, even when one is very angry.** Become realistically aware of: how much violence there is; how many young people die from violence; the role of weapons in leading to violence; how frequently homicides are precipitated by arguments; how alcohol and drugs contribute to violence. Become aware of what makes you very angry; learn the healthy and unhealthy ways you have of expressing anger. Learn how to actively channel your anger in ways that are not violent and are not likely to provoke violence from the other. Understand that violence begets violence and that if you "win" an argument by violence, the other will try to get even in some other way. Learn alternatives to violence in dealing with conflict. Prothrow-Stith (1987) has developed a very helpful curriculum for adolescents on the prevention of violence.

3. **Face conflict rather than avoid it.** Recognize that conflict may make you anxious and that you may try to avoid it. Learn the typical defenses you employ to evade conflict -- e.g., denial, suppression, becoming overly
agreeable, rationalization, postponement, premature conflict resolution. Become aware of the negative consequences of evading a conflict -- irritability, tension, persistence of the problem, etc. Learn what kinds of conflicts are best avoided rather than confronted -- e.g., conflicts that will evaporate shortly, those that are inherently unresolvable, win-lose conflicts which you are unlikely to win.

4. Respect yourself and your interests, respect the other and his or her interests. Personal insecurity and the sense of vulnerability often lead people to define conflicts as "life and death," win-lose struggles even when they are relatively minor, mixed-motive conflicts, and this definition may lead to "conflict avoidance," "premature conflict resolution," or "obsessive involvement in the conflict." Helping students to develop a respect for themselves and their interests enables them to see their conflicts in reasonable proportion and facilitates their constructive confrontation. Helping students to learn to respect the other and the other's interests inhibits the use of competitive tactics of power, coercion, deprecation, and deception which commonly escalate the issues in conflict and often lead to violence.

Valuing oneself and others, as well as respect for the differences between oneself and others, are rooted in the fundamental moral commitment to the principle of universal human dignity. This core value and its derivatives should not only be emphasized in the curricula of many subject matters (e.g., literature, geography, history, social studies) from K through 12, in addition to the conflict-resolution curricula, but also should be learned by students from their observations of how teachers and school administrators treat students and other people in and around the schools.

5. Distinguish clearly between "interests" and "positions." Positions may be opposed but interests may not be (Fisher and Ury, 1981). The classic example from Follett (1940) is that of a brother and sister, each of whom wanted the only orange available. The sister wanted the peel of the orange to make marmalade; the brother wanted to eat the inner part. Their positions ("I want the orange") were opposed, their interests were not. Often when conflicting parties reveal their underlying interests, it is possible to find a solution which suits them both.
6. Explore your interests and the other's interests to identify the common and compatible interests that you both share. Identifying shared interests makes it easier to deal constructively with the interests that you perceive as being opposed. A full exploration of one another's interests increases empathy and facilitates subsequent problem-solving. For an excellent discussion of how to develop empathy and a sense of shared interests see Shulman and Mekler (1985).

It is evident that when considerable distrust and hostility have developed between the conflicting parties, it may be useful to have third parties help in this process of exploration. The third parties may serve one or more functions. They may serve as facilitators, conciliators (or therapists) who help the parties to control and reduce their distrust and hostility sufficiently to permit them to engage in this process themselves; they may serve as mediators who directly assist the parties in this process or even undertake the exploration for the conflicting parties, doing what the parties are unable or unwilling to do. There has been considerable discussion of such third-party intervention in Folberg and Taylor (1984), Kelman (1972), Kressel (1985), and Rubin (1980).

7. Define the conflicting interests between oneself and the other as a mutual problem to be solved cooperatively. Define the conflict in the smallest terms possible, as a "here-now-this" conflict rather than as a conflict between personalities or general principles -- e.g., as a conflict about a specific behavior rather than about who is a better person. Diagnose the problem clearly and then creatively seek new options for dealing with the conflict that lead to mutual gain. If no option for mutual gain can be discovered, seek to agree upon a fair rule or procedure for deciding how the conflict will be resolved. However, not all conflicts can be solved to mutual satisfaction even with the most creative thinking. Here, agreement upon a fair procedure that determines who gets his or her way, or seeking help from neutral, third-parties when such an agreement cannot be reached, may be the most constructive resolution possible under the circumstances. See Lewicki and Literrer (1985) for an excellent discussion of the strategy and tactics of integrative bargaining. To the extent that the parties see the possibility of a mutually satisfying
agreement, they will be more able to listen to one another in an understanding, empathic manner, and of course, the converse is true too.

8. In communicating with the other, listen attentively and speak so as to be understood; this requires the active attempt to take the perspective of the other and to check continually one's success in doing so. One should listen to the other's meaning and emotion in such a way that the other feels understood as well as is understood. Similarly, you want to communicate to the other one's thoughts and feelings in such a way that you have good evidence that he or she understands the way you think and feel. The feeling of being understood, as well as effective communication, enormously facilitates constructive resolution.

Johnson and Johnson (1987), Lewicki and Litterer (1985), Prutzman et al (1988), and many others provide excellent discussions and practical exercises relevant to the development of skills in communicating and listening effectively. As a communicator, one wants to be skilled in obtaining and holding the other's attention, in phrasing one's communication so that it is readily comprehended and remembered, and in acquiring the credibility that facilitates acceptance of one's message. Skills in taking the perspective of others and in obtaining feedback about the efectiveness of one's communications are important. Listening actively and effectively entails not only taking the perspective of the other so that one understands the communicator's ideas and feelings but also communicating the desire to understand the other and indicating through paraphrasing one's understanding or through questions what one does not understand. Role reversal seems to be helpful in developing an understanding of the perspective of the other and in providing checks on how effective the communication process has been.

9. Be alert to the natural tendencies to bias, misperceptions, misjudgments, and stereotyped thinking that commonly occur in oneself as well as the other during heated conflict. These errors in perception and thought interfere with communication, make empathy difficult, and impair problem-solving. Psychologists can provide a check list of the common forms of misperception and misjudgment occurring during intense conflict. These include black-white thinking, demonizing the other, shortening of
one's time-perspective, narrowing of one's range of perceived options, and the fundamental attribution error. The fundamental attribution error is illustrated in the tendency to attribute the aggressive actions of the other to the other's personality while attributing one's own aggressive actons to external circumstances (such as the other's hostile actions). The ability to recognize and admit one's misperceptions and misjudgments clears the air and facilitates similar acknowledgment by the other. (See Jervis, 1976; Kahnemen, Slovic, and Tversky, 1982; Nisbett and Ross, 1980.)

10. Develop skills for dealing with difficult conflicts so that one is not helpless nor hopeless when confronting those who are more powerful, those who don't want to engage in constructive conflict resolution, or those who use dirty tricks. Fisher and Ury (1981) have discussed these matters very helpfully in the final three chapters of their well-known book, Getting to Yes. I shall not summarize their discussion but rather emphasize several basic principles. First, it is important to recognize that one becomes less vulnerable to intimidation by a more powerful other, to someone who refuses to cooperate except on his or her terms, or to someone who plays dirty tricks (deceives, welshes on an agreement, personally attacks you, etc.) if you realize that you usually have a choice: you don't have to stay in the relationship with the other. You are more likely to be aware of your freedom to choose between leaving or staying if you feel that there are alternatives to continuing the relationship which you can make acceptable to yourself. The alternative may not be great but it may be better than staying in the relationship. The freedom to choose prevents the other, if he or she benefits from the relationship, from making the relationship unacceptable to you.

Second, it is useful to be open and explicit to the other about what he or she is doing that is upsetting you and to indicate the effects that these actions are having on you. If the other asserts that you have misunderstood or denies doing what you have stated, and if you are not persuaded, be forthright in maintaining that this remains a problem for you: discuss with the other what could be done to remove the problem (your misunderstanding of the other, your need for reassurance, or the other's noxious behavior).
Third, it is wise to avoid reciprocating the other's noxious behavior and to avoid attacking the other personally for his behavior (i.e., criticize the behavior and not the person); doing so often leads to an escalating vicious spiral. It is helpful to look behind the other's noxious behavior with such questions as: "I wonder what you think my reaction is to what you have said?" "I am really curious. What do you think this will gain for you?" It is also sometimes useful to suggest to the other more appropriate or better means for pursuing his interests than the ones that he or she is currently employing.

A phrase that I have found useful in characterizing the stance one should take in difficult (as well as easy) conflicts is to be "firm, fair, and friendly." Firm in resisting intimidation, exploitation, and dirty tricks; fair in holding to one's moral principles and not reciprocating the other's immoral behavior despite his or her provocations; and friendly in the sense that one is willing to initiate and reciprocate cooperation.

11. Know oneself and how one typically responds in different sorts of conflict situations. As I have suggested earlier, conflict frequently evokes anxiety. In clinical work, I have found that the anxiety is often based upon unconscious fantasies of being overwhelmed and helpless in the face of the other's aggression or of being so angry and aggressive oneself that one will destroy the other. Different people deal with their anxieties about conflict in different ways. I have found it useful to emphasize five different dimensions of dealing with conflict which can be used to characterize a person's predispositions to respond to conflict. Being aware of one's predispositions may allow one to modify them when they are inappropriate in a given conflict. The five dimensions follow below:

(a) Conflict avoidance -- excessive involvement in conflict. Conflict avoidance is expressed in denial, repression, suppression, avoidance, and continuing postponement of facing the conflict. Excessive involvement in conflict is sometimes expressed in a "macho" attitude, a chip on one's shoulder, a tendency to seek out conflict to demonstrate that one is not afraid of conflict.
(b) **Hard -- soft.** Some people are prone to take a tough, aggressive, dominating, unyielding response to conflict fearing that otherwise they will be taken advantage of and be considered soft. Others are afraid that they will be considered to be mean, hostile, or presumptuous, and as a consequence, they are excessively gentle and unassertive. They often expect the other to "read their minds" and know what they want even though they are not open in expressing their interests.

(c) **Rigid -- loose.** Some people immediately seek to organize and to control the situation by setting the agenda, defining the rules, etc. They feel anxious if things threaten to get out of control and feel threatened by the unexpected. As a consequence, they are apt to push for rigid arrangements and rules and get upset by even minor deviations. At the other extreme, there are some people who are aversive to anything that seems formal, limiting, controlling, or constricting.

(d) **Intellectual -- emotional.** At one extreme, emotion is repressed, controlled, or isolated so that no relevant emotion is felt or expressed as one communicates one's thoughts. The lack of appropriate emotional expressiveness may seriously impair communication: the other may take your lack of emotion as an indicator that you have no real commitment to your interests and that you lack genuine concern for the other's interests. At the other extreme, there are some people who believe that only feelings are real and that words and ideas are not to be taken seriously unless they are thoroughly soaked in emotion. Their emotional extravagance impairs the ability to mutually explore ideas and to develop creative solutions to impasses; it also makes it difficult to differentiate the significant from the insignificant, if even the trivial is accompanied with intense emotion.

(e) **Escalating versus minimizing.** At one extreme, there are some people who tend to experience any given conflict in the largest possible terms. The issues are cast so that what is at stake involves one's self, one's family, one's ethnic group, precedence for all-time, or the like. The specifics of the conflict get lost as it escalates along the various dimensions of conflict: the size and number of the immediate issues involved; the number of motives and participants implicated on each side of the issue; the size and number
of the principles and precedents that are perceived to be at stake; the cost that the participants are willing to bear in relation to the conflict; the number of norms of moral conduct from which behavior toward the other side is exempted; and the intensity of negative attitudes toward the other side. Escalation of the conflict makes the conflict more difficult to resolve constructively except when the escalation proceeds so rapidly that its absurdity even becomes self-apparent. At the other extreme, there are people who tend to minimize their conflicts. They are similar to the conflict avoiders but, unlike the avoiders, they do recognize the existence of the conflict. However, by minimizing the seriousness of the differences between self and other, by not recognizing how important the matter is to self and to other, one can produce serious misunderstandings. One may also restrict the effort and work that one may need to devote to the conflict in order to resolve it constructively.

12. Finally, throughout conflict, one should remain a moral person - i.e., a person who is caring and just - and should consider the other as a member of one’s moral community - i.e., as someone who is entitled to care and justice. In the heat of conflict, there is often the tendency to shrink one’s moral community and to exclude the other from it: this permits behavior toward the other which one would otherwise consider morally reprehensible. Such behavior escalates conflict and turns it in the direction of violence and destruction.

The foregoing elements could provide the basis for many different types of courses and workshops in conflict resolution in schools. My limited experience with such training would suggest that, by itself, a simple course or workshop is not usually sufficient to produce lasting effects: students must have repeated opportunities to practice their skills of constructive conflict resolution in a supportive atmosphere. The use of constructive controversy in teaching subject-matters could provide such an atmosphere.

The use of constructive controversy in teaching subject-matters.

David and Roger Johnson (1987) of the University of Minnesota have suggested that teachers, no matter what subject they teach, can stimulate and structure constructive controversy in the classroom which will
promote academic learning and the development of skills of conflict resolution. A cooperative context is established for a controversy by (a) assigning students to groups of four, (b) dividing each group into two pairs who are assigned positions on the topics to be discuss, and (c) requiring each group to reach a consensus on the issue and turn in a group report on which all members will be evaluated. There are five phases involved in the structured controversy. First, the paired students learn their respective positions; then, each pair presents its position. Next, there is an open discussion where students argue strongly and persuasively for their positions. After this, there is a perspective-reversal and each pair presents the opposing pair's position as sincerely and as persuasively as they can. In the last phase, they drop their advocacy of their assigned position and seek to reach consensus on a position that is supported by the evidence. In this phase, they write a joint statement with the rationale and supporting evidence for the synthesis their group has agreed on.

The discussion rules that the students are instructed to follow during the controversy are: (1) Be critical of ideas, not people; (2) focus on making the best possible decision, not on "winning"; (3) encourage everyone to participate; (4) listen to everyone's ideas, even if you do not agree; (5) restate what someone has said if it is not clear; (6) bring out the ideas and facts supporting both sides and then try to put them together in a way that makes sense; (7) try to understand both sides of the issue; and (8) change your mind if the evidence clearly indicates that you should do so.

After the structured controversy, there is group processing and highlighting of the specific skills required for constructive controversy. There is good reason to believe that such structured controversy would not only make the classroom more interesting but that it would also promote the development of perspective taking, critical thinking, and other skills involved in constructive conflict resolution. However, as yet there has been little systematic research on structured controversy.

Mediation in the schools.

There are difficult conflicts which the disputing parties may not be able to resolve constructively without the help of third parties such as
mediators. In schools, such conflicts can occur between students, between students and teachers, between parents and teachers, between teachers and administrators, etc. To deal with such conflicts, mediation programs have been established in a number of schools. These programs vary but, typically, students as well as teachers are given about twenty to thirty hours of training to prepare them to serve as mediators. They are given training in the principles of constructive conflict resolution as well as specific training in how to serve as a mediator. They are usually given a set of rules to apply during the mediation process. Students as young as ten years as well as high school and college students have been trained to serve as mediators. Little systematic research has been done on the effects of such programs but there is considerable anecdotal evidence to suggest that many student mediators have benefitted enormously and that incidents of school violence have decreased.

In selecting to emphasize cooperative learning, conflict resolution, structured controversy, and school mediation as the core of any comprehensive program for educating beyond hate, I have been guided by the view that students need to have continuing experiences of constructive conflict resolution as they learn different subject-matters as well as an immersion in a school environment which, by the way it functions, provides daily experiences of (as well as a model of) cooperative relations and of constructive resolution of conflicts. This pervasive and extended experience, combined with tuition in the concepts and principles of cooperative work and of conflict resolution, should enable the student to develop generalizable attitudes and skills which would be strong enough to resist the countervailing influences that are so prevalent in their non-school environments.
References


