

Approaches to Education on Nonviolence/Peace Studies in K-12 Schools

These are the approaches to nonviolence and conflict resolution education organized from the more general to the more specific, and some of what we at the Center for Nonviolent Solutions consider to be the best resources/programs.

School Climate Programs: These whole school approaches attempt to create a school-wide culture through such things as student sharing during a morning meeting, rule creation, interactive behavior modeling, positive teacher language, collaborative problem solving and family involvement. There is a deliberate focus on social skills. This movement is a natural extension of the cooperative learning experiments of the 1970s. One of the oldest and most venerable of these programs is the Responsive Classroom approach developed in the Pioneer Valley by the Northeast Foundation for Children.

<http://www.responsiveclassroom.org/about/aboutrc.html>

Advisory Programs: These attempts to create a more personalized learning environment where students are well known by at least one adult. Students are assigned to an advisory group for at least the full school year, and often for longer. All teachers in the building have responsibility for a group, which might meet for 15-20 minutes every day. During these meetings conversations range from current events to issues of bullying or violence to academic advising. The emphasis is on relationships and coaching or mentoring. Studies show that mentored students have better attitudes, achieve better grades, and have heightened career/educational aspirations. Here's a link to what Educators for Social Responsibility has to say about it:

<http://esrnational.org/professional-services/high-school/partners-in-learning/advisory-program/>

We have a contact at Leicester High School who developed a very successful program there, and is willing to work with us. Our 2010 summer intern, Clark student Will Colan, wrote up his experiences in such a program at his school.

Formal Peace Studies Programs: These are increasingly common in colleges and universities, but not so in middle and high schools. We pioneered in offering such a program in 2010, a 10-week seminar for sophomores and juniors, at the University Park Campus School. Our program utilizes two anthologies compiled by Colman McCarthy, *Strength Through Peace: The Ideas and People of Nonviolence*, and *Solutions to Violence*, and on his Class of Nonviolence

<http://www.salsa.net/peace/conv/index.html>

Another curriculum that was adapted from that one, "Teaching Peace" by Leah Wells:

<http://www.wagingpeace.org/menu/programs/youth-outreach/peace-ed-book/teaching-peace.pdf>

Conflict Resolution: Training students in techniques for containing, managing and negotiating conflicts to reduce the chances of violence and to work toward resolution of the conflict.

Educators for Social Responsibility offers *Resolving Conflict Creatively* and *Adventures in Peacemaking*. Here is a link to the page which deals with middle school, as that is where WPS would like to focus their efforts:

<http://esrnational.org/professional-services/middle-school/>

Nonviolent Communication skills: techniques to help students understand and be clear about their own needs, values, perceptions and concerns without casting aspersions on others. The most well-known system was developed by Marshall Rosenberg's: <http://www.cnvc.org/>

We are in contact with a college aged trainer, Linnea Palmer Paton, a student at WPI.

Anger Management: techniques for understanding, reducing and containing anger before it leads to violence. While this is not an overall approach, and it's clear that schools teach many different techniques. Mary Bennett at the UMASS Medical School is our best resource on this.

Bullying Prevention Programs: Programs (usually system or school-side) to raise consciousness about the inappropriateness of bullying behavior, how to spot signs of bullying behavior and how to minimize the chances of bullying between individuals or between groups.

- Steps to Respect (31% decrease in bullying in these schools.) Committee for Children, Seattle, Washington. Second Step, A Violence Prevention Curriculum grades PreK-5, and Second Step: Student Success Through Prevention. These are used by the Worcester Public Schools.
- This site is often mentioned as being particularly useful. It's particularly good for looking at "what doesn't work" and "what does work":
<http://www.stopbullyingnow.com/>
- Here's ESR's program: <http://esrnational.org/professional-services/middle-school/prevention/harassment-and-bullying/>
- Olweus "The world's foremost bullying prevention program." Clemson University and the Hazelden Foundation:
<http://www.olweus.org/public/index.page>
- Here's Wellesley College's site on bullying:
<http://www.wcwonline.org/bullying/index.html>
- The Revealers – is a work of middle school fiction in which a group of bullied students join together to stop the culture of bullying in their schools using the creative approach of creating an online tool where students can report and discuss bullying anonymously. Very empowering! <http://www.the-revealers.com/using.html>

Finally, here is a link to a site that describes and compares the many anti-bullying programs that are out there:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/resolve/violenceprevention/English/reviewprog/bullyprogs.htm>

Bystander Responsibility: training students in the responsibilities of bystanders who witness violence, and in techniques for intervention in ways to de-escalate the violence. The idea is that at any given time a student can be a bully or a victim (the preferred terms are harm-doers and targets). The approach has been piloted locally by the Quabbin Mediation Center in Orange, MA: http://www.quabbinmediation.org/html/tab_infopacket.html

Peer Mediation Programs: These are programs that train students in the techniques and procedures of formal mediation of disputes, so that they can mediate disputes and seek resolution of conflicts through mutual understanding and compromise. An attempt is made to train a diverse group of students who work in teams. Anti Defamation League provides training. There are many resources and training manuals online. Here is a summary, again from ESR:
<http://esrnational.org/professional-services/high-school/prevention/peer-mediation-programs/>

And here is the handbook from a Massachusetts program, SCORE (Student Conflict Resolution Experts).<http://www.mass.gov/Cago/docs/Community/Peer%20Mediation%20Guide%20for%20Students.pdf>

Restorative Justice: Programs designed to help students understand the motives behind their offending behaviors to develop problem-solving by using restorative consequences that will help offenders learn a better way to behave and to repair the harm that was done to the victim. Some of the questions a student might be asked to think about are: What happened? What were you thinking of at the time? Who has been affected by what you have done? What do you think you need to do to make things right? Safer Saner Schools is a pioneer in using this concept in schools: <http://www.saferanerschools.org/Training-and-Consulting.html>

Forgiveness: Understanding the healthfulness and usefulness of forgiveness in building any meaningful relationships, and learning techniques for fostering forgiveness. Like anger management, this is not exactly a school approach, but is a relevant topic. Locally, former UMass Medical Chancellor Aaron Lazare is an expert on this subject.

Other Massachusetts resources include:

Anti Defamation League (New England branch)
<http://regions.adl.org/new-england/>

Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character at Boston University
<http://www.bu.edu/sed/caec/index.html>

Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center at Bridgewater State (offers free resources)
<http://webhost.bridgew.edu/marc/index.html>

Northeastern University Sport in Society
<http://www.northeastern.edu/sportinsociety/teamwork/index.html>

School Mediation Associates, Watertown
<http://www.schoolmediation.com/index.html>

Wellesley Centers for Women (addressing teasing and bullying in schools and developing connections to curriculum frameworks)
<http://www.wcwonline.org/content/view/565/299/>