

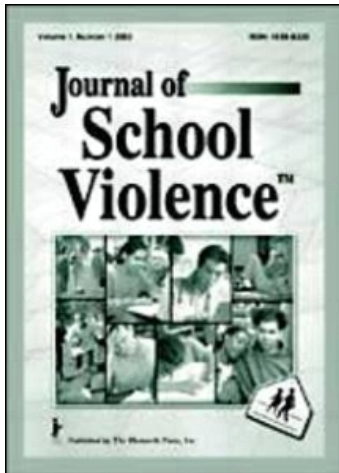
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### Creating Schools of Peace and Nonviolence in a Time of War and Violence

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## Creating Schools of Peace and Nonviolence in a Time of War and Violence

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*In this post 9/11 era Western cultures are focusing on values that support war and violence. In this article an ethnographer explores the impact of these values on schools. These values, seen through the lens of restorative justice, include: (a) punishment, (b) adversarial relationships, (c) monopolization of power, (d) problemization and professionalization, (e) prevalence of economic interests, (f) racism and privilege, and (g) imposition of the dominant culture. Based on his research, the author outlines how schools can create an alternative culture of peace and nonviolence grounded in the restorative justice based idea of peacemaking and focusing on: (a) building trust, (b) healing harms to relationships, (c) restoring dignity of persons affected, (d) respecting biculturalism/multiculturalism, (e) being aware of power differences, and (f) creating safety.*

*KEYWORDS* restorative justice, restorative practices, safety, peace, nonviolence

As the cultures of Western countries are changing in this post 9/11 era, so too are schools. Both are dominated by values that support war and violence. In order to create a sustainable future for society we need to create alternative values for our schools based on peace and nonviolence.

Currently schools pattern their responses to wrongdoing and conflict in terms of safety, that is, keeping the good children safe from the bad children.

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This approach has led to schools using retributive and punitive approaches to discipline, often resulting in actions that separate bad children from their good classmates (e.g., detentions, suspensions, stand downs, and expulsions) (Canter & Canter, 2001; Rogers, 2003). Research shows that children from minoritized and marginalized cultures and those with special needs are overrepresented among these excluded students (Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai, & Richardson 2003; Browne, 2003). This form of response to problems related to student behavior mimics the violent response of Western countries to terrorism, portraying countries where terrorists live as evil and themselves as good as the basis for engaging in a war on terrorism.

An alternative response encapsulates safety as freedom from harm and the threat of harm, as well as the freedom to be who and what we are as persons (Pennell, 2004). In this type of safe environment children learn how to respond to wrongdoing and conflict nonviolently.

## PURPOSE

The research that underlies this paper was compelled by two questions: (a) what peace (nonviolence) means at the school, and (b) what the daily experiences of the students, teachers, staff, and parents associated with a school's culture are like. The purpose of this paper is to explore one aspect of the study, and that is, how a New Zealand school based its disciplinary practices on Western values supporting war and violence, while further research at the same school showed there are alternative values schools can adopt that support the opposite, peace and nonviolence.

My research was based on a commitment to learn how schools helped (or didn't help) children learn how to respond to wrongdoing and conflict nonviolently and to live in peaceful relationships. Based on Goodlad's (1984) idea that schools are intended to help our children to be active and contributing members of society, I wanted to learn if and how schools help our children learn how to be peaceful citizens, particularly in responding to wrongdoing and conflict nonviolently.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for this study was based on the concept of restorative justice. This framework formed a basis for analyzing and interpreting data.

Based on my research, experience and knowledge of the field, I defined restorative justice principles in schools as restorative practices, constituting a response to wrongdoing and conflict focused on healing the harm, particularly to relationships, resulting from the event. While restorative

justice originated in the legal field, the principles subsequently were applied to education (Cameron & Thorsborne, 2001; Morrison, 2002; and Drewery & Winslade, 2003).

This conceptual framework was further narrowed to focus, through a restorative justice lens, on how schools reflect or do not reflect the Western cultural emphasis on war and violence. Howard Zehr (2004, 2002, 1997, 1995) is recognized as a major pioneer in the field of restorative justice (Braithwaite, 2001). In a keynote address at The New Frontiers in Restorative Justice: Advancing Theory and Practice conference in New Zealand, Zehr (2004) clearly linked the work of restorative justice to peacemaking and peacebuilding. He explained that the principles of restorative justice, focused on peace and nonviolence, are not in sync with the values of the dominant Western culture, which are focused on war and violence. Those values include (a) punishment, (b) adversarial relationships, (c) monopolization of power (usually in the state), (d) problemization and professionalization, (e) prevalence of economic interests, (f) racism and privilege, and (g) imposition of the dominant culture.

These Western cultural values closely align with the six elements underlying systemic domination as identified by indigenous people working in restorative justice: (a) violence, (b) exploitation, (c) marginalization, (d) powerlessness, (e) cognitive imperialism, and (f) terror (Henderson & McCaslin, 2005). Thus, Zehr's (2004) ideas are closely aligned with the position of indigenous people concerned with the systemic violence in our dominant Western society. The indigenous position is important to this discussion because members of these cultures are often overrepresented in school exclusionary practices (Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, & Teddy, 2007) and later in the legal system (Browne, 2003).

In contrast Pennell (2004) offered values consistent with creating a school of peace and nonviolence based on restorative justice principles applied as restorative practices in schools. Pennell said that restorative justice is about peacemaking. Peacemaking is based on human rights, draws on cultural heritage, destabilizes power, builds trust, and heals hurts. The role of a peacemaker in the restorative justice context is to: (a) build trust, (b) heal harms to relationships, (c) restore dignity of persons affected, (d) respect biculturalism/multiculturalism, (e) be aware of power differences, and (f) create safety. The combined ideas of Zehr and Pennell formed the conceptual framework for interpreting the data collected for this study.

## DATA SOURCES

At the time I attended the conference at which Zehr (2004) spoke I was in the midst of conducting research during a Fulbright fellowship in New Zealand, which was an ethnographic case study and a replication of my

dissertation study. The first study was conducted at a small private elementary school in the United States of America, and the second study was done at a small public area school (primary and secondary) in New Zealand. Both studies were based on spending an extended period of time in the schools interacting with students, parents, teachers, and administrators. The first study informed the second and acted as an initial lens for interpreting the data.

## METHODS

I spent over 400 hours in each school because spending an extended period of time in the field is characteristic of an ethnography (Creswell, 1998). I collected data in the form of fieldnotes; informal, formal, and focus group interviews with students, staff, and parents; documents; and journal entries. I analyzed these data using constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2000) and vignette writing (Van Maanen, 1988) and shared reflective memos with the participants seeking their comments. These methods were chosen to add trustworthiness to the project.

I chose to analyze the data I collected using the theoretical framework offered by Zehr (2004) and Parnell (2004) because my analysis revealed tensions in the data. I was struggling with understanding the meaning of these tensions. The work of Zehr and Parnell helped me understand the data and interpret the results.

## RESULTS

I analyzed the data that was collected through the lens provided by Zehr (2004) and Parnell (2004) as well as my experience conducting research in schools. I also relied on findings from my initial study on this subject to inform my analysis at the New Zealand school. The results are explained by the emerging themes from my analysis in two major areas: (a) evidence of western culture values supporting war and violence in schools and (b) alternative ways to create a culture of peace and nonviolence in schools. These contrasting themes were the bases of the tensions in my research.

### Evidence of Western Culture Values Supporting War and Violence in Schools

As a result of the data analysis, I found evidence of the Western culture values identified by Zehr (2004) in the following areas: punishment, adversarial relationships, concentrated power or control, problemization and professionalization, racism and privilege, and imposition of the dominant culture.

## PUNISHMENT

My research revealed the current system for managing student behavior was fundamentally based on adversarial processes, which are punishment oriented and retributive in nature. It was the dominant response to student misbehavior in classrooms of the New Zealand school I studied. Teachers tended to utilize extrinsic rewards to support students' behavior that followed "school rules" and "compliance requirements," including certificates, stickers, and other rewards.

In a conversation with students in New Zealand, they described their current discipline system as confusing, inconsistent, pointless, unfair, lacking continuity, and a quick fix. They said the process does not give students a chance to talk or help students resolve problems, be restored, and feel safe. They believed the system gets students into trouble rather than sorting things out. In such a system blame was generalized, relationships were destroyed, and student had limited control over most aspects of their daily lives and were not accountable for their choices.

I found discipline processes in this school were based on rules and protecting the school's image rather than trust. Such processes resulted in students being labeled (e.g., naughty), which could start in primary school and carry over to secondary school. Labels tended to become the totality of who people were and put them in a box with no way to escape. It was like being diagnosed with a terminal illness. The past was held against students, and all students in that group or grade level suffered when one or two of them misbehaved. At times I observed shaming and name-calling by teachers who utilized this particular approach.

Furthermore, I found some teachers believed these discipline systems, such as Assertive Discipline (Canter & Canter, 2001), were based on obedience, failed to heal and restore relationships, ignored the harm resulting from wrongdoing, were at odds with biculturalism, and often depended on the student's personal relationship with the teacher as to how rules were applied. As a result these discipline processes were focused on command and control, labeling and punishment rather than building and healing relationships and restoring dignity to individuals and the community.

## ADVERSARIAL RELATIONSHIPS

Adversarial themes were apparent in the school when language was used that set a student or group of students apart from other students. An adversarial climate among staff (including parents) was created when there was a lack of willingness to mend bridges. Students were treated in an adversarial manner through deficit language, blaming, labeling, shaming, put downs, and not being trusted.

Adversarial relationships were supported by the school with the creation of bifurcated groups of students, particularly the good and bad students. Normally the bad students were excluded in some way from contact with the good students, especially when wrongdoing or conflict occurred. Often the student exhibiting a behavior problem was excluded from the classroom and sent to an administrative expert for discipline. In other instances these students were taught in a separate unit on the school campus.

#### CONCENTRATED POWER OR CONTROL

I found the New Zealand school I studied had a hierarchical structure of power and control. Power and control started at the top with the principal and flowed down through layers of middle management. These layers included assistant principals, deputy principals, and heads of departments. A system of rewarding good teachers who had taught at the school for an extended period of time was established in New Zealand based on giving them management duties and powers. As a result the classroom teacher and students had little or no power and control, nor the capacity to solve classroom problems.

Some people identified control, particularly by some members of staff in positions of authority, as resulting in a lack of sharing of power and patronizing behavior. The results were misuse of authority and the appearance of a lack of trust. Control exercised in the classroom by teachers resulted in a traditional approach to teaching, where the teacher comes into the classroom with the idea they hold all the knowledge about the subject and their job is to dispense this knowledge to students who have little or no knowledge or experience in the subject. Often this approach resulted in boredom and misbehavior. I found this traditional approach to pedagogy contrasted with constructivist teaching strategies, where together the teacher and students create teaching and learning.

Problems arising in the classroom, particularly regarding student behavior, were resolved by sending the student or students involved to an administrative expert. In that way, only one or two individuals in the school had the capacity to solve these problems. I found this response to problems related to student discipline resulted in students and teachers not developing the capacity to respond appropriately to wrongdoing and conflict inside and outside of the classroom.

#### PROBLEMIZATION AND PROFESSIONALIZATION

Some people identified these discipline systems in the school as the major source for making problems out of issues that could be solved by those directly involved, such as teachers and students, and blowing things out of proportion. Some school community members believed staff tended to depersonalize issues and act like professionals so they could feel safe.

By concentrating the power to respond to student behavior problems with one or two administrative people, the school structure supported the professionalization of these problems. The clear message was that only certain people in positions of power could solve these problems and teachers and students were not capable of learning how to respond appropriately to student wrongdoing and conflict.

#### RACISM AND PRIVILEGE

I found some evidence of racism and privilege in the form of deficit conversations about indigenous students and culturally insensitive interactions in the classroom. Some teachers believed these children were not successfully achieving because of a genetic predisposition and/or socioeconomic conditions at home rather than realizing that in their role as teachers they had a substantial effect on the engagement, participation, motivation, and performance of students from non-dominant cultures. Also, some secondary indigenous students, who staff identified as successful, did not feel free to be who and what they were in these classrooms.

#### IMPOSITION OF THE DOMINANT CULTURE

The dominant culture in the school I was studying mirrored society as a whole, with values that supported war and violence by situating power and control at the top and failing to develop the capacity of teachers and students to be self-reliant leaders. I also observed the school culture did not always reflect a culture of care nor support caring teachers.

The major tension related to my study was between traditional discipline systems and restorative practices. A retributive discipline system formed the dominant and traditional response to student misbehavior. This discipline system had serious flaws, centered on failing to teach students how to resolve conflicts nonviolently and to repair the harm to relationships resulting from wrongdoing. The failure to help students develop conflict resolution skills affected their future participation in society in terms of jobs, marriage, etc. At the same time the school I was studying had a mission for creating a caring and bicultural environment and was engaged in a professional development focused on using restorative practices to respond to problems of student behavior.

#### Alternative Ways to Create a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence in Schools

As a result of further data analysis I found evidence of Parnell's (2004) ideas about the role of a peacemaker in a restorative practices context, including

these elements: a) build trust, b) heal harms to relationships, c) restore dignity of persons affected, d) respect biculturalism/multiculturalism, e) be aware of power differences, and f) create safety.

#### BUILD TRUST

*Community is a safe and friendly environment where people live in healthy relationships based on caring and support in a family atmosphere; a place where everyone knows and looks out for each other and their surroundings in an atmosphere of bonding of everything and everyone— Based on Fieldnotes, October 8, 2004*

The first theme I found was relationships. I learned at the core of what schools are about is relationships. Building trust is the key to relationships. Often schools put curriculum at the center of their purpose. However, I have found that you can get the curriculum right, but if the relationships are not right, the school will not succeed.

Further, I found relationships were the key to a successful school and a key motivator for students. I learned from the data I collected that relationships among teachers and staff should involve appreciating, supporting, valuing, and encouraging each other to share talents, expertise and knowledge in a non-judgmental manner of collegial sharing and tolerance for differences. Ideally, teacher-student relationships should focus on welcoming each student, developing a personal rapport with them early in the school year, helping each child to feel successful about their learning and seeing themselves as successful learners from the beginning of school to the end, treating students fairly in an open and honest manner, giving them feedback, and making it fun. In order to sustain relationships I found students need boundaries, firmness, and consistency.

#### HEAL HARMS TO RELATIONSHIPS AND RESTORE DIGNITY OF PERSONS AFFECTED

*“Although they are rough around the edges, in their hearts the students do care” – Quoting a teacher, Fieldnotes, August 6, 2004.*

The second theme was restorative practices. At this New Zealand school healing harm to relationships and restoring the dignity of all people affected by harmful behavior was achieved through restorative practices. I found the three key elements of this theme were safety, accountability, and competency. Safety meant freedom from harm and the threat of harm. Accountability meant taking responsibility to heal the harm to relationships resulting from the wrongdoing. Competency was learning from the incident of wrongdoing how to choose to act differently in the future.

When talking with parents I learned that bullying was a major safety issue at the school. While the parents were not pleased when bullying involved their child, they were happy when the school responded quickly to stop the situation.

Traditionally accountability at the school occurred primarily through a process based on the Assertive Discipline model (Canter & Canter, 2001) and adapted to the school's needs over time. In a professional development session the staff revealed student behavior was viewed mainly in a negative light and the primary response to inappropriate behavior was punishment. However, I found evidence that the school did not always rely on a punitive system nor follow the Assertive Discipline model.

The school staff came to realize during the time I was there competency was achieved by helping the students and teachers learn how to heal relationships broken by wrongdoing or conflict. Apologies were a major component for healing relationships. Helping students learn to offer sincere apologies was difficult if they were taught at home not to cry or say they are sorry. Some teachers were willing to work with students to help them learn to apologize. In that way students were learning an important element of healing the harm to relationships.

#### RESPECT BICULTURALISM/MULTICULTURALISM

*"We would love you to tell all the tamariki . . . they showed excellent manaakitanga to everyone through their waiata and haka. The school truly reflects our community and whanau by . . . biculturalism and whanaungatanga strengths . . . you are a great example to heaps of schools around Aotearoa." From letter dated November 22, 2004.*

The two elements of the school's mission, care and biculturalism, appeared to be connected. This mission was understood clearly from the theme of rituals. Some of the rituals at the school were framed in the context of providing hospitality (manaakitanga) to guests. Both Maori (the indigenous people of New Zealand) and Pakeha (New Zealand people of European ancestry) traditions (tikanga) formed the basis for the ritual of providing hospitality to guests. The Maori traditions of welcoming, formally (powhiri) and informally (whakatau), guests and providing gifts (koha) to special guests, like student teachers and returning students, were an integral part of school life. Prayer in Maori (karakia) was often shared at the beginning and end of meetings and gatherings. Of course, the English tradition of tea was a well-established ritual at this school. When guests were present, food (kai) was provided by staff, parents, or students. Rituals of welcoming and food always went together.

Through these rituals the students learned the value of hospitality. I learned just as care is an exchange process – learning to care for and about others and how to respond appropriately to care – hospitality in the Maori tradition is a reciprocal process – providing hospitality to guests and expecting to be treated with hospitality when visiting these guests.

#### BE AWARE OF POWER DIFFERENCES

*“There’s got to be a place for you in our school . . . for everybody.” Quoting what a teacher said to a student, Fieldnotes, August 20, 2004.*

An appreciation of power differences at the school was found in the theme of community, based on the idea of solidarity. While power differences existed, there was a place for everyone. Solidarity or “all for all” at the school meant that once a student was part of the school family (whanau) the school made every effort to make sure there was a place for the student – a place to learn and a place to create healthy, positive relationships.

The school was bilingual and bicultural, and the English language dominated, while there was respect for Te Reo Maori (language) and Tikanga Maori (culture), particularly in the Maori mainstream and bicultural units. The school offered students many choices and was flexible in providing alternatives and choices for students to fit their individual learning styles and needs. A key attribute of this school was its small size.

Another important component of community was continuity, and one of the main advantages of an area school similar to the one I studied was combining students from primary and secondary years on one campus. While some people may see that as a disadvantage, the continuity of this process, particularly transitioning from primary to intermediate and intermediate to secondary school was a great advantage for students. The school exhibited continuity in teachers. Three of the teachers once were students at the school, and some staff worked at the school for many years.

Another advantage of the area school was the older students could be a “buddy” to younger students, modeling appropriate behavior and tutoring them in their learning. Family involvement in the school was apparent, from the pick up and delivery of children daily to attending the folk dancing assembly at the end of the term. Parents participated in many areas of the school.

#### CREATE SAFETY

*In answer to my question about what it is like to be a Maori student in senior school, the student replies, “Most of the time the lights are turned off. The light comes on Tuesday afternoon at kapa haka,” Fieldnotes, 28 October 2004.*

A new definition of safety emerged from this study. Physical and emotional safety was defined as freedom from harm or the threat of harm. Culturally that meant the freedom to be who (individually) and what (collectively) we are. From my field experience I learned that Maori students need to feel respected and proud of who and what they are as Maori. School staff needed to respect the preferred Maori ways of learning, whanau wisdom, and karakia. These preferred ways of learning included acknowledgement, celebration, mentoring, and honoring who and what they are as Maori. Senior Maori students needed validation by allowing them to express themselves in different ways, utilizing whole brain learning strategies, celebrating differences, and developing a deep respect for these students. The key to this process was knowing who to ask about tikanga Maori.

In the area of emotional safety, the older students wanted their own space. They felt that a safe way to talk to adults at the school was lacking. In the area of physical safety, from interviews of senior student leaders at the school I learned they felt they had a close personal relationship with at least one adult, usually a teacher, at the school.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOLS AND EDUCATORS

To understand these results, we need to realize schools are complex and dynamic organizations. They reflect and are a microcosm of our society. Nowhere else in society do the different dimensions of culture come together in such a small space. Thus, we can expect the results of the research to be contradictory and confusing. In this instance the results reflected both the values supporting a culture of war and violence as well as peace and nonviolence.

As an alternative to traditional approaches to schooling based on dominant societal values supporting a culture of war and violence I learned about creating a culture of peace and nonviolence in schools. First, I found from my research such a school is a safe school, physically, emotionally and culturally. Creating a safe school, physically and emotionally, means establishing norms and values based on safety as freedom from harm or the threat of harm. Cultural safety is based on the freedom to be who and what we are. This definition of safety contrasts with the dominant meaning based on separating students into groups of good and bad, creating an environment of us versus them. So that safety comes to mean keeping one group of students safe from another group of students. The result of this approach is minority students and students with special needs are excluded and suspended from school at a much higher rate than students who perform well in school and belong to the dominant culture.

While these research studies were limited to two sites, the results have implications for school administrators, teachers, and students in many settings.

I would urge educators and people interested in education to apply and adapt these ideas to their schools.

### School Administrators

Several of the ideas investigated in this research relate to school structures. In order to support a culture of peace and nonviolence, school administrators need to share power and distribute leadership. These results can be obtained through transformational leadership (Liontos, 1992).

The idea of transformational (or transactional) leadership comes from the business world. This type of leadership was characteristic of organizations that had participative decision-making and shared power. In contrast, instructional leadership typifies school management that supports Western culture values of war and violence. This leadership style is a top down, hierarchical process, where students and teachers are closely monitored.

Transformational leaders are the keepers of the collective vision of the school and engage in reciprocal relationships with teachers, rewarding discursive teaching and holding traditional teachers accountable. This leadership has three goals: (a) creating a collaborative professional school culture focused on collective responsibility and continuous improvement, (b) encouraging teacher development, and (c) building the capacity of teachers to solve problems effectively. The results of this kind of leadership are: (a) influencing teacher collaboration and (b) shifting teacher attitudes towards school improvement and pedagogy, which improves student achievement and creates a school culture conducive to caring and learning (Liontos, 1992).

Most importantly, school administrators can support and encourage the development of student and teacher competencies to respond to wrongdoing and conflict nonviolently. Barriers to this process include professionalizing and problematizing behavior problems, primarily through hierarchical interference, by:

1. Encouraging or requiring teachers to send students who are creating problems to a designated expert, usually an administrator.
2. Making more serious problems out of issues that can be handled in the classroom.

Building teacher and student competencies to resolve problems nonviolently is fundamental to creating peaceful schools and developing children into citizens who can participate in creating a sustainable democratic society.

### Teachers

Teachers need to build their competency to respond to problems in the classroom nonviolently, particularly related to student behavior problems.

Currently teachers often rely on administrative experts to resolve these problems, and in some cases school rules require teachers to send problem students to specific administrators.

Teachers can accept responsibility for how students behave and build their competency by:

1. Building relationships with students starting with the first day of contact. Getting to know the students and the family and community in which they live and telling students about themselves.
2. Changing pedagogy from traditional to discursive, engaging in teaching and learning, and focusing on student achievement. Shifting from the lecture style of delivery to more interactive, with reciprocal teaching and learning occurring among students and between the teacher and students is foundational to creating a learning community. And student achievement results should be the outcome measurement guiding practice.
3. Coaching and supporting colleagues who are not able to handle student behavior problems. Teachers can learn from one another how to handle these problems through a process of shadow coaching. Sometimes teachers are overwhelmed and need relief from the situation because they are too close to it. Sending a student to a colleague's room for time out can diffuse the situation. The supporting colleague can act as a facilitator for a conversation between the student and teacher so the relationship can be healed.
4. Avoiding labels and engaging in restorative conversations. Teachers are prone to giving children labels (e.g. naughty, bad, slow), and those labels stay with the child for long periods of time. By engaging in restorative conversations (Drewery, 2004), where the problem is separated from the person, teachers learn to respect the dignity of the person while dealing with the problem.
5. Using Peacemaking circles (Pranis, Stewart & Wedge, 2003) to address issues and problems affecting students as a group. Combining Peacemaking Circles with restorative conversations allows a group of students and teacher in a classroom to talk about problems in a safe environment where harm, rather than blame, can be the focus and restoring the dignity of all involved the goal.

Using these five ideas teachers can develop reciprocal relationships in classrooms, where students are cared for and about and, in turn, respond appropriately to care (Noddings, 1992); teachers have high expectations of students (Gay, 2000), and they are prepared to teach each day (Macfarlane, 2004).

## Students

Similar to teachers, students need to be encouraged and supported to increase their capacity to respond to conflict and wrongdoing nonviolently.

In fact, when behavior problems are solved for them, students are robbed of the opportunity to learn valuable skills for living in peaceful relationships.

Building the capacity of students to solve problems nonviolently involves many skills that can be acquired over time as appropriate to the age of the child. I recommend that the skills students need to have and at what age are:

1. Understanding feelings (ages 5–6) by helping students understand that as an Individual I have feelings, and you have feelings, and our feelings may not be the same. Most importantly, children need to learn about empathy as bonding with another individual in such a way as to appreciate at a deep level how they are feeling.
2. Building friendships (ages 7–9) by understanding the dynamics of belonging to a group and learning about listening, trusting, speaking honestly and from the heart, and being respectful of others. Key skills to learn at this age are negotiation and mediation.
3. Developing peacemaking circles (ages 10–11) by being encouraged and learning how to call and lead a peacemaking circle (Pranis, Stewart & Wedge, 2003) to solve problems among a group of students.
4. Engaging in restorative conversations (Drewery, 2004), (ages 12–14) by learning how to hold conversations with others where the problem is separated from the person. The mantra for this process is “The person is not the problem; the problem is the problem.”
5. Facilitating restorative conferences (Maxwell & Morris, 1992). (ages 15–17) by learning the process of facilitation of meetings between persons harmed by wrongdoing or conflict and those persons who caused the harm. This process is focused on restoring the dignity of all persons involved, rather than blame and punishment.

With these skills students and teachers are able to help create a culture of peace in schools and our children will have the foundation for being peaceful citizens and active participants in creating a peaceful society. As a result schools will be safer places, where students and teachers can be free from harm and the threat of harm.

## CONCLUSIONS

My research sought to answer two research questions:

1. what peace (nonviolence) means at the school, and
2. what the daily experiences of the students, teachers, staff, and parents associated with the school's culture are like.

In answer to the first question, I found both schools I studied on the whole to be peaceful and nonviolent. That is not to say that violence, wrongdoing, and conflict did not occur. Rather, based on the belief that conflict is inevitable, I was interested in how the schools responded to such behaviors. I found the schools struggled to balance accountability with compassion, all the while protecting the students from harm.

At a deeper level, I found the schools to be peaceful because of the attitude of the students. An encounter with a New Zealand student convinced me that the violence I was aware of in American schools was inconceivable in the minds of these students. One day a boy, about seven or eight asked me, "Are you from America?" I answered, "Yes." He continued, "Do kids shoot other kids in America?" My heart sank as I answered, "Yes, they do, in some schools. Not very many though." In that moment I realized that the idea of children killing other children was something this child could not comprehend or even imagine. As a result of that encounter, I came to realize these children live in an environment that overall is nonviolent and peaceful.

In answer to the second question I posed, I found that the New Zealand school I studied was struggling with the adoption of restorative practices. Initially administrators thought restorative practices would give them additional tools in their belt for dealing with student behavior problems. Over time they came to realize, more than additional tools, restorative practices involved a cultural shift in how the school responded to wrongdoing and conflict. This demand for profound change in the school's culture created tensions, particularly in administration because of the hierarchical structures and the concentration of power in a few people at the top.

On a deeper level, I came to realize that the traditional discipline system in this school took problem solving regarding student behaviors away from students and teachers and put it into the hands of administrators. In this way students did not learn how to solve problems nonviolently and teachers' capacity to respond to student wrongdoing and conflict was impaired.

In an interview with a senior student at the end of my Fulbright fieldwork, I said, "What I'm sensing is that what we are doing with the present discipline system is taking away the problem from the students and solving it for them. By doing that we're not helping them learn how to solve problems, particularly how to solve problems nonviolently. Do you think I'm accurate in saying that?" The student said, "Yes." I continued, "I'm also telling people that a lot of models – I'm talking about rap music, MTV, and American movies – don't help students learn how to solve problems without violence." The student answered, "Yes. They impact a lot on the students at this school, and like they're into music, looking at some of these people like idols." What I heard this student tell me is at my age I only realized at a surface level the impact of violent models on students today. I found the

dominant models for teaching our children how to respond to wrongdoing and conflict are violent. Further, we are failing in schools to provide learning opportunities and models of peace and nonviolence for resolving problems.

If we want our children to have the capacity as adults to solve problems related to wrongdoing and conflict nonviolently then we have to encourage our schools to model and teach our students how to behave in nonviolent ways. I believe the theories and lessons learned from this research offer us the opportunity to create a new conversation, a new way of thinking, talking, and acting about the culture of schools related to the response to wrongdoing and conflict in a way that supports a culture of peace and nonviolence.

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## APPENDIX: GLOSSARY OF MAORI WORDS

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Aotearoa	New Zealand; land of the long white cloud
haka	vigorous dance
kai	food
karakia	prayer
koha	traditional Maori gifting
manaakitanga	the ethic of caring
Pakeha	a non-Maori of European descent
powhiri	ritual welcome
tamariki	children
te reo	language
tikanga	cultural pattern, custom, obligations and conditions
whanau	extended family
waiata	chant
whakatau	informal welcome
whanaungatanga	relationships

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