



FROM TROUBLE TO DIALOG

Schoolmediation and the Role of Student Mediators

Sogn upper secondary school, Oslo, Norway



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Common approaches to conflict



"FLIGHT or FIGHT"

When students encounter conflicts they often react with verbal or physical aggression. They try to ignore the situation or withdraw from it.

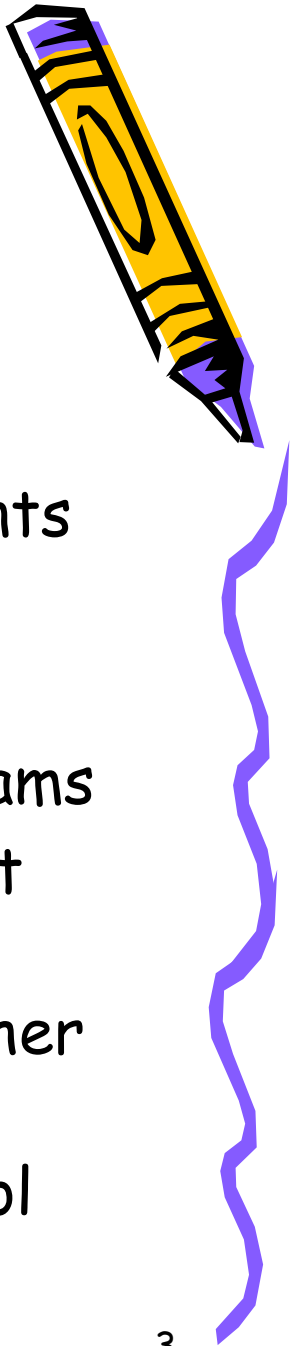
Training positive communication and mediation - an alternativ?



Upper secondary school, Oslo, Norway



- "Large city school"
- About 1600 students
- About 300 staff
- Age: 16 - 19/20
- 8 vocational programs
- About 60% migrant students
- More than 60 mother tongues
- Multicultural school



Strategies for change?

- How can we give the students permanent skills that they can use in situations throughout life and make it easier to function both at school and in the society?
- How can we provide positive role models for all students by giving them means of problem solving?



Preventing and reducing conflicts - priority area for Sogn

1995 - 98

" Student mediation - project"

1995 -97

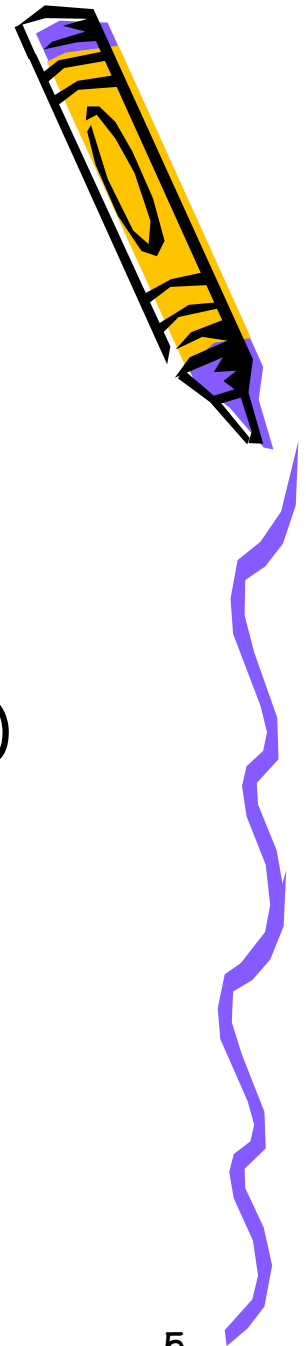
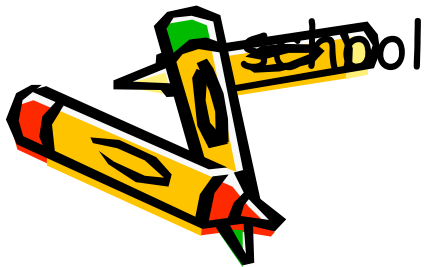
National peer mediation project (primary school)

1997 -99

"Stop violence" - EU project

1998 -

Schoolmediation integrated into normal day at
school



Restorative practices today



OVERALL AIMS

- ❖ Safe and non violent climate at school
- ❖ Restorative practices - systemic cultural change



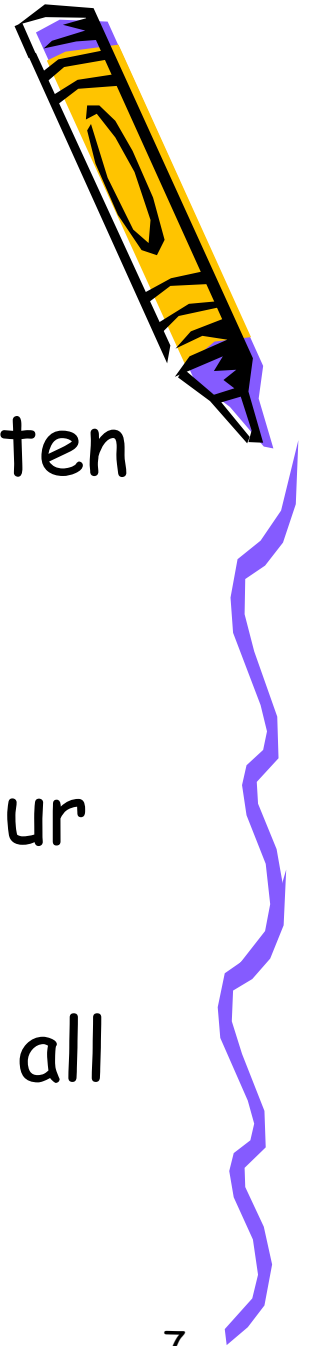
The whole school approach

- ❖ All first grade students are given ten lessons (workshop)

"Conflict management/mediation"

- ❖ The teacher teams are offered four lessons:

"Restorative practices - a tool for all teachers?"



The role of student mediators

The student mediators take part in all restorative practices

- Students teach students (conflict workshop)
- Students mediate in conflicts between students
- Student mediators take part in restorative conferences and teambuilding in classes with high level of disruption and misconduct
- Student mediators take part in dialog meetings with the staff
- Studentmediators do konflikt workshops at other schools



Practical approach

Step 1

"10 lessons conflict management / mediation"

Step 2

One day mediation training

Step 3

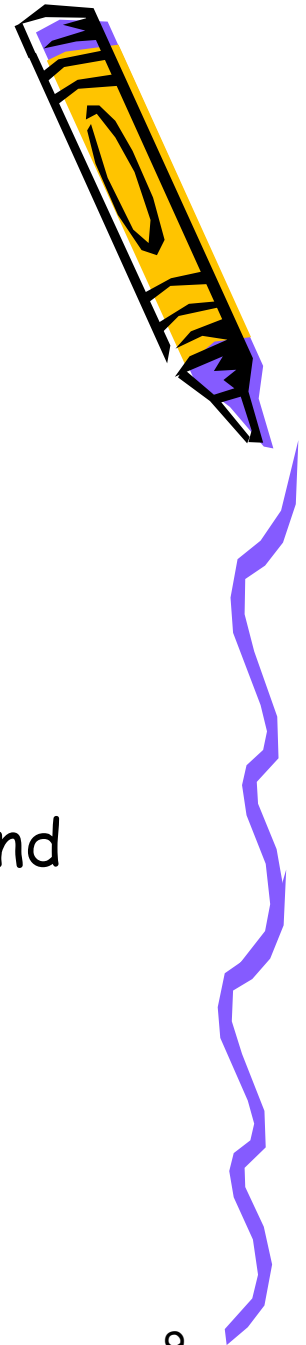
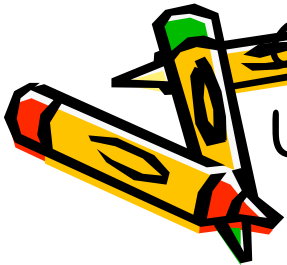
Observing, co - training in conflict workshops and
co - mediating

Step 4

Student mediators - "On their own"

Conflict workshops

Unformal / formal mediation

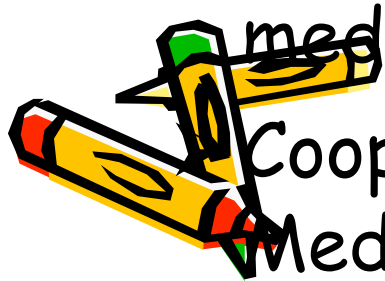


Restorative practices at Sogn



Proactive activities

- "10 lessons konflikt management" - all first grade classes (..30..)
- Dialog meetings with staff
- "Restorative practices - a tool for all teachers"
- Training of student mediators /teacher mediators



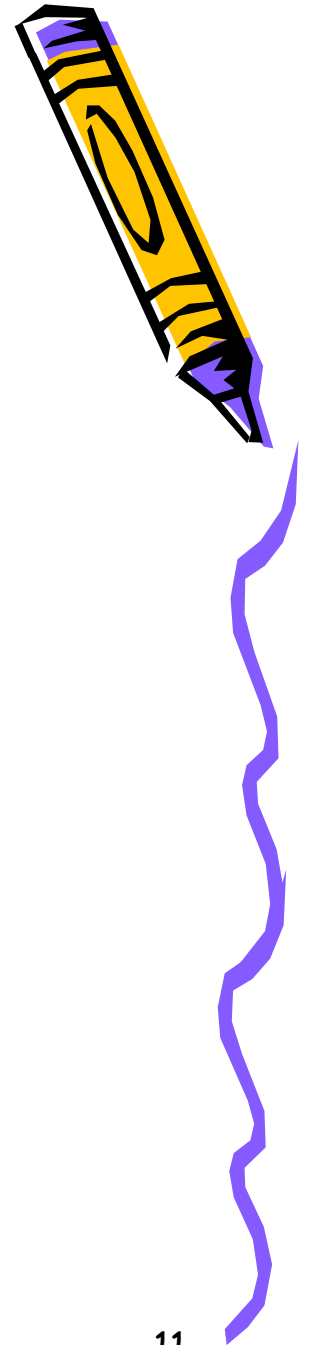
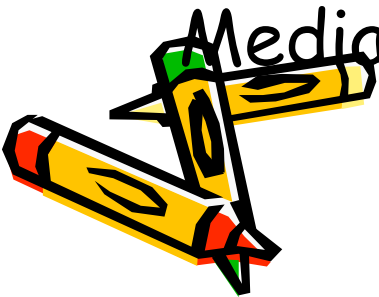
Cooperation with Red Cross, Street
Mediation

... proactive....

- Workshops at university colleges and other external organisations
- Mediation Forum
- Open office
- Fulltime mediation coordinator

Mediation center (training)

Mediation room (conflict handling)



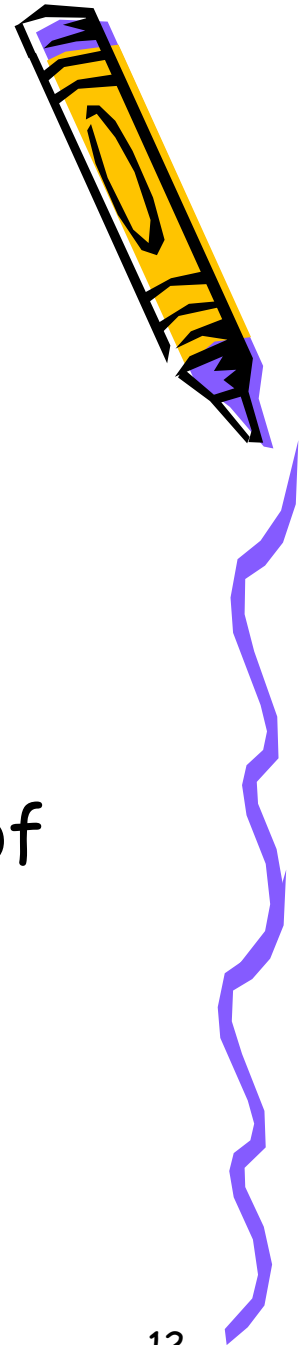
Reactive activities

Tools

- "Face to face" mediation
- Circle
- Conferencing
- Teambuilding in classes with high level of conflict
- **Cases**

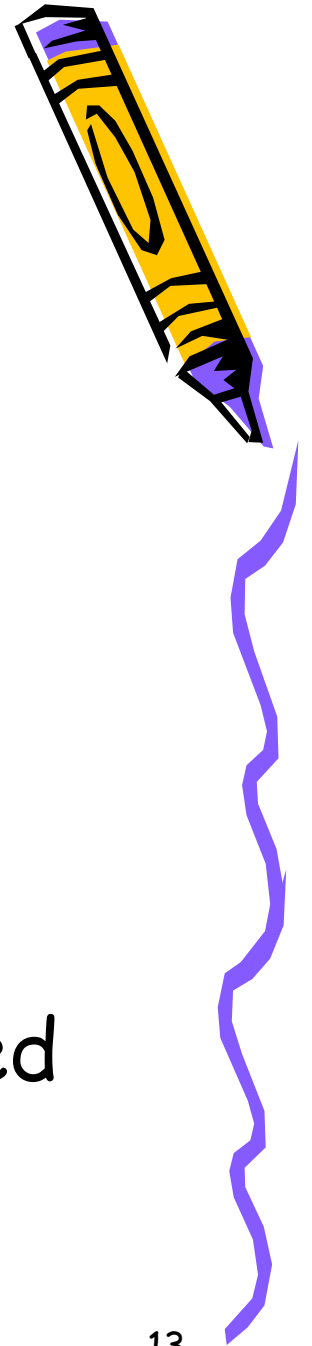
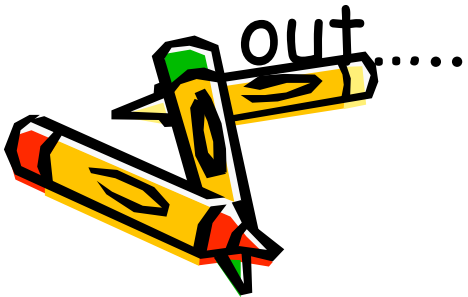
Girl - boy, loss of friendship, rumours, bullying, fighting, threatening, internet/SMS, teacher - student

conflicts



RP in special situations

- Alternative or supplement to traditional punishments such as suspension
- Re - entry mediation
- Truansy
- waiting for the case to be sorted



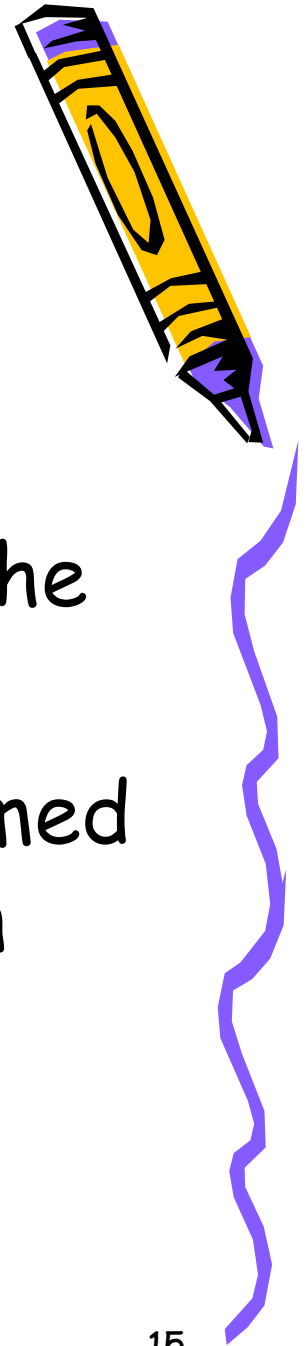
EVALUATION TOOLS

- Statistics
- Self evaluation - student mediators (Rosenberg)
- Focus group (student mediators)
- Interviews (conflict parties)



RESULTS

- ✓ Agreements are kept
- ✓ Students queue up for attending the mediation group
- ✓ School climate seems to have "calmed down". Less numbers of suspension
- ✓ The student mediators are looked up to



DEVELOPEMENT

1995 - 2008

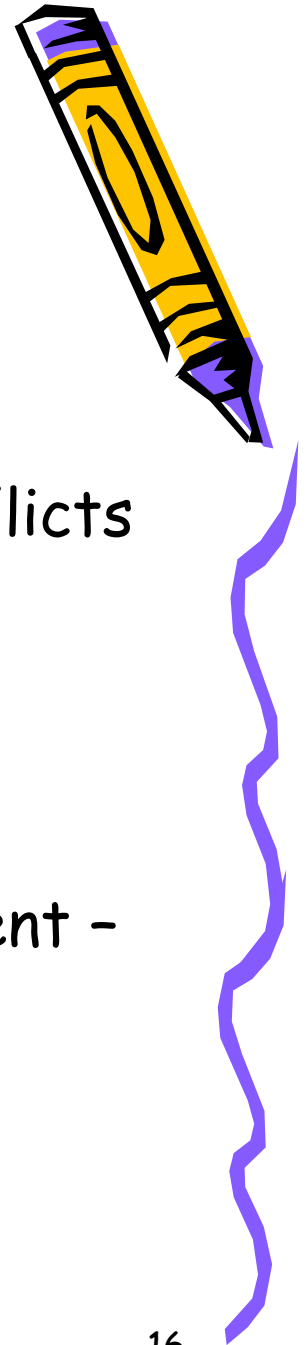
1995 One restorative tool in focus

Face to face mediation took place in "small" conflicts between two students (loss of friendship, rumours..)

2008 A variety of restorative tools

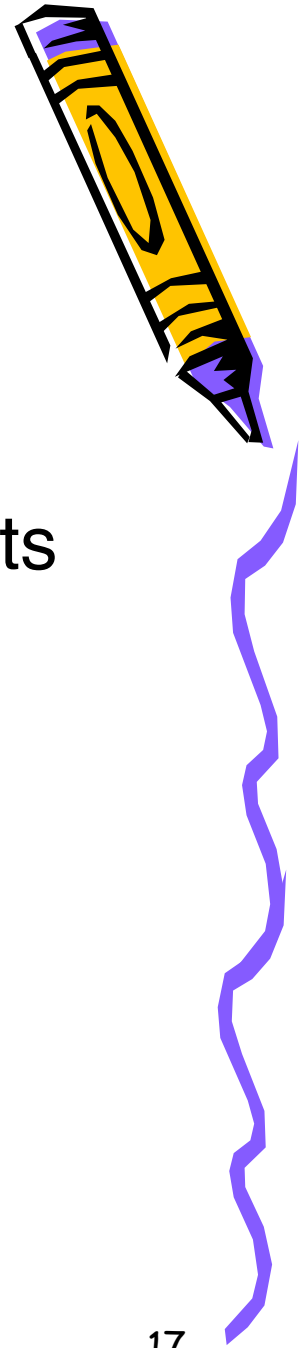
are used in cases with violence, bullying, student - teacher conflicts

In a few cases there is cooperation with the police as well



Some quotes from students

- ... life skills.....
- ... it's nice that the school lets students be mediators..
- ... we are listening very well to the student mediators..
- ... I want to be a mediator..
- ... I've changed..



...quotes ...

- ... my father should have attended this program... all parents should have ...
- ... I've stopped fighting...
- ... good to talk about feelings without being laughed at...
- ... we do respect the student mediators even more than the adults...
- ... it's fun! And I have better self confidence now...



CONCLUSION

T T T

Restorative dialog works

"The whole school approach" works

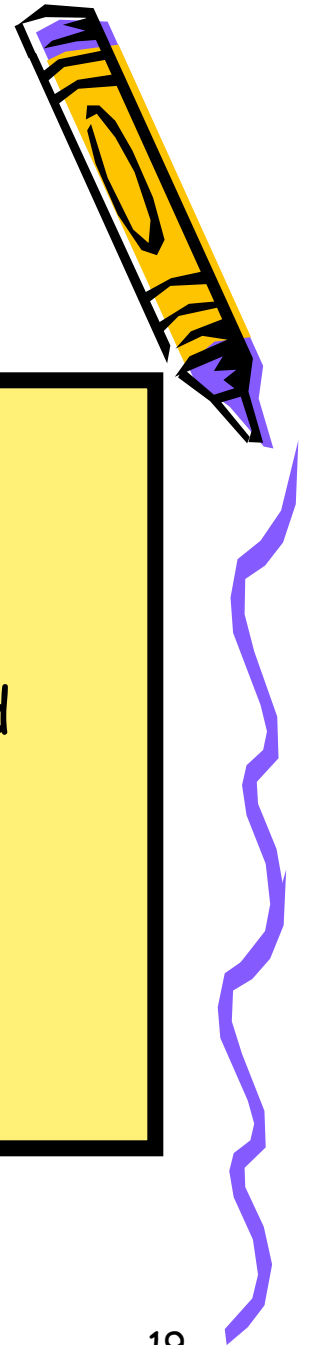
Student mediators are able to solve complicated cases

Participating in the schoolmediation program is

*restorative practices

* democracy training and

* leadership training



THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

