

**TRADITIONAL EDUCATION OR PARTNERSHIP EDUCATION:
WHICH EDUCATIONAL APPROACH MIGHT BEST PREPARE
STUDENTS FOR THE FUTURE?**

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“Previously, necessity demanded the solution of technological problems. Now, as we enter a new and different reality, the demand of necessity is for the solution of problems involving human values, attitudes, behaviors and social institutions.”

Salk & Salk (1981, p. 163)

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Traditional Education or Partnership Education: Which Educational Approach Might Best Prepare Students for the Future?

In an era where the global population is increasing at a dizzying rate, where the process of globalization has broadened and entwined the global economic playing field, and where the planet on which we live is suffering under the current policies and practices, there is a vital need for all global citizens to act as partners. From kindergarten through graduate school, educational institutions offer courses that are meant to teach students how to communicate and act interdependently. At the same time, however, educational pedagogy and practice often lean toward hierarchical educational and relational strategies to control student learning and classroom climate. When student learning, or the learning environment, is controlled with hierarchical strategies, teachers may not be modeling, and students may not be learning, interdependent communication and relational dynamics. Partnership educational strategies may more effectively model interdependent relational dynamics such as compassion, cooperation, and egalitarian communication, as well as, support self-reliance, creativity, and critical thinking in students. This thesis examines 1) the nature of hierarchical and partnership educational and relational strategies, 2) the ways in which training in the concept, and use of, empathy impacted the communication and relational strategies of Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) with their university level students, and 3) the impact of the introduction of the communication model known as Nonviolent Communicationsm (a.k.a. Compassionate Communication) on the communication and relational strategies of the directors and teachers at a charter school (K-8) where the directors chose to use a partnership approach for educating students. Participants included 40 Graduate Teaching Assistants in the communication department of a Southwestern university, and nine teachers, two school directors, and 15 students (3rd - 8th grade), at a charter school nearby. Increased compassion and respect for students on the part of GTAs, and increased cooperation and respect between GTAs and students was reported by GTAs when empathy was included as part of the GTAs' communication and relational strategy with students. Personal interviews and site observations demonstrate increased compassion for students and an increased acceptance of the Nonviolent Communication model as part of the communication and relational strategies of teachers at the charter school.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In an era where the global population is increasing at a dizzying rate, where the process of globalization has broadened and entwined the global economic playing field, and where the planet on which we live is suffering under the current policies and practices, there is a vital need for all global citizens to act as partners. The learning and employment of interdependent communication and relational skills would greatly contribute to an ability to act together to resolve short and long-term social, economic, and environmental problems. From kindergarten through graduate school, educational institutions offer courses that are meant to teach students how to communicate and act interdependently. At the same time, however, educational pedagogy and practice often lean toward hierarchical educational and relational strategies to control student learning and classroom climate. When student learning, or the learning environment, is controlled with hierarchical strategies, teachers may not be modeling, and students may not be learning, interdependent communication and relational skills.

A teacher is a day to day working model for students (Bruner, 1966), therefore, the interpersonal dynamics that teachers model are as important as the academic lessons teachers teach (Eisler, 2000). There is a prevalent master narrative in many cultures that emphasizes a need for hierarchical relationships between teachers and students. These hierarchical relational dynamics may be taking a huge toll on teachers' energy, and may impede student cognitive, affective, and behavioral learning (Eisler). Hierarchy is defined, for the purposes of this thesis, as an interpersonal or intergroup dynamic where one individual is ranked above other individuals, and makes decisions for those individuals.

This thesis examines an educational approach known as Partnership education. Partnership education offers alternatives to traditional, hierarchical dynamics, and contributes to the relational, as well as, the academic development of students by fostering compassion, respect, cooperation and egalitarian communication between students and between teachers and students (Eisler, 2000; Hart & Kindle Hodson, 2004; Rosenberg, 2003).

As early as 1969, Rogers claimed “Education today is faced with incredible challenges, different from, more serious than, it has ever met in its long history” (p. vi). As the 21st century begins, the instructional process continues to fail for too many students, and teacher content competence is not sufficient for overall effectiveness (Waldeck, Kearney, & Plax, 2001). The challenge for teachers in the 21st century will be to facilitate an adequate education for students who face a constantly changing world (Rogers) while, at the same time, helping these students develop a capacity for compassionate, interdependent interaction with other global citizens (Eisler, 2000; Hart & Kindle Hodson, 2004; Noddings, 2000; Rosenberg, 2003). All conduct has two aspects: the *how* and the *what* (Dewey, 1987). The *how* is personal; referring to *how* an individual makes a decision to act (i.e., personal agency). The *what* has an outcome, therefore it is a social act. It would be helpful for students to have educational experiences that demonstrate *how* to make decisions that contribute to each student’s own well-being, and *what* the effect of these decisions might be on the student’s community (Dewey). Partnership education supports all of these educational goals.

EDUCATION IN THE 20TH AND 21ST CENTURIES

Educational philosophy and policy has vacillated over the last two centuries between an “equity” value (providing an equal education for all students), and an “achievement” value (where emphasis is placed on an end result) (Joseph, 2001). In response to the progressive political movement at the turn of the 20th century, Dewey promoted an equity approach to education calling for a progressive, holistic approach to presenting subject matter that involved fitting the curriculum to the child rather than the child to the curriculum (1902, 1916). About the time the public was finally beginning to get comfortable with Dewey’s notions of education, the Russians successfully launched the first satellite into space (1957). As a result of this successful launch, Americans were behind in the space race. Dewey’s notions of progressive education were blamed for burdening the U. S. with two generations of individuals who had spent their school days in classrooms filled with unnecessary subject matter and self-exploration (Postman & Weingartner, 1973). The “achievement” value took hold, and due to a perception that the United States must survive in the face of a growing number of economic and militaristic global competitors, the “achievement” value remains the predominant value in the 21st century. This value has lead to performance goals in education

that focus on keeping students on task, rather than goals that focus on the development of effective, compassionate interpersonal relationships. This approach often does not take into consideration the needs of students or teachers (Joseph, 2001).

Teachers generally take up the profession of teaching because of a desire to share the joy of learning and growing, and to help nurture in young people humanity, creativity and thoughtfulness (Simon, 2002). It is unfortunate that overcrowded classrooms, state-mandated curricula, and standardized testing often lead teachers to rely on hierarchical strategies to keep students on task, rather than focusing on the creation of mutually respectful relationships. Educators often do not recognize many of these strategies as hierarchical. Even if the strategies are recognized as hierarchical, however, teachers often deem them to be necessary in order to teach students what must be taught (Sidorkin, 1997). In many cases, teachers simply do not have alternative strategies to keep students on task and to manage behavior, and so rely on whatever strategy allows them some control.

Education does need to prepare students for the social and economic world they will encounter as adults (Postman & Weingartner, 1973). In order to fulfill that function, schools need to identify and teach the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students will need to function effectively, and contribute to the world they will enter into (Postman & Weingartner). Advocates of a partnership educational approach agree with the need to identify and teach this knowledge, and these skills and attitudes, but believe that focusing on achievement as the predominant value in education may impede the creation of curricula that will teach students how to create interdependent, compassionate, and egalitarian relationships. Advocates of partnership education believe that this relational skill is as important for students as math and science (Eisler, 2000; Noddings, 2000; Rosenberg, 2003). Furthermore, focusing on an achievement value may undermine the academic education students are receiving (see Deci, 1980; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Kohn, 1986, 1993; Molden & Dweck, 2002; Rosenberg, 2003; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Power-Over, Power-To, and Power-With Relationships with Students

Twenty six years ago, Wheelless, Barraclough, and Stewart (1983) defined power as “the perceived bases of control that a person has over another person’s behavior that would not have otherwise occurred” (p. 120); a type of power that is, nowadays, called *power-over*.

Currently, concepts of power referred to as *power-to*, or *power-with*, are being promoted in partnership educational settings. For example, power can also be defined as having the capacity to take effective action to meet individual needs (Kashtan, 2002; Kreisberg, 1992), or the capacity to discover or develop, together, the material and emotional access to strategies that meet group needs (Kashtan, 2002).

Power-over strategies stem from a combination of several assumptions. One is the assumption of scarcity of means and resources (Kashtan, 2002). Another is the assumption that the primary motivation of human beings is the satisfaction of every impulse, no matter the consequences to self or others; therefore human beings require external control (Kashtan). Another assumption is that without hierarchical controls nothing would ever get accomplished (Athens, 2001; Schmookler, 1988). These assumptions lead to what Eisler (1987) calls a dominator social system.

HIERARCHICAL/DOMINATION SOCIAL SYSTEMS AND PARTNERSHIP/EGALITARIAN SOCIAL SYSTEMS

Eisler's (1987) research on prehistorical social structures uncovers two basic possibilities for structuring interpersonal relations. She calls these models the dominator model and the partnership model. Dominator and partnership systems derive from beliefs that either nurture and support, or inhibit and undermine, equitable, democratic, nonviolent, and caring relations (Noddings, 2000). The core elements of the dominator model are: authoritarian, top-down social structures, dominance in decision-making (often male dominance), high relative levels of fear and built-in violence, and disrespect for children, women, and less powerful members of society. There is generally a master narrative that makes this kind of structure seem normal and right. The core elements of the partnership model are: democratic and egalitarian social structures, gender equity, a low level of institutionalized violence and abuse, and a master narrative that supports this kind of structure as normal and right. The degree to which a society orients to the dominator or partnership relational model has profound implications for all aspects of life (e.g., educational systems derive from and follow these collective social beliefs) (Eisler, 2000).

HIERARCHICAL/DOMINATION AND PARTNERSHIP EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES AND RELATIONAL VALUES

Eisler's (1987) definitions of domination-style social structures may not seem applicable to modern, Western societies. An examination of current educational strategies from the perspective of hierarchical or partnership elements, however, reveals that educational approaches still lean heavily toward the dominator model (Eisler, 2000). Hierarchical *educational* strategies would include: a) curriculum design that does not include input from the students, b) encouragement of students to compete with one another for grades or participation points, and c) the use of extrinsic rewards and punishments to evaluate students' work and to control student behavior. Hierarchical *relational* strategies include: a) the use of domination-style language to impose standards and morals on the students, and to meet the needs of the teacher (e.g., "you must," "you have to," "I insist") and b) enforcement of course and classroom rules that have been created by administrators or solely by the teacher without the agreement of the students.

Partnership educational strategies engender relationship processes in day-to-day settings that show students their voices will be heard, their ideas respected, and their emotional needs comprehended (Nodding, 2000). Partnership *educational* strategies would include: a) the use of classroom activities that have been created by the students, b) the creation of curricula that include subject matter requested by students, c) collaborative learning, and d) encouragement of students who understand the material to tutor other students. In a partnership-based classroom, teachers would teach and model such relational values as: a) *egalitarian communication*, where language does not intend to dominate the opinions or behaviors of others, b) *cooperation*, where curricula design and classroom rules are created by all who will be affected by those courses and rules, and c) *compassion*, where the feelings and needs of all parties are heard, and attempts are made by all parties to meet everyone's needs.

In many ways, the partnership approach to teaching is similar to the model of education that Dewey promoted at the turn of the 20th century. This time around, the partnership model may take a firmer hold. According to Eisler (2000), in times of technological, political, and social instability, the opportunity to shift master narratives, thus

social systems, exists. Eisler believes that humans are currently living in this type of technological, political and social instability.

Lewin (1943) claims that a change in a group dynamic from an autocratic (power-over) approach to a democratic (power-with) approach requires a reeducation of the members of the group, but also a change in the power relations of the leaders and the members of a group. This thesis focuses on this change of power relations between teachers and students in order to create a partnership (egalitarian, democratic, compassionate) society by providing students with experiences and opportunities to learn how a partnership society works. Rosenberg (2003a) suggests that if we want children to grow up with the knowledge of, and the ability to, create organizations and institutions where resources and privileges are distributed fairly and equitably, people in leadership positions serve their constituencies rather than try to control them, and laws, rules, and regulations are defined by consensus, we must provide power-with experiences as part of student educational programs. Hierarchical, power-over relationships cannot provide students with the kinds of experiences they would need if they are to learn how to create power-with relationships.

EMPATHY ASA TOOL TO CONNECT

A great deal of what makes a partnership relationship with students possible is the use of empathy as a tool for connecting with students. An empathic communication process creates an avenue for mutually respectful, compassionate dialogue between teachers and students. This mutually respectful and compassionate dialogue enables teachers to comprehend students' personal and educational needs, and allows students to comprehend teachers' personal and educational needs. Mutual respect creates the emotional and psychological space to develop mutual learning objectives, and to establish compassionate and interdependent learning environments.

Rogers (1980), the psychologist who popularized the term empathy in the American psychological literature, states that empathy is a complex, and often misunderstood, way of interacting with another individual, but it is also one of the most powerful and delicate ways humans have of interacting with one another. Rogers saw empathy, not as a state of being, but as a process. The process of empathy involves entering the perceptual world of the other person, then being sensitive, or empathizing, moment by moment as these feelings change.

Empathy is very different from praise or feedback, and this difference makes empathy a powerfully effective tool for connecting with others. By empathizing with the feelings and needs of a person, as well as, the personal meaning behind those feelings and needs, it is possible to help the other person move forward in their experience, whatever the nature of that experience.

THE IMPACT OF COMMUNICATION ON EDUCATION

Dewey (1916) practically explains the need for education; the fact that there are constant births of immature members of society who need to be initiated into the interests, purposes, information, skill, and practices of the mature members. Society exists through the communication of the habits of doing, thinking, and feeling from the mature to the immature members of society. Individuals do not become a society simply by living in physical proximity of one another. It is through communication that societal values are passed on.

McCroskey and Richmond (1983) claim that, in the classroom, teachers must maintain power over students in order to communicate what it is that students need to learn. Power is defined by McCroskey and Richmond in terms of French & Raven's (1959) typology of the five bases of power (i.e., referent, expert, reward, legitimate, and coercive). Wheelless et al. (1983) propose a higher-order typology of power consisting of 21 power bases, as opposed to only five. These power strategies include: previewing expectancies/consequences, invoking relationships /identification, and summoning values /obligation. Wheelless, et al. argue that the higher-order typology provides better communicative mechanisms for the exercise of power.

Even though McCroskey and Richmond (1983) and Wheelless et al. (1983) are suggesting that communication can create this necessary power, they are both referring to a power-over model (the power to maintain control of the learning environment and create learning outcomes through the use of communication). There are problems, however, with this type of power. First, instructors may employ a variety of compliance-gaining techniques, but teacher power only exists to the extent that students perceive it to exist, and accept it (Richmond & McCroskey, 1984). Furthermore, students also possess power in the classroom (Golish, 1999), and communicate that power to teachers (Golish; Golish & Olson, 2000). Considering all the nuances of power dynamics in the classroom, *a* power-with approach

with students may better address what is actually going on in the classroom and, consequently, be more effective in creating an empowering classroom climate and in empowering students to learn and to act on what they learn.

Frymier, Schulman, & Houser (1996) propose that student empowerment is an outcome variable that stems from communication. Communication is necessary to achieve an alignment of values and actions between those acting in an empowering manner and those who are empowered. In order to create a classroom climate where students can learn, students would not be entitled to do anything they feel like doing without regard for the organizational context or goals of others (Frymier et al.). Rather, empowered students would be intrinsically motivated to manage and accomplish tasks that are mutually valued by teachers and students (Frymier et al.). A power-with approach to communication might allow for a quicker and more fruitful alignment process because it would create the space for everyone's needs and goals to be heard and considered.

THE NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATIONSM MODEL AS A MODEL THAT COMMUNICATES POWER-WITH

McCroskey, Richmond, Plax, & Kearney (1985) claim that teacher/student communication is, for the most part, relational communication, and should be examined from that vantage point. The communication model known as Nonviolent Communication (NVC), sometimes called Compassionate Communication (CC), offers guidelines that can help teachers create a power-with type of relationship with students (Simon, 2002). NVC refocuses the use of language and reframes relationships in ways that help teachers stay in a *power-with* mode of relationship with students even in moments of alienation (e.g., when a teacher is sad, hurt, or frustrated, when students are not listening, or when the topic the teacher wants to teach is the last thing on the minds of the students). The components of the NVC model are discussed in detail in Chapter Three of this thesis.

It can be challenging to stay in an egalitarian power dynamic with students. Each new moment would necessitate that teachers and students undo and transform long-held assumptions about teacher/student relationships (Kashtan, 2002). Attempting to get students to do what teachers want them to do with a hierarchical, or power-over approach (e.g., out of fear, guilt, shame, or the desire for reward) is, however, harmful to everyone (Deci, 1975; Eisler, 2000; Gordon, 1974; Kashtan, 2002; Rosenberg, 2003). For example, if students

submit, this submission may lead to a disconnection from the learning process (Kashtan). Furthermore, when teachers resort to a power-over approach, their experiences are often filled with frustration and exhaustion, resulting from attempts to maintain connection and garner respect (Kashtan).

NVC encourages mutual respect for the autonomy of both teachers and students. Mutual respect for one another's autonomy may reduce friction between teachers and students and open channels for communication (Gordon, 1974; Rosenberg, 2003). When teachers *and* students can say "Yes" from the knowledge that they are free to say "No" without consequences, both teachers *and* students are truly empowered (Kashtan, 2002).

Two recent books by Hart and Kindle Hodson (2004; 2008) help teachers integrate the NVC model with a partnership educational approach. The first book, *The Compassionate Classroom* (2004), discusses NVC and partnership strategies (offering activities and exercises). The second book, *The No-Fault Classroom* (2008), offers a complete curriculum for using NVC and partnership principles in the classroom. Hart & Kindle Hodson (2008) also created a set of support materials for the classroom curriculum called *The No Fault Zone™ Game*. The verbiage of the NVC model can be adjusted to fit the needs of teachers from kindergarten to the graduate level.

WHAT A PARTNERSHIP EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT WOULD LOOK LIKE

Rosenberg, the developer of the NVC model, supports a transition of traditional schools to partnership schools, or, as he calls them, life-enriching/life-serving organizations. Rosenberg (2009) describes what would be observed in a partnership educational environment: teachers and students would be working together setting objectives mutually and consensually, teachers and students would speak a process language rather than a language that demands results (i.e., a language that allows the process of looking for what actions might best meet each person's needs at no one else's expense), students would not work out of a fear of verbal or physical punishment, nor would they expect to be motivated by a promise of reward, but would be working from intrinsic motivation, tests would be given at the beginning of the course of study to determine need, not at the end to determine reward or punishment, and grades would be replaced with evaluations of student learning that describe the skills and knowledge students have mastered. The classroom climate would

foster an interdependent learning community where the common goal is to support all students in reaching learning objectives. Rules and regulations would be created consensually by the people who are affected by the rules (students, teachers, parents, and administrators). Force (e.g., holding a student back from hitting another student) would be used only to protect needs such as health and safety, but never with the intent to punish; all such actions being immediately followed by an empathic interaction with the student in an attempt to find out what motivated the student's behavior and to offer alternative behaviors that would be physically and psychologically safer.

Eisler (2009) believes that the adoption of a partnership model in schools (and in society) is essential for human life to flourish. She claims, however, that the dominator model is not weakening in schools. Calls for more control of students, standardization, and keener competition are common. The next generation of students, however, needs to learn to operate in autonomous, equitable and peaceful ways (Noddings, 2000). A partnership model of education can prepare young people to more realistically address environmental issues and the responsible use of new technologies, teach them to think in holistic or systemic terms (in terms of relationships with people and with nature), and better prepare students for the new postindustrial economy as organizational development and management consultants emphasize inquisitiveness, innovativeness, flexibility, creativity, teamwork, and sensitivity (Noddings). Miller (2002) claims that compassion may be the most necessary skill for students to acquire in order to fulfill the needs of a social services industry that will expand as baby boomers grow older.

Of course, partnership school structures would require a higher teacher/student ratio and far greater fiscal and social support for schools than exists now (Noddings 2000). Even without this funding and low teacher/student ratio, however, teachers can gradually learn to apply partnership methods, activities, and attitudes. Whether or not funding or social support can be found in the immediate future, the conversation about traditional versus partnership educational styles needs to take place.

ACADEMIC ANALYSIS OF THE NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION MODEL

Besides this thesis, I am aware of six master's theses (Beck, 2005; Blake, 2002; Hulley, 2006; Jones, 2005; Little, 2008; and Nash, 2007) and one dissertation (Steckel, 1994)

that offer discussions and/or evaluations of the Nonviolent Communication (NVC) model. Due to the communicative nature of NVC, and the fact that communication is an integral part of any discipline, these studies derive from diverse fields (e.g., psychology, theology, dispute resolution, and educational psychology). Another study conducted by Little, Gill, and Devcic (2007) was funded by the Vancouver Port Authority, and two other studies were funded through the Center for Nonviolent Communication. I will discuss the findings of several of these studies in this section. Little (2008), the lead trainer in two of these research studies describes the first five studies.

Steckal's (1994) doctoral dissertation evaluates the impact of a seven-hour NVC training. Measurements for an increase in empathy and self-empathy levels among a group of adult university students, both before and after the training, showed statistically significant increases in both empathy and self-empathy for the NVC training participants. The control group showed no significant changes on the same measures. Blake (2002) examined the impact of a two-day NVC training program with college students enrolled in an Interpersonal Communication class. The study measured increases in levels of empathy for the students in both participant and control groups. Blake found no evidence, however, to suggest that exposure to NVC training uniquely contributed to an increase in empathy, concluding that any program focused on interpersonal communication skills probably supports the development of empathy in training participants. She also suspected, however, that longer exposure to the NVC training might have a more significant impact on participants (see also Carrell, 1997).

Nash (2007) evaluates a two-year NVC training program for staff at a private, non-profit, residential juvenile treatment facility. Staff received a four-hour NVC training followed by weekly one-hour, and one minute, practice sessions. Her study measures two statistically significant positive impacts for the participant group despite a 62% turnover in staffing during the two-year study period. By the end of the study, peaceful conflict resolutions between residents and staff trained in NVC had significantly increased. At the same time violent resolutions decreased between these two groups. In contrast, untrained staff significantly decreased their rates of peaceful conflict resolution, and increased their rates of violent conflict resolution with residents.

Little (2008), examined the impact of NVC training on at-risk female students at a continuation high school in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. This study demonstrated a significant increase in feelings and needs vocabularies, ability to express feelings and needs, and an increase in ability to self-empathize in these students who were in difficult personal circumstances, including violent relationships, on parole, and pregnant.

Several other training programs have demonstrated positive results from NVC and NVC-oriented training. Little, Gill, and Devcic (2007) assessed a three month NVC program for 7th grade students in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. This research shows that the participants experienced statistically significant and dramatically increased empathy and conflict resolution skills comprehension and applications. The control group showed no significant changes. Qualitative analysis of the interview data reveals that the participant students found the training to be engaging, useful, and meaningful. The majority of the participant students reported practicing their new skills in daily conflicts with friends and family members, particularly with siblings, and that they experienced more satisfying conflict outcomes than before the training.

NVC trainer, Cozetti (2000), conducted a study in four schools in Italy that examined levels of conflict before and after NVC training for teachers and students. The study included 321 students with 102 of those students serving as a control group. Children in both groups were asked to describe unpleasant situations at school in 12 categories. Significant increases were reported in three of the categories: respect for behavioral rules, relationship with teachers, and respect for the school's educational programs. No increases were found in the control group in any of the 12 categories. In a second measure, reports from teacher observations demonstrated a) a reduction in the overall number of conflicts, b) a reduction of violent conflicts, c) a decreasing portion of conflicts in which one party withdrew or ended the relationship, d) an increase in the proportion of conflicts resolved through discussion, and e) a strong increase in the proportion of conflicts resolved through calling for help from a mediator (older child or adult). No control group was used for this measure.

In a written examination of conflict situations, 79.4% of students used NVC language for expressing themselves after training compared to 19.4% before training, and 90.3% of students used NVC to empathize with others after the training compared to 8.7% before the training. In a fourth examination of the training, student mediators, who received 16 hours of

NVC training, utilized each component of NVC (i.e., expressing feelings and needs, and empathizing with others' feelings and needs) at the same frequency as teachers who received 61 hours of training.

Kurtz (1988) examined the effects of an approach to teaching math in a manner that respected the students' autonomy (respect for autonomy is a basic tenet of NVC; Kurtz is currently the principal of a middle school where she trains her staff to use NVC with students). Second grade students were taught mathematics in small groups. Kurtz was available for coaching, but did very little questioning of the students and offered minimal evaluation of students' responses. The process also utilized natural self-regulatory inner speech to add social and meta-cognitive value to the learning language. The California Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) administered in the fall and spring of the school year, demonstrated academic gains in these students of over 2.5 years of growth in applied mathematics and a 1.9 year gain in general mathematics in only seven months. Five out of 18 students who participated in the learning program tested at a 7.5 grade level in general math. Transcriptions of five lessons with a group of students over the seven-month period showed a higher incidence of process and meta-process language than traditional classroom discourse. The CTBS showed the students' language expression skills to be at the fifth grade level at the end of the study. This approach to teaching mathematics is similar to the currently popular instructional process, Cognitively Guided Instruction (a.k.a. problem-based mathematics), which is currently taught as part of the newly adopted California state and district materials, *Everyday Mathematics*.

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The central purpose of this project was to offer NVC training to educators. Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) were trained in the use of empathy (a basic tenet of the NVC model). The directors, teachers, and students at a charter school nearby were trained in the four-step NVC model. In Chapter Four of this thesis, I will discuss the delivery of three workshops to the GTAs, the data collection and analysis, and the findings of this training. In Chapter Five, I will discuss the delivery of a four-month training program in the NVC model to the directors, teachers, and students at the charter school, also describing the circumstances at the school that impeded the training of the parents of the students, and their inclusion in

the study. If these training programs were effective, similar training programs could be used to introduce NVC to other elementary and secondary school teachers and students, as well as to GTAs and university professors. The research questions this study attempted to address were:

RQ¹: Do Graduate Teaching Assistants make better connections with students after attending a workshop on the topic of empathy?

RQ²: Does training in the use of the Nonviolent Communication model expand the perception of partnership educational styles, and engender more compassion, respect, cooperation, egalitarian communication, and motivation in directors, teachers, students, and parents at a K-8 charter school?

CHAPTER 2

HIERARCHY AND PARTNERSHIP AS EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES

Hierarchical organizational models in the industrial age were strongly reflected in the educational models of the time (Eisler, 2009). This organizational model has gradually changed, however. Organizations are flattening hierarchies and viewing organizational members as resourceful stakeholders rather than dispensable parts of an organizational machine. Despite these organizational changes, many educators continue to use hierarchical strategies to control the learning process and the learning environment (Sidorkin, 1997). These strategies promote a hidden agenda in the classroom that teaches students that the world *is* hierarchical, and that students must learn their place in the hierarchy (Kreisberg, 1992). In this chapter, I will discuss the hierarchical nature of traditional education, and describe a partnership approach to education. I will then discuss several traditional educational strategies and several partnership educational strategies. This discussion is aimed at building an understanding of the fundamental difference between the two educational approaches.

HIERARCHY AND DOMINATION

I have, so far, discussed teacher/student power dynamics predominantly in terms of hierarchical versus partnership educational strategies. I have not explicated my concern that hierarchical structures and dynamics can, and often do, lead to domineering practices. When I have discussed this potential for dominance with educators, the use of the word “domineering” has been a stimulus for frustration, and even anger. I do not mean to imply that all educators dominate students at all times. Furthermore, domination is not always a conscious act on the part of educators (Sidorkin, 1997). When there is recognition of a domineering relationship, however, this relationship is often justified by the belief that domineering practices are sometimes necessary (Sidorkin; Kreisberg, 1992). In the following sections, I will discuss some of the assumptions that underlie this faith in the need for

hierarchy and/or domination in the classroom. I include this section because of a concern that the benefits of a partnership approach may not be fully recognized if educators do not understand the potentially domineering nature of hierarchical educational and relational strategies.

Hierarchy and Domination in Cultural and Educational Terms

For purposes of this thesis, domination is defined as a relationship in which one party has power over the behaviors and expressions of another party, often without the consent of the other party (Sidorkin, 1997). Athens (2007) argues that domination is a requirement for human beings to complete any type of complex social act, defining a complex social act as one that requires several people to perform all the necessary roles at just the right points in time. Eisler (1987), however, suggests that there are options. Eisler reports on archeological evidence that contradicts Athens' claim. This evidence (e.g., cave art, pottery, buildings and infrastructure) demonstrates that, during the upper Neolithic period, some humans did perform complex social acts without any need of a domination-style hierarchy. Eisler makes a distinction between an ascended hierarchy and a domination hierarchy. An ascended hierarchy is one where organization evolves from a less complex to a more complex structure, but does not rely on domination in order to function (e.g., single celled organisms that evolve into multi-celled organisms). A domination hierarchy is one in which power resides with a few who control the environment by using a top-down, hierarchical approach.

Distinguishing between dominance and domination is also important. If a person accrues a certain level of expertise, more expertise than others, that person will be in a dominant position regarding that expertise. If the person shares that expertise with others who need and request it, domination has not occurred. If, however, the person uses that expertise to limit the behaviors and expressions of others without the agreement of these individuals, domination has occurred (Sidorkin, 1997).

A common justification for the necessity of domination is that humans are selfish and self-serving by nature. Schmookler (1988) claims, however, that it is not human nature that is at the core of domination. It is the belief in the value of domination strategies that lead humans to dominate. Schmookler claims that an underlying awareness that humans are, in fact, quite vulnerable to one another motivates this faith in the need for domination.

Kreisberg (1992) claims that the American culture positively acknowledges teachers who use a combination of care and domination. There is a general acceptance by instructional communication scholars that the use of prosocial behaviors by teachers positively impacts students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness and credibility, and enhances behavioral, affective and cognitive learning (Chory & McCroskey, 1999; Christophel & Gorham, 1995; Comstock, Rowell, & Bowers, 1995; Ellis, 2004; Gorham & Milette, 1997; Moore, Masterson, Christophel, 1996; Plax, Kearney, McCroskey, & Richmond, 1986; Richmond, McCroskey, Kearney, & Plax, 1987; Rodriguez, Plax, & Kearney, 1996; Tevin, 2004; Witt, Wheelless, & Allen, 2004). Despite this acceptance of the value of prosocial teacher behaviors, and despite some research claiming that teachers use, overall, more prosocial than antisocial behavioral alteration messages when seeking compliance from students (Kearney, Plax, Richmond, & McCroskey, 1984; 1985), Kreisberg claims that, from a power-over versus power-with perspective, schools continue to be places in which domineering relationships between teachers and students are regularly played out.

EDUCATION IN PARTNERSHIP TERMS

Rogers (1969) claims that the concept of “teaching” often raises the wrong questions. As soon as a society focuses on “teaching,” questions arise about what to teach. Rogers suggests that it is difficult to know for sure what students should know because it is a constantly changing world. Furthermore, the concern over what to teach is based on the assumption that what is taught is learned. Rogers, therefore, encourages educators to think deeply about the learning process, and how “teaching” actually affects learning.

Eisler (2000) claims that *how* and *what* teachers teach, as well the structure of the teaching environment, are all equally important. A partnership-style educational system has three interconnected components: process, content, and structure (Eisler, 2000). *Process* is about *how* educators teach. The teaching process allows students to have a stake in their education. Teachers act primarily as mentors and facilitators. Students learn teamwork, rather than being continuously placed in competitive relationships with one another or the teacher. *Content* is about *what* students are taught. A partnership curriculum would teach, not only basic skills, but would also teach and model the life-skills students will need to be competent and caring citizens, employers, employees, and parents. *Structure* is about the kind of

learning environment educators construct. The classroom environment would be democratic rather than authoritarian. Decisions would flow from the students to the teachers as well as flowing from the teachers to the students. Students would participate in decision-making about the course material and the setting of course and classroom rules.

Partnership-oriented curricula would support a partnership-style education. Without both elements in place, teachers would send conflicting messages to students. Eisler (2009) advises that a partnership-oriented curriculum would consist of more than just “add-ons” such as black history classes, or women’s history month, programs to address children’s emotions, and conflict resolution training. These are all important contributions, but more is needed. A shift from a hierarchical approach to subject matter to a partnership approach to subject matter, and from hierarchical to non-competitive activities, could demonstrate for students a wider range of human relations, and foster discussions of interconnections and interactive psychosocial dynamics (Eisler, 2000). This more holistic, or systemic, approach may help students develop both cognitive and emotional intelligence, enabling them to navigate through difficult life experiences, and better understand, and begin to lay, local and global structural foundations for compassionate interactions and actions (Eisler).

As a trainer of NVC in educational environments, I have been questioned several times about the wisdom of teaching students that partnership-based relationships are valuable in this day and age. One Graduate Teaching Assistant asked me, “Aren’t we just setting our students up to fail if we teach them to prioritize relationships and concern for others in the business world?” Another individual asked, “Isn’t it important to teach both partnership and competition? What about people who want to pursue a law career?” Eisler (2000, 2009) believes that it would be useful to students if they were taught about both social models, and informed that both dominator and partnership models are at the extreme ends of a continuum of control and mutual respect. After learning about both models, students can decide for themselves which model they prefer to operate within.

Hart (personal communication, June 11, 2009) explains how a partnership-oriented approach to learning standard subject matter could work. Teachers can assist students in looking at history assignments from the perspective of what needs the participants of each event are trying to meet, or by contemplating how the participants could have met needs to thrive and survive differently. For example, how could the participants have handled a

conference in ways that would have met the needs of the countries, rather than start a war? In literature, students could examine the needs of literature characters. Even students as young as eight and nine years old can be taught to look at characters in literature in terms of what needs those characters were attempting to meet by the actions that the characters chose (Pierotti, personal communication, June 27, 2009). This method of teaching supports the needs of administrators who want to provide a solid foundation for students in academic subjects (Hart).

Relationship-Based Learning

There are four types of relationships in every classroom: a) teacher-to-self, b) teacher-to-student, c) student-to-student, and d) student to his or her own learning process (Hart & Kindle Hodson, 2004). An understanding of these relationships might encourage teachers to ponder: a) what is valuable to the teacher about her/his role as a teacher, b) what kind of relationship does the teacher want to create with the students, c) whether students are learning teamwork, or encouraged to compete with one another for attention, participation points, or grades, d) whether the teaching process allows students to have a stake in their education by allowing them to participate in the design of course content and classroom rules, e) whether students are encouraged to assess their own levels of ability and their own learning needs for themselves, and f) whether the curriculum models the life-skills students need in order to be competent and caring citizens, employers, employees, and parents (Hart & Kindle Hodson). Rosenberg (1973) laid out four dimensions of partnership teaching that he believes are vital to teacher/student relationships.

1. ***Mutuality***: a teacher/student relationship where the teacher relates to a student as a colleague:
 - a. The teacher openly shares personal thoughts and feelings with students without blaming students for those thoughts and feelings, or demanding that students take responsibility for those thoughts and feelings.
 - b. The teacher shows empathy and respect for students' feelings and thoughts, and thereby avoids ignoring the student, passing judgment, and giving advice.
 - c. The teacher resolves conflicts with students through rational problem-solving techniques rather than through any coercive techniques such as punishment and reward.

2. *Mutual consent*: by recognizing the importance of a student's consent to learning objectives teachers are less inclined to avoid passing on irrelevant information to the students:
 - a. The teacher and student(s) know what the objectives of the lesson are prior to the beginning of the work on each lesson.
 - b. Both teacher and student(s) are committed to this objective because the objective has been arrived at through mutual consent.
3. *Adjustment to learning styles*
 - a. Teachers make adjustments to teaching because of a recognition that students have diverse learning styles, and by fitting the curriculum to the child, not the child to the curriculum.
4. *Teacher facilitation rather than a conduction (e.g., lecturing) of learning*.
 - a. Teachers would supplement reading assignments and lectures with student-centered learning experiences: games, group projects.

TRADITIONAL OR PARTNERSHIP EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES

In this section of the thesis, I will discuss both traditional and partnership educational strategies to demonstrate the fundamental differences in the two approaches. I believe that a partnership approach to education, which embodies several ideas that teachers might question, will not be considered as a viable alternative to traditional education unless teachers see the two educational approaches as they are related to, and different from, one another.

These differences may be beneficial for preparing students to operate in the world as global citizens. Current students will need to think in much broader terms than previous generations of students have had to think. Philosophic study means the habit of always seeing an alternative, of not taking the usual for granted, of making conventionalities fluid again (James, 1925). I consider the following discussion to be a philosophic study of hierarchical and partnership educational strategies.

EMPATHY

Carl Rogers (1959), founder of the branch of psychology called Humanistic Psychology, considered empathy to be one of the fundamental elements of his "client-centered" approach to therapy. This "client-centered" approach was unique in psychology.

Rather than analyze, advise, and educate his clients, Rogers' style was that of congruency, unconditional positive regard, and empathic concern; in other words, authenticity on the part of the therapist, unconditional positive regard for the client at all times, and empathy as the main form of response to clients. Rogers found that clients responded well to empathy, and grew into more balanced, capable people when he empathized with their problems rather than attempted to fix their problems.

Rogers (1980) defines empathy (or being empathic) as the accurate perception of the internal frame of reference of another individual arrived at by listening carefully to what the person is experiencing, and, in particular, to what is meaningful about the experience to that person. Rosenberg (2003), the developer of the NVC communication model, proposes that empathizing with students' emotions, and the needs underlying those emotions (a student-centered approach), rather than seeking compliance to teacher-centered needs, facilitates an ease in communication between teachers and students, leading to more cooperation and motivation to participate and learn.

Face or Empathy

Goffman (1958) introduced the concept of "face" into the psychological literature in the 1950s. Every individual has a conception of themselves that they present to others; a conception of who they want others to think they are (Cupach & Metts, 1994). When an individual makes this presentation, that individual implicitly requests that others acknowledge this presentation of self, or take this "face" seriously (Goffman). Brown and Levinson (1987) later claimed that there are two kinds of face: *positive face* (the presentation that an individual wants others to acknowledge), and *negative face* (an acknowledgement of what the individual does not want to be part of). Students are often considered to be obliged to the teacher for the education being afforded them, and this perception of obligation leads to less concern about imposing on both students' positive and negative face (Sidorkin, 1997). Needs that impede the completion of an assignment, or a student's inability to express that need, may result in less participation, slower production of work, or even rebellion (Rosenberg, 2003a). Teachers who insist that the student do what they have been told to do impinge on the student's face. Any attempt to change a person's behavior is potentially face-threatening (Cai & Wilson, 2000).

In a partnership-based classroom, empathic concern for one another's needs would be the norm. Students' needs would be considered to be as credible as the needs of the teacher. In this classroom climate there would be far fewer issues of loss of face. In the classroom setting, a teacher would be fully present to a student when that student is expressing an opinion or a need, would empathize with the student's feelings and needs, and attempt to help the student meet those needs. Students would do the same for teachers. If the teacher's and student's needs appeared to be in conflict, the teacher and student would enter into a dialogue about how to best satisfy both parties' needs, sometimes leading to solutions that neither party considered initially.

If a student comes to class and does not feel like learning, Rosenberg (2003a) suggests that a teacher would not take a hierarchical stance with the student, but would empathize with the student instead. Students often have contextual factors (brought from outside school) that get in the way of their ability to concentrate, or their willingness to participate (Gordon, 1974; Rosenberg). Kashtan (2003) suggests that when a student is saying "No," to what the teacher is asking for (in words or actions), they are actually saying "Yes" to something else. Empathizing with a student's resistance will more likely bring to the surface what it is the student is saying "Yes" to; saving the student's face and possibly leading to an alternative way for the student to learn the intended lesson.

As students learn to empathize with teachers' feelings and needs, this dynamic could work in favor of teachers' face as well. If a student says "No" to a teacher's request, this would not imply that the teacher is not in control of the student, or not a good teacher. It would simply be recognized that both teacher and student have respect for one another's autonomy. A mutually satisfactory and beneficial solution could be sought through a dialog between the teacher and student; a dialog in which both teacher and student discuss their personal and educational needs with one another.

Traditional Messages or Empathy

Gordon (1974) identifies three categories of messages that teachers generally use when working with students: solution messages, put-down messages, and indirect messages (Gordon) claims that none of these messages are effective. *Solution messages* tell a student exactly how to modify behavior; the teacher offers a solution to the teacher's problem, and

expects the student to buy into that solution. These messages are often resisted (Gordon). Kearney, Plax, & Burroughs (1991) found that student resistance was strongest in conditions in which students perceived teachers' behaviors as interfering with students' needs or desires. *Put-down messages* denigrate the student, or impugn the student's character (Gordon). These messages contain evaluation, criticism, ridicule and/or judgment. These types of messages are often discounted, seldom result in a positive behavioral change, and students often make negative inferences about the character of a teacher who uses these types of messages (Gordon). Students may also internalize the message as proof of inadequacy, and then feel "forced" to defend against what is considered an attack from the teacher (Gordon). *Indirect messages* generally fail to get the point across clearly enough for the teacher to obtain what is wanted from the student. Kidding, teasing, sarcasm and diverting comments are often not understood. Even when they are, teachers may be judged manipulative or evasive. Empathy may more likely lead to a connection with, rather than a disconnection from a student, creating a channel for communication that can lead to mutual resolutions to academic and behavioral issues.

Fixing Problems or Empathy

Presence is the most precious gift humans can give one another (Rogers, 1959; Rosenberg, 1999). When teachers are fully present, and listen to a student's feelings and needs, the student's value and worth as a human being is affirmed (Schubert, 2007). Teachers often believe, however, that it is their job to question students about motives, to give advice, or even to give false reassurances that everything will work out (Schubert). Furthermore, for people who work in helping professions, such as teaching, there is always the temptation to "fix" things that are wrong (Schubert). Fixing the problems of others, however, is a hierarchical approach, and this approach may seem domineering to those being "helped." Listening empathically to a student, rather than attempting to fix the student's problem, demonstrates a willingness to be in an egalitarian relationship with the student, and allows students the space to fix their own problems.

TEACHER RESPONSIBILITY OR COLLABORATION

School is, overall, a teacher-directed model (Kohn, 1996), and teachers must be effective classroom managers (Lee, Levine, & Cambra, 1997). Kohn suggests, however, that

in order to create a cooperative learning environment, teachers may want to give up some power. Rather than expending energy on power dynamics, Kohn suggests that a teacher think in terms of what students need, and how teachers and students could work together to meet those needs. This approach could involve partnership strategies such as mutually creating learning objectives with students, mutually deciding on course content, and mutually creating and enforcing classroom rules.

Mutual Learning Objectives

In a partnership learning environment, students and teachers would mutually set learning objectives for each student. These learning objectives would differ from one student to the next. The learning objectives would result from the student's interests, and the natural capacities the student demonstrates. In a classroom with 20 - 30 students, much less 40 or more students, as is the case in many college classrooms, working with each student to create learning goals probably seems impossible. Part of the problem, however, may be the way teachers are educated.

Rosenberg (1973) expressed concern, as a psychologist conducting in-service trainings in schools, that college courses were educating teachers to believe that 30 children could learn the same thing at the same time in the same way. Rosenberg considered this to be ineffective training for the teachers, and a dehumanizing approach to relating to students. Rosenberg believed then, and continues to believe, that it *is* possible to teach 30 children as individuals, that it is possible to have each student working toward objectives that are within the student's realm of capability, to have each student working toward personal objectives according to a time schedule that fits the student's personal orientation (style and preference), and to have each student working toward learning goals in a manner that fits the student's unique skills and approach to learning (see also Rosenberg, 2003a). In order to approach teaching in this way, many long-held assumptions would need to be reexamined (e.g., assumptions about learning styles, assumptions about the value of compliance-gaining, even assumptions about the most effective type of relationship between teachers and students). Assumptions about power must also be reexamined. Again, if a teacher and student make an agreement, and the student comes to class and does not want to do what was agreed upon, the teacher would not automatically take a hierarchical stance and demand that the

student fulfill the agreement, no matter how the student feels that day. The teacher would attempt to understand what is preventing the student from following through with the agreement. This approach alone is often enough to result in a student deciding to fulfill the agreement.

When teachers and students are mutually creating learning objectives, teachers would need to be able to support the student's perspective, goals, or interests without reverting to a hierarchical position and insisting that the student must learn what the teacher (and administrators, and state board members) want the student to learn. This does not mean that the teacher would abdicate all responsibility for what a student learns, but if the teacher draws out what the student is saying "Yes" to, when the student says, "I don't want what you are offering" (Rosenberg, 2003a, p. 74), rather than making demands or admonishing the student for lack of cooperation, the student may end up demonstrating a great deal of learning potential. If a teacher begins by considering what the student needs, and how the teacher and student could work together to get the student's needs met, teachers and students may end up in a very different place than if the teacher begins by thinking about how to get the student to do what the teacher wants the student to do (Kohn, 1996). By acknowledging that students have needs, interests, and timing issues, that students come to school with many contextual factors brought from home or community, *and* by assuming these needs and interests matter and are a valid part of the learning/teaching experience, the attitudinal space is created to work mutually with the students.

Kohn (1986) points out that adults who are told exactly what to do and how to do it at work are often subject to burnout. Some adults become actively resentful; others just go through the motions and collect their paycheck. Teachers, who understand this dynamic on a personal basis, often do not realize that students also experience burnout (Kohn). This is just one reason that helping students become responsible for their own learning is beneficial. (e.g., children who pick their own projects and materials have been shown to stay more interested in a project longer (Deci & Ryan, 1985)).

LEARNING THAT MEETSEVERYONE'S NEEDS

Practically, how might the mutual creation of learning activities work? Teachers often ask, "Where am going to find the time to teach this way?" The main obstacle to overcome in

a transition from traditional hierarchical education styles to partnership styles is the willingness to consider that it might be possible, which then might motivate a teacher to try some of the strategies and activities. Susan Ohanian (1994) urges teachers to resist buying into the idea that teachers should produce an assembly-line model of student at the end of each lesson and each school year. In the following two stories, Ohanian demonstrates the kinds of options that exist if the traditional assumptions are tweaked a bit.

When it came time to learn cursive writing, some of Ohanian's 2nd grade students resisted because they thought it was too difficult. Ohanian decided not to force the students to learn cursive on her schedule. About half-way through the year, one of the students who had been resistant to learning cursive asked Ohanian to write a spelling word on the board using cursive. Other students who had been resistant to learning cursive then began asking her how to form individual letters. Ohanian took this cue and began writing the spelling words for the week on the board in cursive and suggested that the students try to write the words out for themselves. The students took her suggestion. Three weeks or so later, Ohanian began comparing the cursive production of the late learners to that of the students who had been practicing cursive all year. Ohanian did not see much difference between the skills of the two groups. Furthermore, the students learned to write in cursive without a lot of distress.

Ohanian noticed that the vocabulary words she was trying to teach her 2nd grade students did not have much meaning for them. She introduced letter writing to help students integrate the words into stories about their own activities. Each day the students would write her a letter about whatever they wanted to write about. Some students who had never spoken in class wrote interesting letters. One child quit writing at one point and, on a hunch, Ohanian asked him a question about stock car racing. He answered her question with a six page letter, even staying after class to finish. Ohanian answered each letter every day. Ohanian's view was that if the business of language arts is to develop a student's reading and writing skills, imagination, intellect and empathy, then letter writing, as an alternative to formal writing exercises, would accomplish this goal. The students were able to integrate vocabulary words into their lives on their own terms.

CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT

How do you apply partnership education to older students who are required to master skills such as research and critical thinking? In order to involve students in learning, McMillan and Cheney (1966) suggest a model of “critical engagement” which encourages dynamic presentations of important and interesting material, lively instruction and debate, open discussion and critical analysis of material, and discussions that not only connect to the real world, but transform perspectives on the real world. Critical engagement suggests a common dedication by both teachers and students to the learning process, and mutual respect from both teachers and students for one another. Critical engagement means that students are stakeholders in their education, with energies, interests, and talents to contribute. Students can take a perspective of ownership while respecting the wisdom of the teacher (Miller & Cheney). Following is a story that demonstrates how this is possible.

In the fall of 2000, Michael Dreiling received a research grant to teach a course on global issues. Dreiling had taught several courses from the critical paradigm, but a recent exposure to NVC, and feedback from students who were asking for more of a voice in what they were being taught, led him to take a partnership approach to teaching this class. He had been dissatisfied for years by the usual intellectual critical approach. It seemed too disembodied from the students’ feelings about what was being learned. NVC offered reflexive tools to focus attention on what was alive for each participant, in the moment, by way of guiding the students and Dreiling to focus on the feelings, needs, and requests that came up for each student during the course. Dreiling knew that he could always overwhelm the students with statistics, but also knew that the students had been leaving his previous critical courses with unaddressed emotions and unmet needs.

The template of NVC was helpful in designing a strategy for evaluating students. Rather than evaluation based on how the students performed on papers or exams, evaluation was based on how clear it was to Dreiling that the students had engaged the subject. Rather than telling students what to do to get a grade, Dreiling asked the students to demonstrate how they each engaged the course material in a way that they imagined would be most life enriching for them. Students were asked to make a proposal to Dreiling about how each student, or group of students, would learn about the subject; in this class the subject was the use of children as sweat shop workers in developing countries.

Not all students appreciated this approach. Dreiling found himself empathizing with some students who had a fear of working in this autonomous fashion. Eight students asked Dreiling to write them a final exam, and grade the exam. He did what the students requested as a way of respecting the students' autonomy.

Dreiling and the students discussed each proposal, coming to a mutually agreed upon version of the project. The projects were diverse. One group proposed presenting a workshop on sweat shop labor at a local high school. Each of the five students in the group chose an aspect of the topic that they would enjoy researching and presenting. Other projects included a video film project, an audio documentary, literature reviews, a rally and music fest against sweat shops, and a poetry project. One project evolved into a full-scale campaign that created an option for sweat free, union friendly, university apparel to be sold at the campus store. Students actively sought strategies that met everyone's needs about how to contribute to a more just world. Dreiling believes that students engaged more fully with the subject in this class than in any class he had previously taught; in some cases students even chose to finish up their project after the course had ended. Dreiling has seen this partnership approach work in many classes since this first attempt in 2000. This project demonstrates practical support for Kohn's (1996) claim that when given assignments that stir their curiosity, most students do not need extrinsic motivators.

A PARTNERSHIP DISCUSSION

Rosenberg (2009) describes what a class discussion in a partnership-oriented classroom would be like. In a traditional educational setting (if there was an NVC-oriented topic) a teacher might say, "Today we will be learning how to express needs." In a partnership educational setting, each person, whether in the role of teacher or student, would share ideas about learning for the day, and in a partnership, rather than a hierarchical manner. For example, a teacher or student might say, "I have been learning some things about expressing needs that have been helpful to me. I would be willing to share this with any of you who might be interested. It involves some things we might do when we are not clear about what our needs are. I have in mind a 10-minute explanation and then an exercise that would take 45 minutes. I'd like any of you who are interested to raise your hand."

At any time during the learning period that another student's needs are not being met with what is being presented, or how it is being presented, that student might say, "My need for hands-on experience is not being met with the way the material is being presented. I would like us to limit the present discussion to another five minutes, and then go into groups of six people to give each person a chance to actively practice what we have been discussing. I'd like anyone whose needs would not be met by my suggestion to raise your hand." A teacher might make a similar request: "I am enjoying this topic, and I would also like to add some concepts to the discussion. I suggest that we discuss this concept for about five more minutes, and then I would like to introduce another concept." While teachers do use this approach in class discussions, it is generally understood, by teacher and students, that when a teacher makes this kind of statement, it means that the discussion, as it is happening, will be completed in five minutes, and the students will move on to another topic. In a partnership setting, students would feel free to make a counter-suggestion. For example: "I find this concept really interesting and useful to my life. I would like to continue discussing this concept for at least another 30 minutes." Other students would feel free to agree or disagree (Rosenberg, 2009).

Teachers generally assume that this approach to teaching would be too time consuming and would prevent the teaching of material that students must learn. While this approach is a bit more time consuming than a hierarchical approach, in a partnership setting, where this type of interaction is normal, students are more likely to use this freedom of choice in a balanced fashion, adding to the discussion only if a genuine need is present. Prior group agreements and teacher/student learning agreements would also frame these class discussions. When transitioning from a classroom climate where students do not generally have much input in the topics or the lengths of classroom discussions, students may, at first, overreact to having more autonomy, and may have to learn how to balance their own autonomy with the autonomy of the teacher and the other students. Once students learn to trust that their autonomy will be respected, however, a more balanced interactional approach is more likely.

THE INQUIRY METHOD

West and Pearson (1994) also encourage critical engagement in the classroom by creating opportunities for students to ask questions, and to discuss their opinions and concerns about subject material. West and Pearson's findings, that only 30 questions were generated by students in 108 hours of instruction, indicate that teachers need to allow more time and space for students to ask more questions that require critical thinking. Questioning is critical to student learning, and teachers can be a catalyst for students' questions.

The critical element in any learning experience is the method, or process, through which the learning occurs (Postman & Weingartner, 1969). Therefore, teachers need to encourage students to ask substantive questions, formulate definitions which are not immediately corrected by the teachers, and determine what problems are worth studying, or what procedures of inquiry ought to be used. This questioning type of environment is important because once a student has learned to ask relevant, appropriate, and substantial questions, the student has learned how to learn. Formulating questions engenders more effective learning than just reading about, and being told about, a topic (Postman & Weingartner).

It is generally taken as axiomatic that the attitudes of teachers are the most important characteristic of the inquiry environment (Postman & Weingartner, 1969). Therefore, the beliefs, feelings, and assumptions of teachers determine the quality of the learning in any environment. An engaging and stimulating environment might be created if each lesson, activity, or project is truly aimed at having students clarify a problem, make observations about the nature of the problem, ask questions about the problem, and inquire into various solutions to the problem (Postman & Weingartner).

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

Collaborative learning (students learning in pairs or small groups and working toward a common goal) can free up the teacher for student/teacher consultations, while creating valuable learning experiences of teamwork for students. This would not be an approach that creates a "perform to the lowest common denominator" standard. Nor would students be asked to sacrifice their own academic well-being to make sure someone else understands the material (Kohn, 1986). Collaborative learning is based on Deutsch's concept of positive, or

promotive, interdependence; the philosophy that each student's success is facilitated by, or even dependent on, the success of other students in a group project. Dividing the room into groups and announcing that students should work with their group mates is not sufficient, however. It takes time and skill to foster promotive interdependence, particularly in light of the competitive and individualist norms that students have internalized from earlier settings (Kohn). A cooperative learning lesson plan may come from the teacher's notebook or it may be devised by the class; perhaps based on something someone may have overheard at home about politics or perhaps a discussion about cats because a student recently found a litter of newborn kittens. Collaborative learning is based on the assumption that learning is an active and interactive process.

There are challenges to group learning. Kohn (1986) points out that group learning is noisy. If the whole school has not decided to use the collaborative learning format, the teacher and the students in the next room may be bothered by the noise. Furthermore, discussions about the social skills involved in collaborative learning take time, and this time needs to be figured into the lesson plan. It is also helpful to the students to discuss how group learning went after each project: whether everyone contributed, whether one student dominated the others or everyone felt free to contribute ideas.

Students also bring learning expectations, and various levels of interactional anxiety to a group experience (Dobos, 1996). Students who have high expectations of the group may not feel satisfied with the learning they take away from the group. Communication apprehension can also prevent a student from interacting with other members of the group. Therefore, some rearrangement of groups, and teacher empathy for student concerns, may be necessary to create a comfortable learning situation for all students.

CHOICE-BASED LEARNING

Research on choice-based learning, where students choose the learning style they will use, choose assignments, and choose how tests will be taken, has generated self-reports that are positively related to feelings of student empowerment (Lewis & Hayward, 2003). Choice-based learning is rooted in the belief that students want more from a class than a grade, even though it often seems that a passing grade is all a student cares about. Sample quotations from student self-report surveys regarding choice-based learning included such statements as

“not everyone is the same, so it gives options to students,” “allows me to be graded on my strengths,” and “increases motivation, interest, and creativity” (p. 154).

Mutual Creation of Rules

In a partnership environment, course and classroom rules would be mutually created by everyone who would be affected by those rules, rather than by administrators and educators without the input of students. When students are equal partners in creating the learning environment, they may be more likely to cooperate with rules that they had a hand in creating. This mutual creation of rules, along with the mutual creation of learning goals, gives students a stake in creating their educational environment, creating for students the experience of taking responsibility for personal needs while acknowledging and cooperating with the needs of others. These experiences may teach students how to create this balance as adults.

Glasser (1984) claims that it is never possible to *control* anyone's behavior for very long. Behaviors are intrinsically motivated, and attempts to control an individual's behavior will lead to resistance in some form. Lee et al. (1997) found that resistance to teacher control appears in very young students and evolves from outright resistance to higher order reasoning against teachers' requests for compliance, but does not disappear. Burroughs, Kearney & Plax (1989) found that college students complied with most teacher requests, but did so, more often than not, despite feeling resistant. Many of the students claimed that resistance was not voiced because the students did not want to upset the teacher. Rosenberg (2003), however, suggests that compliance, when there is actually a desire to resist, may lead to a disconnection from the teacher as well as the learning process.

Glasser promotes a theory known as control theory (1984). Control theory posits that all humans are born with inherent needs, and spend a great deal of time attempting to satisfy those needs. In a culture such as the American culture, where needs are played down, individuals are not always clear about what those needs are. This lack of clarity can lead to a student acting out (talking back, turning in late work, not studying for exams). Glasser considers this acting out to be a strategy used by students who are not meeting a personal need to understand or make sense of the relevance of the material to their own life, or a need for stimulating interaction with the teacher or the material. While teachers often consider lack

of motivation to be a problem within the student, Christopher and Gorham (1995) found that students often consider a poor presentational ability on the part of the teacher to be the most frequent source of demotivation.

It sometimes appears that outside stimuli are the cause of behavior or behavioral change, but it is not the outside stimuli causing behaviors (Glasser, 1986). Teachers tell students every day to work hard, and even though they are punished for not doing so, many students do not work hard. Glasser acknowledges that, when students are threatened, they may do what they are told, if they believe it is better at the time not to resist. Students are, however, likely to become resentful and do only the bare minimum of what is required in the future. Glasser claims that all students ever get from outside themselves is information, and then each student decides how to use that information (Glasser). If students were encouraged to identify the needs underlying their behaviors, the students would be more likely to understand the motivations for their behaviors. Considering Glasser's assumptions, the mutual creation of rules may create a more interesting classroom climate that will better serve students and teachers.

PRAISE AND PUNISHMENT OR CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Navigating the various aspects of classroom justice is time consuming and can be energy draining, leading educators to believe in the necessity of rewards to entice students to stay on task and behave, and punitive actions when students refuse to comply (Kohn, 1993). Rosenberg (2003) believes that both punishment and reward are hierarchical approaches.

Despite a solid belief that there is often justification for punishment, punishment always stems from a belief that one individual has the authority to set the standards of behavior in an environment, along with the belief that if a person does not comply to these standards, that person *deserves* to experience negative consequences for their choice of behavior (Rosenberg, 2005). Teachers, however, also misbehave which leads to resistance to teacher requests for compliance (Kearney, Plax, Hays, & Ivey, 1991; Kelsey, Kearney, Plax, Allen, & Ritter, 2004), and confuses the issue of which standards will be applied.

Rewarding a student, including verbal rewards, or praise, is also a hierarchical strategy because it assumes that one individual is in a position of setting the standards for the receipt of rewards. Furthermore, praise is often an attempt to persuade a student to actively

modify their own view of the value of a strategy; to reach out for more “appropriate” behaviors (Speight, 2005, p. 218) rather than attempt to understand personal motivations. Bruner (1962) suggests that one of the most important ways to help children think and learn is to free them from the control of rewards and punishments. This is because rewards and punishments all too easily establish, in the student, the pattern of doing what the student believes will yield rewards and forestall punishments; patterns that typically result in impoverished learning.

Praise or Gratitude

While children are willing, and often do, say “No,” there is also a strong desire in children to please (Kohn, 1993). Kohn advises that it is important to be cautious with this desire to please, and not exploit it to meet personal needs, as a shortcut to the development of needed skills, to the fostering of a commitment to helpful values and behaviors in students, or to bringing students in on the process of deciding what are helpful values and behaviors (Kohn). Kohn suggests two principles that might be thought of as a standard against which all praise might be measured:

1. Self-determinism: With every comment made, and specifically every compliment given, is the intent of the comment or compliment to help the student feel a sense of control over his or her life (e.g., do comments encourage the student to make personal judgments about what constitutes a desirable action or an effective performance, or are the comments meant to manipulate the student’s behavior by getting the student to think about whether the student has met the teacher’s criteria about what constitutes a desirable action or effective performance).
2. Intrinsic motivation: Are the teacher’s comments creating the conditions for the student to become more deeply involved in what the student is intrinsically motivated to do, or turning the task into something to meet the teacher’s approval?

There are several issues that point to the ineffectiveness or even the harm of praise. An intention to offer feedback about the quality of a student’s work may lead to an interpretation that the teacher is limiting the student’s autonomy (Kohn, 1993). The conveyance of rewards (material or verbal) may indicate good performance, but a performance contingency reward could also convey poor performance (e.g., if rewards are offered in different amounts for different levels of performance) (Ryan & Deci, 2000), c) a positive evaluation that does not fit a student’s self-image may evoke anger (Gordon, 1974),

d) the use of rewards as a strategy for externally regulating behavior can undermine natural organismic processes that evolved to keep organisms in touch with their needs and responsive to their surroundings (Ryan & Deci), and e) students interpret praise differently (e.g., one student, hearing exactly the same words of praise, may interpret the words very differently). Therefore, the assumption that praise is a universally positive action is not necessarily an accurate assumption (Canella, 1986). In many cases, rewards are used to get individuals to do what does not come naturally (e.g., engage in non-valued behaviors) and so may generate a desensitization to personal interests, as well as disrupt awareness and choice, undermine intrinsic motivation, and override inherent tendencies to integrate the value and meaning of actions; tendencies that form the structural basis for the self-regulation of action (Ryan & Deci).

Adults like to think of praise as useful; as informational feedback. Informational feedback is, however difficult to separate from praise. Even when it is believed that a student has done well, and the teacher wants to tell the student so, it is not easy to strip from that information the emotional weight of it (Kohn, 1993). Because praise for the work a student does may also discourage self-directed learning, deemphasizing the performance aspect of learning might help free students, and teachers, from the reward-and-punishment frame of reference that leads to the need to praise students (Kohn). Kohn suggests that if the idea of not using praise is unacceptable, when praise is given, it would be least harmful if the attempt was made to: a) praise what the student does, not the student, b) make praise as specific as possible, c) avoid phony praise, and d) avoid praise that sets up competition.

According to Brophy (1981), the act of giving feedback does not require giving praise. Brophy suggests that students do not actually need praise in order to master the curriculum, to acquire acceptable student role behaviors, or even to develop healthy self-concepts. Furthermore, Rowe (1974) found less task persistence by children whose teachers praised them heavily, and also discovered that those children seemed more tentative in their responses, and less likely to take the initiative to share their ideas with other students. Rowe also concluded that praise was one reason for students to back off from an idea as soon as an adult disagreed with the idea.

Rosenberg (2005) suggests that, rather than offering praise, it is more helpful to offer gratitude. If one individual (teacher or student) informs another individual that what that

individual did or said stimulated a pleasant feeling or carried some information that was useful, the sender may feel happy or even relieved that his or her words or actions contributed to the other person's well-being. Generalized praise, in contrast, seldom offers much information and can leave a person feeling criticized or in a one-down position.

Punishment

Most individuals are taught that bringing up children means control and discipline; that children need to be punished and that "bad" children need to be punished more (Gordon, 1974). Punitive child-rearing, however, is ineffective and can also be hazardous to the mental and physical health of children (Gordon). Moreover, punitive discipline is not conducive to developing a truly democratic society, or creating a world of peace (Gordon, 2000). For all these reasons, the issue of how children are treated is of profound social importance (Gordon). If, as a society, we are serious about working toward a culture of peace, current methods of child socialization need to be examined (Gordon).

Gordon (2004) describes how a partnership approach to discipline might work. The alternative to the old hierarchical method of discipline is not a permissive approach. Rather, a partnership approach to discipline would involve young people in creating rules and living by those rules in ways that model mutual respect, empathy and caring. Gordon suggests that non-power methods add up to a more effective method for gaining genuine cooperation. By giving up the need to control children, but also not being a doormat, teachers may be able to foster more independence and interdependence, allow control for students over their own destiny, and contribute to higher self-esteem. Further, by involving students in their own governing process, teachers may make school far more interesting, prevent disciplinary problems, and foster higher achievement motivation. Classroom rule setting by all who will be affected by those rules encourages students to regulate their behavior out of a consideration of others. Non-power approaches to problem solving (e.g., negotiation and empathy) can create a situation where neither party must lose, and both parties will win.

The belief that discipline is necessary (or effective) with children is seldom questioned (Gordon, 1974). Discipline as a spontaneous approach, however, can create problems. A child's behavior is a movement toward a definite, although sometimes unconscious goal (Dreikurs, 1957). This goal will impact whether the teacher's response to

the behavior is effective or not. For example: if the goal is attention, the teacher's response to the behavior may end the behavior (for a while at least), but if the goal is to challenge a teacher's power, a response that attempts to curb the student's behavior will probably not work. The interaction becomes one of a power contest and will probably make the situation worse. Therefore, it is important for teachers to assess what the goal (or need) behind the student's behavior is before deciding to respond to the behavior (Dreikurs).

Gordon (2004) points out that, as a noun, discipline is perceived by most individuals as: behavior in accord with rules or regulations. As a verb, to discipline means: to train by instruction and exercise; to drill, edify and enlighten. Gordon sees no problem with these definitions. Discipline, as a verb, however, also has many tacit synonyms: to punish, to control, to restrict, to direct, to rebuke, to reprimand, and to reprove. These synonyms fall more into the category of demands for obedience. Rosenberg (2003a) claims that if what teachers want is self-discipline from students, coercive tactics are not useful.

If what you want is self-discipline, I suggest you don't use any coercive tactics because they get in the way of self-discipline. A self-disciplined student...acts out of a certain consciousness of his own values, of how what he is doing will contribute to his own and others' well-being, not out of a desire for reward or a fear of punishment. (2003a, pp. 112-113)

Negotiated order theory is a classroom management philosophy that can be helpful in maintaining order without creating unnecessary and cumbersome rules. Typically, effective classroom managers communicate fewer rules than ineffective classroom managers (Hogeluct & Geist, 1997). Negotiated order assumes that the classroom environment is constantly changing and negotiated in every moment by all the members of the class. Each negotiation would be temporal, and may need to be renegotiated in the future (Hogeluct & Geist).

Resistance to learning is almost always an indicator that the student has encountered a distracting problem in life (Gordon, 1974). Rather than punish the student for being distracted, Gordon claims that it is the teacher's job to help the student return to the learning function as rapidly as possible. Gordon suggests that problems are often uniquely coded (e.g., when a student asks a question with an obvious answer, or the question seems out of place or incongruent). Gordon suggests that when this happens, teachers could look for the underlying

feelings. Rosenberg (2003) suggests that the teacher guess at the feelings of the student and then guess at the needs underlying the feelings. This is not the same as mind-reading; the assumption that the teacher knows what is going on with the student without checking it out with the student. This is also not the same as perspective-taking; imagining what the person is experiencing. Though a guess is made, it is only made to help the student discover the student's need, and once the student identifies the need, the interaction shifts toward getting that need met. This is not to say that teachers would meet the student's need if that need is in opposition to the teacher's need. If this is the case, then teacher and student would negotiate, through empathic listening and compassionate expression of needs, a solution that would more likely meet the needs of both parties. Gordon (1974) also suggests that tuning in to the subtle clues, verbal or nonverbal, that students send when they resist a lesson or a teacher's request will help open up the classroom environment, increase productivity, and enrich learning. Students naturally encounter problems in their daily lives, and as they grapple with these problems, students learn to handle negative feelings (Gordon). To the degree the student is encouraged to trust their own feelings and needs, and to generate their own solutions, that student will develop self-confidence and independence, and may also learn to respect others' autonomy (Gordon; Rosenberg).

Glasser (1990) suggests that teachers teach control theory to their students. That way, if something goes wrong, the students can often figure out for themselves what needs are not getting met, requiring much less counseling from busy teachers or principals. Glasser advocates that control theory be taught to students as early as kindergarten.

COMPLIANCE GAINING OR AUTONOMY

Compliance-gaining is considered to be an important tool for the promotion of student learning and controlling the classroom environment. Educator compliance-gaining efforts have been positively related to a number of positive student outcomes: stimulation of student involvement in classroom activities, minimization of student behaviors that interfere with classroom work, and efficient use of instructional time (Wanzer, Frymier, Wojtaszczyk, & Smith, 2006). It is important, however, to consider, in relational terms, what is actually being sought when compliance-gaining strategies are employed. Are the compliance-gaining strategies being used to gain student participation in interesting, fulfilling lessons and

activities, or to insist on student participation in subjects and activities that are not interesting to students, and that may not meet the students' needs? Are the strategies used in an attempt to help students progress, or to get things done in a manner, or timeframe, that the teacher determines? Furthermore, it is important to think carefully about what the term compliance actually refers to. Is the concept itself a domination-style strategy (Rosenberg, 2003b)?

Scholars who examine compliance-gaining in the context of the classroom are generally concerned with the *tactics* that educators use to keep students on task, and to correct and prevent misbehaviors (Cai & Wilson, 2000). The amount of restriction of a student's autonomy is a common criterion for assessing whether compliance-gaining tactics are more or less appropriate (Sprinkle, Hunt, Simonds, & Comadena, 2006). Almost by definition, achievement of compliance-gaining goals must restrict autonomy, at least to some degree (Kellerman, 2004). Compliance-gaining goals can be separated into types: gaining assistance, enforcing the sharing of activities, changing opinions, changing the status of a relationship, enforcing an obligation, protecting a right, and changing a habit (Kellerman & Cole, 1994). What, though, really differentiates these strategies from one another (Kellerman)? These strategies could all restrict autonomy (Kellerman).

Compliance-gaining strategies can also be damaging to a student's self-attitudes, especially if compliance-gaining strategies consist of attacking personal characteristics, telling embarrassing stories about a student, poking fun of mistakes made, or making fun of abilities (Wanzer et. al, 2006). Richmond (1990) points out that the main goal of education is to impact students' lifetime behaviors and motivation to learn. Given this goal, Richmond advises teachers not to sacrifice this long-term goal by using compliance-gaining attempts too readily to control mundane classroom activities.

Any persuasion encounter is an interdependent process in which sources may have strategies to gain compliance, but receivers have strategies to resist compliance (Lee et al., 1997). Compliance-gaining strategies are often interpreted by students as a form of control, or domination, and students tend to resist teachers who attempt to control their behavior (Sidorkin, 1997). Plax, Kearney, Downs, and Stewart (1986) found that students are more or less resistant to any use of control in the classroom, and reported even greater resistance to strategies that involved coercive intent, peer pressure and modeling (e.g., "This is the way I do it").

Teacher immediacy, which Andersen (1979) defines as the nonverbal behaviors that reduce physical and/or psychological distance between teachers and students, appears to mitigate students' resistance to compliance-gaining attempts. Kearney, Plax, Smith, & Sorenson (1988) found that nonverbal teacher immediacy was the most powerful predictor of students' reported willingness to comply with teacher requests. Burroughs, Kearney, and Plax (1989) found that *only* when teachers were immediate did students indicate a stronger willingness to comply, regardless of the other strategies these teachers employed.

Teachers who use prosocial communication strategies are generally given higher student evaluations than teachers who use punishment to gain compliance (Kearney et al., 1988), and use of prosocial compliance-gaining strategies has been significantly related to positive attitudes toward learning (Jordan, McGreal, & Wheelless, 1990). A point to consider, however, is whether a prosocial approach to gaining a student's compliance is enough to counter any possible negative relational residue left behind if a student is being persuaded to do something that the student may not want to do (Jordon et al.). Critical engagement, mutual setting of learning objectives, mutual creation of classroom rules, and mutual designing of curriculum may lead to less need for compliance-gaining as an educational strategy.

INTRINSIC OR EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Rogers (1977) claims that the substratum of all human motivation is the organismic tendency toward fulfillment; what he calls the formative tendency. Organisms are always seeking, always initiating. Rogers believed that the central energy source of the organism is a trustworthy tendency towards actualization involving not only the maintenance, but also the enhancement of the organism; in other words, intrinsic motivation.

Intrinsically rewarding experiences are experiences for which there is no apparent reward except for the reward gained by the doing of the activity (Deci, 1975). Individuals engage in many activities which on the surface do not seem to have any reward attached to the doing of the activity (e.g., solving puzzles or painting pictures). These individuals are intrinsically motivated to do challenging work, which requires resourcefulness and creativity. They are drawn to these activities, not because of any external rewards that might be gained, but because doing these activities creates certain internal states that the individual finds rewarding (Deci).

Deci and Ryan's (1985) concept of intrinsic motivation is based on two hypotheses: 1) individuals will seek out stimulation/challenges, and 2) individuals enjoy feeling competent and self-determined, therefore, often find it pleasurable to overcome challenges. This perception of competence, and an environment that encourages self-determination, is what energizes a person's will; will being defined as the capacity of the human organism to choose to satisfy its needs (Deci, 1980). Self-determinism is more likely to exist when an individual perceives the locus of causality to be internal rather than external. The self-determinism aspect of intrinsic motivation is more fundamental than the competence aspect (Deci, 1980).

Extrinsic rewards tend to decrease intrinsic motivation in students (Deci & Ryan, 1985). While extrinsic rewards can convey positive information (e.g., a bonus or gold star indicates that a person has been performing well), every reward has two essential aspects: 1) controlling (brings behavior under the control of the individual dispensing the reward, and 2) informational (conveys information about levels of competence). How a reward affects intrinsic motivation depends on which aspect of the reward is salient. If the controlling aspect of the reward is more salient, it will decrease intrinsic motivation. If the informational aspect is more salient, it will increase intrinsic motivation by enhancing a student's perception of competence. Even negative feedback can be helpful if the student is intrinsically motivated to accomplish a task and the negative feedback helps the student increase competency (Deci & Ryan). A student's intrinsic motivation and sense of self will benefit from a classroom climate that is informational; offers the opportunities for self-determination and autonomy (Deci and Ryan).

To the degree that a student is able to approach learning as a task to discovering something rather than learning about it or performing it, there will be a tendency for the student to work with the autonomy of self-reward, or be rewarded by discovery itself (Deci, 1980). The most effective learning occurs when the primary reward is the intrinsic satisfaction with personal accomplishments. When students are leaning intrinsically, they tend to interpret their successes and failures as information rather than rewards and punishments. Thus, stimulating, informational task involvement and internal information regulation will contribute to motivation.

Extrinsic controls can produce immediate learning, but impair conceptual learning, and can lead to a greater loss of rote learning. External rewards may also impede the development of a capacity to think creatively if students aim activities toward those that can be expected to receive rewards. Glasser suggests that, while extrinsic rewards can work for a short time, people who rely on extrinsic rewards cannot be trusted to really think.

Because young students are curious and motivated to learn, it is important for teachers to provide them the opportunity to follow their natural curiosity (Deci, 1980; Dewey, 1902). This does not mean that students would be left fully to their own devices or allowed to do whatever they want, or only what they want. Self-determination involves initiating, but also sometimes involves an accommodation to unyielding elements of the environment, as well as functioning harmoniously with others in the environment (Gordon, 1974).

GRADING AS AN EVALUATIVE STRATEGY OR FEEDBACK ABOUT PROGRESS

Grading, as an evaluative strategy, often stimulates emotions in students. Too often, though, educators ignore the emotions connected to the disappointing grade, and discuss only the instrumental goals that the student “should” be considering (Sabee & Wilson, 2005). In a hierarchical educational system, concerns of face and self-identity are generally not addressed when a student is upset about receiving a low grade, leaving students unsatisfied and sometimes feeling hopeless about their capabilities (Sabee & Wilson). Furthermore, whenever extrinsic rewards are experienced as controlling, they will adversely affect intrinsic motivation for learning (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Students generally have two types of goals: learning goals and performance goals (Molden and Dweck, 2002). When the goal is the demonstration of ability (performance) individuals are more likely to feel failure. In contrast, when the goal is an increased level of ability (learning), setbacks are seen as a natural part of learning; as information about the individuals strategy and thus, an incentive for greater effort. Molden and Dweck posit, therefore, that it matters what meaning an effort has to the person who undertakes the effort. The relation between meaning and motivation appears to be: individuals approach achievement expectations (performance) by considering which personal qualities are being evaluated. The overall effect is to create frameworks of interpretation about ability to learn,

which affect future selection of goals, attributions of failure or success, increases or decreases of performance, and intrinsic motivation. Therefore, the way teachers use grades needs to be carefully considered: as an evaluation of achievement (performance), or as feedback (information about what still needs to be learned).

One option to grading by teachers is to have students grade themselves. It is often assumed that students given this option would always give themselves a high grade. I have experienced the opposite to be true. Students who grade themselves, as well as students who are asked to grade group mates, often demonstrate thoughtfulness about grading themselves or others in a way that seems fair to themselves, others and the teacher. Of course, this type of grading option would only be useful for subjective grading, such as with essays, presentations, or group participation.

In partnership schools, progress reports, rather than grades, are generally used to inform students and parents about how a student is progressing from one level of ability to another. Generating a progress report is more time consuming than adding up grade points. Given the potential down-side of grading, however, progress reports may deserve consideration.

GAPS IN THE RESEARCH

The most noticeable gaps in research on hierarchical or partnership educational styles and strategies appear to exist in the scholarly literature. In the last decade, a few scholars have initiated discussions on student resistance to compliance-gaining strategies (Burroughs et al, 1989; Burroughs, 2007; Kearney, et al, 1991; Kellermann, 2004; Lee et al., 1997; Plax et al, 1986), but I have found little academic literature that addresses the concept of hierarchical teaching styles as a broad concept. This literature review of the underlying premises of hierarchy and domination, and a discussion of the fundamental differences in traditional educational strategies and partnership educational strategies is meant to fill some of that gap. The results of the two research studies that were conducted as part of this thesis will, hopefully, engender enough interest in this topic to fuel further investigation by educators.

SUMMARY

Advocates of a partnership approach to educating students consider emotional learning to be as important as academic learning. A partnership approach would encourage teachers and students to compassionately express feelings and needs in the classroom, and would also encourage empathy for those needs from both teachers and students. Just hearing what another individual is needing, and what it means to that individual to have that need fulfilled, may lead to a willingness in both students and teachers to cooperate with one another, may engender more compassion and respect for both students and teachers, and possibly enhance motivation to stay focused on tasks and participate in classroom activities.

Education has traditionally been delivered through a teacher-oriented, hierarchical dynamic. An educational narrative that purports a need to control students stems from a cultural master narrative that assumes hierarchy is necessary in order to run a society and its institutions. Advocates of a partnership approach to education believe that these narratives do not accurately represent human relationships, and that the need to be in control of students takes a toll on the energy and the motivation of teachers and may impede student motivation and learning. Partnership strategies in the classroom would encourage greater responsibility on the part of students to assess and manage their own learning and behavior, freeing teachers for more interesting learning projects, and from the constant need to deal with behavioral problems.

Educational strategies such as designing courses without input from the students involved in those courses, enforcing rules created without student input and consensus, use of punishment and rewards to control student learning and classroom climate, and grading students' work rather than evaluating students' progress are hierarchical, sometimes domineering, strategies that often do not demonstrate empathy for students. These strategies may lead to less empathy in students for the teacher's feelings and needs in the classroom, and may not model an interdependent, compassionate relational dynamic to students. Empathy for one another's feelings and needs can open channels of communication, making it possible to work together to create learning goals and compassionate, cooperative classrooms, whereas a lack of concern for one another's feelings and needs often leads to tension, frustration and lack of motivation for both teachers and students. Therefore, empathy

is a basic component of partnership education. Empathic concern would be demonstrated by the acknowledgement of each student's individual needs, interests, and learning styles.

Attending to students' individual needs, individual interests, and individual learning styles may seem, at first, like an overwhelming, if not impossible, task. A better understanding of the foundational concept, and the applications of partnership education, however, may influence a consideration of the approach. Rogers (1969) acknowledges that all educators prefer to facilitate experiential and meaningful learning, but warns that the use of a prescribed curriculum, similar assignments for all students, lecturing as almost the only mode of instruction, standard tests, and instructor-chosen grades as the measure of learning, will almost guarantee that meaningful learning will be at an absolute minimum.

CHAPTER 3

THE DEVELOPMENT AND ARTICULATION OF THE NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION MODEL

Nonviolent Communication (NVC) is both a type of consciousness and a dialogical process of communication. The consciousness of NVC focuses on compassion for others and for self. The dialogic model allows communicators to connect with what is “alive” for them in every moment; what they are feeling and what they are needing, and to connect with what is alive in others in every moment; to what others are feeling and needing (Rosenberg, 1999). The model guides communicators to compassionately disclose feelings and needs, and to empathize with the feelings and needs that others disclose. The intent of NVC is to create a quality connection with another individual (or group of individuals). The goal of NVC is to comprehend the needs of all parties, and find mutually satisfactory solutions that meet the needs of all parties. The goal of NVC in the educational setting is to facilitate an alternative to teacher-directed, teacher-evaluated learning by encouraging both teachers *and* students to express how they are feeling about the educational process, and to put their educational and personal needs on the table.

The NVC model helps communicators reframe how feelings and needs are expressed, and how feelings and needs are heard, by placing attention on what is observed, felt, needed, and desired (see details of the model later in this chapter). NVC emphasizes that our choice of language either keeps us connected (through authentic expression of our feelings and needs; life-serving language) or disconnects communicators (by blaming, criticizing, and evaluating others; life-alienating language). With NVC, individuals and groups are invited to practice balancing the dialectical tension for autonomy and choice with needs for belonging, harmony, and community (Little, 2008). In this chapter, I will give a brief history of the development of the NVC model, and then lay out the model and its underlying premises, giving examples of the use of the model as the model and its premises are discussed.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NVC MODEL

The NVC communication model has been developing for half a century. Its seeds were planted when Rosenberg was a student of Carl Rogers in the 1950s. Rosenberg later undertook an independent study of comparative religions, where he came across ideas that further contributed to the evolution of the model. Much of the model has developed, however, through Rosenberg's continuous interaction with social, educational, and religious communities. Rosenberg honed the model by using it in various environments including: conflict resolution in war-torn regions of the globe, educational settings, business settings, prisons, and in weekend workshops and nine-day training retreats attended by the general public. Each of these venues has contributed experiences that have shaped the model.

The Influence of Carl Rogers

After receiving a doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology, in 1961, Rosenberg worked as a child psychologist, predominantly diagnosing children with learning disabilities and behavioral problems. While conducting assessment interviews with these children, Rosenberg (1966) began to notice a trend; that the children were generally not being listened to by teachers or parents. Rosenberg's recognition of this lack of empathy for the children may have stemmed from Rosenberg's training with Rogers who trained psychologists in the value of empathy. This early educational and professional experience appears also to have contributed significantly to Rosenberg's lifelong choice to work with educators, principals, administrators, and students regarding attitudes and methodologies for creating humane and mutually respectful learning environments.

NVC as a Community-Based Practice

In its earliest stages, the focus of the NVC model shifted from a clinically-based to a community-based application (Little, 2008). Little claims that this shift was strongly influenced by the insistence from popular psychologists who advised that individual mental health is dependent on the social structure of a community (Fromm, 1955), the assertion that it is not logistically possible for therapists alone to meet the psychological needs of all community members (Albee, 1967), and a trend at the time on giving psychology away to the community, thereby making knowledge about human behavior as widely and readily available as possible (Miller, 1969). As part of his transition from clinical psychology to

community-oriented psychology, Rosenberg spent several years facilitating racial integration in schools and community organizations across the Southern United States during the 1960s.

Gandhi's Influence on NVC

Rosenberg's goal was to develop a practical process for interaction, with oneself and others, rooted in Mahatma Gandhi's theory and philosophy of "ahimsa" (Little, 2008; Rosenberg, 2005). Ahimsa is translated as the overflowing love that arises when all ill-will, anger, and hate have subsided from the heart (Fischer, 1962; Little, 2008). Rosenberg's distillation of Gandhi's philosophy provides a practical process for developing "ahimsa" in thought, and in communication, by isolating the critical point where a choice is made about how a person will proceed in relating to another person (Smith, personal communication with Little, March 19, 2006). An individual can choose to either criticize or evaluate another individual's thoughts, words, and actions, or attempt to comprehend and empathize with that individual's feelings and needs.

Power Dynamics

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Rosenberg published two books addressing the teacher-student relationship: *Diagnostic Teaching* (1968) and *Mutual Education* (1972). These two books began exploring Rosenberg's current approach to facilitating learning (as well as the processes of enlivening interpersonal relationships, and effective conflict resolution through honesty, empathy, and mutual respect) (Little, 2008). A central goal for the initial NVC model was the restructuring of teacher-pupil roles in the classroom to facilitate greater student responsibility for learning processes and greater participation in decision-making related to learning (Little). Over the years, Rosenberg has applied these goals of greater personal responsibility and greater participation in decision-making processes to all institutionalized hierarchical relationships (e.g., employer-employee, priest-parishioner, police-citizen), and to traditionally hierarchical relationships (e.g., male-female, adult-youth, parent-child (Little).

Iterations of the Model

The present form of the model, published in 1999, includes four components:

a) observations, b) the identification and expression of feelings, c) connecting the feelings to the needs that underlay the feelings, and d) the expression of clear, positive and doable requests. Observations, the expression of feelings, and action-oriented wants (later changed to positive, doable requests) were part of the model from its earliest configuration (Little, 2008). The connection of needs to feelings became part of the model in the 1990s. This addition of the identification and expression of needs to the model may have been influenced by Glasser (1984, 1986, 1990, and 1993) who claimed that individuals' main motivation for action stems from a fundamental desire to meet personal and psychological needs.

Gordon and Rosenberg

The roots of Gordon's models for relationships (Parent Effectiveness Training, Teacher Effectiveness Training, Leader Effectiveness Training, and Youth Effectiveness Training) were also developed during Gordon's years as a doctoral student under Rogers at the University of Chicago (Gordon, 2009). There are several parallels between Gordon's and Rosenberg's models of communication, but the models are also clearly distinct from one another (Little, 2008). One difference is that Rosenberg emphasizes an explicit link between feelings and needs; Gordon suggests this link, but does not explicate it (Little). Nonviolent Communication also includes the concept of self-empathy, or extending empathy towards oneself, and can thus be applied to solve internal conflicts, or as a mindfulness practice (Little). Rosenberg's model also encourages the articulation of clear requests for assistance in getting needs met (Little).

There is a substantive difference between what Gordon terms empathy and what Rosenberg terms empathy. Whereas Gordon's process of "active listening" proposes feeding back to another individual to let them know that you are listening (an action that he terms empathy), Rosenberg focuses more on comprehending and empathizing with the needs behind the person's words or actions. Gordon defines active listening relative to passive listening. By feeding back to another person what that person said, the person giving the feedback will more likely demonstrate an understanding of the other person's circumstances than if no feedback occurs (Gordon 1974). Gordon considers this process of feeding back to be the last step that completes an effective communication process" (p. 67). Rosenberg (2003a) views empathy more as an ongoing process; a process which requires listening with

both heart and mind. The first aspect of empathy is to be fully present to what the other person is experiencing, attempting to comprehend the meaning behind the experience for that person. This notion of empathy is closer to Rogers' (1959) description of empathy: being completely at home in the other person's universe, moment to moment, sensitive to their inner world as if it was your own, but knowing all the while that it is not your own.

This degree of presence is only one part of what Rosenberg calls empathy. Identifying the feelings and the underlying needs is another vital part of the process because it is the feeling and the underlying need that would be empathized with. Empathy is important for both the celebration of met needs (e.g., joy or excitement), and for the emotions that arise when needs are not met (e.g., sad or frustrated). The ability to hear another person's genuine need is a moving experience. Therefore this process of hearing and empathizing with one another's needs can lead to a connection, or sense of bonding. It is not possible to interact with another person in this way, and not be changed as well (Dewey, 1897).

Both Gordon and Rosenberg developed their models with the intention of facilitating a socio-linguistic transformation of *domination systems* (based on rewards and punishment) into *partnership systems* (based on human dignity, mutual accountability, and mutual respect) (Little, 2008). Rosenberg has a long-standing opposition to bureaucracy stemming from a belief that it is difficult to refrain from repressing the autonomy of organizational members in a bureaucratic system (Brogli, personal conversation, July 20, 2006). This opposition may be one reason for the popularity of Gordon's model, while Rosenberg's model is not as well-known. Rosenberg preferred to work alone, or with a handful of trainers, for many years. In the late 1980s, however, several NVC trainers convinced Rosenberg of the need to create an organization that could more effectively disseminate the NVC model and philosophy (Brogli). The organization operates under the name *The Center for Nonviolent Communication*. Additionally, in the late 1990s, individuals who were supportive of the model encouraged Rosenberg to write a book describing the model, and its underlying philosophy. This book was published in 1999 under the title *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Compassion* and was republished in 2005 under the title *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*. Rosenberg eventually wrote two more books, *Life-Enriching Education* (2003a), and *Speak Peace in a World of Conflict: What You Say Next*

Can Change the World (2005). Several transcripts from keynote speeches and workshops have also been published in booklet form.

THE UNDERLYING PREMISE OF NVC

The NVC model is a practical application of human needs theory. Human needs theory has been evolving since the mid-20th century. Maslow (1954) was the first person to popularize the idea that our essential needs go beyond food, water, and shelter. Maslow added a sense of security, a sense of belonging, and a sense of self-esteem to the list of physiological needs that most psychologists considered imperative to survival. Maslow's theory has come to be known as the *Hierarchy of Needs* because, in Maslow's view, certain needs must be attained (e.g., physical needs of food, water, and shelter) before an individual can even recognize other needs (security, a sense of belonging, or the need for respect). Maslow also identified a second list of needs (the higher-order needs of psychologically healthy individuals). This list of needs includes: a need for truth, beauty, unity, wholeness, aliveness, uniqueness, completion, order, simplicity, playfulness, and meaningfulness.

Alderfer (1969) reorganized Maslow's theory to apply to management of employees by creating three components: existence, relatedness, and growth, into which he placed Maslow's components. While Alderfer's components are also considered hierarchical (i.e., existence is prioritized over relatedness, relatedness over growth), Alderfer believed that individuals seek to attain these goals simultaneously. McClellan (1961) proposed that humans develop particular needs over time, as they grow and accrue experience. McClellan categorized needs in three categories: achievement, affiliation and power. Burton expanded the idea of need fulfillment to the conflict resolution movement in the 1960s. Burton added social identity, cultural identity, freedom (or having the capacity to exercise choice in all aspects of one's life physically, politically, and civilly), and distributive justice to the list of needs that are vital to an individual's well-being (Marker, 2003).

Thus, human needs theory posits that all humans have needs, needs being defined as those things that are persistent, ongoing, and necessary to our physical and psychological well-being. Rosenberg believes that all of the needs mentioned above are shared by all people. In contrast to Maslow, Aldefer, Burton and Rosenberg contend that humans attempt

to get all needs met simultaneously; that the need for respect and autonomy are as important as the need for food and water, and even the need to survive physically.

THE NVC PERSPECTIVE

Rosenberg (1999) refers to the process of Nonviolent Communication as a dance between honesty and empathy. Communicators move back and forth between the honest (authentic) expression of personal feelings and needs and the empathic reception of others' feelings and needs. It is a dialogic process aimed at creating greater understanding for one another, thus leading to more compassion for one another. Due to a cultural disposition that does not support the expression of feelings and needs, most Americans have not had much education in the identification and expression of feelings or needs. NVC trainers generally begin a training by familiarizing individuals with feelings and needs vocabularies before teaching the model.

Rosenberg (1999) posits that every choice that an individual makes in life is made to meet a need (see also Glasser, 1984). It is valuable to understand this about people because it allows individuals to empathize with one another, even when the actions or messages of others are offensive or frightening. Because humans have many similar needs, the sharing of needs with one another is more likely to create an understanding of our commonality as human beings. When this commonality is experienced, individuals are less likely to evaluate and judge one another and more likely to look for solutions that can meet everyone's needs (Rosenberg). The intention of NVC is to create the type of interaction that is conducive to hearing one another's needs. A willingness to hear one another's needs and to help one another meet those needs is vital to all social structures whether they are local, national, or international structures.

THE NVC CONSCIOUSNESS

NVC is a communication process that stems from a certain consciousness. **Figure 1** shows the type of thinking that would be part of that consciousness, compared to the type of thinking that would more likely be part of a hierarchical/domination consciousness.

| | |
|--|--|
| NVC Does Not Intend to Correct Goal is to analyze situations, find what is wrong and correct it | NVC Intends to Create a Connection Goal is to create mutual understanding enabling all needs to be met |
| NVC Does Not Use Life-Alienating Language Language that tends to alienate us in the moment to what is alive in ourselves, in others, and in the world | NVC Uses Life-Serving Language Language that tends to reconnect us in the moment to what is alive in ourselves, in others, and in the world |
| NVC is Not a Head Orientation Thinking, speaking, and listening from the head; making judgments | NVC is a Feelings and Needs Orientation Feeling and expressing feelings, identifying and expressing needs compassionately; sustaining connection |
| NVC is Not about Actions That Defy Choice and Require Compliance Reacting to external pressure | NVC is about Choice Self-initiated activity in line with personal feelings and needs |
| NVC is Not about Power Over Others Creating relationships where one person exerts power over another through fear, guilt or shame; solutions are imposed | NVC is about Power With Others Creating relationships in which every person's needs are considered |
| NVC is Not about Moral Judging Focusing on what is good/bad, right/wrong | NVC is about Considering what is Valuable for Each Communicator Focusing on feelings and needs (what each person feels and needs) |

Figure 1: The NVC Consciousness

THE NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION MODEL

The NVC model consists of two parts: 1) compassionate expression of feelings and needs, and 2) listening empathically to the feelings and needs of others. Each part of the model consists of four steps: 1) observation, 2) feelings, 3) needs, and 4) requests. Several premises underpin the model. The two parts and four steps of the model are shown below, followed by a discussion of the underlying premises of the model, and four basic

communication distinctions that Rosenberg considers to be important to effective and compassionate communication.

Part 1 of the Model: Compassionate Expression

1. Describe the behaviors that you are **observing**, or have **observed**. As if you were a video camera, state what it is that you are observing without adding any evaluation, criticism, or blame (e.g., “When I see you crossing out so much of what you have written...” rather than “When I see you being so messy...” or “When you are so disorganized...”).
2. Express how you **feel** about what you are observing (e.g., “I feel confused.” or “I am concerned.” rather than “I just think you are being careless.”).
3. Identify what it is you **need** (the form of a need is usually expressed as a particular need or a value (e.g., “I need to be able to read the paper with ease.” or “I value the notion of thinking carefully before expressing ideas on paper.”).
4. Make a clear, doable, positive **request** of the action you would like the other person to take in order to help you meet your need. (e.g., “Would you be willing to think about what you want to write, and then, after thinking about it, and considering some alternate ways of writing your thoughts, put it on paper?” rather than “Stop being so messy.”)

The same four steps are used for the second side of the model: listening empathically.

Part 2 of the Model: Listening Empathically

1. Describe the concrete actions you are **observing**, or have **observed** (e.g., “When I heard you say “The lesson is too hard...” rather than, “When you were complaining...”).
2. Ask the other person how they **feel** in relation to your observation (e.g., “I was wondering if you were feeling scared?”).
3. Ask them what **need** they would like to have met (e.g., “Do you need more information?”).
4. Ask them if there is a **request** they would like to make of you to help meet that need (e.g., “What do you imagine I could do to help you better understand this lesson?”).

The model is most effective when all four steps are used. If you tell someone how you are feeling (e.g., sad or angry) without connecting the feeling to your needs, the other person may interpret what you are saying as a criticism. Also, if you tell someone what you are needing without telling them exactly what it is you need from them, it can be confusing for the other person. Use of the full model helps prevent these problems.

The Expression of Feelings and Needs

NVC encourages honesty, but there are two kinds of honesty: a) the kind of honesty that expresses our judgments and evaluations of others, and b) the kind of honesty that vulnerably expresses feelings and needs (Rosenberg, 2003b). The consciousness of NVC implies that we are all in the process of becoming at all times (Cunningham, 2008). This process creates needs for meaning, understanding, connection, for safety, autonomy, integrity, belonging, to be seen, to be heard, and to contribute to the well-being of others. These needs are alive in us at all times, and stir us to action (Glasser, 1984; Gordon, 1974; Rosenberg, 1999). Our feelings are rooted in our needs and let us know whether those needs are being met (Rosenberg, 1999). The sharing of these feelings, along with a connection of these feelings to the needs that are creating the feelings, gives others a good idea of what is going on with us. Just hearing our feelings and needs may engender in others a desire to help us meet our needs.

Empathy for the Feelings and Needs of Others

The NVC model focuses all parties on what is happening in the moment; listening and empathizing, moment to moment, to one another's needs, and attempting to comprehend why the fulfillment of those needs is important to each individual. Sptizberg and Cupach (1984) would call this approach "other-oriented," or the tendency to be adaptive toward and interested in the other person. To this end, it is helpful to employ Buber's concept of the I-Thou relationship, where "each of the participants really has in mind the other or others in their present and particular being, and turns to them with the intention of establishing a living mutual relation between himself and them" (Buber, 1965. p. 19). This type of connection is more likely to happen when communicators are empathizing with one another, but empathy is not a very well understood concept. Sometimes it is easier to understand what empathy is by explaining what empathy is not (Connor & Killian 2005).

Empathy is not advice-giving: (e.g., "Well, just study harder.") A connection to the person's needs and feelings is not made when we give advice. We are telling them what we think should work for them, or what would work for us.

Empathy is not reassurance: (e.g., "Oh, I'm sure it's not that bad.") This statement, which aims to make a person feel better, actually implies that the person's feelings are not

valid. It is common to want to defend the depth of our feelings, or the reasons for the feelings, after someone reassures us because we do not believe the other person is really hearing what is going on for us.

Empathy is not sympathy: (e.g., “I am so sorry. I feel terrible hearing that.”) Even though it may seem as if we are connected to the other person, we are really connected to our own feelings when we sympathize. It is not as useful to another person to hear our feelings when what they actually need is empathy for their feelings.

Empathy is not story-telling: (e.g., “Well just last week I was out with my friends and....”). By telling a story about ourselves, the focus is not on the other person’s feelings or needs.

Self-Empathy

When it is not possible to receive empathy from others, it is helpful to empathize with ourselves. Self-empathy is an important part of the NVC model; as important as empathy for others. Self-empathy would employ the model in the same way it is used with other people, but the steps would be applied to ourselves: “When I ...,” “I feel” “because I need ...,” “and so now I would like ...”

Apologies and Mourning

Because we have so often been educated to criticize, evaluate and judge, we tend to also criticize, evaluate, and judge ourselves. Rosenberg (2003b) suggests that mourning a mistake (a form of self-empathy) rather than criticizing ourselves for making a mistake is more useful. Mourning, according to Rosenberg, is the only way to learn from our mistakes (Rosenberg). For example, rather than saying something to ourselves such as, “That was so stupid of me,” we would mourn our mistake without judgment (similar to observing others without judgment), saying to ourselves something like, “I regret that I raised my voice at my students. That kind of behavior does not meet my need to be respectful of others. Next time I will try to be more patient.” Judgments have a harsh feel to them. Mourning has a sweet quality about it; it gives us a chance to really connect with the values we did not apply, furthering our understanding of our needs (Rosenberg).

A related issue is the importance of seeing the difference between apologizing to others and mourning our actions (Rosenberg, 2003b). Apologies are generally based on a

life-alienating, moralistic judgment that what we did, or said, was wrong. Mourning is a life-serving judgment that what we did, or said, did not meet our need for a certain type of interaction with others. An apology usually contains the message: “I am sorry that I did not do what you wanted me to do.” Mourning usually contains the message: “I regret that I did not meet my need to apply my values.” Apologies relate to the feelings and needs of others; mourning relates to our own feelings and needs.

OTHER PERTINENT CONCEPTS UNDERLYING THE NVC MODEL

The model is a template that guides communicators to stay in, what Rosenberg (1999) calls, “life-serving” communication. Life-serving, alive communication refers to communication that keeps individuals in touch with their needs rather than unaware of their needs, keeps communicators expressing their needs and the feelings connected to those needs, keeps communicators listening to one another rather than ignoring or discounting one another, and encourages communicators to actively help one another meet the needs that will serve them in their life. In the sections below I will give a description of “life-alienating” communication, followed by a discussion of some other types of communication that can alienate communicators from one another: compromise, anger, and punitive communication.

Life-Alienating Communication

Life alienating communication consists of words or expressions that obscure responsibility. Rather than expressing our feelings, and how they are related to our needs, we often criticize or blame others for whatever problems are encountered (e.g., abandoned, cheated, and disrespected are all words that actually describe what we think another person is doing to us, rather than describing our own feelings). There are also ways of thinking that obscure that the responsibility of an action is ours. Obscuring the responsibility for our actions interferes with our ability to communicate authentically and compassionately about what is “alive” in us in each moment. Below is a list of communication behaviors that Rosenberg (1999) calls “Life-Alienating Communication” behaviors. These communication behaviors repress the expression of what is alive in ourselves, and impedes an alive connection between individuals.

TYPES OF LIFE-ALIENATING COMMUNICATION

1. **Criticism** implying wrongness or badness
2. **Denial of responsibility** - When denying responsibility, we use words such as “have to,” or “must,” or when we attribute the cause of our actions to:
 - a. the actions of others (“I hit my child because *he* ran into the street.”)
 - b. vague, impersonal forces (“I cleaned my room because *it* was necessary.”)
 - c. our psychological history or condition (“I drink because *I am an alcoholic*.”)
 - d. the dictates of authority (“I lied to the client because *the boss* made me.”)
 - e. group pressure (“I started smoking because *everyone else* was smoking.”)
 - f. institutional policies, rules, and regulations (“I gave grades to my students because *it was the school district’s policy*.”)
 - g. uncontrollable impulses (“I was overcome by my *urge* to eat the candy.”);
3. **Demands** - Demands obscure the reality that everyone has a choice;
4. **Language** associated with the concept that certain actions merit reward and certain actions merit punishment (e. g., “She deserves a raise for handling that issue,” or “He deserves to be punished for what he did.”)

Compromise

Compromise has been heralded as the solution to unsolvable problems, but when we compromise, we are not getting our need met; we are giving up on part of our need. Therefore compromise can lead to: a) resentment, b) lack of motivation to express our needs in the future, and c) a reduction in motivation to spend time and energy looking for alternative strategies that can meet everyone’s needs. Rosenberg (1999) suggests that we never compromise; never give in or give up when it comes to getting needs met. Rosenberg is not alone in his point of view on compromise. Maslow claimed that some needs are so stubborn that “nothing will do for them but their proper and intrinsic gratifications” (Maslow, 1970, p. 78). Burton (1998) believes that no bargaining or compromise is possible in relation to deep-rooted human needs. Follett (1924), an early advocate of cooperative action between employers and employees in the workplace, declared that compromise is temporary and futile; that it usually just postpones the issue. Rosenberg suggests that communicators stay in dialogue until there is a genuine shift of need. An individual may choose to relinquish

portions of, or all of, a previously held position in order to contribute to a satisfaction of needs without giving up or giving in, but shifting because it would meet the individual's own need to do so (Little, 2008). Furthermore, a commitment to dialogue rather than compromise often leads to innovation (Follett), and can also lead to a solution that is more creative and mutually satisfactory for all parties than the initial solution devised by only one party (Fisher & Ury, 1991).

Fully Expressing Anger

NVC views anger as a feeling mixed with blame, judgment, or evaluation. Rosenberg (1999) suggests that anger be interpreted as a warning that judgmental thinking is going on, and that a person may be heading down an unpleasant and unproductive path. Anger is an umbrella feeling with many other feelings underneath (hurt, jealousy, sadness, or frustration) (Rosenberg). Four steps (similar to the steps of the basic model) transform anger into an understanding of feelings and needs.

1. Do not respond immediately when you realize you are feeling angry. Instead...
2. Identify your feelings.
3. Decide what need is not being met that is creating the feelings.
4. Make a clear, positive, doable request of someone to help you meet the need.

Anger can be difficult to understand. Guerrero (1994) proposes that individuals use four modes of anger expression in relationships. Each mode of expression is characterized by different behaviors. In Figure 2: *Modes of Anger Expression*, Guerrero describes the characteristics of the four modes of anger expression. NVC falls into the integrative-assertion mode. By keeping the focus on expression of feelings, and how those feelings are caused by certain needs, NVC prevents the use of the other three modes. The use of the NVC model would help an individual empathize with others when they are employing the other modes.

Force: Punitive versus Protective Use of Force

If communication is not possible in any particular moment (e.g., one person is hitting another person, or two individuals are so angry with one another that they will not communicate and are threatening to harm one another), force may be needed to prevent violence. Rosenberg (1999) recommends the protective use of force over the punitive use of force.

There is an important distinction between the protective and the punitive use of force. This distinction between protective and punitive uses of force parallels the contrast between restorative and retributive justice (Little, 2008).

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Direct/Threatening <i>Distributive-Aggressive</i></p> <p>Yelling, screaming Criticizing partner Trying to prove you are right Slamming doors, throwing objects Trying to “get even” Threatening partner Hostility</p> | <p>Direct/Non-Threatening <i>Integrative-Assertion</i></p> <p>Listening to partner Discussing problems Trying to be fair Clearly sharing feelings Trying to “patch it up” Soliciting disclosure Calm discussion</p> |
| <p>Indirect/Threatening <i>Passive-Aggressive</i></p> <p>Silent treatment Ignoring partner Cold/dirty looks Leave scene Act coldly, brooding</p> | <p>Indirect/Non-Threatening <i>Nonassertive-Denial</i></p> <p>Hiding feelings Denying angry feelings Acting calm “Poo-pooing” feelings Saying nothing</p> |

Figure 2: Modes of Anger Expression Adapted from Guerrero, L. K. (1994). “I’m so mad I could scream”: The effects of anger expression on relational satisfaction and communication competence. *Southern Communication Journal*, 59, 125-141.

THE PROTECTIVE USE OF FORCE

The intention behind the protective use of force is to prevent injury. The protective use of force is used without judgment of others, or evaluation of the behavior of others. Only the actions necessary to stop the person from hurting themselves or others are taken. For example, the protective use of force never includes punitive actions such as hitting, beating, torture, or punitive statements such as threats, labels or humiliation (Little, 2008).

The protective use of force always involves a willingness on the part of those who use the force to begin an empathic dialogue with the other person (or group) as soon as it is possible (Rosenberg, 1999). The underlying assumption is that people harm themselves and others out of pain and/or ignorance and these individuals need help, not punishment (Little).

The protective process for redirecting violent behavior is: empathy, honesty, and then education in alternative approaches for meeting the need that motivated the behavior (Little). In the classroom, protective use of force might be used to hold a student's hands in order to stop the student from hurting another student. No further punitive action (such as spanking or shaking) and no further punitive or evaluative language (e.g., "You are being mean.") would be used. The teacher would enter into an empathic and compassionate discussion of needs with the student as soon as possible, and/or encourage the students to do so with one another

THE PUNITIVE USE OF FORCE

Generally, the intention behind the punitive use of force is to cause individuals to suffer for their "wrong" actions. The goal of punishment is to make the individual repent and change (Little, 2008). In reality, punitive force tends to evoke resentment and hostility. Ironically, punishment also tends to generate resistance to the "corrective" behavior, and to reinforce the very behavior being punished (Zehr, 2000). Rosenberg (2000) claims that punishment damages good will and self-esteem, and shifts attention from the intrinsic value of why an action was chosen to attention solely on external consequences.

Most of us have been educated to evaluate others' behavior as good/bad, right/wrong, appropriate/inappropriate. When we view people in this way, we tend to use language that dehumanizes them (e.g., labels and stereotyping), and this disconnects us from their humanity; from our common humanity (Rosenberg, 1999). Connected to this notion of good/bad, right/wrong, and appropriate/inappropriate is the concept of deservedness. Those who do things that are bad, wrong, and inappropriate deserve to be punished. Good people deserve to be rewarded (Rosenberg, 2005). Dehumanizing language, combined with the concept of deservedness, can interfere significantly with our desire and ability to treat others compassionately.

Contrary to the common belief that it is not possible to have order without punishment in the family, the school, or the society, Rosenberg (2003a) posits that a society does not need to use punishment to manage itself. Furthermore, if social institutions punish children for noncompliance, and create judicial systems that punish adults, society will never attain much peace; a punitive orientation begets punitive behaviors. This does not mean that

societal members never react to malice, coercion or injustice. In order to break the cycle of violence, however, a society needs to make choices that are not punitive.

Along these same lines, it is also important to our overall social welfare to consider how we make requests of others. Do we make actual requests or do we make demands? Rosenberg (1999) claims that he always asks himself two questions before making a request of another individual, or individuals: 1) “What is it I want this other person to do”, and 2) “What do I want the other person’s reasons to be for doing what I am asking them to do?” If we ask ourselves the first question only, shaming or coercing the other person could seem like possible options for getting needs met, but if we *always* ask ourselves *both* questions, it can be seen that shaming and coercing others are not effective in the long run. It does not benefit us in the long run if people fulfill our requests (or demands) because they feel afraid of us or feel shamed or coerced by us. Not all relationships are long-term relationships. Miller, Boster, Roloff and Seibold (1977) found that compliance-gaining messages and certain strategies are more likely to be used across long-term, highly interpersonal situations, while other strategies are more likely to be used across short-term, noninterpersonal situations. An overall attempt to treat everyone as if the relationship is a long-term relationship, however, would more likely contribute to more compassion and cooperation in all interactions.

THE FOUR BASIC COMMUNICATION DISTINCTIONS

A common confusion over some fundamental concepts about communication can lead to a great deal of miscommunication among individuals and groups. In his training, Rosenberg focuses on four of these fundamental confusions, which he calls the *four basic distinctions*, as very important to the communication process.

Feelings versus Thoughts

The NVC model focuses communicators on the identification and expression of feelings, rather than on the expression of thoughts. Rosenberg suggests this approach to communication because a) when we express feelings, rather than thoughts, others are more likely to relate to us, and 2) thoughts about another person often take the form of judgment, criticism, evaluation, or analysis of that person, leading to disconnection when expressed. For example, a feeling would be “I am sad,” or “I am scared.” A thought is often something like

“I think you should be more sensitive” (a criticism) or “I think you are acting crazy” (an evaluation). Hearing another individual’s feelings will more likely engender feelings such as compassion and concern in us because we also know how it feels to be sad, or scared or disappointed. Hearing another’s thoughts (criticism, evaluation, judgment, analysis), we are more likely to react from our own thinking and return a criticism, evaluation, judgment, or analysis of the other person, rather than connect with the sadness or fear of the other person (e.g., “You’re so selfish. You never do what I want to do.” “Well, you’re just too needy” versus “I feel disappointed that you’re going out. I was hoping we could spend some time together this evening.” “Well, I know how it feels to want some company. I could come back early and we could spend some time together.”).

The debate over the sequence of feelings and thoughts (which comes first and how effectively can thoughts override emotions) has been a long one. Goleman (1995) describes the process as simultaneous. Goleman claims that whenever we are stimulated, the information from the stimulator goes to both the amygdala (which processes emotional stimulation) and to the hippocampus (which makes judgments about the stimulus). The hippocampus processes the stimulus more slowly than the amygdala, thus if the stimulus is particularly strong, an emotional response may come about before a thoughtful response. Goleman claims, however, that there is a second kind of emotional reaction which simmers first in our thoughts before it becomes an emotion. In this case, there is an extended appraisal of a situation, and thought (cognition) plays a key role in determining which emotions will be aroused. For example, if we consider the thought, “This taxi driver is cheating me” this thought will probably eventually lead to fear, frustration, or some other unpleasant emotion just as thinking the thought, “This baby is adorable” will probably lead to a pleasant emotion before too long (Goleman).

Therefore, it is not really an issue about which comes first, emotion or cognition. In most cases the hippocampus will override extreme emotional reactions. It is more of an issue of deciding what we want to focus on. Rosenberg suggests that we focus on our emotions because the emotions have more genuine information; identifying feelings can lead to identifying the need that is underneath the feeling. Thoughts, which are so often about the other person (“What’s wrong with them,” “Why are they doing what they are doing,” “Why are they doing this to me”) do not provide us with accurate information about the other

person, and do not provide us with very much information about ourselves. Furthermore, thoughts tend to rigidify the interactions (often being based on morals and long-held opinion). NVC guides communicators away from thoughts about what is wrong with the other person, or what is wrong with us, toward a consideration of what is “alive” in the other person, and what is “alive” in us in any moment. Connecting to what is alive in ourselves and others in each new moment keeps the communication authentic and dynamic, and provides each individual with a great deal of information about the other individual.

Evaluations versus Observations

Because the distinction is not generally made when individuals are being taught how to relate to others, we often do not understand the difference between the types of evaluations and judgments that are necessary in order to survive, and judgments that are moralistic (Rosenberg, 2003b). The distinction is this: evaluations, such as realizing that our soup is too hot to eat, or judgments, such as whether or not to walk across a busy street when the traffic light is not in our favor help us stay physically safe. Evaluations of other’s behavior as good or bad or right or wrong are moralistic judgments. We do not need to evaluate or moralize in order to communicate effectively (Rosenberg, 1999). In fact, more often than not, evaluating and making moralistic judgments can lead to hurt feelings, resentment, and violence rather than compassion. If we state (to ourselves and others) what it is we are observing (e.g., “When I just heard you say that I was sloppy”) we are more likely to open a channel of communication than if we evaluate or label others (e.g., “You are really insensitive”).

Demands versus Requests

Demanding that another person behave the way we want that person to behave shows no respect for the needs of that person. Rosenberg (1999) suggests we have made a demand (rather than a request) if we react negatively to hearing the other person say, “No” to what we have asked for. Do we get angry, or do we respect the other person’s autonomy? Demands imply that the other person’s compliance is not a choice, but an expectation; no matter what the other person’s needs are. Requests express our needs while allowing others to take care of themselves as well. Because of the value that all individuals place on autonomy (Glasser, 1984; Rosenberg, 1999), most individuals respond negatively to demands. A person may refuse to comply with a demand, or may agree to the demand, and then not follow through.

Just because a person says “No” to our request, we would not give up on getting our need met. NVC encourages communicators to stay in the dialogue and attempt to hear what is preventing the other person from meeting our need. A dialogue about what each person needs, and why it would be valuable for each person to get that need fulfilled, may lead to a mutually satisfactory solution that neither party had considered initially.

Needs versus Strategies

Needs are not the same as strategies. This is an important distinction. Needs are ongoing and vital to our well-being (air, water, food, respect, love). Strategies are the ways in which we get our needs met. This distinction is an important one because when we argue, we are generally not arguing about needs. Needs are universal; people have to get needs met. We are usually arguing over the strategy with which to get the needs met (Rosenberg, 2003b). Understanding this distinction enhances efforts to get needs met. We do not have to convince one another to give up on a need. Instead, we can look for mutually satisfactory strategies to get everyone’s needs met.

Rather than acknowledging the universality of needs, we tend to try to convince others that our needs are more important, or more moral, than their needs. This approach usually results in the other person (or group) vehemently defending the importance or value of getting their need met. The other person (or group) may also reciprocate our strategy and try to convince us that our needs are not as important, or as moral, as their needs. This is an exhausting and generally ineffective strategy, especially if the other party senses that we are attempting to get what is best for ourselves at their expense.

NVC IN SCHOOLS

There are only a few partnership-oriented schools in existence at this time. Many teachers around the world are, however, using partnership approaches (including NVC) with their own students in their own classrooms. In this section, I will describe some schools where the partnership model is the operational model, and the NVC model or the premises of the model are employed as a support system for creating the partnership model.

The TEMBA Schools

Since 1997, Catherine Cadden has opened three partnership-oriented schools in Northern California. Cadden trained teachers, students, and parents in the NVC communication model as part of her overall partnership educational strategy. These schools each served eight to 18 students at a time. The last of these schools still operates.

The age of students in these schools has ranged between five and 14. The students are all educated together, not separated by age, because Cadden did not want the students to believe that they had to “be a certain something at a certain age” (Cadden, personal conversation, June 8, 2009). The usual academic subjects are taught, but students also have a choice about what else they want to learn; not just a choice between what they prefer in a curriculum created by the teacher or administrators, but the possibility of suggesting subject matter that would be valuable to them. If there is a shift in the direction of the learning at any time, it is based on the needs of the students as well as the needs of the teacher.

Cadden wanted to create an environment where there was no punishment/reward system, and no coercion for teachers or students. Therefore, one of the partnership relational strategies that TEMBA teachers use in the classroom is resolution circles. Rather than punish students, or separate students from other students when there are disagreements, a facilitator is chosen by whoever is in conflict. The facilitator’s role is to support empathic connection between the disagreeing parties. No solutions are offered, just empathic support. Anyone can be a facilitator, no matter how old they are. For example, at one point Cadden was feeling very frustrated with a 12 year old student because the student’s math work had not come in for two weeks. Eve, a 10 year old student, told Cadden, “Say it how you feel, however you can. I’ll translate it to Sonja” (age 12) (meaning she would translate Cadden’s words into NVC, or feelings and needs). What came out of this interaction was that Cadden realized that she had a lot of fear about Sonja’s well-being. Sonja, it turned out, was having health problems that she did not understand. Through this empathic interaction Sonja received some empathy, and the teacher gained some understanding of Sonja’s circumstances. After this interaction Sonja resumed turning in her work.

There has never been any testing at the TEMBA schools, therefore statistical measurements of achievement are not available. Cadden set up all three schools as non-profit organizations so students do not participate in state or federal standardized testing. Students

who have gone on to public high schools, however, have consistently maintained GPAs of around 3.5. Students demonstrate what they have learned by creating productions to show the community the knowledge they have gained from their studies.

The development of relational and emotional intelligence is an important aspect of a partnership-style education. Cadden believes that the fact that all of the ex-TEMBA students who are now in college were heavily involved in the 2008 presidential campaign is a sign that these students have learned the value of contribution to society. Three students who went on to separate high schools after leaving TEMBA were chosen to help police teams resolve community issues. Cadden believes that the fact that these students were chosen in three separate interviews indicates a level of learning regarding conflict resolution and community orientation. Another measure of emotional development is demonstrated by the following anecdote. A TEMBA student who moved to a public school in the eighth grade told his teacher at the public school that he had not taken tests for four years (while he was attending the TEMBA school). He asked his new teacher if he could take each test three times and be graded on the average score until he could relearn how to take tests. His 8th grade teacher was surprised at the request, but agreed. Half-way through the first quarter, the student decided he was ready to take the tests just once. At the TEMBA school this student had learned that his needs mattered, that he could voice those needs and expect consideration of them, and that he was capable of evaluating his own learning and skill.

The Nova Project

At Nova High School in Washington, there are 300 students. Nova started as a school for students who could not succeed at other schools, but has morphed into an alternative educational-style school. Nova is a non-graded, project-based learning school. Students are regularly involved in community projects, and upon returning to campus, the students have lengthy discussions about the experience, rather than turning in a report on the experience. There is also an asperger division at the school, which enables students to learn how to communicate and work with disabled individuals.

The teachers do not teach NVC per se, but most of the staff at Nova know about NVC, and use the underlying premises. Teachers respect student autonomy. It is the norm to inquire about how students are feeling, rather than just focusing on academic ideas. There is

a lot of group discussion and project-based group learning. All of these are partnership relational and educational strategies.

Gathering statistics has always been an issue for the school because grades are not given for students' work. The population is diverse, however, in terms of academic ability. I was informed that there are no conflicts at the school. While this is a surprising statement, there is a good deal of existing anecdotal evidence that NVC training does considerably reduce conflict in schools.

The Skaarpnaks School

The directors at the Skaarpnaks school in Sweden also do not teach NVC outright to students. Instead teachers choose to live the consciousness of NVC; to listen and care for both the teachers' and the students' needs at the school (Hart & Gothlin, 2000). The school was started in 1998 with 24 students (age six to nine) and four teachers. Parents who had attended an NVC workshop requested that the director start a school based on democratic principles and respectful, compassionate interactions. Because the students were accustomed to an autocratic educational approach, the staff wanted the students to learn to trust that the teachers respected the students' autonomy. This led to an interesting development. Students, in the first year at the school, seemed to fall into three groupings:

1. The youngest students, who were all children of parents who used NVC at home, were the most comfortable with autonomy.
2. The next group of students came from authoritarian schools and homes. These students often appeared confused by teacher requests (e.g., teachers would ask the students "Are you willing to..." rather than telling the students what to do). Homework was never assigned, but students were offered homework as an option. Some students wanted the teachers to make them do homework, but the teachers did not make homework mandatory, wanting the students to learn to make choices, and believing that the more choices the students were given, the more the students would learn.
3. The most challenging students would always ask the teachers, "Do I have to?" whether the teachers requested that the students solve a math problem or go play outside. The teachers would reply that there were no expectations that students do anything they did not want to do, but could do these things if they wanted to.

The teachers found themselves empathizing with the students' fear that the teachers really did want the students to do things the students did not want to do. This confusion over

“choice” continued throughout the first year, and into the beginning of the second year. In the second year, the students would now respond with “No,” or “I won’t do it,” or “You can’t make me” when the teachers made a request. The teachers viewed this reaction as a graduation; the previous year the students saw themselves as having no power, but this year students were testing their power by saying, “No.” Teachers used the NVC dialogic model to work with students regarding this relational shift. NVC helped the teachers and students stay connected to their own needs, and to the needs of the other party. Inevitably, solutions would be found that could meet everyone’s needs. It took two years for this third group of students to test out the teachers’ resolve not to force them to do anything they did not want to do. By the third year the new students went through all of the phases in only one year.

Oak Park Elementary School

At Oak Park Elementary School in Vermont, the gradual introduction of NVC into the school led to a broader adoption of NVC in the district. Wendy Webber, a local resident who had been teaching NVC to adults for nine years, met Deb Pierotti, a third/fourth grade teacher at Oak Park, and the two women started talking about NVC. Pierotti (personal communication, June 27, 2009) had previously taken a communication course that provided her with communication strategies similar to NVC, so she was open to having Webber come to her classroom and teach NVC to her students. This led to NVC training in grades K-6, and later to the introduction of Hart and Kindle Hodson’s (2008) *No-Fault Classroom* curriculum in grades three through six.

An incident in a fifth/sixth grade class resulted in the fifth/sixth grade teacher and a fifth/sixth grade student using the No-Fault Zone™ game in the principal’s office to help calm a student who had become frighteningly irate. The principal was so impressed with the results of using the game that he decided to integrate the game into the school’s anti-bullying program. The district supervisor is also now aware of NVC and wants to broaden its use in the district.

Public School (K-11)

Another school (one that I have agreed not to mention by name or location) has had a great deal of success over the last three years with a partnership approach to teaching. The school has 814 students in grades K-11. Early in the introduction of the partnership approach,

the administrators offered training to the teachers, so that teachers could help students identify their feelings and needs when in conflict with another student or teacher. Rather than send students to the principal's office for discipline, conflicts would be worked out in the classroom. This systemic change encouraged teachers to learn and practice NVC with their students. Not all teachers at the school have bought fully into the partnership approach. There remains, even after three years, some resistance, but many of the teachers at the school are using the partnership model. In 2009 several teachers at the school incorporated the *No Fault* Curriculum into their classroom curriculum.

NVC is not taught outright at this school. Victoria Kindle Hodson, the educational consultant who introduced a partnership educational approach to the school through her Learning Success program, is an advocate of NVC, but believes that it is most effective to introduce the consciousness of NVC before teaching the model itself. She believes that bringing the formal model into the school before providing teachers and students with experiences of the consciousness behind the model can create barriers to the model. An encounter with the formal model, at times, creates a struggle in teachers over long-term communication and relational strategies and behaviors that have not always been empathic, and with long-held values that are contradictory to NVC. Kindle Hodson (personal communication, July, 10, 2009) commented on her approach:

I like going into the school with information and strategies; like how to identify a student's learning style profile (a form of empathy), ideas such as "do your personal best" (a form of autonomy), decentralizing classroom and group agreements (a form of collaboration). They're all NVC [premises]. After [teachers] get these things, eventually you can give them the dialog [the 4-step model]. The principal of the school said, "I keep surprising myself at what I'm willing to embrace now. A year ago I wouldn't be willing to embrace any of this." Later, she got to a point where she said, "I couldn't go back even if I had to."

Jackie Jamison is a second grade teacher at this school who has been using the *No Fault Zone* curriculum in her classroom. One of the first questions that teachers ask when they hear about a partnership approach to teaching is "Won't this take a lot of extra time?" Jamison admits that she did have to take extra time for the first few months to use the *No Fault* activities and game; to make it part of her curriculum. Jamison believes it was well worth the extra time, however, because by late fall, several students began solving their own conflicts, using a greater number of feelings and needs words, and making more requests

than demands of one another; all leading to fewer behavioral problems in the class and saving Jamison time in the classroom.

SUMMARY

The Nonviolent Communication model has been evolving since the 1960s. Rooted in Rogers' concept of empathy, Rosenberg gradually developed a two-part, four-step communication model that can be used by all individuals in all communication situations. The model helps individuals (and groups) identify and express feelings and needs, and guides individuals (and groups) to empathize with the feelings and needs of others. Rosenberg claims that this type of compassionate/empathic communication creates a connection to one another that will likely motivate individuals to help one another meet needs. The development of the model, and an explanation of the underlying premises of the NVC model, as well as, a description of how the premises and model are employed at schools around the world has been laid out in this chapter.

CHAPTER 4

EMPATHY AS A TOOL TO CONNECT: 1ST RESEARCH STUDY

The first research study associated with this thesis began when I agreed to conduct an NVC-related workshop for a departmental colloquium at my university. I chose the topic of empathy, as a way to connect with students, because I was taking an Instructional Communication class at the time and I often overheard the Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) discussing their struggles with students. GTAs do not receive much teacher training. Graduate students work as GTAs in order to gain teaching experience. Peer relationships provide most of the training for GTAs (Meyers, 1998), therefore, first semester GTAs rely heavily on 2nd year GTAs for sense-making, direction, and comfort (Meyers). Empathy can also enhance this peer socialization process.

In this chapter, I will describe the methodology used in this study, the workshops that I conducted on the concept of empathy, the establishment of the measures, and the data collection and analysis. I will then present the findings from the research and conclude with a discussion of the findings.

METHODOLOGY

This was a triangulated research study that included both a quasi-experimental aspect (self-report surveys) and a qualitative aspect (personal interviews). A quasi-experimental approach is used when random assignment is not feasible or desirable. There are generally two ways to create a quasi-experimental study: 1) create a comparison base through a control group, or 2) create a pre and post treatment of the variables (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1976). In this study, a pre/post application was employed to ascertain whether a workshop on the concept of empathy would shift the GTAs' understanding of, attitudes toward, and use of empathy as a communication tool for connecting with students. After one and a half semesters of teaching, following the workshop, a third survey and several personal interviews were conducted.

PARTICIPANTS AND SITE

This study was conducted with the help of 40 GTAs in the School of Communication at a Southwestern university. A workshop was presented as part of a departmental colloquium in a classroom in the Communication building. This was a voluntary colloquium. Eight students and two professors attended. One of the two professors was the advisor for the GTAs. He was positively impressed with the material and asked that the workshop be presented twice more; once at the weekly GTA meeting, and again at a training session for new GTAs joining the department for the new school year. The second and third workshops were also conducted in classrooms in the Communication building. A majority of the GTAs in the department attended one of the three workshops.

OVERVIEW OF THE TRAINING

Each workshop lasted for approximately 45 minutes and included a brief discussion of empathy as a way to create a connection with others, a demonstration of what empathy is, and what empathy is not (Appendix A), and two brief exercises meant to give GTAs some experience with recognizing and using empathy (Appendix B and C). A 10-minute question and answer session followed the demonstration and exercises. The GTAs were also given a follow-up article on empathic listening (Appendix D).

ESTABLISHING THE MEASURES

The primary purpose in conducting quantitative research is to test for the existence of a causal relationship between two or more variables (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1976). Survey research asks questions that are pertinent to the researcher's interests (Nachmias & Nachmias). The questions in the self-report surveys used in this study pertained to an understanding of empathy, the use of empathy, or a behavior or a thought that was not empathic. While empathy measures exist, the measurement of empathy has been a "vexing challenge" (Kohn, 1990, p.120) for researchers over the past few decades because empathy has been defined in many ways, depending on the school of thought that defines it, or how it is measured. This research was related to teacher/student relationships. Because of this particular focus, and because NVC takes an uncommon view of several concepts that are normally considered empathic but in this workshop were identified as "not empathic," I felt it necessary to design a new survey for this project. I did not, however, reinvent the wheel. I

drew inspiration for the survey questions from surveys created by three other individuals who had conducted formal and informal research on the impact of NVC training (Griffith, personal communication, April 14, 2008; Little, 2008; and Steckel, 1994). Steckel (1994) designed a 20-question survey that was built upon three other instruments: the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1980), the Helpful Responses Questionnaire (Miller, Hendrick, & Orlafsky, 1991), and a short version of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale-Short Form (Strahan & Gerbasi, 1972). Little (2008) adapted Steckel's survey and I drew from both versions of this survey to create the survey I used in my study. I also drew from Griffith's (2008) survey regarding parental use of NVC after training.

The personal interview survey, which I also designed, consisted of nine open-ended questions that aimed to prompt the GTAs to share personal experiences about their use of empathy with students. These interviews would be considered focused, non-scheduled interviews (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1976). The questions were open-ended, but asked about specific topics related to the use of empathy (e.g., "Did you change any of your communication strategies with your students after attending the workshop on empathy?")

Both self-report surveys and personal interviews are subject to problems, in particular the problem of bias; participants answering the questions in a socially desirable way. While I can only assume some of the questions were answered with this bias, overall the GTAs appeared to want to inform me about both positive *and* negative experiences. Some GTAs gave me advice on how to conduct the workshops in the future in order to address negative issues that arose for them when attempting to use empathy with their students.

DATA COLLECTION

The self-report survey consisted of 20 questions, and asked for responses on a five-point likert-type scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." The GTAs filled out a survey right before the workshop (Appendix E), and then the same survey, with a slightly different time focus, was filled out by each of the participants after the workshop (Appendix F). Those surveys were stored without any analysis until a third survey was completed. After the GTAs had a semester and a half to apply the workshop material (or choose not to apply it), I attempted to conduct a follow-up self-report survey (also Appendix E). Approximately one-quarter of the previous participants had graduated, and several more

did not respond to my request for participation, therefore, I was only able to obtain surveys for about half of the original participants. I obtained 22 Time 3 self-report surveys. I also conducted 11 personal interviews (Appendix G). (See GTA Informed Consent Form in Appendix H).

The personal interviews were conducted either in a coffee shop on-campus or in the office of the GTA. These were casual discussions in which I asked open-ended questions such as “What impact did the workshop have on you,” and “Did you have any challenges using empathy with students?” I asked for a half hour of time, but most of the interviews ran almost an hour due to the GTAs’ interest in sharing their experiences. I typed the responses, as they were given to me.

DATA ANALYSIS

A Chronbach’s Alpha reliability test was conducted on the 20-question survey. Next, the responses from all three survey times were analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlated t-tests to assess changes in comprehension of, and use of, empathy. For exploratory purposes, a factor analysis was conducted on the Time 1 and Time 2 surveys.

The qualitative data (personal interview responses) was coded into six categories of NVC-oriented concepts, plus two additional categories (see the section entitled *Results of the Personal Interviews* below).

RESULTS OF THE PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

This study was a triangulated study. There were not enough participants in the study, however, to assess statistical significance. Furthermore, in a Chronbach’s Alpha test of reliability, the survey did not prove to be reliable (see section entitled *Results of the Surveys* at the end of this chapter). Therefore, the data collected through personal interviews is, I believe, the most useful data from this study and will be presented first.

Qualitative research focuses on data that is rich in description, understanding, and detail (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975). Qualitative methods provide an understanding of context and a detailed description of how practices actually work (Giangreco & Taylor, 2003). Because education research is not like laboratory research (i.e., teachers and students are social actors who exist in complex and multifaceted social environments) qualitative research methods are ideally suited to this type of research (Giangreco, & Taylor). While not necessarily

generalizeable to the overall population, qualitative data can be of value to individuals in similar circumstances. I believe that this was the case with this research. The responses from the GTAs include issues that are familiar to most teachers and demonstrate that empathy, as a tool for connecting with students, can bring about results that most teachers are seeking: more cooperation, more respect, and more participation from students, and an understanding of teachers' personal and educational needs. The qualitative data also demonstrates that a consideration of empathy by the GTAs, as a way to connect with students, led to results that students appreciate: more respect, cooperation, and compassion from teachers.

Authentic (honest) expression of feelings and needs, *and* empathic concern for those feelings and needs, are the two basic components of NVC. Rosenberg (1999) proposes that enhanced respect, compassion, cooperation, and connection will result from increased honesty and empathy. The personal interview responses were coded into these six NVC-related categories, plus two additional categories: 1) enhanced learning and motivation, and 2) challenges with using empathy.

In order to retain anonymity, the following GTA responses are identified with the first letter of each GTAs first name. If two GTAs had the same first initial, the last name initial was used to identify the second GTA (removed in this version). In an attempt to respond fully to the interview questions, the GTAs often stopped and started again, adding to their response. In these cases, these stops and starts are indicated by dashes (-) in the transcription.

Empathy and Honesty

According to Rosenberg (1999), evaluating or judging others before hearing their needs, rather than listening and attempting to comprehend what it is they need, disconnects individuals from one another. This disconnection often leaves individuals feeling helpless regarding the meeting of personal needs, and impedes the process of looking for solutions that will satisfy everyone's needs. A majority of the GTAs reported that the most helpful idea they took away from the empathy workshop was an awareness of the importance of listening to students. For example, GTAs found it helpful not to jump to conclusions, or make assumptions about what was going on with a student if the student did not show up for class, or asked for an extension of the deadline for an assignment. The GTAs did not talk much about the expression of feelings, and this is not unusual in our culture. Most people do not

have much experience with, and are often not comfortable with, expressing feelings. In the following pages, the GTAs discuss what they found to be helpful about the empathy workshop, and what changes the workshop made in their relationships with their students.

The biggest thing is not jumping to conclusions - and patience, because I find that often, if I'm in a position where a student asks for help, and I'm not really clear about what they're asking about, I make an assumption. That can turn into a nasty situation - my credibility, their view of me as a teacher, their progress in the class. If I take my time, and be a considerate listener, it works.

Yeah, when a student comes [*sic*] to me before, I'd be quick to say, "No, sorry, no late work accepted," but now I try and ask what happened. When they tell me I try - I think I'm more understanding because I understand things come up.

Even when they send e-mails...[with] written comm[unication] it's easy to read in your own voice. Like you think they're just making excuses when maybe they're just really meticulous and want to give you the details. So I think "What is this student needing to know? Are they expressing concern about their grade or the upcoming speech when they ask "What are you grading on here?" [I used to think] "Did you read the instructions?" I understand now that when they ask those kinds of questions that it's not because they didn't pay attention or look at the syllabus; they're just nervous, maybe, so I ask more follow up questions.

I tend to be a little bit sarcastic, and I think the training shifted me to think before I spoke and try to understand their situation more instead of just assuming it's another student trying to make an excuse.

The most important thing is to listen to the students and try to figure out what their needs are - they may not always know what their needs are, but I think it's important to understand what's behind their behavior - why they didn't get the assignment done or they're acting out in class - not to take things at face value but to listen to them, and try to get to an understanding what's behind their actions.

Two of the GTAs saw a significant turn-around in a student at a critical turning point in the semester for each of the students, which they attributed to the use of empathy. Below is a description of one of these situations.

I had a student who was really not doing well in the class; not showing up for class, and he was not doing that well on assignments. He was headed toward not passing. He came to me and started sharing about some troubles he'd been having during the semester. I just...repeated back to him what he was saying in an empathetic [*sic*] way. He told me he had been having some emotional problems

and was seeing a counselor, so I feedback, “So you’ve been seeing a counselor?” He started crying. ...He said “I’ve got all those absences”. ...[I told him] “Well, if you can get a note from the counselor, you can get excuses for those absences, and I could excuse you for the speech you missed.” He really changed. His attitude changed. He was showing up more. He seemed like he was doing much better. He had seemed real glum. And he did well on the rest of his speeches, and ended up doing fairly well in the class. I just repeated back what he was going through – and showed some empathy. It felt really good to help him, and it felt like the right thing to do.... It’s something that I’m definitely going to keep working on, and use it in my teaching style.

Some of the GTAs realized, as a result of the workshop, that they had not actually been empathizing with people, even though they thought they were. Below is one example of this realization.

Trying really hard to...listen to what their situation is instead of trying to relate my own experience to them. I always wanted to show them that I relate, that I know what they’re going through, but I realized I was talking a lot more [than listening to] and expressing empathy about what they’re going through.

A couple of the older GTAs who had worked for a few years before entering graduate school, found the idea of empathy helpful outside of school as well.

It’s come into play at my bar. I’ve seen a huge difference with my tact with patrons; taking my time with them. The other day someone had an altercation with his wife – punched a whole in the wall, and I just thought to myself “Man this guy’s gotta have something going on in his life.” So, I asked him. He started crying and telling me that his marriage was not going well, and they didn’t have the money for therapy.

My general thought is that I was too empathetic [*sic*] and seeming like a pushover. ...I got [from the workshop] that I could empathize with [the students]. ...The NVC model made me feel that it’s not bad that you’re empathetic [*sic*]. It’s okay to be that way. Our society values a get down to business, be logical, be practical, what needs to be done, rather than how it is done, and this model was saying that it’s okay to be empathetic [*sic*]. And the other messages [are] that you need to be more assertive, take charge, not care so much about what other people think or need, and put your own needs and wants first. And here was someone saying it’s okay to be like this – frame it as a strength not a weakness. People say if you’re emotional or sensitive, those are not considered strengths in business or personal relations, so this is someone saying this is an asset.

Rosenberg (1999) proposes that when individuals believe they can be honest about what is going on for them, without being judged or criticized, they are more willing to be honest.

It's promoting more honesty when they're talking to me. Since they feel I'm more understanding...they tell me they slept in or that they just skipped class instead of making up excuses.

A couple of the GTAs mentioned that they were learning the value of expressing their needs to the students and that they could receive empathy for those needs:

You can state your needs. That's something I need to work on - telling them what my needs are. ...I told them that I'd appreciate if they could just understand that I'm a grad student, and I have a 120 page paper due. Before that they were snooty about when are we gonna get our grades...after, if anything, they would ask how my paper was going.

Occasionally, the GTAs had concerns about whether to stay within the departmental guidelines or to empathize if a conflict appeared to arise between the two guidelines (e.g., deduct a letter grade if a paper was late, fail a student if they missed more than three classes). Each GTA seemed to find a balance. The following examples from the interviews demonstrate how each GTA worked it out on their own terms.

It makes me feel good to be able to stay within the lines, but also be empathetic [*sic*] with them because people always have issues. It seems to give them a boost up. As long as I'm being fair to others, and get the required documentation, I'm willing to [let them] turn things in late. It feels like the right thing to do, to be able to help them as a teacher.

The workshop helped to enforce to me that I could be empathic, but also keep the respect. Foster attention to deadlines and assignments, but empathize.

Respect

Several of the GTAs mentioned receiving more comments on the student evaluations that students felt respected by the GTAs in the semesters following the workshop than they had received in previous semesters. Taking the time to hear another individual's feelings and needs can lead to the realization that the other person is much like us; a person with

needs similar to ours who is just trying to get his or her needs met. This recognition can lead to more respect between. The workshop on empathy appeared to stir this realization in some of the GTAs.

I think that just by me being empathetic [*sc*] toward my students, it really emphasizes that we can be respectful of each other and understand each other, and I think that has enhanced their comfort level getting up in front of the class and speaking.

The empathy training reminded me just of respect – because we’re all very vulnerable. I’m a student, too. I think that this idea was related to their perspective [i.e.], “I’m a kid, I’m terrified of standing in front of my peers and being vulnerable.” One little cough or sneeze can be misconstrued as someone frowning on you. The empathy training helped me to be aware of the need to be respectful. It’s in everybody; it’s just good to have the reminder.

I think it’s important to empathize with students in a classroom and create an environment where there is respect, and if you achieve that balance, then your life is a lot easier as a teacher.

Before [I told them what I needed] they never saw me as a student. I think they gained this new respect for me.

Connection

In the workshop, I proposed to the GTAs that the use of empathy would lead to a greater connection between the GTAs and their students, and that this connection would create an ease between teacher and student. The following responses from GTAs demonstrate that the use of empathy did create a greater sense of connection and ease between the GTAs and the students.

One student said she was very comfortable with me and it made the transition from high school to college much easier. I don’t want to handhold them, but I try to connect with them on other levels.

I think when you’re empathizing with them you are connecting with them on a deep level.

Cooperation

Cooperation in a partnership environment would mean student cooperation with teachers, but also teacher cooperation with students. The following responses demonstrate

that this reciprocal relationship was taking place, and that the GTAs attributed it to the use of empathy.

I can tell my students are slightly more relaxed, and I see confidence in them. And I generally see that, for the most part, they don't want to let me down, so they get their work in to me when I ask them to have it. They're very responsive to meeting my goal.

I've seen a turnaround. They have a sensitive issue [and] they come to me. After that, they're more likely to participate - and if you're short with them they're not motivated to come to class or participate. But because we're all new teachers, it was good to have this kind of training. These things are innate, but we were in an unfamiliar context and we're not sure what's going on. And to be reminded of that [you can be empathic with your students] - that's very important.

My biggest concern, especially being a woman, [was] are they going to see me as a pushover [if I empathize with them]? I find that I get less requests for changing speech deadlines than I did my first semester. ...It was good to realize that I could just go into the classes and be me; that I didn't have to be pushing the rules [all the time]. I've even stopped taking attendance, it's just not necessary, most of them show up. That's much better for me administratively.

In combination with some of my activities, it does help enhance participation because they feel more comfortable with me and with the other students, but it is in combination with group activities.

Compassion

Rosenberg (1999) considers compassion to be the natural state of humans. He claims that in his travels around the world over the last forty years, he has found that *most* people enjoy contributing to the well-being of others. When individuals do not share themselves with others, however, do not share their feelings and needs, Rosenberg claims that the lack of connection results in a lack of compassion for one another. If we can hear what others are needing, and why it matters to them to have that need fulfilled, it is not difficult to feel compassionate.

Syllabus and policies was [sic] #1 prior to the workshop. Since the workshop I talk about myself, have them introduce themselves - more in depth than Q&A. ...So [now] when I'm introducing myself [at the beginning of the semester] I want to seem relatable. When the student comes to talk to me [I want them to think] "She's going to understand, or at least try to understand."

I was so cognizant of what I had to do as a teacher, and going through this training helped me to be aware of the students' perspective. It was a nice perspective. It made me think about their situation as opposed to what am I gonna do for the lesson plan. Instead of thinking only of the things I have to do - what do they need to do – remembering what it was like when I was 18. I wouldn't have thought of that otherwise.

I find that I don't react so quickly – I'm a little more agreeable to listening and working out a plan. I know a lot of GTAs wouldn't go that route because they think the students will take advantage of them, but that isn't the case for me. I haven't had issues of being taken advantage of and missing deadlines. Students who are going to do bad work and turn in late papers are going to do it anyway, so what's the point of coming down on them. But some have an issue in their lives and I give them a break and they turn in great work.

I guess it weakens the barrier - you know that teacher/student dynamic. It's helped me to become closer to my students. ...It's just made me more aware of the fact that students have issues. It makes me put myself in the students' positions because sometimes I don't get the assignment done myself for no valid reason; I'm just stressed out. I always wished I could just say that to my professors, so I'm not so quick to tell my students "too bad."

It's really helped me with my international students; knowing what I know from intercultural communication. I know that the students - they're mostly from Japan and China - aren't going to be extroverts. They're not going to come to me for help. But this compassion idea - knowing what I know about their culture, I think "How can I help them be as good a student as the American students? Let's look at this paper as an ESL instead of, "Oh these exchange students can't even write." So I combine my intercultural knowledge with the compassion. Thank you for doing these workshops. I know it's helped me, and my students, and that's what it's all about.

Enhanced Learning/Motivation

None of the GTAs believed that they could connect the use of empathy in a direct way to enhanced learning or motivation. It is posited, however, that the use of empathy, and the resultant respect, compassion, cooperation, and connection will create dynamics that enhance learning. Therefore, one of the questions asked of all the GTAs was: "Do you have any evidence that the use of empathy enhanced learning?"

I think that it just helps build that relationship that makes them feel more comfortable asking questions - questioning your feedback because they know you want to help them - coming in to my office.

I do think it builds kind of a sense of trust and I think that the fact that it builds the trust makes me a little bit more credible so they will try at least to use what I'm teaching.

Yeah, I think so. When they see that you care for them, and can see some of the stuff from their point of view, they think "Okay I'm not another number or getting in the way of his research." I think when the students see that you care, and that you try to tailor the course to meet their needs, then empathy can help a lot. If you use empathy they're gonna put more of a value thing on it rather than just for a grade, they internalize it a little more, they attach themselves to their work more. Having empathy doesn't necessarily mean that they're gonna be excited about the class, but if they perceive that you don't have empathy, then they'll be demotivated. It's a combination of being empathic and knowing what you're teaching.

Challenges with the Use of Empathy

It is not always easy to empathize, and at times the GTAs were vulnerable to their own personal judgments and triggers. The following responses demonstrate some of the challenges the GTAs had while attempting to use empathy as a communication and relational strategy. These challenges are common for individuals who are learning an empathic approach. For example, individuals who are new to NVC often get frustrated if it does not work right away, or does not obtain the results they want. It takes a while to comprehend that empathy is a tool for making a better connection; that you do not always get what you want even if a better connection is made. Also, because most individuals in our culture are not trained in the use of empathy, individuals often believe they are empathizing when they are not. More often than not they are advising, reassuring, or sympathizing. This was discussed in the workshop, but it takes while to shift from that kind of communication to empathic communication. Furthermore, it is challenging to use empathy in situations where the actions of others are hard to empathize with. Some of the GTAs also expressed concerns about a potential loss of credibility due to the narrow age distance between GTAs and freshmen or sophomores.

I've had a couple of students who have been the epitome of difficult students – not coming to class, not turning things in on time - and it's difficult to empathize with them because I don't see them doing the work. I've got this great team, and then these couple of outliers, and I have trouble empathizing with them.

If I get off on the wrong foot with someone – first impressions matter – me getting a preconceived idea about someone or their motivation. I think there are people who are definitely more expressive and charming, you can see their emotions and you understand. I probably empathize with those people more...but others it's harder. So just trying to apply empathy, and be fair with it.

The most challenging thing is to find a balance – there's a fine line between being empathetic [sic] and a pushover. The challenge is to see where there really is a problem. One [concern I have] is because I have more understanding of them, that it leaves me open to being taken advantage of...if they're out boozing the night before, they won't stress out - "Oh [she] will be okay with it."

The biggest challenge with empathizing with the students is: are you consistent? Do you come across as somebody that is trustworthy when you say "Hey I desire your input – I desire your feedback if you're unhappy." And the other moment you're like "I don't want to hear any of it."

There is also the challenge that students are often not accustomed to this approach to teacher/student relationships.

The biggest challenge is like...what the kids existing experience is, what they think should or should not happen between us, or what they think the experience is or should be between us.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEYS

The quantitative research was conducted mainly to test the survey. Given the intercorrelation of samples, but the inability to correlate specific responses to specific participants throughout all three times, it was not possible to conduct inferential tests of statistical significance, even if there had been enough participants to assess statistical power. At a purely descriptive level, however, there is evidence of modest increases in empathic attitudes and behaviors from Time 1 to Times 2 and 3. The mean scores for GTA ratings of NVC behaviors by time are displayed in Table 1. There is a slight decrease from Time 2 to Time 3, but Time 3 scores are still higher than Time 1. A Chronbach's Alpha test of reliability, however, found that the survey was not reliable. Before removing one redundant item (item 6), alpha was found to be .49 for the Time 1 Survey, increasing to .51 after removing the item. A reliability check on the Time 2 survey indicated an alpha of .68 before item 6 was removed, and an alpha of .71 after item 6 was removed.

Table 1. GTA NVC Behaviors Across Times

| | N | Range | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation | Variance |
|---------------------|----|-------|---------|---------|--------|-------------------|----------|
| GTA NVC Behavior T1 | 40 | 1.47 | 2.68 | 4.16 | 3.3077 | .31009 | .096 |
| GTA NVC Behavior T2 | 35 | 1.63 | 2.74 | 4.37 | 3.5564 | .41428 | .172 |
| GTA NVC Behavior T3 | 19 | 1.53 | 2.74 | 4.26 | 3.4986 | .34261 | .117 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 0 | | | | | | |

For purely exploratory purposes, the NVC survey items, as responded to by GTAs, were submitted to exploratory factor analysis with oblique rotation. There were initially 8 factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 for the Time 1 data, and subsequent reductions in extractions produced an excellent 5-factor structure, with factors revealing minimal intercorrelations among factors (Tables 2a and 2b). Given the small sample size, it is premature to read too much into the factor labels, but the clarity of the factor loadings is suggestive that these items are multidimensional in nature.

When the same procedures were applied to Time 2 data for the GTAs, an alternative 5-factor structure emerged, which was similarly well-defined in loadings, but with items shifting in which factors they defined (Tables 3a and 3b). The implication is that the ways in which GTAs were conceptually integrating their understandings of these items was: a) multi-dimensional; interpreting the items as more than one concept or as a multi-dimensional concept, and b) evolutionary from Time 1 to Time 2.

Discussion

GTAs in the School of Communication at a Southwestern university were the participants in this study. Each of 40 GTAs attended one of three 45-minute workshops on the topic of how to use empathy as a tool to connect with students. A 20-question self-report survey was filled out before and after the workshop to ascertain whether the ideas presented in the workshop shifted the understanding or perception of the students on the concept of empathy. After one and a half semesters of teaching, 22 of the original participants took the survey for a third time. Personal interviews were conducted with 11 of these GTAs.

Table 2(a). Pattern Matrix of Loadings for GTA Ratings of NVC Behaviors, Time 1

| | Component | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| What I need | .782 | | | | |
| Consider my needs | .778 | | | | |
| Things get better | .593 | | | | |
| Consider my values | .544 | | | | |
| Guess feeling | .462 | | | | |
| Analyze problem | | .790 | | | |
| often give advice | | .763 | | | |
| Dominate conversation | | .688 | | | |
| Hear what they need | | | .861 | | |
| Must follow rules | | | .739 | | |
| Active listening | | | .484 | | |
| Listen to criticism | | | .450 | | |
| Lower grade | | | | | |
| Refer to syllabus | | | | .852 | |
| Study harder | | | | .737 | |
| Quick apology | | | | .542 | |
| Guess needs | | | | -.515 | |
| Try empathize | | | .483 | | -.746 |
| Advise to focus | | | | | .620 |
| Feel differently | | | | | .583 |

Abstraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 19 iterations.

Table 2(b). Inter correlation Matrix of Factors, Time 1

| Component | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1 | 1.000 | .003 | .061 | -.014 | -.009 |
| 2 | .003 | 1.000 | .052 | .065 | .038 |
| 3 | .061 | .052 | 1.000 | -.004 | .130 |
| 4 | -.014 | .065 | -.004 | 1.000 | .038 |
| 5 | -.009 | .038 | .130 | .038 | 1.000 |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

With the small size of the population, statistical significance was not expected, but a descriptive statistical analysis of the survey responses shows modest increases in the means scores from Time 1 to Time 2 and Time 3. There was a slight decrease from Time 2 to Time 3, but the means score at Time 3 is still higher than at Time 1. A Chronbach's Alpha analysis of the survey questions, however, indicated that the survey was not reliable. Therefore, it is difficult to interpret the increase in the means. Furthermore, a factor analysis of the survey items, conducted for exploratory purposes, revealed that the single concept of empathy may have been viewed by the GTAs as a multi-dimensional concept, or more than one concept. This perception was not communicated by the GTAs in the personal interviews, but the fact that the factor analysis separated the survey questions into five discrete categories should be examined further.

Personal interviews demonstrated that the GTAs perceived the information from the workshop, and their subsequent attempts to use empathy with students, as very helpful in engendering compassion for students, compassion on the part of students for the GTAs, increased cooperation in both students and GTAs, greater mutual respect between students and teachers, more honesty in teachers and students, and a greater sense of connection for GTAs with their students. Considering these perceptions, it is possible that problems with survey reliability, and loss of almost half of the participants at Time 3, resulted in inconclusive quantitative data.

Table 3(a). Pattern Matrix of Loadings for GTA Ratings of NVC Behaviors, Time 2

| | Component | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Advise to focus | .720 | | | | |
| Study harder | .653 | | | | |
| often give advice | .639 | | | | |
| Feel differently | .585 | | | | |
| Things get better | .565 | | | | |
| Dominate conversation | .480 | | .479 | | |
| Guess needs | | .906 | | | |
| Guess feeling | | .753 | | | |
| Active listening | | | .843 | | |
| Hear what they need | | | .755 | | |
| Listen to criticism | | | .617 | | |
| Try empathize | -.416 | | .582 | | |
| Must follow rules | .427 | | .442 | | |
| Quick apology | | | | -.800 | |
| Refer to syllabus | | | | -.699 | |
| Analyze problem | | | | -.696 | |
| Lower grade | | | | -.623 | |
| Consider my values | | | | | -.848 |
| What I need | | | | | -.634 |
| Consider my needs | | | | | -.620 |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization

a. Rotation converged in 17 iterations

Limitations of the Study

These empathy workshops were created for a departmental colloquium, and were attended by GTAs within the department. This resulted in a small population for the study making it difficult to conduct inferential statistical analyses of the data. Furthermore, a lack of experience with survey design, on the part of the lead investigator, may have led to a survey design that was not reliable. One other limiting factor was that the GTAs received only 45 minutes of training on the concept of empathy. A lot of information was delivered in

that period of time. It would be interesting to see what kind of retention and results would come about from a longer workshop, or better yet, a series of workshops.

Table 3(b): Intercorrelation Matrix of Factors, Time 2

| Component | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1 | 1.000 | -.059 | .132 | -.220 | .078 |
| 2 | -.059 | 1.000 | -.151 | .057 | -.108 |
| 3 | .132 | -.151 | 1.000 | -.036 | -.016 |
| 4 | -.220 | .057 | -.036 | 1.000 | .050 |
| 5 | .078 | -.108 | -.016 | .050 | 1.000 |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

Theoretical and Practical Implications and Directions for Future Research

I will discuss the overall theoretical and practical implications of this research in Chapter 6, where I will also make some suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 5

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION MODEL TO A CHARTER SCHOOL : 2ND RESEARCH STUDY

The charter school where I conducted further research was founded by two women who wanted to create a partnership-oriented school. The founders were a former elementary school teacher who had been homeschooling her children for several years and a tutor for homeschooled students. The school served students from kindergarten through the eighth grade. The recruitment flier for the school stated that it would be a school where “students and families powerfully create their lives through self-expression, compassionate connection, and purposeful learning.”

It was intended that this research study would be a triangulated study (both surveys and personal interviews). I hypothesized that training in the NVC communication model would expand the directors,’ teachers,’ students,’ and parents’ perception of partnership educational styles. I also hypothesized that the NVC training would lead to greater compassion, respect, cooperation, connection, and motivation in both the teacher and student populations. In order to test my hypotheses, I planned to distribute self-report surveys to teachers, students, and parents three times during the school year in order to track any changes that might occur as a result of training in the NVC communication model. Due to numerous problems, the expected populations did not materialize. It was, therefore, determined that it would be best to conduct the project as a case study.

A case study is an in-depth, longitudinal examination of a single instance or event; a case. Case studies are particularly useful for studying the how and why questions of particular events (what happened, and why did it happen) (Benedicte, 2000). Case study research relies on multiple sources of data collected through surveys, observation, and personal interviews. A case study is open to the use of theories and conceptual categories, which guide the research and the analysis (Benedicte). In this case, the conceptual

categories were related to the hypothesized results from the use of the NVC model: compassion, respect, cooperation, connection, plus enhanced learning and motivation.

In this chapter, I will describe what happened at the school that prevented me from collecting the quantitative data I planned to collect, discuss the results of introducing the NVC model of communication into the charter school, explain the methodology I eventually used, and then present the results of the data collection.

PROBLEMS WITH THE STUDY

The data base for this study was anticipated to be nine teachers, 120 students and 100 parents, but most of this the data base never materialized. Attempts to collect the quantitative data were thwarted by intense confusion at the school for the first couple of months of the fall term. Three complex educational and socio-emotional programs were introduced to the teachers only a month before the fall term began. An additional issue that contributed to the confusion at the beginning of the year involved a shift in the anticipated school population. While envisioning the school, the directors had been in touch with numerous homeschooling parents. The directors had experienced these parents as educated, intelligent, and open-minded parents who would be open to new ideas in education. When enrollment was opened, only 60 students from this group enrolled in the school. Because the school was set up to house 180 students, the directors made the decision to open the enrollment to the public. Many of the students recruited from the general public were seeking out an alternative educational program because of negative experiences at traditional public schools. The school also attracted several autistic children, and several children with ADHD. This combination of populations created behavioral problems that no one was prepared for. The teachers became quickly overwhelmed and exhausted.

The trainers had hoped the teachers would receive several weeks of training in NVC before the fall term began, but this plan fell through, and the teachers ended up going into the classes with just two trainings under their belt. The communication strategies and relational strategies were new to the teachers, and they were struggling to integrate the strategies on top of all the other issues they had to deal with. The teachers did gradually begin to integrate the model and use it more in the classroom; however, this created another problem. The teachers felt frustrated when they forgot to use NVC and their lack of skill with the model seemed to

make them leery of the model. By October, however, most of the teachers had become more familiar with the model and each teacher worked out a system for integrating NVC into their daily routine. Also, by early October, NVC trainers were going into the classrooms to teach NVC to the students while modeling partnership teaching to the teachers.

The chaos at the beginning of the year made it impossible for the directors and teachers to give me much help in my attempts to obtain parental permission for the students to participate in the study. In three attempts to reach the parents, I obtained permission for only 25 students to participate. Furthermore, the Institutional Review Board at my university deemed the students old enough to give personal assent to participate. When the permission forms came back to me, it was obvious that most of the student assent forms had been signed by the parents, despite my instructions that the students needed to sign the forms. It was necessary to redistribute the assent forms to the students, and remind them that participation in the study was voluntary. After this reminder, 10 of the 25 students opted out of the study. By the time I had managed to gather the students to fill out the surveys, the students had come to understand that the partnership approach to education respected student autonomy. This was new for most of the students at the school, and it was common for them to exercise their new-found autonomy regularly. I imagine this is part of the reason so many of the students opted out of the study. Fear of being part of a research study that they did not understand may have also been part of the reason. Although I surveyed the small population of students who remained in the study, and interviewed them in two groups in the spring, the data was never analyzed because the participation was so small.

I also did not manage to involve the parents in the research study. Two “all-school” meetings took place at the beginning of the second term. The trainers were given an opportunity to talk with the parents about NVC, and to demonstrate the use of the model, but in two attempts to involve parents in formal training, only 14 parents participated, and those parents only attended one training. Therefore, the parent population was removed from the study.

In an attempt to support the teachers and directors during this chaotic couple of months, the trainers sent e-mails offering empathy. Following are some of the e-mails we received in return, demonstrating the teachers’ and directors’ level of stress:

Thank you for your truly loving, supportive email. I read it and started to cry. I have spent this weekend feeling pressed for time and again somewhat overwhelmed. As I looked around my home yesterday (dishes piled high, the washer and dryer doing their jobs with yet more to do, and my precious daughter needing my attention, my thoughts were on [my students]. I was panicked trying to figure out when I would have enough time to do everything I needed and wanted to do for them. And now it's Sunday and I'm just sitting down to prepare at least for the first few days of the week.

I've been doing some NVC mediation with [an NVC volunteer] and it has been beyond powerful, so I definitely look forward to more contact of this sort. I do feel like it fills a strong need that I have to be heard that I have not experienced. So when I got [your] initial e-mail, I was so filled with amazement at your generosity that I cried for a long while.

Thank you for the follow-up email. Sometimes during the week I am taking each minute as it comes and running with it. We have had some very intense experiences; things that I could never have imagined. The outcomes are positive, but the interaction is intense and afterwards I often feel like I do after giving blood at the blood bank.

OVERVIEW OF THE TRAINING

The lead trainer for this project was a certified NVC trainer with approximately 20 years of experience with the model. She had previously trained students at four other schools: two charter schools, one continuation school, and one public school. I had not intended to do any training at the school, but in an effort to support the lead trainer, I offered assistance if she needed it and ended up co-training the teachers, helping out with a few group-learning experiences in some of the classes, and working with the lead trainer to explain and demonstrate NVC to parents at two school meetings early in the spring term. Because I had been using the model for 14 years, I was able to assist. I also observed the lead trainer in the classrooms several times during the month of November.

Teacher/Director Training

The training program began three weeks before the fall term began. The first two training sessions consisted of a standard introduction of the NVC model, and each session lasted approximately an hour and a half. Standard NVC trainings consist of an introduction to the four-step model, an introduction to the vocabulary of feelings and needs, some

information about the underlying premises of the model, and some role-play situations to give trainees an idea of how the model works.

The third training took place the 2nd week of school. The teachers were very tense, talked a great deal about how difficult the first week of teaching had been, and gave one another advice about how to handle one thing or another. We could see that the teachers were anxious, so we did not try to interfere with their process except to offer a couple of NVC-oriented suggestions.

During this training session, one of the directors became very angry with one of the teachers who was balking at sharing a story about an issue with a parent, and demanded that the teacher share the story. The teacher responded by admonishing the director for not using NVC; an interesting realization on the teacher's part so early in the training process. We suggested that the director empathize with the teacher's reluctance to share the story. She tried, but this teacher and director had already had some other difficult interactions, and she had a lot of trouble empathizing. The director eventually managed a little empathy and the teacher decided to share the story. After the story was shared, the other teachers offered empathy for this teacher's sadness about a conversation he had with a frustrated parent. The session ended with a high level of group cohesion.

The trainers realized that, if the teachers were going to receive much in the way of NVC training, requests would have to be made that the training sessions be used predominantly for practicing NVC. It was also decided to add a formal educational component to the training sessions (a brief lesson at the beginning of each training session about the underlying philosophy of NVC) believing that this information would create a better understanding of the model more quickly. This was the approach that was taken for the remaining teacher trainings. I also conducted a brief workshop on empathy, similar to the one I delivered to the GTAs at the university. Small strides were made in the next several weeks. The trainers were able to facilitate some role-plays, and demonstrate to the teachers how to employ empathy with students, and with each other. After eight weeks of this formal training, however, the teachers opted out of the training claiming a lack of time. Shortly, the NVC training time was taken up by a weekly school staff meeting.

The lead trainer began teaching NVC directly to the students at the beginning of October, and I joined her in November. This training continued until mid-December. The

trainer worked directly with the students for approximately 30 minutes every other week. While in the classrooms, the trainer modeled the use of NVC with the students and provided NVC-oriented games and group activities to help students learn the components and the underlying premises of the model. The NVC trainers were also involved, spontaneously, in teacher/student, director/student, and director/teacher interactions when on campus.

In February, over President's weekend, one of the directors read Hart and Kindler Hodson's (2004) book, *The Compassionate Classroom*. While reading the book, the director had "a revelation," as she called it; that NVC was about communicating compassionately with the students *at all times*. This type of experience occurs for many individuals when learning NVC. The underlying premises tend to be integrated in phases. While it is obvious that NVC is about using empathy to connect with others, it usually takes a while for individuals to grasp the level of compassion that empathy can create. The directors were interested in creating a compassionate environment. I saw them struggle throughout the year to balance their feelings of responsibility for what went on at the school, and their desire to employ a compassionate and egalitarian communication style with the students and teachers.

After reading *The Compassionate Classroom*, the director decided to discontinue teaching NVC to the students until the teachers could better learn NVC for themselves. She did not believe the teachers were using the model properly. There is always a learning curve with the model. The NVC trainers expected everyone to make a lot of mistakes for a while, but the teachers were frustrated and disappointed when they perceived themselves as not using the model. This is another typical phase for new NVC learners. When it is recognized that a certain quality of communication can come from the use of NVC, new learners often feel sad when they do not remember to use the model, or perceive themselves as using the model incorrectly.

I had learned of the director's decision the night before, and decided to attend the staff meeting the next day, knowing that this might be a pivotal event at the school. The director was calm and filled with compassion, as she explained her revelation to the teachers. After explaining her decision to discontinue teaching NVC to the students, the teachers all sat very quietly for about 30 seconds, and then one of the teachers said, "I don't want to stop teaching NVC to the students." Several other teachers agreed, and the decision to stop

teaching NVC to the students seemed to dissipate. The staff did, however, decide to discontinue the formal training of NVC at the school for a while.

Teachers and teacher aides obtained further NVC training in the fall of 2009 by attending workshops with the lead trainer. One of the school directors relayed to me that the climate at the school was much calmer at the start of the second year. Students were cooperating more readily with teachers, and similar to the situation at the Skaarpnacks school in Sweden, had become more accepting of the NVC model and partnership approach. It appears that the partnership approach was now considered the norm, rather than the exception.

Student Training

Numerous props, handouts, and activities have been created over the last several years to help students learn NVC. The lead trainer used several of them in the classrooms. Different activities were used for different age groups. The following sections describe these props, handouts, and activities and how they were used with the students. Most of the handouts can be viewed in the appendix section of this paper.

GIRAFFE AND JACKAL PUPPETS

Rosenberg has used puppets for many years to simulate how humans can use NVC when talking with other humans. Using the puppets to represent the human communicators breaks the ice and buffers reactions to non-NVC statements. Rosenberg chose each puppet for a different reason. The giraffe puppet was chosen to represent the NVC premise of compassion and willingness to work interdependently with others. Giraffes have the largest heart of any land mammal, representing the NVC focus on speaking feelings and needs (emotions are generally considered as coming from the heart), and a giraffe has a long neck so it can always see the long-term solution. At the charter school, younger students often referred to the NVC trainers as the giraffe ladies, or the giraffe-talk ladies. The jackal puppet was chosen to represent a person who criticizes, blames, and evaluates others, rather than shares feelings and needs. In some countries neither the giraffe nor the jackal puppets are used because different animals symbolize different things to different cultures.

NVC TRAINING BOOKLETS

Both students and teachers received a training workbook. The student workbook laid out the two parts and four steps of the NVC model, and gave some examples of feelings and needs words (Appendix I). The teacher workbook was more complex, beginning with a description of NVC, an outline of the two parts and four steps of the model, and some exercises for using the model (Appendix J).

EMPATHY GARDEN

The lead trainer sometimes used a picture of an infinity sign (representing the circular process of NVC) filled with flowers; each elliptical shape in the infinity sign represented a garden. One side of the picture represented a student's garden of feelings and needs. The other side represented another student's garden of feelings and needs. There is a ladder between the two gardens signaling that it is always possible to go into the other person's garden and empathize with their feelings and needs; going into the other person's garden and listening to and empathizing with the other person's feelings and needs is as important as expressing your own feelings and needs. I painted a poster-sized empathy garden that was placed in the main office of the school so students would be reminded of empathy whenever they passed the poster. I also drew some smaller versions of the empathy gardens to hand out to the younger students so they could color the flowers in the garden (Appendix K).

NEEDS LIST

The lead trainer created a handout that had "needs" words surrounded by clouds (Appendix L). The students were encouraged to color the clouds with different colors. This handout was intended to familiarize students (ages 5 – 7) with a vocabulary and an awareness of their own needs. The lead trainer also created a large poster of the needs list that was placed on the wall in the main office where everyone could see it.

WHERE FEELINGS COME FROM

An 8 ½ by 11 poster that explained where feelings come from (Appendix M) was placed on the wall in each classroom. Rather than simply showing faces with different expressions on them, the faces are grouped around explanations of the underlying needs

(e.g., feelings expressing physical comfort or discomfort, and feelings expressing fulfillment or nonfulfillment of needs).

GIRAFFE-E-GRAMS FOR EXPRESSING TROUBLED FEELINGS

Children learn early to apologize because an apology is what adults often demand from children, but apologies do not solve the problem and often do not leave the child with an understanding of what actually happened in an interaction; for the other person or for themselves. Without any comprehension of the child's underlying needs that are motivating the child's actions, or an understanding of the impact of the child's words or actions on the other person, it is likely that a hurtful behavior will be repeated (Rosenberg, 2003).

At the beginning of the year, the directors created a "Focus Sheet" that was given to students when they were in conflict. The focus sheet (Appendix N) was meant to remind students of their agreements with class members and teachers to behave and follow the rules. The focus sheet warned students that, if the student received three of these focus sheets, the student's parents would be called. The NVC trainer replaced the focus forms with Giraffe-E-Grams (Append O and P). The Giraffe-E-Grams were meant to serve as guidelines for the use of the NVC model (where each child expresses feelings and unmet needs in an interaction), and there was no reference to calling the students' parents.

GIRAFFE-E-GRAMS FOR EXPRESSING APPRECIATION

Giraffe-E-Grams were also used to help students gain experience in sharing gratitude rather than praise. When a student wanted to let another student know that something this other student did had stimulated a feeling of support, joy, or appreciation for the first student, a giraffe-e-gram would be written and given to the second student. One of the teachers also used the e-grams as a class exercise in order to teach students about gratitude and sharing from an NVC perspective.

DETECTIVE GAME

This game was used for the purpose of teaching students the difference between observations and evaluations (Step 1 of the NVC model). It is common to hear one child saying of another child, "They're mean," or "They're greedy." Evaluations often lead to hurt

feelings and disappointment. It is important, however, to let the other person know if a behavior, such as taking the large piece of the sandwich, does not meet your need. Observations, such as, “You took the biggest piece” connected to a need and a request, such as, “I would like you to give me some of the bigger piece because I am hungry” would more accurately portray what is needed, and prevent the hurt feelings that often arise with a negative evaluation (e.g., “You’re greedy!”). Game cards with observations and evaluations were randomly chosen by students. The student who had an observation card would go around the room seeking out the student who had a corresponding evaluation card, and vice-versa (See Appendix Q). This game was used in grades three through eight.

ROLE PLAY GAME

This game allowed students to get an idea of how to empathize with others without putting the students on the spot. Each student was asked to write a note about a recent situation that had been difficult for them, and all of the notes were put into a box. Another student would draw one of the notes out of the box, and then two students who were willing to volunteer to participate would role-play the situation. The first student would explain what happened, and the second student would guess what the other student was feeling and needing (see the “Observations” section of this chapter where I chronicle some of the role-plays that were acted out in the classroom). These role-plays were done in the third through eighth grades.

NEEDS CHAIN AND FRIENDSHIP BRACELETS

The second grade class spent one NVC training period making needs chains and friendship bracelets. This is an example of a non-competitive activity that students can do that is fun for them. First, each student was asked to write a need (e.g., friendship, safety) on a strip of colored construction paper. Then the slips of paper were looped and stapled together into a long chain that the teacher hung on the blackboard at the front of the room to serve as a reminder to the students to express needs to one another. Then, students were asked to write on another slip of colored paper the statement “When _____ (another student did or said), I felt _____ (e.g., happy, safe, excited), because I needed _____ (e. g., friendship, help). This activity was meant to teach students that feelings are the result of personal needs, not what another student is doing or saying. Therefore, rather than saying

“When ____ did ____, it *made me* feel ____,” NVC suggests “When ____ did ____ I *felt* ____ because it met my need (or did not meet my need) for ____.”

METHODOLOGY

At the charter school, NVC training was about more than just the concept of empathy. The entire four-step NVC model was taught to directors, teachers, and students. This study contained a quantitative aspect (self-report surveys) and a qualitative aspect (personal and group interviews, and classroom observations).

PARTICIPANTS AND SITE

Two school directors, nine teachers, and 15 students (grades 3 through 8) participated in this study. The research was conducted on the campus of the school, which was housed in the educational complex of a large community organization. There was a large courtyard set in the middle of two rectangular, two-story buildings. The students gathered in the courtyard before school and during lunch. The buildings housed nine classrooms, offices, a cafeteria/assembly room, a library, and a computer lab. Surveying and personal interviews were conducted in the classrooms, the courtyard and the computer lab. Observations took place in the classrooms.

ESTABLISHING THE MEASURE

Although measures of empathy and classroom climate exist, I created my own surveys with direction from my thesis supervisor on possible survey categories. It is not uncommon for NVC researchers to design the surveys they use. When looking through available surveys, many NVC researchers do not believe that the extant surveys represent what it is that is actually occurring in an NVC-oriented interaction or NVC-oriented behavior (Hart, personal conversation 2008). I was looking for specific changes that were related to NVC-oriented concepts and NVC-oriented dynamics.

Both the teacher and student surveys contained four sections. The first section contained questions about NVC behaviors, the second section was a behavioral analysis of how teachers and students might handle various situations, the third section examined recognition of NVC, and the fourth section examined whether levels of compassion, respect,

support, and cooperation shifted in teachers and students over time. The student survey contained 26 questions; the teacher survey contained 28 questions.

The personal interview surveys used to interview directors and teachers consisted of nine open-ended questions aimed at prompting the sharing of personal experiences with the use of the NVC model. These surveys, similar to the personal interview surveys used for the GTA study, would be considered focused, non-scheduled surveys. The questions were open-ended, but asked about specific topics related to the use of the model (e.g. “Do you have any evidence that student motivation was impacted by the use of model?”). (See Teacher Survey, Teacher Personal Interview Questions, Student Survey, Director and Teacher Informed Consent Forms, Parental Consent Forms, and Student Assent Forms in Appendices R - X).

DATA COLLECTION

Data for this study was collected through self-report surveys, personal interviews, and observation of NVC training in the classrooms. The directors did not fill out surveys because the decision to include them in the study was not made until later in the school year. Teachers and students, however, filled out self-report surveys twice during the 2008-2009 school year. The teachers were surveyed in August of 2008, before they received any NVC training, and again in the spring of 2009. The students were surveyed once at the end of October, 2008, after they had time to get to know teachers and other students, and again in April of 2009.

The students were given paper copies of the surveys, and were surveyed in the courtyard of the school at Time 1, and in the computer lab at Time 2. Students were supervised by me and one of the school directors during Time 1. At time two, I was the only supervisor. I created an on-line survey for the teachers. Eight out of nine of the teachers filled out the survey on-line for Time 1, but due to some confusion over the survey for this project and a survey connected to another program being introduced at the school at Time 2, four teachers filled out the on-line version, and four teachers filled out a hard copy that I delivered to them. One teacher opted not to participate in the survey data collection process.

It had not been my intention to do any formal observation at the school, but when the decision was made to conduct the project as a case study (in November), I began recording my observations of the NVC training in the classrooms. Observations make it possible to study behavior as it occurs (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1976), allowing for an unstructured and

flexible data collection process that maximizes the understanding of the events. Observations also allow for the collection of the data in its natural setting, without the introduction of any elements of artificiality (Nachmias & Nachmias).

Personal interviews were conducted with all nine teachers, and the two school directors, in February, March and April of 2009. Seven of the personal interviews were conducted in the teacher's classroom during lunch break or after school. Two interviews were conducted over the phone. The interviews lasted for 45 minutes to one hour. I also conducted group interviews with 11 of the students in April of 2009. The students were placed in groups of five and six students, ranging in age from eight to 14. These group interviews lasted for about a half an hour each. I typed the responses to my questions as the interviewees gave them to me.

DATA ANALYSIS

Due to the small number of student participants, the student surveys were not analyzed. A Chronbach's Alpha reliability test, descriptive analysis, and correlated t-tests were conducted on the teacher surveys using the SPSS data analysis software. A hand calculation of the teacher survey responses was also conducted. The personal interview responses were categorized into three NVC-related categories: expression of feelings and needs, making requests, and conflict resolution, and five other categories: teacher use of the model, student use of the model, shifts in communication and relational strategies, enhanced learning and motivation, and challenges with the use of the model.

Because of the nature of partnership schools (i.e., supporting choice and autonomy), I was concerned that the teachers might not be willing to choose just one answer to each survey question. In an attempt to discourage multiple answers, I provided a comment box after each section in case the teachers wanted to comment on the question, or on their response. Few teachers used the comment boxes, but there were several multiple responses to the survey questions. These multiple responses were handled in the following manner: if the survey asked for a dichotomous response (e.g., agree or disagree) and a teacher answered with both "agree" and "disagree," those responses were discarded. When teachers had a choice of four answers, some of the teachers gave multiple responses to the same question.

This issue was handled by using the most NVC-oriented response, if there was one, and discarding the other responses.

RESULTS OF THE PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

Due to several problems with the administration and analysis of the teacher and student surveys (discussed further in the section below entitled *Results of the Teacher Surveys*) the quantitative data is not reliable enough to accurately measure the results of the NVC training at the charter school. Therefore, the qualitative data will be presented first.

Personal interviews with all nine teachers and the two school directors demonstrated increased comprehension, and use of, the model by the school directors and five out of the nine teachers over several months. Interviews also confirmed a reduction of conflict, a reduction in tattling and blaming of other students, and an increase in teacher respect for student needs in the classroom. The interviews also yielded some important information about the teachers' acceptance of the model, attempts at using the model, and challenges with attempts to use the model. The model was called Compassionate Communication (CC) at the school.

In order to identify different interviewees while maintaining anonymity, first initials were used, along with grade levels (removed in this version). The teachers often finished answering a question, but then expounded on their response. These stops and starts are indicated by a dash (-) in the transcription. Following the personal interview data from the teachers, I chronicle several of the observations made in the classrooms during the month of November. A transcription of the student interviews follows the observations.

It takes a while to integrate the underlying premises of the model. This understanding of the model generally begins to appear in the language that an individual chooses. When giving examples of the use of the model (during the interviews), the teachers did not always use NVC-oriented language or use the full model. Therefore, after some of the teacher responses, I have given examples of how the statements would have been made using the actual model as a comparison. When the teachers used phrases that indicated a use of the various steps of the model but did not refer specifically to the model, I bracketed and explained that use as well. I make these comments in an attempt to clarify.

Blaming and Tattling versus Solving Conflicts

The components of the model create a dynamic that often prevents conflict. The same components can help communicators resolve conflicts even after a conflict begins. In the responses below, the teachers and directors explain how use of the model reduced the incidents of blame and tattling at the school. Teachers attempted to help the students identify feelings and unmet needs, and make requests of other students, rather than blame and tattle.. This is the way NVC works in all situations to prevent or resolve conflict.

There's been a huge reduction in tattling and blaming. It's cute because, when you hand over the keys to fixing the problem, they resist at first, but they do it. Even if I've got a 2nd and 4th grader. [I] can have a common bond no matter the age level and that's worked out really well for just getting people heard. It seems to be almost like a light bulb moment. When they hear the need [of the other student] - they don't necessarily agree with them, but they hear their point of view, and see they're not just a jerk – get past the blame thing going on. Once they get to the point where they start hearing each other, then it's pretty quick that they get things settled.

Expression of Feelings and Needs and Empathy for Those Feelings and Needs

In a culture like the American culture, where the expression of feelings and needs is discouraged, individuals (of all ages) need to learn a “feelings” and “needs” vocabulary, and be guided to express feelings and needs until they learn how to identify and express feelings and needs on their own. The responses in this section were to the question, “What do you find to be the most helpful thing about the NVC model?” Most of the teachers thought that it was very helpful for everyone to learn to express their feelings and needs.

The acknowledgement of the feelings is really critical because the kids are getting to express really how they're feeling rather than say [for example] “I don't want to be your friend anymore.” And then “What did you hear me say” [Asking one another, “Would you be willing to tell me what you heard me say?” -step 4 of the model]. I'm telling you the kids' conflicts just vanish. To be able to pinpoint the behavior – express the other's behavior that's bothering them [make an observation rather than a criticism or judgment – step 1 of the model] and having it acknowledged by the other person - and then the conflicts vanish – really truly.

Getting your feelings out on the table. I have stopped class many times because what was going on wasn't relevant to the lesson. We had an incident with the new

president of the school. A lot of people were giving her a hard time because she made promises that would be really difficult to deliver on. ... There was a lot of tension so I wanted to just get it out in the open; get their concerns out in the open. Some people were siding with her, some people were challenging her. I gave her an opportunity to say what was going on for her. It was a very calm conversation in the class where there was a lot of tension outside [in the courtyard], and I could see if I didn't stop it, it would blow up. So the kids were listening, not complaining, but just hearing what each other had to say.

I used to share stories to connect with students, but not in an advice giving way - but just to form bonds. What's changed with CC is that before I would be exploring someone's needs and feelings with them naturally [step 2 and 3 of the model], but I didn't know where to go from there. I didn't know to make a request [to ask them what their request was - step 4 of the model]. ... I'm usually surprised; they usually want something really simple.

[Initially] I wasn't aware that their need in the moment was to get it all out, and I didn't know how to do it without being judgmental or trying to make them stop. [Now, I think] Okay let's give it ten minutes; be crazy. Let's just get all the drama out, then we'll use the model.

Teacher/Student Use of the Model

Training the teachers and the students to use the model was a larger undertaking than training the GTAs in the use of empathy. Remembering to use the steps of the model and integrating the underling premises of the model takes time. In the following sections, I share some of the responses from teachers about their own use of the model and their perception of the students' use of the model.

TEACHER USE OF THE MODEL

The following interview responses describe how the teachers used the model with students and family members.

I tend to use it more when I have a problem than when I'm happy. When my needs aren't met, I tend to want to use CC more than when my needs are met. I don't say "I really appreciate all of you," so it tends to lean on the negative side. ... Mainly I'd use it to solve conflicts.

Now, I listen to the story – not about assigning blame...this is quick and efficient. It's really fast.

It works great with my family. I had a time when I just went through all the steps - this is what I'm seeing and this is what I'm needing for you [NVC would actually be "this is what I'm needing"]. I was very upset and I was yelling and I knew I needed to stop. I was thinking, "What can I do?" So I used it and it came out very natural.

I guess I did use it the other day. I said "I'm feeling great, but these report cards are behind schedule – I'm needing you guys to get quiet and read a book so I can work on the report cards, then I can give you guys some free time. [NVC would have more accurately been "I need some quiet" rather than "I'm needing you..."]

STUDENT USE OF THE MODEL

The following interview responses describe how many of the teachers perceived the students' use of the model.

The kids can, and do, take it in at this age, but it has to be used consistently.

I don't hear the children using it that much. They come to me with problems and I ask them, "Have you tried using CC?" I think they're resistant. To them it sounds foreign. Let's face it, most things that come out of adults' mouths they resist. If I was on MTV singing about NVC, they'd be singing along.

They use it when the adults remind them of it, but I don't believe they're using it on the playground with themselves. I think the only challenge – well more than one – getting the kids to know the steps - which I think we're there now. And, secondly, maybe getting them to put a name on their feelings; being able to identify them. We're doing really well in that area. What they do instead is just get quiet, but I've got kids that have come out from under the rock. I just had one recently who started to express and open up, and another who was really quiet, now he's really insightful and expresses more – because the kids know it's a safe place.

In the beginning the kids were like "This is stupid. I don't want to do this." They say they're resistant to it, but they [several female students] show up every week to [NVC volunteer's] practice group.

Making Requests

The fourth step of the model consists of making a clear, positive, doable request from the other person. The other person is not required to fulfill your request if they do not want to or do not believe they can, but it is important to put the request out there so that the other person will clearly know what you need, and what part of the need you would like fulfilled by them. You can even tell the other person exactly how you would like the need fulfilled.

It is also important to make requests and not demands. People often shut down or rebel when a demand is made of them, but are often happy to help if they view the other person as genuinely making a request.

CC has opened me up to be able to make requests of people and when you take on a position like a director, you need that skill. ...If something isn't done correctly, I use CC to get my point across and [also to] give myself empathy by writing the e-mail. ...I can't think of a time, professionally, that CC hasn't been able to get through to the other person, and rarely do I not get my requests met.

Communication/Relational Shifts

Once a person begins integrating the NVC model, shifts in both communication style and relational dynamics often take place.

My demeanor and tone and my method of communicating has changed. ...[In the past] when kids would have a conflict, I'd just be like "Ugg, shut up, sit down, do your work." I didn't have the tools to deal with the issues.

I wouldn't say it's shifted my view because we...chose [CC] because we were already there personally, but it has solidified for me that I need to just be very present to them; hear where they are at – hearing what they're saying and feeling and [saying] what I'm feeling. I've always been like that but [CC] concretized it more – gone a level deeper.

I do say to the kids "When I observe you talking out in class it frustrates me because I have need for order. Then making a request. I don't have very many issues [in my classroom]. My room is easy and I think some of it is easy because they [the students] don't have that blaming, harshness, authoritarian kinds of - I do have expectations, but I'm not standing up here with my pointer saying "you're wrong, you're bad," and certainly some of that starts with awareness of NVC. [This teacher is using all 4 steps of the model, however, she is saying "it frustrates me" rather than "I feel frustrated." The first statement continues to place blame on the students, the second statement attributes the feelings to whatever is going on in the teacher. What the students do may be a stimulus, but the students do not cause the teacher's feelings. This is an important premise in NVC; important because it prevents conflict.].

Challenges with Using NVC

The teachers were very challenged in their attempts to use NVC at the beginning of the school year. It would have been much better if we could have trained the teachers for

several months before they had to use NVC in the classroom, but that had not been possible as this was a newly formed school. Teachers were sometimes frustrated with the model, and with other teachers' acceptance or nonacceptance of the model.

It's hard for the kids to get the difference between request and demand. "I request that you don't hit me anymore." [Other student] "No I'm not willing to not hit you anymore." Then they're shocked. So they were using requests as a way to stop things [rather than make a connection]. Especially the boys have a hard time with it because they see it as touchy-feely even though it's really straight up – it's not a cover up like "I'm gonna be the tough one." There's nothing alive about a script [referring to the 4-steps model] so the older kids don't like to hear the script. When they hear it as real language they don't know it's CC. [Once NVC users integrate the underlying premises of the model, some tend to stray from the script at times, and use what is sometimes called "street giraffe" meaning, if you express the 4-steps using more colloquial language, it will sound more normal. It generally takes a while to get to this level of understanding with the model, but this director integrated the underlying premises very quickly because she was already thinking along partnership lines when she was introduced to the model].

It is really difficult in a classroom situation when you're focused on one thing; teaching the lesson – math or language arts or whatever. ...I can tell when something's going on with somebody and usually in those cases I've gone to them at a later time.

It's really easy to empathize with one kid, but with two kids. ...Some challenges I faced initially - they didn't want to go straight to the model, especially if it was more than one [student]; to have them say "When I hear this person did this, I felt..." The other would hear it as an accusation. [Also] to get kids to hear observations as observations [not evaluations]. "We're just listening right now. I know you're thinking I'm going to call your parents and tell them which one of you is the bad one [but] we're just listening." [That problem] has shifted down a bit. I don't know if it's because they have more tools, or they know it's how I do it. [We attempted to show the teachers how to empathize with more than one student at a time, but it takes a certain level of skill with the model to know how to stay with it].

It's been difficult because the parents don't understand that we're using CC for discipline. The parents say, "What do you mean you're just talking to them. Shouldn't they get a warning?" There's no consideration for individual needs; just zero tolerance across the board. Sometimes we have to use zero tolerance if kids aren't feeling safe around one another. One kid hits another and the parent is upset because no one gets punished. I think when we brought you in to the parent meeting about CC discipline really helped. [Then the parents knew], "Oh these people actually have a head on their shoulders, and they have thought about this."

RESULTS OF THE TEACHER SURVEYS

A Chronbach's Alpha test of reliability found the survey to be unreliable in all but one section. Alpha for Part Three of the survey, *Recognition of NVC*, was .77 at Time 1 and .75 at Time 2. Interestingly, alpha for Part One of the survey, *NVC Behaviors*, was .23 at Time 1, but increased to .70 at Time 2.

As a student, I have limited experience analyzing data, therefore I can only speculate about the lack of reliability in the majority of the survey sections. I believe, though, that a discussion of the issues associated with the administration of the survey may be relevant to this discussion of the findings because the survey might prove to be more reliable under different administration circumstances. Despite the low reliability scores, I would not want future researchers to dismiss the survey entirely. I view the survey as a building block for future NVC-related surveys.

My best guess about the increase in reliability from .23 to .70 at Time 1 and Time 2 in Part One of the survey (knowing that it takes time to integrate the unique NVC premises) is that the teachers understood the model and the underlying premises much better at Time 2. While comprehension of the survey questions is only part of what makes a survey reliable, a greater comprehension of the model at Time 2 may have lead to different responses from those at Time 1. In regard to Part Two of the survey, the high value that was placed on answering the questions honestly and fully (which several of the teachers expressed concern about) led to unanswered questions and/or multiple responses on several items despite my instructions to the teachers to choose only one response to each item. This may have impacted the reliability score of Part 2. The problem of multiple answers was anticipated, because the teachers were working within a system that placed a high value on autonomy, but the problem was not adequately controlled for in the design of the survey.

I was not able to survey the teachers enough times to get an accurate measure of their perception of the concepts in Part Four of the survey. At Time 1, the teachers did not know the students or the parents, therefore, the teachers could only answer one-third of the questions in Part Four. I had intended to mitigate this problem by surveying the teachers three times during the school year, but I did not manage to conduct a third survey.

Correlated t-tests were conducted to assess significant changes in Teachers' NVC behaviors, behavior analytic understandings of NVC, recognition of NVC behaviors and

principles, and teachers' perceptions of values concordant with NVC (Table 4) (demonstrated by the other teachers, students, and parents). Given the small number of participants, statistical significance was not expected, but the means scores reveal movement in a positive direction for all variables except values concordant with NVC (Part Four). The movement in the negative direction for Part Four of the survey may have been related to the fact that the teachers were only able to fill out one-third of the questions in Part Four at Time 1 because they did not yet know the other teachers, students, and parents very well.

Despite the small positive movement in the means scores, I was getting very positive responses about NVC in the personal interviews from five of the eight teachers, and the two directors. Because there were so few teachers in the study, I was able to do a hand calculation of the survey responses. This calculation found that while three of the eight teachers did not demonstrate a shift in comprehension or NVC behaviors, two teachers moved toward NVC by 13%, one by 25%, and one teacher by 42%. One teacher improved by only 4%, but this was because the teacher scored very high on the Time 1 survey, and improved 4% at Time 2.

Table 4. Correlated t-tests of the Teacher's NVC Behaviors, Behavior Analytic Responses, NVC Recognition Items, and Teacher Values of NVC, from Time 1 to Time 2.

| | | Mean | N | SD | S.E. | t-value | P |
|--------|------------------------------------|---------|---|---------|---------|----------------|------|
| Pair 1 | T1NVCBeh1 | 7.8571 | 7 | 1.51971 | .57440 | T = 0.108 | .917 |
| | T2NVCBeh2 | 7.9286 | 7 | 2.12972 | .80496 | | |
| Pair 2 | T1BAR | 3.7143 | 7 | .95119 | .35952 | T = - 1.333 | .231 |
| | T2BAR | 4.2857 | 7 | .95119 | .35952 | | |
| Pair 3 | T1NVCRec | 10.5714 | 7 | 5.25538 | 1.98635 | T = - 0.281 | .788 |
| | T2NVCRec | 10.7143 | 7 | 5.18698 | 1.96049 | | |
| Pair 4 | T1Teacher Perception of NVC Values | 15.4286 | 7 | .78680 | .29738 | T = - 1.000 | .356 |
| | T2Teacher Perception of NVC Values | 15.2857 | 7 | .75593 | .28571 | | |

Two of the three teachers who did not move toward NVC at Time 2 never engaged personally with the model, and both claimed that the model was too complex for young students to learn. Therefore, no formal NVC training occurred in these two classrooms. The third teacher who did not move toward NVC on the Time 2 survey attended the trainings and made time for the NVC trainer to come to the classroom, but did not believe there was time to use the model in the classroom.

DISCUSSION

The qualitative data in this study demonstrates that NVC training contributed to less conflict in the classroom, less tattling and blaming from students, more honesty with students, and enhanced compassion on the part of teachers for students' needs. Students as young as seven years old were able to learn and use the model in their relationships with one another, though the teachers perceived student use of the model as the result of facilitation by the teachers. Teachers at the charter school reacted similarly to teachers at other schools where NVC has been introduced. Some teachers did not accept the model, teachers had some struggles with learning and using the model, and teachers had personal challenges with the model. Due to a lack of parental permission at the beginning of the study, it was not possible to hear from most of the students whether, and to what degree, they integrated the model, but the older students who were interviewed demonstrated an understanding of the components of the model.

Participants in this study included 15 students (grades three through eight), nine teachers, and two directors. The teachers and directors were given eight formal 1 ½ hour NVC training sessions at the beginning of the school year. A certified NVC trainer visited each classroom every other week for approximately 30 minutes during October, November, and half of December, where students were trained in the NVC premises (through games and activities). Use of the model with students was also demonstrated for the teachers. A 28-question self-report survey was filled out by each teacher before the training began in the fall, and again the following spring. Personal interviews were also conducted with the two directors and eight teachers in the spring. One teacher did not participate in the surveys, but did agree to a personal interview in the spring of 2009.

With the small size of the population, statistical significance was not expected, however, analysis of the quantitative data indicated a moderate increase in responses that represented a greater understanding of, and use of, the NVC model by teachers from Time 1 to Time 2. Three out of four of the survey sections did not prove to be reliable, however, making it difficult to interpret the quantitative results. Qualitative data (personal interviews and classroom observations) demonstrated acceptance and appreciation of, and increased use of, the model over time by five out of the nine teachers. Group interviews revealed a good grasp of the model by older students, and classroom observations demonstrated a willingness in all students to use the model most of the time when it was facilitated by the teachers.

Two of the teachers who did not accept the model (the kindergarten teachers). Their objection to the model was similar; the model is too complex for children this young to learn and to use. There has been very little empirical research done on the use of this model, therefore it is not possible to know, empirically, if this is an accurate assumption. There is a great deal of anecdotal evidence, however, that young children do understand, and are capable of using the model. The third teacher who did not accept the model claimed that the model was too time consuming to use in the classroom.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The main limitation of this study was the small number of participants. Due to the chaos at the beginning of the school year, I did not manage to obtain access to the parents, and this impeded my ability to get parental permission for the students to participate. A further limitation was the small number of teachers involved in the study. This was a multi-grade school, therefore there were only two teachers for the 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders, and two teachers for the 6th, 7th, and 8th graders. An administrative policy that gave the teachers autonomy regarding the implementation of the NVC training in the classroom resulted in a loss of access to the lower-grade teachers for formal, long-term, NVC training.

Theoretical and Practical Implications and Directions for Future Research

I will discuss the overall theoretical and practical implications of this research in Chapter 6, where I will also make some suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION, THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS, AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

DISCUSSION

This thesis project introduced the Nonviolent Communication model and its underlying premises to educators as a communication model that supports and engenders partnership educational and relational strategies. With the population of the planet rapidly increasing, the expansion of a global economic system, and the undeniable symptoms of global environmental degeneration all global citizens need to act as partners. Organizations around the globe are responding to rapid social, economic, environmental, and political change by flattening hierarchies and hiring organizational members who are self-reliant, self-motivated, innovative, and have the ability to work interdependently. Traditional, hierarchical educational and relational strategies may not be adequately preparing the students who will move into these organizational positions over the next 30 years. A partnership educational approach, which includes egalitarian, compassionate and cooperative communication and relational strategies, may better prepare students to act as thoughtful, responsible global citizens in the future.

The literature review examined the nature of hierarchical/domineering social systems and hierarchical/domineering educational systems in an attempt to reveal the underlying assumptions of a master narrative that views hierarchy as necessary for survival. Traditional and partnership educational strategies were discussed in an attempt to demonstrate that there is a fundamental difference between the traditional, hierarchical approach to education and a partnership approach to education, and to demonstrate that partnership strategies are viable. Several schools that currently take a partnership approach to education were introduced as examples of how partnership education can be implemented.

The communication model known as Nonviolent Communication (NVC) (also known as Compassionate Communication) was introduced as a model that guides communicators to

communicate in ways that allow an egalitarian and interdependent relationship between teachers and students, contributing to a greater ability to interact as partners. The NVC model facilitates the goals of partnership education by providing a language focus and a consciousness that encourages a type of communication that is more likely to engender cooperation, compassion, respect, and connection between teachers and students.

Two research studies were conducted to examine whether training in the concept of empathy (a basic tenet of NVC) and training in the NVC model would contribute to an understanding and enactment of a partnership approach to education. Although I conducted two separate studies, the studies were connected by my desire to examine the impact of NVC-oriented strategies at all levels of education. The first study was a triangulated study conducted with Graduate Teaching Assistants at a Southwestern university. The second study was a case study that examined the impact of the NVC communication model on the directors, teachers, and students at a newly formed charter school (K-8) nearby. I was attempting to examine the following two research questions:

RQ¹: Do Graduate Teaching Assistants make better connections with students after attending a workshop on the topic of empathy?

RQ²: Does training in the use of the Nonviolent Communication model expand the perception of partnership educational styles, and engender more compassion, respect, cooperation, egalitarian communication, and motivation in directors, teachers, students, and parents at a K-8 charter school?

Self-report surveys, personal interviews, and, at the charter school, observations in the classrooms, were employed to collect data.

RQ¹ was confirmed in the personal interviews with GTAs. Personal interview responses from 11 of the 40 GTAs who originally attended one of three workshops on the topic of empathy demonstrated increased compassion and respect for students by the GTAs, a perception of increased respect for GTAs by students, and a perception of increased cooperation between students and GTAs. The GTAs perceived the use of empathy as enhancing connection with students, and all of the GTAs said that the use of empathy to enhance connections with students would continue to be a strategy in their teaching.

The self-report surveys demonstrated a moderately higher comprehension, and use of, empathy from Time 1 to Time 2. Time 3 surveys showed a slight drop in comprehension and

use of empathy, but Time 3 data still demonstrated a higher comprehension and use of empathy than at Time 1. The survey did not prove to be reliable, however, therefore, it cannot be concluded that the quantitative data was a confirmation of RQ¹ despite an increase in means scores.

RQ² was partially confirmed in the personal interviews with the teachers and directors at the charter school. A gradual understanding of the NVC model and partnership strategies, and increased compassion and respect for the needs of students was demonstrated in the personal interviews of five out of nine teachers and the two directors at the school. Of the four teachers who did not demonstrate an overall increase in comprehension and use of the model, three were the teachers for the lower grades. The two kindergarten teachers and the first grade teacher never accepted the model; therefore no formal training was conducted in their classes. The fourth teacher made time for the NVC trainer to come into the classroom, but did not believe there was time to use the model in the classroom. This teacher did, however, report using the model with children at home. Increased cooperation from students was confirmed in the teacher interviews, and also in one of the director's interviews in relation to the administrative staff. Teachers did not believe they could connect use of NVC directly to student motivation to learn, but several teachers believed that the safer emotional environment that use of NVC created made a difference in student attitudes toward learning.

The quantitative data from teacher surveys demonstrated an overall increase in comprehension and use of the NVC model, but the survey did not prove to be reliable. The student surveys were not analyzed due to the small number of student participants, and it was not possible to involve the parents in the study.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The Nonviolent Communication model derives from human needs theory. Human needs theory emphasizes the identification and articulation of needs. All humans have needs; defined as those things that are persistent and ongoing. These needs are universal; people around the globe have similar physical, psychological, and emotional needs. Human needs theorists, such as Maslow, Alderfer, McClellan, Burton, Glasser, and Rosenberg, consider the

fulfillment of these needs to be imperative to the overall physical and psychological well-being of humans.

Instructional theories have barely touched on the idea of fulfilling students' needs in the learning process. Although educational strategy has shifted from an autocratic structure, students' needs are not yet being taken seriously in the classroom. While classroom management has shifted toward engaging students in the learning process, rather than punishing students for ignoring or rebelling against the learning process, classroom management still relies more on compliance-gaining strategies than on attempting to find out what needs are motivating student participation (or lack of participation). Teacher communication is often hierarchical rather than egalitarian. A closer examination of human needs theory, particularly through a partnership educational lens, may lead to needs-based instructional theories of interacting with students.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The Nonviolent Communication model is applied human needs theory. If needs can be identified and clearly articulated, it is more likely that the type of classroom environments that students and teachers desire will materialize; classrooms in which students feel comfortable with the learning process and are eager to participate and learn. The two research studies conducted for this thesis were attempts to further the understanding that a partnership style of teaching and learning is a viable way of interacting with students.

As part of this thesis project, I interviewed several teachers who are attempting to integrate the NVC model, and its consciousness, into their curriculum. There are problems. It is not easy to shift personal communication and relational habits, much less attempt to shift those of others (students, administrators, and parents). All of the teachers I spoke with, however, suggested that educators give the partnership approach a chance. Some suggest introducing the underlying principles of NVC in an organic way before introducing the communication model itself so that teachers, administrators, students, and parents can grow accustomed to the unique approach. It takes time to implement NVC in a classroom, but many teachers who have done so say that it saves a lot of time, as well as reduces conflicts and increases participation and cooperation once students integrate the model.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Both human needs theory and the NVC communication model propose fundamental changes to the traditional educational system. Therefore, a gradual entry into a school setting may allow more opportunities to do research on the impact of the NVC model, its premises, and its distinctions. Hart (personal communication, June 11, 2009), who held the position of Education Project Director for the Center for Nonviolent Communication for eight years, has concluded that to do an adequate research study on NVC in any school, the school must have certain things in place: stability, clarity, and an ease among teachers. There would need to be a commitment on the part of key decision-makers to a minimum number of hours of NVC training, and funding that is considered by NVC trainers to be sufficient to establish an NVC foundation before setting up an NVC training program. It would also be imperative for future researchers to do thorough surveying of a school's climate. Several questions would need to be answered, such as: a) do the teachers have adequate classroom and curricular support, and the job security to engage in this unique type of learning and teaching, b) what are the teacher relations like at the school, c) what is the level of openness and commitment to this kind of move from a traditional educational setting to a partnership educational setting, and d) is the school prepared at the administrative and board levels for these kinds of changes? Hart believes the answers to these questions are vitally important because school directors and teachers do not always anticipate the inevitable challenges of making a change from traditional educational styles, which are often punitive and hierarchical, to partnership educational styles, which are generally egalitarian, not punitive in relational or structural dynamics, and employ cooperative creation of curricula and classroom rules and environments.

Research on the NVC model should probably be conducted in small pieces; for example, conducting training and research on the concept of empathy at elementary, middle, and high school levels like the one I conducted at the university level, or by following a small group of teachers (perhaps one grade level of teachers) who are already established at a school through a gradual introduction to the model. The few studies that have been conducted in recent years only begin to examine this area of social structure and human interaction, therefore the possibilities for future research focus are numerous.

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APPENDIX A

DEMONSTRATION: WHAT EMPATHY IS/IS NOT

DEMONSTRATION OF WHAT EMPATHY IS AND WHAT EMPATHY IS NOT

GTAs did role-plays of these teacher/student interactions and I identified the strategy.

| Student | Teacher |
|---|---|
| "Gosh, I'm worried about the midterm." | "Oh, I'm sure you'll be fine." (Reassurance) |
| "When is the assignment due?" | "I'm amazed you don't know. Look it up in the syllabus." (Criticism) |
| "I don't understand what you're asking for with this assignment." | "So, you're feeling confused?" (Empathy) |
| "I'm having a very difficult time this semester." | "Well, you oughta see why my schedule is like." (One-Upping). |
| "I am very concerned that I did this assignment all wrong." | "No need to be dramatic. Just turn it in and I'll see what you did." (Discounting) |
| "I seem to be way behind. I don't know if I can get this assignment done in time." | "Well, what happened? When did you start the assignment? Why didn't you come to me sooner?" (Interrogating) |
| "My dog died." | "You poor thing." (Sympathy) |
| "This assignment is asking for too much. I don't know if I can do all of this." | "When I was in school, I once had an assignment that took 100 pages of typing to complete." (Story-Telling) |
| "I looked and looked for some articles to cite on this topic, but I just couldn't find any." | "I hear that you've really been trying to find support for your idea." (Empathy) |
| "I am really having trouble liking That guy who sits in the front row in class. In fact, I hate him." | "Well, just tune him out." (Giving Advice) |

APPENDIX B

EMPATHY EXERCISE 1

EMPATHY WORKSHOP EXERCISE 1

GTAs did role-plays of these teacher/student interactions and I asked the GTAs to identify the strategy.

| Student | Teacher |
|--|--|
| "When is the assignment due?" | "You're no longer in high school. Look it up in the syllabus." (Evaluation) |
| "Gosh, I'm worried about completing all the work required for this class" | "You're worried that you may have trouble completing the work for this class?" (Empathy) |
| "I'm having a very difficult time this semester." | "Well, You oughta see what my schedule is like." (One-Upping) |
| "I am very concerned that I did this assignment wrong." | "Oh, it's probably not that bad. Just turn it in." (Reassurance) |
| "I don't understand what you're asking for with this assignment." | "So, you're feeling confused?" (Empathy) |
| "I seem to be way behind. I don't know if I can get this assignment done in time." | "How did you get so behind? Didn't you read the syllabus? What don't you understand? (Interrogating) |
| "My cat died." | "Oh, you poor thing." (Sympathy) |
| "I've never done an assignment this long!:" | "When I was a freshman, I had this really long assignment due and I..." (Story Telling) |
| "I looked and looked for some articles to cite on this topic, but I just couldn't find any." | "I hear that you've really been trying to find support for you ideas." (Empathy) |
| "This guy is taking over the group." | "Well, get control of him." (Advice-Giving) |

APPENDIX C
EMPATHY EXERCISE 2

EMPATHY EXERCISE 2

GTAs were grouped in pairs and asked to respond to each other with empathy.

| Student | Hint |
|---|-------------------------------|
| “When is the assignment due?” | (are they confused?) |
| “Gosh, I’m worried about completing all the work required for this class.” | (are they worried?) |
| “I’m having a vey difficult time this semester.” | (are they afraid?) |
| “My aunt died.” | (don’t sympathize, empathize) |
| “I just realized that I’ve done this assignment all wrong!” | |
| “I don’t understand what you’re asking for with this assignment.” | |
| “I seem to be way behind. I don’t know if I can et this assignment done in time.” | |
| “I’ve never done an assignment this long.” | |
| “I can’t find any information on this topic and I looked really hard.” | |
| “I’m the only one in my group doing any of the work. | |

APPENDIX D

EMPATHIC LISTENING FOLLOW-UP ARTICLE

Empathic Listening by H. Holley Humphrey

Would you like to increase your intimacy skills? Want to know why most listening breaks down? How about being able to really “be there” when a friend is feeling blue? Here are some tips for listening expertise.

What is Empathic Listening?

Empathic Listening is a mixture of communication skills and awareness to use when you genuinely want to connect. You can use it to applaud someone’s victory or to help uncover what’s really troubling her. The result is often a deeper sense of connection, relief and joy!

Have you ever been really excited about something and felt disappointed with the response you received? For example, you might say, *“Hey, I just paid off my credit card!”* Perhaps a friend offers a flippant reply. *“Big deal, you’ll be back in debt in no time.”* Or in a misguided attempt to celebrate with you, she might unconsciously divert the subject to herself with, *“Congratulations! I did that two years ago.”*

With empathy, however, because the focus stays on the speaker, the enjoyment lasts longer. If your friend’s response were, *“Wow, I bet that’s a big relief!”* you might feel encouraged to continue. *“Yeah. Sometimes I thought I was drowning in debt.”* An empathic listener will stay with you as long as she honestly can until the conversation seems complete. *“Sounds as if you’ve felt pretty desperate at times. I imagine you’ve been wishing for a fresh start?”* You might reply, *“Exactly. I need to be saving money instead of living on the edge.”* The listener may confirm, *“I’d guess what you really want is financial security.”* *“Precisely!”*

Can you feel the difference? With the focus consciously on the speaker, both people have a deeper, more meaningful experience. It becomes a mutual exploration. It is done “with” someone not “to” them.

How Can You Listen More Empathically?

Primarily, it’s about quality attention. Your heartfelt attitude of acceptance and alertness help the speaker express clearly what she is trying to say. **First**, focus on discovering her unmet needs, and **then** present yours. After that, work together to find a solution.

Start with the intent to connect. Don’t get caught up in “doing it right.” It’s not about being clever. Sometimes even just connecting silently is plenty. It’s your intent and your attention that counts.

To guess her unexpressed need, ask yourself, *“What is she feeling? What might she be wanting or needing?”*

During pauses in her speaking, help her clarify her feelings and needs (or just her needs) with guessing phrases such as:

1. “Seems as if you wish...?”
2. “Were you wanting...?”
3. “Are you hoping...?”

This is a process similar to peeling an onion. Be prepared for feelings, wants and even the subject to shift at different layers. Don’t be dismayed by “No.” answers. Simply use that information to hone your next guess.

If you get stuck, try offering to summarize, *"May I tell you what I've understood so far?"* Or you might say *"I'm stuck right now. It would really help me to listen better if I knew more about what you are wanting. Can you help me out?"*

If you get tired or have other obligations, ask to reschedule, expressing your feelings and needs honestly. Perhaps you can sincerely say, *"I have some frustration and feel torn right now because I'd like to hear what you're saying and at the same time I'm distracted by an upcoming appointment. I'd like to wait until I can give you my complete attention because you're important to me. How do you feel about stopping soon and continuing this evening?"* (hear her feelings)

Here's a sample dialog:

"Nobody seems to care about what's happening in the world today!"

"Sounds like you're feeling some discouragement?"

"I just hate the ignorance and harmful destruction."

"You'd like a safer world?"

"Yeah. I want people to value Life, not money and oil."

"Seems as if you're wanting people to wake up and change their priorities before it's too late. You need social change?"

"Exactly!"

"Would you like to hear how I deal with my discouragement and need for a major change?"

Two more suggestions:

1. DON'T TAKE THINGS PERSONALLY.

As listeners, taking criticism personally is our single biggest miscalculation. We all do it. The biggest listening secret is that when people seem to be complaining they are really poorly expressing their own feelings and needs.

"You're so incompetent" might be more accurately expressed as "I'm so exasperated. I wish I could explain things so clearly, that you'd do them perfectly the first time." If, however, you do hear such a "you statement" try something like, "You're upset? You wanted something done differently?"

If you hear, "You never listen to me," instead of reacting you could try, "Are you needing my full attention right now?"

That speaker might have meant, "I'm frustrated. I'd really prefer to have your total concentration right now. Would you be willing to let the telephone machine answer calls while we're talking?"

Again, to receive criticism empathically listen for the unspoken need. In hearing it as that person's need, you'll be less tempted to defend yourself and more available to listen.

2. DON'T GRAB THE SPOTLIGHT.

When we agree silently, or verbally, to be a listener, it's a serious agreement. We are being entrusted with someone's vulnerability. Often, however, right in the middle of listening, we get an overwhelming temptation to interrupt. Inadvertently we're asking the speaker to focus on us. It seems justified though, because we're convinced the information is valuable and will be very helpful.

10 Obstacles to Empathic Listening.

The ten most common ways to take the spotlight away from the speaker are when we:

1. Give advice /Fix-it

"I think you should ..."

"If I were you, I'd ..."

"There's a wonderful book"

2. Explain it away

"I would have called but ..."

"She only said that 'cuz you..."

"But I didn't mean to"

3. Correct it

"That's not how it happened."

"You're the one who started..."

"Excuse me? I never said that!"

4. Console

"It wasn't your fault..."

"You did the best you could..."

"It could've been a lot worse."

5. Tell a story

"That reminds me of the time..."

"I know just how you feel."

"Yesterday, I was walking ..."

6. Shut down feelings

"Cheer up. Don't be so mad"

"Blah blah. Quit belly-aching."

7. Sympathize/commiserate

"Oh you poor thing..."

"How can people do that?"

8. Investigate/interrogate

"What made you do that?"

"When did this happen?"

"Why didn't you call ?"

9. Evaluate/Educate

"You're just too unrealistic."

"The trouble with them is..."

"What is this telling you?"

"If you weren't so defensive..."

10. One-Up

"That's nothing. Listen to this!"

Timing is Everything!

These temptations are actually “premature” attempts to connect because they usually come with nurturing intentions. They’re not “wrong” but the timing is poor if the speaker is still uncovering her deeper need. Listen for responses that indicate completion, such as, “Exactly!” or “That’s right!”

Use your intuition about timing or ask if the speaker is ready to listen.

“Do you have a sense that I’ve really heard you or is there something else you’d like me to understand?”

“I’m moved by what you’ve said. Would you like to hear my feelings about that?”

“I’m curious about this. May I ask a couple of questions?”

“I have a suggestion. Would you like to hear it now or would you prefer to continue?”

“I have a story that’s similar and might be useful. Would you enjoy hearing it?”

“I’m remembering it a little differently. Would you be willing to hear my version?”

“Given the situation, would you like to brainstorm some solutions together?”

Empathic Listening is a combination of:

- 1) Having the intention to connect
- 2) Focusing on clarifying the speaker’s needs first
- 3) Remembering that criticism is someone’s poorly expressed feelings and unmet needs,
- 4) Checking the timing before offering your feelings, suggestions, corrections etc.

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APPENDIX E

EMPATHY WORKSHOP SURVEY TIME 1 AND 3

Date you are taking this survey? _____

What is your gender? _____

How many semesters/years have you been teaching? _____

Have you had training in Instructional Communication or Psychology? _____

Directions: Please indicate your amount of agreement with each of the following statements by placing an X in the box that best describes the degree to which you agree or disagree.

| | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Not Sure | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1) When I listen to a student's problem, I often give advice about how to handle to the problem. | | | | | |
| 2) When listening to a student's concerns, it helps to guess what they might want or need. | | | | | |
| 3) When I listen to a student's problems, I try to empathize with the student. | | | | | |
| 4) It is good for the student to advise them to stay focused on their schoolwork when they have a problem. | | | | | |
| 5) When a student is concerned about a low grade, I tell them to study harder. | | | | | |
| 6) When I am trying to understand a student, I guess what they are feeling, then check it out. | | | | | |
| 7) If a student seems upset, it is a good idea to help them find reasons to feel differently about the situation. | | | | | |
| 8) When I am advising a student, I tend to dominate the conversation. | | | | | |
| 9) If I'm upset about how an interaction is going with a student, it helps to consider what I want or need in this moment. | | | | | |
| 10) When I'm not sure if I understand a student, I say what I heard, and ask if I heard it correctly. | | | | | |

| | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Not Sure | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 11) When a student seems worried, I reassure them that things will get better. | | | | | |
| 12) When a student criticizes me, I try to listen to what that person is feeling and needing. | | | | | |
| 13) It is alright if I don't understand what a student is saying, because the rules must be followed. | | | | | |
| 14) When I listen to a student's problems, the first thing I do is I analyze the problem. | | | | | |
| 15) If a student does not understand how to do an assignment, I refer them to the syllabus. | | | | | |
| 16) When someone appears upset or critical about my behavior, it is best to offer a quick apology. | | | | | |
| 17) If I have strong feelings about a situation it is helpful to consider my values as well. | | | | | |
| 18) If I in a disagreement with a student, it is good a good thing for me to consider my needs. | | | | | |
| 19) When a student is complaining about the class or the course, I try to hear what it is they need. | | | | | |
| 20) If a student does not follow classroom rules, it is appropriate to lower their grade for the course. | | | | | |

Thank you for your participation. Your responses to this survey are anonymous. This survey will remain in the possession of the investigator who has distributed it. The data will be used in the investigator's Master's thesis, and may also be presented at an academic conference, or published in an academic journal.

Steckal, Donna. 1994. Compassionate Communication Training and Levels of Participants Empathy and Self-Compassion (PhD Dissertation). San Diego CA: United States International University, Faculty of Psychology and Family Studies. Modified by Marion Little (2005) for Master's Thesis: Victoria, BC, Canada: University of Victoria. Modified by Suzanne Jones (2008) for Master's Thesis: San Diego, CA: San Diego State University. The essential meaning of, and the information targeted by each question, has been retained.

APPENDIX F

EMPATHY WORKSHOP SURVEY - TIME 2

Date you are taking this survey? _____

What is your gender? _____

How many semesters/years have you been teaching? _____

Have you had training in Instructional Communication or Psychology? _____

Directions: Please indicate your amount of agreement with each of the following statements by placing an X in the box that best describes the degree to which you agree or disagree.

| | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Not Sure | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1) When I listen to a student's problem, I would give advice about how to handle the problem. | | | | | |
| 2) When listening to a student's concerns, it helps to guess what they might want or need. | | | | | |
| 3) When I listen to a student's problems, I would try to empathize with the student. | | | | | |
| 4) It is good for the student to advise them to stay focused on their schoolwork when they have a problem. | | | | | |
| 5) When a student is concerned about a low grade, I would tell them to study harder. | | | | | |
| 6) When I am trying to understand a student, I would guess what they are feeling, then check it out. | | | | | |
| 7) If a student seems upset, it is a good idea to help them find reasons to feel differently about the situation. | | | | | |
| 8) When I am advising a student, I would dominate the conversation. | | | | | |
| 9) If I'm upset about how an interaction is going with a student, it helps to consider what I want or need in this moment. | | | | | |
| 10) When I'm not sure if I understand a student, I would say what I heard, and ask if I heard it correctly. | | | | | |

| | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Not Sure | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 11) When a student seems worried, I would reassure them that things will get better. | | | | | |
| 12) When a student criticizes me, I would try to listen to what that person is feeling and needing. | | | | | |
| 13) It is alright if I don't understand what a student is saying, because the rules must be followed. | | | | | |
| 14) When I listen to a student's problems, the first thing I would do is I analyze the problem. | | | | | |
| 15) If a student does not understand how to do an assignment, I refer them to the syllabus. | | | | | |
| 16) When someone appears upset or critical about my behavior, it is best to offer a quick apology. | | | | | |
| 17) If I have strong feelings about a situation it is helpful to consider my values as well. | | | | | |
| 18) If I in a disagreement with a student, it is good a good thing for me to consider my needs. | | | | | |
| 19) When a student is complaining about the class or the course, I would try to hear what it is they need. | | | | | |
| 20) If a student does not follow classroom rules, it is appropriate to lower their grade for the course. | | | | | |

Thank you for your participation. Your responses to this survey are anonymous. This survey will remain in the possession of the investigator who has distributed it. The data will be used in the investigator's Master's thesis, and may also be presented at an academic conference, or published in an academic journal.

Steckal, Donna. 1994. Compassionate Communication Training and Levels of Participants Empathy and Self-Compassion (PhD Dissertation). San Diego CA: United States International University, Faculty of Psychology and Family Studies. Modified by Marion Little (2005) for Master's Thesis: Victoria, BC, Canada: University of Victoria. Modified by Suzanne Jones (2008) for Master's Thesis: San Diego, CA: San Diego State University. The essential meaning of, and the information targeted by each question, has been retained.

APPENDIX G

GTA PERSONAL INTERVIEW SURVEY

GTA PERSONAL INTERVIEW SURVEY

- 1) What Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication training have you had?
- 2) What are some of the ideas from the workshop that have been most valuable for you?
- 3) Have you used any of the strategies you learned at the workshop with your students during the last few months?
- 4) Has the empathy training shifted the way you communicate with your students?
- 5) Has the empathy training shifted the way you relate to your students (e.g. how you feel about the nature of your relationship with your students)?
- 6) Have you noticed shifts in other areas of relating to your students?
- 7) Have you seen any evidence that the NVC training has enhanced your students' learning and/or motivation to learn?
- 8) Do you believe that empathy has made any difference in how much your students have applied the things you have taught them this fall?
- 9) What challenges have you faced in attempting to use empathy with your students?

APPENDIX H

GTA INFORMED CONSENT FORM

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Before you give your consent to volunteer, it is important that you read the following information and ask as many questions as necessary to be sure you understand what you will be asked to do.

Principal Investigators: Suzanne Jones, B.A. Communication, M.A. Candidate, San Diego State University, School of Communication. Study supervised by Dr. Brian Spitzberg, San Diego State University, School of Communication.

Purpose of the Study: This study will assess teachers' knowledge of the concept of empathy, and whether training in the communication model called Nonviolent Communication can increase that knowledge and encourage the use of empathy in Teacher/Student Interactions. Participants will include volunteers who attend the NVC Training Workshop presented at the charter school, Innovations Academy. The number of participants is expected to be approximately 9.

Description of the Study: Your participation is completely voluntary. Your participation involves taking two 20 question surveys – one right before the training, and the other directly after the training. The survey contains questions about your understanding of the concept of empathy, and how you use it now, and how you may use it differently after the training. It is expected that it will take 10 minutes or less to complete the survey. Both surveys will be taken in this room. At the end of the fall semester, 2008, participants will be asked to volunteer to take a third survey which will be almost exactly like the one taken at the training workshop. Of those willing to continue participating in the study at that time, I will also ask for volunteers who are willing to be interviewed in a one on one interview about their experience of employing the training information in the semester of teaching following the training workshop. The interviews will consist of just three open-ended questions having to do with use of the training received at today's workshop: 1) employment of any of the training from today's workshop, 2) observances of differences in your relationships with the students, and 3) whether you would like to share specific experiences. The interviews are expected to take about 45 minutes.

Risks or Discomforts: The risks or discomforts associated with this study are expected to be minimum; no greater than with any other activity you would be involved in on a daily basis.

Benefits of the Study: A teacher's main goal is to pass on subject material to students, but teacher/student relationships are very important because they can foster or impede this passing on of information. Learning more about the concept of empathy, and being able to use empathy as a relational tool can improve teacher/student relationships, may contribute to the student, the teacher, and society in the long run. **I cannot guarantee, however, that you will receive any benefits from participating in this study.**

Confidentiality: All responses to these surveys and interviews are anonymous and will be used only for the purposes of the study. The data may be eventually used as part of a Master's thesis, published along with data from other similar studies in an academic journal, or presented at an academic conference. The research files will be kept in the possession of the principal investigator.

Incentives to Participate: There are no incentives offered for participating in this study.

Costs and/or Compensation for Participation: There are no costs associated with participation in this study.

Questions about the Study: **If you have any questions about the research now, please ask. If you have questions later about the research, you may contact the principal investigator at xxxx. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the Division of Research Affairs, San Diego State University (telephone: 619-594-6622; email: irb@mail.sdsu.edu).**

APPENDIX I

NVC TRAINING WORKBOOK FOR STUDENTS



COMPASSIONATE (NONVIOLENT) COMMUNICATION
at Innovations Academy, San Diego

Marcelline Brogli, MFT

*Certified Trainer - Center for Nonviolent Communication
 Marriage / Family Therapist - Lic. # MFT 18222*

TEL: 858-755-4053 • FAX: 858-755-6853 • E-MAIL: mbrogli@earthlink.net

SPEAKING IN GIRAFFE LANGUAGE

*also called **Compassionate Communication***

OBSERVATION

WHEN I *see, hear, think, remember, imagine...,*

FEELINGS

I AM *(my feelings) (sad, hurt, scared, glad, safe, relieved ...)*

NEEDS

BECAUSE I need and value ...

REQUEST

AND NOW would you be willing to ...

LISTENING IN GIRAFFE LANGUAGE

also called ***Nonviolent or
Compassionate Communication***

FACT or OBSERVATION

When you see, hear, think, imagine, remember . . .

FEELINGS

Are you...? his or her feelings,
“angry” is a cover up feeling for hurt, sad or scared.

NEEDS

Because you need / value . . (Safety, Belonging,
Trust. etc.)

REQUEST

And now you would like...

RELATIONSHIP NEEDS

BELONGING

Accomplishment

Affection

Appreciation

Beautiful things to look at, feel and listen to

CHOICES

Creative expression

Dignity, RESPECT

Exercise, FUN, Play

Harmony

To have chances to help others

Honesty, Truthfulness

Learning new skills

Order

POWER

Peace, Reassurance, Rest

SAFETY

Security, Space

Support, Touch

Understanding

TRUST

APPENDIX J

NVC TEACHER TRAINING BOOKLET

Marcelline Brogli, MA, MFT, *Certified Trainer, Center for Nonviolent Communication, Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist* Tel.: 858-755-4053 Fax: 858-792-7643 Web: www.cnv.org e-mail: mbrogli@earthlink.net

Introductory Workshop To Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication with Marcelline Brogli, MA, MFT

Center for Nonviolent Communication

5600-A San Francisco Road NE, Albuquerque NM 87109

Tel: (800) 255-7696 Fax: (505) 247-0414 email/www: cnvc@cnvc.org

Nonviolent Communication SM (NVC) is a process that strengthens our ability to inspire compassion from others and respond compassionately to others and ourselves. NVC guides us to reframe how we express ourselves and how we hear others by focusing our consciousness on what we are observing, feeling, needing, and requesting. Practical and proven in daily life around the world, Nonviolent Communication is a reliable language for being heard, hearing others, clearly and confidently expressing our needs and dreams, and for working through conflict with compassion and success.

Nonviolent Communication Training strengthens the ability to:

Make clear, non-interpretive observations when others' words or actions conflict with our own values.

Evaluate honestly without passing judgment.

Request assertively the cooperation we need without demanding or commanding.

Understand and respect the feelings and needs underlying communications that we receive from others even when we do not like the form of the message.

Dr. Marshall B. Rosenberg developed Nonviolent Communication and founded The Center for Nonviolent Communication (CNVC) which is now a global organization whose vision is a world where everyone's needs are met peacefully. CNVC contributes to this vision by facilitating the creation of life-serving systems. We do this by living and teaching the process of NVC which strengthens the ability of people to compassionately connect with themselves and one another, share resources, and resolve conflicts.

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Outline of Nonviolent Communication

Clearly expressing how I am without blaming or criticizing.

- 1. The concrete actions I am observing (remembering, imagining) that are contributing (or not contributing) to my wellbeing.*
- 2. How I am feeling in relation to these actions.*
- 3. The life energy in the form of needs, desires, wishes, values, or thoughts creating my feelings.*

Clearly requesting that which would enrich my life without demanding.

- 4. The concrete actions I would like taken.*

Empathically receiving how you are without hearing blame or criticism.

- 1. The concrete actions you are observing (remembering, imagining) that are contributing (or not contributing) to your well-being.*
- 2. How you are feeling in relation to these actions.*
- 3. The life energy in the form of needs, desires, wishes, values, or thoughts creating your feelings.*

Empathically receiving that which would enrich your life without hearing any demand.

- 4. The concrete actions you would like taken.*

NEEDS INVENTORY

Autonomy

- choose one's dreams/goals/values
- choose one's plan for fulfilling one's dreams/goals/values

Celebration

- celebrate the creation of life
- celebrate the loss of life (mourning)

Interdependence

- acceptance
- closeness
- consideration
- contribute to the enrichment of life (exercise one's power by giving that which contributes to life)
- order
- empathy
- honesty (empowering honesty: that which enables us to learn from our limitations)
- appreciation
- love
- reassurance
- respect
- support
- trust
- warmth

Physical Nurturance

- air
- food
- movement/exercise
- protection from that which threatens life
- rest
- sexual expression
- shelter
- touch
- water

Integrity

- Authenticity
- Meaning
- Creativity
- Order

Play Spiritual communion

- Beauty
- Harmony
- Inspiration

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EXPRESSING COMPASSIONATELY

1. Stating the observable behavior: Take care not to mix observations with evaluations.

When I (saw, heard, remembered, imagined)

2. Expressing my true feelings:

Take a moment to feel the feelings before stating them. Yes, there is time! If you say "I feel like/that/it/I/you," no feelings follow.

I am/was

3. Stating my unmet needs:

The needs may include you and others.

Because I am/was needing

4. Making my connecting request in positive, "do-able" action language:

Are you willing or And now I would like you

- a) to tell me what you heard me say.
 - b) to tell me how you feel about what I said.
 - c) to tell me if this sounds to you like a demand or a request for cooperation.
 - d) to tell me what you wish had happened.
 - e) to tell me how you feel about exploring possible solutions.
-
-

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RECEIVING COMPASSIONATELY (or Listening Empathically)

1. What is the Observable Behavior: Take care not to mix observations with evaluations.

When you (hear/heard, notice/d, remember/ed, imagine/d)

2. Guess the Feelings: What might the person be feeling?
Take a moment to guess his/her feelings

Are/were you (hurt, sad, scared, glad, relieved, concerned, puzzled...)?

You 'must' have been (dismayed, frightened, delighted...)

I am *guessing* that you were (upset, annoyed, grateful...)

3. Guess the Need:

Because you were needing (trust, peace, support)

Use "because you," not "because I."

Feelings are created by needs being met or not met, not by what others do or not do.

4. Guess the Connecting Request in positive action language:

And right now, would you like

a) me to tell you what I heard you say?

b) me to tell you how I feel about what you said?

c) me to tell you if that sounds to me like a demand or a request for cooperation.

d) me to tell you an experience of mine that I'd like to share?

e) to explore some solutions together?

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Feelings likely to be present when our needs and wants ARE being satisfied.

Glad

cheerful
confident
delighted
encouraged
excited
grateful
happy
hopeful
inspired
joyful
proud
relieved
satisfied
touched

Playful

adventurous
alive
effervescent
energetic
enthusiastic
exuberant
giddy
happy
impish
invigorated
refreshed
stimulated
thrilled
zestful

Peaceful

blissful
calm
connected
content
encouraged
engrossed
expansive
free
loving
relaxed
satisfied
serene
thankful
tranquil

Loving

affectionate
amorous
appreciative
comfortable
compassionate
connected
friendly
grateful
optimistic
secure
sensitive
tender
trusting
warm

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Feelings likely to be present when our needs and wants are NOT being satisfied.

Angry

aggravated
exasperated
agitated
furious
annoyed
hostile
bitter
irate
cross
pessimistic
disgusted
resentful
enraged
shocked
upset

Confused

apprehensive
perplexed
disturbed
puzzled
embarrassed
frustrated
torn
uncomfortable
hesitant
uneasy
insecure
unsteady
overwhelmed
withdrawn

Tired

apathetic
indifferent
detached
inert
exhausted
lethargic
fatigued
listless
fidgety
heavy
sleepy
helpless
weary

Scared

afraid
jittery
anguished
lonely
anxious
nervous
fearful
overwhelmed
frightened
panicky
helpless
startled
horrified
terrified
worried

Sad

depressed
gloomy
despondent
grieved
discouraged
heavy
disheartened
helpless
dismayed
hurt
distant
lonely
distressed
overwhelmed
troubled

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NON-FEELING INVENTORY

(Words that tell us our feelings are cloaked in evaluations)

When we think *what* people have done to us. "I feel ..."

ABANDONED

abused

attacked

blamed

betrayed

cheated

cornered

CRITICIZED

Distrusted

dumped on

hassled

ignored

insulted

INTIMIDATED

invalidated

isolated

MANIPULATED

misunderstood

NEGLECTED

patronized

PRESSURED

put down

ripped off

rejected

smothered

threatened

tricked

unaccepted

USED

violated

Or, when we think *what* we are rather than how we feel. "I feel ..."

FOOLISH

guilty

inadequate

left out

let down

overpowered

overworked

STUPID

unheard

UNIMPORTANT

unseen

untrusted

UNWANTED

unworthy

worthless

There are more; have fun detecting them!

Other NON-Feeling Warning Signs

When a person begins with "I feel..."

like

that

it

as if

you, I, he, she, they...

Rather than a feeling statement, what tends to follow these words are the thoughts, evaluations, judgments or the criticism listed above

APPENDIX K

EMPATHY GARDEN

*The following three appendices contain copies of some of the handouts given to the students at the charter school to help familiarize them with the concept of empathy and familiarize them with the idea of identifying their needs. The first two were just hand drawn pictures and could definitely be improved. The third handout has been imported from a longer document so the page numbers are a little confusing, but all three work as a demonstration of the type of handouts that could be used.

Empathy Garden – Color the Flowers



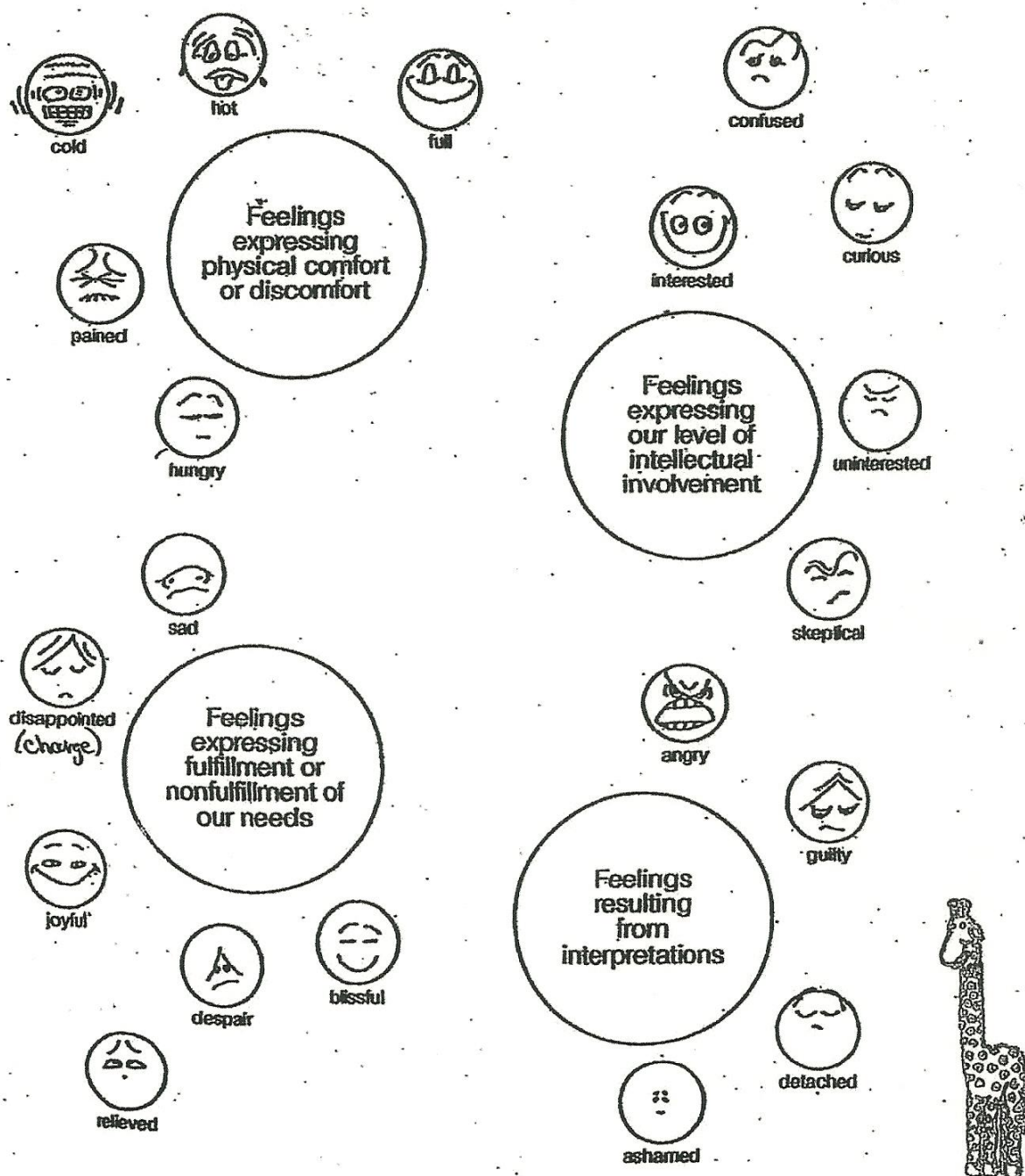
APPENDIX L
NEEDS LIST

Needs List – Color the Clouds



APPENDIX M
WHERE FEELINGS COME FROM

Feelings



APPENDIX N

FOCUS SHEET

Focus Sheet

Name: _____ Location of Incident: _____

Date: _____ Staff Member: _____

Agreement Broken:

The impact of breaking agreement on myself is:

The impact of breaking agreement on others is:

What I can be trusted for in the future is:

I understand that if 3 focus sheets have been written in a month's time, that my parents will be informed. Signature: _____

APPENDIX O

**GIRAFFE-E-GRAM FOR EXPRESSING
TROUBLED FEELINGS**

GIRAFFE-E-GRAM

This Giraff-E-Gram is sent to you today to let you know about something that troubles me. Please write or talk to me about it.

Date _____

Dear _____

When I _____

I am/was (my feelings) _____

Because I am/was needing _____

And now would you be willing to _____

_____ by _____

Adapted from Marshall Rosenberg, Ph.D. by Holley Humphrey and M Brogli International
Center for Nonviolent Communication, www.cnvc.org. Oct 01mb

APPENDIX P

**GIRAFFE-E-GRAM FOR EXPRESSING
APPRECIATION**

GIRAFFE-E-GRAM

This Giraff-E-Gram is sent to you today to let you know about something that I appreciate. Please write or talk to me about it.

Date _____

Dear _____

When I _____

I am/was (my feelings) _____

Because I am/was needing _____

And now would you be willing to _____

_____ by _____

Adapted from Marshall Rosenberg, Ph.D. by Holley Humphrey and M Brogli. International Center for Nonviolent Communication, www.cnvc.org. Oct 01mb

APPENDIX Q

DETECTIVE GAME CARDS

| | |
|--|--|
| That's a dumb idea. | I have another idea. |
| She's nosy. | She asked me questions about what I did. |
| They are mean. | They said I couldn't have a turn. |
| He doesn't care about other people. | He often cuts in front of others in line. |
| She's greedy. | She took the last three pieces of pizza. |
| He is a genius. | He figured out a math problem before I did. |
| She's a dictator. | She said I had to turn the jump rope. |
| They think they're so great. | They said that I couldn't sit at their table. |

APPENDIX R

IA TEACHER SURVEY TIME 1 AND 2

Age ____ **Female/Male** ____ **Cultural Background** ____ **Years teaching** ____

Part I

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each statement below by circling the [A] if you agree with it or think it is mostly true, or by circling the [D] if you disagree with it or think it is mostly untrue. If there is more you would like to say about your responses, feel free to comment briefly in the box provided at the end of this section.

- A D** 1) When I am pleased with a student's progress on a project, I praise the student.
- A D** 2) When students do something that I don't want them to do, I tell them they are misbehaving.
- A D** 3) If a student does not do what I want them to do, I tell them why it is important for them to do what I want them to.
- A D** 4) If a student does something I like, I tell them specifically what they did that I like.
- A D** 5) When the students are being too noisy, I sometimes tell them they are making me unhappy.
- A D** 6) If a student does not want to do what I ask them to do, I ask what they want to do instead.
- A D** 7) When a student is disrupting the class, I think about what it is I need.
- A D** 8) I am always willing to hear a student say "no" to one of my requests.
- A D** 9) When I am talking to the class, I expect the students to be quiet and listen.
- A D** 10) When I am feeling good about my students, I am usually thinking about my needs.
- A D** 11) If two students are having an argument, I tell them they are both at fault for arguing with one another.
- A D** 12) When I want students to participate more in a project, I explain to them that their participation will make me happy.
- A D** 13) I believe that a quiet classroom is imperative to learning.
- A D** 14) If students get restless with a project, I ask them why they have lost interest.

Comments: If there is anything more you would like to say about your responses to the above statements, please comment on the back of this page. Please number your responses so I know which statements you are referring to.

Part II

Below you will find a variety of situations that you might experience in the classroom, and each is followed by some possible responses. Please place a check mark next to the statement that best describes the approach you would be most likely to take in each situation. If there is more you would like to say about your responses, feel free to comment briefly in the box provided at the end of this section.

- 1) When the students are excited and not listening to me, I generally...
 - ☐ a) insist they settle down.
 - ☐ b) use a signal that we have all previously decided upon to indicate that I would like them to settle down.
 - ☐ c) tell them I can see that they are full of energy, and request that they listen to me.
 - ☐ d) start a discussion about what would benefit everyone.

- 2) I generally get the students to follow my directions by...
 - ☐ a) explaining my needs to the students.
 - ☐ b) reminding the students why it is important to follow directions.
 - ☐ c) asking them if they are willing to follow my directions.
 - ☐ d) insisting that the students do what I ask.

- 3) When a student takes another student's belonging, I generally...
 - ☐ a) ask the student if they are willing to return the belonging.
 - ☐ b) ask the student what motivated their action.
 - ☐ c) explain to the student how to get along with others.
 - ☐ d) tell them that taking other student's belongings is wrong.

- 4) When a student is upset, I generally...
 - ☐ a) tell them that they need to calm down.
 - ☐ b) try to guess what they need.
 - ☐ c) tell them that I can see they are crying.
 - ☐ d) tell them that I do not have time to deal with their feelings.

- 5) When considering how to do classroom projects, I generally...
 - ☐ a) set up the project for the students.
 - ☐ b) ask the students to plan the project.
 - ☐ c) work together to set up the project.
 - ☐ d) make sure that the students set up the project properly.

Comments: 6) If you would like to respond further to any of the statements in this section, please comment on the back of this page. Please number your responses so that we know which statements you are referring to.

Part III - For the following behaviors, indicate your view of each behavior by checking the space along the word-pair that best reflects your attitude toward the behavior, as the example below illustrates.

Unsupportive: ___:___:___: ☒ :Supportive

1) Advising a student how to behave is...

Compassionate: ___:___:___:Uncaring

| | | | |
|---------------|---------------------------|----------------------|----------|
| Compassionate | Somewhat Compassionate | Somewhat Uncaring | Uncaring |
|---------------|---------------------------|----------------------|----------|

2) Telling students it is important for them to do what I ask them to do is...

Cooperative: ___:___:___:Hierarchical

| | | | |
|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| Cooperative | Somewhat Cooperative | Somewhat Hierarchical | Hierarchical |
|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|

3) When I tell a student they must follow the class rules, I believe that my communication is...

Collaborative: ___:___:___:Authoritarian

| | | | |
|---------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| Collaborative | Somewhat Collaborative | Somewhat Authoritarian | Authoritarian |
|---------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|

4) Responsibility for creating classroom rules belongs to...

Teacher: ___:___:___:Students

| | | | |
|---------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Teacher | Teacher with input from students | Students with input from teacher | Students |
|---------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------|

5) When I ask the students to be quiet, I am being...

Respectful: ___:___:___:Not respectful

| | | | |
|------------|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| Respectful | Somewhat Respectful | Somewhat Not respectful | Not Respectful |
|------------|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|

Part IV

Indicate the extent to which you find the relational values below present in the TEACHERS at Innovations Academy by placing a check mark in front of the statement that best describes your experience. Remember your responses to this survey are confidential.

Compassion

- ☐ Very Present
- ☐ Moderately Present
- ☐ Slightly Present
- ☐ Not Present

Respect

- ☐ Very Present
- ☐ Moderately Present
- ☐ Slightly Present
- ☐ Not Present

Cooperation

- ☐ Very Present
- ☐ Moderately Present
- ☐ Slightly Present
- ☐ Not Present

Support

- ☐ Very Present
- ☐ Moderately Present
- ☐ Slightly Present
- ☐ Not Present

Indicate the extent to which you find the relational values below present in the STUDENTS at Innovations Academy by placing a check mark in front of the statement that best describes your experience.

Compassion

- ☐ Very Present
- ☐ Moderately Present
- ☐ Slightly Present
- ☐ Not Present

Respect

- ☐ Very Present
- ☐ Moderately Present
- ☐ Slightly Present
- ☐ Not Present

Cooperation

- ☐ Very Present
- ☐ Moderately Present
- ☐ Slightly Present
- ☐ Not Present

Support

- ☐ Very Present
- ☐ Moderately Present
- ☐ Slightly Present
- ☐ Not Present

Indicate the extent to which you find the relational values below present in the PARENTS at Innovations Academy by placing a check mark in front of the statement that best describes your experience.

Compassion

- ☐ Very Present
- ☐ Moderately Present
- ☐ Slightly Present
- ☐ Not Present

Respect

- ☐ Very Present
- ☐ Moderately Present
- ☐ Slightly Present
- ☐ Not Present

Cooperation

- ☐ Very Present
- ☐ Moderately Present
- ☐ Slightly Present
- ☐ Not Present

Support

- ☐ Very Present
- ☐ Moderately Present
- ☐ Slightly Present
- ☐ Not Present

Thank you for participating in this research study. Remember that your responses are confidential. If you have any questions about the study, please contact me at xxxx.

APPENDIX S

IA TEACHER PERSONAL INTERVIEW SURVEY

IA TEACHER PERSONAL INTERVIEW SURVEY

- 1) What Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication training have you had?
- 2) What are some of the Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication ideas that have been most valuable for you?
- 3) Have you used any Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication strategies with your students during the last few months?
- 4) Has Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication training shifted the way you relate to your students (e.g. how you feel about the nature of your relationship with your students)?
- 5) Have you noticed shifts in other areas of relating to your students?
- 6) Have you changed any communication strategies with your students since being trained in Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication?
- 7) Have you seen any evidence that the Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication training has enhanced your student's learning and/or motivation to learn?
- 8) Do you believe that Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication training has made any difference in how much your students apply the things you have taught them this year?
- 9) What challenges have you faced in attempting to use Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication with your students?

APPENDIX T**IA STUDENT SURVEY TIME 1 AND 2**

Are you a girl or a boy? _____ What is your cultural background? _____
 What is your birth date? _____ What grade are you in? _____
 Has NVC Trainer come to your class? _____

Part 1 - Please read the following sentences about things your teacher might do in class. Tell us if you Agree or Disagree with each sentence by circling just the A if you mostly agree with it or think it is mostly true, or circle the D if you mostly disagree with it or think it is mostly untrue.

- A D** 1) If I tell the teachers that I need something, they try to help me get what I need.
- A D** 2) When I do not want to do what my teachers ask me to do, they tell me that I have to do in anyway.
- A D** 3) If I do not want to do what my teachers want me to do, my teachers ask me what I want to do instead.
- A D** 4) When I am doing something my teachers don't want me to do, they tell me that I am misbehaving.
- A D** 5) My teachers are always willing to hear what I want to do, even if they asked me to do something different.
- A D** 6) When I tell my teachers that I want to work on a different project than the other students, they tell me that I have to do what everyone else is doing.
- A D** 7) My teachers tell the students that cooperation is important so all students can learn.
- A D** 8) The teachers decide what we learn about in class.
- A D** 9) My teachers tell me what it is I am doing that they like.
- A D** 10) My teachers ask the students what they want to learn in class.
- A D** 11) If the teachers want the students to do something, they explain exactly what they want.
- A D** 12) If I make a mistake, the teachers say it was my fault.

Part 2: For each sentence in Part Two, fill in the bubble that tells us what usually happens. Fill in only one bubble after each sentence.

13) When the students are not paying attention, the teachers usually...

- ☐ tell the students to be quiet and listen.
- ☐ use a signal we all agreed on to let us know they want our attention.
- ☐ say they don't care what we want because they just need us to pay attention.

14) The teachers get the students to follow directions by...

- ☐ explaining what they need from the students.
- ☐ telling us what they need and asking what we need.
- ☐ telling the students that we must do what they tell us to do.

15) When my teachers teach me something new, I...

- ☐ try to use what my teachers taught me at home and at school.
- ☐ do not really use it very much.
- ☐ I think about it, but do not use it very much.

16) When I have a disagreement with another student, I...

- ☐ try to make them do what I want.
- ☐ ask them what they need.
- ☐ tell them they are a mean.

17) When I do not like what another student is doing, I...

- ☐ call them names.
- ☐ tell them specifically what it is that I don't like to see them doing.
- ☐ think about what I need from the other student.

18) If I disagree with what a teacher is telling the students, I...

- ☐ do not do anything because it is not good to disagree with the teacher.
- ☐ tell other students, but not the teacher, because I don't want the teacher to get mad.
- ☐ tell the teacher what it is that I know about the subject.

Part 3: For each sentence in Part 3, fill in the bubble that tells us what you think is mostly true. Please fill in only one bubble after each sentence.

19) I learn more from...

- ☐ group projects that we all create together.
- ☐ work that I do by myself.

20) If a teacher tells me that I have to do something, I believe that the teacher...

- ☐ respects me.
- ☐ does not respect me.

21) When all the students are talking at once, I believe...

- ☐ the students do not respect one another.
- ☐ the students are excited and want to participate.

22) Because of the way my teachers teach the class...

- ☐ I like to participate in the projects.
- ☐ I don't feel much like participating in the projects.

23) My relationship with my classmates is...

- ☐ a partnership.
- ☐ a competition.

24) When I know more than the other students about a subject, I...

- ☐ like being the smartest student in the class.
- ☐ want to help the other students learn what I have learned.

25) My relationship with my teachers is...

- ☐ a partnership.
- ☐ a relationship where my teachers is in charge.

Part 4:

26) Please tell us how often you see the things listed below in the way your TEACHERS talk to you and act toward you by placing the number that best describes how often in front of each of the values.

1 – Not often 2 – Sometimes 3 – Often

_____Kindness _____Helpfulness _____Cooperation _____Respect

27) Please tell us how often you see the values listed below in the way your PARENTS talk to you and act toward you by placing the number that best describes how often in front of each of the values.

1 – Not often 2 – Sometimes 3 – Often

_____Kindness _____Helpfulness _____Cooperation _____Respect

28) Please tell us how often you see the values listed below in the way other STUDENTS talk to you and act toward you by placing the number that best describes how often in front of each of the values.

1 – Not often 2 – Sometimes 3 – Often

_____Kindness _____Helpfulness _____Cooperation _____Respect

Thank you for your help with my research study. If you have any questions, contact me at xxxx.

APPENDIX U

DIRECTOR INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of Study: Does Training in the Communication Model Called Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication Contribute to a Shift in Relational Values and Communication Strategies in Teachers, Students, and Parents, and Enhance Cognitive, Affective, and Behavioral Learning in Students?

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Before you give your consent to volunteer, it is important that you read the following and ask as many questions as necessary to be sure you understand what you will be asked to do.

Investigators: Principal Investigator: E. Suzanne Jones, M.A. Candidate, San Diego State University. Supervised by: Dr. Brian H. Spitzberg, Ph.D., San Diego State University.

Purpose of the Study: To determine whether training in the communication model called Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication contributes to a shift in the way teachers, students, and parents relate to, and communicate with one another, and whether students' learning and motivation to learn is enhanced by the use of the model by teachers. The study will consist of approximately 120 students, ages 7 through 13, as well as nine teachers, and approximately 100 parents. The study will be conducted at Innovations Academy, and online.

Description of the Study: If you decide to participate, you will be asked to participate in a personal interview with the principal researcher, Suzanne Jones. You will be asked to respond to questions about your experiences and use of the Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication model with students at Innovations Academy. The interview should take about 30 minutes to complete. The interviews will be conducted at Innovations Academy. If time permits, you may be asked to participate in a second personal interview in April or May of 2009. Onsite observations will also be made by the researcher. These observations will be made in the classrooms, in the recess area, in the cafeteria and assembly room.

During the interview you will be asked questions such as:

1) What are some things that have been most valuable for you, as a director, about Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication?

2) What challenges have you faced in attempting to use Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication with students?

3) Have you used any Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication strategies with students at Innovations Academy in the last few months?

Risks or Discomforts: You may feel some sadness when remembering a communication or interaction with a student or teacher that did not go well, but there is no expectation of any discomfort greater than any experienced during normal everyday activity. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You may withdraw from the interview process at any time.

Benefits of the Study: The results of the study may lead to teaching strategies that enhance teacher/student relationships and learning. This study may also contribute to the field of Instructional Communication by confirming the value of certain teaching strategies over others. Identification of and use of these strategies may create an environment where students are more motivated, retain more of the material, and are willing to contribute to a cooperative environment. I cannot guarantee, however, that anyone will receive any benefits from participating in this study.

Confidentiality: Your responses from all three surveys and the personal interviews will be confidential. **Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent allowed by law.** The data collected will remain in the hands of the investigator and kept in a locked file cabinet at the principal investigator's residence. The data will be retained for at least three years. The findings may eventually be published in an academic journal, or presented at an academic conference.

Costs and/or Compensation for Participation: There are no costs associated with participation in this study. You will not be paid for participation in this study.

Voluntary Nature of Participation: Participation in this study is voluntary. **If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to stop your participation at any**

time. Your choice to participate or your refusal to participate in this study will not, in any way, affect your relationship with Innovations Academy or SDSU.

Questions about the Study: If you have any questions about the research please contact me at xxxx. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the Division of Research Affairs, San Diego State University (telephone: 619-594-6622; email: irb@mail.sdsu.edu).

The San Diego State University Institutional Review Board has approved this consent form. If you would like a copy of this consent form for your records, please contact me at xxxx and I will provide you with a copy. You have been told that by completing the survey you are not giving up any of your legal rights.

APPENDIX V

IA TEACHER INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of Study: Does Training in the Communication Model Called Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication Contribute to a Shift in Relational Values and Communication Strategies in Teachers, Students, and Parents, and Enhance Cognitive, Affective, and Behavioral Learning in Students?

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Before you give your consent to volunteer, it is important that you read the following and ask as many questions as necessary to be sure you understand what you will be asked to do.

Investigators: Principal Investigator: E. Suzanne Jones, M.A. Candidate, San Diego State University. Supervised by: Dr. Brian H. Spitzberg, Ph.D., San Diego State University.

Purpose of the Study: To determine whether training in the communication model called Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication contributes to a shift in the way teachers, students, and parents relate to, and communicate with one another, and whether students' learning and motivation to learn is enhanced by the use of the model by teachers. The study will consist of approximately 120 students, ages 7 through 13, as well as nine teachers, and approximately 100 parents. The study will be conducted at Innovations Academy, and online.

Description of the Study: If you decide to participate, you will be asked to respond to statements on a self-report survey that will be distributed at three different times during the 2008-2009 school year. This survey will ask you to respond to statements about how you relate to and communicate with your students. Each survey should take about 30 minutes to complete. The surveys will be taken using the Survey Monkey Website and can be taken on any computer.

Example 1:

Agree or Disagree: a) If a student does not do what I want them to do, I tell them why it is important for them to do what I want them to, b) When I am pleased with a student's progress on a project, I praise the student.

Example 2: When a student takes another student's belonging, I generally...

- _____ a) ask the student if they are willing to return the belonging.
- _____ b) ask the student what motivated their action.
- _____ c) explain to the student how to get along with others.
- _____ d) tell them that taking other student's belongings is wrong.

In December (2008) and again in April (2009) you will be invited to participate in a personal interview, lasting about 30 minutes. The interview will be conducted on the Innovations Academy premises or at a coffee shop nearby at a time that is convenient for you. You are not required to do a personal interview to be part of this study. These interviews are conducted so that the researcher can gather more information than can be obtained from a survey. During the interview you will be asked questions like:

1) What are some things that have been most valuable for you as a teacher about Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication?

- 2) What challenges have you faced in attempting to use Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication with students?
- 3) Have you used any Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication strategies with your students this fall?

Benefits of the Study: The results of the study may lead to teaching strategies that enhance teacher/student relationships and learning. This study may also contribute to the field of Instructional Communication by confirming the value of certain teaching strategies over others. Identification of and use of these strategies may create an environment where students are more motivated, retain more of the material, and are willing to contribute to a cooperative environment. I cannot guarantee, however, that anyone will receive any benefits from participating in this study.

Confidentiality: Your responses from all three surveys and the personal interviews will be confidential. **Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent allowed by law.** The data collected will remain in the hands of the investigator and kept in a locked file cabinet at the principal investigator's residence. The data will be retained for at least three years. The findings may eventually be published in an academic journal, or presented at an academic conference.

Costs and/or Compensation for Participation: There are no costs associated with participation in this study. You will not be paid for participation in this study.

Voluntary Nature of Participation: Participation in this study is voluntary. **If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to stop your participation at any time.** Your choice to participate or your refusal to participate in this study will not, in any way, affect your relationship with Innovations Academy or SDSU.

Questions about the Study: If you have any questions about the research please contact: Suzanne Jones at xxxx. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the Division of Research Affairs, San Diego State University (telephone: 619-594-6622; email: irb@mail.sdsu.edu).

The San Diego State University Institutional Review Board has approved this consent form. You indicate that by completing this online survey you have read the information in this document and have had a chance to ask any questions you have about the study. Completing the survey also indicates that you agree to be in the study and have been told that you can change your mind and withdraw your consent to participate at any time. If you would like a copy of this consent form for your records, please contact me, at xxxx and I will provide you with a copy. You have been told that by completing the survey you are not giving up any of your legal rights.

APPENDIX W

IA PARENTAL CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENTS

Title of Study: Does Training in the Communication Model Called Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication Contribute to a Shift in Relational Values and Communication Strategies in Teachers, Students, and Parents, and Enhance Cognitive, Affective, and Behavioral Learning in Students?

Your child is being asked to participate in a research study. Before you give your consent for your child to volunteer for this study, it is important that you read the following information detailing your child's participation, and ask as many questions as necessary to be sure you understand what your child will be asked to do. If you decide to allow your child to participate, please print out this form, sign it, and take it to your child's teacher.

If you have more than one child that will participate in this study, you will need to print out, and sign, a consent form for each child.

Investigators: Principal Investigator: E. Suzanne Jones, B.A., Communication, M.A. Candidate, Communication, San Diego State University, School of Communication. Supervised by: Dr. Brian H. Spitzberg, Ph.D., San Diego State University, School of Communication.

Purpose of the Study: To determine whether training in the communication model called Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication contributes to a shift in the way teachers, students, and parents communicate with and relate to one another, and to examine if use of the Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication model by teachers, enhances students' learning and motivation to learn. The study will consist of approximately 120 students, ages 7 through 13, as well as nine teachers, and approximately 100 parents. The study will be conducted at Innovations Academy, and online.

Description of the Study: If you decide to allow your child to participate, your child will be asked to respond to statements on a self-report survey at three separate times during the 2008-2009 school year. The statements on the survey will ask your child about how teachers communicate with them and relate to them at school, how they perceive the way the teachers communicate with them and relate to them, and how they, as a student, communicate with and relate to other students. Your child will also be asked to respond to statements on the survey about whether the way the teacher communicates with and relates to them affects their learning and motivation to learn. Your child will take the surveys at school.

Some examples of statements that your child will be asked to respond to are:

Example 1:

Agree or Disagree a) When I misbehave, my teacher tells me what I am doing that my teacher would like me to stop doing, b) My teacher is always willing to hear what I want to do, even if my teacher asked me to do something different,

Example : 2: Indicate what the teacher is most likely to do in a certain situation, such as:

When the students are not paying attention to the teacher, the teacher...
 ___ tells the students to be quiet and listen.
 ___ uses a signal we all chose to let us know that she/he wants our attention.
 ___ says he/she doesn't care what we want because he/she needs us to pay attention.

In December and again in April, your child will be invited to do a personal interview. This interview will also take about 30 minutes, and will be conducted on the premises of Innovations Academy. Your child is not required to do this interview to be part of this study. The personal interviews are conducted so that the researcher may gain more information than can be given on a survey.

The questions for the interviews will be open-ended questions, such as:

- 1) What are some things about Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication that you have liked the most?
- 2) Has learning Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication changed the way you act toward others?
- 3) Has learning Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication changed the way you talk to others?

Risks or Discomforts: The only risk I can imagine is that your child might feel some sadness when remembering a communication that did not go well, but there is no expectation of any discomfort greater than any experienced during normal daily activity. If your child does not want to continue taking the survey, they can withdraw from the process at any time.

Benefits of the Study: The results of the study may lead to teaching strategies that enhance teacher/student relationships and learning. Better educated students can participate in the institutions of society in a more informed, effective manner, thus benefitting society. This study may also contribute to the field of Instructional Communication by confirming the value of certain teaching strategies over others. Identification of and use of these strategies may create an environment where students are more motivated, retain more of the material, and are willing to contribute to a cooperative environment. I cannot guarantee, however, that anyone will receive any benefits from participating in this study.

Confidentiality: Your responses from all three surveys and the personal interviews will be confidential. **Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent allowed by law.** The data collected will remain in the hands of the investigator and kept in a locked file cabinet at the principal investigator's residence. The data will be retained for at least three years. The findings may eventually be published in an academic journal, or presented at an academic conference.

Costs and/or Compensation for Participation: There are no costs associated with participation in this study. Your child will not be paid for participating in this study.

Voluntary Nature of Participation: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your child's participation or refusal to participate will in no way affect their relationship with Innovations Academy or SDSU. If you decide to allow your child to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to stop your child's participation at any time.

Questions about the Study: If you have any questions about the research, please contact me at xxxx. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the Division of Research Affairs, San Diego State University (telephone: 619-594-6622; email: irb@mail.sdsu.edu).

The San Diego State University Institutional Review Board has approved this consent form.

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this document and have had a chance to ask any questions you have about the study. Your signature also indicates your permission for your child to participate in the study and that you have been told that you can change your mind and withdraw your consent for your child to participate at any time.

Signature of Parent/Guardian of Participant

Date

Name of Child (print)

APPENDIX X**IA STUDENT ASSENT FORM**

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Suzanne Jones, a student from San Diego State University, is studying how students, teachers, and parents talk with one another, and she is also studying whether different ways of talking by your teacher will help you learn better.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will fill out some surveys that tell about how you, your teacher, and your classmates talk with one another and treat one another. You will be asked to fill out three surveys during the school year. Each survey will take about 30 minutes to fill out.

You may also be asked to participate in an interview in December and again in April of next year where I will be asking you about how your teacher talks to you, and if the way your teacher talks to you helps you learn better. You do not have to participate in this interview. You can just fill out the surveys. (Each interview will take about 30 minutes).

You do not have to answer any question on the survey or during the interview if you do not want to. Even if you start to take the survey, or after the interview starts, you can change your mind and stop participating any time you want.

Please talk to your parents. If you have any questions about this study, please ask them before you start filling out the survey or contact me at xxxx. **Taking part in this study is up to you. No one will be upset if you don't want to participate.**

Please mark one of the choices below to tell us what you want to do:

_____ **No, I do not want to be in this project.**

_____ **Yes, I want to be in this project.**

Write your name here

Date

Project Representative

Date