

TRANSFORMING FORMAL LEARNING THROUGH EDUCATIONAL  
PERMEABILITY TO STUDENT KNOWLEDGE

by

CORINA LELUTIU-WEINBERGER

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City  
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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the  
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Dr. Colette Daiute

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12/06/2006

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Date

Chair of Examining Committee

Dr. Joseph Glick

---

12/08/2006

---

Date

Executive Officer

Dr. Colette Daiute

---

Dr. Martin Ruck

---

Dr. Roger Hart

---

Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

## Abstract

TRANSFORMING FORMAL LEARNING THROUGH EDUCATIONAL  
PERMEABILITY TO STUDENT KNOWLEDGE

by

Corina Lelutiu-Weinberger

Adviser: Professor Colette Daiute

This dissertation addresses theory and research on education and development to demonstrate the benefits of youth participation in learning. I ask whether and how urban high-school students might participate as curriculum developers, a particularly under-explored mode of active student learning and related research. I propose and examine the concept of *educational permeability to student knowledge*, through which a priori youth knowledge becomes integrated in formal learning. Based in theory arguing against unidirectional learning and knowledge reproduction, I apply the concept of *permeability* in a violence prevention context to alter youth deficit models dominating the field.

Racially/ethnically diverse adolescents from an after-school program modified an adult-authored violence prevention curriculum. The methodology grounded in socio-cultural theory and practice included collaborative group activities within zones of proximal development by use of scaffolding.

The resulting Youth Curriculum was more complex than the Adult Curriculum due to its wider range of violence types and prevention strategies, an expanded session on emotions and a new session on controversial issues of violence. Sixty three percent of the two curricula's concepts represented a priori student knowledge, which indicates youth competence in contributing to content. The Youth Curriculum's view of violence

as relational and systemic implies a broader scope that supersedes individual pathology, and supports theories of prevention that frame violence as a social phenomenon.

Besides substantive content changes, the learning process departed radically from traditional knowledge assimilation. To achieve permeability, I adjusted our project's phases to accommodate student patterns of participatory learning. The group displayed several types of peer collaboration and scaffolding. Students developed concepts by clarifying ideas, contributing to each others' points, or engaging in cognitive conflict. Student resistance to the Adult Curriculum facilitated permeability to youth perspectives and learning processes.

To create a pedagogy of permeability, I positioned the students and they positioned themselves as competent knowledge contributors. Permeability is a complex succession of events (Sequence of Permeability), whose application necessitates specific conditions. Ranging on a continuum of low-moderate-high degrees, permeability allows student ideas to enter formal educational spaces to complement curricula. Unconventional pedagogy and learning processes are needed to transform knowledge from a student perspective.

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## Table of Contents

<b>PART I.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The Structure of this Dissertation.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Youth Violence Prevention.....</b>	<b>6</b>
Youth Violence.....	9
Reviews of Preventive Efforts.....	11
Disease Centered Models of Violence and Adolescent Perpetrators.....	21
Alternative Frames of Violence Prevention: Relationships Between Individuals and Their Constructed Social Structures.....	27
A Focused Sample of Violence Prevention Programs.....	31
<b>Diverse Perspectives on Education.....</b>	<b>34</b>
Educational Neutrality, Value Systems and the Treatment of Difference.....	35
National Homogeneity, Tradition and Standards.....	36
Permeability as Part of the Multicultural Tradition of Education.....	39
Reports of a Multidimensional Crisis in Today’s Public Education.....	44
<b>Youth Participation.....</b>	<b>47</b>
A Negligible Tradition of School Participation.....	47
A Tradition of Participation Outside of Schools.....	51
<b>Developmental and Socio- Cultural Perspectives of Youth Participation in Education: Can Youth Participate and What Can They Contribute?.....</b>	<b>55</b>
ZPDs, Scaffolding, and Spontaneous and Scientific Knowledge.....	55
Peer Collaboration.....	59
Power Relations in the Classroom and the Hidden Capacities of Young Minds.....	61
Hybridity and the Third Space.....	64
Dyson’s Conceptualization of a Permeable Curriculum.....	65
<b>The Impetus Behind Developing A Model of Permeability.....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>Research Questions.....</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>PART II.....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Chapter 2: Methods for A Permeable Theory, Research and Practice.....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>The Site and Participants.....</b>	<b>71</b>
World Youth.....	72

<b>Activities, Methods and Data</b> .....	<b>73</b>
The Curriculum and Its Selection .....	77
The Transformation of the Curriculum.....	80
<b>Analyses: The Assessment of the Content, Process, and Pedagogy of the Curricular Transformation</b> .....	<b>85</b>
<b>The Coding</b> .....	<b>90</b>
<b>Narrative Analysis and Positioning Theory</b> .....	<b>95</b>
<b>Components of Permeability</b> .....	<b>100</b>
The Sequence of Permeability .....	100
Conditions Determining the Degrees of Permeability .....	103
<b>PART III</b> .....	<b>108</b>
<b>Chapter 3: Content Differences between Youth and Adult Perspectives of Violence Prevention</b> .....	<b>108</b>
<b>(1) Curricular Structural Issues</b> .....	<b>109</b>
Tables of Contents .....	109
Curriculum Overviews.....	119
<b>(2) Youth-Generated Concepts vis-à-vis Violence Prevention</b> .....	<b>126</b>
Elements of the AC That Were Preserved by the Students .....	127
Elements of the AC Modified by the Students .....	128
Unique Youth Perspectives.....	129
<b>(3) Sources of Knowledge</b> .....	<b>161</b>
<b>(4) The Imperfections in the Content of the Youth Curriculum</b> .....	<b>167</b>
<b>Chapter 4: Youth and Adult Processes Characteristic of a Permeable Practice</b> .....	<b>170</b>
<b>(1) The Process of the Learning/Transforming Task from an Adult Perspective</b> .	<b>171</b>
The Steps I Initially Proposed for Our Project.....	171
My Scaffolding as an Element of Process .....	177
Elements of Process in the Adult Curriculum.....	195
<b>(2) Elements of Youth Process</b> .....	<b>198</b>
Collaboration.....	198
Peer Scaffolding.....	201
Cognitive Conflict.....	203
Resistance .....	205

Affective and Playful Talk.....	207
Impromptu Discussions .....	210
Use of Everyday and Scientific Concepts.....	212
Chaos or Discovery Episodes .....	214
<b>(3) Role Playing as an Ideal Learning Venue in this Project .....</b>	<b>217</b>
<b>(4) Our Group’s Roadblocks with Making the Process of Permeability Work .....</b>	<b>218</b>
<b>Chapter 5: A Pedagogy of Permeability .....</b>	<b>225</b>
<b>(1) My Explicit Pedagogy Intended to Create Permeability .....</b>	<b>226</b>
<b>(2) The Youth’s Explicit Narratives about Their Student Roles and Relationships with Teachers .....</b>	<b>230</b>
<b>(3) The Students’ Implicit Pedagogical-Like Behavior During Our Sessions .....</b>	<b>239</b>
<b>(4) The Vision of Pedagogy as Devised by Students in the New Curriculum.....</b>	<b>242</b>
<b>PART IV .....</b>	<b>248</b>
<b>Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion .....</b>	<b>248</b>
<b>Youth Perspectives as Important Missing Aspects of Violence Prevention .....</b>	<b>249</b>
<b>Implications of Permeability for Development and Education .....</b>	<b>258</b>
Adult Scaffolding and the Transformation Process .....	259
Youth Processes of Knowledge Transformation .....	261
Re-Positioning Learning Roles in Education.....	263
<b>Permeability Extends Similar Models of Youth Participation in Learning .....</b>	<b>267</b>
<b>Permeability as a System for Participatory Youth Development in Learning.....</b>	<b>269</b>
The Sequence of Permeability .....	271
Degrees of Permeability.....	272
<b>Project Strengths.....</b>	<b>273</b>
The Advantages of Permeability.....	273
Youth Development .....	274
The Extended Potential of These Data Beyond This Dissertation.....	275
<b>Project Limitations .....</b>	<b>277</b>
Project Level Limitations:.....	277
Limitations of Our Content, Process and Pedagogy .....	283
<b>Recommendations for Future Research/Theory and Practice .....</b>	<b>285</b>

(1) Sites, Institutional Support and Feasibility ..... 285

(2) Continued Theory Development ..... 287

(3) Methods ..... 295

(4) Evaluation..... 298

**Appendices..... 302**

**References..... 375**

## List of Tables

Table 1. Activities, Methods, Types and Time of Data Collection.....	75
Table II. Content Codes Frequencies.....	358
Table I2. Content Codes Definitions.....	358
Table I3. Process Codes Frequencies.....	360
Table I4. Process Codes Definitions.....	360
Table I5. Pedagogy Codes Frequencies.....	362
Table I6. Pedagogy Codes Definitions.....	362
Table I7. Violence Related Codes Frequencies.....	364
Table I8. Violence Related Codes Definitions.....	364
Table I9. Other Codes Frequencies.....	364
Table I10. Other Codes Definitions.....	364
Table 2. Codes with Definitions and Data.....	91
Table 3. Types of Analyses.....	98
Table 4. Conditions Determining Degrees of Permeability.....	104
Table 5. Adult Curriculum and Youth Curriculum Tables of Content.....	111
Table 6. Amount of Overlap Between Adult Curriculum and Youth Curriculum.....	117
Table 7. Violence Prevention Strategies of the Youth Curriculum.....	147
Table I11. Youth Transformation of the Two Adult Curriculum Sessions on Anger....	365
Table 8. Comparison Between the Adult Curriculum’s Two Anger Sessions and the Youth Curriculum’s Emotions Session.....	158
Table 9. Frequency of My Turns During Sessions.....	182
Table 10. Types of Facilitator Scaffolding.....	190

Table 11. Types of Facilitator Scaffolding in Two Sessions of Different Permeability..	194
Table I12. Tasks in the Adult Curriculum with Examples and Functions.....	367
Table I13. Adult Curriculum Skits.....	370
Table I14. Youth Curriculum Skits.....	372

## List of Figures

Figure 1. The Sequence of Permeability.....	102
Figure 2. Degrees of Permeability in Two Sessions with Different Tasks.....	181

## PART I

### Chapter 1: Introduction

*“Selphie: schools aren’t teaching us what we’re really supposed to know in life ... education is really like holding us back, um, because we’re easier to control that way and make us ‘better’ citizens ...*

*Asia: I agree with her too because ... if for example like you go to like a first grade um class like a preschool and then ... you give a child like something to draw and they use all these unrealistic colors and all these like out of the ordinary drawings that doesn’t make any sense whatever [it] is, because their imagination is so much bigger than ours is, because the more we grow up and the more standards they give us the ... smaller our imagination gets. ... You know how you teach them oh, that’s not real, XXX it’s supposed to be blue, not brown ... and so like at that point I think our imagination gets smaller and we all think the same way you know through our lives”*

Selphie, age 14, and Asia, age 15

Youth participation in their own development, in many forms and to different degrees, has been promoted within the past decades as a more equitable and effective educational strategy (Comer, 1988; Cook, 2005; Dyson, 1993; Gutierrez, Baquedano-López & Tejada, 1999). The modalities and outcomes of students’ increased involvement in learning have also become a research platform for many scholars. Researchers have begun to document the shortcomings of conventional passive student roles and the positive potential of youth interaction with and transformation of scientific knowledge (Gutierrez et al., 1999).

With the intention of supporting the move towards youth-centered learning paradigms, this dissertation brings together *theories of education and development* to demonstrate the need for and benefits of a particular kind of youth participation in learning. *Violence prevention education* serves as an example of a field that lends itself to student participation in closing conceptual and practical gaps. This dissertation

proposes that both *education* and *violence prevention* begin incorporating *young people as agents* in their cognitive and social formation. I ask, furthermore, whether and how a group of high school students in an urban context might participate as curriculum developers, a particularly under-explored mode of active student learning.

Violence prevention cannot be effective without educational discourses and practices appropriate for their students. The definitions of “effective” and “appropriate” are negotiated in this dissertation among three equally important parties: a conventional curriculum of violence prevention, a group of students invited to transform this curriculum, and myself, as a researcher and non-traditional adult educator who facilitates the project. My identity as a facilitator trained in the Vygotskian tradition, was further shaped by the students, who ultimately viewed me as a collaborating guide. The context is one of informal learning, which the students and I established together, away from their schools and the after-school program from which they were recruited.

This dissertation argues against the treatment of students as empty receptacles in which predetermined knowledge is to be deposited for the purposes of knowledge reproduction (Freire, 1970). For students who are not part of the mainstream, as were this project’s participants, conventional education inflicts a lack of continuity between school and their private lives, because information learned at home is not typically valued in school (Nieto, 1994). This severs a necessary developmental dialogue and makes education incomplete and *impermeable* to its students’ knowledge and, often, needs. To reform learning through student participation, this research promotes the concept of *educational permeability to student knowledge*, as a paradigm through which relevant *a priori youth knowledge* becomes integrated in formal learning. I define *permeability* as a

complex succession of events and conditions that invite student perspectives around a subject matter to enter formal educational spaces and complement curricula to increase their pertinence to young people. As I will demonstrate with this project, permeability applied in learning violence prevention can lead to the emergence of unique and valuable youth perspectives.

Meaning is often interpreted differently by adult educators and their diverse student populations. Based on the idea that scientific curricular values are inherently incomplete due to their sole adult authorship, this dissertation reports on a study inviting students to debate the idea of violence prevention. I define *knowledge/curricular/concept creation* as the result of a collaboration among students and myself as a researcher and educator, towards integrating existing curricular concepts with pertinent a priori student knowledge, or spontaneous/everyday knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978). The a priori youth knowledge is acquired by students in previous school and out-of-school learning. Although this project's idea of youth curriculum design was initiated by me, once the students became involved, the scientific content was open to their re-creation. Throughout this dissertation I use the words "we" and "our" to indicate that this work was authored not by me or the students, but by all of us together, through a collaborative and dialogical learning relationship.

This dissertation's central concept of *permeability* is complementary to and extends previous research. Dyson (1993) first introduced the concept of a permeable curriculum in her work on literacy in an urban primary school that included children from poor working class African American and middle class Caucasian communities. Dyson built on Vygotsky and Bakhtin to argue for the importance of acknowledging children's

culturally informed ideas in their acquisition of writing skills (and learning in general). Dyson (1993) challenged school practices for disassociating writing as a carrier of cultural meaning from social discourses that have an impact on children's academic, social and identity development.

Later in this paper, Gutierrez et al.'s (1999) *third space* is described as a neutral zone where students and teachers meet to negotiate their views that are inevitably divergent due to their diverse or heterogeneous identities. The product of such collisions is positive in nature and results in a hybrid body of knowledge common to all the players (Gutierrez et al., 1999). Further, the concept of *social-relational wisdom* (Daiute, Buteau & Rawlins, 2001) demonstrates how ethnic groups hold dissimilar values due to their different cultural backgrounds (Daiute & Jones, 2003), which determines their interpretations of curricula and the world. Therefore, student wisdom should be positively recognized in schools. I illustrate in this dissertation that permeability makes possible the existence of third spaces where social relational wisdom is valued, thus allowing students to move to the center of knowledge formation as important critics and co-contributors.

### The Structure of this Dissertation

Preceding reviews of relevant violence prevention, educational and developmental work I provide a map of this dissertation. There are four main parts: (1) an introduction, (2) a methods section, (3) results and (4) a discussion/conclusion section. The first sub-section of the Introduction addresses ideas of violence prevention, including various theoretical and practical efforts made to reduce violence in this country. This review points out that models of deficient adolescents in need for redress dominate the

field, and that there is a glaring absence of *student perspectives* in the conceptualization of prevention programs.

In the second sub-section of the Introduction I review current educational practices that leave room for improvement. They also parallel those of violence prevention learning, given that students still do not occupy a central role in their development, which leads to oppressive and unsuccessful learning (Nieto, 1994; Sleeter & Grant, 1991). These less-than-ideal learning conditions affect mainly underprivileged students, whose diversity is “mishandled” as an element to be mainstreamed rather than recognized as a resource for development (Gutiérrez et al., 1999). The third subsection of the introduction presents how youth participation has been conceptualized across formal and informal learning settings. Sociocultural in nature, the fourth sub-section of the Introduction proposes a concrete student influence on learning, which I further contextualize as a youth-centered re-construction of violence prevention materials. The last subsection of the Introduction states this project’s aims and research questions.

The second chapter of this dissertation contains its Methods, designed to fit the rationale behind a student-driven permeable learning. I invited a diverse group of students from an after-school organization to select a violence prevention curriculum and modify it according to their own perspectives as individuals who hold relevant knowledge not accounted for in an adult model of prevention. Our methods intended to maximize student participation (and permeability) through focus groups, discussions, and group work around editing existing curricular sessions and building new ones.

The Methods chapter also presents the rationale for analysis, which is centered around this dissertation’s major points of interest: differences in adult and youth (a)

curricular Content (Chapter 3), (b) learning and knowledge generation Processes (Chapter 4), and (c) Pedagogical approaches (Chapter 5). While the analyses capture overlaps between adult and student thinking, they also profile important differences and the need to open scientific discourses to the complementary knowledge of their learners. Through multiple types of transcript and document examinations, the results chapters detail not only the transformation of curricular content, but also that of students from passive learners to critical agents in knowledge generation. The last chapter (Chapter 6) reviews our major findings and their implications for theory, practice and future research.

### Youth Violence Prevention

Any search in educational, psychological or medical databases under “youth violence prevention” will result in numerous variations on an old theme, indicating our long-lived concern with this phenomenon. Given the continued violence around, by and towards youths (Clayton, Ballif-Spanvill & Hunsaker, 2001; Elliot, Hamburg & Williams, 1998; Howard, Flora & Griffin, 1999; Kopka, 1997), the problem of violence still deserves the full attention of researchers, practitioners and policy makers. Towards that end, this paper wishes to approach the topic of youth violence in a new way. The recipients of violence prevention need to be an integral part of the creation of such programs. I review a few types of violence prevention paradigms and assess their inclusion (or lack) of youth perspectives. With the help of selected literature on violence and its prevention, I review facts of youth violence and models that are in disagreement with this dissertation. Then, I outline existing and proposed alternatives.

Successful prevention has been associated with accommodation to, mastery of and application of curricular values and desirable behaviors. There are hundreds of violence prevention programs applied nationally (Clayton et al., 2001; Howard et al., 1999; Tolan & Guerra, 1994). I have found that these are of various theoretical orientations (such as biologically-based, cognitive-behavioral, developmental or sociocultural), have different goals (such as skill acquisition, attitudes and behavioral changes, crime rate declines, or educational achievements), and involve different levels of intervention (from individual, to community and combinations of those) (Clayton et al., 2001; Fields & McNamara, 2003; Howard et al., 1999; Tolan & Guerra, 1994). Many programs do not employ an explicit theoretical basis and present different measures of precursors and violence, making a coherent categorization of the field difficult (Howard et al., 1999). In addition, most programs have not undergone evaluations, and their effects could fall anywhere between “short-lived” to “inconclusive” (Howard et al., 1999; Elliot et al., 1998; Johnson & Johnson, 1996; Tolan & Guerra, 1994). Not surprisingly, the literature on empirical evaluation of school based prevention programs is characterized as “scattered and thin” (Samples & Aber, 1998, p. 217) or inadequate (Mytton, DiGuseppi, Gough, Taylor & Logan, 2002).

Despite numerous preventive efforts, the experts in the field note continued violence involving young members of our society (Clayton et al, 2001; Kopka, 1997; Elliot et al., 1998; Hamburg, 1998; Howard et al., 1999; Samples & Aber, 1998; Spencer, Dupree, Cunningham, Harpalani & Munoz-Miller, 2003; Tolan & Guerra, 1994). Mytton et al. (2002) cite Kaufman et al.’s report on school crime and safety where it was indicated that in 1998, 43 of 1000 US kids were victims of violent crimes while

commuting to and from school. Tragedies like Columbine High School that emerged at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century gave youth violence a new face and invoked different reactions. Some suggest that it was “a wake-up call to the nation...to teach our children how to get along with each other peacefully” (Clayton et al., 2001), while others acknowledge the need to attend on individual development, but not forget the socio-political and economical forces that mold development and often do not leave much room for negotiation (Daiute & Jones, 2003; Daiute et al., 2001, 2003; Fagan & Wilkinson, 1998).

The concern with violence is much larger than individual kids, or schools, or even communities. Hamburg (1998) and Tolan and Guerra (1994) indicate that American youth develop in an environment where violence is an acceptable common occurrence that does not surprise news audiences. Funk, Elliott, Urman, Flores, & Mock (1999) call this “desensitization” to violence due to its daily presence. Moreover, the need to attend to this phenomenon is increasing as our world is modeling violence as a tragic substitute for diplomacy (the latest warfare diplomacy of President G.W. Bush) and is investing tremendous amounts of money and intelligence to find more sophisticated ways of annihilation. When and what type of violence is justified (if any should be), and how can we expect our youth to follow certain norms about violence when powerful adults break their own rules and often model the opposite of what they preach (Tolan & Guerra, 1994)? It seems that, at least for now, the literature does not address violence as a global problem with local implications, such as the current intense military recruitment of young people. Many violence prevention programs were created late in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and

have not yet changed to account for the 21<sup>st</sup> century's rise of violence to new and more complex levels, the most prominent example being the latest "war on terror".

The literature that is available on American youth violence is concentrated on smaller social systems and, does not attempt to analyze the impact of wars among nation states on ordinary people. In addition to the immediate violence that surrounds young people in their daily lives, we need to ask ourselves how the latest political campaigns of warfare are impacting their development into future adults. What are students thinking of violence and how might their views of prevention differ from those of adults? Are the preventive activities delivered to students a match for today's inflated violence? Where can we locate the source of "disturbance" (Crews & Counts, 1997)? Is it in our young people or in the society that raises them? Where and how can we find solutions for a more peaceful world? Lastly, should young people have a central role in finding solutions to these questions? This dissertation views students as invaluable resources for critical evaluations of the violent adult world.

## Youth Violence

While Tolan and Guerra (1994) define violence as an intentional behavior that causes physical harm to others, Kopka (1997) extends its description to encompass verbal and visual statements that threaten and jeopardize one's civil rights. Kopka (1997) and Hamburg (1998) present juvenile violence as moving from being a law enforcement and justice system problem to a school and community concern, and a public health matter.

An overwhelming number of programs, studies and reports have addressed the issue of school violence. Hamburg (1998) and Samples and Aber (1998), however, point out that school violence is a reflection of the transactions happening in the communities

in which these schools exist, while school environments often times escalate the effects of outside factors. Kopka states that schools in the 60's and 70's did not even report statistics on violence, since the topic was not a national concern. From FBI sources, Kopka presents statistics indicating that both juvenile (ages 10-17) violent crimes and arrests started rising in the late 80s. Further, these sources predicted that juvenile violent crime arrests should double in numbers from the early 90's to 2010. Lowry, as cited in Hamburg (1998), found that homicide rates for youth between ages of 10 and 24 increased by 286% from the 60's to the 90's. The groups that were hit the hardest by these trends in violence were minorities and especially African American youth (Hamburg, 1998; Kopka, 1997; Spencer et al., 2003).

Alarmingly, Howard et al. (1999) report that compared to other countries, youths in the United States constitute a disproportionately high number of victims and perpetrators, while 21% of homicide deaths are those of people between 5 and 24 years of age. In 1991, it was reported that the highest probability of violent behavior initiation fell around ages of 15 and 16, while the highest rate of engagement in violent acts occurred between 16 and 17 years of age (Hamburg, 1998). Perpetrators are increasingly younger and have greater access to firearms (Clayton et al., 2001).

Although the percentages vary depending on the reporting source, time period and setting, large numbers of students report knowing peers who carry guns, knowing perpetrators or victims, witnessing violence, being victimized, as well as being afraid to go to school (Clayton et al., 2001; Elliot et al., 1998; Hamburg, 1998; Howard et al., 1999; Kopka, 1997). Jankins and Bell (as cited in Clayton et al., 2001) state that in 1994, 25% of inner-city high school students had personally experienced serious violence,

while over 60% witnessed a shooting and nearly 50% saw a stabbing. More than half of such witnessed incidents resulted in death. Once more, minority students (Hispanic and African-American) are more likely to miss school because of feeling unsafe (CDC, as cited in Hamburg, 1998), while “homicide rates among Black males in ...[the 15-24] age range are over ten times those of their White counterparts” (Spencer et al., 2003, p. 34). Youth violence has been decreasing considerably in the past decades, and it reached its lowest levels since the 1970s (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice, 2006; Snyder, 2000), while the rate of juvenile violent crime arrests has decreased considerably since 1994 (The Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 2006 National Report). Despite such encouraging reports, youth violence and victimization remains an area of concern, and below are examples of programs designed to address these critical issues.

## Reviews of Preventive Efforts

Given the large number of violence prevention or intervention programs, I used meta-analyses and review studies that categorize and evaluate programs to define the field (Clayton et al. 2001; Fields & McNamara, 2003; Tolan & Guerra, 1994). After discussing these reviews, I distinguish two opposite ends of the spectrum, namely *disease* centered and alternative *social* models to emphasize this dissertation’s adherence to social approaches to prevention. Similarly, I discuss programs that are in dissonance with this project, followed by a few programs that describe how the existing research on youth violence has viewed the role of young people in prevention. I selected this last group of programs because they contain *some* elements of student participation, although none come close to the idea of allowing youth to co-author violence prevention materials.

One common trend of the review articles selected for this summary is that they often described the same violence prevention programs, yet from different perspectives and under different categories. It is difficult to outline a coherent review of the violence prevention literature because reviewers used different organizing principles in their taxonomies. For example, Tolan and Guerra (1994) adopt a nested systems approach and categorize preventive endeavors by levels of intervention, such as individual, interpersonal relationships, proximal social contexts, and societal macrosystems. Similarly, Kerns & Prinz (2002) organize their review of violence prevention by grouping programs under individual (aimed to change personal qualities), family (aimed to influence youth by affecting parents and families) and larger social systems interventions (target child's environments from classrooms to communities).

In a different instance, Fields and McNamara (2003) categorize prevention as (1) primary, secondary and tertiary, or (2) theory driven (attribution, resilience, developmental and eclectic theories). Samples and Aber (1998) adopt "developmental and contextual frameworks" (p. 218) to organize their presentation of violence prevention and intervention. These include age appropriate interventions that also account for the environmental conditions in which youth find themselves in their everyday lives. Clayton et al. (2001) segment interventions into antiviolence, conflict resolution, and creating peace programs.

Tolan and Guerra (1994) categorized violence prevention based on sources of violence (individual, interpersonal relationships, social contexts or societal influences), types of violence (*situational*, related to accidents, poverty, or social oppression; *relationship*, such as familial or peer; *predatory*, such as robbery or rape; and

*psychopathological*, such as harming others due to individual pathology) or level of intervention (primary, to develop certain skills or characteristics prior to any events; secondary, for those at risk such as gang members; or tertiary, applied to those who have already engaged in violent acts). Tolan and Guerra place the myriad of views on violence and prevention on a biopsychosocial continuum.

Tolan and Guerra (1994) note, however, that the existing programs have done a poor job at “separat[ing] risk factors for adolescent violence ... from its role as part of a general pattern of serious antisocial behavior” (p. 8). In their review, the authors found that most interventions targeted one risk factor, usually aiming to change individual characteristics, and left out important agents such as those of social, historical or environmental nature. The authors recommend that prevention programs, unlike most which exist today, need to draw theoretical links among the multiple levels of influence encompassed in the biopsychosocial model (from individual to social macrosystems).

Tolan and Guerra (1994) found that some programs gave more positive results than others, however, most of them fell short of a few important qualities. They concluded that “even the most basic knowledge about what is effective and what is not, let alone knowledge about what works with which populations and for what type of violence, is lacking” (p. 39). They called for intense efforts of evaluation to avoid the implementation of ineffective or even harmful programs. In addition, it was noted that a distinction needs to be made between antisocial and violent behaviors, especially because effective antisocial behavior programs may not reduce or may even increase violent acts. Also, data derived from certain groups most often cannot be generalized to groups who are involved in other types of violence (Tolan & Guerra, 1994).

Among the individual level programs that had positive results seemed to be the cognitive-behavioral multidimensional ones that, for example, taught problem solving in conflict situations and cognitive skills connected to perspective taking or moral reasoning. Tolan and Guerra (1994) also found that programs that tapped and fostered real-life skills and situations were more effective, and so was behavior modification in real-life contexts. In agreement with this meta-analytic finding, this dissertation invites youth to create a violence prevention curriculum that draws on their experiential (real-life) knowledge of violence and peace, as well as the multiple views of violence found in the world that extend beyond youths' immediate surroundings and across nations. This type of learning is inherently *permeable* to its students' values.

Tolan and Guerra (1994) reviewed positively programs that called for more parental involvement in schools (Tolan & Guerra, 1994), however, ways to connect the needs of various families vis-à-vis different types of violence and effective interventions were not suggested. Tolan and Guerra (1994) also found that positive effects were generated when youth were given the chance to have prosocial roles in schools and communities. These findings support this dissertation's conviction that the more agency students have in various activities of importance to them (such as learning and/or violence prevention), the more successful the outcomes (such as academic achievement, better understanding of the causes and consequences of violence and, ultimately, lack of involvement in violence related incidents).

However, Tolan and Guerra also stated that the individual level interventions were the most common, as well as the easiest to evaluate, which left the rest of the important impacting levels (schools, communities, or societal practices such as gun control or racist

crimes) insufficiently studied and modified by interventionists. As Tolan and Guerra found, multilevel interventions that extend beyond classrooms to include parents and communities are the most effective. Similarly, Hamburg (1998) noted that, indeed, “violence results from a confluence of multiple factors, including personal behaviors amenable to change, as well as family, neighborhood, and social systems that are themselves modifiable” (p. 39). Even though two elements that influence young people (schools and neighborhoods) were named as important targets in prevention, they were found in most programs as mere sites of delivery of individual interventions and not as grounds for systemic change (Tolan & Guerra, 1994).

The review also concludes that popular peer mediation programs were minimally evaluated and had shown mixed results. Further, different types of “approaches to peer influences have not been investigated adequately enough for conclusions to be drawn” (Tolan & Guerra, 1994, p. 41). The authors stress the importance of further developing and evaluating these programs, although they do not mention why such interventions are salient, and what might be an appropriate way of measuring a successful intervention. This dissertation agrees with Tolan and Guerra (1994) about the weight that peer mediated programs should be given, because students are viewed here as knowledgeable learners, who can critically debate issues of violence with each other and adults, becoming more involved, competent and motivated as a result. These are desired outcomes for a healthy development, while peer initiated activities are the center of this dissertation’s theoretical and methodological goals. I postulate that peer participation cannot be effective as a mere formality that does not have the power to influence core issues of violence and peace. Permeability to student knowledge as a the next step

beyond positioning peers as mere conduits of adult prevention (i.e., peer mediation programs) enables the initiation of youth into the *conceptualization* of curricula.

Tolan and Guerra (1994) also discussed ineffective programs. Among those were psychotherapeutic and intensive casework approaches. The former only worked as part of large structured programs and the latter actually showed some negative effects. Biomedical and institutional models showed ambiguous results and seemed to only work with highly violent youth. These findings do not support the idea that violence is an exclusively public health care and injury control problem (Kopka, 1997). This statement provides an incomplete image of violence, given that only 5-8% of the violent population is involved in predatory violence and less than 1% in psycho-pathologically related violence (Tolan & Guerra, 1994).

Rather than being an individual pathological tendency, violence seems to be more of a social, relational, situational and systemic issue (Daiute et al., 2001, 2003; Elliot et al., 1998; Fagan & Wilkinson, 1998; Price & Everett, 1997; Tolan & Guerra, 1994).

Therefore, preventive methods should target violence accordingly by taking into account its socially constructed nature. I concur with Tolan and Guerra's findings that real-life, applied skills, and behavioral-cognitive anti-violence interventions, as well as the integration of these in education and communities, are preferred models of prevention.

Price and Everett (1997) state that school violence prevention programs are incomplete "without careful consideration and amelioration of environmental influences of violence such as poverty, lack of perceived opportunity to succeed, and community and family disintegration" (also see Ruttenberg, 1994; Webster, 1993; Novello, Shosky, & Froehlke, 1992). The values learned by students from their communities, and which

influence their relationship with violence (Hamburg, 1998) can be officially introduced by students into school materials.

In their review of school violence prevention programs, Howard et al. (1999) noted that the majority of programs were limited to what they called lower order outcomes (skills, attitudes, beliefs about violence), whose effects were long lasting. The authors mentioned that “to counteract the negative influences from all the settings in which youth spend time, classroom learning needs to complement and, ideally, act synergistically with the broader school, home, and community in which the youth live” (p.205). Howard et al. (1999) report that only four programs involved parents, none involved community representations, and only three targeted broader school environments.

The majority of the programs reviewed by Howard et al. (1999) aimed at nurturing social skills for anger control, aggression and violent behavior. They also targeted social problem solving and development of prosocial behaviors. Most programs were designed for urban youth and eighty percent of the programs included students from lower socio-economic strata. There seems to be an excessive targeting of poor urban minority young people who are presumed to be more violent than others. Unfortunately, the American school shootings within the past few years, which have occurred disproportionately in white middle class contexts, suggest that minority youth have been overly pathologized, while others are assumed to be socially fit due to their mainstream group membership.

Further, none of the programs reviewed by Howard et al. (1999) involved critical social analysis by students as members of complicated communities filled with social transactions and relations of power that determine the development and perpetuation of violence. The authors pointed out that although peers are important in young people’s

lives, only one of the thirteen programs reviewed invited peers to co-teach prevention with adults. They recommended that peers are given a greater role in the implementation of school violence prevention

Clayton et al. (2001) reviewed numerous programs and place them under three categories: antiviolence, conflict resolution and peace programs. *Antiviolence programs* aim to create an atmosphere non-conducive of violence and aggression by enforcement of rules. These programs do not bring about peace through the sole establishment of behavioral norms and individual anger-management learning. Clayton et al. (2001) found that despite students' being "given skills" (p. 9) to help them navigate away from violent situations, they were not taught to handle those events in case they occurred. Also, despite some programs' effectiveness, their long-term impact was questioned. The antiviolence programs that targeted the same skills (e.g., anger management) were found to be in need of comparative evaluation to see if some were more effective than others. The antiviolence programs' targeting of students with perceived problems (anger, aggression), rather than all children, was seen as a shortcoming (Clayton et al., 2001).

On the other hand, the *conflict resolution* programs focus on interpersonal relations of conflict by preventing anger from becoming sheer violence (Clayton et al., 2001). Problem solving, steps towards dealing with conflict and ways of preventing its escalation are the main objectives of conflict resolution, which have been proven to "bring about somewhat longer lasting peace" (Clayton et al., 2001, p.3). Although the authors did not find the reviewed conflict resolution programs to increase self-esteem (like the antiviolence ones tended to do), they specified the potential for generalizability of the useful skills learned here. These could be applied in multiple social situations

outside of school, given that the “problem” children were not the only ones targeted. Clayton et al. (2001) noted that conflict resolution paradigms were more other-oriented, giving students opportunities to not only help their own potential conflicts, but also of those around them.

For these authors, *peace programs* are associated with the concept of resiliency. They may contain elements of both antiviolence and conflict resolution, but mainly nurture self and other appreciation, leading to avoidance of violence and solving of conflict, and fostering of peaceful transactions. Altruism, compassion, and proactive approaches teach youths to interact with others peacefully and find creative non-violent solutions to conflict. The more holistic approach of peace programs lays in their training children in a greater number of skills and through more diverse means, often involving the larger circles of parents, communities and students in all grades (Clayton et al., 2001). Further, they seem to be effective in a number of domains besides violence, including academics and social relations with peers. Peace programs show that “violence is multiply determined and can be addressed in multiple ways” (p. 17).

Despite their focus on programs that taught children ways of being non-violent and seeking harmonious social relations, Clayton et al. (2001) stressed that such programs’ effectiveness could be maximized when combined with elements that address societal factors related to youth violence (a refrain found in the other reviews as well). Clayton et al.’s review also suggested that prevention should not separate problem students from the rest, given that targeting aggressive children may exacerbate the problem, and leaving out the rest defeats the purposes of prevention.

In a different review, Samples and Aber (1998) discussed stage-salient factors that may facilitate a healthy development. Different ages present different concerns, as well as potential for intervention. Samples and Aber (1998) stated that the formation of a stable peer group takes place during early adolescence (12-14), while identity formation and consolidation take place in middle adolescence (15-18). The authors stated that research is needed to determine how the many violence prevention endeavors (from metal detectors to peer mediation) delivered at this developmental stage affect identity processes. Programs found relevant by the authors ranged from young people's social and cognitive processes to prosocial behavior and even parental training.

After their review of programs (see some below), Samples and Aber (1998) recommended extending the definition of school-based prevention into after-school hours to link it with families and communities, and connect with youth's everyday knowledge. However, schools (especially in urban settings) are too often controversial grounds for nurturing peaceful youth, given their hostile environments that are overcrowded, filled with metal detectors (Devine, 1995) and intellectually inadequate (McCormick, 2000). Therefore, the potential for reaching youths in schools is diminished.

Webster, cited in Samples and Aber, found classroom interventions alone to have short lasting effects. In contrast, Samples and Aber's overall review noted positive effects on the children in interventions vs. controls. Yet, they were concerned, like most other reviewers, with the applicability of results to children of diverse cultures and socio-economic status. This review found African American and low-income students and families to be oversampled for the early-age models of intervention and undersampled for the later ones. Samples and Aber (1998) concluded that supplementing school efforts

with additional supports would maximize the achievement of positive results, given that children do not live in a vacuum and school learning needs to be buttressed by communities and homes. I agree that it is important that schools acknowledge and reinforce the learning that takes place outside of school by encouraging students to make connections between all these learning grounds (Samples & Aber, 1998).

### Disease Centered Models of Violence and Adolescent Perpetrators

Howard et al. (1999) found that thousands of schools nation-wide adopted some kind of preventive methods, ranging from classroom taught curricula to school policies and security measures. Over 90% of junior high and high schools prohibit violence, over 91% have anti-firearms policies, and 81% restrict possession of knives (Howard et al., 1999). Ninety-six percent adhere to one or more security measures such as closed campuses (78%), or searches of bags, lockers and desks (61%) (Ross et al. as cited in Howard et al., 1999). Other common practices are suspension, metal detectors, dress codes and security guard surveillances (Clayton et al., 2001; Howard et al., 1999). This review invokes images of a prison rather than one conducive of intellectual growth.

As the literature is beginning to depict students in penitentiary-like schools, social justice researchers and practitioners point to a flow of student bodies connecting schools to prisons. A striking account is McCormick's (2000) report of practices in New York City schools where students pass through metal detectors and are scanned every time they step in and out of school spaces. McCormick reported that overcrowded, dilapidated and segregated high schools are filled with security guards and technical equipment, whose presence assumes these students' high potential for criminality. McCormick (2000)

stated that after these adolescents underwent “the demeaning effects of assuming a criminal stance ... they remain largely undifferentiated [in classrooms], and in the corridors and the cafeteria they are watched by police and a uniformed security force. These tactics separate teens, who are primarily Black and Latino, into criminal and noncriminal categories” (p. 181).

This symbolic violence affects its ‘subjects’ profoundly, who report feeling dehumanized and aggressed without a real basis. Educators fear their students and relinquish themselves from ‘disciplining’ youth by entrusting them to armed guards (Devine, 1995). For many minority students, such surveillance activities have become one of the most prominent aspects of education (Devine, 1995).

Price and Everett (1997) conducted a survey of 550 secondary school principals on their opinions of violence in their schools and its prevention. It is to be noted, however, that 91% of the principals and 79% of the student population were white. Overall, principals viewed violence as an individual rather than a social or systemic phenomenon. Top risk factors included school absences, verbal insults, educational difficulties, threats to students and teachers, in-school fighting, and vandalism or gang activity (Price & Everett, 1997). Prevalent correlates to violence were inadequate parental supervision or family involvement, and exposure to violence in the media. Price and Everett (1997) also found that principals rated non-educational measures against violence to be the most effective. These included random or scheduled locker searches, increased lighting, search dogs, crisis management services, and police/guards on premises. Educational measures, of which the most effective were conflict resolution/mediation, crisis intervention and peer education, were less preferred than the surveillance ones. Violence

programs were most implemented in inner-city/urban schools and in increased crime neighborhoods. Lastly, Price and Everett (1997) pointed out that “most of the programs may have been implemented as a curative response to an unfavorable situation rather than as primary prevention” (p. 227).

It seems that identifying the problem of violence within the young members of our society and remedying that diagnostic with an array of pounded skills, punitive methods and expectations of imminent criminality reveals an erroneous approach to prevention. Violence is not nested within young people, and by trying to combat youth violence by targeting a presumed criminality in everyone, students are dissociated from the society that is primarily responsible for this phenomenon. This dissertation does not deny violent behavior by youth that occasionally has fatal consequences, however, it indicates that numerous existing ‘remedies’ are not viable solutions and could even lead to the exacerbation of violent behaviors. Socializing youth in a prison-like atmosphere cannot foster a positive self-image and development.

Coie et al. (1993) outlined principles for a national science of prevention that are “forged at the interfaces of psychopathology, criminology, psychiatric epidemiology, human development and education.... [intended] to prevent or moderate major human dysfunction” (p. 1013). This quote is laden with terminology indicative of a view of perpetrator youths who need to be adjusted to a normal level. Coie et al. (1993) also believed that the primary purpose of prevention was to identify connections between clinical disorders and generic risk factors, as well as moderate the latter’s effects. As violence is a largely social phenomenon and related to pathology in less than 1% of the times (Tolan & Guerra, 1994), basing prevention on risk factors that are ‘generic’ leads to

grossly inappropriate solutions. Further, understandings of violence and conflict are different for different segments of this country's and world's diverse population, therefore the needs of one group may be irrelevant to another, which requires different interventions for diverse young people (Daiute & Jones, 2003; Fagan & Wilkinson, 1998; Samples & Aber, 1998).

Kopka (1997) assembled a comprehensive resource manual reflective of this country's efforts to diagnose and curtail violence. The book reflects a focus on individual characteristics, and youth-blaming and punitive approaches to violence, as well as the country's neglect to put itself under scrutiny in relation to violence. For example, the listed risk factors for violence are as follows: physiological, socioeconomic, handgun availability, gang membership, drug/alcohol use and abuse, and violence in the media. The physiological risk factors are the first on the list and involve imbalances in hormonal levels, hyperactivity, A.D.D., low intelligence and reactions to physical abuse. However, once more, as Tolan and Guerra (1994) state, only 1% of violence can be attributed to such causes.

The second risk factor is of a socioeconomic nature (Kopka, 1997), but it is not described in terms of systemic inequalities that expose different segments of the population to different opportunities for a successful development. Instead, Kopka's socioeconomic aspects affecting youth violence are domestic violence, poverty, substance abuse resulting in child neglect, out-of-wedlock children and broken homes, lack of parental involvement, peer pressure, unemployment and school drop-outs. This picture missing a socio-political and historical analysis of this country's relations of domination and marginalization which result in impoverished and dilapidated

communities where all the above listed phenomena can occur. By listing these risk factors in isolation from their origins and attempting to “fix” the victim without questioning the larger social systems behind these undesirable phenomena, we have an inaccurate understanding of violence and the preventive efforts are futile. Poverty, for example, is a consequence of inequality, racism and classism, and not the root of the problem. Inequality, racism and classism are the roots of the problem and should have been listed as socioeconomic risk factors. Similarly, increasing availability of guns, drugs and alcohol, and media violence (Kopka, 1997) have to do with large social systems of which youth are part and demand scrutiny.

Federal legislation was passed to address youth violence, including the 1994 Gun-Free Schools Act that expels, for at least one year, students who bring guns to school (Kopka, 1997). Despite the good intentions for protection, this legislation is blind to the socio-economic conditions related to youth’s gun handling by not addressing the reasons for which students may carry guns. The legislation, therefore, appears as a mere punitive bandaid (rather than ameliorating and cooperative) solution. Similarly, the 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act that populated the streets with more police, built new prisons and harsher sentences for violent crimes (Kopka, 1997). Rather than investing to create more prosperous communities and positive educational and employment opportunities, the law makers acted with harsher actions after a crime had occurred. Even though the Safe and Drug-Free School and Communities act and Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994 allocated funds for violence prevention and education, drug and alcohol usage/sales increased, together with victimization of public

school teachers (Kopka, 1997). Nowhere in these provisions did students play an active role, but they received considerable prescriptive top-down impositions.

Before presenting a few programs whose elements fall closer to the model promoted in this dissertation, I discuss elements that I believe are antithetic to a youth centered theory of prevention. These are illustrations of non-youth centered approaches that, unfortunately, dominate the field. In one example, Embry (2002) described the prevention program “Good Behavior Game” as a vaccine that inoculates youths against bad behavior and compares it to the quick antiseptic soap that sanitizes instantaneously against germs. This program is the quick and easy fix that our society needs for its multi-problems of drugs, violence and delinquency (Embry, 2002). The curriculum aims to inhibit disruptive behaviors and substance use at low cost and high speed, just like hand washing, to use Embry’s words. Clayton et al. (2001) described Good Behavior Game as part of the behavior modification theory that employs punishment and reinforcement techniques to overcome aggression and shyness.

In their review, Clayton et al. (2001) mentioned the “Prepare Curriculum” as a promising peace program. However, it is “based on the theory that aggression results from social-cognitive distortions and interpersonal skill deficiencies” (p. 14). It is also believed that aggression is learned and can be easily substituted with prosocial thoughts and behavior. It can be taught to aggressive and withdrawn children, however, it is recommended for all youth.

The inadequacy of prevention disease models that view youth criminality as imminent is illustrated by Mytton et al. (2002) in their meta-analysis of “44 randomized controlled trials of secondary violence prevention programs” (p. 753). It was found that

programs for high risk youths reduced modestly aggressive behavior given the similar effects generated by training skills for nonresponse (such as anger management or conflict resolution) or improvement of social skills and contextual changes. The programs' benefits were not deemed reliable unless proven as such by much needed properly controlled trials.

None of the programs reviewed by comprehensive studies and meta-analyses (Clayton et al., 2001; Fields & McNamara, 2003; Howard et al., 1999; Samples & Aber, 1998; Tolan and Guerra, 1994) involve student agency in thinking critically about violence prevention. Students are assumed to be steps away from negative behavior and assaulted early on with antidotes and corrective methods. They learn and are 'altered' by adult perspectives alone. I do not propose to ignore the realistic potential for criminality by youth, but argue that different approaches to violence prevention need to be adopted, some of which are described below.

### **Alternative Frames of Violence Prevention: Relationships Between Individuals and Their Constructed Social Structures**

Early research on violence prevention generated homogeneous understandings of violent behaviors and the motivations behind them. Critics of such approaches to prevention state that new theories and applications need to acknowledge the variety of forms, purposes and circumstances surrounding violent acts of youth (Fagan & Wilkinson, 1998). These authors contextualize violence through what they call "situated transactions", an essential element for understanding and curtailing violence in society. Fagan and Wilkinson (1998) analyzed violence, developmentally and socially, as a

practice that has functions for the growing adolescent, given that it occurs in episodes of complex and meaningful interactions and not as simple personality displays. Fagan and Wilkinson (1998) adopted Cornish's event-based approach, which are "theories of action" (p. 57) and allowed for an analysis of motivations and decision making within concrete contexts. Therefore, factors involved in youth's dealings with violence should guide the creation of more effective prevention. This dissertation proposes to have student curricular input because, as members of their communities, youth's internalize norms that later play a role in their social identities and scripts they follow in decision making (Fagan & Wilkinson, 1998). I maintain that that such values should be negotiated in a formal learning environment. In this way, we as educators can establish a connection between the real and academic lives of youth (Vygotsky, 1978), allowing for a continuity in their dialogical self (Hermans, 2001).

Fagan and Wilkinson (1998) made a strong case for the developmental function served by violence for adolescents. In their view, violence is part of some youth's mundane interactions, as well as a means to achieve some important goals. Fagan and Wilkinson (1998) pointed to the importance of viewing violence as an event-based manifestation of coercive nature. Considerable numbers of youth become gang members, which provides a context for disputes over power, territories, material goods, grievance or reinforced group identity (Fagan & Wilkinson, 1998). In disenfranchised and impoverished communities, gang membership can be a survival mode.

Besides achievement of status, power, material goods, or a certain social identity, two other functions emerge as worthy of notice when thinking of ways to prevent violence. The first is what Fagan and Wilkinson (1998) call "rough justice and self help", where

perceived wrong doings by others against the self or the in-group lead to achievement of moral justice through violence. This is the type of violence that can occur in the form of an alternative (illegal) economy, and it often is a tool for transacting material goods and maintaining one's position within social networks. Youth are involved in such activities, in addition to what Fagan and Wilkinson (1998) call "defiance of authority", a common teen behavior of rebellion against one's family, peers or community. Tyler states that such oppositional youth cultures are caused by a perceived sense of external forms of control acting unfairly on them (Fagan & Wilkinson, 1998). The classic rebellious adolescent image is complicated when the young person is of minority background, for whom the achievements of middle class are linked to oppression.

Violence needs to be interpreted as a consequence of a complex and historical development of dominant vs. subservient social relations. Building on Bronfenbrenner's ideas, Fagan and Wilkinson (1998) thus approach the problem through "an ecological-developmental framework in which violence reflects the hierarchical interaction of individual developmental needs and goals (e.g., identity, affinity, mastery, and defiance) within highly skewed social and structural contexts of neighborhoods and communities" (p. 81). This model seems to be a more appropriate social approach to understanding and combating violence than the disease models promoted by authors like Coie et al. (1993).

Along the same lines, Spencer et al. (2003) take into account developmental stages as filtered through contextual factors, leading to different outcomes for those experiencing the world in dissimilar ways. Their study focuses on African American youths who have been either exposed or a victim of violence in high proportions (75% of them, as cited in Spencer et al., 2003). Instead of examining the correlation between exposure to violence

or victimization and poor developmental/academic outcomes, these students are generally stereotyped as failing, inadequate, dangerous or delinquent. They are often abandoned in their misperceived pathology, instead of being supported towards resiliency.

Spencer et al. (2003) related inadequate development of abstract thought and hypothetical reasoning to chronic dealings with violence of impoverished minority students, which in turn has negative consequences for attention, memory and learning (also see Wine, 1982). Increased sensitivity to the threat of violence developed by these youth, Spencer et al. postulated, is not usually interpreted beyond a clinical perspective, which is a partial intervention, given that it cannot address its effects on their cognitive processes and subsequent performances. A socio-contextual and developmental explanation would be more appropriate when constructing interventions for youth overburdened by violence. Spencer et al. (2003) concluded that the feelings of distraction, fear or self-consciousness that come out of cumulative experiences with violence affect normative learning processes and are often unaccounted by adults who in turn mistreat youths. The authors suggested that such context and culture specific phenomena need to become part of prevention and intervention endeavors, together with adolescent-salient issues.

Spencer et al.'s (2003) study is relevant in this dissertation because it points investigators towards what may constitute proper supports for adolescents. For example, coping mechanisms for those in high-risk environments may include anger, as "a form of competence for social and emotional viability", therefore "behavioral expressions that are associated with violence ... should ... be considered in context" (p. 40). Spencer et al. (2003) also cited Edmond who suggested that learning is influenced by the level of

adaptation and constant adjustment one has to make under chronic stressful conditions that are distracting and detrimental to the ideal situations for academic success. This dissertation cannot directly change the less than ideal learning conditions of many inner city youth (which I illustrate later), however, it can bring those interested in change closer to young people's interpretations of their experiences, which are often misappropriated by adults or those from the mainstream. Students' contributions to the efforts to help them cope with violence by identifying ways of analyze the problem and solutions are valuable, and should become recognized as such by more educators and policy makers. Not all violence prevention curricula/programs exclude youth involvement in learning, as reflected in the next segment.

### A Focused Sample of Violence Prevention Programs

In this section I present a few programs that include some student involvement in their activities. I emphasize program features that position students as participants and discuss some common points these programs have with my project.

In an ethnographic study, Kelly (2001) engaged disenfranchised youth at risk in creating socially conscious artwork, through the creative arts community based program called "City @ Peace Project" in Santa Barbara. Scholarly inquiry by young people employed art as a medium through which human development and social activism to find solutions to societal problems were fostered (Kelly, 2001). Violence prevention was just one facet of this creative arts curriculum, together with the acquisition of protective factors and cultural empowerment. Kelly (2001) found positive effects of youth involvement in documenting their experiences (including those relevant to violence

prevention) through their art research and interactive dialogue that benefited their communities.

The “Comer School Development Program” was cited by Kopka (1997) as a notable violence prevention program, although it does not target violence directly. Comer (1988) regarded education as a pivotal element in achieving a positive developmental trajectory. Comer initially designed an intervention for poor inner-city minority students aimed to change the climate of their schools and bridge home and academic lives (Coulter, 1993). Comer posited poor academic performance as a function of schools’ failure to assure continuity between the social and cultural realms of school and home (Coulter, 1993). Comer created an alliance among administrators, students, parents, and teachers to facilitate students’ feeling more secure, valued and academically apt; since the initiation of this program, hundreds of schools have adopted it and more child-centered policies and practices have emerged (Kopka, 1997).

The “Voices of Love and Freedom” (VLF) by Walker (1998) is a K-12 conflict resolution training curriculum and is also part of a comprehensive intervention that includes academic success and involvement of families and communities. It focuses on perspective taking around ethnic and racial discrimination. Students collaborate to reflect on characters from relevant literature read as part of the curriculum, and work together towards applying the learned conflict resolution values in story completion and fictional writing tasks. Not only does the curriculum provide students with steps to avoid and appease conflict, but it also addresses the socio-historical conditions of diverse groups that are often backdrops for violence. This socio-cultural perspective is extremely rare in the prevention literature (if not unique). Although highly structured by activities,

students are given ample opportunities to analyze and express their views. However, Daiute et al. (2003) found that the curriculum did not leave room for student original critiques and contributions to be considered as viable alternatives to some curricular values, conclusion that inspired my dissertation.

The “Social Decision Making/Problem Solving” program is theoretically informed by child development, cognitive, clinical and educational theories, and exposes youth to matters of social awareness and self-control by familiarizing them with pursuits of healthy life choices (Clayton et al., 2001). It is meant to prevent not only violence, but also substance abuse and academic failure. The program also teaches social responsibility and positions young people as agents who are able to influence their own and others’ life course positively. Student prosocial participation is further nurtured by their application of the learned skills in different contexts (Clayton et al., 2001).

Creativity also comes into play in “Children’s Creative Response to Conflict”, another notable program found in Clayton et al.’s (2001) review. It teaches children conflict resolution methods through interactive role playing, discussions, and hands-on activities. Cooperation, effective communication problem solving, interviewing and bias awareness are part of these workshops and seem to be positive and desirable elements for a student-centered paradigm.

The analysis of a violence prevention program I propose in this dissertation is inherently an educational act, because it evaluates the learning process and information given to young people towards their healthy development. Prior to outlining the specifics of our project, I review theories of education to show how permeability can either be

fostered or curtailed, depending on the kind of learning paradigm one chooses to adopt in conveying violence prevention.

### Diverse Perspectives on Education

There seems to be a relationship between violence and education, given that a deplorable school climate is associated not only with poor academic performance and drop-out rates, but also with increased risks of violence related activities (Kopka, 1997; Flannery & Williams, 1999). The previous analyses of youth violence have conceptualized young people as subjects of violence, but not as authors of solutions. Given my proposed framework of participation, how prepared is our education to have students as partners in learning? The degree of student involvement in education is dictated, in part, by the presence or absence of certain educational principles that could be broadly defined as belonging to either traditional or progressivist approaches (Gross, 1997), which are shaped by politics of class, race and economics.

I juxtapose here the more traditionally/homogeneously oriented schools of thought to alternative/heterogeneous educational paradigms such as multiculturalism, pluralism, anti-racist education, critical multiculturalism and pedagogy. Traditional education promotes a singular mainstream standard to which all students should adhere, while the second class of educational paradigms acknowledges and nurtures a diverse development fit for all students. Debates around the 'appropriate' type of education are ideological in nature (Lelutiu-Weinberger, 2002; Sleeter, 2001), and while discussions of educational standards could focus on components such as testing or curriculum, it is also important to scrutinize the ideologies behind various models of education.

## Educational Neutrality, Value Systems and the Treatment of Difference

In this section, I establish the political identity of my dissertation. I frame education not as a neutral site for learning, but as a place where reproduction and/or transformation of established cultural norms occur (Daiute et al., 2003; Freire, 1970; Gross, 1997; Hoffman, 1996; Short & Carrington, 1996; Sleeter, 2001). Contrary to certain claims that education should not be an arena where political-ideological tensions are played out (Bloom, 1987; Hirsch, 1987), schools are nonetheless affected by interest and political groups in power (Darling-Hammond, 2001; Fine, Anand, Jordan & Sherman, 2000; Hoffman, 1996; Lelutiu-Weinberger, 2002; Nieto, 1994; Ravitch, 1990, 1991a; Sleeter, 2001). Political configurations find their way into learning communities, which are used as vehicles for disseminating messages to the youth about a country's conventions, power and resource distribution (Rose, 1990; Sleeter & Grant, 1991). In essence, education is a means of socializing future citizens into their roles and positions in relation to their country's dominant discourses (Devine, 1995; Fairclough, 1995, Lelutiu-Weinberger, 2002), including those of violence, its causes, 'villains' and 'innocents'.

Ideally, according to the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC), "education should be directed at developing the child's personality and talents and at preparing the child for a productive adulthood, with discipline reflecting the child's human dignity" (Brassard, Hyman & Dimmitt, 1991, p. 370). Education should also model and practice respect for students' identities, including their cultures (Hoffman, 1996; Nieto, 1994; Short & Carrington, 1996), which is not the case for many American students from non-dominant backgrounds and of lower SES. These arguments boil down

to matters of *values*. This paper considers that the scrutiny of the type of *value system* (knowledge) that dominates a culture is essential for a critical analysis of that culture's educational practices. Approaching learning in an action-oriented manner requires acknowledging power issues, their political implications and the cultural codes nurtured or resisted by players (from administrators, to students, families and communities) (Hoffman, 1996). I consider the different 'camps' presented in the next sections to be carriers of ideological interests, and not mere proponents of neutral educational philosophies, despite some claims to the contrary.

The United States has a long history of struggles over what to do with the *differences* among its peoples. Some propose that diversity is minimized or reduced to a homogeneous national identity (Bloom, 1987; Hirsch, 1987; Ravitch, 1990,), and others work towards acknowledging diversity as a resource (Banks, 1994; Daiute et al., 2003; Gutierréz et al., 1999; Nieto, 1992, 1994; Sleeter & Delgado Bernal, 2004). Such matters are inextricably linked to personal and group identity, and are embodied at all levels of this country's structures, including its educational institutions. Debates over what constitutes a 'proper' education or effective violence prevention are relevant because they are related to embracing, merely tolerating or rejecting difference, which in turn determines who is allowed to shape education and to what extent.

### National Homogeneity, Tradition and Standards

The authors reviewed in this section support the preservation of a nationalist integrity by rejecting various ethnic identities that are perceived as threatening (Cole, 1998; Short & Carrington, 1996). I present traditional education critically because it undermines the

goals of progressive education to empower marginalized students. The proponents of traditional education maintain that schools in the United States should work towards building a common body of knowledge meant to socialize all youth into the mainstream American culture (Bloom, 1987; Hirsch, 1987; Ravitch, 1990, 1991a, 1991b). E. D. Hirsch (1987, 1996) finds that America lacks a national “cultural literacy”, and he attributes this deficiency to the progressive educational movement based on Rousseau and Dewey. Hirsch (1987, 1996, 1999) believes that proper education should teach the culture originated by the founding fathers of this country or other White figures (Caesar, Luther, Homer, Washington, Jefferson, Webster, Shakespeare) and reinforce a national monocultural body of knowledge. Hirsch’s idea of national cohesion could be achieved by engraining all students with a uniform curriculum of facts, which, from the point of view of many co-existing and marginalized ethnic groups, is what Barker (cited in Short and Carrington, 1996) calls *new racism*.

The relativity of value systems across cultural groups in the United States demands subjective interpretations of various social practices (Short and Carrington, 1996). However, this is threatening to Hirsch’s cultural integrity, whose goal is to educate all citizens in the same ideology to achieve “high universal literacy” (1987, p. 2) that. Hirsch’s type of education, from this dissertation’s perspective, is *impermeable* to the values of many cultural groups and leads to an impoverished developmental path.

Different parties have different explanations for the knowledge gaps referenced by Hirsch. For example, one group of educational theorists and historians (Bloom, 1987; Hirsch, 1987, 1996; Ravitch, 1995; Reid-Wallace, 1995) attribute the decline in student academic performance to this country’s struggle with establishing, lowering, or

abandoning standards. These authors connect the changes in the American cultural make-up with a decentralization of educational practices by ethnic groups. However, these groups' cultural backgrounds lead to different educational needs and competencies, which necessitate acknowledgement (Delpit, 1986; Faison & Flanagan, under review). Evaluation standards need to be changed, not lowered.

Ravitch (1990) believes that while our society achieved a healthy "pluralistic multiculturalism" originated by the 60's fight against racism and discrimination, contemporary forms of multiculturalism have become *particularistic*. Ravitch defines particularism as a complete immersion of youth into their ancestral cultures and rejection of values shared with out-groups. I agree that particularism, as ignorance and rejection of values other than one's own, can only lead to yet another form of oppression. Ravitch (1990) fails to recognize, however, that traditional education is inherently particularistic by perpetuating white supremacy and rejects diversity to preserve its power.

Progressive educators, in contrast, take history and racism into consideration (Gates, 1992; Matsuda, 1993). Various group's different histories impact identities and create different value systems, which are in turn represented by young people in their thinking (Daiute et al., 2001; Daiute & Jones, 2003). These need to be incorporated in formal learning to provide appropriate education. By being denied representation in education, diverse youth face discontinuity between school and their private lives because what is learned at home is not typically valued in school (Gutiérrez et al., 1999; Hull & Schultz, 2002; Moll, Amanti, Neff & González, 1992; Nieto, 1994). Efforts against a discriminatory and incomplete education have been made for decades, and here a few prominent ones.

## Permeability as Part of the Multicultural Tradition of Education

If the reality of the classroom demographics is to be taken seriously (Nieto, 1992), it is imperative that we scrutinize the meaning of diversity, and the degree to and truthfulness with which multiculturalism is applied (Banks, 1994; Nieto, 1994). Themes of “diversity”, “multicultural education”, “anti-racist education” and “pluralism” surfaced over the years as solutions to revise dominant educational practices.

May (1999) and Sleeter and Delgado Bernal (2004) write about a long history of various types of activism that link forms of oppression to social justice efforts.

*Multicultural* education is one such endeavor that started as an activist intellectual movement challenging of racism in the 60's, and took various forms as it entered educational discourses (Banks, 1994; May, 1999; Sleeter & Delgado Bernal, 2004). Obidah (2000) states that in its beginnings, multiculturalism called for American's nonhierarchical examination of diversity in a true democratic fashion, while Banks (1994) and May (1999) report that a pluralistic society needed multicultural education to achieve freedom and dismantle cultural boundaries as social impediments. Consequently, white dominant discourses were confronted through the introduction of curricular counter narratives based on previously marginalized ethnic bodies of knowledge (Banks, 1994; Obidah, 2000; Sleeter & Delgado Bernal, 2004).

May (1999) states that multiculturalism was intended to address the gaps in achievement for minority students. Yet, Nieto (1992, 1994) sees the need for multicultural education to serve the interests of *all* students through curriculum and pedagogy rooted in social justice. A shortcoming of multiculturalism could be explained

by its goal to raise the status of minorities, without questioning white privilege and omitting class analyses of inequality. As such, the issue was located in minority peoples themselves, and white supremacy was not problematized, leading to superficial changes. As Nieto (1992, 1994) states, plain tolerance of and cultural sensitivity to difference alone cannot make an education multicultural, because they fail to account for structural and institutional arrangements that produce power differential. Due to the fact that originally multiculturalism did not address racism from an ideological perspective, it did not achieve its social justice goals to a great extent.

Sleeter and Delgado Bernal (2004) indicate that the *antiracist movement* was a 'correction' to multiculturalism's oversights. Specifically, the gravity of racist oppression that remained unaddressed by the original multiculturalism created the need to view race as a site of struggle. May (1999) reports that the *antiracist* British movement, on the other hand, focused on the discrimination and obstacles encountered by racial minorities. Sleeter and Delgado Bernal indicate that anti-racist education can inform multicultural education by challenging educational racism, racist school practices (e.g., tracking), placing culture inside power dynamics, connecting schools and communities, and problematizing whiteness. The assumed neutrality of institutions (see Hirsch and Ravitch above) is targeted directly by anti-racist education, exposing the hierarchical power relations between the dominant and dominated groups (Sleeter & Delgado Bernal, 2004) as reflected in pedagogy, resources and curricula.

The antiracist British movement, however, was accused of limiting its goals to a black-white racial dichotomy (leaving out class and gender), and ignoring cultural factors (May, 1999; Sleeter & Delgado Bernal, 2004). Cole (1998) and Sleeter and Delgado

Bernal (2004) suggest that rather than focusing either on race or on culture alone, the two should be combined. Short and Carrington (1996) propose that multiculturalism is revived, to integrate an analysis of group differences as well as possible commonalities.

May (1999) also seeks an alliance between multiculturalism and antiracist education as complements of each other, especially with the adoption of Freire's (1970) *critical pedagogy* in the United States. Critical pedagogy has provided an antiracist understanding of multiculturalism, helping it move away from oversimplifying the issues at hand. Under the influence of critical pedagogy, multicultural education was informed by the structural socio-economic and political inequities of marginalized populations (May, 1999). As a building block of *critical multiculturalism*, critical pedagogy is "a systematic interrogation of schools and schooling processes that enables educators to see these terrains, not simply as sites of instruction or as arenas of indoctrination and socialization, but also as cultural terrains that promote and/or negate student empowerment and teachers' self-transformation" (Obidah, 2000, p. 1040). Critical multiculturalism challenges both micro and macro forms of racism beyond a mere celebration of difference (May, 1999; Sleeter & Delgado Bernal, 2004).

May (1999) and Obidah (2000) find that multiculturalism and critical pedagogy together can address the effects of *cultural* differences on various groups' educational experiences and social power positions. Echoing Freire (1970) and Vygotsky (1979), Obidah (2000) sees the need to formally recognize the *social dynamic elements* people use to construct culture. Besides simply recognizing that one culture is different from another, those differences have important implications for each group's educational needs

and priorities, which resonates with my argument for the importance of *educational permeability to student diverse cultural knowledge*.

Critical multiculturalism creates spaces for “teachers as transformative intellectuals who usurp traditional notions of power and authority in the classroom and allow... students... [to] make meaning and find power for themselves” (Obidah, 2000, p. 1040). For example, students would be encouraged to discuss in class the effects racism is having on their lives (Fine, et al., 2000; Nieto, 1994), or the way the status of immigrant illegality is damaging youth’s worth as citizens and participants in this society (Solis, 2002). By integrating issues that incessantly affect the lives of diverse students, education will become empowering and legitimize youth’s presence as participants in their own development. The evolution of the efforts to recognize diverse identities supports our alternate way of creating violence prevention, which points to the absence of social analysis and student participation in most current prevention curricula/programs.

There is an increasing consensus that schools should cease to dismantle the knowledge brought into the classrooms by students and begin valuing it (Dyson, 1993; Nieto, 1994), while Cummings (1994) calls for a move away from coercive learning and teacher-centered models that inhibit critical thinking, especially for underprivileged students. I propose that besides the teacher’s pivotal role in a critical multicultural classroom (Obidah, 2000), students should be encouraged to adopt active positions and engage in dialogue (Daiute et al., 2002; Freire, 1970; Gross, 1997; Nieto, 1994, 1999a, 1999b; Sleeter & Grant, 1991). Learning that engages students and teachers in a dialogue will validate the various cultural selves they each bring into schools.

In seeking ways to initiate an avant-garde bottom-up dialogue, Freire's (1970) *critical pedagogy* proposes the dissolution of the student-teacher contradiction. When a meeting point between students and teachers is sought, these two traditionally segregated 'classes of citizens' interchange roles at times to both become learners and teachers, given their valuable complementary knowledge. The *novice and expert positions* are fluid in this educational model, where power is redistributed more evenly and the rigid walls around academic knowledge are opened to diverse concepts. For Freire, the student role as a passive and empty receptacle who is to be filled with information by the teacher needs to change, if students are to become agents of self and other transformation. [In this dissertation, I use the term *expert* to signify student, teacher or curricular knowledge that is relevant and valuable. I do not use expertise to indicate complete proficiency in a given topic, but rather the presence of pertinent knowledge that promotes learning.]

The 'banking system' (Freire, 1970) restricts youth's creativity and participation in life. Knowledge "emerges only through invention and re-invention, through restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry men pursue in the world, with the world and with each other" (Freire, 1970, p. 58). This belief coincides with the Vygotskian argument on the importance of the social element in learning. Development is an inherently dynamic and social apprenticeship, and not an automatic intake of recycled information.

Freire calls for students' consciousness raising since they are holders of information that needs to be mined for more efficient learning and social positioning to occur. I claim that students do not need to be guided in becoming *first-time* knowers, because they are already knowledgeable, by being participants in various social realms. Instead, students

need to become aware of the value of the information they possess and be supported to share and negotiate it while learning curriculum.

Freire identifies the emancipation process as the formation of a critical consciousness that makes the transformation of the world possible and prevents the learners from being engulfed into an oppression system. The teacher-student dialogical relations, mediated by the world, will become acts of liberation and allow its participants to be critical thinkers (Freire, 1970). This type of learning, “the problem-posing method” (p. 68), is a manifestation of freedom that is humanizing and allows for a student-teacher co-construction of society.

The problem-posing theory recognizes individuals as historical and intentional beings, by fueling their agentic abilities towards themselves and the world. Freire also regards this type of education as “constantly remade in the praxis” (p. 72). The banking system of education implies permanence, which counteracts the goals of a multicultural education that is fluid and diverse in nature. Perpetuity is the equivalent of tradition, which maintains a unilateral power distribution, while marginalizing those who deviate from the norm. I find that the shift from a “banking system” to a “problematizing system” requires institutional change towards permeability to student critical and original thinking. Students in this dissertation will be challenged to problematize the prevention information they receive and formulate a more relevant agenda for combating violence.

## Reports of a Multidimensional Crisis in Today’s Public Education

To avoid de-contextualization and link this paper to the other efforts of educational reform, below are summaries of injustices confronted by contemporary poor and minority

youth which show the urgent need for better allocation of resources and alternative educational approaches.

ACORN (the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now) (2000) reports that *most Black and Latino New York youth are enrolled in less than adequate schools*, while parents are being systemically prevented from intervening on their children's behalf to remedy the situation (ACORN, 2000). White parents receive more information, attention, better treatment and less scrutiny than Black and Latino parents. Further, while New York City high schools are composed of 39% Blacks and 34% Latinos, there are less than 5% Blacks and a little over 4% Latinos at Stuyvesant, and 11% Blacks and 9% Latinos at Bronx Science. These students are prepared for mediocre or substandard tracks (ACORN, 2000).

One mechanism that steers new generations for lives either at society's top or bottom through education is *tracking*. According to Nieto (1994), "although many tracking decisions are made on the most tenuous grounds, they are supported by ideological norms in our society about the nature of intelligence and the distribution of ability" (p. 409). Yet, class and race remain strong determinants of educational quality (Oakes, Stuart Wells, Yonezawa & Ray, 1997; Fine et al., 2000). Success is reserved for select groups who are privileged by class and/or race and often experience the benefits of Advanced Placement (AP) (Oakes et al., 1997, Fine et al, 2000). More often than not, schools place African-American and Latino students in low and remedial ability groups due to misconstrued deficits and limited potential; these students encounter less powerful learning environments, have access to less resources and are challenged considerably less than high track students (Oakes et al., 1997).

Another component of institutional racism (Matsuda, 1993) that affects academic outcomes and demands change is teacher distribution in public schools. The Institute for Education and Social Policy (IESP) (2001) reports that the shortage of qualified teachers in New York City is caused by the attraction of suburbia's better compensation, resources and smaller classes. A lower percentage of high need community school district children reads at or above grade level. Further, lower salaries co-vary with the lower socio-economic status of the students. Among the same lines, Darling-Hammond (2001) reports on a deprivation of resources and teacher preparation experienced by Black and Latino students in central cities. Unequal distribution of educational privileges between urban (mostly of color) and suburban (mostly white) students determines the low passage rate of state testing for the former group, which in the long run deepens the existing racial inequalities (Darling-Hammond, 2001). Minority students' drop-out and incarceration rates are also on the rise.

Due to the unequal distribution of resources, less privileged students receive worse preparation that negatively affect their developmental trajectories, leading to involvement in high risk acts such as violence (Spencer et al., 2003). Not to be ignored, as it poses one of the strongest threats to a high quality and democratic public education today, are the issue of high stakes testing and its companion, the teaching of specific skills whose only purpose is to prepare students for those tests. 'Teaching to the test' is a reaction to the pressure on schools and teachers to achieve higher passage rates for their students. This practice often results in what Jones, Jones and Hargrove (2003) call a chain reaction whose elements are, among others, narrow curricula, item teaching that is unethical, cheating, student anxiety, and compromise of quality and meaningful instructional time.

Amrein (2003) reports that academic performance decreased overall after the introduction of state-mandated high stakes testing, while drop-out rates increased and graduation rates decreased. Further, younger and younger cohorts are becoming GED students, and students experience more often within-grade retention, while some are expelled right before the test date (Amrein, 2003). Apparently, high stakes testing has become a gatekeeper of success, which is narrowly defined and unlikely to lead to meaningful development. Children's creativity, emotional and social development are compromised, yet those are expected qualities of a self-actualized individual (Jones et al., 2003). Test skill building strikingly resembles the overflow of skill teaching in the violence prevention field, which I critiqued in previous sections. These narrow definitions and practices of learning, development and prevention are orienting youth towards academic and social failure. As a contribution to the larger efforts of progressive educators to create a more just education, this dissertation proposes diverse student participation in learning as a meaningful social development act. It is, therefore, worth examining the current state of student involvement in learning.

## Youth Participation

### A Negligible Tradition of School Participation

Another body of literature relevant to this dissertation is the one on *participation*. Although there is high variation in the degrees and forms of student participation in schools, across the board youth are allowed to influence their learning in a limited way,

in the sense that curriculum is not co-authored with students. Why is student participation in learning important? Vygotsky (1978) postulated that children did not internalize an exact copy of the experienced social aspects, but rather adopted versions that they first transformed. More research on how youth transform knowledge is required due to its valuable practical implications.

Sleeter and Grant (1991) provide an example of *lack* of student participation in salient activities. They identify a discrepancy between the knowledge students are expected to learn in school and that encountered in their out-of-school lives. The former is “a series of tasks to complete for authority figures rather than as an instrument for advancing their own interests” (p. 53), and the latter allows them to exert some power and influence over certain circumstances. The consequent “bifurcation ...between school knowledge and real-life knowledge” (Sleeter & Grant, 1991, p. 49) leaves students powerless and devalues competencies they could otherwise exert in school.

Rudduck, Day and Wallace (1997) believe that schools confine students at a childhood stage for too long. This occurs because schools underestimate students’ social maturity that makes them competent in many areas. There is a lack of balance between the high levels of responsibility students often have outside of school and the low levels of accountability they are granted inside classrooms. As a result, schools smother student voices based on dated notions of childhood that ignore students’ ability and rights to influence their lives. Rudduck et al. (1997) found that by inviting students to be part of the conversation, policymakers can obtain essential information on both positive or disappointing aspects of learning, issues of motivation, reasons for dropping out or settling for minimum academic exchanges. Students could gain more powerful positions

from which they could share their knowledge and learn at the same time. Students need to find meaning in and feel some ownership over the activities in which they are involved (Ammentorp, 2002; Sleeter & Grant, 1991).

Daiute et al. (1993) found that engagement and control over ideas (in other words participation) were manifested the most when students working collaboratively on a writing task were allowed to freely test and expand their competencies. In another instance, student talk about their home and neighborhood lives was “important for understanding the student culture and for teaching students more productively” (Sleeter & Grant, 1991, p. 56). Furthermore, Rudduck et al. (1997) found that student views about school improvement were different from and complemented those of policymakers. By including them in reform efforts, youth alternatives to institutional provisions can surface. Curriculum is based on values, and students’ experiences become internalized as values. These two value realms need to begin constituting each other.

However, Sleeter and Grant (1991) report that school and class content are the least mentioned topics by the students they interviewed. Specifically, one third of the students reported that class content was unrelated to their lives, and approximately only half of them found that one or two classes were relevant to their outside experiences. The most significant segments of these students’ cultural knowledge were peers and events over which they had some measure of control and in which they chose to participate (Sleeter & Grant, 1991). School related events and content were viewed as being orchestrated by adults as a series of mandatory tasks. Sleeter and Grant note that concomitantly with the school’s rejection of student knowledge and experiences, these youth qualified school knowledge to be of little use to them. The degree to which

students were involved in decision making around various issues determined what was and what was not relevant to them.

Nieto (1994, 1999a, 1999b) refutes the claim that schools should act as agents of assimilation into the norm, and proposes that policy makers draw on student cultural knowledge. She believes that listening to students and including them in dialogical efforts to revolutionize education are keys to a successful system for youth of all backgrounds, resulting in the creation of “a more socially conscious curriculum” (Nieto, 1994, p. 404). Further, opening communication channels with students will enable them to become critical decision-makers.

Nieto’s interviews with ethnically diverse students revealed the strength they drew from their backgrounds, and their disappointment that schools did not use those as resources. Dropout instances were often related to schools’ efforts to convert students into monocultural individuals, which fundamentally conflicted with many of these youth’s identities (Nieto, 1994). Students are perceptive of the low expectations schools have of them, as well as of the fact that they may not receive high quality challenging learning. Freire would regard these students as having the necessary consciousness to move towards liberation.

Besides curricular values, pedagogical practices are equally powerful in engaging or alienating students (Nieto, 1994). Students viewed teaching methods such as “chalk and talk” or straight from the textbook to be non-engaging and discouraging of creativity and critical thinking. Daiute et al. (1993) make an important “contrast between social reproduction as characterized in a teacher’s modeling of expert composition strategies and social construction as characterized by collaboration among novice” (p. 42) children

and adolescents. At the same time, Nieto finds that although heterogeneous grouping or peer cooperative learning are helpful, they alone cannot lead to better schooling unless teachers adopt progressive and culturally sensitive pedagogy. Various scholars (Daiute et al., 1993, 2003; Freire, 1970; Gross, 1997; Nieto, 1994; Wehmeyer & Sands, 1998) point to the need to make the complementary student-teacher partnerships a common practice.

## A Tradition of Participation Outside of Schools

It appears that despite the notorious lack of participatory opportunities for students in formal education, youth are successfully involved in other social activities (UNICEF, 2003). The accounts described below give us hope that we could learn from these models and import the most participatory ones into formal education.

Hull and Schultz (2002) presented a few accounts of robust learning that, unfortunately, for now, take place outside of formal educational spaces. Mundane activities (such as children's reasoning about handling a parking ticket, or a poor and marginalized women's informal poetry and prose writing group conducive of not only literacy but also political awareness), embed creative modes of thinking and strategies for problem solving. Hull and Schultz (2002) point out that "research on out-of-school learning is currently keen, and we are beginning to have portraits of children and adults performing successfully in a variety of out-of-school tasks that they've not been able or eager to complete in schoolroom. But we are troubled by a tendency we have noticed to build and reify a great divide between school and out of school ... [which] sometimes dismisses the engagement of children in non-school learning as merely frivolous or remedial or incidental" (p. 3).

Hart (1997) identifies degrees of youth participation, depending on how much control children have and whose agendas are being promoted. Hart uses the metaphor of a *ladder* to explain the levels of acceptable participation, as well as the ways in which adults can facilitate true child and adolescent involvement. The bottom rung is what Hart (1997) calls *manipulation and deception*. The first is a mechanism for adults to put out their own messages by using youth as their vehicles and the second occurs when adult involvement in a project remains hidden for the purposes of presenting it as a strictly child-created enterprise. The second rung is called *decoration* and involves children carrying a message (on a banner or T-shirt) that they do not understand or have anything to do with. The next rung up is *tokenism*, where children are used as symbols (such as their presence at a conference) to impress the audience and make them believe that young people are involved in a particular activity. Tokenism may intend for children to have an impact in a certain area, however, a concrete influence cannot be documented.

The models presented thus far do not teach children and adolescents about democracy and participation. Hart (1997) continues by presenting the next rungs up, which allow young people to be involved and have a choice. *Social mobilization* (or *assigned but informed*) does not help children truly understand and practice democratic principles, even when they are informed of the project's agenda. Social mobilization can be a good first step into democratic socialization, but it needs to be followed by other, more participatory, activities to counteract its top-down nature. *Consulted and informed*, Hart's (1997) next rung up, represent adult initiated actions, in which children's input is taken seriously. Next, in the *adult-initiated* models where *decisions are shared with*

*children*, processes are to be shared by all age groups. Negotiations need to happen to find middle grounds between adult and youth goals.

Moving up, the *child-initiated and directed* projects are primarily found in children's play. These contexts that facilitate the learning of important socialization skills are unfortunately rarely seen in other activities, which continue to be dominated by adults (Hart, 1997). Adults need to be sensitive to child and youth initiated activities, and nurture them enough to sustain, but not modify them. Hart indicates that these types of children's projects usually unfold secretly. The unofficial curricula produced by students previously noted in the educational literature seem to be of the same nature with the child initiated and directed participation.

Children and adolescents have their own enterprises, and their ability and willingness to negotiate with adults in building their futures makes their agency that much more sophisticated. Hart (1997) termed this highest rung of the participation ladder *child initiated shared decisions with adults*. As I develop a model of student participation in official curriculum design, I draw on Hart's three last models.

In another concrete example of youth participation, Ammentorp (2002) analyzed the role of literacy in the formation of political activism for a group of children (8-13 years of age) who became engaged in the activities of People's Campaign, New Brunswick. The Campaign was an adult grassroots political organization for candidates running for City Council. Gradually, the students became even more involved in People's Campaign and formed a youth caucus. The youths received academic help from the adults, who introduced them to a project involving the creation of a zine that had the improvement of New Brunswick as a central theme. A youth campaign was initiated and

consisted of flyering, protests, meetings, homework assistance, the making of the zine and election-day work. Children worked on their own agenda items (literacy, the activities of their caucus, research on elements in need of change in town), as they supported the larger goals of the People's Campaign.

Ammentorp drew on Freire's (1970) concept of problem-posing education, which in this case helped children become proactive, identify and exert their rights, increase their literacy skills and conduct meaningful activities in the context of political activism. Miller (1992) found that adolescents engage in issues of political and activist nature when those have relevance to their lives, but also to the well-being of society. Ammentorp found that "children participated in political activity and by doing so changed themselves and the community in which they lived" (2002, p. 4). Such activism, Ammentorp states, is essential for building democracy and young people's sense of self-determination. These were also minority children (African American and Latino/a), who became meaningfully engaged in a dialogue for community change from which they had been historically barred. This is an example of youth participation in a project that combined youth with adult goals, and led to young people's leaps in academic performance and political identity formation. Such enterprises should become part of school practices to support the formation of youth's sense of agency and self-determination.

The above information originates from practice, which is theory's partner. The following section contains theoretical ideas that further reveal the benefits and need for student participation in education, and possible mechanisms through which *permeability to student knowledge* can be achieved.

## Developmental and Socio- Cultural Perspectives of Youth Participation in Education: Can Youth Participate and What Can They Contribute?

This dissertation postulates that education quality and youth violence are highly correlated, given that they are both determined by social, historical economical and political factors. This study looks at what young people believe is pertinent to learn about violence prevention and peace (curricular content) and the ways in which those should be learned (process) and taught (pedagogy).

Based on social developmental theory, this section describes some of the mechanisms through which students can contribute to what they learn, and specific conditions that can facilitate participation. These include student-teacher power relations in the classroom and the type of scaffolding necessary to support youth in integrating knowledge they already hold with the one learned in school. Further, the question of young people's capacities to perform such traditionally adult-designated tasks is answered through demonstrating students' ability to stretch their performances beyond their *actual* level of development and into *potential* zones of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978).

### ZPDs, Scaffolding, and Spontaneous and Scientific Knowledge

As scholars and practitioners point out the urgency of connecting student outside of school resources with academic development (Comer, 1988; Daiute et al., 2001, 2003; Dyson, 1993; Nieto, 1994), this project seeks practical ways to formally implement student expertise. As stated earlier, I use the terms "expertise" and "expert" to indicate the possession of pertinent knowledge in a given aspect. However, by no means am I implying that teachers and especially students whom I call experts possess an exhaustive

pool of information on the aspect at hand. I draw this term from the master-novice literacy studies, which I address later in this dissertation.

Vygotsky and Lee are two theorists and practitioners whose works on the zone of proximal development and scaffolding I outline below. Vygotsky (1978) introduced the concept of the ‘zone of proximal development’ (ZPD) as he addressed the relationship between instruction and development. Previous approaches to instruction and psychological testing had postulated that learning should be matched to the child’s *actual* level of development, corresponding to his or her age and *individual* performance abilities. According to Vygotsky, those views ignored and made impossible the measurement of one’s *potential* learning capacity. Vygotsky (1978, 1987) defined the *actual developmental level* as the already matured mental functions used by a child to complete tasks without any help. For a constructive assessment of one’s higher levels of performance reached with the help of more knowledgeable others, Vygotsky (1978, 1987) saw the need to ‘prospectively’ assess the child’s growth potential in a collaborative process. Instruction should target functions in “embryonic” states, and whose full development was triggered by socially meaningful interactions with more knowledgeable others (Vygotsky, 1978, 1987). The ZPD was thus defined as “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

Vygotsky also connected the learning that occurred outside of school with formal academic instruction. He believed that *everyday or spontaneous concepts* began forming

during one's preschool years (Vygotsky, 1987). During formal schooling, a child assimilated *scientific concepts*. These two classes of concepts shared fluid boundaries, were mediated by language and social interaction, and formed a unified system of childhood mental development. The emergence of scientific concepts was facilitated by sufficiently matured spontaneous concepts. In turn, an increase in scientific knowledge influenced the further growth in spontaneous concepts. However, scientific concepts did not replace the existing spontaneous knowledge, but rather restructured it.

Thus, Vygotsky's (1978, 1981, 1987) theory can be applied in the United States today, where people struggle to find an education fit to their often divergent needs. If one's higher mental functions result from social acts negotiated through cultural means of mediation (Vygotsky, 1981), the encountered educational content, style, rules, peers and teachers are key determinants to one's developmental outcome. This study's a priori and school knowledge parallels Vygotsky's two classes of concepts, and it postulates that outside (spontaneous) knowledge can formally be integrated with school (scientific) concepts through *permeability*. I postulated here that if the knowledge brought by students from the outside (*everyday concepts*) is in conflict or remains unacknowledged by the dominant cultural values found in schools (*scientific concepts*), important developmental processes will be disrupted.

Applications of Vygotsky's ideas have been used towards studying how permeability to cultural knowledge affects learning. Carol Lee's (1993, 2000) work is an example of educational permeability to cultural knowledge used to learn academic concepts. Students' everyday knowledge was instrumental in teaching them established scientific concepts such as interpreting literary meaning. Lee (2000) maintained that

specific cultural, historical and social contexts enable learning through dialectical dialogues of semiotic mediation (Vygotsky, 1978). Although Lee did not use students' knowledge to change curriculum, she employed elements of teacher-student and peer dialogue and negotiation of heterogeneous cultural values. Lee showed how teachers used students' culturally rooted social knowledge (a priori understanding of values, social milieu, and language) as a *scaffolding* device to apprentice them in literary analysis of African American texts. *Scaffolding* delineates the stepping stones laid down by a more knowledgeable person to teach a novice specific skills within a ZPD (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976). The gradual learning through scaffolding is mediated socially and built on children's feedback.

Lee (2000) demonstrated that *signifying*<sup>2</sup>, an African American form of social discourse, could become a scaffolding tool for teaching complex interpretation strategies. Signifying as a *spontaneous* concept intuitively understood by students resembled literary *scientific* concepts such as metaphor, irony, or rhetorical tropes with double entendre and inferred meanings. However, Lee questioned Vygotsky's claim that *spontaneous* concepts emerged strictly from community experiences, and *scientific* ones from formal educational settings. Signifying shared features with spontaneous concepts by being situational and practical; it also resembled scientific concepts by being systematic, part of a hierarchy of concepts, generalizable and relative (Lee, 2000). The student-teacher and peer exchanges gradually created a new intellectual classroom culture. Lee's findings show that the border between spontaneous and scientific knowledge can be blurred, allowing for permeability of outside wisdom into the classroom. Thus, academic and real-life knowledge can form each other to alter traditional top-down education.

## Peer Collaboration

The theory and methods employed in this proposal rest on ideas of peer group collaborations as means of contributing and advancing one's knowledge. The most creative and involving activities are likely to take place within peer (group) work (Cohen, 1994). In group work, students are allowed to take a task in their own hands, negotiate meaning, make mistakes and think critically about the issues at hand (Cohen, 1994). I claim in this dissertation that students cannot become agents in learning unless the power in the classroom shifts from a unilateral teacher-held control to a shared power among students and teachers. This is not possible without creating a safe setting for students to begin expressing and experimenting with their ideas in a non-punitive or predetermined learning regimen.

Peer group work is a non-threatening context where students can use each other's knowledge, ask questions, critique, contribute ideas, explain, disagree and make decisions without much interference from the authoritative teacher figure (Cohen, 1994). This collaboration can be a jumping board for students to integrate their a priori knowledge into the material (educational permeability), and at the same time undergo a more active learning process over which they have some ownership. Cohen notes that this type of learning motivates and engages all students, which is a challenge to traditional methods of teaching and their content (Lee, 2000, Nieto, 1994).

Cohen (1994) states, however, that collaborative work is itself foreign to the traditional American cultural practices, where individualism is valued. Sapon-Shevin and Schniedewind (1991) describe collaborative learning as a tool for empowerment within multicultural and heterogeneous learning arrangements: "...cooperative learning can be linked to raising critical consciousness about the sources and forms of inequality and to

helping students and teachers become empowered to create the changes necessary for multicultural classrooms, schools, and society” (p. 161). Like Cohen, these authors contrast cooperation with the competition that is traditionally encouraged in classrooms, which teaches children that there can only be one winner. Sapon-Shevin and Schniedewind (1991) identify schools as arenas of socialization, where competitive setups portray models of authoritarianism of the oppressor-oppressed relations.

However, the win-win results of cooperation contradict competitive conditions, and are agree with the co-existence of multiple competencies. Thus, learning in a collaborative fashion facilitates the sharing of complementary expertise of peers (Daiute & Dalton, 1993) displayed through “different models of human interaction” (Sapon-Shevin & Schniedewind, 1991, p. 161), and fosteres heterogeneous communities where multiplicity is valued over the singularity of competition.

Through cooperation, students learn to take multiple perspectives and discover that the strict boundaries set by societal rules can be more porous and with more overlapping segments than allowed by traditional education (Sapon-Shevin & Schniedewind, 1991). Diverse students experience conflict, its causes and resolution differently (Daiute & Jones, 2003). Consequently, these youth hold complementary knowledge/expertise that can be used to build more complex curricula. The next section suggests how long-lived traditions of student-teacher power in the classroom need to be reconfigured to welcome students as knowers.

## Power Relations in the Classroom and the Hidden Capacities of Young Minds

Specific conditions need to be met before students can acquire agency through peer collaborations. For true student input, the solutions reached by youths as they work on a certain task need to go further than the piece of paper on which assignments are completed (as traditionally done in classrooms). As I claim in this dissertation, student work done in small groups and research activities ought to be, at the end of the day, incorporated in the official curriculum that is being re-written. The degree to which a student is able to co-construct what he or she learns and offers is tied to the freedom allowed for such participatory opportunities. *Classroom power relations* are defined by whether at a given time a student interacts with the teacher, or with a peer student (Daiute, 2002; Daiute & Dalton, 1993; Daiute et al., 2003). Depending on who the ‘negotiation’ partner is, power shifts from a more hierarchical (teacher-student) to a more equal (student-student) configuration. The latter leaves room for negotiation of curricular values (Daiute, Campbell, Griffin, Reddy & Tivnan, 1993; Daiute & Dalton, 1993; Daiute et al., 2003), and needs to be extended to modify hierarchical teacher-student relations.

Daiute et al. (1993) found that peer collaboration “includes play, extensive exploration, and reliance on social and affective supports, [yet it] is not typical of school behavior, [therefore] these results suggest that educators need to rethink the design of instructional contexts” (p.62). Both the type of information exchanged and the way this is manipulated and transformed are determined by power dynamics and the kind of communication (collaborative vs. unidirectional transmission) in a classroom (Daiute et

al., 1993; Daiute & Dalton, 1993; Daiute et al., 2003). Cummings (1994) finds that collaborative power relations in the classroom will compel school authorities to recognize the traditionally overlooked and rejected sources of knowledge that reside in students.

Despite the strict classifications made by traditional developmental cognitive theory, students as young as third grade are able to reason, make decisions and solve tasks creatively, even if their strategies draw more on spontaneous knowledge rather than on organized and planned adult strategies (Daiute et al., 1993; Daiute & Dalton, 1993). Early developmental models (Piaget, 1963; Erikson, 1980) are limited in the sense that they view children as cognitively restricted by their age and stage of development.

Hart (1997) states that developmental principles are assumed to be more or less universal representations of the child, and are often incorrectly generalized to non-Western non-White children. Hart illustrates how children of different ages and cultural backgrounds hold various competencies (multiple intelligences) that, if organized under adult guidance, can facilitate significant social action as well as continued learning. Hart suggests that “children living in different cultures, environments, and social classes are exposed to different materials, experiences, and informal teaching by their families and neighbours, and this results in the appearance of different competencies at different times” (p.27). Diverse youth can benefit from exchanging wide ranges of values.

In interactions with knowledgeable peers or adults, children’s learning potentials expand beyond the restrictive age boundaries of the stage-like models. Daiute and Dalton (1993) studied the processes and outcomes of student collaborations as compared to student-teacher learning. Ethnically diverse low-achieving third graders became active constructors of knowledge through spontaneous and socially interactive peer strategies

(Daiute & Dalton, 1993). They benefited from each other's different but complementary academic and social abilities or expertise. In another study, Daiute et al. (1993) found that teachers can help students incorporate more English language elements when they base their instruction on student-generated questions, interests and suggestions.

Peer collaborations can play catalytic roles in writing, mathematics, social studies and problem solving (Cohen, 1994). Through coordination, partner interdependence, equal power distribution, and heterogeneous views of diverse ethnic backgrounds, children benefit from novice partnerships. Daiute and Dalton (1993) found that peer collaborative learning resembled adult cognitive apprenticeship. *Play* around academic tasks revealed important tactics for planning and revising strategies. A certain form of *generativity* emerged as peers introduced personally meaningful themes and agendas into the school settings. As this paper proposes, such strategies should be recognized as student-held abilities to employ effective learning processes, and which should be used in shaping education. Further, *cognitive conflict* (play element of disagreement, contesting and arguing) helped children's examination of their and others' thoughts, leading to idea building and clarification (Daiute & Dalton, 1993). Peers expanded their analytic abilities by *implicitly* reflecting on others' points of view, as they contrasted, critiqued and coordinated them.

Peer work is valuable because students can discuss ideas more spontaneously and critically with individuals of equal status. What Daiute et al. (1993) found in their study, echoing Cohen's (1994) ideas, was a mutual experimentation and meaning making by young students who felt more comfortable taking intellectual risks during peer work. Third and fourth graders drew heavily on affective and social resources, as opposed to the

cognitive and intellectual ones present in the interactions with the teacher. Daiute and Dalton (1993) postulated that peer cooperation may be ideal for practicing and expanding inert knowledge, which supports viewing youth as knowledgeable and allowing them to become partners in learning. Peer support links a child's mode of thinking in informal settings to official classroom performance, and enables the intuitively held skills to position students as wisdom and expertise carriers beyond the rigid stages of some cognitive developmental theories.

### Hybridity and the Third Space

In a similar research line, Gutierrez et al., (1999) see potential for intellectual growth when conflicting discourses based on diverse knowledge first collide. Official (institutional) and unofficial (bottom-up, usually those of students) discourses co-exist in diverse classrooms. If these are both recognized as resources to be negotiated and drawn upon in making intellectual leaps, peers and teachers will find themselves collaborating in what Gutierrez et al. (1999) call the *third space*. As students move from the periphery of their unofficial spaces, teachers also need to move from their official spaces to meet students in a commonly created third space of negotiation. This becomes a fertile learning ground when the course of a class changes based on negotiated knowledge, unconstrained by rigid curricula and institutional discourses.

Active negotiation of values leads to *hybrid* conversations in a third space of intellectual development, fusing official and unofficial knowledge (Gutierrez et al., 1999). Once a third space filled with hybrid knowledge is accepted as legitimate in content, it can move to the status of an *official space* of the classroom discourse. This dissertation is interested to know what happens to the heterogeneity of the values brought

to the third space. After conflict and negotiation of heterogeneous cultural values, and after the third space becomes an official space, can the original *heterogeneity* of values survive? Should this even be a goal, if the constant process of negotiation takes precedence over traditional reproduction of dominant values or the isolation of formerly marginalized ideas? Is this a sufficient achievement for an education to be dialogical and permeable to cultural values? Should the goal of a permeable education (that facilitates a third space) be to lose the initial heterogeneity and create new knowledge, which is a hybrid of all ‘knowledges’ brought to the mix? The next section presents the work of yet another researcher that is closely related to what I propose in this dissertation.

### Dyson’s Conceptualization of a Permeable Curriculum

Another line of research that is pertinent to this project is Dyson’s (1993) own understanding of a permeable curriculum. Dyson observed children (kindergartners to third graders) who informed their literacy learning with oral folk and pop culture traditions from outside of school. Literacy was conceptualized beyond vocabulary and grammar, to qualify it as a social act representative of the children’s interactions with people in their lives.

Much like Gutierrez et al. (1999) and Lee (2000), Dyson (1993) challenges education in terms of its principles being “grounded in narrow imaginative universes, universes that see literacy as taking root comfortably for children with middle-class backgrounds who speak Standard English and respond to school-like tasks in conventional ways” (p. 6). She followed six children in a progressive educator’s class to understand the students rich unofficial curricula and show how resources learned in their African American communities were employed by the children in developing their

literacy abilities, both as academic skills and meaningful social acts. This present dissertation proposes to extend Dyson's original conceptualization of a permeable curriculum by placing it in Gutierrez et al.'s (1999) third space and making a *formal* transformation of knowledge possible. More specifically, none of the previous research engaged students to go as far as writing their perspectives into formal curricula. Permeability as an educational paradigm, and in agreement with the goals put forth by Daiute, Dyson, Nieto, Lee and Gutierrez and her colleagues, will not only show the complementary value of youth knowledge, but also make it a permanent (yet in flux due to its social nature) aspect of learning inside and outside of schools.

### The Impetus Behind Developing A Model of Permeability

What is a *permeable event*? A *permeable event* is defined here as an instance when a student-initiated view is expressed and recognized as educationally relevant and valuable. This project defines this concept theoretically and operationalizes it as a praxis by showing the particularities of permeable learning. Below, I present previous research that sparked my convictions that students hold the answer to optimizing their education.

Daiute et al.'s (2003) analysis of the Voices of Love and Freedom (VLF) curriculum (Walker, 1997) illustrated the process and types of knowledge young students used to critique the fixed values of conflict resolution and ethnically sensitive violence prevention materials. Daiute et al. (1993, 2003) identified original, student created curricula that emerge when students (of various ages) worked collaboratively. Through informal and safe ways in the company of peers, these learners brought to the surface

values important to them, and which have often been referred in the literature as *children's curricula* (Daiute et al., 1993) or *unofficial curricula* (Dyson, 1993). They are unofficial because they are not solicited by teachers or included in curricula. Although they are student-generated, these curricula are nonetheless complex. Gutierrez et al. (1999) referred to the teacher and student discourses as *official scripts and counterscripts*, respectively.

The purpose of Daiute et al.'s (2003) study in the context of the VLF curriculum was to examine student knowledge as sources of creativity and learning. The authors found that ethnically diverse students took critical perspectives of the ideal conflict resolution techniques they were expected to internalize. Even though the curriculum legitimized diversity and gave solutions for a peaceful co-existence, students applied the official curricular values to various degrees, according to how much the conflict resolution strategies made sense to them.

In these safe spaces of peer collaboration, students often debated what Daiute et al. (2003) called *unique values*, or unofficial positions stemming from their life experiences with racial and ethnic conflict (Matsuda, 1993). Some of them did not believe that curriculum values like 'walking away' or 'compromising' would always work when applied to real life situations, where not backing out may be the only way to survive. Confrontation seemed to be an essential step in their understanding of social relations, and could not be easily extirpated, like the curriculum suggested. In another instance, two foreign students started the writing task but ended up debating the imperialist tendencies of United States. This can be interpreted as two young foreigners finding irony in a curriculum that advocated peaceful relations among children, although

the country in which this lesson is learned exhibits global bully-like behavior. Yet, there were no formal opportunities for these students' concern to be addressed.

Unofficial values were discussed during side peer conversations, and never became part of the formal classroom script. Ammentorp (2002) found that "school environments in the United States...do not create a context for children to appropriate what they learn to their life nor to apply their life experiences to what they learn" (p. 3). Drawing on Daiute et al.'s work (2003), I created conditions for students to become official representatives of their own points of view at the curricular negotiation table. In this way, educators can make learning more relevant, and students can participate in their own development.

The research questions of this dissertation are varied in nature to account for the multiple aspects of this study. They point to my intentions to address not only the meaningful difference youth input will make in conceptualizing violence prevention (matters of content), but also to seek effective ways in which to facilitate students' accessing their a priori knowledge and integrating it with scientific knowledge. The questions represent separate conceptual pieces that will reveal different facets of permeability as a theory and practical application.

### Research Questions

This project's research questions address the complex paradigm of permeability. I list the questions here, however, I elaborate (in the Methods chapter) on the aspects of permeability they each reveal, and which I briefly mention below.

**Guiding umbrella question of permeability:**

What is the function of **educational permeability** to student knowledge?

**Research questions pertaining to curriculum Content:**

- (a) How does a violence prevention curriculum designed by youth differ from one designed by adults in terms of both structure and content?
- (b) On what kind of knowledge do youths draw to contribute to the re-writing of a violence prevention curriculum?

**Research questions pertaining to the Process of permeability:**

- (a) How did the discussions proceed when the learning task was to critique and transform an adult curriculum? How did students alter my initial transformation plan in order to incorporate their own modes of learning?
- (b) What was the type and necessary amount of scaffolding that supported student agency but not interfere with their creativity?
- (c) What were the ways in which students transferred their everyday knowledge to scientific learning environments?

**Research questions pertaining to the Pedagogy of permeability:**

- (a) What kind of pedagogy allows for student contributions to learning?
- (b) How can agency be transferred from the adult (teacher or facilitator) to the students so that their participation can have a substantive effect in transforming knowledge? This is a power redistribution requirement that is crucial for permeability to take place, and implies gradual student self- and peer scaffolding.

**Questions/aspects addressed in the final chapter:**

This dissertation asks what are some fundamental differences between adult and youth perspectives around violence and its prevention. It also intends to discuss the value of having youths involved in collaborative knowledge creation in terms of social development, formation of new skills and learning. The final chapter will also address the sequence and conditions of permeability, and suggest what may be learned from the diversity of student perspectives that could help educators, researchers and policy makers create a more efficient and inclusive education.

## PART II

### **Chapter 2: Methods for A Permeable Theory, Research and Practice**

#### The Site and Participants

Meaning is shaped by social actors who interact in specific ways around ideas, and by the setting of their activities. Institutions promote specific agendas and expect their constituents to follow them, as their organizational structures affect the type of knowledge generated within them. Therefore, the outcomes of this dissertation would have been steered in distinct directions, depending on whether it took place in a school, or in an alternative space, such as a youth organization or an after-school program. In searching for a site, I kept a number of qualities in mind, such as openness to student development, student-centered and participatory practices and ethnic diversity.

Out-of-school settings seemed ideal for implementing student co-authoring of curricula, given their less regimented and pressured environments. Being ‘away from school’ gives learning a different potential, which is the main goal of this dissertation. In terms of disadvantages, being that students participate in after-school voluntarily, the sample of participants should be highly selective, and probably made of more committed or dedicated students. Further, after long challenging activities in school, students’ energy is likely to run low, and their busy schedules may limit their time and interest in the project. Such institutions may offer less support for research, given that they have their own agendas to execute and may even be concerned with their possibly precarious existence as organizations. However, I believed that alternative learning spaces could be a better place to initiate youth into curricular knowledge creation.

## World Youth

This after-school program is attended by junior high and high school students from various schools around the New York Metropolitan area. Students are involved in what they believe are meaningful activities, such as social activism and leadership. The youths attend and organize interactive workshops and conferences on salient issues such as HIV/AIDS, drugs, peace and conflict, teen pregnancy, or media power.

Since this dissertation is interested in the pedagogy of student participation in curriculum design, it is important to acknowledge that by attending World Youth activities, these students are exposed to a different kind of learning than usually experienced in schools. At World Youth, students learn to collaborate and become leaders, and are initiated in relevant social issues that impact their and other people's lives to great extents. Freire would look upon the mission of World Youth as consciousness raising for the purposes of self and social change. World Youth students are more likely to be independent thinkers and initiators of social action than those exposed to learning in conventional schools alone. Therefore, these students were already familiar with alternative learning modes.

To recruit students, I made contacts with the organization's Executive and Deputy Directors, and at their suggestion, I visited one of the program's workshops. I described the project to the students, while the coordinators did not participate in this activity in order to avoid possible coercion issues. I introduced the project as an opportunity to input youth ideas into a curriculum of violence prevention. I made clear my conviction that students are knowledgeable and that their points of view should be part of formal learning (see Recruitment Script in Appendix A).

Approximately ten students expressed interest in joining the group, while a few others began attending our sessions after the project had started. Despite my efforts to recruit equivalent numbers of females and males, there was only one male participant, who attended the group only once. Therefore, group consisted of 12 females and 1 male. Their average age and grade were 15.53 and 10.23, respectively. They were ethnically diverse: 3 Blacks, 7 Hispanics, 1 Trinidadian, 1 Bengali, and 1 White & Hispanic.

An Institutional Review Board application was submitted and approved by the CUNY Graduate Center prior to any contact with the students. Appendix A contains Institutional Review Board related materials. The participants were asked to select nicknames to protect their anonymity and confidentiality in all materials generated by this research. Additionally, after the signed student and parental informed consent forms were returned, I asked the students to provide demographic information, which I also kept confidential: age, gender, race/ethnicity, grade level, school attended, borough of residence. Students were given \$10 and a 2-ride Metrocards per session.

### Activities, Methods and Data

Our goal was to create a youth-generated curriculum pertinent to students similar to those in the group. Given our limited time together, we decided to create a Table of Contents, a Curriculum Overview, and two fully youth-designed sample lessons (the rest of the sessions were only developed schematically). I present the projects activities in chronological order. Table 1 (Activities, Methods, Types and Time of Data Collection) contains this study's activities, as I had originally planned them, before meeting the students. One of the goals of this dissertation was to create a process and pedagogy

responsive to student needs. The project was informed about and centered around the group's 'needs' by framing our activities within Hart's (1997) ladder of youth participation. Particularly helpful were Hart's rungs of (a) *adult-initiated* models in which *decisions are shared with children* (due to our collaborative activities) and (b) *child-initiated and directed* projects (due to the unique youth work independent from my scaffolding). I therefore expected the elements of my original proposed plan of activities (see upcoming Table 1) to change to some degree to accommodate the young authors' own emerging processes and pedagogy. Later, I describe the ways in which this original plan changed, which was an encouraging finding for learning in a permeable paradigm.

**Table 1. Activities, Methods, Types and Time of Data Collection**

Activity	Methods Used	Type of Data	Time of Collection
Initial reflections on education and violence prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Focus group around education and violence prevention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Transcript of focus groups</li> <li>▪ My observations</li> </ul>	Second session (first being informed consents and introduction)
Curriculum selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Discussions around summaries of two curricula and guiding questions to establish the goals of curricula and preferences/intentions of students</li> <li>▪ Pros and cons lists.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Transcript of group discussions</li> <li>▪ List of pros and cons</li> <li>▪ My observations</li> <li>▪ First agenda for change</li> </ul>	Second session
Our collaboratively established agenda for change which outlined goals for curricular transformation and was updated every session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Discussions around AC goals to establish problematic areas and ways of handling those from a youth point of view</li> <li>▪ Participatory listing of goals and updating of them in each session</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Transcripts of group discussion</li> <li>▪ Constantly revised lists of goals (actual agenda)</li> <li>▪ My observations</li> </ul>	Every session

**Table 1 (continued).**

Activity	Methods Used	Type of Data	Time of Collection
The transformation of the curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Discussions around every curricular lesson guided by the agenda for change, and critical questions designed by us</li> <li>▪ Use of activities and worksheets in the AC</li> <li>▪ Activities designed by us (such as role playing, internet/library research, interviews with key informants)</li> <li>▪ My session plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Transcripts of group discussion</li> <li>▪ Student writing produced throughout, including lists, questions, recommendations for change and modalities of change.</li> <li>▪ Student devised plans to critique and reconstruct the curriculum (should they rotate in leading the sessions)</li> <li>▪ Agenda of the day</li> <li>▪ My observations and session plan</li> <li>▪ Revised agenda for change</li> </ul>	From third session on
Closing discussions on education and violence prevention to reflect on this experience; evaluation of the product, its use and the process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Focus group around education and violence prevention; evaluation of this experience: process, new product</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Transcripts of group discussion</li> <li>▪ My observations</li> </ul>	Last session
Other analyses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Examination of AC and Youth Curriculum for content, process and pedagogy</li> <li>▪ Interrogation of theory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All of the above data</li> <li>▪ Actual AC and Youth Curriculum</li> </ul>	Ongoing

Since this was a participatory project, some of the methods (or processes) of redesigning the curriculum were established during the course of the transformation, based on my discussions with the students and their own peer negotiations. The structure and nature of the curriculum also determined the methods employed for change.

Prior to reading through the Adult Curriculum, I conducted an initial focus group to document students' views of education and violence prevention. Based on the idea that knowledge is shared and transformed in social interactions (Vygotsky, 1978), focus groups are an ideal forum for tapping into student a priori knowledge, to trigger “problem-posing” learning that should aid the formation of new concepts (Freire, 1970).

I encouraged the students to use their a priori understanding of conflict and violence, namely knowledge they already had of these phenomena from their peer relations, communities and families, or even previous school encounters with violence prevention. Their answers were eventually integrated with selected parts of the Adult Curriculum that appeared relevant to the group. Here are some sample questions (see Appendix B for all focus group questions):

- (1) What is your role as students in your classes?
- (2) Do you get the opportunity to comment on what you learn?
- (3) Who should learn violence prevention?

### The Curriculum and Its Selection

One of the first steps in the project was to *engage students in selecting the curriculum they were going to transform*. This activity indicated what appealed to

students in a violence prevention curriculum and how they decided which Adult Curriculum they wished to transform. The task initiated students in assuming a central role in the evaluation and selection of materials to be learned, as opposed to their school experiences, where curricula are selected for them, therefore imposed, by adult educators.

During the proposal stages of this dissertation, I identified a few desirable qualities for the curriculum to be modified that had to do with logistical matters, and conceptual issues related to a student centered approach. The curriculum needed to be no longer than 10 sessions and not require extensive student preparation. Time was a consideration in terms of the site's willingness to become involved in such an activity for an extended period. Further, since I assumed that student attendance would be sporadic, a demanding time commitment and complicated curriculum would have made a successful collaboration more difficult to achieve.

Part of the design was to invite students to work interactively, therefore the curriculum needed to have a *peer collaborative approach*. The students' pooled resources, together with my scaffolding, compensated for their inexperience with curriculum design and critical analysis. Further, a collaborative environment fostered an *increased power status* young people need to feel comfortable and safe in challenging each other (and myself) (Dyson, 1993; Gutierrez et al., 1999). Since the transformation was to be done primarily by students, it was important that the original curriculum encouraged student *active participation*. Therefore, the learning process of the Adult Curriculum, involved hands-on activities by students (e.g., discussions or role-playing).

I presented two curricula to the students (see Appendix C for descriptions), and asked them to choose one to undergo the transformation of student co-authoring. I had

selected these curricula based on reviews of the violence prevention literature described earlier. They are representative of the violence prevention field at large in the sense that they focus on teaching youth skills that they presumably lack (anger or aggression control, overall self management in conflict situations, rationalization and cognition for judging the causes and consequences of violence, etc). They also leave room for improvement because they do not link violence with socio-historical and economic contexts, and do not focus on issues of diversity as related to violence. Students in this study could add their views as young people of multiple racial and ethnic backgrounds.

The curricula are among those frequently used in public schools and whose outcomes have been examined. Further, as indicated in the introduction, programs of prevention are likely to be more successful if they are circumscribed contextually in the social worlds of youths. Therefore, both curricula included matters beyond school behavior, although to a limited extent. However, the “Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents” (Prothrow-Stith, 1987) addressed more interpersonal issues of violence (e.g., conflicts in school), while Project Peace (de Anda, 1997) included more elements on intrapersonal strategies of violence prevention (e.g., self-reflection and meditation).

As an example of pros and cons of an Adult Curriculum, I use the “Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents” developed by Deborah Prothrow-Stith (1987) (and which the students transformed). It provides students with factual information regarding homicide among youth, but also regards anger as a normal part of people’s lives (Kopka, 1997) with the potential to be used constructively (Larson, 1994). By not pathologizing this aspect of our social make-up, the Adult Curriculum presents violence as a phenomenon that can be avoided by noting the risk factors associated with it. The

curriculum involves student participation because youth are encouraged to explore conflict by engaging in role-playing and analysis of those enactments, rather than hearing the curriculum lectured. This curriculum motivates students to find alternatives to fighting through debates of losses and gains, as well as through analyses of precursors and ways of avoiding conflict (Larson, 1994). Students brainstorm and complete creative homework assignments. However, the curriculum does not go beyond interpersonal violence and the statistics that it provides on youth violence are not current. Further, student participation is closely structured by the adult developer.

The data generated by this task was in the form of transcripts of group discussions and my observations. In terms of methods to select one of the two curricula, I guided the students to read through sample lessons, discuss their main elements, and make lists of their likes and dislikes of each curriculum. To assist the analysis and selection, I prompted the participants to summarize their understanding of both curricula and reflect on how we would work with them. My role in this phase was that of an impartial guide, to avoid influencing the students' decision.

### The Transformation of the Curriculum

Group work (Cohen, 1994) appears relevant in the sense that it allows for student experimentation, innovation, learning, and socialization with others different than themselves. Students have different academic, social, cultural or personal strengths, which can be used to complement peers' abilities, while learning at the same time.

I originally proposed to have rotating teams of students responsible for different sections of the curriculum. Each session, a new team was going to be responsible for

reading the materials ahead of time and leading the discussions with questions and activities. I planned to first model ways to tackle the lesson with questions and activities, so that the students would have a template from which to build their own styles. However, once the project began, I realized that reading in advance and devising discussion questions for each session would have been too difficult for the students, given their heavy schedules. Instead, I presented questions and activities for every session (within the *Agenda of the Day*, described below) to have a loosely structured approach that jumpstarted the students in thinking critically about issues and helped them reshape the activities I originally proposed.

We used two types of agendas: an *agenda for change* and *agenda of the day* (see Appendix D for examples). They were both built based on the progress we made as a group, in terms of activities we employed to transform the content. The first was very detailed and contained issues that students found most problematic with the curriculum and intended to modify either by adding to existing curricular values, taking some of these out, and/or merging original curriculum material with research and knowledge of their own. The second type of agenda outlined specific goals/activities for each session, such as ‘reading through the Adult Curriculum’s Table of Contents to pick relevant sessions’. These were mostly unrelated to detailed content work. Following, I briefly describe why we merged the *agenda for change* with the *agenda of the day*.

During the first session, we engaged in an overview of the entire curriculum. Each lesson of the curriculum was going to have its own *agenda for change* that we established as a group. These agendas underwent constant revisions based on our ongoing decisions. In parallel, each time we met I gave students an *agenda of the day*. It

reflected summaries of the goals we accomplished in previous sessions and a list of that day's activities. Late in the analysis phases of this project, I began viewing the *agenda for change* as a guide for transforming content, and the *agenda of the day* as a guide for our processes/activities. Given that it is difficult to disentangle Content from Process, these agendas were highly interrelated. The *agenda for change* can be viewed as a subset of our daily plans (*agenda of the day*). Further, the issues we transformed, originally in the *agenda of the day*, became part of the Youth Curriculum, therefore they did not need to be listed separately. Consequently, early into the project we began keeping one agenda (for activities/tasks), while working with the emerging curricular content as a proxy for the agenda for change.

To help the students reposition themselves from passive learners to co-authors *based on concepts important to them*, I looked for patterns of youth original ideas in their discussions and posed questions to guide (not control or re-direct) their critique of the Adult Curriculum. For example, the group had an interest (independent from the Adult Curriculum and my own original goals) in exploring a wide range of emotions, as opposed to the Adult Curriculum's focus on anger. Eventually, with my guidance, the students developed a new session to represent their views vis-à-vis emotions and violence. The following is a question I posed, after noticing *the students'* interest in emotions, to open an opportunity for the youth to use their spontaneous knowledge:

- 1 **Corina:** you think they're [2 AC sessions on anger] related, really related? Ok.
- 2 Um... Last time we talked about love and hate, I mean those are emotions too
- 3 **Student:** mhm
- 4 **Corina:** this person [AC author] only talks about anger. What are the other emotions
- 5 that come up in violent thinking?

In line 2, I remind students of the topic they initiated during a previous session and help them see how that relates to the Adult Curriculum's references to anger. Although my utterances in lines 2, 4 and 5 are directive, they represent a type of scaffolding that is based on youth interests as connected to the Adult Curriculum. Connecting the two was the goal of this project, and I facilitated students' linking of their spontaneous knowledge to the scientific one of the Adult Curriculum. In chapter 4, I discuss the types of scaffolding I employed and the various outcomes they generated.

In the beginning, I modeled a critical stance by emphasizing how the students' points of view can be used to identify gaps in the Adult Curriculum. However, as the students became more comfortable and familiar with the task of going beyond the curriculum as is, they became proficient in asking critical questions to uncover the limitation of adult views, and the modalities of contributing their own youth perspectives.

Once the Adult Curriculum was selected, we identified its structure, objectives, and content. Sessions from the Adult Curriculum that the group deemed important were then added to the emerging Youth Curriculum. The group formed a new Table of Contents and Curriculum Overview (see Appendix E). Then they inserted the concepts they generated during the initial focus group under the new Youth Curriculum sessions during the Concept Pasting Project. Each youth concept was written on a thin piece of paper; those were drawn randomly by students, who read them and indicated the category to which they belonged (e.g., causes of violence, strategies of prevention, etc). Each session from the new Youth Curriculum was represented by a large sheet of paper posted on the wall. The students glued corresponding concepts under each new session.

As a witness during every group meeting, I gathered information about the sessions' events and interesting observations. I applied this knowledge in the analysis of the project's process, pedagogy and the group's own transformation from mere students to co-authors.

There are multiple types of data generated during the transformation, and they include transcripts of group discussions, student written materials produced throughout, including lists, recommendations for change and modalities of change, my observations and the constantly revised *agenda of the day*. The methods employed to solicit these data were intense discussions around every Adult Curriculum lesson, activities and worksheets in the original curriculum, and activities designed by the students for the youth-designed sessions (e.g., role playing, brainstorming sessions, exercises).

As our project's goal was to create an example of a youth-generated curriculum that could be implemented in an actual public school classroom, we periodically envisioned our *audience* and evaluated our ideas based on what we believed its needs may be. In terms of a final product (for a short-lived project with modest support), we aimed to create a Youth Curriculum consisting of (1) a Table of Contents, (2) a detailed Curriculum Overview and (3) two fully youth-designed sample lessons. The group did not only work on content, but also on the process and pedagogy of implementing such a curriculum (how to conduct the sessions, division of labor, or role of students and teacher/guide, etc). In order to get an idea of how this curriculum could be put to practice, the students split into two groups towards the end of the project, and each group fully designed one youth session of the new curriculum. Then, the two groups taught the session they designed to each other.

The last phase of the study was an evaluative/reflective session that asked students to look at the new curriculum and revisit their definitions of conflict, violence and peace that they gave in the beginning of the study. The students spoke of possible changes they may have discovered in their conceptualization of these phenomena and how their participation in the group was connected to those changes. They also evaluated their curriculum, as well as their recommendations for how it could be used and by whom. Here are a few final focus group questions (see Appendix B for entire list):

- (1) How was the experience of being allowed to contribute to a curriculum?
- (2) What did you think of our activities and the process we followed?
- (3) What will you take away from this experience regarding prevention and/or violence?

### Analyses: The Assessment of the Content, Process, and Pedagogy of the Curricular Transformation

In this section I describe the ways in which I analyzed the outcomes of our curricular redesign project. My goals for analysis were to capture the effects of this collaborative knowledge transformation on three essential aspects of learning: (1) shifts in curricular Content, (2) Process of learning/transforming and (3) the Pedagogy we employed to create a *permeable learning*. I capitalize Content, Process and Pedagogy when I refer to them as categories of analysis and not as they are commonly used in speech as mere nouns. My interest in these three categories of analysis stemmed from the project's research questions, which in turn led me to organize the results in three corresponding chapters. I once again present my *research questions* below, this time together with their *implications for theory, research and practice*, and brief *descriptions*

*of each results chapter.* Following the Methods, I address each research question with relevant data, within its corresponding chapter.

First, here is an overarching question descriptive of my master concept of **permeability**, and it will be addressed by various finding throughout the three results and the discussion chapters:

**Guiding Umbrella Question of Permeability:** What is the function of **educational permeability** to student knowledge?

**Implication: Educational permeability** to student knowledge should facilitate student participation in discussing, critiquing and re-designing a curriculum. As a result, a more complex curriculum of violence prevention will emerge, which will be transparent in the complementary layers added by students to the Adult Curriculum.

I folded our many types of data under three organizing categories of analysis, namely **Content**, **Process** and **Pedagogy**. I developed codes to investigate the data by combining concepts generated in the planning stages of the project and those that transpired in the process of transcribing and coding. Thus, the codes emerged through a grounded process (Strauss & Corbin, 1994) in which the theory and data informed each other. I applied my codes to transcripts by using the qualitative software Atlas.ti. The codes are addressed in the next section.

**Content** involves micro-analysis of the values from the Adult Curriculum and Youth Curriculum, including their commonalities and differences in what is salient about violence prevention. To measure differences between the two curricula, I adopted Daiute et al.'s (2003) method of extracting the main values promoted by a curriculum, which allowed me to identify the structure and content/values of the Adult Curriculum

and Youth Curriculum. Both the teacher's manual and actual sessions helped me establish the Adult Curriculum's values, while I drew the Youth Curriculum values from the multiple data sources of the project. By examining the two curricula's values side by side, I determined their degree of overlap (or how many of their values were shared and how many were unique to each). I later describe the unique youth contributions in terms of their being simple additions or significant transformations indicative of inherently distinct youth and adult perspectives.

**Research Questions for the Content Results Chapter:**

- (a) How does a violence prevention curriculum designed by youth differ from one designed by adults in terms of both structure and content?
- (b) On what kind of knowledge do youths draw to contribute to the re-writing of a violence prevention curriculum?

**Projected analysis outcomes:** The new **curriculum content** will be an integration of original elements generated by students, demonstrating that student perspectives are unique, necessary and diverse contributions. Further, the wide variety of sources from which the students draw their knowledge will be evident.

Aside from specific codes I applied at textual level, documenting the **Process** and **Pedagogy** of permeability necessitated recording possible changes from session to session. Towards this end, I recorded the processes and pedagogy necessary for students previously socialized as novices to transition into being recognized as competent knowledge creators after actively participating in our project. Based on the literature on

peer collaboration described earlier, I expected to identify elements of **process** such as brainstorming, debates, collaboration, or using each other as resources, etc.

**Research Questions for the Process Results Chapter:**

- (a) How did the discussions proceed when the learning task was to critique and transform an adult curriculum? How did students alter my initial transformation plan in order to incorporate their own modes of learning?
- (b) What was the type and necessary amount of scaffolding that supported student agency but not interfere with their creativity?
- (c) What were the ways in which students transferred their everyday knowledge to scientific learning environments?

**Projected analysis outcomes:** The data will reveal particular **processes** or mechanisms by which the students investigate the Adult Curriculum and create new knowledge that is complementary to the existing one. Student interactions (where I am a participant and not a sole leader) should be spontaneous, collaborative and problem-solution oriented. My supports should form in response to student signals, to optimize their success in conveying spontaneous knowledge and merging it with scientific concepts.

The final results chapter will address the notion of **Pedagogy**. The analysis should reveal the multiple pedagogies we discussed (e.g., school, World Youth, my own, the students') and their relationships to each other. The teacher's manual of the Adult

Curriculum is representative of formal institutional pedagogy, and is contrasted with the pedagogy employed by my collaboration with the youth.

**Research Questions for the Pedagogy Results Chapter:**

- (a) What kind of pedagogy allows for student contributions to learning?
- (b) How can agency be transferred from the adult (teacher or facilitator) to the students so that their participation can have a substantive effect in transforming knowledge? This is a power redistribution requirement that is crucial for permeability to take place, and implies gradual student self and peer scaffolding.

**Projected analysis outcomes:** Student curricular contributions require a different **pedagogy** than that necessary for teaching a curriculum as is, or what has been characterized as unidirectional teaching, where students passively absorb information rather than produce it. Power relations need to be redistributed among myself as an adult and the students in order to enable the latter to be co-constructors of knowledge.

Although I describe the three results chapters separately, they are in fact interdependent. Process is a product of Pedagogy, and Content is a product of Process (therefore Pedagogy). The qualities of these three symbiotic elements, as reflected in the data, detail the general idea of *permeability*, which will reach its complete definition in the **Discussion and Conclusion Chapter**.

### Questions for Discussion and Conclusion:

- (a) What are some fundamental differences between adult and youth perspectives around violence and its prevention?
- (b) What is the value of having youths involved in collaborative knowledge creation in terms of social development, formation of new skills (what kind of skills) and learning?
- (c) What is the sequence in which permeability takes place and what are the conditions of permeability?
- (d) What can be learned from the diversity of student perspectives that could help educators, researchers and policy makers create a more efficient and inclusive education?

**Projected analysis outcomes:** These questions wrap up this dissertation and guide its recommendations. By the end of the curricular transformation, shifts in students' **understanding** of *learning and, violence prevention* will be recorded. A permeable (student-centered) approach will emerge as a preferred alternative to the more traditional passive learning, and a more complex understanding of violence as a social rather than individual phenomenon will be illustrated.

### The Coding

I created the codes I used to analyze our weekly session transcripts in the process of transcription and analysis. I applied the grounded theory method (Strauss & Corbin, 1994), and created the initial version of the codes based on theory and the proposed research objectives. The codes are intended to measure permeability in different ways,

whether that is represented in Pedagogy, or Process, or previous knowledge of violence (Content). While coding, I refined the initial codes and added issues of violence (which were not fully reflected by the Content codes) and other independent codes.

A complete list of codes with their frequencies of occurrences in the transcripts and definitions can be found in Appendix I (Tables I1-I10). Further, Table 2 (see below), presents two code examples for each main category. I illustrate each of these codes with excerpts from our sessions in the results chapters. Due to space limitations, I only paraphrase the examples of data for the codes in Table 2.

**Table 2. Codes with Definitions and Data**

Type of Code	Definition	Paraphrased Data Example
Preservation (Content Code)	A segment of the original curriculum that the students decided to keep; scientific concept.	The students included in their curriculum the AC's preventive strategy of 'fight or flight'.
Structure (Content Code)	Students comment on the structure and sequence of the curriculum. They reconfigure some segments in a way that makes sense to them.	The students moved gains and losses of fighting from Session 6 (in the AC) to the end of the Introduction (in the YC).
Impromptu Discussion (Process Code)	Instance when the students take on a discussion about an issue they struggle with or need clarification for without being prompted by the AC or myself. It serves an important role in discovering knowledge and learning. It goes hand in hand with peer collaboration.	In response to a student's stating that she hated a teacher, the group launched itself in a discussion about spirituality as a preventive strategy (original to the YC).
Peer Help and Clarification (Process Code)	Instances when peers jump to help a confused student.	At a student's confusion about what it means to use anger constructively, two others explain how exercise is a way of doing that.
Power Relations (Pedagogy Code)	Reconfiguration of traditional teacher, student, and peer roles and relations necessitated by the task of transforming a curriculum from a youth perspective.	The students make decisions about curriculum design because they share my power of handling knowledge agentively.
Youths on Pedagogy in School (Pedagogy Code)	Reflections by youth on how things are learned, the conduct of their teachers and the administration's stances in their schools.	Students give examples of how some teachers' style is reading to them from the book and writing notes on the board, without involving them in dialogue.
Controversial Issue of Violence (Violence Code)	Controversial issue, not black and white, students intrigued.	Why is the US investing so much money in the army, which is a symbol and executor of violence?
Social and Systemic Issue of Violence (Violence Code)	Issues of violence of a larger scale than the individual and personal realms are addressed.	The students discuss how oppressive systemic practices like police brutality or racial profiling induce violence, especially for the poor and minorities.

The frequencies of code occurrence in transcripts as seen in tables I1, 3, 5, 7, 9 need to be interpreted with caution because they do not represent true frequencies. For example, if the idea of “passive resistance”, which was an original youth addition, was mentioned more than once, I coded it as an “original addition” each time. I coded a total of 64 “original additions”, but some of those were the same original youth idea that was mentioned a few times over the course of the project (see Table I1). Further, one excerpt to which I assigned the code “original addition” may have contained more than one original youth ideas, but they were not each counted individually as a few original additions. I intended to code the excerpt so that its meaningful sequence of utterances was preserved and not broken down into isolated utterances that may not have carried meaning on their own. Therefore, trying to identify changes in code frequencies over the sessions is misleading.

I created the codes to operationalize the theoretical points of interest based on the research questions and literature review. Rather than focusing on individual codes, I organize the results chapters around my main findings, which transpired from the coding process, and relate back to the more abstract theoretical concepts that the codes embody.

There were some codes designed in the early stages of analysis, which proved not to be instrumental. Some codes were too specific once the analysis began, and they did not add (individually) to the theoretical points I intended to argue. For example, *content extension* (adding to something in the Adult Curriculum) and *content modification* (changing something in the Adult Curriculum) were mutually exclusive, but it became evident that extending vs. modifying was not conceptually important in showing how

youth and adult views were different, therefore I merged them. Codes like youth *resourcefulness* were added in the process of coding, when a pattern of the group's pragmatic and resourceful orientation emerged (e.g., providing the future learners of the Youth Curriculum with hotline numbers to call should they feel threatened).

The following paragraphs refer to coding decisions, including the unit of analysis for this project. Given that I was interested in youth views, the *collective* contributions of the students constituted my unit of analysis. As the Adult Curriculum itself represents a unit of analysis indicative of its adult author's views, I interpreted the transformations by this project's participants at the level of the *youth collective*. Individual voices converged to form the *youth collective* and reflect the collaborative efforts to re-write the Adult Curriculum. I regarded individual contributions as elements of collaboration towards conceptual cornerstones, especially given that not every student attended each session, thus not guaranteeing complete data points for every participant. Therefore, I did not analyze individual contributions in isolation, but only as they related to the meaning produced by the group.

In operationalizing the youth unit of analysis, each act of coding incorporated utterances that held meaning independently of its preceding or subsequent utterances. For example, if the question was 'what should be included in a violence prevention curriculum' and the group gave several key points (e.g., the influence of the media or various prevention strategies), our speaking turns around each of these points were coded as one unit. Each excerpt may have several codes attached to it, if it contained multiple aspects of analysis (such as peers-facilitator collaboration, unique student contribution, a priori knowledge of violence, structural change to the curriculum and so on).

Below is an example of a quote that I coded for multiple aspects. The quote is followed by a list of all the codes I applied to it, with the corresponding line numbers from the excerpt. [To keep the quotes brief in this dissertation, I excerpt only turns that illustrate the point that is being presented at a given time. I use ellipsis to indicate where text was omitted.]

- 1 **Corina:** do you have any good catchy phrases for listing the other emotions?
- 2 **Polly:** the other emotions that promote violence
- 3 **Corina:** other emotions that promote violence. All right.
- 4 **Polly:** or is that too general? Cause the more you get in the depth of it, it takes for
- 5 ever
- 6 **Corina:** yes, cause it's too many emotions. So how about other emotions besides
- 7 anger that
- 8 **Liz:** can lead to violence ...
- 9 **Seleen:** besides the anger
- 10 **Corina:** ok. Let's write it out. Other emotions ... this is the next bullet under
- 11 physiological changes. Other emotions that.. Liz, you had a good idea
- 12 **Liz:** that can contribute to violence or promote it.
- 13 **Corina:** that can contribute or trigger or lead to
- 14 **Selphie:** that can be associated
- 15 **Corina:** can be associated. Ok, now we're moving to healthy and unhealthy ways to
- 16 express anger. Remember that list that the other kids who did this curriculum before
- 17 came up with ... like plus and minus, remember?
- 18 **Lucy:** oh, yeah, I remember it, but again this is about anger
- 19 **Corina:** yes, to express negative emotions?
- 20 **Lucy:** yeah. Negative emotions that lead to anger or negative emotions?
- 21 **Corina:** negative emotions. Ok, we're gonna keep that? Illustrate the range of
- 22 healthy and unhealthy ways? [group silent]

[Co-Extension] = Content code indicating that the AC's focus on anger was extended to include other emotions [lines 1-9]

[Co-Language issue] = Content code indicating a discussion around language, such as replacing 'anger' with 'negative emotions' and other reformulations of curricular text [lines 1-15; 18-20]

[Pe-Peers-facilitator collaboration] = Pedagogy code indicating that the adult collaborated with the students, and they did so among themselves as well [lines 1-20]

[Pe-Positioning and shifting roles] = Pedagogy code indicating that the collaboration involved repositioning of expert roles, as we each assumed that position when we had something pertinent to contribute [lines 1-22]

[Pe-Power relations] = Pedagogy code indicating that the excerpt contains information about power in the group, as I shared my power as the adult in the room with the student experts [lines 1-22]

[Pe-Student Input Invited] = Pedagogy code indicating that my question invited students to contribute their a priori student knowledge in coming up with better terms [lines 1, 6, 11, 21]

Next, the Pedagogy codes repeat because they are also relevant markers of Process.

[Pr-peers-facilitator collaboration] [lines 1-20]

[Pr-positioning and shifting roles] [lines 1-22]

[Pr-Power relations] [lines 1-22]

[Pr-Student Input Invited] [lines 1, 6, 11, 21]

Often, I used the same codes (as above) in the coding of both Process and Pedagogy, since process is a result of pedagogy, and in this project such codes explain these two categories thoroughly.

### Narrative Analysis and Positioning Theory

This type of analysis is characteristic of “narrative psychology and narrative discourse [which] are defined as sites of development as well as sites for examining development ... particularly useful for addressing unmet challenges of integrating culture, person, and change” (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004, p. viii). Narratives represent any given aspect of human development in society, from the particularities of a political system, to classroom practices. Daiute and Lightfoot (2004) present *narrative analysis* as the study of stories representative of a society’s metaphors, genres and discourses; it

allows us to study “phenomena, issues, and people’s lives holistically” (p. xi), as influenced by history.

Within narrative analysis, I employed *positioning theory* (Davies & Harré, 1990; Harré & van Langenhove, 1991; Bamberg, 2004) due to the importance it gives to how individuals participate socially by strategic use of language in conversations. Harré & van Langenhove (1991) state that persons act through and within conversations, institutional practices and social rhetorics (or ‘master narratives’ according to Talbot, Bibace, Bokhour, & Bamberg, 1996), all belonging under the umbrella of discursive practices. Given that I intend to capture how students view themselves in relation to their social world, of which education and violence are part, I found these theories and their analysis tools to be extremely useful. Our conversations constitute our verbal and create our written data, and they represent, according to Harré & van Langenhove (1991), “the most basic substance of the social realm. It is within conversations that the social world is created ... [and] social acts and societal icons are generated and reproduced” (p. 394). Further, I was interested in our interactions as representations of knowledge creation and challengers of knowledge perpetuation. Thus, the meaning I was seeking to identify in the data could be best found in our narratives that “have to be analyzed as (performed) situated actions that are interactively accomplished” (Bamberg, 2004, p. 153). Positioning theory, as explained by Bamberg, helped me capture how students assumed new positions as knowledge creators, as we collaboratively examined normative discourses and generated new narratives of our social selves. In the final chapter, I mention specific positions we assumed for ourselves or created for others in our group, all of which contributing to reconfigured power.

There were several types of analyses I conducted independent from simple coding of transcripts. Table 3 lists them in the order in which they appear in the analyses chapters, together with the purpose they serve:

**Table 3. Types of Analyses**

<b>Analysis</b>	<b>Function</b>
Comparison of AC and YC Tables of Contents	To show how the students merged, eliminated or added sessions (structural differences).
Examination of YC Curriculum Overview.	To show some other structural and semantic differences between AC and YC.
Amount of overlap between the concepts in the AC and YC.	To show how many values were shared, how many were unique to each and how many were shared but generated by students from their a priori knowledge base before examining the AC.
Extensive examination of youth original values, including an original youth session on emotions.	To show how student perspectives are often times fundamentally different and sometimes even more valuable from what is being taught to them.
Identification of youth sources of knowledge	To show alternative learning spaces and how important it is to acknowledge their value.
Description of some flaws in the YC.	To show shortcomings in the YC content.
The effects of and changes in the proposals I had originally made for activities around curricular transformation.	To show what kind of activities are likely to support permeability and how those need to be flexible to accommodate the most important elements, the students.
Variations in degree of permeability in two sessions with different tasks (the first attributed more control to the students, while the second was more structured by me).	To show how the degree to which permeability occurs is a function of who has control over the task being performed (adult or adult-students in collaboration).
Variations in the frequency of my interventions/scaffolding across sessions as a function of task difficulty and group dynamics.	To show how adult interventions change in reaction to student cues.

**Table 3 (continued).**

<b>Analysis</b>	<b>Function</b>
Variations in the types of my interventions/scaffolding in two sessions with different tasks, in relation to permeability.	To show how six types of adult scaffolding may or may not influence the degree to which permeability occurs.
Processes in the AC.	To show the differences between AC and our processes, and how the former are unlikely to lead to permeability.
The processes generated by students in transforming the AC.	To show unique youth modes of handling spontaneous and scientific knowledge.
Role playing as a learning venue.	To show the functions of role playing in a permeable curriculum.
Description of roadblocks in the process envisioned by me and altered by the students along the way.	To show some of the shortcomings of Process in our project.
Youth-proposed learning processes for future learners of their curriculum.	To show whether or not these young people propose different learning venues for students like themselves than those they employed in our project.
Description of my own explicit pedagogy intended to create permeability.	To show the principles of a permeable pedagogy that I employed as a facilitator.
The students' explicit narratives about their positions as students and relationships with their schools, afterschool program and our project.	To show these students awareness of their positions and roles in schools, afterschool and our project as results of different pedagogies.
The students' implicit pedagogical-like behavior as they learned from each other and me during our sessions.	To show how these students adopted their own pedagogy during our project.
The vision of pedagogy as devised by students in the new curriculum.	To show whether or not these young people propose a pedagogy of permeability for future learners of their curriculum.

AC = Adult Curriculum

YC = Youth Curriculum

## Components of Permeability

I used the individual codes to record the many ways in which *permeability* was facilitated and took place throughout the project. Our multiple types of data built a robust definition of the concept of permeability and supported its importance in learning that recognizes students as competent knowledge contributors and transformers. I operationalized the concept of permeability with a few components and describe them in this section. First I address the Sequence of Permeability, and then the conditions that determine the Degrees of the Permeability.

### The Sequence of Permeability

Each of the three results chapters will contribute different aspects to what I call *the Sequence of Permeability* and represent graphically in Figure 1. This is a process made of several phases, which constitute conditions that need to be met in order for permeability to take place.

First, two resources used in a permeable environment are the pools of information upon which the knowledge learners/transformers (students and facilitator) exert their agency: (a) a priori/spontaneous/everyday knowledge (represented by the geometrical figures on the top of Figure 1) and (b) curricular scientific concepts of the Adult Curriculum (represented by the cylinder in the middle of Figure 1).

The phases of the Sequence of Permeability are outlined here and elaborated throughout the results chapters:

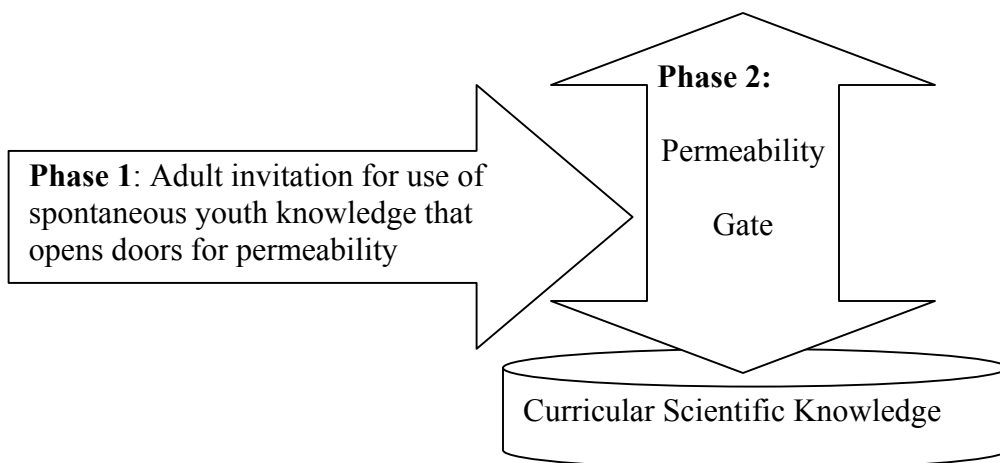
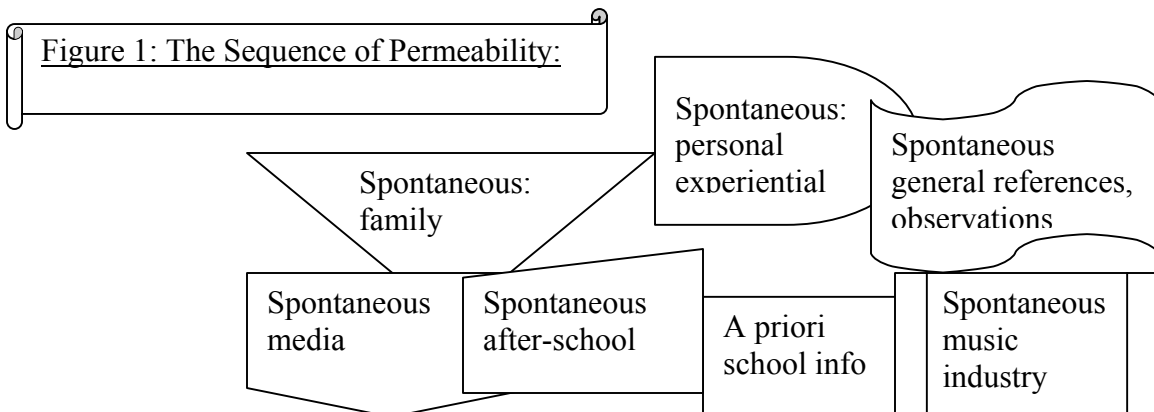
**Phase 1:** Adult invitation for students to use their a priori knowledge (opens Permeability Gate);

**Phase 2:** Youth contribution of spontaneous concepts from previous experiences (formal or informal learning) through the Permeability Gate . The sources of knowledge on which the students draw are represented on the top of Figure 1 (not an exhaustive list);

**Phase 3:** Immediate/negotiated acceptance or rejection of spontaneous knowledge and fusion of spontaneous knowledge with the scientific one after social interaction around meaning. During this phase, the students begin opening Permeability Gates for each other as part of peer collaboration and scaffolding;

**Phase 4:** New hybrid knowledge is formally recognized as a valid educational artifact.

**Phase 5:** Application of new knowledge in other contexts beyond this learning opportunity to other endeavors, such as participation in one's community, sharing the knowledge with other peers, or applying it to other formal and informal learning settings. This phase validates the students having experienced knowledge transformation roles and creating a meaningful product.



**Phase 3:** Collaborative space where youth and adult knowers learn from each other and the scientific curriculum, and negotiate to transform knowledge through a process of permeability

**Phase 4:** New Knowledge (hybrid of spontaneous and scientific)

**Phase 5:** Applications of New Knowledge and skills in a different context to continue the cycle of constructing meaningful social acts.

## Conditions Determining the Degrees of Permeability

Once it occurs, permeability can reach different degrees, depending upon the presence or absence of several key aspects. Consequently, I developed a simple **continuum of permeability**, to indicate whether an episode of relevant information exchange was higher or lower in permeability. Throughout the results chapters, I illustrate this continuum with examples of episodes that are *low, moderate or high* in permeability. The qualification of permeability as low, moderate or high is based on three criteria:

- (1) the intensity of student efforts around elucidation of meaning within the collaborative or combative group;
- (2) the number of sources of knowledge used by students for a priori/spontaneous information, and
- (3) the teacher/facilitator control over the task at hand.

For example, I recorded **low permeability** when:

- (1) the exchange of information was minimal and the search for a solution to a given problem/dilemma was not intense or laborious,
- (2) the sources used for spontaneous knowledge employed by the students were few and non-distinct, and
- (3) the task that was being performed was highly controlled by the adult (myself in this case) with directive activities that were less flexible to changes by the students.

Table 4 summarizes the conditions that my research investigates in relation to the degree to which permeability can occur. I make references to this table in each results chapter, where I use data examples to illustrate each of the three degrees of permeability.

**Table 4. Conditions Determining Degrees of Permeability**

Degree of Permeability (DOP)	Conditions Determining the DOP
Low Permeability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• minimal exchanges of information and searches for answers</li> <li>• few or indeterminate a priori sources of knowledge</li> <li>• highly controlled adult task (adult held power)</li> </ul>
Moderate Permeability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increased exchanges of ideas</li> <li>• presence of more a priori sources of knowledge</li> <li>• task is flexible to accommodate youth input, but still needs to be completed as originally set by educator (slightly redistributed power)</li> </ul>
High Permeability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• numerous exchanges around elucidating one or multiple concepts</li> <li>• high usage of a priori sources of knowledge</li> <li>• collectively determined task (power is equally distributed among students and educator)</li> </ul>

The first two conditions (intensity of dialogue and number of sources used) are partially contingent upon the openness (or lack thereof) of the adult educator to change his/her activities to accommodate student input/needs. For example, if the activity is to work closely within specifically defined rules (like finding one single peaceful outcome in a confrontation), the potential for creative or multiple youth perspectives (high permeability) is reduced. This is to a great extent determined by how much *power* the educator intends to share with students (more on this in the Pedagogy chapter).

There is an important distinction that needs to be made, especially given that I propose to employ and extend socio-cultural concepts of education. I do not equate ‘**task control**’ by the adult with his/her **scaffolding**. Scaffolding within a ZPD, which I will address in the Process chapter, facilitates learning, but the *content* that is learned and the *process* by which content is learned can be either (a) controlled/determined exclusively by the adult or (b) be negotiated by the adult and students. Therefore, I refer to ‘**task control**’ as having the *power* to influence the course and content of learning, therefore the potential for and degrees of permeability. Alternatively, *scaffolding in a permeable paradigm* is an activity intended to support youth meaningful participation in knowledge transformation, whether it is done by the adult or peers.

Scaffolding is, however, related to task control because the latter determines *whose* goal is being achieved during an activity. Scaffolding can be used to direct students towards an imposed goal that is adult-determined, or to help students achieve their own goals or goals established collaboratively with the adult educator. *Therefore, scaffolding is a tool of process, whereas task control is inherently pedagogical in nature and it embodies the principles of the actors who establish the learning discourse.* For example,

as the adult facilitator of this project, I could scaffold (with guiding questions) (1) a discussion in which *students themselves decided* to explore multiple levels of violence or (2) a task that *I proposed* to the students during which they evaluate an existing violence prevention curriculum. The scaffolding mechanism could facilitate the achievement of either goals. I relate these two elements to data in the Process and Pedagogy chapters.

Further, the more time allotted towards a task of discovery, the more opportunities for extensive permeability. Therefore, as the presence (or usage) of these elements increases, so should permeability. Yet, given that there is an infinite number of ways in which we can interact socially around meaning, these are most likely not the only conditions that curtail or increase permeability. I will refer to Table 4 in discussing my results.

While not all the above conditions need to be met in every instance for permeability to be low, moderate or high, their presence alone or in combination with each other has an impact on whether information is merely reproduced (low permeability) or considerably transformed (high permeability). I consider that Freire's 'banking system' where students merely absorb information, with no pertinent input, represents a lack of permeability. Therefore, traditional teaching and learning of a curriculum, where students internalize imposed information, promotes low, if any, permeability.

I employed these methodological criteria to judge the degree of permeability in a given excerpt that I coded for various themes. I provide data in the results chapters to illustrate how these degrees of permeability played out in our social interactions around various concepts. Given that Content, Process and Pedagogy each add a distinct facet to Permeability as a 'master' construct, I will illustrate its different operationalizations in each of the three results chapters. In **Content**, I illustrate the product of permeability by

giving data examples organized around the chapter's main findings of differences in adult and youth views of violence prevention. In **Process**, I describe how permeability was facilitated by the activities I documented in (1) my own processes, (2) the Adult Curriculum's processes, and (3) the students' processes. In **Pedagogy**, I again present permeability in relation to the types of pedagogies informing this project (1) my own, (2) the Adult Curriculum's and (3) the students'. I revisit the sequence and degrees of permeability at the end of this dissertation to summarize this model for participatory education and make recommendation to educators and researchers. Lastly, as I describe our success in achieving permeability in content, process and pedagogy, I reserve the end of each results chapter to describe the less successful aspects of our project. These can, nevertheless, serve as lessons for future implementations of this type of endeavor.

### PART III

## **Chapter 3: Content Differences between Youth and Adult Perspectives of Violence Prevention**

In this results chapter I compare the values (or concepts) of the Adult Curriculum to those of the Youth Curriculum. The focus here is the content, rather than the various processes (on my or the students' part) that triggered youth original ideas. Although content and process work synergistically, I found that it was necessary to separate them to explain them thoroughly. It is important to note that youth participation and idea generation was often prompted by a few types of scaffolding I employed and which I discuss in Chapter 4. For the time being, it is helpful to keep in mind that the Youth Curriculum's content was to a great extent a product of a permeable process. This chapter addresses **two research questions pertaining to Content**, outlined below with their corresponding analyses.

- (a) How does a violence prevention curriculum designed by youth differ from one designed by adults in terms of both structure and content?

First, I address both structural and content issues of the curricula with the use of (1) a youth-designed Table of Contents and Curriculum Overview compared with the original adult one, (2) Youth-Generated Concepts for each youth session (without lesson plans) from our weekly tape-recorded sessions, plus (3) a session on Emotions fully designed by the youth group compared to the two corresponding adult sessions on anger.

(b) On what kind of knowledge do youths draw to contribute to the re-writing of a violence prevention curriculum?

Next, I address the second question by looking at the origins of the students' a priori knowledge. Lastly, I present a less successful aspect of the youth-designed content.

The Youth Curriculum, as supported by the rich data in this chapter, appeared to be of high quality and greater complexity than the Adult Curriculum.

### (1) Curricular Structural Issues

I first identified differences between the two curricula at a structural level. In order to account for references students made to the organization of the curricula, I coded the transcripts for *structure*. Here is an instance when we made a decision about the placement of a session within the curriculum, which was a structural matter:

**Corina:** So we need to have a good presentation of the different ways of fighting. Should that be a session on its own or does it belong with something else? ...

**Asia:** I think that should be on its own ... You don't? [to another student]

**Corina:** No? What would you pair it with?

**Precious:** Violence. Are we gonna have a session on violence itself? ...

**Polly:** I think it it's a little bit of everything. It has to do with strategies, it has to do with the causes ... I think it has to do a little bit with everything....

**Corina:** so do you think this should go earlier in the curriculum or...

**Polly:** I think it should go earlier

**Asia:** earlier, yeah, me too

The frequency of structural concerns increased over time, from one reference in the first session, to 13 references in the fifth session, as the students' understanding of curricular organization crystallized (see Tables I1-10).

## Tables of Contents

The two curricula have distinct tables of contents, which reflect some differences between adult and youth understandings of *how and what* is necessary to learn about violence and its prevention. Table 5 illustrates how the sessions in the Adult Curriculum were merged, eliminated, or directly carried through to the Youth Curriculum. In addition, the students added two new sessions. Equivalent adult and youth sessions (due to merging and abbreviation of adult sessions) share table rows. The sessions eliminated from the Adult Curriculum are crossed out, and the unique youth sessions have no corresponding adult sessions to their left. Following the table I present the students' rationale for reconfiguring the Adult Curriculum.

**Table 5. Adult Curriculum and Youth Curriculum Tables of Content**

<b>Adult Curriculum</b>	<b>Youth Curriculum</b>
1. There is a Lot of Violence in Society	1. Introduction: a) Types and Meaning of Violence b) Statistics c) Causes
2. Homicide, Statistics and Characteristics	
3. Exploring Risk Factors	
6. There's More to Lose Than To Gain From Fighting	[Concepts from the AC Session 6 were borrowed to end the YC Session 1, although they do not have a distinct subsection]
4. Anger Is Normal	2. Emotions
5. There Are Health and Unhealthy Ways to Express Anger	
<del>7. What Happens Before, During and After a Fight</del>	
8. Preventing Violence	3. Strategies of Prevention and Intervention
9. Fighting, What Else Is There?	
<del>10. Practice Throwing a Curve</del>	
	4. Grey Areas ( <i>Unique</i> )
	5. Resources and Review ( <i>Unique</i> )

As seen in Table 5, the original sessions 1 (types), 2 (facts), 3 (causes) and 6 (gains vs. losses) were condensed and merged into one introductory session. Consequently, the students preserved the adult curriculum's discussion of types of violence, statistics of homicide, causes of violence as well as the benefits and drawbacks of violence, but they only allocated one session to them. The group viewed these sessions as introductory and closely related blocks that need not be discussed separately. This group had a recurring tendency to condense the information in the Adult Curriculum, and they did that for two reasons.

First, the students found some information to be repetitive, especially if points from previous sessions were addressed in later sessions. Although these stood as transition and review concepts between the adult sessions, the youth group did not see them as necessary. However, they did reserve part of the last Youth Curriculum session as a review segment of the most important points of the curriculum. Here is a quote that pertains to the elimination of Session 7 of the Adult Curriculum because the group did not want to spend more time on the steps before, during and after a fight:

**Seleen:** what do you think about this session: What Happens Before, During and After the Fight? ...

**Precious:** Corina, I think that it keeps repeating itself

**Student:** yeah

**Polly:** yeah, because in the previous section, in section 6 it said umm... the long term and short term consequences

**Asia:** it's repetitive

**Polly:** what happens if you do this what happens if you do that. And that's exactly what happens during after a fight

**Corina:** ok, so, what do you think, what should we do with this session?

**Neelie:** nothing at all, we have it already ...

**Asia:** exactly

Polly considered that the consequences of fighting in the Adult Curriculum Session 6 illustrated what happens *after* a fight, therefore they could be eliminated. Implicitly, the causes/triggers of violence described in the Youth Curriculum Introduction session constituted what happens *before* a fight. Lastly, by being members of a violent society (as critically described by the group and presented later in this chapter), what happens *during* a fight (or a violent act) is no mystery to these students. Therefore, the Adult Curriculum Session 7 was eliminated partly because it was redundant, and partly because it contained a priori knowledge that the students brought to the group.

Secondly, extending the above, and more important than pointing to the redundancy of the Adult Curriculum, the students found certain adult curricular concepts to represent knowledge already held by young people. From a student point of view, such familiar concepts did not need to be taught as extensively as planned in the Adult Curriculum. This represents a major finding since it is a quintessential youth perspective that indicates what it makes sense to learn and what is considered a ‘waste of time’. Young people are not naïve and oblivious to elements of conflict and violence, as many curricula assume them to be. In the segment that follows, Adult Curriculum’s session 3 on risk factors is abbreviated and incorporated in the large introductory session of the Youth Curriculum:

- 1 **Corina:** is it important to know risk factors? ...
- 2 **Selphie:** I know what risk factors are.
- 3 **Corina:** ok, so you know what risk factors are and they don’t need to spend a lot of
- 4 time on them?
- 5 **Asia:** no, if it’s important I think they should know what risk factors are like isn’t that
- 6 what you should watch out for before something happens? Oh, like signs maybe?
- 7 **Corina:** ... I think it is important to know what they are but do you think people
- 8 really know what they are and don’t need to spend a whole session on learning that?
- 9 Student: mhm
- 10 **Asia:** depends if you take it seriously or not. ...
- 11 **Selphie:** yes, that I don’t think we need to have a whole session on it. I think we can
- 12 like incorporate it on one of the other sessions we have that it might be relevant to.
- 13 **Neelie:** like have a list or something
- 14 **Corina:** what do you think the risk factors would fit into? Can it be combined?
- 15 **Neelie:** what triggers it? ...
- 16 **Selphie:** I think that could be part of session one – There’s a lot of violence today.

Students’ familiarity with certain notions of violence, which came out in our conversations throughout the project, was coded as *a priori knowledge of violence* (see upcoming section on a priori youth knowledge as spontaneous or everyday concepts). While some a priori student concepts coincided with what was presented in the Adult

Curriculum, some was unique to these youth and was not found in the Adult Curriculum. The students, however, evaluated the concepts carefully before preserving, adding or discarding them.

We merged the original sessions 4 (anger) and 5 (expressing anger) and expanded them to include a complex range of emotions associated with violence. I present this new session on Emotions later in this chapter as an example of a fully developed youth session. The youth saw the original sessions 4 and 5 as highly related but incomplete. Although anger may be a core emotion in violence, there are other emotions that play a role just as important as anger. Their place in social dynamics that relate to violence is explored by the students in a unique session. The incorporation of multiple emotions indicates that students draw heavily on affect and related social circumstances (Daiute et al., 1993), as complements to the cognitive and rigorous steps of adult prevention.

The original sessions 8 (prevention) and 9 (alternatives to fighting) were merged into one session called Strategies for Prevention and Intervention. The youth did not fully develop this session, however, numerous strategies emerged throughout our meetings. The students' strategies are described later in this chapter, and they surfaced virtually in all our meetings. Therefore, the students did not explore strategies only in the sessions intended for the discussion of prevention/intervention, as designed in the Adult Curriculum. This, and other patterns found in the youths' discussions and addressed later, show that students do not prefer to explore the components of prevention (i.e., causes, types, prevention, etc) in isolation from each other. Rather, they integrate them as parts of a whole phenomenon which they try to understand. I documented the students' tendency to tackle the many aspects of conflict/violence in relationship with

each other rather than sequentially both at this *structural-content* level (the merging of AC sessions 1,2 & 3, and 8 & 9), and in the *process* they used to create new meaning.

The group eliminated the original session 10 (practicing learned skills through role playing and analysis) because they built role playing (and their subsequent discussion) into each youth session. As I describe later, devising and performing skits serves a number of important functions in understanding and creating concepts for this group. For this age group, the skits are the equivalent of *play* seen in younger children who use it as a tool that mediates learning (Dyson, 1993). The students' preferred (explicitly stated multiple times) that they wrote their own skits to explore concepts. The Adult Curriculum's main strategy, namely "throwing a curve" (or doing something surprising to appease the conflict) was not fully explored by the group because they did not design a youth prevention session. They did not eliminate it, but rather made it part of their extended list of prevention strategies.

Two sessions were unique to the youth curriculum, one being on *Grey Areas* and one on *Resources and Review*. The former constituted highly debated and often controversial issues around violence found important by the group. The *Grey Areas*, together with the previously mentioned *Emotions* session, are examples of how these young people applied their original thinking to alter scientific knowledge by making complex contributions. The group created the *Grey Areas session* to make space for issues that are not straight forward or easily resolved with prevention strategies (be they generated by adults or youths). For example the students were highly concerned with difficult topics such as child abuse, police brutality, riots for civil rights or achieving national independence through violence. We labeled them as being *Grey*, while the AC

avoided such controversial topics. The wide spectrum of “difficult” issues for which the “Grey areas” section was created shows this group’s concern with violence at multiple social levels, from a household/interpersonal level, to a global one.

The last session provides young people with sources of information and support (e.g., hotlines and youth centers) and a review of the curriculum’s salient points. The group proved to be very practical and resourceful, asking for “real stuff” that would guide young people who may need to solve conflict or violent situations. The students’ propositions were intervention-oriented, for example when they wanted to develop “believable” (i.e., representative of their daily lives) videos about violence prevention and present them in elementary schools. This active approach to learning and teaching represents the essence of the Youth Curriculum’s genesis and final content. The resources section is just one of the Youth Curriculum’s pragmatic aspects. Lastly, this session also includes a brief review of important concepts of the Youth Curriculum.

An initial understanding of the similarities and differences in content between the two curricula is seen in the *degree to which they overlap*. [This quantitative coding is independent from the qualitative coding I applied to the content within transcripts.] My first step in this analysis was to read through both Adult Curriculum and Youth Curriculum and extract, in a brief list format, each *concept* (or *value*) they promote. For example, a concept in the Adult Curriculum is ‘the focus on interpersonal violence’, while a concept in the Youth Curriculum is ‘the media can have both a negative and positive effect on young people’. Next, I developed a 6-point scale coding system (see below) for each concept in the two curricula. For example, I coded with 0 all the concepts exclusive to the Adult Curriculum, such as the ‘comparison of homicide

statistics among different countries around the world'. I consider it exclusive to the Adult Curriculum because it did not appear in the Youth Curriculum. I coded with 1 all the concepts that appeared in both curricula, such as the affirmation that 'anger is a normal part of life'.

Table 6 contains the frequency (and percentages) of these codes in the two curricula. The table is accompanied by the 6-point scale to show the different of types of concepts, and to account for how much of the Youth Curriculum values were generated by the students themselves, regardless of whether or not they appeared in the Adult Curriculum as well. These codes are mutually exclusive, except for 3 and 5, which overlap in most instances. Only the last two columns of Table 6 show the overlap between codes 3 and 5.

**Table 6. Amount of Overlap Between Adult Curriculum and Youth Curriculum**

<b>Curricular Concepts</b>	<b>N*</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N**</b>	<b>%</b>
In AC only	26	14%	26	13%
In both curricula, no differences	38	20%	38	19%
In both curricula but more elaborate in the AC	8	4%	8	4%
In both curricula but more elaborate in the YC	38	20%	2	1%
In the YC only	81	42%	81	41%
Shared AC & YC values that emerged in the youth group before reading the AC	-	-	45	22%
Number of total concepts across AC & YC	191	100%	200	100%

\* Includes all codes but 5

\*\*Includes codes all codes (the majority of 5s and 3s overlap, therefore only those concepts coded with 3 alone were left in this column under 3)

AC = Adult Curriculum

YC = Youth Curriculum

Scores given to each concept in the Adult Curriculum and Youth Curriculum:

0 = In AC only

1 = In both curricula, no differences

2 = In both curricula but more elaborate in the AC

3 = In both curricula but more elaborate in the YC

4 = In the YC only

5 = Shared AC & YC values that emerged in the youth group before reading the AC

As I illustrate in column 3 of Table 6, of all the concepts in the two curricula, 14% were unique to the Adult Curriculum, while 42% were unique to the Youth Curriculum. Forty four percent of the concepts were shared by the two curricula. These were of three types: (a) shared concepts that had the same level of complexity in Adult Curriculum and Youth Curriculum (20%); (b) shared concepts that were more elaborate in the Youth Curriculum (20%); (c) shared concepts that were more elaborate in the AC (4%). Additionally, 22% of the concepts were shared by both curricula (regardless of their level of complexity), but the students generated them independently, before reading the Adult Curriculum (column 5). These represent a priori knowledge held by youth outside of the formal learning of the Adult Curriculum. Therefore, the proportion of a priori youth knowledge about violence prevention is 63%: 45 (22%) concepts shared by the Adult Curriculum & Youth Curriculum but generated by the youth independently from reading the AC, and 81 (41%) unique youth concepts. This number indicates that young people are quite familiar with this topic and teaching them information they already know is most likely not an effective strategy for curtailing violence among youth.

Although this project was not designed to measure the effects of this intervention for subsequent violence in this group, it did point to elements that are relevant to young people vis-à-vis violence, which may give us clues to what more effective prevention should include.

## Curriculum Overviews

The Curriculum Overview, a more detailed description of each session, provides further information about the main concepts covered in the Youth Curriculum. The group reviewed the Adult Curriculum's Curriculum Overview and changed it in order to reflect the new structure, however, a significant number of the Adult Curriculum's objectives were preserved. For an item by item description of the two curricular overviews, see Appendix C for the Adult Curriculum Overview and Appendix E for the Youth Curriculum Overview. Here, I only discuss main differences.

For the introductory session, the students changed the Adult Curriculum's emphasis on acquaintance violence to indicate the Youth Curriculum's broader coverage of different types of violence. The students elaborated on the distinction between conflict and a fight to point to the dual nature of conflict (constructive or negative, depending on one's choice on how to proceed). They expanded the list of risk factors beyond Adult Curriculum's weapons, alcohol, and arguments. The Youth Curriculum's first session ends with objectives from Adult Curriculum's session 6 on negative and positive consequences of fighting in order to give the "learners" of this new curriculum a chance to reflect on this salient aspect earlier in the process rather than later.

In order to avoid redundancy, we decided not to *list* the triggers of anger in the Emotions session (as in the Adult Curriculum), but only *briefly review* certain triggers from the previous session. We moved the “fight or flight” response to the prevention/intervention session, whose objectives we shifted so that the order in which they are presented would make more sense to young people. For example, identifying prevention methods effective in school became the second to last item as opposed to its earlier place in the Adult Curriculum, while the benefits of preventing fights ended the session as a last statement for “learners” to take away, as this quote illustrates:

- 1 **Neelie:** I said that, so, ok, let’s just put, it’s just my my suggestion, Identify the
- 2 Violence Prevention Methods that Might be Effective in School last ... because it’s
- 3 talking about fights here, so it could relate to students
- 4 **Corina:** ok, so you don’t wanna put the school smack in the middle
- 5 **Neelie:** yeah, exactly
- 6 **Asia:** yeah ... So you just switch it ...
- 7 **Corina:** ... How about the last one?
- 8 **Precious:** Recognize the Benefits of Preventing Fights... That’s good, I think so
- 9 **Corina:** so where does it go? ...
- 10 **Precious:** I think it should go last
- 11 **Corina:** to end with that and leave people with that idea?
- 12 **Lucy:** yes

The *risks* of intervening in a fight became the third to last item for that same reason, and were paired with *safe ways* of intervening. I observed extensive negotiation and reflection over the order in which the objectives of the curriculum should be presented. The students wanted future learners of the curriculum to follow a certain logic, which was slightly different from that of the Adult Curriculum. For example, they wanted them to know about the positives (e.g., saving face, winning) and negatives of fighting at the end of the Youth Curriculum Introduction because they did not think it was useful to wait and learn about them in Session 6, like the Adult Curriculum proposed. The group believed that once the future students learning and contributing to

the curriculum would have thought about types, statistics and causes of violence (Youth Curriculum Session 1), it would be wise to put things into perspective and recognize that there are more losses than gains from fighting. This is just one example of how the order in which ideas are presented made a difference to these students.

Interestingly, beside structural shifts, deletions and additions, the students also made noticeable *language* modifications. For example, they changed the Adult Curriculum's objective "Generate healthy methods for dealing with anger" to "*Recognize and generate healthy methods for dealing with negative emotions*" to reflect the complexity of the task. In another instance, "alternatives to *fighting*" became "alternatives to *achieving your goals*". Such a semantic distinction indicates two characteristics of the Youth Curriculum: (1) fighting/violence is socially constructed, as some individuals used it in achieving their goals (regardless of the moral implications this may have), and is usually not pathological (less than 1% of violence is psycho-pathologically related, as cited in Tolan and Guerra, 1994), like the medical prevention models present it; (2) fighting/violence is an undesirable choice of action. Also, the group replaced the Adult Curriculum's statement that violence is glamorized on *television* with glamorized by the *media*, to include the wider range of technology accessed by young people, such as virtual spaces, many types of art or newsprint, and the music or video-game industry. The youth group spent a considerable amount of time carefully evaluating the language in the Adult Curriculum, therefore being aware of semantics and the role it plays in conveying meaning. This indicates a sophisticated level of thinking, where the content of the message and its form determine each other and are of equivalent importance.

The type of changes in the Adult Curriculum implemented by the group was contingent upon the degree of permeability that occurred. Just because I invited student spontaneous concepts to permeate the scientific space, it did not mean that they always did, or that they permeated it to a high degree. This led me to identify a continuum of degrees of permeability throughout the sessions, as I mentioned in the Methods chapter. I can best describe the low, moderate and high levels of our permeability with examples from the data. Below I use data examples coded as *language issue* (indicative of youth's critical view of semantics) to illustrate the continuum of permeability.

In the instance below, there was a *low degree of permeability* (refer back to Table 4 in Methods), given the mere usage of the students' *vocabulary*, without any references to other sources of a priori knowledge, or without exhibiting a laborious discovery process (as in upcoming examples). The students altered the Adult Curriculum's anger sessions' objectives to indicate the new session's emphasis on other emotions that may precede anger. The Adult Curriculum's "*Distinguish among* controlling, expressing, and channeling *anger*" was changed to "*Define ways of* controlling, expressing, and channeling *negative emotions*" in order to indicate that the 'learners' of the new curriculum would discover these ways themselves, rather than having them predetermined by the curriculum. Here is how the language change decision was made:

- 1 **Corina:** ... if we wanna keep it, how to change it to make more sense
- 2 **Student:** change it ...
- 3 **Neelie:** yeah, we wanna keep it ...
- 4 **Asia:** so it's distinguish among ...
- 5 **Lucy:** I think maybe it could be define ... ways of controlling, expressing and
- 6 channeling negative energy or emotions.

Lucy's suggestion to replace *distinguish* with *define* (line 5) was immediately accepted and not contested by the group. There is no negotiation of meaning or searches for

answers, and no obvious sources of knowledge (or references) other than a vocabulary suggestion made by Lucy. Here, permeability was low.

The magnitude of permeability increases in this next example, where our search for the right formulation was more extensive, inquisitive, and the sources of knowledge called upon were slightly more varied than above. We were attempting to change one of the bullets in the adult Curriculum Overview in order to account for our addition of other emotions next to anger.

- 1 **Corina:** so we can say emotions are part of life instead of anger is part of life?
- 2 **Lucy:** that wouldn't make sense [laughs]
- 3 **Asia:** emotions are part of life
- 4 **Polly:** well, it does make sense. Yeah, it is natural to feel emotions whenever you are
- 5 in a situation that XXX
- 6 **Asia:** ... but emotions as a part of life doesn't sound right.
- 7 **Lucy:** or emotions that lead to violence
- 8 **Student:** are part of life ...
- 9 **Hira:** no, because we may XXX avoid violence ... I'm saying you know like people
- 10 avoid violence ... Everybody got violence in their life
- 11 **Corina:** ... Lucy means it when people don't avoid it
- 12 **Hira:** oh, ok ...
- 13 **Lucy:** so maybe it could be emotions that MAY lead to violence

Having been given the opportunity to make decisions, the students not only generate knowledge, but they do so through a process of negotiation. They contest each other (and me) by making use of their existing composition skills in combination with general knowledge (Polly's comment that it is natural to have emotions, lines 4-5, or Hira's statement that violence could be present in everyone's life, by choice, lines 9-10). The final form of the bullet was reached after a few turning points in their line of logic:

- (1) change of the word *anger* with *emotions* (initiated in line 1)
- (2) the rejection of *emotions are part of life* and (line 2)

- (3) its replacement with *emotions that lead to violence* to indicate the causal effect of emotions and not their neutral presence in life (line 7)
- (4) further complication of the statement's interpretation, which is placed in a prevention context by the reminder that the option to *avoid* violence exists (lines 9-10)
- (5) final settlement on *emotions that may lead to violence are part of life* through a subtle linguistic nuance to indicate that emotions do not necessarily have to cause violence.

In this discovery episode, five distinct permeable moments occurred, which pushed the development of student thinking forward. The sequential transformation of meaning was based exclusively on student perspectives that entered and significantly changed the scientific domain of a formal curriculum. Students reached the final formulation through questioning, or *contesting* (Daiute & Dalton, 1993), not only the AC but also of their own ideas. Layered scaffolding, mostly by peers, can be observed, together with amicable differences of opinion. The *process* of permeability and varied integration of the Adult Curriculum and Youth Curriculum is described in depth in the next chapter. The separation of Content and Process is nearly unnatural, since they are products of each other, as I argue later in this paper. Yet, there are benefits of addressing them one by one, such as thoroughly showing their distinctiveness as products of a permeable education.

While the previous example is an episode of moderate permeability, the presence of more intense searches for answers and a wider variation in sources of knowledge make the next excerpt an example of high permeability. Here, another language-related dispute around a single word reiterates the students' keen awareness of the salience of wording for the message conveyed by the curriculum:

- 1 **Asia**: a typical homicide? What does a typical homicide look like? ...
- 2 **Anthony**: yeah, what is a typical one?

- 3 **Corina:** a homicide is a homicide  
 4 **Asia:** yeah  
 5 **Corina:** all right, let's hear, what do you think about that?  
 6 **Asia:** ... I guess by knowing the typical homicide they maybe want you to be aware  
 7 of how it can happen before it happens ... A typical homicide, like what happened in  
 8 Columbine and all that stuff... Is that typical or not? A gun? Something?  
 9 **Anthony:** some XXX that a gun is normal....  
 10 **Corina:** it's become normal, unfortunately. So do you, what do you think when this  
 11 person talks about a typical homicide? It's teaching kids that there are typical  
 12 homicides and a-typical homicides  
 13 **Asia:** I don't think that's a good  
 14 **Anthony:** you're killing, what's the difference, whether I kill you with a knife or I  
 15 blow up a building, what's the difference? ...  
 16 **Neelie:** when they say typical, it makes it seem like there are some homicides that  
 17 are less, more, more of important than others, which is not true. I don't even know  
 18 where they got the wording. Cause like he said, whether you kill somebody, blow up  
 19 a building, it's still homicide.  
 20 **Anthony:** almost saying like homicide is good.  
 21 **Corina:** like some is good and some is bad?  
 22 **Anthony:** if I stabbed you in the back umm that's, you, I killed the person but it's  
 23 typical ... XXX in the head that's supposed to be a major thing ...  
 24 **Corina:** ok, so what if we took away that word? How can we change it? ...  
 25 **Neelie:** I'd say just a homicide ... do not add any other word to it ...

The students' efforts to make sense of an adult value (lines 1-8), namely profiling common types of violence based on statistical frequency of occurrence, imply a different perspective and uncover a misconception in the field of violence prevention. For students, the important aspect of homicide is not how 'typical' it is (its form and circumstances), but the gravity of the act itself (lines 16-19). The intrigue for students did not lay in how violence is manifested (whether it is a common robbery or an unusual mass killing by ostracized students). What the passage uncovered was the students' clear understanding of the meaning of taking a life, regardless of the method used (lines 14-15). This moment of permeability shows that the characteristics of homicide are too familiar to the group and equally damaging to the victims, which determines the students to reject the AC's ranking of homicide.

As a highly permeable event, the excerpt above evidenced just one missing perspective from our adult teachings. The episode was triggered by a semantic resistance on the part of the students, who worked carefully throughout the project to select words that would best represent their intentions and point to inadequacies. The next section reveals some fundamental differences between what adults and youth believe is important to know about prevention.

## (2) Youth-Generated Concepts vis-à-vis Violence Prevention

This section addresses concepts of violence prevention, as they gradually emerged in our weekly sessions, and became the detailed content of the youth sessions presented in Table 5 (Adult Curriculum and Youth Curriculum Tables of Content). I used Content specific codes in Atlas.ti to interpret the tape-recorded transcripts (see Tables I1-I10 Appendix I). These data are used to provide a more in depth look at student perspectives of violence besides those from Table of Contents and Curriculum Overview.

For example, to establish similarities between adult and youth concepts, I first wanted to capture instances where the youth preserved, extended, modified, eliminated or made original additions to the Adult Curriculum. While coding, the need to create additional codes arose. An example of a new code is *youth resistance*, to mark the instances when a conversation took place around a particular adult value which the students found inappropriate or insufficient, therefore ‘resisted’ the Adult Curriculum’s message. Rather than describing each code, this section uses them to show what segments of the two curricula overlap and which ones are unique to the Youth Curriculum.

## Elements of the AC That Were Preserved by the Students

The amount of overlap between the two curricula (see Table 6) shows that 44% of the Adult Curriculum was preserved by the students. Whether these concepts were a priori student knowledge, or were borrowed from the Adult Curriculum, both adults and youth deemed them as important. This is an indication that students have the capacity to evaluate information and make decisions about the function it serves in learning violence prevention, which validates their participation in creating curricular materials. Thus, the students did not disqualify many Adult Curriculum concepts, but paired them with youth ones to give a more accurate representation of violence from their perspectives. Below are two excerpts illustrative of elements from the Adult Curriculum with which the group agreed and decided to keep as part of the Youth Curriculum.

- 1 **Corina:** Also they talk about *television violence*
- 2 **Polly:** that's very important
- 3 **Student:** I like that ...
- 4 **Julia:** especially here [in the US]

- 1 **Corina:** ... Anything else that jumps at you?
- 2 **Selphie:** the *homicide*...
- 3 **Corina:** what about that?
- 4 **Selphie:** cause it says ... student objectives, I think three *major causes of death for*
- 5 *young people* ages 15 to 24, so that's including our age range and that's interesting

These are two examples of the types of adult concepts preserved in the Youth Curriculum: the importance of television violence and knowing about the three major causes of death for young people. They tend to be factual, informative and not controversial. Television violence or risk factors for young people are representative of basic knowledge about violence and did not need modifications.

## Elements of the AC Modified by the Students

An intermediary aspect between preserving parts of the Adult Curriculum and creating unique Youth Curriculum content was making a hybrid of the two. I coded this as *modification* or *extension*. In these instances, the group found some elements of the AC to be incomplete and consequently altered them to various degrees. For example, the Adult Curriculum urged students to exert self-control when angry. The Adult Curriculum defines self-control as keeping one's emotions and actions in check, and remaining calm.

Lucy, however, extends the discussion of self-control by making practical suggestions:

**Lucy:** What helps me is I have discipline. Like, that's why ... in a lot of juvenile prisons they have weight lifting, because, that gives you ... you're strong, everybody knows you're strong that's in the weight lifting room ... and it also gives you discipline because in order to keep getting strength you have to go every day and you have to like work out and work on it and it gives you discipline

While Lucy preserves the Adult Curriculum's concept of self-control, she provides a more elaborate understanding of it. Through discipline and physical strength building one can attain higher self-esteem and have no need to be violent. This is an instance of low permeability, given Lucy's use of one type of a priori knowledge. Another example of something from the Adult Curriculum that was modified were homicide statistics:

**Corina:** ... By the way, do you know how old these statistics are?

**Asia:** nineteen ninety seven? ...

**Selphie:** why, do they look unrealistic?

**Corina:** ... this curriculum is being taught to high school kids right now, and the statistics are from..... oh, yeah, 1986

**Selphie:** uhhhh!

**Asia:** oh my god! Before I was born! ...

**Corina:** so it looks like we have some work to do [laughs]

**Neelie:** wait, are they still teaching this right now? That's ridiculous!

**Asia:** wow, cause violence XXX be plummeted ... in the last few years

## Unique Youth Perspectives

The most fascinating portion of Content, however, was the *youth group's original thinking*. This was often the result of students' *resistance* to some adult ideas (later, I describe resistance as an element of process). Original youth thinking can be recognized in a few forms in the Youth Curriculum: (1) frequent discussions about the etiology of violence and its function in society, which often led to controversial issues of violence and its prevention (materialized in an original *Grey Areas Session*); (2) a more complex representation of prevention strategies (materialized in an extended *Prevention Session*); (3) an explicit youth goal to create a curriculum pertinent to "real life" (represented throughout and in a *Resources* section) and (4) the central role played by emotions (materialized in an original *Emotions Session*). For the remainder of this chapter, I address these four areas separately, the last one being an in-depth look at the students' *Emotions Session* as an example of a fully developed youth session.

### Etiology of Violence and Controversial Issues

The students were more concerned with the origins, functions and consequences of violence than with how violence manifested itself (e.g., the Adult Curriculum's descriptions of how a gunshot kills, or steps to conflict escalation). The Why was more important to the students than the How, which was not informative to them. The students did not automatically accept concepts as presented by the Adult Curriculum or even their peers, but questioned and probed them. This was not only an element of Process,

(revisited in the next chapter), but also a result of the groups' dissatisfaction with simple definitions when the phenomena were in fact complicated.

### The Youth's Inclusion of Multiple Types and Levels of Violence

The Adult Curriculum opened with a brainstorming session on types of violence, which were meant as a mere backdrop for acquaintance violence, the objective of the Adult Curriculum. The Adult Curriculum asked the students to reflect on a number of things, such as the reasons for which violence is so widespread, its negative effects, or its relation to social factors that affect attitudes and perceptions of violence.

Although the Adult Curriculum did not label itself as a pacifist curriculum and stated that prevention was a choice, as was violence, it did not find prevention as problematic as the students did. Their resistance to the simple solutions of the Adult Curriculum was apparent in the groups' interest in a *wide range of types of violence* (as opposed to the interpersonal one in the Adult Curriculum), and the *etiology and function of violence* in society. The combination of these recurring topics resulted in the groups' recognition that violence prevention is surrounded by controversy; therefore, prevention is not as straightforward as this Adult Curriculum (and others alike) set it out to be.

What is violence and why is it used? To answer their own questions, the students first looked at where (e.g., streets, the media, or between countries) and under what circumstances violence occurs (e.g., gang disputes, an HBO series, or the invasion of Iraq). Consequently, talking about various types/levels of violence became a necessity. The group believed that the Adult Curriculum's focus on interpersonal violence and its emphasis on *fighting* as a form of violence were narrow and incomplete. From our meetings, it became clear that the students found it necessary to consider a number of

levels of violence in order to understand it. In contrast to this student attitude, the Adult Curriculum instructs the teachers that they “will not be discussing war, violence between strangers, of the nonphysical violence of racism, unemployment, or poverty beyond the web chart [an introductory exercise]” (p. 14).

Although the Adult Curriculum’s justified its focus on interpersonal violence by saying that it is the most likely form to affect young people, this group needed to continuously contextualize *themselves* within the larger social world. The students confirmed theories of violence prevention (reviewed in the introduction) that move the focus away from the individual and frame violence as a social construction resulted from the activities of multiple determinant forces (Fagan and Wilkinson, 1998). The students identified a number of violence-related social circumstances, ranging from family dynamics (domestic violence, child abuse), to small social circles (bullying, gangs), to systemic practices/discourses (civil rights riots, police brutality, class oppression) to global dominance (independence wars against imperialism, terrorism and responses to it, capitalism, etc). The students brainstormed these levels of violence without being influenced by the Adult Curriculum or myself.

### Youth’s Critical View of Adult Social Practices that Fail to Protect Youth

As part of their unique thinking, the students presented a complex understanding of how various social systems interact to produce violence at different levels. In the next example the students are critical of the videogame industry’s desire to build profits, which overrides the principles of adult responsibility to protect children:

**Polly:** you know what, what it is? Like, um, it’s greed as well, like people, like businesses that sell videogames and things they just care about selling ... and it says

strictly 17 and older on the videogames

**Julia:** no one listens to that

**Polly:** and then they see little kids this young buying them and they're like [Julia keeps agreeing: yeah, they know it] And that happened to my little brother he came with that [said name, unintelligible, group is amazed] and it's like it's all about sex and violence and prostitutes, and all that stuff, and I was like 'what are you doing with this?!' And he was like 'oh, I got it' because he said that daddy gave him the money to buy it, I was like 'NO! How could they sell it to you?!' He said 'the man just gave it to me'. [group laughs]

**Asia:** they know it, I think it just appeals to little kids XXXX it's supposed to be for older people, they know it too. Like my brother's he's like... I'm like 'this is a bad movie', he's like 'why, it's PG13' ... And I think, I was gonna say something about teenagers and the media too, it's kind of like a relationship going on, like they both work for each other, I see it like a marriage almost, because ... without teenagers the media will be nothing and I think ...

**Julia:** oh, they know, trust me, they know but they choose not to because they know if they do it, if they do abide by that thing won't make any money.

Reflective of the students' interest in the etiology of violence, above is a socio-economic analysis where violence is introduced to little kids early on by the video game industry and provocative media that needs young people to thrive. Society disregards the effects of this on young people. Selling as many games as possible to anyone who has money to buy them puts very young children into a premature initiation into an adult world of violence and sex. The students saw the industry's capitalist attitude itself as an act of violence, in addition to teaching children that violence is edgy and normal (all of which was missing from the Adult Curriculum).

Two macro systems that influence young lives, different media types and consumerism, seem to make their presence in the data in various ways. The students were shocked by the murder of a Chinese food delivery man by a group of young people who wanted to obtain money to buy a certain brand of sneakers. The desire to own a valued object had in this case fatal consequences, to which this group of students was exposed by watching the news. Here is the excerpt:

**Precious:** ... ok, you know how the media affects kids a lot right, and these kids wanted these Jordans so bad that when there was a, they'd seen a Chinese delivery man they killed him and took his money just to get the Jordans

**Asia:** in Jamaica Queens?

**Precious:** yeah

**Asia:** I saw those. That was sad ...

**Polly:** I think that plays a big part too, like pressure amongst other students in school ... Like in our school it's an all girls school, it's a lot of competition since we wear uniforms, there's competition on shoes ... Like all these accessories and everything and there's like if you don't have the new Jordans they're like 'oh my goodness, what are you wearing?' Things like that. People feel pressured to be just like other people are so like then I guess that contributed to what those kids did. I mean it's bizarre, it's absurd.

The strong criticism of being consumers is also seen above, when this group of girls described how social exclusion (violence specific to girls, see Underwood, 2003, for details) based on clothing and accessories that takes place in their schools.

Violence prevention (just like any other subject matter in school) presents a model of behavior, pointing to "good" and "bad" ways of being. The concept of *role models* for youth was brought up independently from the Adult Curriculum in the very first session and reemerged throughout the project. The students were critical of the lack of good role models for their generation, due to exposure to violent videogames, the graphic multi-media era, some irresponsible parenting, or some oblivious teachers. Here is an exchange that resulted in response to the question of who should learn violence prevention:

**Polly:** I personally feel that everyone from children to adults should learn ... Children because they are growing up in a place full of violence, where violence surrounds them and they need to know about it before they actually get to see it and everything. And adults because you know, they have to learn how to treat others because the way they treat others, like their children, as we discussed earlier. ...

**Corina:** models?

**Polly:** they need to learn how to manage through situations without using violence ...

**Asia:** I think kids are innocent. ... I kind of, start with them, adults and stuff and what are exposed in the media is all their [adults] fault from the start, and now and they talk about how kids don't know how to control themselves ... who do you have to blame for that? ...

**Julia:** just like teachers are telling kids don't smoke, but they're outside smoking.

Adults present young people with mixed messages: they expect children to be righteous and ‘moral’, while their own actions fail to support such demands. As young people ask for good role models, they indicate that adult responsibilities are often not respected.

Here is another critical observation made by students vis-à-vis teachers:

- 1 **Hira:** I’m in, I’m training to be a mediator in my school, and like this [participation in
- 2 our group] is even more training for me ... I’m in that situation that I feel like I need
- 3 to fight or something like that, I can’t do it because I have to be a good example.
- 4 Cause I’m studying not to fight, but yet I’m gonna fight, I can’t contradict that
- 5 **Asia:** that’s true
- 6 **Lucy:** like teachers smoke
- 7 **Hira:** they say don’t smoke. I had a teacher once in my school that she smelled like
- 8 smoke ... Lin [group laughs surprised] you don’t smell the coffee and cigarettes? ...
- 9 **Lucy:** smoking is violence too!

The group knows what right and wrong conduct is, and they hold themselves responsible to stick to their principles (lines 2-3). The same cannot be expected of some adults, who display hypocritical behavior. Once again, young people are not oblivious to adult behaviors, and explicit ways of ‘correct’ socialization, such as prevention curricula, appear artificial when indirect messages are contradictory and more powerful influences. The statement that “smoking is violence too” (teacher smoking referenced in two different occasions) is laden with meaning. It indicates that some adults not only fail to nurture children, but they also hurt them. Being socialized in an unprotected manner, once again points the puzzle of violence prevention away from individual students targeted for interpersonal violence and to problematic social practices. This is an intriguing systemic view emerged from student perspectives.

Current and past political issues were prominent in our discussions, indicative of another important context called upon by the group in order to understand the etiology of violence. For example, after 9/11, many of these students’ peers felt that it was their duty

to “serve” this country and enrolled in the navy, which is a clear example of how events that happen at a global scale trickle down to affect individuals. Polly, in a matter of seconds, made the connection among micro and macro systems, with a critical view of this country’s large investments in an institution of violence, namely the army. In this highly permeable moment, Polly constructs a keen analysis of a current practice that affects people like herself:

- 1 **Polly:** I think that’s a whole different issue cause like ummm I always thought of  
 2 what we’re doing now, like talking about violence on... in a level that’s ummm like  
 3 not so universal. Like, because when we get to the thing about the countries you also  
 4 have to focus on the armies and then the armies promote violence. And then like  
 5 there’s so much propaganda to join the army. And then every country needs an army  
 6 we’re XXX the most powerful country because of our army, so much money goes  
 7 into the army. And the army is all about violence, training to promote violence and  
 8 all these things. ... It’s such a big theme in itself. ... Like war... and all that stuff. ...  
 9 I never, I hadn’t thought about that...  
 10 **Corina:** so do you think it should be in a curriculum? ...  
 11 **Student:** mmmmm  
 12 **Asia:** yes  
 13 **Corina:** Although it goes beyond, beyond the daily lives  
 14 **Polly:** yes ... I mean a lot of people are considering it. After 9/11 especially a lot of  
 15 people felt very nationalist and patriotic so they wanted to join the army and the navy.  
 16 I now of a lot of people who joined the army after September 11th to show patriotism  
 17 for the United States. It’s a ... really big issue. ... I hadn’t thought about it before.

In contrast to the Adult Curriculum’s confined presentation of violence at an interpersonal level, Polly, as a young critical thinker, engages in a socio-political and economic analysis of violence of national and global scales. She clearly illustrates how the leadership of this country invests heavily in the military, which is a symbol of violence (lines 3-8). Although the issue seems to go beyond our daily lives, the armies are made of individuals, some of whom she/we know. Polly points to the link between individuals and social systems (e.g., the army and our government’s attitude towards war), therefore violence at global/macro levels violence does affect young people and

such issues should have a place in a curriculum of violence prevention (lines 10-16).

Paradoxically, prevention seems to be needed mostly by adults (perspective missing from the Adult Curriculum), a fact that emerged from a youth perspective often absent in schools. The excerpt is an example of high permeability, due to Polly's use of everyday concepts to elucidate complicated social discourses and activities behind violence.

### Youth's Foregrounding of the Controversial but Essential Justified Violence

The Adult Curriculum alluded to violence committed towards a good purpose, as seen on TV shows where "good" and "bad" characters confront each other. It asked students to think about the meaning violence takes when a "good" guy commits it. This issue falls under the umbrella of justified violence, which was merely touched upon in the Adult Curriculum, but fueled many discussions in our group. This indicates the youth's belief that even though controversy is complicated, it cannot be avoided while trying to understand the inner workings of violence. The students brought up the topic in the first session, before having read the Adult Curriculum, and carried it through to the end of the project, in different forms, such as impromptu discussions that often turned into heated debates, or in carefully planned skits. The group operationalized justified violence in two distinct ways: (1) *self-defense* and (2) *social justice issues*.

#### (1) Self-Defense:

Consistent with the group's understanding of violence as a connecting factor among various social units (also found in more recent theories of violence prevention- see introduction), the students defined *self-defense* in both micro and macro forms. First, the students debate personal self-defense, showing their resistance to simple solutions to

violence. Below, the Adult Curriculum's list of gains and losses of fighting sparked a discussion in the group about the feasibility of having positive outcomes after a fight:

- 1 **Neelie:** but do you think that it is good, that good things come out of fighting? ...
- 2 **Asia** sometimes ...
- 3 **Neelie:** of course not
- 4 **Polly:** as you guys said, when you guys showed the Grey areas and stuff was when
- 5 fighting is acceptable ... I suppose that umm the only thing good that can come out of
- 6 violence is when you use it as self defense... To defend yourself ... Yet, you
- 7 shouldn't hurt the other person, like hurt them to a point ... that dead
- 8 **Precious:** if you have to ...
- 9 **Asia:** like when enough is enough and you don't have to actually.. 'cause they
- 10 sometimes beat them to death they don't realize it ...
- 11 **Precious:** I think you will never know until you're in that position

Self defense appears as a last resort, although it is a difficult decision (lines 4-6, 9, 11). The students resist the zero tolerance rule promoted by some schools and prevention curricula, and suggest to use violence only when absolutely necessary, but not to cause fatalities (lines 6-7, 9-10). In this way, Polly maintains a preventive frame, which became a strategy (learn self-defense techniques that will only disable the opponent, not kill them). The majority of the students work with Polly to make this option seem plausible, which is an element of Process. This was one of the most prevalent controversial issues, which sparked the creation of the Grey Areas session. This was an episode of moderate permeability, given the presence of a negotiation, but the scant use of a priori knowledge. Nonetheless, important conceptual progress was made.

Self defense as justified violence is taken to another level when institutions such as the police and justice system become involved. This is a sophisticated presentation of how resorting to violence and society's response to that are controversial matters, therefore preventing violence is not easy, as illustrated in the excerpt below:

- 1 **Neelie:** and like people say and like the media and everything that violence is not
- 2 good ... but also today when we was in a film festival, they were doing a

- 3 documentary and it said that you have the right to live, so that's encouraging you to  
 4 like use violence ... self defense, whatever, somebody comes a'chew, yeah you have  
 5 the right to kill them ...
- 6 **Asia:** it depends on the way you take it..
- 7 **Neelie:** well, come one, somebody's attacking you ... I'm saying when they say you  
 8 have the right to live they also encouraging for you to use violence if anything  
 9 happened
- 10 **Asia:** well, umm you like can just stand up for your rights as long as you know your  
 11 rights, and they were talking about police brutality at that point, remember? ... So if  
 12 they come a'chew mostly they target youths because mostly they don't really know  
 13 their rights so they kind of feel like they can take advantage of you ...
- 14 **Neelie:** but in this film festival they say ok, you have the right to live and they show a  
 15 boy working at a store and another guy walks in ... He gets aaa like a card and then  
 16 he comes up to him with a with a knife and he's like give me your money ...
- 17 **Asia:** ... a boy came out with a gun and phsssss ...
- 18 **Neelie:** and then they said that charged him, they charged him as an adult! And but  
 19 yet they they told that is right, that you have a right to live! How you're gonna....  
 20 Never mind ...
- 21 **Selphie:** yeah and umm it was talking about the rights that youths have ... Like you  
 22 might be thirteen and yet you'll still be charged as an adult for the crime and stuff but  
 23 you know many people don't know their rights when they go to court so they are  
 24 taking advantage ...
- 25 **Precious:** there wouldn't be rights
- 26 **Selphie:** yeah....
- 27 **Neelie:** this country dictates
- 28 **Polly:** it depends, everybody has the right to live, but not every... no one has the right  
 29 to live in a violent environment..
- 30 **Precious:** but'chew have to fight for your rights
- 31 **Neelie:** and your life

Although highly controversial, violence becomes the means for preserving one's most fundamental right: the right to live (introduced in lines 3-4). However, the need to use justified violence exposes, once more, adults' contradictory behavior towards young people (lines 3-5, 7-9). The right to live translates here into self protection or protection of individuals by the justice system. However, many young people are not aware of their rights and are failed by the institutions created to protect them, such as the police and the courts. The students make firm comments about taking action as young people to learn and protect their rights (lines 10-13, 23-24, 30-31). This violation of rights is nonsensical

and the students confront the flawed systems (lines 21-27). Further, to bring forth these issues, the students tap into a priory knowledge learned in semi-formal settings (a school organized film festival) and everyday knowledge about police brutality and young people. The discussion of rights is elaborated vis-à-vis police brutality, which is oppressive and abusive of power. This point transitions my analysis into the second and related aspects of justified violence: *social justice issues*.

(2) Social Justice Issues:

Some interesting, but not surprising, aspects of this group's original thinking were *social justice issues*. Before I address those, I describe the Adult Curriculum's rather reductionist stance vis-à-vis poverty and racism. In the Adult Curriculum, *race* is not a factor in homicide because "when poor communities in different parts of the country are compared, they often have about the same rate of homicide, regardless of the racial makeup of the community." (Prothrow-Stith, 1987, p.34). A more prominent factor associated with homicide, the Adult Curriculum states, is *poverty*. Specifically, the Adult Curriculum postulates that when there is less money and high unemployment, there is more stress, free-floating anger, and there is not a lot to lose from engaging in arguments. Therefore, this is the way in which poverty is a precipitant for anger in the Adult Curriculum, besides weapons, alcohol, and arguments.

A radically different understanding is formulated by the group. As opposed to the Adult Curriculum's emphasis on interpersonal arguments (e.g., peers stealing from each other, or spreading rumors, etc), the youth group often circumscribed violence within a social justice frame. Below is an excerpt from a discussion around issues of inequality,

racism and discrimination, which have implications for violence and disadvantaged positioning of poor and/or minority people by those in power:

- 1 **Corina:** how is poverty related to violence?
- 2 **Asia:** the difference between classes ...
- 3 **Anthony:** yes, there's always a fight for power. ...
- 4 **Corina:** where do you think would most violence be likely to happen?
- 5 **Asia:** well, it's portrayed in the media and in society that lower classes have more
- 6 violent incidents ...
- 7 **Corina:** and is that true? You said it's *portrayed* ...
- 8 Selphie: I highly doubt that. They also portray that minorities are like that too. That
- 9 they're also very violent... You know, and it's like, 'uh, you're a black person, you're
- 10 not gonna shoot me, are you?' And it's racist comments. [pause]
- 11 **Corina:** ... That statement, that violence occurs more in minority people is actually
- 12 ... an act of racism?
- 13 **Selphie:** ... I think it's stereotypical ...
- 14 **Corina:** so it's not necessarily true [that violence occurs more in minority people]
- 15 **Selphie:** exactly
- 16 **Anthony:** it's a way to make everybody feel safe
- 17 **Corina:** everybody?
- 18 **Anthony:** not everybody, but it's a label to make it for people to feel safe, like, it's
- 19 basically a label to make the higher class feel safe. They feel the minorities will run
- 20 around, that's the bad ones ...
- 21 **Corina:** ok, so we're getting at these power issues and social issues that appear to be
- 22 in one way and are connected to violence ... but the *truth* about them is different than
- 23 how it's usually portrayed like you said in the media ...
- 24 **Neelie:** oh, I was gonna say, when you said what type of violence, like comes out of
- 25 like middle class and lower class... I say exploitation because middle.. like in history
- 26 and all that... like middle class and higher class they always wanna put like the the
- 27 lower class people to work and stuff like that and that's also a form of violence
- 28 because during that process of putting these people to work they abuse them and all
- 29 that and then when the people try to fight back they end up getting killed. ...
- 30 **Anthony:** rebellion ... You try try to fight back to turn things equal
- 31 **Asia:** protest ...
- 32 **Corina:** so, so trying to make things equal and social justice puts people at risk for
- 33 losing their lives
- 34 **Anthony:** it happened in our history ... Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Gandhi.
- 35 Anybody who wanted just a little bit a' peace got... some, something bad happened
- 36 to them. Coincidentally. ...
- 37 **Corina:** yes, so, do you think these issues that we're talking about should be up here,
- 38 above alcohol?
- 39 **Student:** above alcohol [laughing]
- 40 **Anthony:** yes!
- 41 **Corina:** yes
- 42 **Neelie:** something that jumped at me from here, it says that if race is not a factor in

43 homicide, why is the overall homicide rate higher for Black and Hispanic people than  
44 for white people? ...

45 **Asia:** I think it's also, remember the deal with cops last time, and how they usually  
46 hang around you know minority neighborhoods and everything and they probably  
47 half the time they don't even know what the other Caucasians are really doing is  
48 because they're not ...

49 **Corina:** they're not watching them so much?

50 **Asia:** yeah

In this excerpt, prompted by my questions/statements (lines 1, 4, 7, 32, 37), the students quickly revealed their insights about a multitude of social justice issues, in a highly permeable 'episode of discovery' (defined in the Process chapter). Lines 4, 7, 21-3, 37-8 of this excerpt are examples of my scaffolding techniques (discussed at length in the Process chapter). They consist of questions or statements I made at what I considered to be potential turning points in concept generation by the youth. This type of scaffolding intended to set up ZPDs conducive of permeability to critical youth thinking.

As opposed to the Adult Curriculum's downplay of racism and simple presentation of the negative effects of poverty, the students competently link oppressive social practices to violence. They isolate surveillance, overexposure of negative minority images, racial profiling and poverty as directly related to false discourses of violence (lines 5-11, 46-51). Minorities are positioned by the power-holders ("the higher class" and "the other Caucasians") as 'evil-doers', serving to cover-up and distract the world from the 'evil doings' of the more powerful (lines 17-21). These issues became part of the Youth Curriculum's session on Grey Areas covering controversial matters around violence.

The students make use of their a priori knowledge from both recent and past history to analyze the workings of power systems that have fatal consequences for the

marginalized. Fighting for civil rights comes at a high price, which was a direct connection students made between achieving social justice and violence (lines 26-32, 35-37). The Adult Curriculum disassociates violence from inequality by de-emphasizing the negative consequences of racism and poverty, and reduces it to the level of mundane arguments between individuals, given its focus on interpersonal violence prevention.

The previous excerpt is an eloquent example of high permeability, which was triggered by my guiding question on poverty and violence. My question was inspired by the students' conversation about risk factors of homicide (e.g., jealousy, drugs, gang membership, racism). These risk factors were originated by the students, and I merely scaffolded on to them to connect their commentaries to the Adult Curriculum's mention of poverty as a risk factor. Such guidance or prompting is not curtailing of permeability, but opens the Permeability Gate as an invitation of student perspectives. As I will discuss in the Process and Discussion chapters, I do not maintain that permeability can only happen without adult intervention. *Permeability is the result of specific and orchestrated student and facilitator processes.*

The previous data example was of high permeability because the group systematically challenged the Adult Curriculum's narrow presentation of such important factors in violence (e.g., poverty, racism, discrimination). The students used a multitude of a priori sources of knowledge, and collaborated by adding layer after layer of highly pertinent knowledge. As described in the Methods section (see Table 4), my invitation for student a priori knowledge reduced my level of control over the discussion, therefore facilitating a student-directed brainstorming task. Consequently, the degree of permeability was high. Having met all three conditions of permeability (student use of

diverse sources of knowledge, intense discussions and a student-centered task that was not controlled by the adult), a highly permeable situation arose.

The discussion of how violence has been used reaches a *political* level in connection to acquiring freedom and social justice. Below is a final example in this series of excerpts illustrative of the group's hard work to understand the etiology and functions of violence:

- 1 **Precious:** if there's something good out of violence? Sometimes you do it.
- 2 Depending on the situation. You could earn your respect, people can respect you
- 3 more. Sometimes it's necessary. I think so.
- 4 **Corina:** ok, ... to prove your point XXX earn respect
- 5 **Polly:** not necessarily
- 6 **Corina:** you disagree? Let's have let's have a discussion. ...
- 7 **Precious:** wasn't it... wasn't Haiti was the first African American country to win it's
- 8 independence? ... How did they win their independence? Through what?
- 9 **Asia:** hahahah! India won their independence
- 10 **Precious:** through what? [violence]
- 11 **Asia:** nonviolence [laughs]
- 12 **Precious:** XXX [through violence]
- 13 **Asia:** ... I think that yeah, cause there are countries that do win their independence by
- 14 fighting and everything and I guess you have to look at it from a point of view like, if
- 15 you have the odds on your side, then you could most likely win, but in a in a in a
- 16 situation like India where Britain had the more advanced weaponry and they
- 17 were outnumbered and everything, the only thing they could do which actually they'd
- 18 get them sympathy and they won was not use violence. So I think you have to look at
- 19 the odds and.... I'm not sure, I guess it goes into the question if it's justified or not.

Passive resistance emerged as an example of another national level strategy against violence and as a means for achieving independence. Such a pacifist solution is juxtaposed to a violent one, and the different perspectives (violence vs. non-violence) expose a controversy that was never reconciled. The students acknowledged each others' points of view, but agreed to disagree, which became a strategy of prevention. The multiple functions and ways in which violence is used raise the students' awareness about the difficulty of eradicating violence.

The original contributions by youth emerged as a result of the group's view of violence as far more complicated than the interpersonal image of it presented in the Adult Curriculum. The information presented in the Adult Curriculum did not deny the existence of other types and functions of violence, or other emotions associated with it, however, it did not deem them as important for young people to know. For this group of students and newer theorists of violence prevention (Hamburg, 1998; Samples & Aber, 1998), the etiology of violence can be traced to our *social* transactions and systems, and *not to individuals*. While it is individuals who commit violence, it is often in response and a result of socially constructed systems of oppression, such as the need for alternative economies such as the drug market (Fagan & Wilkinson, 1998), global power struggles, civil rights, discrimination, or complicated social relationships (domestic violence, child abuse, peer pressure, social norms of conformity, or even intra-individual conflict). The students exhibited a pattern of discussing violence as part of various social systems.

The Adult Curriculum proposed a medical model of prevention that has its roots in the public health domain (Prothrow-Stith, 1987). Its goal was to alter environments, thinking and behavior based on previous successful health-related interventions, such as reducing smoking or improving cardiovascular conditions. As stated earlier, medical models intrinsically believe that their target populations are problematic and need change. These models of prevention do not consider as problematic various social conditions external to individuals to which violence may be attributed, such as 'racial profiling', which was pointed out by one of the students. Traumatic events, added to harsh socioeconomic conditions, appalling physical environments and inadequate education are found to have cumulative and negative consequences on normal development including

emotional, cognitive, intellectual, or academic outcomes (Spencer et al., 2003). The students recognized controversies around violence, and their recurring discussions of the etiology of violence were necessary in order for them to better understand the nature of violence, and therefore create an informed curriculum.

### Strategies for Violence Prevention

The strategies for violence prevention in the Youth Curriculum were reflective of the types of violence the students deemed important to address (see upcoming Table 7, Violence Prevention Strategies of the Youth Curriculum). Similarly, the strategies in the Adult Curriculum were geared towards dyadic or small group situations. Both curricula included careful evaluations of the potentially violent situation and the gains/loses of taking certain actions. Further, both curricula believed that conflict/violence was a choice, as were the peaceful alternatives.

The Adult Curriculum presented the students with a few potentially violent interpersonal situations and asked them to think of three categories of responses: fight, flight or others. In this way, the students learning the Adult Curriculum were involved in creating alternatives to fighting, as was the youth group. The main strategy promoted by the curriculum, however, was entitled *Throwing a Curve: Your Other Choice*, which reads: “Do the unexpected. Your opponent probably expects you to be defensive and hostile (ready to fight), or else frightened (ready to flee). Instead, throw a curve and be confident, friendly, and ready to joke” (Prothrow-Stith, 1987, p. 81). The person trying to prevent a fight is advised to “stay on center”, “keep it cool” and “stand in the other

person's shoes". The strategies recommended are: "give 'em a way out", "keep it light", and "apologize/excuse". This strategy involves an assessment of oneself, the situation and the opponent. It remains confined in the dyadic interaction and to specific immediate situations. The steps are unambiguous and simple. It is most likely useful in daily confrontations (for which it was designed), without high stakes like those involved in gang related disputes, black market transaction, or abuse in the household.

The students did not fully develop the Prevention/Intervention session. However, they assembled a whole range of strategies as a result of the many issues covered in our discussions. Their strategies are an interesting continuum of solutions that may be straight forward (e.g., "talk it out", "take the other person's perspective") or they leave it to the person in a conflict to decide which path to take by giving them suggestions for how they can reason about the situation. Table 7 contains *some* of the Youth Curriculum's strategies, be they unique to the youth group, or overlapping with strategies provided by the Adult Curriculum.

**Table 7. Violence Prevention Strategies of the Youth Curriculum**

Strategy	Comments
<b><u>(I) “Think before you act (analyze situation and potential for conflict/violence)”</u></b>	
<p>People are exposed to many positive and negative influences, but have the option to choose their path. It’s in our power to choose to be or not to be violent.</p>	<p>This strategy is an indication of the group’s internalized concepts of rights, namely the one of self-determination. People are agents who have the ability and right to choose their path.</p>
<p>Courage comes out not when fighting, but when not taking up a violent challenge.</p>	<p>Alternatives to fighting have a higher value and opting for them shows a more complex understanding of conflict.</p>
<p>Determine the real source of anger.</p>	
<p>It is important to examine your emotions, psychological and internal states.</p>	
<p>Try to handle negative comments in a way that won’t allow them to hurt you and then let them slip off. Although hard to do, reflect first and try not to act on impulse.</p>	
<p>You may understand the person but not see eye to eye. Try to agree to disagree and not take it to a violent level.</p>	<p>Not every conflict can be solved, yet violence is not a must. The group gave conflict a whole range of classifications, including one as potentially positive and constructive (force that pushes relationships forward). This strategy is in the middle, between destructive and constructive conflict.</p>

**Table 7 (continued).**

Strategy	Comments
<b><u>(II) Concrete Prevention Strategies</u></b>	
Passive resistance	This strategy was borrowed from levels of violence beyond the interpersonal one, such as historical efforts for independence or civil rights.
School can offer self-defense classes. Find techniques of self-defense that will not get you in trouble, won't endanger the other person, but only disable them.	Hands-on, resourceful. Self-defense is only used when absolutely necessary and only to buy the 'victim' time to get away. This is a clever solution that indicates that violence cannot always be avoided and certain types of it would be the only way out. This strategy brought in a lot of controversy but pushed the group's thinking further.
Learn to give and take constructive criticism. Good communication is needed and works. Do not just tell people off.	This teaches youth more diplomatic approaches.
Find motivations to keep yourself passive and do not react in a violent manner. Acquire and maintain discipline.	Work on the self is more characteristic of the YC, which reflected considerably on strengthening oneself both physically and mentally.
Connect with people that have been through your experiences for strength.	These were controversial topics, given the positive but also negative ways in which religion could be used. However, it offers novel alternatives (at least when compared to the AC).
Religion and spirituality as positive ways to deal with anger (for some people).	

**Table 7 (continued).**

Strategy	Comments
<b><u>(III) “Do not just worry about yourself “ (Prevention Beyond Oneself)</u></b>	
<p>Do not just worry about yourself, but be concerned with the ‘bully’ who may not just attack you but also other kids. Take action to make sure that even after you are ok (by solving a conflict by yourself or with others’ help), other kids won’t become the bully’s next victims. Talk to teachers, parents, counselors, other kids and don’t let things go too far.</p>	<p>Social responsibility and communal efforts to keep everyone safe.</p>
<p>Watch out for signs of potential violent incidents. Learn to recognize them and follow up on them with effective action. Feel safe to report suspicious signs (confidentiality)</p>	<p>Strategy emerged from the groups’ knowledge of the Columbine shooting and personal experiences in middle school.</p>
<p>To prove that you’re stronger than your opponent ignore them. They only bother you for attention. This is hard to achieve, but it takes practice, self-control, and motivation to keep your integrity and patience. Educate yourself and others about this.</p>	<p>This resembles reaching out to the “perpetrator” and seeking the positive sides of him or her. Although it seems like naïve or unrealistic prevention, it was inspired by personal experiences in the group.</p>
<p>Encourage people who are not popular to show who they really are. They may surprise you in a good way.</p>	

Table 7 is divided into three sections: (I) one for strategies applied *before* taking any action, (II) one for *concrete strategies* and (III) one for the group's *social responsibility* for prevention. The table is an abbreviated version of all the Youth Curriculum's strategies (appearing in full Appendix E) and it reflects mostly youth-generated unique strategies of violence prevention.

Both Adult Curriculum and Youth Curriculum included various suggestions on how to assess the situation before acting (section I of Table 7), followed by concrete strategies (section II of Table 7). However, the Youth Curriculum's assessment strategies (section I) reflects the group's interest in the nature of violence and its socially constructed meaning. This gives prevention a social context, to reflect how it is created during social transactions that are goal oriented, and does not isolate it as an individual problem. In addition, the concrete strategies are more varied than those in the Adult Curriculum. Lastly, a unique characteristic of the Youth Curriculum strategies is the *social responsibility* assumed by the group (section III), which illustrates the students' interest in thinking about other people's safety besides their own. They extended their preventive measures to include the youth community. In their research on the different modes of home socialization received by Black and White teens, Faison and Flanagan (under review) found that Black adolescents were taught by their families to not settle for their individual well-being but contribute towards communal success. Given that all the students in our project were of color, their concern with the well-being of others seems to be in agreement with Faison and Flanagan's (in press) findings. Although most youth

strategies are preventive (which both curricula promote as a first step in conflict), the last section of the table provides a general overview on intervention (although not elaborate).

The strategies in Table 7 were embedded in discussions throughout all the meetings and did not emerge during any one specific activity. Subsequently, they were closely related to all the other aspects of violence (types, risk factors, consequences, etc) and resulted as logical extensions or components of those other aspects. Many of the youth-generated strategies were more elaborate versions of the strategies provided in the Adult Curriculum.

### Resources

The final session of the Youth Curriculum included a list of resources for students to use if needed. This was a unique contribution not found in the AC. Although the list was not fully developed, but its presence suggests a very pragmatic side of youth perspectives. The students therefore thought about violence both abstractly (its meaning and etiology; symbolic violence, etc) and practically (real life resources for those “in trouble”). Following are the types of information provided on the Youth Curriculum’s Resources List:

- TV and the media (educational and consciousness raising programs, as well as programs that bring on relaxation and take one’s mind off things).
- Services and hotlines for kids to contact (if in danger or feeling violent urges); counseling possibilities readily available.
- Create a video of a conflict situation that seems real and discuss prevention.
- Family could help when dealing with violence and could join in some sessions.

- Historical figures as role models: Martin Luther King, Gandhi, Nelson Mandela.
- More kids should know their rights.

The list of resources was an example of how the youth perspectives were pragmatically oriented, or ‘hands-on’. Further, students often reference real life examples, such as an incident in school, lyrics to a violent song, a historical figure or event, a teacher, a family member, etc. Such examples help them understand and elaborate ideas, which is also an element of *process*. The group explained why it was important for them to believe in what they learned, especially in a violence prevention context, where the stakes are high. Including personal experiences in curricular materials would make the content believable, therefore increase the likelihood of its effectiveness:

**Corina:** Any more ideas to include in a violence prevention curriculum?

**Polly:** I think ... that people’s personal experiences will help people understand better ... what the purpose of the curriculum is and maybe one or two experiences would help people better understand what is really going on

**Corina:** if you make it real, you mean, if you connect it to real lives?

**Polly:** yeah, like the play, like the skits that we’re supposed to perform ... it’s like they depict real life experiences as well, it’s not like only a story ...

**Lucy:** because a lot of times you don’t really know if something bad is happening to you, maybe you think they are, but then you maybe think that it’s not anything really, so I think there should be a clear definition that they show like a video or something that shows exactly what is this and they compare them and say, oh, ok, this might be happening in my life.

‘Making it real’ is a theme emerged periodically in the larger context of education, when the group was critical about what they learn in school that is not applicable to or useful in real life. They are also aware that their own or other people’s experiences are valuable and should be used. Students therefore see the need for and role of permeability in making learning more effective. Learning through believable examples is an effective way for students to handle knowledge, and the use of realistic

experiences seems to mediate the transfer of everyday concepts to formal learning. The students' use of 'real life' examples is a good representation of the content and process likely to occur in a permeable learning environment. This was an episode of moderate permeability, given the pertinent information, yet the absence of an intense discussion illustrative of multiple sources of knowledge. Further, the task control was evenly distributed among the youth and myself, because although the students were accomplishing my goal (by answering my moderately directive question), they were free to bring in knowledge pertinent to *them* and not to a predetermined agenda of my own.

The notion of *skits* requires mention due to its importance in student knowledge creation, both in terms of content and process. Role playing was a conduit for the group to convey salient messages. As stated above, the students were adamant about presenting believable scenarios, as an improvement over the Adult Curriculum and others they experienced in schools. Here is an example:

**Lucy:** ... we could get a video, actual, because a lot of curriculums do this, like an actual video of two people fighting, except everybody knows it's fake, so ...

**Hira:** but kids listen more to their friends

**Nesie:** and the cartoons

**Hira:** than other persons

**Lucy:** yeah, but as I was saying ... it has to look real, like something actually happened because a lot of times they show us except it looks so fake, nobody even pays attention. It's like, uuuuh, you're down! It's very sad [group laughs]

Not only would these skits make more sense to students, but they would also become something the youth authored. This gives them a sense of accomplishment and allows them to take responsibility, as they position themselves as creators of knowledge.

### On Emotions and Violence

An example that allows a direct comparison between sessions of the Adult Curriculum and Youth Curriculum is the session on Emotions created by half of the students in this research project for the purpose of “teaching” it to the second half. During our weekly sessions, the students often discussed emotions vis-à-vis violence. That was an indication that this group of girls found emotions to be an essential component of understanding violence prevention. The students made use of experiential knowledge that included affective resources while exploring challenging academic tasks (Daiute et al., 1993). Further, girls’ conflicts are built around situations where emotions play a central role, given that girls’ aggression is predominantly relational (Underwood, 2003). Therefore, the use of affective resources in academic tasks, together with the exclusively female composition of the group (except for one male who only attended one session), may explain why emotions played such a big role in Youth Curriculum.

Realizing the salience of the girls’ preference to discuss emotions, I pointed out that the Adult Curriculum presented ‘anger’ as the most important emotion likely to lead to violence, while leaving out a whole range of emotions deemed as important by these students. As a result, we unanimously decided that the Youth Curriculum needed to have a session on Emotions, where anger was one of the emotions linked to violence. The session replaced the Adult Curriculum’s two sessions on Anger. I proceed by describing the values found in the Adult Curriculum and Youth Curriculum, and then I present a table of similarities and differences among sessions, and interpretations of these differences (Table 8, Comparison Between the Adult Curriculum’s Two Anger Sessions and the Youth Curriculum’s Emotions Session, upcoming).

The Adult Curriculum dedicates two sessions to anger. The first helps students understand anger, and the second teaches them how to deal with anger. Table I11, Youth Transformation of the Two Adult Curriculum Sessions on Anger (see Appendix I) contains concepts (or values) I extracted from the two Adult Curriculum sessions and an indication of whether or not they were preserved in the Youth Curriculum. However, we changed the references to *anger* into *negative emotions* to indicate the use of an entire array of emotions. As with other segments of the Adult Curriculum, the students partly preserved, extended or eliminated the Adult Curriculum's two sessions on anger.

Appendix F includes the session designed by the youth on emotions and violence. The text in italics represents instructions for those teaching the session. Probably the most striking characteristic of the youth-designed session on emotions is its being *highly contextualized* in real life situations likely to affect kids. The issues are in this way made relevant to students by illustrating social phenomena and practices that surrounds them. The students' inclination to *examine the many facets of violence concomitantly* is again reflected here. The group included and connected together types, causes, consequences, strategies and decision making opportunities around violent situations. The session is layered and sequential, but does not present the elements of violence in isolation from each other (e.g., types of violence from its causes and consequences, etc), as does the Adult Curriculum. To the contrary, it gives the 'learners' an opportunity to look at these aspects at once to understand how they work together.

The session opens by illustrating a broad range of emotions, generated by the students themselves. It also mentions many types of violence, therefore the need to understand the wide spectrum of emotions associated with each of those. Although anger

is presented as being part of being human life, “growing up” (as the students wrote in their session to indicate adolescents’ road to adulthood) involves learning how to handle anger without causing negative social consequences. Strategies of dealing with “negative emotions” are offered, followed by a section on causes of negative emotions. Further, the group found useful the Adult Curriculum’s three-step process of controlling, expressing and channeling negative emotions and therefore preserved it.

The students’ use of skits served two functions. One was to apply, through role play, the knowledge presented in the first part of the session (range of emotions connected to types of violence and their causes). The second, more implicit function, was for students to complement the scientific concepts adopted from the Adult Curriculum with their spontaneous knowledge. Violence and its associated emotions were depicted through a careful selection of scenarios: desire, rape, lesson about the potential danger of romantic relationships; depression, low self-esteem, suicide/violence towards the self; fear; homophobia, gangs; jealousy, relationships, love; domestic violence by women; social construction of beauty resulting in bulimia; consumerism and materialism. The function served by creating and acting through knowledge (the youth-authored skits), is elaborated in the Process chapter. For now, it is sufficient to say that the skits in the Emotions session served as venues for conveying meaning. In a Vygotskian sense, if we consider the skits to be the adolescent equivalent of children’s play, then role playing mediated the students’ representation of knowledge.

The activities in the Emotions session positioned the learners as participants through brainstorming, and by inviting them to match emotions with the types of violence depicted in each scenario. The youth session ended with yet another interactive exercise

likely to engage kids, appeal to their interests as teens (love relationships), and present them with a realistic situation that challenges them to solve a dilemma.

Table 8 (see below) compares the Adult Curriculum's and Youth Curriculum's sessions on emotions based on shared and divergent points.

**Table 8. Comparison Between the Adult Curriculum’s Two Anger Sessions and the Youth Curriculum’s Emotions Session**

Similarities	Differences found in the Youth Curriculum
Anger is part of life, but it is not acceptable to take it out on people.	Youths view learning how to deal with anger as part of “growing up” as teenagers, therefore part of development into adulthood. It is a social responsibility issue.
Causes of anger.	The youth curriculum explored causes of negative emotions, not just of anger. They directly link types of violence, to triggers and emotions, as opposed to the adult curriculum’s presentation of these in different sessions. A bigger portion of the youth session is devoted to causes, which are illustrated in complex skits.
Mention that other emotions intervene in violent situations.	As opposed to the adult curriculum’s tangential mention of other emotions, the entire youth session is dedicated to the wide range of emotions associated with violence. This may be a result of the fact that the group was constituted of girls, who find emotions to be tightly connected to violence, as mediators to motivations behind violent acts.
Strategies of dealing with anger.	<i>(no differences)</i>
Pedagogy: the adult curriculum has a predetermined agenda, as has the youth curriculum. Both involve students by brainstorming at different points, and lead discussions with questions.	In the youth curriculum, students brainstorm but also analyze the skits and identify emotions, causes and strategies. They are also engaged in a persuasion game. Students are therefore more active. The skits are socially constructed from a youth perspective and require students to connect their spontaneous knowledge to the scientific one of violence prevention.

**Table 8 (continued).**

<b>Similarities</b>	<b>Differences found in the Youth Curriculum</b>
<i>(no similarities)</i>	<p>The adult curriculum progressively addresses concepts, and has two sessions covering anger. One helps students understand anger and another teaches them how to deal with it.</p> <p>The youth curriculum is more direct, does not always follow a logical order (addresses strategies before causes). However, it assumes that students have an a priori knowledge base that allows them to skip some basics of the adult curriculum (i.e., physiological changes during anger, its role in homicide, recognizing one's anger, etc). The youth curriculum challenges its 'apprentices' to see how emotions and motivation are rooted into everyday conflict.</p>
<i>(no similarities)</i>	<p>The skits are meant to contextualize emotions within social situations likely to affect the students. They are presented in the second part and allow students to explore the concepts addressed in the first part.</p>
<i>(no similarities)</i>	<p>The session was designed by teenage girls. It reflects their interest in love relationships. This speaks to the idea of having students contribute to the materials they learn in order to make them more relevant to their interests and applicable to their lives. The role of affect in youth knowledge creation transpires in this session (see upcoming discussion).</p>
<i>(no similarities)</i>	<p>The session is comprehensive because it connects the many types of violence, causes, emotions and strategies, which are scattered throughout the sessions of the adult curriculum. The youth Emotions session thus gives a well-rounded presentation of the phenomenon of violence.</p>

The differences between the adult and youth sessions on emotions are more striking than their similarities. The youth-designed session has broader goals and touches on multiple aspects of violence and emotions in comparison to the more simplified and linear adult sessions on how to tackle anger. The students' tendency to place violence by individuals into the larger context of social systems was observed throughout all our meetings. It is an indication that the Youth Curriculum has a larger scope than the Adult Curriculum. The goals of the Adult Curriculum reflect its orientation towards a health/physical model.

The cover of the Adult Curriculum states that it was “designed to help adolescents deal with anger in productive, nonviolent ways. Teenage health teaching modules”. Even before opening the book, it is stressed that the focus is on the individual who needs to be taught healthy ways of dealing with anger. The goals of the curriculum are “to show high school students the extent to which they are at risk of homicide, what factors usually attend a homicide, and positive ways to deal with anger and arguments, the major causes of homicide” (Prothrow-Stith, 1987, p.3). While individuals are agents in any act including those of violence, this curriculum *isolates* the individual as the problem to be ‘fixed’ and identifies anger as the most important ingredient of violence. The individual as part of complicated social transactions (Fagan & Wilkinson, 1998) is absent, and the role of other emotions and phenomena (such as denial, jealousy, betrayal, exclusion, fear, etc) is diminished by the Adult Curriculum. The Youth Curriculum follows a different logic, and the social construction of knowledge is observed in relevant relational situations employed by the students to reflect how reality is more complicated than explained in the Adult Curriculum.

### (3) Sources of Knowledge

In this section I look at the *sources of knowledge* on which the students drew to the re-write the Adult Curriculum. This idea is an expansion on what Moll et al. (1992) call “funds of knowledge”, or “hidden” resources students (minority in his research) have at their disposal from participating in their home and community life. In this paper, the *sources of knowledge* extend beyond Moll et al.’s learning sites to include information young people internalized from their socialization in all spheres to which they have access. These may range from media events, to gang memberships and various other peer interactions, to family life, and even previous formal learning experiences. These are potentially unlimited, and every individual carries unique combinations of sources of knowledge, as a result of their social history.

Given that students speak from existing pools of information that they previously internalized as members of various social circles (Bakhtin, 1986), they call upon *experiential knowledge*. The use of experiential knowledge, especially by minority students like those in this project, has been an effective learning mechanism (Ball, 2000; Moll et al., 1992). Being allowed to speak in class and basing that communication on previous experiences seems to propel traditionally marginalized students towards improved academic success (Martin, 2006).

If student participation is to be considered a valid educational tool within schools, other places of learning (as formal or informal as they may be) should be documented (Hull & Schultz, 2002). By being aware of the students’ alternative learning sources

(e.g., a particular ethnic community, a peer group involved in various technologies, etc), educators should actively direct the students' attention towards those sources and help them tap into valuable inert knowledge. Although some of the sources were stated by the group (such as a history class, an after-school program or a past prevention class), many of them remained undetermined.

The knowledge introduced by the students, independently from the Adult Curriculum, was coded as *youth knowledge*. This is a term that accounts not only for the content of this knowledge, but also for its *sources*. Next, I developed another simple categorical coding system to record the types of sources used by the students (described below). I applied it to the quotations included under the *youth knowledge* code. The sources are not always independent of each other, as this dissertation maintains. These sources can be seen as interdependent nested systems, nevertheless, they each have a unique core that differentiates them. Following is the list of sources of knowledge identified in the students' talk/writing, along with definitions and examples from the data.

**Personal experiential:** Instances when examples from a student's past experiences were given. These may include other sources listed here, given that, ultimately, events in which one participates become an experience, be it listening to the news, or living/reflecting upon a historical event (i.e., September 11 or Martin Luther King).

The students in this group called upon this type of knowledge often, and typical formulations of their personal experiences usage would be "I saw..." or "One time I was walking..." or "My DARE teacher...". Here is just one example of a personal experience on which Lucy drew to recommend a prevention strategy (talking to parents):

**Lucy:** I think, also, important is to talk to your parents, cause I remember like I was in fifth grade and some kid started to pick on me but like I had pride, but then I know I

couldn't face him alone, cause I was one, so I called home my mother, and then my mother, like I know my mother would fix it. So I think that children should try to get their parents involved and not like exclude this life from their parents.

**Home-family:** Instances when a reference was made to the student's immediate or extended family. Although this category is likely to overlap with the above, it still has a distinct quality as a space where seminal social exchanges take place. Below is an observation made within Liz's family that is violence-related:

**Liz:** I also think it's videogames. My little cousin is five years old and he has a playstation and he has X box and all that stuff and one day, like two days ago he asked me, oh, can I have, cause I have pizza, can I have a piece. And I said sure, and I gave him some. And his brother said oh, I'm gonna tell on you because you know you're not supposed to do that. And he said, he said 'shut up before I cut your face!' And I was like, I look at him and was saying, what, you want me to cut your face? And he's this short and he's five years old!

**School:** Instances when information or practices or teachers from the student's school/classes were referenced. In this instance, the students defined what 'fun learning' meant by pointing to both 'non-fun' and 'fun' school activities. One teacher's pedagogical practice was given as a desirable technique to motivate students:

**Polly:** well, it depends what you consider fun. What do you guys consider fun? What is fun to you?

**Asia:** fun? [laughs] sex ed, no I don't know

**Neelie:** activities? Educational activities you said?

**Asia:** it was all right, it was boring

**Polly:** what anyone's experience in school was fun to you? I don't know, what would I consider fun?

**Asia:** sometimes they could take a really boring subject in history and make it fun

**Student:** mhm

**Lucy:** there's no boring subject in history, they could just make it [laughs] boring

**Asia:** that's true

**Corina:** so educational activities made fun and interesting ...

**Polly:** yeah, like our teacher in school, Rosana, we play Jeopardy,

**Lucy:** oh, I hate that

**Polly:** we pick a competition

**Precious:** that sounds fun, I like that

**Polly:** ... it's more of a competition but at the same time people learn it, they take it in  
**Asia:** it sticks to the mind what we study

**Polly:** and the way in which people compete to like get the most points and stuff it's it makes it fun

**Asia:** and you see it on a test too, oh, that was with 500 points [laughs]

**Neelie:** and also the best way that, the reason why it makes it more fun is because you get a benefit from it, like if you win you get 5 or 6 points or something like that, so that really boosts everybody's like..

**Corina:** motivation?

**Neelie:** yeah

**After-school:** Instances when information or practices from the student's after-school program were used. Here is such an example:

**Asia:** I was gonna say that in World Youth we're learning everything and I think I think what people, what a country should be really aware of, if you really want peace, is not looking at your own country and what you can do to intimidate other countries WITH your weaponry and everything, but look at why they wanna fight you. Because I know the US has a lot of... IS a target is a prime target for many countries for several reasons

**Neelie:** cause of Bush ...

**Polly:** You'll be surprised to know what a bad reputation the United States ... has in other countries

**The media:** Instances when examples from media events (news, movies, etc) were referenced. This was a 'popular' source of information for the group that was often criticized for its negative influence on young people. Here is an example about an event in the news about the effects of an HBO series:

**Anthony:** there was another one in Chicago, a kid killed his mother, was going to school like four months ... and he forged his mother's signature to get his report card everything through the mail for like four months. He left his mother in a closet or something, but the smell seeped through the floor ... So the neighbor sent the neighbor sent the umm super to the apartment, I guess he was at school that day, and he opened it up he found the body [group reacts] ... he ended up like chop her head.. it was because of Sopranos, he was watching Sopranos, ... and it was the season finale cause I remember I saw that episode and Tony cut that guy head off in his sleep so he did it to his mother [group reacts]

**The music industry:** Instances when references that were music related (singers, lyrics, video clips). Following is a segment in which the violent and soothing potential of music is examined:

**Polly:** [talking about Eminem] killing his wife and dragging her through the woods

**Lucy:** WHAT?

**Polly:** and you could hear her and it's like and it's bizarre...and it's like, but then again it helps people, it releases all this bad energy

**Precious:** tension

**General references/observations:** Instances when the source of knowledge could not be determined. This was probably the most frequent type of information contributed.

**Polly:** ... like someone who's born with violence in them and someone who just develops violence. Like some people are born in, born into umm violent households and that that's very, like that's what's happening today. Like children are being born into households without, with single parent households and everything and it promotes violence because like so much pressure and stuff as we, so before people know how to release it, so they take it out on kids, or they take it out on this and children learn from that.

Another trend related to the students' sources of knowledge was a sequential combination of multiple sources to construct a line of logic during a conversation, as seen in the example below. I marked the sources of knowledge in brackets and capital letters:

**Asia:** [GENERAL] I think that's the best part about religion, if you embrace it the right way that it can really really help you out. And some people take it the wrong way and they act ...

**Lucy:** just use it as an excuse for hating

**Corina:** [FACT/HISTORY] I have a question. What do you think about the religious motives behind Osama Bin Laden or [group gets loud, overlaps, agitated] ...

**Lucy:** he he's using religion ... [GENERAL] because religion in it's purity is a theory. Religion is something good and loving. ... and Osama and people like Osama Bin Laden, these leaders want want power ... to take the control and whatever they feel like.

**Corina:** so they use it, misuse it for their own evil purposes [group agrees]

**Neelie:** yeah, they use God, they use God as an excuse toward negative actions

**Lucy:** [HISTORY] Like pope, like the popes in the Medieval times

**Polly:** [HISTORY] and crusades ... Joan of Arc, she said that God told her to fight ...

**Asia:** [PERSONAL EXPERIENCE] I was in my mom's car and there was a license plate in front of us that said Kill for God and I was like *come on!* Gee! What? ...  
[GENERAL + FACTS] ...

**Polly:** [AFTER-SCHOOL] that's what we discussed in World Youth this Friday. Like whether religion unites or disunites people. ...

**Lucy:** and I was shocked

**Polly:** and it was a *big* conflict ...

**Precious:** [HISTORY] like the Palestinians and Israelites [students agree]

The Adult Curriculum did not talk about religion and its role in violence, which may have been an intentional act to avoid imposing certain values. The youth saw it as both a strategy of prevention (when used how it was “intended”), and as a source of conflict and violence. They called upon a multidimensional type of knowledge to explore the dual role of spirituality, including past and current global violence-related issues. The students, again, with ease, connected individuals to socially established systems, events and moral values. I edited the original lengthy excerpt, however, here are the sources of information, and their frequency of use by the group: general knowledge/facts (5 instances), history (5 instances), personal experience (1 instance), after-school program (1 instance) and family (1 instance).

The many places from which students drew their knowledge suggest that their information base is diverse and that for each individual student there are multiple converging (or competing) perspectives (Bakhtin, 1986) that have the potential to push learning forward if allowed to permeate curricula. The students also used **peer groups** as reference points, although not as often, such as in the earlier example where Polly mentioned the materialistic competition promoted by girls in her school. Further, as **our own group** assumed a unique identity/culture as a learning site (Dyson, 1993), we began making references to past sessions, points of view and project goals.

#### (4) The Imperfections in the Content of the Youth Curriculum

No curriculum is flawless. As we critiqued the Adult Curriculum, so can someone/I appraise the Youth Curriculum and point to shortcomings. This section has an equivalent in the Process and Pedagogy chapters, to show how our product, ways of achieving and teaching it could be improved. Given the numerous types of data, for this analysis I selected one piece of data in particular, especially because it is not mentioned anywhere else in the results chapters. I am referring to the other session that was fully designed by the youth aside from the Emotions session: the Youth Curriculum's Introduction session.

This first Youth Curriculum session was vulnerable to flaws from the beginning. As seen in Table 5 earlier in this chapter, the students merged the first three independent sessions of the Adult Curriculum into one introductory piece. The result was a large introduction to the Youth Curriculum. The Adult Curriculum's sessions on types, statistics/facts and causes/triggers of violence coincided with a priori youth knowledge and were perceived by the group as closely related in function, namely to *orient* the learners to the basics of violence. Consequently, the group spent less time on such introductory matters and condense them into one comprehensive session. The merits of the Youth Curriculum Introduction are as follows:

- The 'types of violence' section is broader, to reflect the group's intention to contextualize violence, from individual to global levels.
- The causes/triggers of violence are representative of the multiple levels of violence with which the group was concerned.

- The homicide statistics are more detailed compared to the Adult Curriculum. They represent cross tabulations of multiple variables, such as gender by race, or race by year, or victim-offender relationship by race and by year, etc.

To a great extent, the shortcomings of the Youth Curriculum's Introduction were due to a poorly planned design phase. The group did not have enough time to work on what they believed was a highly challenging task of assembling masses of information in a coherent manner. Following are some elements that could have used more work:

- The multiple 'types of violence', which the whole group had brainstormed throughout our meetings, were at times misclassified by the group in charge of designing this session. Specifically, they used the Adult Curriculum's taxonomy of International-National-Community-Institutional-Interpersonal Violence to classify subordinate categories. However, types of violence such as *mental abuse*, *sexual abuse*, or *disciplinary violence* were grouped together under International Violence because the students believed that these practices occurred universally in every country, therefore they were 'international'. The students misrepresented this category the most, but defined the others appropriately (for example, rebellion was a type of National Violence, and abuse in work relations was a type of Institutional Violence).
- The Introduction session's Causes and Triggers of Violence were comprehensive, however, they were presented in a list format, while the ins-and-outs of interesting factors in violence like *video games* or *struggle for power* were not discussed. However, it was issues of this nature that made our sessions interesting and revealed the importance of the unique youth perspectives.

- Overall, although the Youth Curriculum Introduction could be classified as a comprehensive informational session for a violence prevention curriculum, it did not reflect the originality of youth perspectives I observed in our sessions, including their critical approaches and transformative activities around concepts in the AC.

Despite the shortcomings of the Youth Curriculum, the students generated content of high quality and of greater complexity than the content of the Adult Curriculum. Issues of Content find their place on the Sequence of Permeability (Figure 1) in the areas represented by *youth sources of knowledge*, the *scientific curriculum* and the *new knowledge as a hybrid of spontaneous and scientific concepts*. The following chapter contains elements of Process that support the students' competence not only in generating knowledge, but also in conveying it through meaningful social interactions.

## **Chapter 4: Youth and Adult Processes Characteristic of a Permeable Practice**

In this chapter I describe the mechanisms we adopted to learn and transform the Adult Curriculum. Whether the elements of process were intense debates, reiterative tasks or group collaborations, our course of discovery was not clean cut and linear.

### **Research questions for Process:**

- (a) How did the discussions proceed when the learning task was to critique and transform an adult curriculum? How did students alter my initial transformation plan in order to incorporate their own modes of learning?
- (b) What was the type and necessary amount of scaffolding that supported student agency but not interfere with their creativity?
- (c) What were the ways in which students transferred their everyday knowledge to scientific learning environments?

I address five different aspects: (1) the process by which I approached the learning/transforming task (including our adherence to and departures from my initial proposed steps) as compared to that identified in the Adult Curriculum; (2) the elements of youth process; (3) permeability as a function of task control; (4) role playing as an ideal learning venue; and (5) our roadblocks with making the process of permeability work, including the process proposed by the students for those who would learn/transform the curriculum in the future. The types of data I used for this part of the

analysis were transcripts and my handouts, agendas, Adult Curriculum and Youth Curriculum skits and my observations.

### (1) The Process of the Learning/Transforming Task from an Adult Perspective

#### The Steps I Initially Proposed for Our Project

I originally offered the group a sequence of activities meant to provide a structure supportive enough to help the students familiarize themselves with the Adult Curriculum and the goal of the project, but also flexible enough to allow them bring forth their knowledge to modify the Adult Curriculum. I expected that my original plan would be altered by the students, whose roles would gradually change from passive learners to apprentices who create knowledge. Here are my originally proposed steps with descriptions of how some of those were altered collaboratively with the students.

1. *Initial focus group* on issues of education and previous violence prevention/conflict resolution experiences (see questions in Appendix B); *selection of Adult Curriculum to be modified*, out of two which I had selected (see Methods chapter for rationale).

- I planned these activities for the first session to capture the students' perspectives about violence before their exposure to the Adult Curriculum. Instead, they extended over two sessions because the issues around violence brought up by the group were extremely diverse and important to the students, therefore required additional time. These issues ranged from straight forward prevention the students may have learned

- in the past, to contradictory adult models of conduct, to symbolic violence, and references to macro levels of violence.
- Another change in plans occurred when the students decided that instead of selecting one Adult Curriculum out of the two presented to them, they would combine elements of each into a new curriculum because they complemented each other. For example, the students saw the first curriculum (The Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents) to be more socially oriented, while the second one (Project Peace) had more introspective techniques that dealt with the mind and body. However, because we spent too much time on the first one, and because the Youth Curriculum covered internal/introspective aspects, we did not look at the second one.
2. I intended the *Agenda for Change* (see Methods for definition) to be a constantly evolving document for recording the most important points/concepts to be modified. This was different from my weekly plans for each session (*Agenda of the Day*), which dealt with the structure/steps of the process rather than with content. We quickly merged the two agendas because we found it difficult and perhaps not ideal to separate the content from process. I argue earlier in this dissertation that the creation of knowledge by youth and the process they follow are symbiotic, therefore their separation would be artificial. Additionally, the Agenda for Change is reflected in the Youth Curriculum's final features.
  3. *Selection of sessions from the Adult Curriculum to preserve in the Youth Curriculum and the design of the Youth Curriculum Table of Contents.* In order to critique, we first needed to understand what we were evaluating, therefore we examined each Adult Curriculum session.

- The Youth Curriculum Table of Contents, as I originally planned, emerged from inviting the group to look at the Adult Curriculum Table of Contents *after* they discussed their own ideas of violence prevention. Therefore, once we established the students' perspectives about what a violence prevention curriculum should include, we evaluated them in comparison to the structure of the Adult Curriculum.
  - This became another lengthy process due to the difficulty of the evaluation task (i.e., is this or is this not necessary for violence prevention?) and the loosely structured youth interactions.
  - This initial examination of the Adult Curriculum was not extremely detailed. Due to the fact that the students were not required to read every line in the Adult Curriculum closely (or learn it in the traditional way of absorbing information without considerable youth input), they were able to comment on issues of interest informally and by using a priori knowledge.
4. The assembly of *The Curriculum Overview*, during which we produced a more elaborate description of each Youth Curriculum session.
- Expanding the Table of Contents to construct a Curriculum Overview based on youth ideas and those outlined in the Adult Curriculum was a challenging task. It spanned over two sessions (instead of one as originally planned) and involved intense negotiations. It was relatively easy for the students to brainstorm ideas about violence and its prevention (during the focus group). However, integrating their ideas with those in the Adult Curriculum was a novel task that required organizing main ideas reflective of the fusion of youth and adult concepts. This was the groups' first

- experience with synthesizing concepts to construct a clear sequence of logical steps in a curriculum and it proved to be laborious.
5. For the *Concept Pasting Project* I asked students to assemble all the concepts we had generated previously (original youth ideas or some variation of the Adult Curriculum) under the Youth Curriculum's sessions, which are reflected in the Table of Contents.
    - During this project, the students decided what concepts would appear in their sessions (e.g., to incorporate a concept like *peer mediation* under the session on Prevention Strategies). The focus groups and initial discussions of violence prevention generated a myriad of ideas corresponding to specific sections of a curriculum (i.e., types of violence, strategies, etc). As I describe later in this chapter, the students exchanged these ideas almost chaotically and did not follow any particular order (e.g., prevention strategies may have been discussed before types of violence). I planned the Concept Pasting Project in an effort to direct students towards organizing and synthesizing the plethora of ideas they had produced until that point.
    - For this stage of the project, I assembled all their ideas and placed them on thin pieces of paper in the middle of our table. The students took turns in drawing these papers, reading the text and suggesting a place for them in the Youth Curriculum, such as under causes of violence, or resources, or emotions.
  6. The next steps were to *select 2 sessions to be fully designed and taught by the students*.
    - Given the time constraints, we did not fully design the entire Youth Curriculum. Further, since approximately 10-12 students were in attendance at each meeting, we formed two groups, each of which designed one session and then presented it to the

- other group. We selected the two sessions collectively, without any differences of opinion.
- The design activity was the most difficult segment of the project, as I describe later in this chapter. Both groups needed more time than I originally planned. The teaching sessions followed a conservative process and pedagogy, as found in school teaching.
7. The last planned task was the *final focus group*. The students reflected on their experience of participating in our group, and revisited issues of education and violence prevention from the first focus group. This was a powerful exercise, where the students addressed explicitly our redefined roles as dual learners and educators. The discussion was inspirational for everyone at the table and constituted a final awareness raising act vis-à-vis permeability as an educational tool that respects students in a new way (or that finally finds respect for students?)
  8. My on-going tasks: *introduce and negotiate proposed tasks for the group, and re-state the goals of the project*.
    - At the beginning of every meeting, the group received the *Agenda of the Day*. It described the day's goals and tasks for the remainder of the project. I wrote the agendas and intended to negotiate them with the students. However, we had no direct negotiations of these items, because the group did not view the agenda as a rigid daily plan they had to follow and did not express any interest in changing the upcoming plans of action I had proposed. However, I constantly changed the course of a day's activities to accommodate the pace or needs of the group, and each session's agenda was based on what had happened in the previous session.

- My restating the project's goals proved to be important. I noticed the need to reiterate our goals as the project evolved and I attribute it to the unusual task I had given to the group. Students have strictly defined identities by learning in the traditional education practiced in their schools. The group assumed with enthusiasm their new and radically different identities of knowledge creators, although the transformation from one identity to another was slow, cumbersome and probably not complete. This was a short-lived project that had the ambitious mission to 're-socialize' students in a paradigm of endless learning possibilities. Despite the difficulty of this task and the incomplete transformation (more in the Discussion chapter), it was a success due to the new important knowledge the youth felt competent to create.
9. There were also some *objectives/tasks that were dropped from the project*. This did not affect, however, the quality of Youth Curriculum. Further, it was to be expected that in a process that is fluid and determined along the way plans would change, including the adoption of new tasks or the exclusion of others.
- The merging of the two adult curricula, as the students initially intended, did not happen due to time constraints and the fact that our group covered the main concepts in the second adult curriculum.
  - Given the students' affinity for skits, we agreed that they would design them for every session. Since we did not fully design every session, however, the Curriculum Overview was supposed to list skit ideas. The difficulty of putting together the Curriculum Overview, together with the challenging design sessions led us to only include skits in the fully designed sessions.

- Throughout the project, the students were enthusiastic about presenting their curriculum sessions or skills to other students. They proposed many ideas, such as creating an educational video for elementary school children, putting together a violence prevention conference for youth like themselves, or teaching other students. These activities did not take place because the redesign of the Adult Curriculum was a massive task in itself and branching out would have required much more time and resources. However, these were interesting activities that illustrated the creativity of this group and their various of skills (existing and evolving).

The above commentaries on the sequence of planned and impromptu procedures show not only the role of each activity, but especially the ways in which I adjusted them to accommodate a dynamic learning process. Permeability requires changes in content, processes and pedagogy to incorporate the students' styles of interaction and optimal modes of learning. In this paradigm, changing initial lesson plans is not a failure to educate students in the 'proper' manner, but a necessary condition for student participation and an outcome of dialogic learning.

### My Scaffolding as an Element of Process

Below, I address the actions I took as a facilitator of this project (I define my pedagogical position as a facilitator in the next chapter). After I had made clear the purpose of the project and their own roles, I asked the students to speculate about my role in the project. Their response coincided with the position I myself intended to adopt:

**Corina:** what do you think my role will be? ...

**Julia:** a listener, observed

**Precious:** also a teacher ...

**Precious:** a guide

**Corina:** a guide. Ok. Are you gonna be guides?

**Asia:** us? in a sense, yeah

**Group:** yeah

**Polly:** we're gonna be guides for you XXX ...

**Precious:** we'll be helping you to understand the world of violence today

From the start, I was perceived as somebody different from a teacher. I was a *listener*, an *observer*, a *guide* and, also a *student* (a key role for an educator of permeability). Being positioned as such made easier my goal of being one of the *many* facilitators of ZPDs in the group, next to the students and even the adult curriculum. [At the end of the project, I was no longer the most powerful guide, as described later.] This type of positioning, which the students assigned to me in relation to them, influenced emerging elements of process. As I describe in the introduction, permeability implies a redistribution of power in the classroom, which has implications for the processes that take place.

The description of the *particularities of my scaffolding* is a partial response to the question of how much support is necessary in a permeable learning paradigm in order to create appropriate zones of proximal development. Such ZPDs need not be highly controlled and laden with adult power smothering of student creativity and originality, and the scaffolding should rest more on student goals/needs rather than adult ones (Wood & Middleton, 1975).

There are a few indicators of power (agency) re-distribution. In this section I present 3 types of analyses: (a) variations in *permeability in two sessions with different tasks* (the first attributed more control to the students, while the second was more structured by me); (b) *variations in the frequency of my interventions/scaffolding* across sessions as a

function of task difficulty and group dynamics; and (c) *variations in the types of interventions/scaffolding* I employed in those same two sessions with different tasks, in relation to permeability.

### (a) Permeability as a Function of Task Control

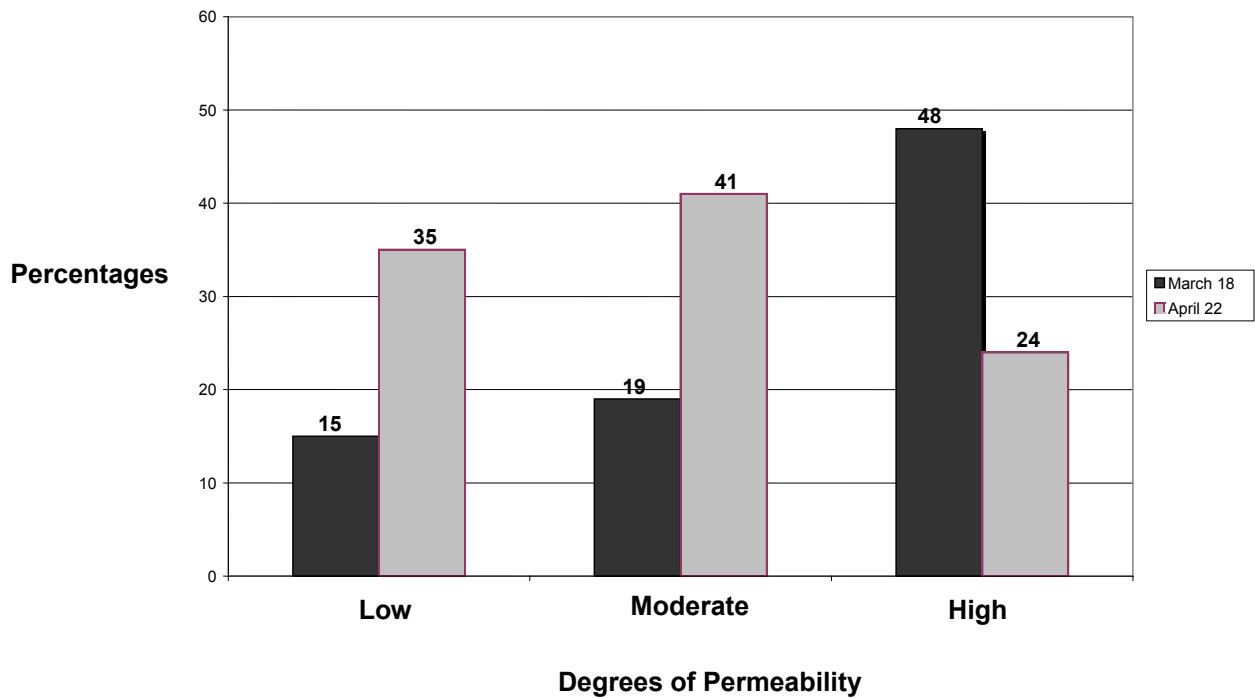
Table 4 from the Methods chapter lists the conditions that determine the three degrees of permeability, one of which being how much control is exerted over the task at hand (activity) and by whom. This power may be held exclusively by the adult educator, or shared with the learners. Daiute et al. (1993) found that teacher-controlled tasks correlated negatively with students' writing of elaborate narratives, while peer work that was highly interactive presented a positive correlation with such narratives. High monitoring of the entrance and type of student ideas is bound to limit diverse learning and confine creativity. It is therefore difficult for students to develop high versatility in concept manipulation. It is the *type* of adult intervention, however, that curtails novice learning, rather than the *frequency* (Wood & Middleton, 1975).

I suggest that the processes we employed lent themselves to permeability. Nevertheless, the degree to which knowledge permeated and was used to transform the curriculum varied as a function of the task in which we were involved. It is impossible to determine the degrees of permeability during the learning of the Adult Curriculum as intended by the author, because I do not have data from a traditional teaching of this material. To estimate the frequency of occurrence of the low-moderate-high episodes of permeability in our project, I coded two transcripts based on this taxonomy. Given that I maintain that the nature of the task determines to some extent the degrees of

permeability, I selected two transcripts, one representative of a more directive, task oriented activity (design of the Curriculum Overview, April 22<sup>nd</sup>) and one representative of a session where the goal was student input in response to open ended questions (I solicited youth perspectives on what a violence prevention curriculum should contain, March 18<sup>th</sup>). In this analysis, I hypothesize that the more closely students are kept to an adult-determined task, the less permeability will occur. Therefore, I expected to find higher degrees of permeability on March 18<sup>th</sup> than on April 22<sup>nd</sup>.

I did not evaluate permeability in all quotations in the two transcripts. I omitted excerpts from this analysis if they were subsets of a larger quotation, or if they contained solely my own actions and had no interaction with students.

The March 18<sup>th</sup> session contained 65 quotations. I omitted 8 of them and coded 47. There were 7 instances (15%) of low permeability, 9 (19%) of moderate permeability, and 31 (48%) of high permeability. The April 22<sup>nd</sup> session contained 71 quotations. I omitted 13 of them and coded 58. There were 20 instances (35%) of low permeability, 24 (41%) of moderate permeability, and 14 (24%) of high permeability. The bar graph below illustrates that the second session, which was more controlled by the nature of the task (designing the Youth Curriculum overview) and kept the students focused on the Adult Curriculum, had considerably fewer instances of high permeability (24% vs. 48%), and more instances of moderate and low permeability (41% vs. 19%, and 35% vs. 15%, respectively). In other words, the more student knowledge the task solicits, higher the possibility for increased permeability.



**Figure 2. Degrees of Permeability in Two Sessions with Different Tasks**

Here are three examples of different types of permeability from April 22<sup>nd</sup>:

**Low Permeability** (simple evaluation of a concept from the generalized learner's perspective)

**Opal:** what does this bullet say?

**Precious:** ... explaining channeling because kids won't understand what that means

**Moderate Permeability** (short exchange where Julia introduced scant yet meaningful experiential knowledge to contest Lucy's proposal):

**Lucy:** I'm just saying, if you give me a reason, I don't see any reason to be put in there ...

**Julia:** no ... it's an emotion [the physiological changes] that happens before you get

into a fight. I'm sure a lot of people who XXX when someone gets them really angry they start crying, a lot of people start shaking [group overlaps]

**High Permeability** (short yet intense exchange with critical perspectives on the part of the students, with some guidance from me; powerful analogies with allusions to a political system that thrived on censorship, which shows the students' sophisticated a priori knowledge and their understanding of how violence can be just as harmful in its symbolic forms):

**Lucy:** you can prevent violence, but conflict... people will always disagree and that will be a conflict, although it could be a non-violence conflict ... like a heated discussion

**Corina:** yeah, people say, first of all that conflict can be constructive ... Second of all, conflict can be seen as the first step to violence ... a conflict that can become violence.

**Lucy:** but people will always disagree, like, just because you disagree on one thing, that's a conflict, isn't it?

**Corina:** yes

**Lucy:** so you can't XXX [stop] that because that would be like communism [silence]

**Selphie:** communism is good in it's true form [silence] ...

**Lucy:** wow.. communism...

### (b) Frequency of My Interventions Across Sessions

Changes in the frequency and types of my intervention are markers of my dialogue with the students, given that they fluctuated in response to their and my needs combined.

Below is a count of the number of turns I had in conversations during each session:

**Table 9. Frequency of My Turns During Sessions\***

<u>Date</u>	<u>03/04</u>	<u>03/18</u>	<u>03/25</u>	<u>04/01</u>	<u>04/15</u>	<u>04/22</u>	<u>04/29-E</u>	<u>04/29-I</u>	<u>05/13</u>
<b># of turns</b>	191	271	410	194	520	446	103	176	168

E = Emotions session design

I = Introduction session design

\* = table does not include the youth teaching sessions, where I was passive

The frequency of my interventions fluctuated throughout the sessions. This pattern seemed to be related to our social dynamics and the sessions' types of tasks, which

determined who had more control and affected the degrees of permeability. However, the frequency of my scaffolding is also an indicator of task difficulty and the amount of support needed by the students during a given session. These affirmations, however, are based on simple frequency counts and in conjunction with the nature of our tasks and conversations, therefore “significance” cannot be interpreted in a statistical sense.

My most numerous interventions took place on three occasions: March 25<sup>th</sup>, April 15<sup>th</sup>, and April 22<sup>nd</sup>. On **March 18<sup>th</sup>** (I took 271 turns), the group took more time to discuss their spontaneous concepts solicited in the **March 4<sup>th</sup>** (I took 191 turns) focus group. The number of turns I took on March 4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> was low, which appeared to be a condition for increased student participation because I did not exert high control over tasks, which were student-driven and did not require much adult scaffolding. The following are some examples of the nature of my participation during these two first sessions (when I asked focus group questions, reiterated our goals, and posed questions to clarify (or scaffold) knowledge initiated by the students):

- “Does anyone else have a different experience from their own school?” (March 4<sup>th</sup>)
- “I want to ask you guys, just off the top of your head, what you think should go in a violence prevention curriculum?” (March 18<sup>th</sup>).

On **March 25<sup>th</sup>** (I took 410 turns), we began the task of selecting sessions from the Adult Curriculum to be preserved in the Youth Curriculum (and extended to April 1<sup>st</sup>). Going through the Adult Curriculum to evaluate the importance of its sessions (goal generated by me) was difficult and required more support from me, therefore more control. My interventions were more focused on bridging the messages of the Adult Curriculum and the students’ evaluation of their importance.

- “We’ve expressed our opinions a lot about violence and prevention, right? ... It’s time to connect them to the curriculum. Our purpose is actually to look at the

- curricula and take stuff from them and combine it with ... your own thoughts on this. Let's start looking at one of the curricula"
- "What I'm trying to accomplish is to see if this should be a session on it's own or it's repetitive of what we already said"

The frequency of my interventions decreased considerably, from 410 in the previous session, to 194 on **April 1<sup>st</sup>**. On that day, a few more students joined the group and changed our previous dynamics. I was overwhelmed by the increased number of students and one new student in particular, who was gregarious and created confrontational situations. Consequently, I assumed an observer's position. I restated our goals and accomplishments, and repeated students' statements to help them connect spontaneous and scientific concepts. During this session, however, as the students exerted more control, an abundance of youth prevention strategies was generated for the first time.

Here are some of my comments:

- "So students need to be a big part of what's being taught, that's what this whole group is about ... to have input, and the idea is that every time this curriculum will be taught, the students learning it will be transforming it."
- "Removing yourself from the world and just introspect ... and think about what's happening, like self-management of anger or feelings?"

On **April 15<sup>th</sup>**, we had two tasks: Concept Pasting and the design of the Youth Curriculum Overview. It appears that I had to direct both tasks more closely than the beginning sessions. The number of my turns jumped from 194 on April 1<sup>st</sup> to 520 on April 15<sup>th</sup>. On April 15th, I changed my strategy to (1) clarify even more our goals to the new students, and (2) increase the supports/direction needed by the group as the tasks became more challenging (placing youth concepts under the Youth Curriculum sessions and negotiating the new Curriculum Overview). These were goals I set for the group.

For the Concept Pasting project, I helped the group categorize the concepts we found important in earlier sessions. April 15<sup>th</sup> was a laborious session, where youth input was just as sought as before, but had to be more firmly oriented towards what I had proposed to be accomplished. The experience from April 1<sup>st</sup> made me realize that the group needed more structure to organize knowledge, once they had produced it.

On **April 22<sup>nd</sup>**, we completed the Curriculum Overview and discussed guidelines for the youth sessions design. The number of my interventions decreased only slightly, from 520 to 446, which indicated that my supports were still in need, for two reasons: the Curriculum Overview remained a challenging task, and introducing the group to the specifications of a design session was a complicated task for me to explain and for the students to comprehend. The frequency of my interventions dropped on April 29<sup>th</sup>, for the student design sessions, when I only intervened in case of a roadblock. Here are some comments I made on April 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, which reflect my guiding, rather than controlling, method:

- “Where do you think it goes? Is it a controversial issue? To use violence to obtain civil rights or to use violence to obtain [freedom]” (April 15<sup>th</sup>)
- “I think the first line takes care of it, what do you think?” (April 15<sup>th</sup>)
- “We’re doing the elaborate table of contents. Now, sessions one, two and three of the original curriculum are gonna become one session for us.” (April 15<sup>th</sup>)
- “We were trying to reword it, but you’re saying to take it out?” (April 22<sup>nd</sup>)

In order to create as many permeable moments as possible, my involvement in the group was collaborative, and mostly responsive to student ideas. By the second session it appeared that the students began using each other as resourceful conversation partners, and at the end of the project, the students explicitly labeled me as a participant in the group and not a sole leader, as seen in this fragment from the last focus group:

**Polly:** I think you were a lot like one of us ... because like you contributed to the work that we did in general, and we contributed to the work that you put for us, and like we all worked together in that sense, meaning rather than being a teacher, a professor, a... educator, you were like more of a student, I believe.

Theoretically and practically, the power had become evenly distributed, as the youth became gradually more and more independent and incorporated me as a participant.

### (c) Permeability as a Function of My Types of Scaffolding

Aside from my larger goals for the project and frequency of interventions (both described above), I applied four specific codes to the transcripts to capture the type of scaffolding I provided to the group: *facilitator guidance*; *facilitator overview/summary*; *peers-facilitator collaboration*; and *facilitator builds on student input*. I designed the last code to show how I built on student's contributions. However, it proved to be insufficient for capturing our complex exchanges and I stopped using it for coding.

More representative of my activities were the other three codes, because they (1) showed different types of scaffolding in various situations and (2) provided reminders of our interim achievements and how those related to our ultimate goals. Here are a few examples of what I coded as *facilitator guidance*. The first one is a concept clarification:

**Corina:** The sixth is beliefs and attitudes. The seventh is a sequence of thought, feeling, actions.

**Polly:** what exactly does that mean?

**Corina:** something that, it's a stimulus that triggers something in your thought and then you become angry for example and then you act.

Next is an excerpt from a heated discussion around a personal story told by Lucy to which the group reacts strongly, and I intervene to help them connect spontaneous knowledge to the scientific goals of a prevention curriculum. This is an example of moderate permeability due to a collaboration to give a priori knowledge scientific status:

- 1 **Lucy:** no, I really hated her!
- 2 **Polly:** hatred is a very big word [group laughs] ...
- 3 **Lucy:** I didn't write the essay just not to have his paper that would belong to me!
- 4 **Asia:** my goodness, usually people say that when something ... offended them ...
- 5 **Corina:** so what do we do with hate? This is connected to violence.

In line 1, Lucy introduces experiential knowledge, and the group reacts. I scaffold Lucy's spontaneous knowledge towards a scientific application (line 5). Following is an example of a more extensive explanation I gave to the group to both review concepts previously discussed and indicate how those could be meaningfully organized. As a result of my guidance, the students contributed to the discussion by operationalizing the larger categories I had proposed with concrete examples:

- 1 **Corina:** Last time, we threw out so many categories.. It was a very interesting
- 2 discussion but it wasn't organized in categories ... but now I'm gonna start to
- 3 organize and actually we'll do it together. ... We have ideas [about] what a good
- 4 curriculum is... we're gonna build these things in gradually... Then types of
- 5 violence ... [and] causes ...
- 6 **Neelie:** strategies
- 7 **Corina:** strategies. Issues to be aware of like [pause] last time we talked about
- 8 **Asia:** like the media...
- 9 **Corina:** the media, video games
- 10 **Asia:** political issues around the world

Another code indicative of my types of scaffolding was also *peers-facilitator collaboration*, which captures our dialogue around various issues. In the following excerpt, I conversed with Anthony about his experiential knowledge to illustrate a few aspects of prevention that are relevant to youth:

- 1 **Corina:** ok, so we have to find ways, strategies, cause it's easy to say
- 2 **Anthony:** it is easy to say
- 3 **Corina:** deal with your violence, but how?
- 4 **Anthony:** a lot of kids don't have the will power to do it
- 5 **Corina:** you think it takes
- 6 **Anthony:** I don't think a lot of kids have real power to like not really understand, like
- 7 they don't ... [on] their own ... to go out and find something to do other than go try

- 8 beat on somebody ...
- 9 **Corina:** so it takes something to
- 10 **Anthony:** ... it takes some type of inner strength to do it [refrain from using violence]
- 11 **Corina:** ok, that's really interesting, that's true, so it's takes some courage and some
- 12 learning and some skill formation over time
- 13 **Anthony:** I used to be like that
- 14 **Corina:** You did? You did? Wow, and what happened?
- 15 **Anthony:** when I was younger I was just bad!
- 16 **Corina:** how were you bad?
- 17 **Anthony:** I used to put like XXX if I would be driving and I'll be pulling the car and
- 18 the wheel and would be skidding all around the street I was running the street and
- 19 stuff, I looked bad. And then I lost my father
- 20 **Corina:** oh, I'm sorry...
- 21 [group sighs]
- 22 **Anthony:** like I had nobody to look up to so I looked up to people ... one day first
- 23 thing I saw was sports ...
- 24 **Corina:** ok, we talked about sports last time as a way to
- 25 **Asia:** let go of your emotions and
- 26 **Corina:** yes, channel your negative emotions into something positive, right?

My collaboration with Anthony took a scaffolding form in the sense that I clarify and add to his statements (lines 3, 11-12, 24). I also ask questions to help him continue his narrative to inform us about the strategy of prevention he employed based on his real life experience (lines 14, 16). Then, Asia and I summarize our previous session's decision about ways to deal with emotions (lines 24-26). Later, I identify my patterns of scaffolding throughout sessions and relate them to degrees of permeability.

The code *facilitator overview/summary* was important because being reminded of previous decisions helped the students (and myself) plan the next steps. The example above was a combination of guidance (lines 2-3) and some summaries of decisions made in the previous sessions (lines 3-5, 7). Next is one example of a type of review I did to set the stage for building the Curriculum Overview. Often, I employed summarizing (lines 1-5) and guiding (lines 5-6) together in a complementary fashion:

- 1 **Corina:** I think we got up to session two. Ok, so what I did was take our
- 2 sessions, and insert the original curriculum into our sessions, to fit it in. For example,

3 for emotions, we said we'll have a chapter on emotions, we decided to put session 4  
4 and session 5 [of the original curriculum] together all under emotions. Do you  
5 remember that? [group agrees] Ok, ... we're right now editing the overview of the  
6 curriculum, and then we're gonna move to designing the sessions ... We did a pasting  
7 project [last time]

I made the distinction between 'task control' and 'scaffolding' in the Methods chapter. I referred to the former in relation to *power distribution* in the classroom (adult-held *or* shared with the students). I defined *scaffolding as a tool* that can be used to either direct students based on adult-generated goals (adult-held task control in a banking system) *or* direct them based on their feedback/goals/needs (adult-student negotiated task control in a permeable paradigm). Thus, 'task control' is an operationalization of pedagogical principles, whereas 'scaffolding' is an operationalization of processes through which learning occurs. This section illustrates how 'task control' distribution together with 'scaffolding types' can influence the degree to which permeability occurs.

My interventions as facilitator of this project varied, depending on the task, student dynamics and stage of project. To conduct this analysis, I first identified 6 types of scaffolding provided by me. Initially, these 6 scaffolding types were coded under the three main codes of *facilitator guidance*, *peers-facilitator collaboration* and *facilitator overview/summary*. I later further refined my scaffolding types within these codes, and the results can be seen in Table 10:

**Table 10. Types of Facilitator Scaffolding**

Type of Scaffolding	Example of Statement	Implications for Permeability
(I) Orientation towards goals and tasks.	‘We are going to...’	This is directive scaffolding/instruction, whose implications for permeability will depend on whose goals (youth or adult) are being pursued.
(II) Summaries of accomplishments/decisions and their importance for the project.	‘We decided that...’	Guidance to relate upcoming work to existing decisions. This intervention alone will not lead to permeability (of any degree) unless students decide to elaborate on these established concepts/decisions.
(III) Explanations triggered by students’ questions.	‘A curriculum is...’	This intervention alone will not lead to permeability (of any degree) unless students decide offer original and transformative perspectives in relation to the topic at hand.

Table 10 (continued).

Type of Scaffolding	Example of Statement	Implications for Permeability
(IV) Statements and question posing at what appeared to be opportunities for turning points in thinking and argument development to help students see what the next step may be.	‘So, you think that this controversial issue should be integrated in the curriculum. How can we do that?’	Facilitator scaffolds on embryonic youth ideas to set up ZPDs to validate student perspectives and help students elaborate them in a scientific direction.  This type of scaffolding may lead to high permeability, although the adult’s goals surface when he/she chooses to scaffold at a particular moment and in a particular direction.
(V) Restatements of students’ utterances in equivalent lexical forms to clarify them and help students define meaning vis-à-vis the emerging Youth Curriculum.	‘In other words, you think that in this instance efforts to create social justice came at a high price and involved violence...’	Facilitator clarifies youth perspectives to enable students to set up <i>their own scaffolds</i> as they proceed to develop their arguments based on their own ideas.  This type of scaffolding is likely to lead to high permeability.
(VI) Question posing to solicit information.	‘What do you think should go in a violence prevention curriculum?’	Intervention intends to establish youth perspectives and scaffolds the students towards establishing their goals.  This type of scaffolding is likely to lead to high permeability.

This scaffolding typology parallels that of Wood and Middleton (1975), who described 5 types of mother interventions in helping their children assemble a wooden structure. The first (general verbal instructions based on the child's needs) led to the most successful assemblies of the structure by the child, while the last (mother demonstrates the task from start to finish) led to the least successful assemblies by the child. It appears that the taxonomy of own scaffolding falls in the vicinity of Wood and Middleton's (1975) first level of intervention, where the scaffolding is a dialogue with the learner and not a highly directive activity.

My first two types of intervention, however, seem to be the least responsive to the students, given that they direct students towards goals (be they my own or negotiated with the group) and are not necessarily a reaction to student signals along the way. The third type (explanations to student questions) is based on student cues, however, it does not appear to be dialogical beyond a question-answer exchange. These first three types of scaffolding are therefore more directive and closer to traditional processes and pedagogy of scaffolding. This qualification was supported in my data and is illustrated in the next paragraphs.

My last three types of intervention have the potential to lead to higher permeability because they invite and build student ideas. The fourth and sixth types are more directive than the fifth because they allow me (adults) to solicit youth perspectives in answer to what I may consider to be an important concept. Nevertheless, such types of adult scaffolding have the potential to foster permeability because they are intended to extend youth-generated ideas and goals, and not exclusively promote concepts of an inflexible

scientific curriculum. It is difficult, however, to compare my typology of scaffolding to that identified by Wood and Middleton (1975), given that their participants had to adhere to a very specific task, while our project was fundamentally different.

I conducted an analysis of my 6 *types* of interventions during the two sessions I mentioned in the previous section on ‘degrees of permeability as a function of task control’. Briefly, on March 18<sup>th</sup>, I invited students to narrate their perspectives of violence, thus providing scaffolding to facilitate student-generated concepts, while on April 22<sup>nd</sup> I directed the students towards a goal I proposed (the assembly of a Youth Curriculum Overview).

I coded for my 6 types of scaffolding in each of the two transcripts, and then tabulated them against the degree of permeability I identified for March 18<sup>th</sup> and April 22<sup>nd</sup> in the above mentioned analysis of task control. As seen in Figure 2 from the earlier section, March 18<sup>th</sup> had more occurrences of moderate and high permeability than April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Table 11 presents the distribution of each type of scaffolding I provided in the two sessions:

**Table 11. Types of Facilitator Scaffolding in Two Sessions of Different Permeability**

<u>Type of Scaffolding</u>	<u>Frequency of Type of Scaffolding</u>	
	<u>Higher Permeability</u>	<u>Lower Permeability</u>
	<u>Session</u>	<u>Session</u>
(I) Orientation towards goals and tasks.	8%	8%
(II) Summaries of accomplishments/decisions.	4%	<b>14%</b>
(III) Explanations triggered by students' questions.	2%	<b>15%</b>
(IV) Statements and questions at turning points in thinking and argument development.	36%	32%
(V) Restatements of students' utterances to clarify them and help students define meaning.	<b>34%</b>	14%
(VI) Question posing to solicit information.	16%	17%

Table 11 represents the frequency of occurrence for each of the six types of my scaffolding during a higher permeability (March 18<sup>th</sup>) and a lower permeability (April 22<sup>nd</sup>) session. Scaffolding to orient students towards goals, pose questions to help students make conceptual leaps or pose questions inviting of student perspectives did not seem to have made a difference in the degree to which permeability occurred. However, it seems that higher permeability was facilitated by my restating students' own utterances to help them see their meaning for scientific purposes (34% vs. 14%). Perhaps, seeing

their ideas take meaning in the context of formal learning helped students the most in further elaborating them and thus increasing their participation in the project even more.

It also appears that lower permeability occurred when students needed explanations (15% vs. 2%) and when I summarized accomplishments and previous decisions (13% vs. 4%). The first could be explained by increased task difficulty April 22<sup>nd</sup>, and the second by the lack of relevance of my summaries of previous decisions. It was surprising, however, that permeability was not a function of scaffolding at critical points (code IV) or posing questions to solicit youth perspectives (code VI).

These data should be interpreted with caution, given that the analysis was only based on two sessions, it does not take into account the task control element and there were no statistical analyses. Further, given that the effects of type of scaffolding on permeability was not configured to be measured in the original design of the study (but was a late consideration of analysis), this may put the validity and reliability of these findings into question. I address the implications for this otherwise important aspect of a permeable learning in my recommendations for future research from the last chapter.

Nevertheless, my interventions were intended to create zones of proximal development with minimal scaffolding in order to influence student original thinking as little as possible. I also encouraged collaborative exchanges, which sometimes appeared to unravel smoothly and other times led to conflict. Next, I juxtapose my processes with those evident in the Adult Curriculum to further profile the process of permeability as accommodating of student participation.

### Elements of Process in the Adult Curriculum

At this juncture, I continue to flesh out the conditions of permeability based on the contrast between the processes employed by the teachers of the Adult Curriculum versus those I/we devised to draw out youth perspectives. The activities in the Adult Curriculum are not meant to completely shut out youth perspectives, given its solicitation of student knowledge about concepts like types of violence or alternatives to fighting. Moreover, this curriculum was a candidate for transformation because of its student participatory approach (see rationale in Methods chapter). However, its pedagogical goals operationalized through corresponding tasks that were adult controlled influenced the degree allowed for student input (permeability).

The continuum of permeability (low-moderate-high) I developed is contingent upon the educator's interest in hearing students and the use of those perspectives to either reproduce or transform knowledge (or, as Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987, defined it: *knowledge telling vs. knowledge transforming*). These have implications for who has control over tasks and on whose goals the tasks are intended to accomplish. I conducted another analysis to determine how the Adult Curriculum's and our processes do or do not lend themselves to permeability.

The Adult Curriculum's steps for teaching and learning were predictable, structured and highly directive of the type of student involvement it expected. In contrast, our process, although planned (see Agendas of the Day, Appendix D), had a fluid quality that allowed it to change in response students' needs, therefore allotting students the power to influence the learning process and content. Given that the goal of our project was to maximize permeability, our processes were in constant flux. Table I12 (Tasks in the Adult Curriculum with Examples and Functions, see Appendix I) contains concrete steps

identified in the Adult Curriculum (summarized from patterns found in all sessions), which document a more rigid approach to how knowledge is exchanged. The steps are closely related to those used in traditional classrooms, although there was an explicit invitation for student participation. Students were active in the sense that they brainstormed concepts, however, those were predetermined by the adult author and there was no room to deviate from learning the message of the curriculum.

Controversy was minimized in the Adult Curriculum. To the contrary, the Youth Curriculum examined violence as a continuum by adding the controversial topics of justified violence and violence as a means for achieving rights (independence, civil, etc). These aspects represent differences between the two curricula's content, however, content is highly dependent on process. A process that is flexible and participatory (adult-youth negotiated) will result in a radically different type of knowledge than the one of a closely controlled process (adult-established). Given that the Adult Curriculum process only invited a certain *amount* of student input on concepts of its choosing, the *type* of input (a priori knowledge) was also closely controlled by teacher scripts.

For example, here is the teacher's instruction from the Adult Curriculum's introduction, paraphrased. 'If students state that it is unrealistic to avoid violence and that non-violent alternatives don't work, remember that non-violent solutions are not simple and that non-violent role models usually apply to political situations (King, Gandhi). Students are asked to remember that they have more experiences of non-violent solutions than they may realize. There is always a choice and first the situation needs to be assessed before acting because of loss of temper or thinking that there are no alternatives.' While these messages are less rigid than a zero tolerance approach,

recognize that avoiding violence is not easy and guide students to reflect before acting, the teacher is not prepared (because it is not expected of her) to address students' complex thinking around controversy, as seen in this project. According to the Adult Curriculum, even if students begin to question the feasibility of prevention in certain contexts, their exploration should be curtailed in order to follow the Adult Curriculum's precise steps towards its predetermined objectives. Upcoming under the cognitive conflict section is an intricate discussion among students that shows disagreement over how realistic it is to avoid violence. Not only would the Adult Curriculum's processes prevent that essential discussion from happening, but would also be limited in being able to accommodate sophisticated youth perspectives.

In the next section, I detail students' actions, who were the most important agents behind our processes. I also present more examples of my supports, to illustrate how my scaffolding was woven into collaborations with students to widen the potential for permeability. The scaffolding alternated among all of us, depending on who held the relevant knowledge at a given moment.

## (2) Elements of Youth Process

### Collaboration

Daiute et al. (1993) reported that peer collaboration on literacy tasks included "a wide range of social interactions ... including asking questions, monitoring, directing, answering, initiating, repeating, disagreeing, negatively evaluating, and playing" (p. 56). Although Daiute et al.'s participants were third graders, the adolescents in the current

project engaged in much of the same social exchanges to create their curriculum. The distinct interaction elements above emerged in a general climate of *peer collaboration* and *peer-facilitator collaboration*. I made these theoretical points earlier in this dissertation in conjunction with *classroom power relations*. The latter need to be explicit principles of pedagogy and process that create comparable positions of power for students and teachers. Collaboration that results in knowledge transformation can only take place when students are given the privilege of contributing to the pool of knowledge. I address how we reconfigured traditional power relations through positioning in the chapter on Pedagogy. The collaboration I describe here was a product of such explicit shifts of power dynamics necessary for permeability.

One of the main pedagogical goals of our project was to allow students to use collaboration as a tool for discovery. As I anticipated, this mechanism occurred naturally in the group. The students were aware of their working together to understand and devise curricular content. When I asked them about what stood out for them at the end of one of the early sessions, they noted the new dialogue among themselves:

- 1 **Corina:** [What are some] things that jumped at you [today] ? ...
- 2 **Polly:** I think it was more passionate, ... we were more involved than last week ... I
- 3 don't know if we got more familiar with each other or something, but it was more
- 4 **Asia:** more in tune.. we talked to each other a little bit more ...
- 5 **Polly:** we got more out of this, we got more out of ourselves than last time ...
- 6 **Asia:** or opened up more to into more personal issues
- 7 **Polly:** one subject led to another
- 8 **Asia:** it was weird

What the students describe above is an increasing communication among themselves (lines 2-4), and their resorting to spontaneous knowledge (line 6). Daiute et al. (1993) found in their study that while the teacher's statements were independent and geared towards achieving cognitive control, the children's interactions were interdependent and

affective. I identified the same student patterns of interaction in our group, whose members collaborated during every session by initiating concepts, questioning others/the Adult Curriculum, contesting ideas, steering the course of the discussion, or evaluating others/the Adult Curriculum positively (support) and negatively (disapproval). These are elements much like those identified by Daiute et al. (1993) and built our collaboration.

The students engaged in various types of collaboration. First, there were the equal contributions, when they added layer after layer of meaning to a given topic, such as the influence of the media. Often, one student would propose an idea, which was further developed and supported by others. Here is an example of a basic and smooth peer collaboration where they provide scaffolding for each other:

- 1 **Polly:** since it does focus only on one form of violence, like fighting ... there are
- 2 many things that relate to fighting, and many problems of fighting, so when I first
- 3 saw the title ... it's like.. what type of fighting? ... It's too general
- 4 **Asia:** it has to really turn to the type of fighting too
- 5 **Polly:** ... That's right. It depends what type of fighting they mean, what type of
- 6 violence they relate to
- 7 **Hira:** You mean like, you're just thinking of verbal or physical
- 8 **Polly:** uhu, even like Gandhi, he fought, but
- 9 **Hira:** verbally
- 10 **Polly:** but in a different in a
- 11 **Hira:** peacefully, peacefully
- 12 **Polly:** passive way, and there was more to gain than to lose
- 13 **Julia:** there needs to be more detail ...
- 14 **Polly:** it's too brief in general ..
- 15 **Hira:** it's too vague

The group worked together to sediment their student perspectives, which were either a priori knowledge from previous school/afterschool learning (Gandhi) or ideas formed during the collaboration itself. First, Polly identifies the Adult Curriculum's insufficient definition of fighting (lines 1-3), then Asia supports her (line 4), after which Polly and

Hira collaborate to give concrete examples of how the curriculum could be improved (lines 7-12). They end their evaluation by summarizing the need for change.

## Peer Scaffolding

*Peer scaffolding* as a mechanism of collaboration occurred very frequently and positioned the students as knowers who guided each other due to their complementary expertise (Daiute et al, 1993, Daiute & Dalton, 1993). Individual students possessed different types of valuable information and they switched off their roles of experts, depending on what they were able to contribute at a given moment. I coded this as *peer help and clarification* and defined it as support from other students when one or more of them struggled with understanding certain aspects. Below is a situation of peer scaffolding that occurred during the redesign of the Curriculum Overview:

- 1 **Lucy:** but I have a problem. I don't understand it, and if I don't understand it I'm
- 2 sure other people won't understand ...
- 3 **Precious:** can you explain what you don't understand, please? ...
- 4 **Corina:** let's explain it. Who wants to explain it? ...
- 5 **Precious:** everything we're taking out is repetitive, I still try to figure out what you
- 6 don't understand ...
- 7 **Lucy:** wait, isn't that like the same thing, because if you already have it, what's the
- 8 point of distinguishing it? I don't get it.
- 9 **Hira:** ... Like you say you don't understand it, they're having it in other words, so
- 10 maybe we could clarify it a little more
- 11 **Asia:** like it says distinguish, is that the word that you
- 12 **Lucy:** like I know it's distinguish among controlling, expressing and channeling
- 13 anger. It's like putting controlling and expressing and channeling into groups.
- 14 **Polly:** no ... on the contrary, it's putting it together. So that to let a child know
- 15 **Asia:** the difference between... yeah
- 16 **Polly:** to let a child know ... when you're angry, when you feel like you wanna punch
- 17 the boy right next to you [group giggles] you can predict [group giggles] ... I mean
- 18 for little kids, that's an example of controlling, like you could do this or that. You
- 19 know how psychologists ... they have toys ... and you could see the little kids, like
- 20 you often see the psychiatrist like ok, draw a picture and that's a way of controlling
- 21 **Asia:** channeling
- 22 **Polly:** and expressing your anger ... **Polly:** yeah, well they all relate in a very direct
- 23 way, like expressing and controlling, is like prevent the anger ...

- 24 **Neelie**: what do you mean by channeling?  
 25 **Asia**: like use anger to do something else as positive like exercising  
 26 **Seleen**: like you're channeling it that way into a good thing  
 27 **Asia**: you know, it releases it [anger]  
 28 **Lucy**: and so that means to tell the difference between controlling, expressing and  
 29 channeling, or to give examples of what's controlling, expressing and channeling? ...  
 30 **Polly**: umm you'll tell the little kids control yourself, ok, control yourself. Now  
 31 you're still angry, like express yourself. Yeah but this little kid, he did this to me ...  
 32 Ok, now channel it and you do it this way  
 33 **Lucy**: wow, now I understand, thank you very much, but ...

There are a large number of acts happening above. Not only do students help Lucy understand one of the objectives in the AC, but they do so by building on each others' points (lines 24-27). As they interpret the meaning in the AC, they do so with each others' knowledge, and they teach and learn themselves, all the same time. They make good use of spontaneous concepts (lines 16-22) as analogies that support their explanations of the meaning in scientific concepts. However, the students do not have a complete explanation ready, as evidenced by their own search of answers. This is an exquisite peer teaching moment in which they learn as they explain (Daiute & Dalton, 1993; Daiute et al., 1993). I am absent (physically present, however) because the group is taking on tasks independently and is able to manipulate information without master scaffolding. They scaffold themselves in a direct and firm manner, almost confrontational (lines 3-6), yet amicable. This passage represents an event of high permeability due to layered and elaborate exchanges, the intense use of spontaneous concepts combined with scientific knowledge.

It is also interesting how Lucy positioned herself in a *generalized learner's perspective* (lines 1-2) where she anticipates that other students may not understand a language segment in the Adult Curriculum. This approach is necessary for curriculum development or relevant knowledge dissemination, and demonstrates meta-analytic

thinking, which is customarily attributed to experts (adults) only and not to novices (students) (Daiute & Dalton, 1993). The generalized learner is an abstract concept, and its periodic occurrence in the groups' talk indicates students' ability to take multiple perspectives concomitantly and to anticipate the effects of their products on others.

Further, it was useful for the students to keep an *audience* in mind when devising sessions. They asked me about the possible uses of the Youth Curriculum, and even in the future students' ages. Seeking a 'live audience' with whom to share their ideas is in agreement with the students' intentions to disseminate something applicable to real life. Therefore, an element of process was the *students' evaluation of the knowledge they themselves generated*, which is an indication of complex thinking. Not only were they able to assemble meaningful ideas by fusing everyday and scientific concepts, but they skillfully imagined the usefulness of this information and the reaction from the audience for whom it was intended.

### Cognitive Conflict

However, we did not always agree on the concepts at hand. I use my findings to show how *cognitive conflict* (Daiute & Dalton, 1993) was just as common as classic collaboration in our group. In these instances, a group of students would support an idea while debating it with a minority who believed otherwise. I coded these occasions as *debates*, which were interesting episodes of permeability, where conflict of opinion created turning points in students' (and my own) thinking. Such contrasting opinions required students to understand their opponents' points of view, find support for their own statements and refine their rebuttals in order to be convincing. *Cognitive conflict* or

*contesting* (Daiute & Dalton, 1993; Gutierréz et al., 1999) created elegant ZPDs, where we had to juxtapose our diverse perspectives and work together to find common grounds.

Conflict generated questioning and probing of concepts, which students did not automatically accept as valid, but scrutinized them as ideas relative to particular contexts and social conditions. Despite the age difference between this group and the third graders studied by Daiute and Dalton (1993), their findings are applicable to these adolescents, who, by contesting each others' ideas, reflected on their validity, compared them to their own perspectives, and presented opposing arguments. Through this type of confrontational collaboration, the students challenged the homogeneous/universal view of violence in the Adult Curriculum and reframed violence in its diverse, complicated and socially conditioned forms. In the next example, during an arduous process of layering their perspectives, the students' posed a fundamental question about violence prevention: Can violence be avoided?

- 1 **Seleen:** ... to prove that you're actually stronger than the person is if
- 2 you actually ignore that person cause ... they bother you in order to get your attention
- 3 I know you get tired of it, but ... I know that sometimes it comes to the point that you
- 4 wanna fight or whatever, but you could like try to still ignore it, you know?
- 5 **Precious:** I can't ignore it
- 6 **Hira:** it gets irritating, it's like somebody buzzing in your ear, they keep on and on
- 7 **Polly:** It's all about self control and patience [group overlaps]
- 8 **Lucy:** ... I haven't fought because I have tried SO hard to build the person that I am
- 9 you don't understand how hard like not to fight ... I'm not gonna destroy all that just
- 10 by fighting because I have worked so hard on it ... it's like half my lifetime
- 11 **Asia:** XXX motivation
- 12 **Lucy:** it's like I have this motivation that I have to keep because I just would ruin
- 13 waist so much of my life, not, just to crumple it in one split second? But I'm human,
- 14 I have to have a way back, that's why education helped me. ... If I have a strong
- 15 comeback and ... even if I don't fight them, I still have my humanly satisfaction ...
- 16 **Hira:** I'm not putting you down on how you feel that way, more power to you ...
- 17 but it gets to a point ... that you cannot take it anymore.
- 18 **Student:** through the body? ...
- 19 **Precious:** you're shaking too much
- 20 **Polly:** XXX control. Last year I was like the new girl in school, so a certain group,

21 people who would bother me a lot, and they were like this person cannot possibly be  
 22 what she appears to be and ... she's gonna pop any second and then like they  
 23 bothered and bothered [me] and I was like oh, god... And then like I had self-control  
 24 so I wouldn't do anything about it, they wanted me to approach them in a violent  
 25 manner but I didn't do so, so now that they know that I'm not that type of person they  
 26 have this respect for me and they don't attempt that anymore  
 27 **Asia:** ... like when somebody comes and just wanna test you ... and see what you're  
 28 all about. I remembered when you came in last year, ... cause you're very nice ...  
 29 **Seleen:** people take advantage ...  
 30 **Nesie:** yeah, like when I talking to you in global class like I was trying to see but like  
 31 I noticed you but you'd rather keep it inside ...  
 32 **Hira:** but sometimes keeping it inside is worse... then one day it's gonna come out ...  
 33 **Neelie:** that's what happened to me  
 34 **Julia:** exactly, but if she keeps it in she's gonna eventually explode ...  
 35 **Corina:** what do you think about that ... is that a very manageable way? ...  
 36 **Polly:** yeah, I think it's all about self control, I have too much self control  
 37 **Seleen:** yoga classes

This high permeability episode illustrates the modus operandi for youth processes. Here, two camps debated the controversial issue of the feasibility of preventing violence. Seleen, Lucy and Polly support violence prevention, mostly through learning how to exert self-control (lines 1-4, 7-15, 20-26, 36-37), while Hira, Nesie, Precious and Julia claim the opposite (lines 5-6, 16-19, 32-34). In this project, the students often furthered knowledge through direct challenges of meaning, which they supported with strong arguments of both experiential and scientific nature. In fact, the more optimal are the conditions for high permeability, the more diverse student activity of transformation and learning occurs (as in the instance above).

## Resistance

An important element of youth process was their *resistance* to the Adult Curriculum, which is a first student step in permeability. Resistance does not describe the student dynamics in the group (like self and other scaffolding or cognitive conflict), but the dialogue between students and text. Student objections to some ideas in the Adult

Curriculum were primary driving forces of transformation. Once students resisted the original content, they needed to justify their position and offer alternatives. In the earlier excerpt illustrative of *peer help and clarification*, Lucy resisted the language in the Adult Curriculum, which confused her. This required a group effort to decipher the original meaning and eventually led to language changes to clarify it.

The ideas that induced student resistance were varied. Curricula do not ask (or avoid asking) the question of feasibility of prevention, because their message is that violence has to be avoided. Students, however, are not naïve and do not shy away from showing their skepticism:

**Precious:** sometimes I wonder if violence can really be prevented because even when people try to do good ... say Martin Luther King, he tried ... to stop segregation, which he did, right, but it still cost him his life. ... You can still try to do good, you can try to talk about preventing violence ... but it can cost someone's life. Maybe violence, maybe we can try to prevent violence at some type of extent, but can you really prevent it? That's what I wonder sometimes [pause, group silenced and thinking]

This bold question did not receive a clear answer, however, it yielded an original Youth Curriculum session of *Grey Areas* to make sure that such controversial and difficult issues are not excluded from curricula. The impetus behind Martin Luther King's objectives could be viewed as prevention (of racism, discrimination, inequality, therefore violence against minorities and possible retaliation), however, he himself was not protected from violence. Precious's thinking is tremendously insightful, analytic, and challenging of not only violence prevention, but of systems of oppression that continue to affect lives. Such perspectives need to surface when educators prepare the new generations of young people for our complicated world, especially if we hope that they would change it for the better.

## Affective and Playful Talk

Other than answering my questions and tending to various tasks, the group engaged spontaneously in what may traditionally be considered problematic disciplinary issues. I define *affective and playful talk* as student references to how they may feel in relation to another student or issue. The students' utterances are informal and intended to tease their peers (who may be present or absent while the conversation is taking place). For example, while discussing scientific concepts of conflict, Asia and Neelie began narrating a past incident in which Neelie had popped a balloon that belonged to Asia (spontaneous knowledge).

Specifically, I documented social interaction that was *interruptive, playful, humorous* and interspersed among more academic-type foci, especially during the student-design sessions. Daiute et al. (1993) found such peer exchanges to be proxies for composition strategies, as were searches for meaning, references to personal experiences and feelings, all of which were patterns around knowledge manipulation in our group. The "affective talk" (Daiute et al., 1993) of the students in this project showed the students' close interactions around both personal and academic references. Direct questioning of a peer's opinion, positive and negative evaluations of each other, and even teasing, joking or mocking often accompanied the difficult task of negotiating how to formulate a sentence, or whether or not a concept was important to be included. Here is an example of a conversation that was charged due to Precious's belief that Lucy had anger problems:

- 1 **Precious:** There's something I wanna say, that, do you think you need an anger
- 2 management class, because you use the word hate a lot? [Lucy giggles] ...
- 3 **Neelie:** The word hate is a very strong word
- 4 **Precious:** No, I'm not even gonna joke, I'm really serious [group overlaps]
- 5 **Hira:** Hate is a strong word, you could say dislike ...
- 6 **Lucy:** ... it happened a long time, I said I hate

- 7 **Precious:** no, no, no  
 8 **Lucy:** at that one moment [she lost some of her confidence, voice is weaker] ...  
 9 **Julia:** maybe that's how she feels about  
 10 **Precious:** yeah, but that's crazy [group overlaps]

The passage above shows very direct statements that are personal (lines 1-2, 4, 10), yet related to the content of the prevention curriculum given its objective to convey how anger can be managed (lines 3, 5). Precious is not shy about targeting Lucy (and this was not the only instance), and the group agrees with her, but offers alternatives as well. The students act almost as an intervention team, combining a personal mission with the formal task of understanding anger.

The students used *affective and playful talk* commonly, marbled in prevention related conversations. This playful form of address made the atmosphere lighter, especially when the group sorted through controversial and difficult issues. Here is a passage from an excerpt presented earlier, however, this time the focus is on an element of youth process of interaction that is humorous:

- Neelie:** but do you think that it is good, that good things come out of fighting?  
**Asia:** why don't we find out? [laughs]  
**Neelie:** no, I'm saying [laughs] excuse me! [high pitch and joking] No, really, do you think that..  
**Asia:** yeah, I don't know....  
**Neelie:** no  
**Asia:** sometimes  
**Neelie:** no, I mean it's not.. but  
**Asia:** sometimes?  
**Neelie:** of course not

Asia teases Neelie, then playfully continues the conversation without abandoning the objective of determining whether or not fighting can have positive outcomes. The students found (in this and other instances) banter to be a natural means of interaction that helped them create a valuable curriculum. This example was of low permeability,

because the only problem solving strategy was the students' use of their existing relationship (being in the same class). The next example contains an exchange of higher permeability, as a result of the intense and complex social exchanges, as well as confrontational and playful qualities, all of which are closely related to prevention:

- 1 **Neelie:** talk it... this might sound dumb, but talk it out with yourself as well ...
- 2 **Hira:** like you look at what happens inside you ...
- 3 **Neelie:** sometimes I do that, I go, sit down and I say yey, you know, I just start
- 4 talking to myself and it makes me relax [group laughs because she 'talks to herself']
- 5 **Hira:** like she's crazy, she's not crazy XXX the way that she XXX
- 6 **Lucy:** ummm I feel some tension over here [laughs; group talks over each other]
- 7 **Student:** for anger [group laughs; lots of unintelligible conversation]
- 8 **Hira:** ... the way I said it I didn't mean it that way ... but the way you say it you
- 9 make it seem like it is a wrong thing ...
- 10 **Neelie:** she said when I said I talk to my.... Not that I talk to myself! [group giggles]
- 11 **Corina:** ok, so things all right [laughing]? ...
- 12 **Lucy:** ok, this is practical because I see, like this really [can] become bad because the
- 13 person was joking but ... they could believe they weren't joking and it becomes into a
- 14 whole thing.

The joking, teasing and mocking revolved around Neelie, who gave personal examples to build scientific knowledge, such as a useful strategy of anger management (lines 1, 3-4). The process around Neelie's explanation of her strategy was unusual from the point of view of a pedagogy that is on the traditional side. The girls ridiculed Neelie, although she was not offended. For Neelie, teasing became a catalyst for concept refinement and clarification (lines 2, 4, 12-14). Lucy used the friendly conflict in the group as an example of how a confrontation can get out of hand, depending on how those involved take the criticism. Thus, she frames the impromptu playful interaction as a risk for violence, which was an clever operationalization of curricular concepts (lines 12-14). The conversation had affective undertones and despite its sarcastic attitudes, the group eventually accepted Neelie's account as a potential strategy.

It is possible that a condition for permeability is allowing students to create *social contexts of comfort* that mediate contributions of spontaneous concepts to formal learning. [‘Comfort’ is used loosely, given the possibility for both pleasant and harsher social and affective interactions.] In other words, producing and internalizing knowledge may be triggered and optimized to a considerable extent on ‘student terms’ and not by strictly controlled rules of conduct imposed by schools. Previous research on peer collaboration (Cohen, 1994; Daiute et al., 1993) supports the idea that students share information more easily and approach ideas more critically in a context where there is less of a power differential (such as among fellow students). These are safe zones where students explore knowledge more ‘comfortably’ in the absence of an authority figure (teacher), whom they may perceived as intimidating or punitive.

### Impromptu Discussions

An important step towards achieving permeability in our project was what Daiute and Dalton (1993) and Daiute et al. (1993) identified as student *initiating* of ideas. The students engaged in concept initiation when they volunteered (or initiated) a priori knowledge. Once students become familiar and comfortable with taking the initiative of going beyond adult generated tasks or concepts, they began accessing their everyday sources of knowledge without my probing. I noticed these patterns of student information initiation during the course of coding and thus created a new code, *impromptu discussion*. The following is an example where in reviewing a general point of interest from the previous session, Neelie initiates the group, in line 5, into a whole new discussion around an incident of violence:

1 **Asia:** [last time] we talked about how society plays an influence on kids nowadays

2 and ... now younger kids are getting affected by society even more by the media and  
 3 everything. And they all play a very important role into how kids grow up and it has  
 4 to do with violence too. How they treat others  
 5 **Neelie:** I saw something on the news about a kid like I'm not sure if he hit a teacher  
 6 or he threatened another kids, he was in pre-k with scissors ... and then another kid  
 7 threatened his teacher with a pencil  
 8 **Asia:** pre-k?  
 9 **Neelie:** yeah, pre-k [group shocked] ... And then the police came and everything ... It  
 10 was a big deal and scissors ...  
 11 **Asia:** in Bowling for Columbine they had the youngest school shooting was in like  
 12 pre-k ...  
 13 **Neelie:** shooting? Like a gun?  
 14 **Asia:** yeah, a little boy took it from his dad's house I think. ... You should see  
 15 Bowling for Columbine  
 16 **Corina:** I know, so many people told me

Building on their points from the previous session (lines 1-4), the students introduce the example of violence in very young children in an impromptu manner (lines 5-10).

What makes this process ad hoc is that students were asked to summarize our previous discussion, but initiated a new conversation and proceeded in a new direction. Yet, the students contributed pertinent information and layered the general/vague argument from the previous session with real-life examples. Further, students contributed a second relevant piece of information, Michael Moore's 'Bowling for Columbine', which became a teaching moment for them. Asia recommended that I see the movie, as an educational opportunity for *me* (lines 14-15). The episode was of high permeability, given the use of multiple sources, collaboration, teaching moments (for peers and myself) and the impromptu discussion itself.

In traditional classrooms, and depending on the teacher, this behavior *may* be seen as disruptive because the students deviated from the original question. However, in this paradigm, impromptu introductions of concepts are both products and necessities of permeability. When feeling safe and being positioned as proficient, students more easily

resort to their spontaneous knowledge. The impromptu introduction of concepts is a mechanism of permeability where *students take control and decide what is relevant*. In this way, they become agents of their own learning, as opposed to being prompted and directed by an adult, as in traditional learning models.

I do not argue that by adopting this learning strategy educators allow students to ‘rule’, since the goal is to reach an optimum collaboration among students and teachers. Socializing students into exerting some control (or ownership) over content appears to ease the transition of spontaneous concepts into the scientific space. Students are more comfortable handling concepts (regardless of their origin) if they know that they can initiate perspectives relevant to them *and* the teacher.

### Use of Everyday and Scientific Concepts

To document the instances when the students related their knowledge to scientific concepts, I created the code *use of everyday and scientific concepts*. The code enabled me to evidence the students’ concurrent handling of everyday and school concepts effectively. This code is the Process equivalent of *youth knowledge* I coded under Content. Youth knowledge that permeates in adult-student discussions is futile if it is not meaningfully associated with scientific content.

In the following example, the students elaborate on a source of violence shared by the Youth Curriculum and Adult Curriculum, “the bully” or “bullying behavior”, and develop it into a strategy through a common understanding drawn from their experiences. Taking the bully concept (scientific because it was part of the Adult Curriculum), the girls apply their unique perspectives:

1 **Lucy:** ... a lot of people follow the strongest one, right? But what a lot of people

2 don't notice is the strongest one is the most innocent one?  
 3 **Julia:** the most what? Innocent? ...  
 4 **Polly:** vulnerable?  
 5 **Lucy:** not vulnerable, not vulnerable  
 6 **Hira:** so what are you trying to say? ...  
 7 **Lucy:** no, in the mind. Like you could talk to them and they would actually listen  
 8 because deep... they're so, they want help a lot of times ...  
 9 **Polly:** ok, I understand what she's trying to say ... Like a bully in school ...  
 10 everybody's afraid of him. Like, have you seen Arthur? [group explodes with  
 11 agreement and laughs] ...  
 12 **Hira:** XXX gushy-mushy guy, yeah  
 13 **Polly:** people are sometimes afraid of him, but when he gets with his friends and  
 14 everything, he's very like  
 15 **Student:** soft  
 16 **Polly:** yeah [group overlaps] Yeah, because, like a bully, everybody's afraid of him  
 17 and everything and they're like oh my goodness, don't mess with him, he's very  
 18 tough, but when you get know the person they're really not what they appear to be

Above is an original analysis of the identity of a classic perpetrator, the bully. The students propose that efforts to know a person may strip one of their aggressive image (lines 7-8). They make an implicit recommendation to 'get to know your enemy', which is a prevention strategy analogous to 'talking it out' (to learn about one another and stand in the opponent's shoes). The students were on the same page, familiar with each others' points of reference, thus demonstrating their common youth perspectives, which are unlikely to be shared with teachers. They used everyday concepts (the cartoon series "Arthur") as analogies to support the development of a scientific strategy of prevention (lines 10-18) appropriate for their age. This led to a smooth collaboration that fused a priori and scientific knowledge. The students discussed age-appropriate strategies at other times in the project. This is a meta-analytic approach to curricular development in the sense that these young authors are able to take the generalized learner's perspective in an effort to make the material relevant to hypothetical learners.

We took the final step in the permeability sequence when we integrated (to various extents, depending on the degree of permeability) spontaneous and scientific knowledge.

This was a marker that we had transformed knowledge. In this project, we converged the two classes of concepts both implicitly, as part of the discussion/task at hand, and explicitly, as a result of a planned activity.

### Chaos or Discovery Episodes

We employed *collaboration, cognitive conflict, resistance, impromptu discussions and spontaneous social exchanges* not only as isolated events, but also in combination with each other during more complex interactions. These were common processes through which the group operated, and I named them *discovery or chaos episodes*. *Chaos* is a cruder but probably more accurate description of these developmental events. I give the word chaos a good connotation here, because the students solidified their understanding of concepts through seemingly disorganized and disparate conversations.

The chaos episodes are jumbled and appear meaningless at first glance, and would be viewed as disciplinary problems in a traditional classroom. In this learning paradigm, however, the discovery/chaos episodes became learning opportunities because they served a number of important functions. What would be labeled as a tangential conversation that would throw the group off track, may be a necessary component of permeability. Such episodes of chaos allow learners to explore a topic without a confining structure or strictly predetermined parameters, which gives students a chance to tap into their “funds of knowledge” (Moll et al., 1992) to select relevant concepts. The episodes may also create the ‘social contexts of comfort’ the students need while they search for meaning. The discovery episodes are dynamic ZPDs that emerge in impromptu forms.

The session on April 1<sup>st</sup> contained large number of discovery episodes, partly due to the new members who joined us that day. The dynamics became more combative, therefore highly interactive and fit for permeability. My scaffolding during this session was more non-directive (illustrated by my first question in the following excerpt), as a response to the students' having taken more control over the flow of ideas. Whereas in the previous sessions the students had mostly explored the etiology, types and controversy around violence, the spontaneous concepts that filled the April 1<sup>st</sup> session pertained to the feasibility of different *strategies* of prevention. Below is an example of a discovery episode where the group tried to improve the Adult Curriculum's list of gains and loses as a result of fighting:

- 1 **Corina:** ... So what are we doing with this session?
- 2 **Lucy:** I think is to add the glories you get, not only from like the glories of choosing
- 3 the other one ... cause a lot of people fight for the glory, right? So, if you told them
- 4 oh, look [glories of not fighting]
- 5 **Hira:** also for respect
- 6 **Asia:** exactly
- 7 **Lucy:** yeah, but, if like, cause like a lot of times you say 'oh, if I'm an honors student
- 8 I'm a nerd', but a lot of people forget about the glory of it.
- 9 **Corina:** so show the positives of good decisions?
- 10 **Lucy:** the positives
- 11 **Hira:** I disagree with, I don't know what you're saying that the nerds, cause I don't
- 12 think that me and my friends are nerds, I think we're just intelligent people who are
- 13 trying ...
- 14 **Lucy:** no, but
- 15 **Hira:** I'm not saying other people aren't trying
- 16 **Nesie:** yeah, but it doesn't mean they're just being on honor roll
- 17 **Hira:** nonono no! I'm saying
- 18 **Neelie:** she means that how she said that since they're on the honor roll they were
- 19 nerds
- 20 **Corina:** like some people would
- 21 **Student:** they're just hard workers
- 22 **Lucy:** no, I said, I was saying that
- 23 **Hira:** just because they know what they're doing.. cause you're a hard worker too
- 24 **Corina:** no, people who are not that sometimes [cut off by group overlapping
- 25 loudly] are considered
- 26 **Lucy:** no, are scared to go there [to the honors roll] for the fear of being a nerd ...

27 **Asia:** what others don't realize is that when you make fun of people who you think  
 28 are nerds you may actually end up working for them one day... become their boss  
 29 one day

30 **Seleen:** yeah, that's what I heard, that's kind of scary ...

31 **Lucy:** yeah, that's one of the glories you get

To explain the usefulness of a list of “glories” one gets by not fighting, the students resort to an analogy pertaining to the glories of being a ‘nerd’. Tension and confusion emerged when Lucy’s example was misunderstood (lines 5-6, 11-13). The students placed academic success into perspective in a humorous way (‘you may end up working for the nerd’, lines 27-29), and equated it (in a different instance) with a prevention strategy in the sense that being hard working keeps youth focused, motivated towards positive preoccupations and ‘out of trouble’. However, to get this point across, the group experienced temporary confusion due to miscommunication, which could be attributed to rash interpretations and talking over each other without listening (lines 5, 10-11, 14-15, 22-23). Most of the exchanges were not dialogical, yet they converged at the end and resulted in an improvement to the Adult Curriculum when the students added a column for the ‘glories’ (positives) of *not* fighting (the Adult Curriculum showed the positives and negatives of fighting).

As part of the *sequence of permeability*, my own scaffolding processes opened a Permeability Gate, which in turn gave students power to initiate their own interesting processes. I planned and altered my strategies for interaction before and during our sessions, to achieve dialogism. On the other hand, the students ‘improvised’, meaning that they had no pre-set action plan in mind, but concocted it *while* transforming knowledge. Thus, it appears that even without extensive planning on the students’ part, they are able to make competent contributions to learning. Assembling mechanisms for

knowledge generation ‘on the go’ is consistent with another student-preferred and ‘fun’ way of learning, namely through skits, or acting out reality.

### (3) Role Playing as an Ideal Learning Venue in this Project

At the intersection of Concepts, Process and Pedagogy are the Skits (or Role Plays). Both the Adult Curriculum and Youth Curriculum employed role play, but they were different in terms of the types and complexity of the social relationships and events depicted in them. Consistent with the two curricula’s approaches, the skits in the Adult Curriculum depicted interpersonal violence, while those in the Youth Curriculum had a socio-historical, contextual and community oriented approach. The Youth Curriculum skits, and as its other aspects, incorporated interpersonal violence besides other types, however its depiction was closer to the students’ lives. I analyzed each curriculum’s skits in separate tables.

The Adult Curriculum recognizes skits as efficient learning mechanisms (see Table I13 in Appendix I for the Adult Curriculum skits). However, the students deemed the Adult Curriculum’s focus on interpersonal violence and fighting as narrow several times. The Adult Curriculum scenarios are mainly dyadic, and artificially insulated from other or larger social factors that affect young people, such as communities, families, alternative economies, and massive social systems (consumerism, the media, poverty, discrimination, or warfare, to name a few). The image of violence depicted by the Adult Curriculum is too simple. To the contrary, the violence presented in the youth group’s skits resembled more realistic conflict situations. Table I14 (Youth Curriculum Skits, in

Appendix I) contains all the skits developed and acted by the students during the project. The first 8 were part of the original Emotions session.

The students solely authored the social circumstances that they believed were associated with violence. Just as seminal as the content is the *form* in which curricular values are presented (here through skits). Designing and performing skits involves play, imagination, artistic expression and an opportunity to use youth resourcefulness. From my observations of skit performances both in World Youth and our group, they provided young people with freedom and a certain type of empowerment that may optimize student centered learning. Skits are certainly an alternative form of knowledge generation and internalization, and proved to be exceptional venues of permeability. Finally, acting is a safer way of participation for shy students, such as Opal and Liz, who held back their involvement in the group despite their occasional relevant contributions.

#### (4) Our Group's Roadblocks with Making the Process of Permeability Work

It would be deceiving to claim that our process was flawless. Just as I addressed the shortcomings of the youth-designed (under my supervision, nonetheless) Content, I will next point to the pitfalls of our Process. The permeable process of curricular transformation was not always evident to either the students or myself. The 'chaos' episodes, despite their productive outcomes, are examples of our struggles to easily reach coherent meaning. This subsection is a closer look at the course and roadblocks of an actual design session (the Introduction), where the process was especially difficult due to the novelty of the task for the young authors and my own search for the right amount of intervention that would not affect their creativity, but support them when needed.

I gave the background for this design session in the Content chapter, where I introduced the circumstances behind the difficult youth design process. Briefly, the students had a limited amount of time to complete the challenging task of condensing 4 Adult Curriculum sessions into their Introduction session. An indicator of the difficulty the Introduction design group had in completing this task is the increased number of my interventions (176 turns) in their group, compared to the lower number of my interventions (104 turns) in the group designing the Emotions session (at the same time, in a different room). This frequency count suggests that the Introduction design team needed more support from me than the Emotions design team. Following are elements of process I identified in the group designing the Youth Curriculum Introduction.

The group had three materials with which to work in designing the session: the Adult Curriculum, their youth ideas and my instructions. Despite my detailed and repeated verbal and written instructions about the design session, such as conceptual goals, pointers on what steps to take and what roles to assume, (see Appendix G), the students were *confused about the task*, as illustrated in the following excerpt. There was a great deal of back and forth about what the task entailed:

**Julia:** all right guys, let's get started. Where do we start?

**Selphie:** all right. How to use this curriculum? [reading from the original curriculum's instructions] We added that?

**Precious:** what do you mean?

**Julia:** oh, do we have to write a How To?

**Precious:** I don't know

**Selphie:** How To Use This Curriculum.

**Opal:** should we put a How To?

**Julie:** no

**Student:** we shouldn't

**Polly:** I think it should be very self-explanatory

**Selphie:** yeah, you're reading it, basically.

**Julia:** but then we godda make like the teacher's guide ...

**Precious:** it says how to use this curriculum

**Juila:** we'll probably... won't have to do how to use this curriculum, but what is the focus of this curriculum ...

**Opal:** just put what is the focus of this curriculum ...

**Julia:** what is the focus of this curriculum? [pause]

**Polly:** I don't think 'How do I Prepare to Teach Violence Prevention?' is very relevant ...

**Selphie:** Yes, because some teachers have never done that

**Precious:** what is the purpose of this curriculum? ...

**Opal:** so we don't have to put that in

**Precious:** how to prepare ... It's not necessary, this is a students' curriculum

**Julia:** this is like, this is more like for the teachers ...

**Precious:** so instead of having that, we should have a section for the teacher's manual.

The group's task was to design an Introduction session, and not a teacher's manual. The initial lack of clarity over the task suggests that, for students, transitioning into being solely in charge of assembling knowledge was challenging and probably required additional supports from me.

Another recurring pattern was that the students were overwhelmed by the magnitude of the task. They repeatedly stated how much work there was:

- 1 **Opal:** that's a lot of work for us ...
- 2 **Polly:** the session in itself is very big ...
- 3 **Selphie:** we can make a decision to incorporate one of the old ones next to them or
- 4 just leave it as it is or change it any way we want [Precious is bored, moans, yawns]
- 5 **Polly:** wow, this really is long
- 6 **Opal:** it's a lot of work, I did not think XXX ...
- 7 **Precious:** this is the longest introduction I've ever seen in my life
- 8 **Polly:** but we can shorten it, right?
- 9 **Precious:** yeah, it's too long ...
- 10 **Julia:** we could find ways to make it interesting
- 11 **Polly:** ... That's our objective, make it something that we would like to learn about.
- 12 Like not some history kind of like domination or something like that like we you do
- 13 in school. I like to XXX like something that you'd be excited.. that's enticing to you
- 14 **Selphie:** we can have Barney beating up Dora the Explorer
- 15 **Julia:** what?
- 16 **Selphie:** and say that's a bad way and violence [some giggle]
- 17 **Julia:** no, we can't do that

The students are referring to the first three and the sixth sessions of the Adult Curriculum, which they merged into one for the Youth Curriculum. At the time when the

students made decisions about merging the Adult Curriculum sessions, I indicated to them that the Youth Curriculum Introduction was becoming too long. I did not impose my view on them, but merely advised them not make rush decisions (I refer to this pedagogical approach of permeability in the next chapter). Nonetheless, they followed their plan, and what seemed like a logical idea when they designed the Table of Contents became an overwhelming task during the design session. Their evaluation of the massive project was correct, because they had very little time to design the session and too many materials. Surprisingly, the group critiqued their own previous work, given that they themselves generated and structured the concepts in the Youth Curriculum. Yet, they did not lose perspective of the fact that their curriculum should be interesting and appealing to young people, not long or boring like school materials (lines 10-16). Selphie's idea of using cartoons in the session was humorous, yet rejected by Julia, and shows her a priori knowledge (lines 14-17).

The students were disinterested, moaned and had difficulty focusing on the task. Precious especially, yawned, examined herself in the one-way mirror in the room, applied makeup and even filled out a job application. The group talked about the snacks I had provided. It is possible that the group felt that formal curricular design may not be something students should do. Contributing views, transforming and assembling information (like in the Pasting Project) may be more suitable forms of participation for students because the group was significantly more engaged in those projects.

It was my intention to intervene as little as possible in order to see what students would do if allowed to make most of the decisions themselves. This was probably the most exploratory activity I had proposed to the group. As I described earlier, keeping my

distance during the design sessions had less than desirable consequences not only for their design Process, but also for the Content they created. Designing curricular sessions are difficult tasks for adults, who have resources and time to develop such products. It was unrealistic of me to expose the group to such a difficult task and expect a polished session. In the future, students should be given more time and increased scaffolding and guidance in designing a session. Or, perhaps, once students' views have been recorded, adults could assemble them into formal sessions, with student assistance and feedback.

Aside from the process followed by the group who designed the Introduction, the students proposed a process for the learners of the curriculum (the other half of the students in this case). The students did not write process instructions formally, but conveyed them implicitly in choice of activities for the session. I compare these with (1) the Adult Curriculum and (2) the activities chosen by the group who designed and taught the Emotions session. The student-designed Introduction was identical in terms of Process to the one in the Adult Curriculum:

- a few brainstorming activities (types and causes of violence) and presentation of the group's own taxonomies;
- a homicide statistics guessing exercise and the group's presentation of the actual statistics;
- presentation of additional homicide statistics by race, gender and age and
- performance of a skit by the design team and their asking questions of the audience pertaining to what had happened in the scene.

These activities coincided with those employed by the Adult Curriculum, although the group expressed their intentions to "make it fun". I explain their lack of success in

departing from such traditional learning processes by the fact that their most important task was to organize and convey the knowledge in a coherent manner, and the form in which they were going to present it was a lesser priority. In addition, the students' school socialization with more passive learning processes probably led them to reproduce this way of teaching in their own session, where they did not facilitate any *transformation* of knowledge by the learners.

Although both groups of students (one who designed the Introduction session and one who designed the Emotions session) participated in our project since its inception and had the same goals for session design, they each viewed the learners' involvement differently. Briefly, the Emotions group proposed a considerably more interactive process of conveying information. From the analysis of the Emotions session in the Content chapter, I could note that the learners brainstormed, answered complex questions, participated in a few pseudo-games and viewed multiple provocative skits. However, neither of the two groups invited their learners to transform knowledge. The outcome may have been different had I specifically asked them to involve the learners in co-authoring the sessions, just as I had invited them to do.

A main question behind this dissertation had to do with what happens (not only what is produced) when students are trusted with assembling lesson plans. In this chapter I itemized our patterns of interaction throughout the project. This constitutes the Process of permeability: how outside youth concepts are solicited, introduced, refined, negotiated and blended into the conglomerate of adult ideas they are intended to complement. In the Sequence of Permeability (Figure 1), the Process can be found in phases 2 and 3, where the Permeability Gate is opened by an adult invitation for youth a priori knowledge to

enter (phase 2), and then be negotiated collaboratively in the process of knowledge transformation (phase 3). Our process was highly social, as our multiple types of interactions mediated the construction of knowledge. Our *process* was a result of the *pedagogy* of permeability I envisioned and shared with the group. The type of pedagogy applied in a setting greatly influences whether or not the learning reproduces or transforms existing knowledge. Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy described in the introduction of this dissertation guided my unfavorable evaluation of 'banking' pedagogies, and compelled me to promote a pedagogy that was progressive and transformative.

## **Chapter 5: A Pedagogy of Permeability**

Pedagogy is at times perceived as a difficult concept to define and operationalize, perhaps because it is often *implicitly* entrenched in how learning is practiced. One particular dictionary explains pedagogy as “the principles and methods of instruction”, and even as “the art or profession of teaching”. In this chapter I present data that defines the *pedagogy of permeability*. Having detailed the concrete ways of implementing permeability and its outcomes in the previous chapters, I proceed with establishing the principles/guidelines behind the processes and content of permeability.

### **Research questions for Pedagogy:**

- (a) What kind of pedagogy allows for student contributions to learning?
- (b) How can agency be transferred from the adult (teacher or facilitator) to the students so that their participation can have a substantive effect in transforming knowledge? This is a power redistribution requirement that is crucial for permeability to take place, and implies gradual student self and peer scaffolding.

There are a few types of pedagogy I discuss here. The pedagogies that came to life during the project were not monolithic or rigidly predetermined. The view of pedagogy as a product of goals and processes is one that is compatible with a permeable education because pedagogy transforms itself here to meet the needs of those for whom it is intended. Further, because I was not the only power holder, aside from my own pedagogy were ones generated by my power-sharers, the students.

A permeable process made possible the percolation of youth's ideas and their new curriculum, which were all fostered by a pedagogy that redistributed traditional power relations to view students as competent. Pedagogy, although the last to be described in this dissertation's array of main concepts, seems to be the first step in opening the Permeability Gate (remember the Sequence of Permeability in Methods). If an adult invitation for youth perspectives does not exist, none of the subsequent possibilities for permeability to Content and Process would have a chance to take shape.

The idea of pedagogy is represented here in four ways: 1) my own explicit pedagogy intended to create permeability; 2) the students' explicit narratives about their positions as students and relationships with teachers from the opening and closing focus groups; 3) the students' implicit pedagogical-like behavior as they learned from each other during our sessions; 4) the students' vision of pedagogy in the new curriculum.

### (1) My Explicit Pedagogy Intended to Create Permeability

To define my role, I chose to present myself as a *facilitator*, rather than a teacher or instructor. A common definition of a 'facilitator' is "someone who makes progress easier". However, my definition expands on the one from the dictionary to reflect the type of agency I assumed in the project, including scaffolding in response to student needs, power redistribution to allow for student active participation and learning of my own. I define myself as a 'facilitator' to indicate that although I fostered student agency, my position was still one of power, although fundamentally different from that of a 'teacher's' in traditional settings. I positioned myself within the group as someone who shared her authority with the students, as a requisite for permeability. Yet, as

conventional teachers represent the ideologies of their schools and curricula, I too represented an institution with values and goals, however, one who *positioned students* as partners in expertise, and who allowed herself *to be positioned by* them in the dialogue of knowledge transformation.

Earlier, in the Process chapter, I illustrated at length how the activities I had proposed for the group lent themselves to a permeable process. The *agendas of the day* mapped those activities, and are good representations of my pedagogical assumptions. To record my pedagogical practices in yet another modality, I created a few codes and applied them to session transcripts. Being mindful of the first phase in the Sequence of Permeability, namely inviting student input, a prerequisite condition was to reconfigure traditional classroom power relations. I used the code *student input invited* to mark the instances when I solicited student knowledge (it was also a Process code, since these two categories overlap). The previous results chapters showed numerous instances where I had called for student participation. Here is a simple invitation I made:

**Corina:** We can start from here when we design the session. Homicide Statistics and Characteristics. ... Do you want to keep this handout?

The next logical step in creating a pedagogy of permeability is that if students are to participate, they need to assume increased power to act. I created two codes to capture that: *power relations* and *positioning and shifting roles*; I usually marked a segment of text with both codes at the same time, because the first indicates the presence of a theoretical power issue and the second represents its operationalization. The code *power relations* indicates the intention to reconfigure traditional teacher-student, and peer roles and relations, which was necessary in order to transform a curriculum from a youth

perspective. The code *positioning and shifting roles* pointed to the way in which we all positioned each other as knowers (a constant flux), which gave different actors ‘expert’ positions at different times. With expertise came power and responsibility, which takes us back to the first code. Therefore, the two codes are complementary.

The power and positioning codes had high frequencies because virtually every time I invited student input, I shared my power with the students. Initially, I positioned students as knowers by soliciting information. Gradually, they began to position themselves as such by initiating discussions and actions illustrative of their competencies. Again, examples in the Content and Process chapters contained a number of quotations to which these codes were applied (yet not explained as such until this current chapter). For that reason, I will only give one data example here to illustrate the instrumentality of these codes. Here is one instance of high permeability, due the group’s collaboration that eventually resulted in structural changes:

- 1 **Corina:** this session is about... what are we gonna do about it? ...
- 2 **Polly:** I like the way it’s approached, like the consequences of behavior and all that
- 3 stuff, it’s approached in the right manner but ...
- 4 **Precious:** like, wouldn’t it fall into session one?
- 5 **Julia:** yeah
- 6 **Precious:** there’s a lot of violence in society, maybe that could [cut off by laughs]
- 7 **Corina:** wow, so, session one is getting really big
- 8 **Precious:** because it all falls into ...
- 9 **Julia:** or maybe we just ... it could fit into the homicide section, homicide part of
- 10 **Precious:** or anger is normal
- 11 **Polly:** ... Every session here XXX is related to one another. ... If you would put all
- 12 the sessions together you would see how they can all relate to another
- 13 **Julia:** it flows ...
- 14 **Polly:** that’s the whole point for the XXX
- 15 **Corina:** yes, to build on each other, like we talked in the first session

As I entrusted the group to make important decision, they questioned the need for Adult Curriculum Session 6 to stand independently (lines 3-4). Being positioned as

proficient and having evaluative power, they decided to incorporate it at the end of the Youth Curriculum introductory session. Polly assumed a critical evaluation of what they were about to do (disrupt the sequence of sessions in the Adult Curriculum) (lines 11-12). They presented a few proposals (lines 4, 9-10) and scrutinized their own intentions, which signaled a *monitoring technique*. This higher order type of mental activity is usually attributed to and assumed by adult educators, however, it surfaced in instances of ‘contesting’ as a result of the youth’s being pedagogically positioned as competent.

Another pedagogical technique I employed to orient students towards assuming expert roles was through supporting statements or questions. I addressed the code that marked this aspect of a permeable pedagogy, *facilitator guidance*, under Process as well. I adopted two types of guidance. One was explicit and embodied in my statements about our goals and the students’ roles in transforming knowledge:

- 1 **Corina:** ... I see that you guys are very hands on, like we need ... to reach out to
- 2 parents, ... to be able to tell if something happens, ... to have numbers. ... [These
- 3 are] very practical elements, which these curricula don’t have!
- 4 **Group:** [laughs] really? Really?
- 5 **Corina:** really! See this is the youth perspective that I know is in you guys that needs
- 6 to be put together with the adult perspective to make better prevention.

I continuously reinforced the value and seminal role of the student knowledge base (lines 5-6), in order to establish a discourse of youth competence. The second type of guidance I gave was implicit, and it occurred in form of scaffolding questions. Here is another example of my pedagogical guidance that gives students the evaluative authority:

**Corina:** We’re talking about causes of violence. These curricula talk about that too, and we’ll see what you think [about] their causes of violence. Are they enough, are they ... what you think they should be?

Lastly, I conducted a comparison of our pedagogy to the one in the Adult Curriculum. The key to the Adult Curriculum and Youth Curriculum pedagogical contrast lays in the way in which they used student knowledge. I employed a pedagogy that allowed student perspectives to transform knowledge, even though some of my utterances were more *directive* than others (e.g., my question about the relationship between poverty and violence, or my suggestion to create an expanded emotions session after having observed the students' high interest in exploring a range of emotions). In contrast, the Adult Curriculum's invitation of youth opinions did not lead to knowledge transformation, because it steered students to internalize predetermined curricular goals. That was a pedagogy of reproduction of adult scientific knowledge.

In the Adult Curriculum, the students were given agency to express opinions and contradict the teacher (e.g., cannot avoid violence because sometimes it is the only way to save face). However, that only went as far as seeing multiple perspectives before being strongly oriented towards adopting the messages of the AC. The students had no opportunities to contribute something that would change meaning if different from concepts in the Adult Curriculum.

## (2) The Youth's Explicit Narratives about Their Student Roles and Relationships with Teachers

One of the purposes of the opening and closing focus groups was to shed light on how the group may view themselves in relation to their education and educators, including our group. I consider these aspects to be indicators of the students' evaluation of the pedagogies to which they are exposed (in schools) and help co-create (in World Youth and our project). What do students think about the ways in which they are treated? In

their perspectives, what type of social relationships would create an ideal learning environment within their schools? For this portion of data analysis, I created codes that measured the students' views on pedagogy in three ways, through references to (1) types of knowledge learned in school, Global Youth and our project, (2) student/teacher roles in school, Global Youth and our project and (3) their direct statements vis-à-vis pedagogies in school, Global Youth and our project.

These codes were different in nature from those of Content and Process because they were applied to students' answers to questions that asked them to take a direct evaluative stance of their experiences. While my coding of Content and Process captured students' enactment and manipulation of concepts, here I coded the students' direct references to concepts of Pedagogy.

I begin with an analysis of data from our initial focus group. Due to its complexity, the text was marked with multiple codes, all belonging under the umbrella of Pedagogy. The following student narratives came in response to my question: "Can you compare the learning that happens in World Youth to the one that happens in you schools?". I used the codes [**Youth on pedagogy in school**] ; [**Non-dialogical education**] & [**Youth on their position/role in schools**] to mark students' references to notions like Freire's *banking* system of education conducive of knowledge reproduction. Below are examples that support the youth's perspectives on school.

**(a)** One student believes that much of school learning is unidirectional and not stimulating. In contrast, out-of-school learning is involving, therefore motivates and stirs students' desire to internalize information:

**Julia:** ... some kids ... if you put them in a class where a teacher is just lecturing to you ... it's just gonna go through one ear and come out the other, but if you're ... active in

the class, it's gonna make it more fun, kids won't be falling asleep and they're gonna actually wanna come to class and ... learn something, But ... some classes are so boring.

**(b)** School pedagogy is highly directive and almost punitive:

**Selphie:** ... in school it's like NO, do this! That's what it is ... it's really bad .

**(c)** Here is a reference to school methods of evaluation, which pressure students, as do strict teachers who seem to understand students less than those in World Youth.

Although Polly attributes this to an age differential, that understanding may be confounded by the discrepant goals of the two types of pedagogies, which influence the teachers' conduct:

**Polly:** In school you get homework and class work ... and it's just pressure and they keep pressuring you... but then in World Youth you don't need to worry about bringing in homework, or this teacher, really strict teacher. Like the teachers at World Youth are younger than most of our teachers and they understand you, they make it fun.

In a similar instance, Precious and Julia reiterate the importance students give to being able to coordinate their perspectives to those of their teachers. That is done through finding common grounds, which is peculiarly attributed to similarities in age:

**Precious:** ... some teachers are not really around our age so then they're not thinking about it the way that we look at things

**Julia:** and they have different, like the older teachers they have different guidelines that they follow ... but like the younger teachers now they know where we're coming from cause ... they had to go through it just a few years ago and they know how we feel at times so they're like a little less strenuous on us.

The group may use age as a proxy for better *communication* with teachers, a core element of the dialogical education promoted by permeability. Diversity between students and teachers should not get in the way of communication in a permeable paradigm. To the contrary, if learning is done as demonstrated in this project, differences among parties (teachers and students or peers themselves) should be complementary and

lend themselves to productive zones of proximal development (Daiute et al., 2003; Guitierrez et al., 1999). Differences do not need to separate students and teachers hierarchically, but can lead them to productive collaborations in which discrepant views are negotiated. For Guitierrez et al. (1999), diverse perspectives meet in *the third space*. I argue that the creation of a third space and its efficient use to produce knowledge is made possible by a permeable pedagogy.

(d) The last focus group contains direct references to students' being positioned as oblivious to various social practices, therefore being subjected too often to an education of prevention that teaches them little new information. The students (from different schools) talk about previous prevention they experienced (the DARE program):

**Lucy:** I think that confidentiality [is] ... an important part of this, because, yeah, in the DARE program with the police officer it was like you can't say anything because ... I remember people saying oh, you can't recognize like the XXX drugs, most of us recognized it cause that's just the neighborhood we lived in, but ... we were like scared to say anything because it was a police officer [Asia had mentioned that she had a gun]

**Corina:** so you acted like you didn't know them

**Lucy:** yeah. ... So we didn't really learn anything, cause she's like [changes tone of voice] 'this is on the street', like we didn't know that, like she was teaching us as if you were aliens to the world, we're living on Mars and this was just happening somewhere and you're about to go there, so, GET READY! ...

**Asia:** they're trying to prepare us for the real world, yeah, you XXX it and

**Lucy:** we are in the real world ...

**Polly:** I was just gonna say in here we expressed our opinions freely, but I supposed XXX a program in which XXX participating, you weren't allowed, not that you weren't allowed, but you felt intimidated, therefore you didn't do that.

**Nesie:** you couldn't say things because there was a police officer and maybe what you were gonna say wasn't what they would expect and what they wanna hear.

Not only was the pedagogical approach of this prevention program inducing of fear and lack of a true educator (police officer) student dialogue, but the students did not feel like they learned anything new. The students' statements reflect how educators may

miss opportunities to convey new knowledge and converse with their students when they assume youth to lack relevant a priori knowledge.

I was also interested in learning about students' evaluation of school content, which compelled me to create the code **[Youth on knowledge in school]**. In the following example, the information provided in school is old and be static, while out-of-school knowledge appears to be critical, eye-opening and scrutinizing of the status quo:

- 1 **Asia:** [In] school ... they give us more facts than opinions ... you have to take it and
- 2 learn it and memorize it
- 3 **Polly:** I should mention like ... you go to school to learn about history, things that
- 4 happened in the past or things that everybody at one point XXX learned, right? But
- 5 then at World Youth you learn things that of people are ignorant, or they don't wanna
- 6 see, or things that people never thought of, or hear of.

Polly's remarks (lines 3-4) seem to characterize the pool of knowledge recommended for school learning by E. D. Hirsch (1987) (reviewed in the introduction of this dissertation), whose goals are to preserve America's homogeneous heritage, the tradition of the white 'founders' of this country and exclusive of diversity. Does this mean that Hirsch's prejudiced "cultural literacy" is thriving in our schools?

At the other end of the spectrum are the group's evaluation of the knowledge, pedagogy and youth positioning in World Youth. To capture these aspects, I first employed the codes **[Youth on pedagogy in afterschool]** and **[Youth on their position/role in after school]**.

(a) The out-of-school pedagogy is appealing to the students because it invites participation, which is the first condition of permeability:

**Polly:** They make learning fun, and ... I would consider it active learning.

**Julia:** Yeah, active learning, that's a good term ...

**Selphie:** and we get to express it [their opinion] and then we end up going in groups or doing some kind of activity.

(b) Pedagogical methods have an impact on whether or not information is internalized:

**Asia:** I was just gonna say that things that I learned in World Youth ... I remember it better and it sticks to my mind better and things that I learn in schools I would just forget the next day. Cause it's just the way they put it out to you.

(c) World Youth learning is transformative of youth perspectives, which suggests positive youth development. Out-of-school learning is presented as social, which is the type of pedagogy sought by this group:

**Group:** it's fun, it's fun, yeah

**Asia:** it's a different experience

**Polly:** ... It's rewarding because you learn so many different things that change your perspectives and that affect you in so many different ways ... It's overwhelming that's why, and it really affects you like things that they talk about and you really bond with people and people love that. They like a new experience and learning XXX

**Corina:** Do you contribute with your own opinions? ...

**Julia:** You have to contribute at World Youth.

The knowledge available in World Youth, which I coded with [**Youth on knowledge in afterschool**], is appealing to these students, as is the afterschool program's pedagogy:

- 1 **Asia:** Oh, my God, World Youth like there's so many different... Like the
- 2 issues are so different than school issues.
- 3 **Selphie:** and World Youth is just about what you already know, what you might
- 4 feel about it later and like your perspective on it and everything, it's really
- 5 different ... It's human rights issues ... each person is entitled to their own life
- 6 and how we shouldn't be discriminated, prejudice ... And also they deal with a lot
- 7 of world issues and I think it's something that schools also need to address not
- 8 only like after school thing and not a lot of people are aware of ... it should open
- 9 people's minds, what the world is, what's really going on in the world.

Selphie is critical of the fact that important matters such as human/civil rights do not have a place in school, where they should be introduced to 'open people's minds' (lines

7-9). Out-of-school learning is perceived as emancipatory and progressive, which implies that in-school learning is narrower in scope. Additionally, Selphie's comment of 'what you might *feel* about it later' (line 4) brings us back to the central role of *affect* for this group, first noted in their understanding of emotions and violence prevention, and now in their perception of learning in general. In this project, I observed a pattern indicative of the importance this group gives to their affect and affinity towards activities in which they are involved. Specifically, learning has relevance if it is 'fun', 'engaging', 'pleasant', 'satisfactory', 'rewarding'. These are characteristics of their experiences in World Youth and our project, but less of the learning they encounter in their schools. This finding concurs with Daiute et al.'s (1993) conclusion that peers draw on affective resources as they collaborate on tackling challenging academic tasks. In the final chapter, I suggest that this affective component of learning may be instrumental in informing ways to transform education.

The student accounts from above show that, even before participating in our group, the students had a sharp awareness of the possibility of different pedagogies, and the impact they each have on learning. Specifically, the active participation in World Youth is more likely to lead to transformation of knowledge, which in itself has practical purposes, such as civil rights. The passive learning in schools, where creativity is curtailed for the sake of following rules, leads to reproduction of past knowledge, which does not even "stick" and is judged as less instrumental to students' lives.

The students were aware of the relationships among type of pedagogy (rules, norms and expectations), knowledge and student participation (or lack there of). A pedagogy of teacher control and strictly determined adult goals limits the possibilities of

interesting knowledge exchanges in which students may be more inclined to participate. On the other hand, a place like World Youth, where student involvement is the life of the organization, attracts young people due to its liberal and participatory pedagogy. World Youth knowledge is pertinent to ‘life’ and is more likely to be internalized.

Moving on to the experiences in our *own project*, I present the students’ perspectives of their *position in the group* vis-à-vis peers and myself, which I coded with **[Youth on pedagogy in our group]** and **[Youth on their position/role in our group]**.

The students developed an awareness of their own active involvement, as evidenced below in the students’ reflection on their behavior in one of the sessions:

- 1 **Lucy:** I liked that everybody stated their opinion and supported it, not like, oh, it’s my
- 2 opinion but like I don’t care ...
- 3 **Neelie:** There was a feeling of devil’s advocate, going back at each other ... asking
- 4 questions
- 5 **Asia:** questioning each other in a way ...
- 6 **Precious:** I liked that everyone had so many ideas about violence prevention, that
- 7 shows that everyone really cares about the world around us, you know. It takes more
- 8 than just showing up, but actually say what you feel, that, that’s beautiful, I like that...
- 9 **Polly:** I think it went deeper than ... the topic of violence ... We tried to go down to
- 10 the coore ... Sometimes it ... felt like we were going really off topic ...
- 11 **Lucy:** ... but then I realized we were just going to the core and founding things ...
- 12 like setting a foundation ...
- 13 **Asia:** ... when it comes to violence it’s not just violence ... you’re fighting or you’re
- 14 not fighting... [group agrees] There are sooo many things that come into [play]

During our March 18<sup>th</sup> session, the students discussed controversial correlates of violence (e.g., propaganda for the army or civil rights efforts) that may not have an obvious connection to a violence prevention curriculum (lines 9-14). Here, the students comment on their collaboration that was sometimes fueled by productive conflict. While playing ‘devil’s advocate’, the students become increasingly aware of the complexity of violence. Questioning each other and defending points of view showed the students’

genuine interest for the issues at hand and a feeling of ownership over ideas (Sleeter & Grant, 1991), which was contrasted with the lack of involvement of “just showing up” (lines 3-8). We reached new levels of conceptual understanding due to student participation that was uncensored and a result of a pedagogy we were co-establishing.

The students also confirmed my (and other scholars’) suggestion that power-holding in the classroom determines the positions assumed by (or imposed on) students and, consequently, teachers. In response to a question about my role, the group expressed its awareness of power dynamics I had initiated and which affected them positively:

- 1 **Julia:** You didn’t make it be known that you’re an authority figure ... like we all
- 2 know we have to respect you, but you ... didn’t make it a big issue, you, I guess you
- 3 left it upon us to
- 4 **Asia:** to know that
- 5 **Julia:** to know that we have to do it. Like, most teachers, ... they tell you, basically
- 6 they have to keep remind you about it, but you just like let it XXX, that’s why I think
- 7 everyone has such respect for you
- 8 **Student:** exactly
- 9 **Julia:** cause you didn’t ... have so much power over us, like
- 10 **Corina:** so the power was distributed
- 11 **Student:** it was ...
- 12 **Corina:** we all had power
- 13 **Julia:** it was balanced
- 14 **Nesie:** you didn’t throw it in our faces
- 15 **Seleen:** like, oh, I’m the teacher, you’re supposed to listen to me and nobody has to
- 16 say anything ... You was like, you was like, she’s like part of us ...
- 17 **Lucy:** ... responsibility [comes] with privilege ... we’re lucky to get here, like not
- 18 everybody gets to make a curriculum, to experience and.... But then you have to
- 19 [have?] responsibility to come here

While Lucy humorously described me earlier in the session as a ‘guiding stick’, Seleen considered me to be a part of the group (line 16) and Julia positioned me as an authority figure (line 1), who gained respect not by imposing my power, but rather by sharing it (lines 7-13). Further, Lucy sees their participation both as a privilege and a responsibility (lines 17-19), which indicates that while such positions are rare for

students, to ‘rise to the occasion’ implies a commitment usually expected of adults. In the above example, *my* choice of self-positioning as willing to share power *positioned the students*, who gradually began *positioning themselves and me*. As described in the earlier quotes, students *are positioned* by their schools/teachers as powerless, and do not have the option *to position* either themselves or their teachers. These are fundamental distinctions between a pedagogy of permeability (which transforms standards) and one of control (which preserves standards).

### (3) The Students’ Implicit Pedagogical-Like Behavior During Our Sessions

I analyzed the pedagogy adopted (knowingly or not) by the group with codes similar in meaning (and identical in name) to some I described in the Process chapter. The most obvious student pedagogical behavior was in assuming scaffolding/guidance positions towards their peers. The code *peer help and clarification*, defined as ‘instances when peers jump to help a confused student’ documented the group’s increasing confidence in their ability to orient each other independently from my interventions. As I demonstrated earlier, peer help often co-occurs with *peer collaboration*, where a few students work together to clarify, or understand, or explain various concepts. I chose a moving quotation to illustrate both codes (*peer help and clarification* and *peer collaboration*) and further define the pedagogy of permeability crafted by the youth:

- 1 **Lucy:** ... if ... somebody said that she wants a fight but you don’t want to, I think
- 2 that’s more courage ... For example, even if I hated everybody, even that that man,
- 3 that DARE teacher, I still love him as a human being ... therefore [laughing]
- 4 therefore, if I had to have a choice either kill myself or the teacher, I would kill
- 5 myself [group laughs, overwhelmed and nervous]
- 6 **Corina:** you’re all right? ...
- 7 **Neelie:** You’re saying that you hate him, but yet you love him as a human being, but
- 8 doesn’t love and hate contradict each other? ... Can you have both? ...

9 **Lucy:** yeah, I mean, yeah, it's because, my father, I love him, he's my father, yet I  
10 hate him for what he has done ...

11 **Neelie:** but that's different, you hate him for what he has done

12 **Asia:** and you know [you] love him because he's your father ...

13 **Lucy:** no, no, no [yelling], but I feel ... every human being is like my like my

14 **Student:** equal

15 **Lucy:** my people

16 **Neelie:** comrade

17 **Lucy:** yeah, comrade, man! [everyone laughs] they deserved to be loved! I mean like  
18 I think love is the first step ... I would feel guilty for ... killing that person, that  
19 would put me to misery ...

20 **Corina:** so if you think of love and hate as like

21 **Asia:** I think there could be a thin line between love and hate

22 **Corina:** primary emotions, almost like instincts you say love should be number one...

23 **Lucy:** like hate, you cannot avoid hate

24 **Corina:** it's no choice, like they can co-exist together?

25 **Lucy:** I can think they can, they do

26 **Precious:** you could avoid hate I think you should try. I think that love will always  
27 win hate if you tried enough. [group agrees]

28 **Lucy:** but like since we are humans and we all have human nature, sounds like we  
29 don't have a choice whom we hate. ...

30 **Precious:** yes you do, cause everyone's responsible for their own actions

31 **Lucy:** no, I'm not saying.. you had the choice not to go UPON this hate, you had the  
32 choice not to do anything about it, you had the choice to not SHOW it! ...

33 **Asia:** it's about nature, and what's already in us before we start

34 **Lucy:** because I cannot stop it like I try to ...

35 **Asia:** you can stop it if you want

36 **Precious:** you should, can, you're just gonna have to want to, because you control ...  
37 yourself, you control what you feel, ... you're responsible for you. If you can say  
38 that you can hate someone but if you feel that you are a good person ... you CAN  
39 stop hating the person. ...

40 **Lucy:** I think it takes like time

41 **Asia:** true, and forgiveness

42 **Lucy:** and discipline. Because I've been TRYING to [laughs] like it's like ... I feel  
43 that I have no control over how I feel. I have control over what I do to what I feel. ...  
44 Like to set up my surroundings to make myself happy ...

45 **Precious:** also, I don't mean to bring it up or offend anyone, but if say  
46 you believe in God or anything, that can also help you ...

47 **Asia:** spirituality ...

48 **Polly:** because religion doesn't promote hate. ...

49 **Asia:** I think that's the best part about religion, if you embrace it the right way ...  
50 some people take it the wrong way and they act ...

51 **Lucy:** just use it as an excuse for hating

This example of high permeability shows the group involved in a complex and agentive interaction triggered by Lucy's raw confessions of her attitudes vis-à-vis suicide, homicide and a paradoxical co-existence of love and hate (lines 3-4, 17-19, 23, 29). I marked this quotation with a number of codes, given its abundance of acts and meanings. Here I will only focus on how the episode is illustrative of the youth group's pedagogy.

The fact that Lucy initiated such a risky and provocative conversation suggests that she had assumed a powerful role. She 'taught' the group about alternative and unusual reasons for *not* committing homicide, namely, putting herself into 'misery' for killing another human being (lines 18-19). She supported her stance with experiential knowledge from her relationship with her DARE teacher and father (lines 2-3, 9-10). Lucy demonstrated a few elements of student processes and pedagogy, which led to unusual ideas. She generated unique content (a strategy to avoid homicide by controlling action, lines 42-44) and engaged her peers into intense cognitive conflict. She also adopted an interesting pedagogy by the way she decided to share her knowledge, therefore 'teach' *and* learn from the others. Lucy's way of conveying information was direct, almost combative, and positioned all the participants in the conversation (including herself) as having equal status in challenging each other. Lucy welcomed scrutiny by the peers, which proved to be her characteristic way of interacting in the group. The group's successful collaboration after an arduous negotiation transpired through their two strategies (control of action and spirituality) and agreement about the pitfalls of religion.

The students collaborated and debated, setting up ZPDs (lines 7-12, 36-24), clarifying concepts for each other and reaching new understandings together (lines 44-51)

by making use of spontaneous knowledge. They took control over the entire process of content creation, and began shaping their ideas in scientific form when they analyzed the role of emotions, the agency individuals have over their actions and prevention strategies.

Interestingly, the students were not only positioned by peers into expert roles, but they also assumed these positions themselves. Daiute et al. (1993) found that peers are more likely to explore their knowledge with equal status/power partners (peers) and not with adults who are usually sole power holders. In our group, the youths occupied teaching roles (whether or not they did that intentionally) and felt comfortable sharing provocative knowledge, even in the presence of the adult (myself). The group also shifted our expert positions in such a way that I became the novice, given that, at times, I was a mere witness to the group's discussions and learned from them. This was an astonishing episode of permeability, for Content, Process *and* Pedagogy.

#### (4) The Vision of Pedagogy as Devised by Students in the New Curriculum

If there was one dominant feature about student pedagogy, it was its fluidity. The students did not adopt one type of pedagogy during our whole group sessions, but constantly created it as a supporting structure for their interactions. *Student participation in curricular creation* revealed a different aspect of permeable pedagogy than did giving the group a chance to *design sessions for the use of others* besides themselves. The former implied our group's construction of a pedagogy with whom we were comfortable in order to transform and generate knowledge. The latter involved the group's creation of pedagogy for *other individuals their age*. How did these students view themselves as educators for other students? Is there a difference between the pedagogy they adopted for

themselves during our sessions and the one they created in preparing to ‘teach’ other students? There was, in fact, a drastic contrast between the two.

This section of the Pedagogy chapter is the equivalent of two sections in the Content and Process chapters that specified some less than perfect outcomes of youth work. One goal that the group only achieved partially was that, even at the end of the project, the students had a hard time seeing themselves as partial power holders. They did assume teacher roles during the teaching sessions, however, their own behaviors were quite traditional and they did not position their ‘students’ as partners.

In envisioning what a hypothetical next group of students to transform the curriculum would do, this group gave the teacher control and power over decisions, positioning students in passive roles of learners but not contributors. A short exchange about the importance of designing a teacher’s manual reveals that they did not intend to ‘prepare’ students for teaching (or conveying and creating knowledge):

- 1 **Polly:** I don’t think ‘how do I prepare to teach violence prevention’ is very relevant
- 2 **Selphie:** let’s see, how to prepare to teach. Yes, because some teachers have never
- 3 done that
- 4 **Precious:** what is the purpose of this curriculum? ...
- 5 **Opal:** so we don’t have to put that in
- 6 **Precious:** how to prepare ... It’s not necessary, this is a students’ curriculum
- 7 **Julia:** this is like, this is more like for the teachers
- 8 **Polly:** like the teacher’s manual

Due to time limits of this project, I later asked the students to focus on the Introduction session and not build a ‘teacher’s’ manual. Although they were building a ‘students’ curriculum’, which would nonetheless require recommendations on how its content could be conveyed (such as in a manual), the group considered that only teachers would need to receive such guidance (lines 6-8). This maintains the power in the domain of an adult authority. The group’s persistent conceptual separation between student and

teacher roles (as in traditional pedagogy), indicated that they still understood these positions as rigid. For the group to envision more porous boundaries between teachers and students, and therefore a truer pedagogy of permeability, a more radical intervention may be necessary (implemented over a long period of time and in multiple disciplines).

The Introduction session group, in particular, conveyed information mostly unidirectionally and attributed passive roles to their ‘students’. The session had a strict format and the ‘teachers’ added information to the one they had asked the ‘students’ to brainstorm. As in the Adult Curriculum, there was no transformation of content and the ‘students’ were not invited to assume knower roles. The pedagogy was rather dull and reminiscent of knowledge transmission in traditional settings.

Yet, our usage of and affinity for progressive pedagogy was clear to the students, as evident in the last focus group where they indirectly evaluated our pedagogy by defining their and my role in working with knowledge (I used parts of this quote earlier):

- 1 **Corina:** ... what kind of students [were] you [in this group] ... and how did you
- 2 contribute to the curriculum?
- 3 **Polly:** we were students like what we would like to be in our own schools. ... We
- 4 contributed to the curriculum because although we used it, we also put our ideas and
- 5 our thoughts into it, and we arranged things so that they could fit into this whole new
- 6 model ... that makes sense ...
- 7 **Lucy:** We learned to learn, not for grades, cause... you didn’t grade us ...
- 8 **Corina:** so learning had a different purpose
- 9 **Lucy:** yeah ...
- 10 **Opal:** I felt important. Like I was part of something, like I was doing something ... I
- 11 got to state my opinion, how I understand it
- 12 **Julia:** we can’t really do that in school [group agrees]
- 13 **Seleen:** the student has a limited time to speak. ...
- 14 **Corina:** what do you think my role was?
- 15 **Julia:** ... at the beginning I thought your role was gonna be the same XXX ... you’re
- 16 just teaching us something. But then as the sessions progressed I realized that it was
- 17 us who were teaching you things about
- 18 **Asia:** prevention?
- 19 **Julia:** violence prevention. We were teaching everyone, we were teaching each other
- 20 about like, violence and our opinions, so your role was more like ... a listener ...

21 **Seleen:** throughout the sessions I realized that we learned like on our own, like you  
 22 gave us the sessions and stuff, but we learned by discussing it and stuff like that. It's  
 23 not like in school that we have to write notes down and study it.

The students had a clear idea of their agency in determining the course of the project, our collaboration and shared power. They preferred this learning paradigm to the one they knew from being students in their schools (lines 3, 22-23). The students felt important for having an impact on knowledge (lines 10-13) and appreciated that learning was done to learn and not to be evaluated by a standard yet arbitrary grading system (lines 7-8). Although we as a group practiced a *permeable pedagogy*, due to the students' socialization under the traditional pedagogy of their schools, the group had a hard time fully transitioning to thinking more progressively. However, the identity these students had forged over their entire educational 'career' could not have been completely replaced with a radically different identity in a few months. In addition, our collaboration appeared to have been these students' first opportunity to affect the pedagogical course of a project. It was likely that the novelty of creating knowledge prevented students from adopting a pedagogy of permeability while teaching the sessions they designed.

Despite this example of students' perpetuation of familiar pedagogies, the pedagogy we employed in this learning paradigm followed both as an outcome and necessary condition for a dialogical education. In the last focus group, the students evaluated the pedagogy of their curriculum, which revealed their appreciation of student-driven learning:

- 1 **Lucy:** I think that the expectations of the [AC] curriculum are different, because in
- 2 the old curriculum you're like ok, you don't know anything about violence. You
- 3 read this text ... and you're gonna learn about violence. By the end of the packet you
- 4 will learn how to prevent violence the way we [the AC] have taught you.
- 5 **Corina:** right, as opposed to?
- 6 **Lucy:** as opposed to ours, like you're gonna work through this and ... they don't tell

7 you instructions, you make up the instructions. Like you decide, like in the course of  
8 discussions you come up with it yourself, it's not something that you're told.

9 Because if you're told, you have your experience and you might think that this is not  
10 true. ... It doesn't tell you how you should learn it.

11 **Neelie:** like everyone said, it doesn't have to be wordy, like our presentation today  
12 about Emotions, honestly, I didn't think we had that much information, but we had  
13 more activities than information, but you get a lot of information from the activities  
14 and the scenarios. You're able to learn and THAT clicks much sooner and better in  
15 your head.

16 **Corina:** so it shouldn't be lecturing. Ok. What would you do with the new  
17 curriculum? ...

18 **Julia:** it has more activities, like interactive activities with the students, so that they  
19 could participate and like enjoy themselves. Cause when you're like, when you're  
20 doing things, you don't really think about how long things are. ...

21 **Lucy:** it's a cake that you bake, and you give part of it to the next person, and the  
22 person bakes this cake, eats it, but part of the main ingredient and part of theirs they  
23 give to the next person. I think it should be like this because, ok, we started it ... and  
24 then we have experience from it and we have benefited from it and I think you should  
25 give it to the next person, so they could add their own and make it better and also  
26 experience it until like forever

During this evaluation of the two curricula, the students characterize the Adult Curriculum's pedagogy as unidirectional, unconcerned with youth perspectives, and where students are assumed to lack any a priori knowledge about violence prevention (lines 1-4). To the contrary, the Youth Curriculum allows the learners to establish methods of learning the existing content and change it as they see fit (lines 6-8). Otherwise, the information that is imposed may not be 'believed' (lines 9-10). Further, only a curriculum that has student involvement and interaction around content seems to be relevant to youth (lines 11-20). Lastly, the metaphor of a 'cake' is a sublime representation of our permeable paradigm: everyone is involved in baking the cake *and* eating it, after which they pass the ingredients to the next person/group, who can add their own signature to it, to make it 'appetizing' to themselves (lines 21-26).

This is a true pedagogy of participation, where there is no absolute truth or method of investigating it, but these are determined by those involved in learning and discovering it along the way. When asked what they thought would need to be in place for a group to change a curriculum, the students said: “it’s not just [a] one person thing, it’s a group thing, and group work, involvement, participation, there needs to be cooperation ... [and] patience”. Both the students and myself adopted pedagogical techniques and we were all learners and teachers through constant repositioning. In relation to the Sequence of Permeability (Figure 1), issues of Pedagogy are the principles behind the opening of the Permeability Gate and negotiations of spontaneous and scientific knowledge collaboratively by students and the adult educator. What the Sequence of Permeability does not capture are the power relations that are balanced among all of us, as knowledge transformers. As previously argued, the pedagogy of permeability is not static, but changes constantly in response to the intentions of students and teachers who evolve by using each other as scaffolds.

## PART IV

### **Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion**

This practice-based research project encouraged students to re-define curricular content and educational practices to complement them with missing diverse youth perspectives. Schools do not provide empowering knowledge to youth due to curricula that do not connect to students' experiences, but rather perpetuate the teacher-student transmission of predetermined knowledge (Sleeter & Grant, 1991). Rather than internalizing a curriculum, the values behind concepts, as well as the assumptions, meaning and intentions of the author were subjected to student analysis in this project, as an integral step of permeable learning. This dissertation suggests an alternative theoretical and practical model of education that redefines the treatment of a priori and scientific knowledge and gives appropriate recognition to the formative roles they *both* play in youth development. In this chapter I discuss the major findings in conjunction with previous theories and research in violence prevention, education and development. My research demonstrates the benefits of fostering permeability.

Some final questions guide the conclusions and recommendations of this dissertation.

- (a) What are some fundamental differences between adult and youth perspectives around violence and its prevention?
- (b) What is the value of having youths involved in collaborative knowledge creation in terms of social development, formation of new skills (what kind of skills) and learning?
- (c) What is the sequence in which permeability takes place and what are the conditions of permeability?

- (d) What can be learned from the diversity of student perspectives that could help educators, researchers and policy makers create a more efficient and inclusive education?

Based on these questions, the chapter is organized in four sections. I begin by drawing on the chapter on Content and relating some of my findings to previous claims of the violence prevention field. The findings of the Process and Pedagogy chapters help build the remaining three sections of this final chapter. I briefly revisit socio-cultural understandings of learning and development, and place this research in the tradition of socially mediated development through collaboration and emerging expertise within appropriate zones of proximal development. Next, I address my central concept of *permeability* together with its sequence and conditions, as a model for practice. The remainder of the chapter outlines possibilities for further analyses of these data, strengths and limitations of this research, and recommendations for future theory and research for those who wish to implement the permeability model in their schools/organizations.

### Youth Perspectives as Important Missing Aspects of Violence Prevention

One major objective of this dissertation was to identify *unique youth thinking*, as proof for a successful application of permeable learning. As the results demonstrate, student ideas permeated and led to significant transformations of the Adult Curriculum. Based on the differences between the two curricula, I suggest that violence prevention needs to alter its content to some degree for youth to benefit from learning (and contributing to) it.

## Essentials of the Youth Curriculum

One of the first patterns I identified was the group's **condensing and eliminating** of certain segments in the Adult Curriculum. Such elements appeared *redundant or constituted a priori youth knowledge* that did not need to occupy space in the curriculum. Editing down adult concepts is one way in which the students indicated that they were familiar with the basics of violence, despite their being positioned as inexperienced by most curricula. The youth held relevant a priori information that is assumed (by most schools) to be lacking, leading to futile educational acts. In my analysis of the *degree of overlap between adult curriculum and youth curriculum concepts*, I found that 63% of all concepts in the two curricula combined represented a priori student knowledge. Thus, the group held a considerable amount of violence prevention information.

The a priori knowledge the students displayed in our interactions gives them the *status of 'experts'* (within the parameters of my definition of holding pertinent knowledge), next to the scientific knowledge in the Adult Curriculum. Raising young people's awareness to what violence looks like and its tragic implications (as the Adult Curriculum attempts) may be, to a great extent, a superfluous effort, given the students' solid spontaneous knowledge about these matters. What we should be doing instead, as adults, is allow young people to explore the relationships among the functionality of each type of violence in relation to social practices that we, as adults, have set up.

Indeed, the group's interest in the **etiology of violence** is a major finding in this dissertation. Placing emphasis on the *etiology and function of violence in society* appears to be a necessary step for understanding the problem well enough to find an

appropriate solution. These discussions (minimized in the Adult Curriculum) were often of controversial issues of violence, leading to the creation of the original Youth Curriculum session on *Grey Areas*. The students were adamant about covering the complex relationships among multi-level forms of violence, the controversy around employing *justified violence*, and the ways in which violence intersects with *social justice issues*. The group's tendency to view violence as *relational, situational and systemic* is in agreement with more recent theories of prevention that move the focus away from individual pathology and into their social practices (Daiute et al., 2001, 2003; Elliot et al., 1998; Fagan & Wilkinson, 1998; Hamburg, 1998; Price & Everett, 1997; Tolan & Guerra, 1994). The numerous aspects of original youth thinking do have a common root, namely their socially constructed nature. The racial/ethnic composition of this group was diverse, and they were all from minority backgrounds. It is not surprising that the group spent a considerable amount of time discussing discrimination and social injustice. Faison and Flanagan (under review), illustrate that Black and White adolescents undergo dissimilar political home education due to their parents' experiences of differential treatment; Black youth were more prepared for and aware of societal prejudice.

It is important that curricula converse with their students, given that identity is the frame through which students interpret and respond to their world (Martin, 2006). This group's concern with the etiology of violence as a form of oppression may be explained by the students' non-mainstream position in society. Daiute and Jones (2003) demonstrated that oral and written language of 5<sup>th</sup> graders contains social relational messages that differ depending on one's ethnic identity. Despite assertions by developmental stage theorists (Piaget, 1963; Kohlberg, 1973), Daiute and Jones (2003)

found that 5<sup>th</sup> graders had the capacity to identify, analyze and manipulate issues of racial and ethnic discrimination. The students debated ideas of violence and related them to personal experience, resulting in increased representations of conflict around race and ethnicity. Moreover, students' internalization of their cultural belief systems sets up "diverse characteristic ways of knowing that organized groups of texts by African American, Latino/a, and White students" (Daiute & Jones, 2003, p. 17). This research evidenced how group affiliations "construct children's racialized ways of knowing" (2003, p. 21) and how young authors in turn transformed dominant cultural messages (as represented in the curriculum) in order for them to reflect their own experiences with social relations and conflict. Thus, students' diversity interacted in complex ways with knowledge, which needs to be considered in creating and teaching curricula.

Further, our group believed that children are exposed to violence at younger and younger ages, confirmed by reports that the US has a disproportionately higher number of young victims and perpetrators compared to other countries (Howard et al., 1999), that perpetrators are increasingly younger and have greater access to firearms (Clayton et al., 2001), and that most violent behavior is likely to begin around age 15 (Hamburg, 1998). Yes, some young people do commit crimes, including homicide, however, most young people are not perpetrators, but mere spectators of tragic outcomes. Instead of saturating our youth with information they already know, *we should be examining our socially constructed systems and practices* (racism, poverty, warfare, imperialism, etc) that are the real causes of violence. Young people learn that violence is normal, after seeing it as a mundane practice (Hamburg, 1998; Tolan & Guerra, 1994) in neighborhoods or other more remote locations, such as Iraq's invasion. Why are we trying to fix children, while

it is ourselves who are in dire need of intervention? Our values (and actions) are passed down to new generations, and it is some of those values that need to be scrutinized.

This brings the discussion to one of **morality**, and some discrepancies noted by this group between adult expectations of youth and their own adult behaviors. Recurrently, the students interpreted violence in conjunction with the *role of adult responsibilities*. The students expressed disappointment about being socialized in a violent society, whether it happened at home in the form of abuse, through capitalist profits from video games and the music/movies industry, or by watching current governmental ‘diplomacies of violence’. Such adult failure to protect youth made this group suggest that the first to learn violence prevention, and therefore assume more responsibility, were adults.

Another finding reflective of youth rationalization around curricular design is that students **discussed the various elements of prevention (e.g., causes, types, strategies) concomitantly, rather than as independent entities**. Although the Youth Curriculum had distinct sessions, the students collapsed types, statistics and causes of violence into one introductory session, to give learners a more complex first encounter with the phenomenon at hand. Similarly, the session on Emotions created by this youth group could stand on its own because it contains all essential components for understanding violence (types, causes, emotions, and strategies). This finding suggests that these youth preferred to look at the phenomenon of violence as a whole, in order to better understand its array of social intentions, motivations and acts.

More evidence of the sophistication of the Youth Curriculum is that it contained a more complex configuration of prevention strategies in **an extended Prevention Session**. The Adult Curriculum’s rather elementary approach offered its learners three solutions,

namely fight, flight or other. Our group found the fight or flight response to be an insufficient reaction given the real world's diverse situations that require more 'creativity' in finding an appropriate preventive strategy. While the Adult Curriculum's "other" strategies were to be brainstormed by students (as in our project), they remained confined to interpersonal conflict. To the Adult Curriculum's main strategy (Throwing a Curve to pleasantly surprise the opponent), our group added a myriad of other strategies. While one could argue that these are equivalent to the "other" strategies prompted by the Adult Curriculum, they reach beyond small scale conflict and stratify prevention. Specifically, the Youth Curriculum strategies have a three-layer configuration: strategies applied *before* any action is taken, *concrete strategies* and strategies reflective of the group's *social responsibility* for prevention. These qualities make youth strategies more complex and fit for the 'real-life' that the group so adamantly wanted to address.

Indeed, the students needed to make **the curriculum extremely practical and reflective of real life**, in order for it to have meaning for its learners/creators. Tolan and Guerra (1994) found that the most effective programs connected the learning of prevention skills with the need for them in real life. In our project, the students' objections to school knowledge that lacked in applicability to outside circumstances were incessant. Consequently, *the youth curriculum is a response to immediate social concerns*, such as the need for confidentiality in order to build up courage to talk with adults about dangerous situations; or self-defense classes that teach them to disable an opponent without serious or fatal injuries. To account for ideas of this nature, the group created a *Resources* section. Further, giving *experiential examples* to support their arguments helped students make conceptual progress. Students brought into the

curriculum their *concrete* a priori knowledge, which suggests that they understood that permeability can make learning more pertinent, and therefore effective.

In order to transform school pedagogical practices to resemble student-centered learning in alternative spaces (like the one in World Youth), practitioners and researchers may wish to explore **the role of affect in academic achievement** and adjust their methods accordingly. I found students' affinity, which is a form of affect towards certain content and activities, to be a condition for increased student interest. Participation in something that is appealing and relevant seems to stir an interest in students and provide them with motivation to learn (Sleeter & Grant, 1991). Further, for something to be engaging, students and curricular perspectives need to share some common grounds. Towards that purpose, I demonstrated the instrumentality of *permeability* as a process that integrates youth and scientific knowledge.

As a last major youth unique contribution, the *Emotions Session* accounts for the central role played by emotions vis-à-vis violence. The youth group, as stated previously, was constituted of girls. It has been suggested that exploring emotions in a systematic manner serves a purpose for girls. Underwood (2003) states that, from the time gender identity begins to emerge, girls are socialized such that anger is a component of their hostile social interactions (more so than for boys). *Relational aggression* has developmental purposes, and the girls' equivalent of boys' physical confrontations are gossip, social exclusion or friendship manipulation. My findings suggest that prevention programs should devote adequate time to exploring the complex role of emotions vis-à-vis conflict and violence. For mixed genders groups (which is usually the case), adopting

a permeability paradigm will allow both girls and boys to signal the kinds of concepts and behaviors that are important to them, therefore requiring a place in a curriculum.

### The Youth Curriculum's Place in the Field of Violence Prevention

How does the Youth Curriculum fit into the field, and what does it contribute to the tradition of violence prevention? If classified by the taxonomies used in violence prevention reviews or meta-analyses (see first part of this dissertation), the Youth Curriculum has characteristics of **primary prevention**, meaning that it is not intended specifically for delinquent students, but for everyone who is part of a learning site, be it formal schooling, after-school/youth groups or other organizations. Further, it is not limited to issues of individual scale, but thoroughly **examines and addresses violence and individuals at all levels of society**. The product of this group's work resonates with theorists like Tolan and Guerra (1994) who find that prevention is effective when its audience extends beyond students, and to their families and communities. The Youth Curriculum's third category of strategies ("Prevention Beyond Oneself") raises awareness of students' (and our) responsibility to make prevention a communal effort.

Clayton et al. (2001) found that many programs target youth who are perceived to have deficiencies in terms of aggression, impulsivity, control or self-esteem. However, the role of a meaningful education, critical thinking, supportive environments and large socio-political issues within which young people conduct their lives have begun to emerge as important variables in prevention. Similarly, the Youth Curriculum distinguishes itself from medical/individual/psychopathological models and it is founded on what Fagan and Wilkinson (1998) call 'situated transactions'. In other words, **the**

**Youth Curriculum is *fundamentally social*** in its conceptualization of the etiology, types, functions, consequences and solutions to violence. It also contains components found separately in existing curricula/programs (see introduction): *cognitive-behavioral* as outlined by Clayton et al. (2001) (analyses of the cause and effect relationship between intentions and actions); *emotional* as addressed by Spencer et al. (2003) (reflection on the role of emotions in violence); and *skill-based* as reviewed by Clayton et al. (2001) (strategies to avoiding conflict and managing negative emotions).

In summary, there were advantages in having youth create a curriculum which compensated for some of the shortcomings of the current field of violence prevention. The students indicated that violence prevention is not simple and that the field would benefit from (1) shifting its understanding of violence as an individual problem to viewing individuals within their social systems (Daiute et al., 2001, 2003; Elliot et al., 1998; Fagan & Wilkinson, 1998; Price & Everett, 1997; Tolan & Guerra, 1994), and from (2) addressing controversial issues, including justified violence, functions and etiology of violence, and violence and social justice. The group's contributions are essential given that, as Howard et al. (1999) stated, none of the programs they examined asked students to reflect on their place in social networks of transactions and relations of power behind violence. This group did not bypass such issues, but viewed individual acts of violence as reactions to having to operate in systems of inequality.

Lastly, from the review of prevention programs in the introduction of this dissertation, it appears that the field of prevention is not prepared to address **violence as a global problem with local implications**. The students in this group indicated that these matters are nonetheless a concern for young people. Continued youth participation

would provide curricula with much needed missing/ignored/purposely omitted perspectives. The next section moves vertically, from the textual level of the two curricula, to the practices behind these distinct modes of learning.

### Implications of Permeability for Development and Education

In this section I integrate my findings regarding the Process and Pedagogy of permeability, with previous theory, research and practice on issues of development and education. I also continue to summarize concrete ways in which permeability manifested itself in our activities and learning principles.

#### A Flexible Plan for Curricular Transformation

A learning practice that engages students is open to change, as a response to student needs, which are manifested in collaborations among themselves and with the adult educator (Dyson, 1993; Gutierréz et al., 1999). As expected, the **students altered** not just the Adult Curriculum, but also **my proposed ways in which to tackle the content**. I underestimated the time they needed to spend exploring their perspective on education and violence before selecting a curriculum to transform. Whereas the initial discussion of youth perspectives during the first focus group was accomplished with ease, the creation of a Youth Curriculum Table of Contents and Curriculum Overview was more challenging, as these were the first phases of the project where the students had to synthesize ideas, organize them into categories and succinctly describe them in the overview. Even more difficult to accomplish was the design of the two youth sessions, and, consequently, both groups prolonged their allotted time. Further, their teaching of

the sessions to each other mimicked the pedagogy and processes with which they are familiar from their school experiences. Extending the time needed for task completion is a result of the considerable leap within a ZPD that students have to make in order to synthesize and organize information in a formal manner (e.g., designing a session). Therefore, I found that flexibility in adjusting the phases of a project to accommodate student patterns was essential for a permeable process.

Another finding related to Process was my having to **reiterate our goals and the students' new positions as agents**, given that the group seemed to have a difficult time transitioning both conceptually and practically from their school passive selves to those proposed by our participatory process of permeability. Further, the students did not manage to completely blur the boundaries between the roles of students and teachers, and the latter remained the ultimate power holders. As stated earlier, being socialized as a learner in a new way requires more time and experience than our project provided. Nonetheless, as various excerpts from our last focus group showed, the students had a clear awareness of the essential differences between their role of knowledge *transformers* in our group (and World Youth) and that of knowledge *tellers* in their schools (Breiter & Scardamalia, 1987). This shift, yet incomplete, indicates a successful intervention.

### Adult Scaffolding and the Transformation Process

Daiute et al. (1993) suggested that teachers could intervene to organize students' inert knowledge and catalyze progress when students seem to have exhausted their resources in trying to tackle an academic task. I identified **six types of interventions or scaffolding patterns** I used in the present study. Briefly, I oriented the group towards

goals and tasks; summarized our decisions; provided explanations to students' questions; posed questions to create ZPDs at turning points in their argument development; restated students' ideas to clarify or connect them to scientific concepts in the Adult Curriculum; posed questions to invite a priori youth knowledge. It appeared that only my restating of students' ideas to help them see their pertinence vis-à-vis violence prevention was associated with increased permeability.

It could be argued that my other types of scaffolding (e.g., explanations, posing directive questions and asking specific questions of my own) involved more control on my side and facilitated low to moderate permeability. This is supported by my findings of permeability as a function of task control, meaning that the more control I assumed, the less permeability to student ideas occurred. However, I found that the more difficult the task at hand, the more frequent and directive my interventions had to become.

I participated the least in directing the flow of events when I invited the group to explore their a priori knowledge, or, when the group took control and had a high interest in a task (like writing skits), manifesting an independence that was productive and led to original knowledge creation. In those instances, I was either an observer or an equal contributor, working side by side with the students towards problem-solving. These processes seemed to be conducive of permeability and suggest how teachers need to reposition themselves in order to allow for student originality to manifest itself.

Thus, an educator in a permeable setting needs to scaffold students transform concepts by using their a priori knowledge. However, the educator needs to be apprehensive about not imposing adult goals, which would curtail permeability. Perhaps the distinction between scaffolding as a *guided discussion* (which I tried to implement

here) and scaffolding as *adult directive control* (as the Adult Curriculum employed) may be key to crafting supports to increase permeability. The section on recommendations for future research provides more insights on this important issue.

### Youth Processes of Knowledge Transformation

This aspect of our project supports and contributes to previous developmental theories on the **advantages of peer collaboration** (Daiute & Dalton, 1993; Daiute et al., 1993; Forman & Cazden, 1985; Sapon-Shevin & Schniedewind, 1991; Solis, 2002; Vygotsky, 1978) and group work (Cohen, 1994). There were a few types of peer collaboration, all of which rested on a basic *mechanism of peer scaffolding*. The group collaborated by **contributing sequentially** to each others' points, layering argument after argument. They also **helped and clarified concepts for peers**, which acted as a proxy for conventional adult scaffolding. The students engaged in **cognitive conflict** (Daiute & Dalton, 1993), or disagreement, contesting and arguing, which helped them examine their own and peers' thoughts, leading to idea building and clarification. However, the element of youth process that proved to be highly instrumental in the group's critical evaluation of the Adult Curriculum was their **resistance** to perspectives which they found incomplete or in disagreement with their beliefs. Resistance, as a facilitator of permeability, allowed students to take action towards either altering or eliminating selected concepts of the Adult Curriculum. The unique aspects of the Youth Curriculum (mainly the Grey Areas and Emotions sessions) were a result of the scrutiny to which they subjected the Adult Curriculum.

Another specific way of peer interaction was their **affective and playful talk**, such as teasing and humorous interjections during collaborative examination of concepts. This was a way for students to create *social contexts of comfort*, which seemed to mediate youth's contributions of a priori knowledge to the curriculum. Handling concepts may be optimized under student-determined conditions conducive of exploration of content away from strictly imposed rules, such as talking when prompted, limiting oneself to academic talk, or keeping peer-talk to a minimum to increase teacher-student talk.

A data example from Daiute et al.'s (2003) study of unique children perspectives on conflict resolution, promoted by the VLF curriculum (Walker, 1998), shows a pair of students slowly building a conflict among their fictitious characters, when they were interrupted and redirected by the teacher who demanded that they gave their story a 'good ending'. The students obeyed and agreed that they would 'save' the confrontational scene for a different chapter of their story. Such adult interventions, which were justified in this rather traditional teaching of the curriculum, disrupted the fragile social context of comfort improvised by the two boys on the margins, in order to build the story line in which they had an interest. Being that the story was unlikely to end peacefully, the pair was resisting the pacifist curriculum, which may be viewed as students' internalizing a message that contradicts the curriculum. Is this an indication that the curriculum did not have its intended impact, and if so, how can educators be aware of this outcome if such student-talk continues to have the status of counterscripts (Gutiérrez et al., 1999) or unofficial curricula (Dyson, 1993)? Violence prevention (and other academic subjects) could only benefit from an accurate assessment of its impact, from which to learn what specific elements need adjustment. Student original thinking cannot happen in learning

environments that are inflexible and imposed, but only in a supportive permeable environment where students can create contexts conducive of contributions to learning.

The last two elements of youth process were **impromptu discussions** and **chaos episodes**. The first resembled Daiute et al.'s (1993) 'initiating', which marks the students' introduction of their perspectives. The impromptu discussions were relevant in our process due to their spontaneity and role as catalysts in shifting the focus of a discussion in a new direction. This was a characteristically student-directed strategy that can be combined with those of teachers to create more balanced power dynamics. Lastly, the *chaos episodes* were intense events of discovery during which our conversations were disorganized and appeared off track, however, in every case, they led the group to finding a solution to a given question. Any of the elements described above may be employed during a chaos episode; the unpredictable content and direction of these discussions seemed to be necessary for students to sort and understand concepts.

The data show students' abilities to create curriculum, as well as the manner and conditions under which that is possible. We challenge original formulations of ZPDs as created exclusively by an expert (adult) – novice (youth) relationship. We supported the benefits of peer learning and construction of knowledge, especially instrumental in introducing missing diverse youth points of view. The next section addresses *our pedagogical decisions* as specific principles behind the processes of permeability.

### Re-Positioning Learning Roles in Education

I employed *positioning theory* (Davies & Harré, 1990; Harré & van Langenhove, 1991; Bamberg, 2004), a type of discursive/narrative analysis (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004), to explain how the specific positions we adopted, based on collective decisions,

helped us restructure traditional classroom power relations that are unequal and put students at a disadvantage. According to Harré and van Langenhove (1991), the self and others are created during discursive practices through positioning, while all the parties have opportunities to negotiate new positions. I claim that, starting with my proposal of redistributing power, the students and I engaged in creating and recreating our selves as agents of knowledge transformation. Below, I use Harré & van Langenhove's (1991) positioning terminology to summarize my findings.

The **pedagogy of permeability** is facilitated by specific types of positioning. Given the mutuality of positioning and goals of a permeable education, it is difficult to present youth pedagogies separate from my own. I first *positioned myself* ('deliberate self-positioning'), and then *was positioned by the group* ('deliberate positioning of others'), as a guide, observer, and listener, rather than a teacher. The students described most (not all) of their teachers as authoritative, generally not engaged with their students, and interested in conveying curriculum, many times straight from the book and 'tied' to the board. Echoing Nieto's (1994) findings, this group felt shut out and disconnected from school when the pedagogy was one of 'chalk and talk'. This constitutes a 'forced positioning of others', where *schools positioned students, despite their preferences, as passive and unable to determine their own developmental course*.

The introduction to this dissertation devotes attention to the evolution of educational models, from Hirsch's "cultural literacy" (1987) to "critical multiculturalism" (May, 1999; Obidah, 2000; Sleeter & Delgado Bernal, 2004). Contrary to this paper's belief of the need for student participation in learning, Hirsch (1987) and Reid-Wallace (1995) associate student agency with lack of rigor and discipline, and recommend that children

are presented with a systematic transmission of specific, standard, and pre-determined cultural information. Freire (1970) labels this method as a “banking system” of education, where filling passive students with pre-processed, often irrelevant information should be subject to reform. I agree with Freire’s conviction that learning in a progressive education nurtures student discovery, a desired process towards healthy youth development, and a likely outcome of a permeable pedagogy.

Below is an example of how pedagogies congruent with those proposed by individuals like Hirsch, namely of ‘forced positioning of others’, affect students. In their student-centered research, Fallis and Opatow (2003) found that ‘class cutting’ was a response to schools’ intransigence to student preferences or contributions. Boredom with educational content, and teacher disinterest and low expectations caused students to feel disrespected by their educators’ unwillingness or inability to challenge and keep them enthusiastic about learning. Fallis and Opatow (2003) characterized “class cutting as symptomatic of structural violence” (p. 108) and a coping mechanism against “moral exclusion” (p. 112). Student critical awareness of how they are positioned by schools is mostly ignored at institutional-systemic levels that deprive students of fair opportunities for success and write them off as behaviorally, intellectually and morally deficient (Fallis & Opatow, 2003). The above suggests how the institution of education (teachers being mere executors of the system’s pedagogical guidelines) *forcibly positions* its apprentices. Students can position neither themselves nor their teachers.

Although the students positioned me as a guide, they were also aware of my power. I was still an authority, but I was not the only one. I *shared my power*, while I maintained a collaborative stance. As I positioned students, I invited them to both position

themselves and me. Despite my authority as the group's facilitator, we *took turns in assuming positions of initiators and negotiators of concepts*, as we conversed to transform knowledge. As Lucy recognized in our last focus group, with the power of influencing learning, a privilege for students in her view, came a new responsibility. Being in charge of all aspects of learning was something to be taken seriously and "just showing up" remained in the domain of passive student roles.

The identities of public school students, as narrated by the youth, are good indicators of those institutions' pedagogies. They presented powerful discourses of unidirectional learning, student limited time to speak, un-engaging and even punitive student-teacher relationships. The group also commented on a lack of teacher-student perspective coordination, whose differences are not used towards productive knowledge exchanges in third spaces, as Gutierréz et al., 1999 suggest, but as bases for maintaining two separate social classes of education- its teachers and its students. School knowledge, as a product of its pedagogy, was static and often superfluous.

The group placed the pedagogies of World Youth and those of our project at the other end of the spectrum, given their collaborative and participatory philosophies. The knowledge was interesting, relevant to their lives, and more likely to be internalized for longer duration. It also was transformative of students, helping them become critical thinkers. Students' discourses of school and after-school experiences had affective qualities, the first being negative, and the second being positive and rewarding.

Our own group allowed students to be positioned, position others and themselves as agentive, which gave them, for the first time, the power of authorship, which translated

into the privilege of owning intellectual property. The students also assumed pedagogical roles, in a collaborative, not authoritative, manner.

### Permeability Extends Similar Models of Youth Participation in Learning

This project is clearly embedded in and inspired by previous theories of learning in formal and informal settings. Whether we wish to label ourselves as progressivists or critical multiculturalists, we agree that we need to replace a pedagogy that is static, limiting(ed) and oppressive with one that is co-emancipatory, socially and culturally grounded and in flux due to a perpetual collaborative reconstruction. Gutierrez et al.'s (1999) work on **the third space** introduced earlier intends to bridge home and school cultures, as a mechanism for positive development of diverse students. The third space and hybridity are used to move across differences and share the complementary bodies of knowledge brought into a common arena. In this paradigm, educators need to be extremely perceptive of their students' reactions to the curriculum and their contributions, which will probably take the class into a different direction than originally planned.

However, it did not appear, from the students' talk, that they *transformed* the curriculum through original additions. Student participation was more like our processes of *extension* or *modification* of the Adult Curriculum, which resulted in low degrees of permeability. Whereas this type of learning begins to recognize the diversity of perspectives in a classroom given that it is "disharmonious... polycontextual, [and] multivoiced" (Gutierrez et al., 1999, p. 287), it is not clear what kind of position the hybrid knowledge assumes in the formal learning space, once it is created. Although student talk created relevant ZPDs, it remained encased in a rather traditional power

differential, as the teacher led the flow of arguments and the students learned mainly untransformed scientific knowledge. The teacher did not learn anything new, because the paradigm did not give students the option to position their teacher as a novice.

Gutiérrez et al.'s (1999) third space seems to be the equivalent of Phase 1 in the Sequence of Permeability (see Figure 1 in Methods chapter). Yes, student interest and questions are welcomed, but the process resembles knowledge telling rather than transforming (Breiter & Scardamalia, 1987). Our permeability extends the groundbreaking third space by attaching to it additional transformative steps, bolder power shifts and more radical changes in scientific knowledge. Once these occur to maximize the potential of the third space as a ZPD, the resulting knowledge will be truly hybridic.

As stated earlier, a model of learning that comes closer to ours is Dyson's (1993) own formulation of a **permeable curriculum**. Learning that invited youth input and decisions while acquiring writing skills was effective and necessary for a meaningful educational experience. Dyson viewed writing as a social act and conveyor of cultural meaning; however, inflexible school practices around literacy have disconnected it from social discourses. Permeability, Dyson argued, depends "on classroom social structures that make sensible diverse kinds of social action and test sense" (p. 217), given that the teacher creates conditions for students and him/herself to challenge rigid traditional literacy practices. The teacher in whose classroom Dyson gathered her data invited students to participate in various imaginative spheres. She encouraged them to resort to verbal traditions of the African-American community, which they expressed verbally and in writing, as meaningful social acts of interaction with peers and the teacher.

However, it appears that Dyson (1993) followed a reasoning similar to Lee's (1993, 2000) use of students' knowledge of *signifying* as a scaffolding tool for teaching complex elements of literary interpretation (see my introduction for details). In these two approaches, youth's "funds of knowledge" are employed towards learning scientific concepts, while transformation of knowledge by original contributions is insubstantial or lacking. Permeability should reach beyond employing a priori knowledge for internalizing already established (and often static) bodies of knowledge. This dissertation extends Dyson's original work to provide specifications of permeability as a complex model of education with multiple components, facilitating conditions and processes.

I view permeability as part of many educators' and researchers' efforts to obliterate unidirectional learning and begin respecting students as potentially important contributors in learning, given an appropriately dialogical pedagogy and process. I claim that permeability is a key mechanism for achieving an affirmative education for all students, who need to become agents in their development. As I slowly built a case in the previous chapters for its need in education and its characteristics, I proceed to summarize the conditions and sequence of events that make permeability possible.

### Permeability as a System for Participatory Youth Development in Learning

This dissertation does not pioneer recommendations for participatory learning in schools. Depending on circumstances, institutions and individual teachers, student involvement is valued in various ways. Youth participation is contingent upon the degree to which students are invited to be active and whether or not their knowledge is making a concrete difference in transforming formal concepts. Often, participation is poorly

operationalized, and to understand the importance of the ways in/degrees to which young people are active, I will revisit Hart's (1997) ladder of participation reviewed earlier.

Hart suggests that participation that is adult controlled and directed serves adults and does not empower youth. Our project was not student-initiated, therefore does not fall on Hart's (1997) highest rung of participation, namely *child initiated shared decisions with adults*. I would suggest that our model of permeability is somewhere in between what Hart classified as (a) *adult-initiated* models in which *decisions are shared with children* (given our collaborative activities) and (b) *child-initiated and directed* projects (given the original work by youth independent from my intervention). Hart believes that the latter appear mainly in children's play, where they unfold secretly. If placed in the educational contexts discussed in this dissertation, child-initiated and directed projects may be considered the equivalents of student *unofficial curricula* (Dyson, 1993). Further, our Sequence of Permeability gave these previously 'secretive' or unacknowledged exchanges of youth knowledge a formal status.

Bringing the discussion back to traditions in education, I mentioned earlier the critics' views on the pitfalls of multiculturalism, whose noble intentions were cut short by its becoming a practice that reduced diversity to simplistic representations. Just because a practice labels itself as multicultural, it does not mean that it validates and nurtures the multiple student perspectives in the class. The reality of imposing mainstream values continues to exist and has helped the perpetuation of the dominant group's power and discourses. The veracity of student participation in knowledge creation parallels these two arguments (Hart's taxonomy of participation and the shortcomings of multiculturalism) and this project begins (as the tip of an iceberg) to

outline some ways in which the commitment to youth development as valuable contributors can be undertaken.

Pedagogy, although the last to be described in this dissertation's array of main concepts, seems to be the first phase in opening the Permeability Gate (see Sequence of Permeability in the Methods chapter). If an adult invitation for youth perspectives does not exist, none of the subsequent possibilities for permeability to Content and Process would have a chance to take shape. Our project provides the specifications of a *permeable education* and is a step by step guide for three key aspects of formal learning that accommodates diverse student views: curriculum (Content), activities (Process) and underlying principles (Pedagogy). These converge to form the Sequence of Permeability first mentioned in the Methods chapter and represented in Figure 1.

### The Sequence of Permeability

To reiterate, **permeability** is a complex succession of events and conditions that invite student perspectives to enter formal educational spaces and complement curricula to increase their pertinence to young people. In order for permeability to occur, **first** (*Phase 1*) **the adult invites students to tap onto their a priori knowledge** in connection to scientific questions (see Figure 1 in the Methods chapter). This act **opens a Permeability Gate** (*Phase 2*), through which the **youth contribute their spontaneous concepts** from previous experiences (formal or informal learning). That knowledge is **accepted or rejected through negotiation** and possible fusion with the scientific concepts after social interaction around meaning (*Phase 3*). The **new hybrid knowledge** is formally recognized as a valid educational artifact (*Phase 4*).

It is important to recognize that knowledge does not only enter the learning space, but once internalized, its carriers use the Permeability Gate once more to take concepts outside and use them to contribute towards all the other sources they used to build their previous knowledge (*Phase 5*). This leads to a multidirectional flow of knowledge, which makes the Permeability Gate a two-way door. This last phase is necessary in order for the youth's new positions as knowledge transformers to be validated through practice beyond the initiating experience. Applying the new knowledge and skills in another context (e.g., in interactions with community members or other learning contexts) will further the youth's agentic abilities and validate their creative process.

### Degrees of Permeability

Table 4 in the Methods chapter outlines the conditions that have the capacity to influence the degree to which permeability occurs. Contingent upon the *degree* to which the conditions of permeability are met, any given exchange around knowledge can be classified on a continuum of low, moderate and high permeability. It became clear from the multitude of data examples in this study that (1) the more intense the discussion is around a concept(s), (2) the more a priori knowledge is employed and (3) the less the task is imposed/controlled by the educator, the higher the permeability and therefore the possibility for transformation of knowledge.

The first two conditions (intense youth discussions based on numerous sources of knowledge) are contingent upon the third, or the amount of control assumed by the adult educator. Figure 2 in chapter 4 illustrated how the more adult-directed (in terms of goals for learning) the task, the less permeability occurred. I also conclude that the degrees of permeability are not influenced by the *frequency* of adult scaffolding, but by the type of

instruction/scaffolding employed by the adult. If the scaffolding is done to promote student needs rather than adult goals, permeability increases.

Permeability is both a theoretical model of education, and a practical application. It is theoretical because it represents an **educational paradigm** and falls in the line of research of progressive education. This includes the pedagogical aspect of the model which is in the tradition of critical multiculturalism. Further fine-grained analyses of these data could bring contributions to **theories of development in the socio-cultural tradition** by investigation the concepts of *zone of proximal development* and *scaffolding*, *novice-expert relationships*, and *collaboration*. Permeability is operationalized and embodied through specific processes, which I claim are conducive of participatory learning and describe in chapter 4. The outcomes of permeability as a theory and practice are visible in the content that is produced as a result of its application, and the transformation of novice-master positions.

## Project Strengths

### The Advantages of Permeability

I have repeatedly stressed throughout this dissertation the benefits of adopting permeability as a learning paradigm. I will only briefly mention these ideas here. I view **permeability as an arm of critical multiculturalism**, therefore making theoretical and practical contributions to the long tradition of reforming education. As a practice, it ensures student meaningful participation in what they learn. This in turn enables youth to contribute to our society's changing bodies of knowledge, and it protects them from

experiencing forced positioning to assimilate concepts that perpetuate the discourses of those in power and eradicate diversity.

As mentioned in the previous section, the data generated by this project allowed me to delineate specific steps in implementing permeability, and the conditions that can maximize its potential. As constituents of the sequence and conditions of permeability, I was able to model and then analyze in detail three important aspects of learning, namely content, process and pedagogy.

### Youth Development

Through participatory learning, students had the opportunity to make decisions vis-à-vis knowledge and personal development. Co-construction of curricula requires critical thinking and planning, which may not be experienced or experienced to a high degree in other circumstances. Further, students learned/practiced negotiation skills, which often require tact and significant strategizing.

Participation also require students to think beyond a lesson plan and a grade, as our project compelled the youth to apply their knowledge to educate others, from elementary school students to adults. Contributions to curricula involve students in understanding (and changing!) not only the purpose of education, but also in becoming aware of the infrastructures of their schools and education in general. The students even began considering the feasibility of introducing such learning in their schools, by reflecting on time (heavy loads due to teaching to the test) and resource constraints (budgets). This type of analysis is similar to administrative planning, in which students are not customarily involved.

## The Extended Potential of These Data Beyond This Dissertation

An issue I encountered in the planning phases of my analysis was the difficulty of deciding which analyses to include and which to set aside for future data exploration.

The complexity of the project lent itself to multiple types of data, which could be interpreted in numerous ways to present their significance for practice, theory and research. The next paragraphs briefly mention the types of data analysis not included here, but which could further show the relevance of this type of learning paradigm.

Given that permeability was a master concept, I created subordinate codes to provide descriptions of its various aspects. I did not apply a specific permeability code and developed the permeability continuum late in the analysis stages and only applied it to a few transcripts. Using the low-moderate-high codes for the entire data set may elucidate even more specific conditions of permeability.

The contributions of individual students were not the focus of this dissertation, as my unit of analysis was the youth group as a whole. However, during our sessions and later in the analysis stages, it appeared that most of the students had specific roles in thrusting the group into various ZPDs. One example is the boisterous Lucy, whose provocative remarks took us to new understandings of violence and education. One idea for future analyses of individual student interventions builds yet again on the peer collaboration literature, where novices make progress due to their complementary a priori knowledge (Daiute et al., 2001), and these data may make further contributions to this theory. The data could also be examined in support of the hypothesis that youth participation alongside the teacher is advantageous because it could lead to a *heterogeneous* type of

pedagogy (that of the teacher and the students combined). This can be investigated by documenting the qualities of individual student contributions.

The students made references to children's rights (although indirectly), especially to those of *nurturance*. Their discussions of the need for proper adult role models and increased responsibility for protecting youth from violence represent, in my understanding, an opportunity to further explore these indications in conjunction with the literature on youth rights.

Additionally, I believe that the Youth Curriculum's skits merit a more in-depth analysis. The goal would not be to compare them to those in the Adult Curriculum, but to view them independently and in connection to theories of play and imagination, and their role in learning and development. The skits serve as important mediators for learning, and are symbolic representations of realities that are relevant to students; therefore, they carry quintessential youth perspectives.

Lastly, as I transition the discussion towards the project's limitations, my identity as a researcher of educational issues and not of a practitioner/educator was both beneficial and limiting. It was advantageous because I did not need to make an effort to disassociate myself from traditional teaching practices I may have acquired had I been an educator. I was also more easily able to think as a student and 'pick up on' their perspectives. Not displaying traditional teacher qualities may have helped the group perceive me as less authoritative and more as a partner. However, my lack of teaching experience put me at a disadvantage in terms of pacing the project, knowing when and how to intervene, or how to better scaffold the design sessions. The next section presents a few more issues of this nature.

## Project Limitations

First I will address (1) some issues related to decisions I made at a project level, (2) after which I will employ once more the categories of analysis I have chosen (Content, Process and Pedagogy) as useful organizers for presenting the limitations of the Youth Curriculum.

### Project Level Limitations:

#### Dated Adult Curriculum

I selected The Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents (Prothrow-Stith, 1987) as a candidate for student transformation because of its reviews in separate reports (Kopka, 1997; Larson, 1994). The curriculum was widely used in high-schools and it involved student participation. However, it is a relatively old curriculum, and, as the students pointed out on a few occasions, ‘things have changed since the 80s’. There were words/expressions in the Adult Curriculum that were not used by the students in their daily interactions, inside or outside of school: “chump”, or “girls are mustards”. However, more importantly, some violence-related practices that exist today were not a concern when this curriculum was written. The Adult Curriculum does not account for issues such as today’s easy access to firearms (even for children) (Clayton et al., 2001), school shootings or video-games. Some discrepancies between youth and adult views may have been confounded with the Adult Curriculum’s having been created for a different generation, and led to inflated differences.

#### Medical/public health orientation of adult curriculum

Deborah Prothrow-Stith (1987) is an MD, who gave preference for a more medical understanding of violence, rather than a social one. Although the curriculum emphasized interpersonal violence created by social interactions, elements such as “How weapons injure and kill” (p. 33, descriptions of the physical effects of a bullet such as heavy bleeding, asphyxiation, the body’s going into shock and systems shutting down, etc), the effects of alcohol on the brain (p. 27, chart and discussion of the limbic system, brain stem and cortex), or physiological effects of anger (p. 45, adrenalin release, breathing and heart rate accelerations, blood pressure rises) show that the presentation of violence is laden with physical aspects, rather than perspective taking, for example. The Voices of Love and Freedom prevention program (Walker, 1998) reviewed earlier is an example of a curriculum that is concerned with social issues of diversity and discrimination, which seemed to have been elements of interest for this group as well. A different Youth Curriculum would have probably emerged from the group’s analysis of a more socially oriented curriculum.

#### Civic education and academic abilities of this group

The highly critical remarks made by this group at various points in the project show their aware of discourses of inequality, oppressions and important global issues. These students’ interest in social justice and their very participation in World Youth sets them apart from average public school youth. World Youth’s mission “is to prepare urban youth to become global citizens and community leaders [and] ... to ensure that young people of diverse backgrounds have the knowledge, skills, and experiences they need to succeed in the workplace and participate in the shaping of public policy and international

relations” (World Youth, May 3 2006). The students’ involvement with activism in World Youth shows their interest in crossing boundaries of tradition and conventions. While I regard these students as ‘elite’ and admire their performance in this project, I am also aware that the project would have taken a different course had the participants not been as highly selective as this group. The findings of this project may not apply to other public school urban student, yet, as this dissertation proposes, every time an official curriculum is transformed, the result should be different and reflective of the different identities of its young authors.

### Gender

Another limitation came from the fact that we had an all girls group (one boy attended once). When asked what they would change about our project, the girls recognized that female and male perspectives are different and both are needed to have a well rounded curriculum.

Perceptions of violence, as well as its manifestations are significantly different for girls than for boys (Underwood, 2003). Underwood (2003) states that girls tend to be more focused on friendships, and their aggression remained unnoticed for a long time because researchers and practitioners targeted boys alone. However, despite the fact that they engage in more aggressive social behavior rather than direct physical violence, conflict among girls has serious consequences, such as social exclusion (Underwood, 2003). The girls in our group narrated on a few occasions personal incidents of verbal conflict and physical violence, which resonate with Underwood’s (2003) claims. She notes that girls’ displays of aggression are more among the lines of gossiping, backstabbing, ruining the adversaries’ friendships or reputation. Although these actions may

not be considered as dangerous as is boys' physical violence, they are cause significant distress among girls and sometimes lead to physical violence (Underwood, 2003).

The participants' gender most likely determined some of the qualities of the Youth Curriculum, given its new session on Emotions and the group's recurrent concern with love-hate relationships. Our outcomes would have been different, had I been successful in my efforts to include boys in this group (a few showed interest but did not follow through).

As our project was developing, I worked with a second group of students (let's call it the *third group* given that at one point in this dissertation I mentioned that my first group had split into two for the design sessions). I followed the same research questions and methodology. Given that this section is dedicated to limitations due to gender homogeneity, I would like to make references to this group first in connection to its gender composition. I chose to address the third group only in the project's limitations section due to the tense relationship we had in working together.

The third group was composed of more boys than girls (7 boys and 5 girls), and the dynamics were considerably different from those in the all girls group. Briefly, two incidents of violence occurred during our sessions. One occurred when a boy pulled another boy's chair as he was sitting down. He fell, jumped up and ran after the first boy. The whole group stormed out into the hallway to see the fight (the first boy was beat up), and accidentally threw me against the wall with force. The second incident occurred when three boys presented a skit of an escalating conflict that was to culminate into a physical fight. They did not stop before starting the fight (as I had asked them) and threw each other on the floor, until a staff member walked in and put an end to it. I gave this

example not to pigeonhole boys as perpetrators, but to suggest that a project's dynamics are likely to be different in a group where boys are present, as were the group's more crude and graphic narratives of violence in which they participated or witnessed.

#### Other aspects of my work with the 'third group'

Appendix H contains my field notes describing my last session with the third group. Briefly, we had a highly confrontational relationship throughout the entire project, due to their inappropriate behavior (mostly towards each other and some towards me), such as cursing, hitting each other (not me), screaming, banging on furniture and making remarks towards me that I found offensive (e.g., "just give us the money and go"). A few adults from this youth center (not affiliated with World Youth) came in for the first few sessions to control the group, and some students were not allowed to come back (by the center) for misbehaving.

The group challenged me every step of the way, testing their boundaries. In order to get through a session, I resorted to teaching the Adult Curriculum in a traditional manner. The group was involved by answering questions and brainstorming, but we never departed from the teachings of the Adult Curriculum to create unique sessions (or anything close to that, such as a Youth Curriculum Table of Contents). Two main reasons determined me to end our project three sessions early.

First, as seen in my field notes (Appendix H), in our last session, I believed that the students were extremely confrontational and aggressive. They strongly rejected my proposal to introduce them to the first group to exchange information. The meeting of the two groups would have completed our Sequence of Permeability (Phase 5), when the

students who created the Youth Curriculum described in this dissertation would have engaged the third group in a permeable learning act, as they had been engaged by me. The New Knowledge would have been validated by its being *shared and transformed* by this new (across groups) student collaboration.

Secondly, I ended the work with the ‘third group’ early because I had become a punitive authority (by keeping strict rules and even yelling) and taught the Adult Curriculum in the oppressive manner against which I am arguing in this dissertation. This paradox determined me to walk away angrily and disappointed (in myself, but also the students).

Given that I did not analyze these data, I am still grappling with trying to understand the dramatic differences between my two experiences in trying to implement the same project. I even question my decision of placing these descriptions in the limitations section. Although in a way I view the experience with the third group as a failed project, I also know that it generated rich data.

As I propose a curriculum that is transformed every time a new group learns it in a permeable fashion, I can support my theory with these two different experiences. In a way, the third group did write their own curriculum, although I am yet to elucidate what kind of knowledge they generated and why they used such processes. Their curriculum has more *enacted* elements, given that the students’ behavior is extremely telling of intentions, concepts and histories of these students. These youth are probably closer to urban public school students than was the first group, which was different due to reasons described earlier. The third group could generate intriguing findings, and I intend to begin analyzing the data in the near future.

## Limitations of Our Content, Process and Pedagogy

Each of the results chapters contain an example of less than ideal outcomes of our project. Here, I will revisit those aspects to indicate areas where there is room for improvement. First, some shortcomings of the Youth Curriculum's Content were that some types of violence were misclassified by the group who designed the Introduction. As such, *domestic violence* was labeled as International Violence because the students reasoned that it occurs in every country. Similarly, the students occasionally brought to the table incorrect or misrepresented information, especially pertaining to intentions of historical figures or events, such as Gandhi's passive resistance or Malcolm X. Daiute and Dalton (1993) found that, despite instances of incomplete and incorrect knowledge sharing around composition, pertinent learning occurred within peer collaborations, and similarities between expert-novice and peer collaborations were present. Children's intense negotiations over the writing tasks led them to make generalizations about story structures and experiment with new ideas, helping them internalize literacy symbols. Post-collaborative advances in story composition were more noticeable than those made during individual writing sessions.

Interactive composition with peers led to elaborate narratives, and Daiute and Dalton (1993) view such peer work as productive and a good mechanism for learning (as I also argue in this dissertation). To account for such misrepresentations of information that occurred in our group, the adult facilitator could redirect the students. However, this is a delicate task, given that it may interfere with youth creativity and impede (to various degrees depending on circumstances) their knowledge creation. A balance should be

found between necessary interventions and allowing students to explore concepts as this dissertation suggests.

Further, some of the unique perspectives that arose from our verbal exchanges during sessions and made the content interesting were lost when the students formally organized them into a session. For example, the role of racism and discrimination in violence was not discussed in the Youth Curriculum Introduction session in the detailed manner in which they were discussed in our previous intense discovery episodes. As possible explanations for these outcomes, I find that the students would have done better had they had more time to put together the Introduction, or had I given them more feedback. However, it was my intention to be as absent as possible for this last phase, to allow the group to be independent and practice the skill of organizing knowledge, once they had produced it.

Our process probably suffered from my not having extensive teaching experience, thus not always knowing how much time a task may require, or, even more importantly, how much scaffolding (intervention) to provide before converting tasks that are supposed to be student-centered into highly controlled adult activities. Probably the Introduction group could have used more direction from me (which would have prevented them from misclassifying the types of violence mentioned above), which would have made their process of design less burdensome.

Lastly, we did not manage to accomplish a complete transformation in the group's understanding of a pedagogy of permeability. As mentioned in the Pedagogy chapter, the Introduction design group had difficulty separating the roles of teachers and students when preparing their session to be taught. The fact that they made such a crisp

distinction between teachers and students by writing a 'teacher's manual' (not for students) indicated that the group, even at this late stage in our project, had difficulty grasping their positions co-leaders in teaching the curriculum. Neither group employed a participatory approach in their teaching sessions of the Introduction and Emotions sessions. Both their processes and pedagogy resembled traditional learning and teaching. Further, the two design groups' recommendations for process and pedagogy in their sessions were either weak or absent.

### Recommendations for Future Research/Theory and Practice

In this section I propose ways to further define permeability and its constituting processes, from a socio-cultural stance. This section also serves as a response to our project's limitations, described above. My recommendations pertain to (1) sites for implementation and implications for institutional support; (2) suggestions of how this theory could be expanded; (3) methods for practice; (4) evaluation.

#### (1) Sites, Institutional Support and Feasibility

I agree with Hull & Schultz (2002) that the divide between school and out-of-school learning has been too wide and too long lived, and that scientific knowledge could benefit from the unconventional but resourceful development from communities, organizations or informal groups. I conducted this project through a youth organization because I did not anticipate support from schools. One school first suggested that I worked with their students during lunch break, after which they rejected my proposal. However, my goal is to integrate the practice of permeability with school learning.

Institutional (Department of Education, districts and principals) and parental support are crucial. I had difficulty finding organizations willing to collaborate with me, mainly because their institutional infrastructures (including those of youth organizations) were not flexible enough to engage in this project. Further, unless a school is interested in adopting or increasing its progressive (specifically critical multicultural) practices, an implementation of permeability may not be an option. I propose radical changes in pedagogy and student roles, which may be too removed from a school's conceptualization of its identity. For permeability to be practiced in schools, educators would need to re-examine *power relations in the classroom* and see the potential of a permeable education to dissolve the dichotomy between educators as sole knowers and students as not-knowers.

As other progressivists have suggested (Nieto, 1994), schools also ought to revise their *definition of knowledge* to include multiple types that are valid and complementary in many cases. Researchers and scholars like Cook (2005), Dyson (1993), Gutiérrez et al. (1999), Hull & Schultz (2002), Lee (1993, 2000), Moll et al., (1992) and Sleeter and Grant (1991) promoted and/or documented the importance of mining the rich bodies of knowledge to which individuals and groups have access, and of using them as scaffolds in formal learning. I also suggest that such knowledge becomes more than a scaffold, but a permanent, yet in flux due to its social nature, component of school learning. This could be achieved by inviting student knowledge to permeate curriculum.

One should also be prepared for skepticism to permeability by schools, given that, as it stands, their goal is to transmit knowledge without interest in hearing any "ifs and or buts". When asked about implementing this learning in their schools, the group was

enthusiastic, but Asia was skeptical about how well it would serve her in passing standardized testing, which is a product of a banking systems of learning: “Asia: I’d be very happy.. I don’t know if you’d pass the Regents.... [laughs]” . She is right to assume that passing the Regents may not be ensured by knowledge or pedagogies characteristic of World Youth/our project, as long as the separation between school and out-of-school goals, content, processes and pedagogies remains. Instead of leaving it up to the students to navigate between and reconcile these two equally important yet disparate realms of their live, we should find modalities to integrate school and alternative learning.

Finally, high stakes testing has replaced the type of meaningful learning that should take place during school hours (Amrein, 2003; Jones et al., 2003), and changed the rather noble purpose of education of fostering creative young minds. Schools need to change their deeply rooted *ideology* (described in the introduction of this dissertation and by this project’s participants), which is a monumental task. Until these issues are resolved, after-school spaces have began to act as proxies for the more engaging and innovative learning. Although it is essential that schools, as seminal socialization agents, transform themselves to allow for a new student identity, this transition will take time, multi-level efforts and resources. It seems that, at least for the time being, the next steps of this research would benefit more from continuing to develop in alternative learning places (like after-school programs or youth organization), than being introduced in schools prematurely.

## (2) Continued Theory Development

This project was an initial effort to begin outlining the theory of permeability in the socio-cultural tradition (Vygotsky, 1978). It is also intended as a contribution to the long tradition of multiculturalism. There are still numerous questions to be answered about what constitutes permeability and what are the processes that maximize the degree to which student knowledge could inform education. What kind of scaffolding, by whom (adults, peers) and what type of tasks create ZPDs inside which students can critically and productively explore concepts, be they of various presentation types, writing, social studies, etc? What are some new components from which this model could benefit?

### Task Control and Difficulty

The finding that my restating of students' utterances was the type of scaffolding most likely to lead to high permeability was intriguing. Both sessions under analysis contained permeability, therefore I am not implying that my other types of scaffolding, especially soliciting student narratives or posing questions at moments critical for conceptual advancement, excluded the possibility of permeability. From the difference between the two curricula, my processes as a facilitator (in conjunction with those of the students) created, without a doubt, considerable instances of permeability.

As stated earlier, the two sessions had different tasks, the first being to solicit youth views and the second to synthesize ideas into a curricular overview. Not only was the second session structured around my goals, but it had an increased level of difficulty. These two conditions of 'task control' and 'task difficulty' need to be explored further to determine how they influence the degree to which permeability can occur. To make the connection between these two conditions and permeability, one could devise a taxonomy of different types of scaffolding (e.g., guiding questions, initial adult help followed by

invitation of peer help, open assignments where the students can chose the course of the task, etc) and apply it to sessions where:

(a) (1) the task control is given more to the adult or (2) more to the students or (3) is more evenly distributed among them

(b) (1) the task difficulty is lower or (2) higher

It is important to establish how these variations in conditions affect permeability. If some prove to lead to lower permeability than others, solutions need to be found to adjust their effects on the degree of permeability. Finding such solutions is essential because I do not believe that (high) permeability could and should only occur during low difficulty tasks and/or only when students' goals alone are being pursued. Learning implies gradual mastery of increasingly difficult operations, which in turn necessitate proper ZPDs. It is the conditions behind the effectiveness of such ZPDs that are in need for elucidation. Specific types of scaffolding will prove themselves to be essential.

### Scaffolding

Perhaps, if the task is difficult and the students need to achieve goals that may not have been negotiated with them by the teacher (although I argue against that), the solutions lay in the types of scaffolding the adult could provide and could allow peers to set up for each other. The 6 types of scaffolding I identified in my own interventions in the project necessitate further investigation to better understand what types of content and student responses each one of them can facilitate. Such findings, in turn, have implications for permeability in the sense that they will help determine the kinds of

scaffolding that best lend themselves to high permeability. For example, a study could set its methods to create distinct and well defined types of scaffolding and then measure the outcomes of their application during permeable events in terms of the kinds of student responses they may induce and how those measure in on the continuum of low-moderate-high permeability. This project was not specifically set up to directly explore a taxonomy of scaffolding types and their outcomes from the beginning, but I induced these late in the data analysis stages. My conclusions should be revisited with more appropriate methodology that puts to practice and examines different types of scaffolding.

Further, I propose that researchers and educators employ creativity to depart from more traditional understandings of scaffolding (such as those of Wood and Middleton (1975) or my own) and devise new ways to help students, given that permeability itself is innovative by inviting students to author knowledge. To assemble a comprehensive array of types of supports (scaffolding), researchers could look in various domains besides their own and begin investigating how educators across the disciplines (from the sciences to the arts) have been successful in their attempts to facilitate their students' conceptual leaps. For example, the Writing Across the Curriculum Program, although it does not specifically target student participation, is a good example of innovative and unconventional integration of writing in all disciplines, including mathematics, chemistry, psychology, dental laboratory, etc. Through my participation in this program, I observed different types of scaffolding. For example, a failed experiment in chemistry was not a lost opportunity for learning. The professor helped students investigate the steps they had taken that led to their results, which was in itself a learning act. The students had to work together to figure out the point(s) where the experiment deviated

from its intended course, and report on the subsequent consequences. The professor scaffolded them in learning how to do a retrospective analysis and deduce the correct steps from the incorrect ones. This type of adult and student/peer scaffolding may be transferred from task to task or subject to subject.

To maintain a perspective of permeability, scaffolding should be negotiated with students. Simple questions such as “What would make this task easier for you?” or “If you were to ask this of your peers, how would you present it and how would you help them?” may help students offer such solutions. After all, it is their needs that are being scaffolded, and the types of supports should be informed by them.

Scaffolding that is effective in youth’s creative and meaningful learning in other types of settings (home, youth centers, after-school activities) should be explored (Hull & Schultz, 2002). Students ‘carry’ with them specific ways of learning, or types of help they prefer and find most useful in accomplishing tasks. These may be solicited, as I mentioned above, through direct questioning, however, the students may not be aware of them. In those cases, parents or other parties (from other adults to peers) may be resources for this type of information. Techniques of learning that are most helpful to youth may be considered to be part of what Moll et al. (1992) call “funds of knowledge”, which should include not only ideas and beliefs, but also specific behaviors and ways of learning and conveying knowledge. Ethnographic methods may prove themselves useful in informing researchers interested in devising optimal types of scaffolding.

From the above, researchers may wish to *add* to classic scaffolds (such as question posing or variation in degree of intervention during a task), elements suggested by student behavior and elements recommended by students during consultations with

them about supports they see themselves needing during a task. Negotiating supports with students means conversing about processes of learning, which is a principle of the pedagogy of permeability.

### The Value of Peers in Facilitating Permeable Content and Processes

The role of peers in assuming expert positions merits further investigation. From our data, I noticed that each student assumed a particular role that remained constant over time. For example, Lucy was the most critical of conventional ideas of violence prevention. Asia often placed two sides of an argument next to each other and tried to understand them by exploring their similarities and differences. Julia, on a few occasions, stepped in to suggest a reconciliation between two debating parties by suggesting a new point of view. These are mere observations from my data, and establishing individual students' patterns of interaction would constitute an interesting analysis with the potential to add to our understandings of permeability and student roles.

Such self-positioning by students indicates their assuming specific expert roles, which are not only instrumental for *content* generation, but also for elucidating further the *processes* of permeability vis-à-vis master-novice (Daiute & Dalton, 1993) theories. A researcher interested in establishing the functions of expert roles adopted as a constant practice over time by various students, could first identify each student's abilities and how those are expressed in interactions. Then, the researcher could encourage those to emerge as supports for his or her peers in situations when those would work best.

Different expertise comes from having different histories and experiences, which are tied to identity (Cross & Fhagen-Smith, 2001; Daiute & Jones, 2003; Faison & Flanagan, under review). Complementary knowledge, and therefore positions of

expertise, can be generated by students from diverse backgrounds who can learn from each other. Therefore, future designs of this research should aim to include as much diversity in their sample as possible. Racial and ethnic diversity, however, should not be the only ones considered. Students of different ages, genders and especially national origin have unlimited potential of innovative collaboration towards bringing together (in harmony or cognitive conflict) dissimilar experiences.

### The Sequence of Permeability Expanded

I outlined five phases of the Sequence of Permeability that facilitate the use and transformation of two types of sources of knowledge (spontaneous and scientific). These phases, I suspect, are not the only elements that may play a role in the process of permeability. Most likely there are other components that could be added to the sequence, which will be unique to the characteristics and needs of the group undertaking such a project. Given that permeability implies a flexible paradigm, each time this learning practice is adopted, a different version of the Sequence of Permeability may be generated. That would be an ideal outcome, which would indicate a successful transformation of knowledge by students in collaboration with their facilitator.

Building on the section above on the role of peers, besides being involved in more micro processes of concept manipulation, students can also contribute to the macro activity-level of implementing the Sequence of Permeability. I did not reserve a place in Figure 1 for peers opening new permeability gates for each other and the facilitator, although the participants in this project engaged competently in such acts (and a new analysis may be conducted). Future research could add this aspect to its goals by conceptualizing and operationalizing ‘peer Permeability Gate opening activities’. These

may coincide with processes I already identified in this project (may it be a form of peer scaffolding?), or constitute a whole new venue of participation in itself.

Another addition to the Sequence of Permeability could be various youth projects conducted away from the group, but brought in as additional youth-authored educational pieces. For example, this group proposed that they conducted small research projects of their own to inform their emerging curriculum. We did not implement that idea, since it was one of the many possible activities brainstormed by the group, and given our time and resources, we only aimed to accomplish more basic transformation tasks. However, such a youth-centered activity could be adopted in future research, and its place in the Sequence of Permeability could be assessed. In addition, since we did not have a Phase 5 (application of the new skills/knowledge in a new context), future research can provide images of permeability that vary across the settings in which the paradigm is applied.

### Measures of a Permeable Learning Over Time

Permeability as an outcome was measured in this study in three ways: content, process and pedagogy. These are immediate assessments, yet, the long-term educational value of participating in a permeable process needs to be investigated. Do the students' new identities and skills transfer to other contexts? Do students employ or seek to create Sequences of Permeability in other classes or projects? Such a research project can expand the theory and applications of permeability in terms of its value and long-term effects, and can draw on Vygotsky's (1978) postulation of knowledge/skill transfer from context to context. After all, learning is valuable if applied in new learning enterprises.

This type of a research project, however, would necessitate at least two phases. First, a similar undertaking as our own study would need to take place, which would

constitute the intervention. Its effects will be measured beyond the transformation of content, process and pedagogy of the initial project, and into the students' new activities outside of the project, such as in a different after-school undertaking, or even in formal class tasks in their schools. This study implies a longitudinal design.

In terms of methodologies, given that this theory is only in its beginning states and given the many aspects that necessitate investigation, keeping the groups small and varying only a few elements at a time may be ideal. Our project (not number of participants) was probably too big to completely and thoroughly account for its numerous and complicated aspects, such as the best types of scaffolding, variations in task control and difficulty, peer expert roles, etc. A longer project and more specific research questions addressing the elements just mentioned would more appropriately measure these concepts. There is an abundance of questions that remain to be answered, which is promising for a future line of research in the particularities of permeability.

### (3) Methods

*The students:* One could replicate this study by both expanding it and keeping in mind the limitations of our project listed above. Students would need to be diverse in terms of their ethnic and racial backgrounds (note that we did not have any white students), their gender composition should be balanced, and they should be representative of public school students, to avoid the highly selective sample we had in our project.

*The curriculum and beyond:* Consideration should be given to the type of adult curriculum to undergo transformation, such as its publication year and orientation.

Perhaps, a more socially oriented (rather than medically oriented) curriculum would be

more appropriate. The project does not need to be confined to one adult curriculum, but could draw on multiple resources and include small scale research projects conducted by students to answer questions they may have. As stated before, the students in our project wanted to interview various people who may have insight about violence (e.g., family members, police officers, gang members, etc) and present their findings in elementary schools, because they believed that awareness about such issues should start early on. Due to time limitations and lack of resources and connections, I was not able to help the students with such proposals, but they could be implemented in future research.

*Other new elements:* As stated earlier, I found that having an audience in mind (e.g., another group of students) and building something that is relevant to real life (e.g., could be applied meaningfully) helped the students. A new project could be that high school seniors would design a curriculum for juniors, given that they would be likely to share similar pools of knowledge and understand what their fellow students may need to have addressed. The curriculum could be re-written by every class of seniors. Further, as facilitators prepare curricula, they could do that in partnership with students. These recommendations are not confined to violence prevention, but could be applied to other disciplines (diversity courses, the humanities, social sciences, the arts, gender and political studies, and even economics).

*Feasibility:* There were a few conditions that allowed this project to take place. I formed a relatively small group (12 students only), which allowed us to have meaningful and lengthy conversations, and accomplish our goals in a timely fashion. We also had resources due to the Graduate Center's ample and private space, their audio-visual

equipment and my being funded by the Spencer Foundation Discipline Based Studies in Education for Social Justice and Social Development Fellowship to conduct this study. Although this is not a limitation, the circumstances of the project make it difficult to be replicated in schools without significant changes.

How could this project be implemented in public schools with loaded schedules and large classes of students? Some of the students in this group suggested to have this project as an elective. This may be a way to introduce it in schools and gradually apply it to various courses. Perhaps, in the beginning, it could be one project among others, but as the school adjusts to the content, processes and pedagogy of permeability, it could become a main practice.

To maintain smooth collaborations and facilitate pertinent exchanges of knowledge in large classes, I suggest increased use of *peer group work* that is more independent from the adult educator. In our project, I was present all the time except for the design sessions, when I participated less. Increased distance the educator and students may give unofficial curricula opportunities to permeate even more, to be granted official status in the end product. Students could take ownership of the knowledge created in peer groups and present it to the large group as their own mini-lesson, from content, to process, to pedagogy. Yet, as students get more opportunities to work away from adult supervision, they should also receive more feedback on their product, once it has a form that characterizes student thinking. In this way, misrepresentations of knowledge could be minimized or avoided.

Cohen (1994) states that peer group work is a non-threatening context where students can use each other's knowledge, ask questions, critique, contribute ideas, explain,

disagree and make decisions without much interference from the authoritative teacher figure. However, in a permeable paradigm, there will be no ‘interference’ from an authoritative figure, because the adult should become a more equal participant, rather than taking over or being excluded from conversations on the outskirts of the classroom.

#### (4) Evaluation

It is not enough to implement permeability, but its effects need to be systematically assessed. Despite my initial and final focus groups, I did not have a formal evaluative component, therefore limiting my ability to make such claims. Nonetheless, I propose a variety of changes to learning and violence prevention, which are sometimes based on a trend (such as frequency of occurrence in a pattern or code), or, other times, based on a few utterances that, I believe, carry powerful meaning. Quantifying such claims and other findings in this dissertation would strengthen the validity of my arguments and further define the permeability paradigm.

I recommend that more rigorous *pre and post intervention measures* of certain concepts of interest should be implemented to measure the effects of participating in a permeable paradigm. These could consist of student writing indicative of their views on certain issues, or even existing scales that target specific values in which teachers and researchers are interested (be they of educational practices or violence-related, etc). The students could be an integral part of the evaluation by designing its instruments together with educators. Evaluation should be just as important as assessing the content, process and pedagogy employed by the participants.

*Skill acquisition* (general academic skills such as critical thinking, or composition, and topic specific, such as preventive strategies) could be observed over time, and

compared to students in other settings, where a permeable paradigm is not in place. For example, do students whose ideas are allowed to permeate and who are able to organize them formally perform differently in the long run compared to students who were exposed to strictly conventional learning? This is only one example, given that the goals of an evaluation are shaped by a project's aims. There are multiple scales that measure skill acquisition for different domains and purposes. I recommend combining them with qualitative assessments through focus groups, narrative writing and analysis of materials generated over the course of the project. Martin (2006) found that "mixed-method designs present an opportunity for a triangulation of results, by juxtaposing findings achieved through various methods, and amplifying themes that connect across results" (p. 202). A mixed-method design leads to both complex data and opportunities for more thorough evaluations.

The theory of permeability claims that knowledge is in a state of flux, given the social agents who continuously reconstitute it (Bakhtin, 1986; Bamberg, 2004; Harré & van Langenhove, 1991). Therefore, evaluating permeability by employing traditional methods of 'cause-and-effect' assessment may not be appropriate. Further, caution should be taken in generalizing findings since all the aspects of the model are contingent upon the students' and adult educator's identities and circumstances. These determine the "funds of knowledge" (Moll et al., 1992) they each carry, which may be dissimilar across settings.

Based on this dissertation's aims to create participatory learning, I recommend that should this Youth Curriculum be implemented beyond this project, the students

would get the chance to change it according to their perspectives. This should hopefully ensure continual student participation in learning and prevention. I claim in this dissertation that permeability is a mechanism that promotes the goals of critical multiculturalism, and that its outcomes are emancipatory for students. I also maintain that permeability benefits schools as well, by enriching their bodies of knowledge and expanding their pedagogies towards more appropriate student development, given our heterogeneous discursive identities that need to be better served by the institutions that claim to nurture them. Much work remains to be done to further develop and begin to apply permeability in and out of schools, as a new way of learning.

The reciprocal formation of everyday and scientific concepts (Vygotsky, 1987) cannot take place if there is no continuity between outside and inside school knowledge, and if these two realms are seen as fundamentally different. Further, the rejection of everyday knowledge of marginalized students leads to a forced assimilation into the power-holding culture, and lends itself to oppressive learning and development. Following from the above, to make inside and outside educational spaces a more integral part of each other, the definitions of scientific and everyday concepts need to be examined, as this project succeeded to do. We propose that education cease to view mainstream and adult knowledge as exclusively scientific and diverse and/or student knowledge as exclusively spontaneous.

This dissertation modeled learning through knowledge generation facilitated by permeability to the various types of knowledge carried by diverse students. Why is it important to leave school's boundaries to seek information to be learned within school spaces? Students are members of a society that conducts its transactions in many other

places besides schools. Being violent and, especially, knowledgeable about violence is determined by many outside-of-school social transactions, that are circumstantial and characteristic of each group's practices and identities (Daiute & Jones, 2003; Daiute et al., 2001; Fagan & Wilkinson, 1998). In order to target the particularities of specific types of violence for various groups and ages, as recommended by Tolan and Guerra (1994), local and specialized information needs to be gathered and applied. The modalities of conceptualizing prevention need to be widened, which was done here by inviting students to be partners in problem posing and solving (Freire, 1970). This dissertation does not reject existing bodies of knowledge, but it emphasizes the need for partnering up with students to create more complete knowledge systems. It also does not blame teachers for the many pitfalls of learning, but examines education as a system that needs to be scrutinized for its limited values and practices.

Appendices

## **Appendix A**

### **Institutional Review Board Related Materials**

#### **Recruitment Script Used at World Youth**

“Hello, my name is Corina Lelutiu-Weinberger and I am a doctoral student in Social Personality Psychology at the Graduate Center of CUNY. I am here today to tell you about a project I’m doing for my dissertation. The dissertation is a study that I am required to do in the last part of the program before I obtain my degree. My project has to do with violence prevention. Unfortunately, as we all know by now, violence is part of our world, especially now with the global political tensions, and it’s important to think of ways to prevent it. Are any of you familiar with any violence prevention programs that you may have experienced in your schools? I’ve been reading about this field and noticed that none of the programs are interested in what young people themselves have to say about prevention and peace. I want to work with a group of young people to transform an existing violence prevention curriculum such that students’ views are added to those of the adults who wrote the program. I think young people have a lot to say about how to deal with this serious problem and their perspectives should be included in official violence prevention materials. We would meet a few times, pick a curriculum to work with and then talk about what’s missing from it, what can be done better, and how. We’ll also talk about your views of prevention and education. Does anyone have any questions? Might any of you be interested in doing this project together?”

### Assent Form

My name is Corina Lelutiu-Weinberger and I am a student in the Social Personality Psychology Ph.D. Program at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY), and Principal Investigator of this project, entitled “Young People as Authors of Violence Prevention Paradigms”. The project invites young people to change violence prevention materials in order to include student opinions into schools’ efforts to keep violence from happening. I would like permission to work with you to choose some widely used violence prevention materials, discuss them and find ways to improve them so that they would make more sense to people your age.

We would meet about five times with a few more students and talk about peace, violence prevention and good ways of resolving conflict. We will also have discussions about the best ways in which students think learning happens, as well as about your experiences with solving conflicts. I will pay you \$10 for participating every time we meet, and give you Metrocards to cover travel expenses.

With your permission, I would like to tape-record our conversations so I can record the details accurately. The tapes will only be heard by me and my advisor. All information gathered will be kept confidential, and will be stored in a locked file cabinet to which only I will have access, located in the Psychology Department at the Graduate Center in room 6203.02. This is a voluntary activity, and at any time you can refuse to participate in this project (or any parts of it) without any penalty.

There is no known risk involved in your participation in this study. Issues of violence prevention could be upsetting to some people. If for some reason you become upset, we will discuss it immediately and you can also contact Michelle Luc at 212-226-0130, who is a social worker at World Youth and who can provide further help. The benefits of participating in this project are that you will have the chance to influence a prevention curriculum that could be used by other students like you, and add your opinion to such important issues in our society. You will be part of a new way of learning, which will allow young people to use in school the information they learn at home. You will also learn about curriculum design, critical thinking and ways of obtaining information through research. There will be approximately 5-7 participants in this study.

I may publish results of this project, but names of people, or any identifying characteristics, will not be used in any of the publications. If you would like a copy of the study, please provide me with your address and I will send you a copy in the future.

If you have any questions about this research, you can call me at 212-213-6481, or email me at [cleluti@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:cleluti@gc.cuny.edu), or contact my advisor, Dr. Colette Daiute at 212-817-8711 or at [cdaiute@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:cdaiute@gc.cuny.edu). If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you can contact Hilry Fisher, Sponsored Research, The Graduate Center/City University of New York, 212-817-7523, or at [hfisher@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:hfisher@gc.cuny.edu).

Thank you for your participation in the project. I will give you a copy of this form to take with you.

If you agree to participate, please sign below:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I agree to have the discussions taperecorded [circle one]:    Yes        No

\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator's signature:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### Parental Consent Form

My name is Corina Lelutiu-Weinberger and I am a student in the Social Personality Psychology Ph.D. Program at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY), and Principal Investigator of this project, entitled “Young People as Authors of Violence Prevention Paradigms”. The project invites young people to change violence prevention materials in order to include student opinions into schools’ efforts to keep violence from happening. I would like permission to work with your child to choose some widely used violence prevention materials, discuss them and find ways to improve them so that they would make more sense to people of your child’s age.

We would meet about five times with a few more students and talk about peace, violence prevention and good ways of resolving conflict. We will also have discussions about the best ways in which students think learning happens, as well as about your child’s experiences with solving conflicts. I will pay your child \$10 for participating every time we meet, and give him or her Metrocards to cover travel expenses.

With your permission, I would like to tape-record the conversations so I can record the details accurately. The tapes will only be heard by me and my advisor. All information gathered will be kept confidential, and will be stored in a locked file cabinet to which only I will have access, located in the Psychology Department at the Graduate Center in room 6203.02. This is a voluntary activity, and your child can refuse to participate in this project (or any parts of it) at any time without any penalty.

There is no known risk involved in your child’s participation in this study. Issues of violence prevention could be upsetting to some people. If for some reason your child becomes upset, we will discuss it immediately and he or she can also contact Michelle Luc at 212-226-0130, who is a social worker at World Youth and who can provide further help. The benefits of participating in this project are that your child will have the chance to influence a prevention curriculum that could be used by other students like him or her, and add his or her opinions to such important issues in our society. Your child will be part of a new way of learning, which will allow young people to use in school the information they learn at home. Your child will also learn about curriculum design, critical thinking and ways of obtaining information through research. There will be approximately 5-7 participants in this study.

I may publish results of this project, but names of people, or any identifying characteristics, will not be used in any of the publications. If you would like a copy of the study, please provide me with your address and I will send you a copy in the future.

If you have any questions about this research, you can call me at 212-213-6481, or email me at [clelutiu@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:clelutiu@gc.cuny.edu), or contact my advisor, Dr. Colette Daiute at 212-817-8711 or at [cdaiute@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:cdaiute@gc.cuny.edu). If you have questions about your child’s rights as a

participant in this study, you can contact Hilry Fisher, Sponsored Research, The Graduate Center/City University of New York, 212-817-7523, or at [hfisher@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:hfisher@gc.cuny.edu).

Thank you for your participation in the project. I will give you a copy of this form to take with you.

If you give permission to your child to participate, please write in your child's name and then sign below:

Child's Name : \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's/Guardian's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I agree to have the discussions taperecorded [circle one]:    Yes        No

\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix B

### Focus Group Questions

#### Questions for initial focus group:

- First, what school do you come from and how it is to learn at that school? Here are a few things to talk about:
  - What is your role as a student in your classes? What is the role of teachers in your classes? How do you feel about these?
  - What kind of learning goes on? Talk about the content of what you learn. Do you enjoy it? Would you add to or take things away from it? Why?
  - Do you get the opportunity to comment on what you learn? When and to whom do you make those comments? What happens to your comments?
  - Is there any other learning that you'd like to experience in school, besides what's usually done?
- Next, let's talk about your experience with this after school program.
  - Why do you come here? What does it do for you?
  - What and how do you learn here?
  - Can you compare it to your school experiences?
- Lastly, what do you think our experience will be like?
  - What's the point of this group?
  - What do you expect to get from this experience?
  - What do you think you'll offer to the group?
  - If you had to guess, what will my role be?

The second part of our discussion will be about violence prevention.

- Have you learned any violence prevention, conflict resolution, peer mediation or peace related materials? Let's talk about it, how was that and what was it about?
  - What did you take from that experience?
  - Why do you think violence prevention is taught? Who should learn violence prevention?
  - What in your opinion, would be something important to talk to students about in the context of violence prevention? What should students know? What would you tell them?
  - Are there things about violence prevention and peace that adults don't know but of which they should be aware? What can young people tell them about that?
  - Lastly, how do you feel about being part of this group?

**Questions for final focus group:**

- Weeks ago I asked you to reflect on your roles as students in your schools, learning at World Youth and in our group.
- Did anything change in your opinions since then? Your definitions of what students are or what they should be? Your definitions of learning, what it is or what it should be? Your definitions of teachers, what they are or what they should be?
- How about when you compare the content that you learn in school, at World Youth and in this group?
- Let's talk about what we did:
- How was it to be able to contribute to a curriculum? What kind of students were you? What did you see my role to be?
- What was my role?
- What did you think of our activities and the process we followed? How was working together?
- What can you say about the process we adopted to change this curriculum?
- What do you think needs to be in place (or needs to happen) for students to be able to change a curriculum?
- What did you think of the content of the original curriculum? How about the new curriculum? Is it any good? How do they compare to each other?
- What would you do with the new curriculum?
- How should it be taught? To whom and by whom? In schools or in setting like this one?
- How do you think your schools would feel about adopting this type of learning or this curriculum? How would your parents feel about it? How about the rest of the students?
  
- Before we reflect on your experience with violence prevention in this group, I'd like you to think of a message that you can place in front of the new curriculum for the teachers and students who would take this curriculum on. What would you tell them, instruct them, share with them? Tips, advice, instructions on how to use it, how to think of it, what to do with it?
  
- Weeks ago we also talked about violence prevention, conflict resolution and peace.
- How was this experience compared to those you had in the past (if you had any)?
- Did you change your beliefs about these concepts from the first session to this one?
- What will you take away from this experience regarding prevention and/or violence?
- Why do you think violence prevention is taught? Who should learn violence prevention?
- What in your opinion, what would be something important to talk to students about in the context of violence prevention? What should students know? What would you tell them?
- Are there things about violence prevention and peace that adults don't know and of which they should be aware? What can young people tell them about that?
  
- Overall, how was this experience for you?

- What aspects of it did you enjoy and what aspects you did not enjoy?
- What would you do differently?  
Anything in particular that may have been triggered in you during this project?

## Appendix C

### Summaries of Two Adult Violence Prevention Programs Presented to the Group As Candidates for Transformation

#### FIRST CURRICULUM Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents Deborah Prothrow-Stith

The curriculum is part of the Teenage Health Teaching Modules program, and it is given to grades 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> in 10 sessions of 50 minutes each. It focuses on studying facts of homicide among youths. It recognizes anger as a normal part of people's lives that can be used constructively. Students are helped to understand violence as something that can be avoided by being aware of the risk factors associated with it. Students are allowed to explore conflict by engaging in role-playing and reviewing of videotaping of those enactments, rather than having the curriculum lectured to them. This curriculum motivates students to find alternatives to fighting through debates of loses and gains, and analyses of precursors and ways of avoiding conflict. Students brainstorm and complete creative homework assignments, while learning about both interpersonal *and* institutional violence.

#### CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

##### SESSION 1: THERE IS A LOT OF VIOLENCE IN SOCIETY

###### GOALS:

- Determine what information and misinformation students already have about violence, its causes and its effects
- Discuss the extent and types of violence in society and the focus of this course – that is acquaintance violence.

###### STUDENT OBJECTIVES:

- Recognize the extent of violence in society
- Identify and discuss types of violence

###### HANDOUTS:

1. The Many Names of Violence
2. Homicide Statistics and Characteristics

##### SESSION 2: HOMICIDE: STATISTICS AND CHARACTERISTICS

###### GOALS:

- Provide statistical data on homicide and the characteristics of homicide

## STUDENT OBJECTIVES:

- Define a statistically “typical” homicide
- State the statistical relationships of weapons, alcohol and arguments to homicide
- Cite the three major causes of death for young people ago- 15-24

## HANDOUTS:

3. Homicide by Precipitant
- 4.. Alcohol and homicide
5. Weapons and Homicide

## SESSION 3: EXPLORING RISK FACTORS

## GOALS:

- Discuss the homicide-related risk factors introduced in Session 2
- Describe the effects if alcohol on the brain and alcohol's role in interpersonal violence

## STUDENT OBJECTIVES:

- Identify the risk factors for homicide
- Describe the effects of alcohol on the brain and alcohol’s role in interpersonal behavior
- Identify the most common precipitants of homicide

## HANDOUTS:

6. Logging Television Violence

## SESSION 4: ANGER Is NORMAL

## GOALS:

- Explain that anger is a normal part of life
- Describe the physiological changes that occur during anger
- Explain the “fight or flight” response

## STUDENT OBJECTIVES:

- Accept anger as a normal and natural part of life
- List stimuli that lead to anger
- Cite physiological changes that occur during anger
- Understand that anger is an emotional and physiological reaction to a stimulus

## HANDOUTS:

7. Physiological Effects of Anger
8. Degrees of Anger

## SESSION 5: THERE ARE HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY WAYS TO

## EXPRESS ANGER

### GOAL:

- Illustrate the range of healthy and unhealthy ways to express anger

### STUDENT OBJECTIVES:

- Recognize that anger can be used constructively
- Generate healthy methods for dealing with anger
- Evaluate methods for dealing with anger as healthy or unhealthy
- Distinguish among controlling, expressing, and channeling anger

### HANDOUTS:

9. Your Anger Style Inventory
10. Your Anger Style Inventory Scoring Guide

## SESSION 6: THERE'S MORE TO LOSE THAN TO GAIN FROM FIGHTING

### GOALS:

- Compare the positive and negative consequences of fighting
- Demonstrate that the negative consequences of fighting outweigh the positive
- Identify emotions and needs (other than anger) related to violence

### STUDENT OBJECTIVES:

- Distinguish between a conflict and a fight
- List both positive and negative consequences of fighting
- Be aware of needs and emotions that are related to fighting
- Analyze the long and short-term consequences of fighting

## SESSION 7: WHAT HAPPENS BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER A FIGHT?

### GOALS

- Illustrate that fights don't just happen; certain steps precede them
- Analyze a specific fight situation(s)

### STUDENT OBJECTIVES:

- Recognize the role of peer pressure in fight situations
- Recognize the rising level of emotion present during the escalation of conflict
- Be aware of nonverbal indicators during a fight
- Analyze the steps of escalation in a fight

### HANDOUT:

11. Preventing a fight

## SESSION 8: PREVENTING VIOLENCE

### GOALS:

- Determine the ways violence might be prevented through analysis of a fight
- Discuss the difference between prevention and intervention
- Identify the violence prevention methods that might be effective in school

### STUDENT OBJECTIVES:

- Identify possible violence prevention strategies to use at school
- Distinguish between preventing violence and intervening in a violent situation
- Understand and evaluate the risks of intervening in a fight
- Recognize the benefits of preventing fights
- Analyze fight situations to determine possible points of prevention and intervention

### HANDOUTS:

12. Fight, Flight, and Other

## SESSION 9: FIGHTING-WHAT ELSE IS THERE?

### GOALS:

- Emphasize that there are more choices in a conflict than fight or flight
- Identify obstacles to nonviolent conflict resolution
- Describe how violence is glamorized in our society

### STUDENT OBJECTIVES:

- Identify nonviolent alternatives to fighting
- Recognize factors that hinder nonviolent conflict resolution
- Discuss how violence is glamorized, particularly by television

### HANDOUT:

13. Throwing a Curve: Your Other Choice

## SESSION 10: PRACTICE THROWING A CURVE

### GOALS:

- Practice skills of nonviolent conflict resolution
- Encourage empathy with opponents
- Identify alternatives to fight and flight

### STUDENT OBJECTIVES:

- Summarize the points of view of both participants in a conflict resolution
- Role play the skills of nonviolent conflict resolution
- Recognize that fighting is only one of several choices in a conflict situation.

**HANDOUTS:**

14. Reverse Role-play Cards
15. Throwing a Curve Role Plays
16. Prevention Role Plays

**SECOND CURRICULUM**

**Project Peace: A Safe-Schools Skills Training Program for Adolescents**  
**D. de Anda, School of Social Welfare and Social Policy,**  
**University of California, Los Angeles, California, U.S.A.**

(Summary from:  
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/resolve/violenceprevention/English/sitemap.htm>)

**Key Words:** Conflict resolution; Grades 6 to 12

**Objectives:** To reduce aggressive behavior by teaching the causes of violence and cognitive-behavioral strategies for controlling emotions that lead to conflict escalation; encouraging the use of nonviolent solutions; and changing attitudes about the acceptability of violence in peer interactions.

**Description:** Based on cognitive-behavioral principles, the program uses a 3-step stress method to reduce anger arousal, change self-talk, and use nonviolent coping responses. The ten 55-minute instructional sessions, a review and a culmination session include statistics, video depictions, discussions of violence in society; and self-talk cognitive-restructuring exercises to learn alternative strategies to violence.

## Appendix D

### AGENDAS FOR CHANGE AND AGENDAS OF THE DAY

**February 26, 2004**

#### **Agenda of the Day**

Welcome to the Young People as Authors of Violence Prevention Paradigms Project!

We will be doing a few things today:

1. Who's Corina?
2. Informed Consent forms.
3. Discuss what to expect from participating in this project:
  - Next session will include
    - returning the parental consent forms
    - initial discussion: talk about education and violence prevention/conflict resolution.
    - your definitions of violence, conflict and peace.
    - your story of a memorable incident of violence or conflict.
    - final item of the day: pick a violence prevention/conflict resolution program to work with for the rest of the times we meet together.
  - The following sessions will include discussions about the curriculum you selected to see if it's missing anything from your point of view as young people. We'll make lists with what you find problematic and think of ways to add what's missing to the curriculum or change any part of it.

**March 4, 2004**

**Agenda of the Day**

So, what's our group's name? (keep thinking if you don't have one yet....)

Here's what's on the agenda for today:

4. Return Parental Informed Consent forms.
5. Nicknames and demographic sheet.
6. Write about your definitions of conflict, violence and peace, and then about a memorable incident.
7. Let's talk about learning and violence prevention.
8. Time to select our curriculum (finally!)!!!!!! (I'm so curious which it'll be...)

**March 18, 2004**

**Agenda of the Day**

Hello! Hope you had a good two weeks!

Here's what we'll do today:

1. Before we even look at the two curricula, what do you think should go in a violence prevention curriculum? Present Agenda for Change.
2. Our goals:
  - combine parts of the two curricula that you think need to be included
  - think of what should be in a violence prevention curriculum but is not in the two curricula as of now; make a list of what you think is missing and would like included in the final product; think of how that can be included
  - think of the end result: who will be able to use the new curriculum? Let's try to make it for use in a real classroom with 30-40 kids. How will that be taught? Slowly develop a guide's (or teacher's manual). What are the roles of students? What is the role of the guide/teacher?
  - Can you add any other goals?
3. Examine the two curricula and begin selecting pieces for our own curriculum. Everyone takes turns in reading out loud and posing questions to guide the decision process.

**First Agenda for Change *[generated from the first focus group's transcript]***

Things you brought up in the violence prevention discussion:

- TV and the media; teens and the media have an interdependent relationship; they depend on each other
- Liked addressing statistics of violence for your own age group
- Liked addressing homicide
- First curriculum was educational, reminded you a lot of school since it was redundant with the way things are learned there and what is learned there (you said repetitive)
- Issues in the curriculum were more like common sense, something you learned at home or in your communities and are being brought up again by the curriculum
- Noticed the concepts of "anger", "triggers" and their "prevention"
- Noticed that sessions build on each other
- You like role playing and want that to be in the curriculum to make it more fun
- From the second curriculum, you agreed with the need to calm oneself down, relax, introspect, self-talk; reminded you of yoga and meditation
- You liked the second one for focusing on emotions, psychology and the internal

- Suggested to combine the curricula to have both the social (more from the first curriculum) and the internal (more from the second curriculum); you see the internal and external as equally important to have in a violence prevention curriculum; the individual and the social
- Learned some prevention in DARE; it was boring
- In the past you learned how others tried to prevent violence but not how you can have the power to do something about it
- Peer mediation didn't work
- Violence prevention is needed to give kids alternatives to fighting and being aggressive
- Kids need to be more mature and responsible
- New generations are more exposed to negative things like gambling, violence, sex, cursing; this initiation is TOO EARLY
- Young kids lack role models
- Adults ask kids to be moral and good, but turn around and do what they preach against; also there is a lot of bad parenting
- Video games and the whole industry are a major source of negative exposure; they do not care for what happens to the kids, they just want to make a profit
- Adults are aware of what the consequences of their actions are but do not care
- Corporate America and many adults need to learn prevention to set better models; the problems are not necessarily in the kids
- Adults first need to learn how to treat each other and then ask kids to follow rules
- Important to know the many sides of a story; there are many perspectives in the world.

**March 25, 2004**

**Agenda of the Day**

Here are the items for today:

1. Examine the two curricula and begin selecting pieces for our own curriculum.

Everyone takes turns in reading out loud and posing questions to guide the decision process.

2. Review the Agenda for Change.

**Second Agenda for Change *[generated from the transcript from the March 4<sup>th</sup> session]***

- TV and the media
- Statistics of violence for your own age group
- Homicide
- Role playing to have a more fun curriculum
- Curriculum that is educational AND fun
- Need to calm oneself down, relax, introspect, self-talk; yoga and meditation
- Importance of examining one's emotions, psychology and the internal states
- Combine the curricula to have both social and internal factors
- Peer mediation didn't work (from one person's experience); it was suggested by the group as a potentially useful component in schools
- Violence prevention needs to give kids alternatives to fighting and being aggressive
- Important to know the many sides of a story; there are many perspectives in the world.
- Kids need to be more mature and responsible
- New generations are more exposed to negative things like gambling, violence, sex, cursing; this initiation is TOO EARLY
- Kids lack role models
- Adults ask kids to be moral and good, but turn around and do what they preach against; also there is a lot of bad parenting
- Video games and the whole industry are a major source of negative exposure; they do not care for what happens to the kids, they just want to make a profit
- Adults are aware of what the consequences of their actions are but do not care
- Corporate America and many adults need to learn prevention to set better models; the problems are not necessarily in the kids
- Adults first need to learn how to treat each other and then ask kids to follow rules

- Talk to your parents
  - Feel safe to report suspicious signs (confidentiality)
  - Become more aware of violence and think of consequences
  - Provide services and hotlines for kids to call (if in danger of being attacked or feeling violent urges); counseling possibilities readily available
  - Dual role of music in calming negative emotions AND pushing some to be violent
  - Sports and physical activity
  - Consider seriousness of situation before acting
  - Determine the real source of anger
  - Connect with people that have been through your experiences
  - Talk about the different levels of violence: from interpersonal (day to day) to genocide and civil war
  - Strategy: Passive resistance
  - Violence as a negative way of communicating or lack of communication; some people use it as a tool for getting what they want
  - Is violence ever justified? In self-defense?
  - You have choices, despite pressures; discuss the choices; how far can freedom to act go before it becomes violence? Is intervention to stop that freedom censorship?
  - Do you have courage for not taking up a violent challenge?
  - Two strong feelings: love and hate; primary emotions; they battle to win
  - Strategy: spirituality and religion.
  - The curriculum should make students feel motivated; have goal oriented activities
  - The curriculum should have collaborative and competitive activities at the same time
  - The curriculum should have real life examples; examples that are personal and general
- 
- Should we have a conference?
  - Should we do interviews with people we think can inform us?
  - Will you help the writing process?

**Categories to organize the above:**

- Qualities of a good curriculum (fun? Open for negotiation? What else?)
- Types of violence
- Issues to be aware of
- Causes/precipitants
- Strategies
- Grey areas (justified violence, no other options but violence, is peace always an option?)

**April 1, 2004**

**Agenda for Change [the end of this agenda contains the first session of the Youth**

**Curriculum, which is where we ended the previous session]**

From Meeting 1:

- TV and the media
- Statistics of violence for your own age group
- Homicide
- Role playing to have a more fun curriculum
- Curriculum that is educational AND fun
- Need to calm oneself down, relax, introspect, self-talk; yoga and meditation
- Importance of examining one's emotions, psychology and the internal states
- Combine the curricula to have both social and internal factors
- Peer mediation didn't work (from one person's experience); it was suggested by the group as a potentially useful component in schools
- Violence prevention needs to give kids alternatives to fighting and being aggressive
- Important to know the many sides of a story; there are many perspectives in the world.
- Kids need to be more mature and responsible
- New generations are more exposed to negative things like gambling, violence, sex, cursing; this initiation is TOO EARLY
- Kids lack role models
- Adults ask kids to be moral and good, but turn around and do what they preach against; also there is a lot of bad parenting
- Video games and the whole industry are a major source of negative exposure; they do not care for what happens to the kids, they just want to make a profit
- Adults are aware of what the consequences of their actions are but do not care
- Corporate America and many adults need to learn prevention to set better models; the problems are not necessarily in the kids
- Adults first need to learn how to treat each other and then ask kids to follow rules

From Meeting 2:

- Talk to your parents
- Feel safe to report suspicious signs (confidentiality)
- Become more aware of violence and think of consequences
- Provide services and hotlines for kids to call (if in danger of being attacked or feeling violent urges); counseling possibilities readily available
- Dual role of music in calming negative emotions AND pushing some to be violent
- Sports and physical activity
- Consider seriousness of situation before acting

- Determine the real source of anger
  - Connect with people that have been through your experiences
  - Talk about the different levels of violence: from interpersonal (day to day) to genocide and civil war
  - Strategy: Passive resistance
  - Violence as a negative way of communicating or lack of communication; some people use it as a tool for getting what they want
  - Is violence ever justified? In self-defense?
  - You have choices, despite pressures; discuss the choices; how far can freedom to act go before it becomes violence? Is intervention to stop that freedom censorship?
  - Do you have courage for not taking up a violent challenge?
  - Two strong feelings: love and hate; primary emotions; they battle to win
  - Strategy: spirituality and religion.
  - The curriculum should make students feel motivated; have goal oriented activities
  - The curriculum should have collaborative and competitive activities at the same time
  - The curriculum should have real life examples; examples that are personal and general
- Should we have a conference?
  - Should we do interviews with people we think can inform us?
  - Will you help the writing process?

**Categories to organize the above:**

- Qualities of a good curriculum (fun? Open for negotiation? What else?)
- Types of violence
- Issues to be aware of
- Causes/precipitants
- Strategies
- Grey areas (justified violence, no other options but violence, is peace always an option?)

From Meeting 3:

NEW CURRICULUM

Sections from the Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents:

**Session 1 (There Is a Lot of Violence in Society), Session 2 (Homicide: Statistics and Characteristics) and Session 3 (Exploring Risk Factors) are combined:**

- Inform students about violence (they may be uninformed and/or misinformed)
- Discuss types of violence in society
- Statistics (need to be updated – from the CIA Fact Book and The Human Development Report)

- Discard the terminology of “a typical homicide”
- Discuss risk factors (not just alcohol) and triggers of conflict/fights/ violence

**Session (Anger is Normal) 4 and Session 5 (There are Healthy and Unhealthy Ways to Express Anger) are combined into a new chapter called “Dealing with Emotions”**

- Discuss the range of emotions likely to be associated with violence (not just anger): anger, confusion, sadness, denial, depression, guilt, fear, self-esteem.
- Anger should not be presented as acceptable, although it is a human emotion.
- Brainstorm about and discuss how to deal with this range of emotions constructively.
- Re-do the list on page 51 (Healthy and unhealthy ways to express anger).
- Adopt the last student objective from Session 5. Interesting and helpful to know about.

**Session 6 (There’s More to Lose Than to Gain from Fighting):**

The different ways of fighting need to be presented in a more detailed manner. There are many ways of being violent (verbal, physical, pictures, video games, etc)

**April 15, 2004**

**Agenda of the Day**

Here are the items for today:

1. Discuss the schedule for the remainder of the project:
  - April 15 – design table of contents
  - April 22 – Split into two groups to design two sessions (concepts, handouts and skits)
  - April 29 – The two groups will teach each other the sessions they designed last time
  - May 6 – Final session – thoughts, reflections, recommendations.
2. Today we'll tackle the "CONCEPT PASTING PROJECT" to get a detailed table of contents. Pick from pile, BRIEFLY discuss concept and place it in the appropriate category. At the end, give brief descriptions for each major category to create an explicit table of contents.
3. Sort through the handouts and decide where to place them and which ones to do in the group. Do you want to discard any all together?
4. Think of skits for each session.

**Agenda for Change**

YOUTH CURRICULUM

Sections from the Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents:

Place assignment on page 66 in the front of the curriculum to be one of the first things for students to complete.

**Place all the handouts in front of each chapter, and not hide them at the end where they could be overlooked.**

**Students can conduct surveys in their communities to get answers to questions related to the prevention of violence.**

## I. INTRODUCTION: TYPES OF VIOLENCE, FACTS ABOUT VIOLENCE AND CAUSES/RISK

### FACTORS/PRECIPIANTAS:

**Session 1 (There Is a Lot of Violence in Society), Session 2 (Homicide: Statistics and Characteristics) and Session 3 (Exploring Risk Factors) and Session 6 (There's More to Lose Than to Gain from Fighting) are combined:**

Inform students about violence (they may be uninformed and/or misinformed)

Discuss types of violence in society

Statistics (need to be updated – from the CIA Fact Book and The Human Development Report)

Discard the terminology of “a typical homicide”

Discuss risk factors (not just alcohol) and triggers of conflict/fights/ violence

Session 6 is incomplete as is. The different ways of fighting need to be presented in a more detailed manner. There are many ways of being violent (verbal, physical, pictures, video games, etc). The current ones are vague and nonspecific.

Describe consequences of violent behavior.

Show the advantages of good decisions.

Think if the situation is worth a fight first. Do not make snap judgements.

Only use violence in self-defense and in a way that will not get you in trouble.

Find motivations to keep yourself passive and nonreactive in a violent manner.

Talk it out with your opponent, yourself and others (friends, counselor, teachers, parents, others).

Be more honest with yourself and others. Communicate more before escalating a conflict into violence.

Try to use constructive criticism and not just tell people off.

## II. EMOTIONS: WHICH ONES ARE THEY AND HOW TO DEAL WITH THEM TO PREVENT

### VIOLENCE:

**Session 4 (Anger is Normal) and Session 5 (There are Healthy and Unhealthy Ways to Express Anger) are combined into a new chapter called “Dealing with Emotions”**

Discuss the range of emotions likely to be associated with violence (not just anger):

anger, confusion, sadness, denial, depression, guilt, fear, self-esteem.

Anger should not be presented as acceptable, although it is a human emotion.

Brainstorm about and discuss how to deal with this range of emotions constructively.

Re-do the list on page 51 (Healthy and unhealthy ways to express anger).

Adopt the last student objective from Session 5. Interesting and helpful to know about.

**Session 7** is too narrow because it only talks about fighting. Discard it.

## III. STRATEGIES OF PREVENTION:

Session 9 should precede Session 8.

**Session 10 should be dispersed throughout all of them because it includes skits and every session should have a skit that addresses each important concept. Students should get to practice and learn through skits all along the way, not wait until the end.**

**The last page should contain a list of resources such as organizations or hotlines that young people can contact in case they feel in danger, or see others that are violence or could be violent, or, if students have violent urges themselves and want to seek help.**

**Thursday, April 22, 2004**

**Agenda of the Day**

Here are the items for today:

Schedule for the remainder of the project:

- April 22 – Finish Curriculum Overview; select Handouts; prepare for Session Design; begin designing two sessions
- April 29 – continue and finish designing; one group may have its turn in teaching
- May 6 – the second group will teach its session to the first group; final thoughts, reflections, recommendations.

**Thursday, April 29, 2004**

**Agenda of the Day**

Here are the items for today:

Schedule for the remainder of the project:

- April 29
  - **Collaborative Log** from last time
  - **Sessions Design**: select and design two sessions (concepts, handouts, skits)
- May 6 – **Teaching**: each group will teach its session to the other group
- May 13 – **Wrap-up**: final thoughts, reflections, recommendations.

**Thursday, May 6, 2004**

**Agenda of the Day**

Here are the items for today:

Schedule for the remainder of the project:

- May 6 –
  - Groups finish designing sessions
  - Group 1 teaches **Emotions** to Group 2.
  
- May 13 –
  - Group 2 teaches the **Introduction** to Group 1.
  - **Wrap-up**: final thoughts, reflections, recommendations.

## **Appendix E**

### **The Youth Curriculum**

*[This Appendix contains the Youth Curriculum's Table of Contents, Curriculum Overview and youth concepts under their corresponding sessions. This is the initial Youth Curriculum, before the two sessions, Introduction and Emotions, were fully designed by the two groups]*

### **Table of Contents**

#### **Session I- Introduction: Violence in Our Society**

1. Types and the Meaning of Violence
2. Statistics/Facts About Youth Violence
3. Causes/Precipitants/Risk Factors/Triggers

#### **Session II- Emotions**

#### **Session III- Strategies/Prevention/Intervention**

#### **Session IV- Grey Areas**

#### **Session V- Wrap Up**

- 1) Review Session
- 2) Resources

## Curriculum Overview

### **Session I- Introduction: Violence in Our Society**

#### **1. Types and the Meaning of Violence**

##### THERE IS A LOT OF VIOLENCE IN SOCIETY

- Determine what information and misinformation students already have about violence, its causes and its effects
- Discuss the extent and types of violence in society
- Brainstorm definitions of different types of violence
- Distinguish between a conflict and a fight, and between conflict and violence and how conflict could lead to violence

#### **Handouts:**

The Many Names of Violence

Statistics/Facts About Youth Violence

##### HOMICIDE: STATISTICS AND CHARACTERISTICS

- Provide statistical data on homicide and the characteristics of homicide
- State the statistical relationships of weapons, alcohol, arguments and other risk factors to homicide
- Cite the major causes of death involving young people ages- 15-24

#### **Handouts:**

Homicide Statistics and Characteristics

Causes/Precipitants/Risk Factors/Triggers

### EXPLORING RISK FACTORS

- Discuss the homicide-related risk factors
- Describe the effects of alcohol on the brain and alcohol's role in interpersonal violence
- Explore the relationship between drugs and violence
- List and compare the positive and negative consequences of fighting
- Demonstrate that the negative consequences of fighting outweigh the positives
- Analyze the long and short-term consequences of fighting

#### **Handouts:**

Homicide by Precipitant

Alcohol and Homicide

Weapons and Homicide

Preventing a Fight

### Session II- Emotions

- Emotions that may lead to violence are a part of life
- Review stimuli that lead to anger
- Describe the physiological changes that occur during anger
- Other emotions that can be associated with violence
- Illustrate the range of healthy and unhealthy ways to express anger
- Recognize and generate healthy methods for dealing with negative emotions
- Define ways of controlling, expressing, and channeling negative emotions (conflict tree)

**Handouts:**

Physiological Effects of Anger

Degrees of Anger

**Optional Handout:** Your Anger Style Inventory

**Session III- Strategies/Prevention/Intervention**

- Discuss the difference between prevention and intervention
- Explain the “fight or flight” response and emphasize that there are more choices in a conflict than fight or flight
- Identify obstacles to nonviolent conflict resolution
- Describe how violence is glamorized in our society particularly by the media
- Identify nonviolent alternatives to achieving your goals
- Determine the ways violence might be prevented through analysis of a fight (skit)
- Discuss risks and safe ways of intervening in a fight
- Identify the violence prevention methods that might be effective in school
- Recognize the benefits of preventing fights

**Handouts:**

Preventing a Fight (revisited)

Fight, Flight and Other (brainstorming exercise)

Throwing A Curve: Your Other Choice

Skit Material: Reverse Role-Play Cards; Throwing A Curve Role Play;

**Session IV- Grey Areas**

*[we did not design on overview because this Youth Curriculum session did not have an equivalent Adult Curriculum session, based on which all the other session overviews were designed]*

**Session V- Wrap Up**

1) Review session

2) Resources

*[we did not design on overview because this Youth Curriculum session did not have an equivalent Adult Curriculum session, based on which all the other session overviews were designed]*

**FOLLOWING ARE THE NEW CURRICULUM SESSIONS DESCRIBED IN DETAIL ONE BY ONE:**

### **Session I- Introduction: Violence in Our Society**

#### **YOUTH DECISIONS:**

**Session 1 (There Is a Lot of Violence in Society), Session 2 (Homicide: Statistics and Characteristics) and Session 3 (Exploring Risk Factors) and Session 6 (There's More to Lose Than to Gain from Fighting) of the old curriculum are combined under the new SESSION I.**

**Here are goals you came up with for this session:**

- Discard the terminology of “a typical homicide”
- Discuss risk factors (not just alcohol) and triggers of conflict/fights/ violence
- Session 6 is incomplete as is. The different ways of fighting need to be presented in a more detailed manner. There are many ways of being violent (verbal, physical, pictures, video games, etc). The current ones are vague and nonspecific.
- Describe consequences of violent behavior before getting into prevention.

#### **Types and Meaning of Violence**

- Physical violence, weapons violence, verbal abuse, domestic violence, child abuse, mental abuse, sexual abuse, disciplinary violence.
- Class oppression and rebellion.
- Cops and police brutality.
- Is violence innate or learned? Are we products of our environments? Violence may be innate/instinctual, but civilization and socialization can steer us away from it.
- Don't forget that women beat men too. Kids hit their parents too. And vice versa.

- Love relationships can lead to violence together with use of weapons, physical abuse, intimidation, fear
- Different levels of violence: from interpersonal (day to day) to genocide or civil war
- Fights against social injustice and inequality often have a high price – violence and loss of life (Martin Luther King, Malcom X, Nelson Mandela).
- Exploitation and abuse in work relations; class differences
- Struggle for power
- Poverty, racism and discrimination. The poor and minorities are often portrayed as more violent. These are discriminatory and racist acts that can potentially lead to up-rises for equality.
- Homicide
- Society and the media look at a lot of negative teen behaviors but don't put out positive aspects and facts about them. There should be more of those presented to the world for other kids to have good peer models. Present teens who focus on their career and studies and future, and not the few wild teens.
- Kids need good role models

### **Statistics/Facts About Youth Violence**

Update curriculum statistics to present current statistics of violence for your own age group

### **Causes/Precipitants/Risk Factors/Triggers**

- Invading one's personal space with prolonged looks or physical proximity.
- The military un-teaches and re-teaches to achieve no emotion; gangs and cliques – socialization into specific group memberships that makes people prone to violence
- Learn to recognize the gravity of violent acts and their consequences; they are not jokes or normal acts
- Blackmail
- Power makes people devious.
- Putting others down

- Traitor and loyalty; betrayal; no emotion
- Cops and police brutality.
- TV & the media
- Struggle for power
- Sopranos and Eminem
- Alcohol is not a main factor of violence, it might just enhance it. People commit crime sober.
- New generations are more exposed to negative things like gambling, violence, sex, cursing; this initiation is TOO EARLY
- Kids lack role models
- Religion sometimes used a negative tool to gain power, and ends up in violence.
- Joking too far can be dangerous and out of control. It can hurt others.
- Drugs, love/jealousy, arguments, gangs, political disagreements/issues around the world.
- Video games are a major source of negative exposure
- Cartoons and images that are provocative and violent –symbolic violence that can turn into actual violence through subsequent actions.
- Violence as a negative way of communicating or lack of communication; some people use it as a tool for getting what they want

## **Session II: Emotions**

Session 4 (Anger is Normal) and Session 5 (There are Healthy and Unhealthy Ways to Express Anger) are combined into a new session called “DEALING WITH EMOTIONS”

This chapter asks what is the range of emotions associated with violence (besides anger) and how to deal with them to prevent violence

Here are some decisions you’ve made about this session:

- Discuss the range of emotions likely to be associated with violence (not just anger): confusion, sadness, denial, depression, guilt, fear, self-esteem.
- Brainstorm about and discuss how to deal with this range of emotions constructively.

- Anger should not be presented as acceptable, although it is a human emotion.
- Re-do the list on page 51 (Healthy and unhealthy ways to express anger).
- Adopt the last student objective from Session 5 - interesting and helpful to know.

Here are some more emotions you found to be associated with violence:

- Pressure; dignity; pride
- Two strong feelings: love and hate; primary emotions with a thin line in between; they battle to win. Love should always win.
- Hate is a strong word. Substitute with 'dislike'.
- Some adults ask kids to be moral and good, but may turn around and do what they preach against
- Find ways to channel negative emotions positively (sports, music, calming surroundings, artistic expressions).
- Love relationships can lead to violence together with use of weapons, physical abuse, intimidation, fear
- Traitor and loyalty; betrayal; no emotion
- Find the good in people by going behind their façade – for example bullies could be soft and approachable if you get to know them. People are not always what they appear to be.
- Investigate where real source of anger comes from
- Courage comes out not when fighting, but when not taking up a violent challenge.

### **III. Strategies of Prevention and intervention**

Session 9 (Fighting-What Else Is There) should precede Session 8 (Preventing Violence).

**Here are some goals you came up with for this session:**

- The session needs to show the advantages of good decisions over decisions to be violent.
- Divide strategies into prevention and intervention
- Do skits that depict situations of conflict but which can be de-escalated.

**Here are strategies you suggested throughout all our meetings:**

- Important to know the many sides of a story because there are many perspectives in the world. Look at the other person's point of view
- Become more aware of meaning of violence. Learn to recognize the gravity of violent acts and their consequences; they are not jokes or normal acts
- Think before you act (analyze situation and potential for conflict/violence)
- Consider seriousness of situation before acting- is it worth a conflict or aggravation?.
- Avoid snap judgement from first impressions; first get to know someone.
- Find motivations to keep yourself passive and nonreactive in a violent manner.
- Be more honest with yourself and others. Communicate more before escalating a conflict into violence.
- Make the right choice (not cut school, or drink or smoke). Resist the pressure to be 'bad', although some kids might look down on you for wanting to be a good student and excel. Make explicit the 'glories' that kids can get from staying on track and contrast them to the negative aspects of taking the other road (school cutting, substance use, violence)
- Try to earn respect and attention through positive accomplishments, like scholarships, sports, community work and not by having a 'bad' boy or girl reputation on the streets. Both ways can get one attention, but the first one should be a preferred model.
- Find ways to work it out
- Talk to opponent or others; professionals, friends, family, teachers
- Stay to yourself, seclude yourself for a while; introspect, self-reflect, listen to music, do something that relaxes you or makes you feel better; make your surroundings enjoyable
- Acquire and maintain discipline; weight lifting; running
- You have choices, despite pressures; discuss the choices;
- Walk away
- Be more honest with yourself and others. Communicate more before escalating a conflict into violence
- Encourage people who are not popular to show who they really are. They may surprise you in a good way.

- People need will power and inner strength to overcome urges to initiate or respond with violence.
- Learn to give and take constructive criticism. Good communication is needed and works. Do not just tell people off
- Watch out for signs of potential violent incidents. Learn to recognize them and follow up on them with effective action.
- Find techniques of self-defense that will not get you in trouble, won't endanger the other person, but only disable them.
- Peer mediation
- Try to handle negative comments in a way that won't allow them to hurt you and then let them slip off. Although hard to do, reflect first and try not to act on impulse.
- School can offer self-defense classes
- Give kids alternatives to fighting and being aggressive and educate everyone as such
- Find ways to channel negative emotions positively (sports, music, calming surroundings, artistic expressions).
- Try not to keep it inside, release the pressure in a constructive way (remember the soda bottle?). Yoga, exercise. Talk it out with yourself, a third party and seek advice.
- Find age appropriate ways of expressing anger and releasing pressure, as well as ways with which you feel comfortable. Let it out in a safe way and release some pressure.
- Religion and spirituality as positive ways to deal with anger (for some people).
- To prove that you're stronger than your opponent ignore them. They only bother you for attention. This is hard to achieve, but it takes practice, self-control, and motivation to keep your integrity and patience. Educate yourself and others about this.
- Importance of examining one's emotions, psychological and internal states
- Connect with people that have been through your experiences for strength
- Try to be the bigger person and think that fighting won't get you far. Maybe it will settle things for now, but it's not a long term solution.
- Passive resistance

- Not just worry about yourself, but be concerned with the ‘bully’ who may not just attack you but also other kids. Take action to make sure that even after you are ok (by solving a conflict by yourself or with others’ help), other kids won’t become the bully’s next victim. Talk to teachers, parents, counselors, other kids and don’t let things don’t go too far.
- Control emotions and behavior
- Role playing
- Sports and physical activity
- Feel safe to report suspicious signs (confidentiality)
- TV and the media
- Determine the real source of anger
- Talk to your parents
- People are exposed to many positive and negative influences, but have the option to choose their path. It’s in our power to choose to be or not to be violent.
- Fighting as last resort. First try any possible positive way that you can think of to get through to the other person AND YOUR peaceful instincts.
- Courage comes out not when fighting, but when not taking up a violent challenge.
- You may understand the person but not see eye to eye – disagreement. Try to agree to disagree and not take it to a violent level.

### **Session IV- Grey Areas**

This session discusses issues that are important to know. Violence prevention is not as easy and straight forward as many adults and curricula would like it to be. In our discussions, we stumbled upon some controversial issues and difficult decisions which we believe should be part of a violence prevention curriculum in order for students to be aware of them. We named these issues the “Grey areas” of violence prevention.

- Violence is sometimes used for gaining/maintaining respect and by countries to obtain/maintain independence. Violence sometimes eliminated imperialism and helped people gain human rights. People lost their lives while fighting for social justice, freedom and rights. It’s a paradox that gaining such wonderful things is by way of violence.

- Those who label the hard working kids as ‘nerds’ forget that they may end up working for them one day!!!! ☺
- How far can freedom to act go before it becomes violence? Is intervention to stop that freedom censorship?
- Is violence ever justified? In self-defense?
- Kids lack role models
- Religion and spirituality as positive ways to deal with anger.
- Fights against social injustice and inequality often have a high price – violence and loss of life (Martin Luther King, Malcom X, Nelson Mandela).
- Ignoring opponents to prove strength
- Poverty, racism and discrimination. The poor and minorities are often portrayed as more violent. These are discriminatory and racist acts that can potentially lead to up-rises for equality.
- Bad people/bullies are often not as “bad” as they appear to be. Get on their soft side.
- Propaganda for war, joining the army, which is education to become violent. Tremendous amounts of money poured by countries into their armies. What kind of education is this for youths, who are on the other hand told to be non-violent?
- The Spornos and Eminem
- Dual role of music in calming negative emotions AND pushing some to be violent.

## **V. Review and Resources**

### Review Session

- How far can freedom to act go before it becomes violence? Is intervention to stop that freedom censorship?
- Is violence innate or learned? Are we products of our environments? Violence may be innate/instinctual, but civilization and socialization can steer us away from it.

- It is essential to know the various sides of a story for there are many perspectives in the world.
- “everybody has the right to live, but ... no one has the right to live in a violent world”
- What would you change about this curriculum?

### Resources Page

This last section contains a list of resources such as organizations or hotlines that young people can contact in case they feel in danger, or see others that are violence or could be violent, or, if students have violent urges themselves and want to seek help. There are also some suggestions for young people to find role models.

- TV and the media (educational and consciousness raising programs, as well as programs that bring on relaxation and take one’s mind off things)
- Services and hotlines for kids to contact (if in danger or feeling violent urges); counseling possibilities readily available
- Connect with people that have been through your experiences for strength
- Create a video of a conflict situation (skits) that seems real and discuss it in terms of events, consequences and prevention.
- The positive impact of family on one’s actions and ways of dealing with violence.
- Martin Luther King, Gandhi, Nelson Mandela
- Role playing

- Many kids don't know their rights and are taken advantage of by police and in courts.

Session 10 should be dispersed throughout all of them because it includes skits and every session should have a skit that addresses each important concept. Students should get to practice and learn through skits all along the way, not wait until the end.

## Appendix F

### Youth Curriculum Session on Emotions

#### Dealing with Emotions

*Introduce the session with the following statements:*

Emotions are a significant part of ones' existence. They play an essential role in the manner in which one leads their daily life. A whole range of emotions is associated with violence. One is commonly faced with violent or tumultuous circumstances, in which emotions can greatly influence one's thinking and behavior. This session will show you how emotions promote violence and illustrate the types of emotions that come up in different violent situations. In this session we will discuss definitions of various emotions and we will also have multiple scenarios that will illustrate the different types of emotions that can arise in real life situations. An activity will be included where decisions will need to be made pertaining to your thoughts and differences of opinion, as well as to consequences of those decisions you make. You will be asked to partake in a game called "The Devils Advocate". This will provide a learning experience that will give you a better understanding of violence and emotions that relate to each other.

*Ask the students to name emotions that they think are associated with violence. After they brainstorm, add the following:*

Anger is not the only emotion associated with violence. Sadness, denial, obsession, depression, guilt, fear, self-esteem, jealousy, love, hate and desire can all promote violence as well. It needs

to be understood that there are many types of violence such as verbal abuse, mental abuse, sexual abuse, physical abuse towards another and yourself, etc.

*Ask students to define the emotions you brainstormed. See what they say and if needed, share these dictionary definitions with them:*

Sadness = grieving, mournful, downcast

Denial = refusal to admit the truth of a statement or charge

Obsession = a persistent disturbing preoccupation with an idea or feeling

Depression = low in spirits, a state of feeling sad

Guilt = a feeling of responsibility for wrongdoing

Fear = an unpleasant often strong emotion caused by expectation or awareness of danger

Low self-esteem = a low level of confidence in one's self or self-conscious

Jealousy = demanding complete devotion

Love = strong affection

Hate = intense hostility and aversion

Desire = to long, hope, or wish for, craving

Anger = a strong feeling of displeasure.

Although anger is a human emotion, it is not acceptable to take anger on anyone. Part of growing up involves learning to handle anger.

### How to Deal with Anger

*First ask students to brainstorm, then share the list below:*

Talk to someone

Cry

Read a book

Sleep

Take a walk

Lock yourself in a room

*First ask students to brainstorm about causes of anger, then discuss the following:*

Being denied

Not having your own space

Not being accepted

Being mistreated/disrespected

Having to do something against your will

*Move to discuss the following:*

What are distinctions among controlling anger, expressing it and channeling it? [Controlling anger means keeping a lid on it; expressing anger means making known your feelings of anger; channeling anger means diverting it by engaging in a constructive activity such as exercising, doing homework or painting a picture]

*Different scenarios will then be acted by the 'teachers', so that the 'students' can see how the many emotions are associated with violence. They will ask the students to listen for or think about two things: (1) identify emotions; (2) prevention/intervention strategies.*

### Scenarios

- A. A girl named Jessica and a guy named Joel chat on the Internet regularly. Jessica describes to Joel how pretty she is and how perfect her body is. Joel becomes interested and he longs to be with her. One day they decided to meet. On the day that they met Joel approached Jessica and she quickly rejected him. Joel wanted her bad and he couldn't believe that he was rejected. Jessica decides to leave but Joel forcefully held her back and unfortunately rapes her.
- B. Janelle's mother died. Janelle missed her mother very much and constantly cried. Her mother was the only person in the world for her. No one would ever listen to Janelle but her mother. Janelle loved her with all her heart but one day she couldn't take it any more so she committed suicide.
- C. Two friends get into an accident. One immediately died and one was able to live. They had both been drinking alcohol a couple of minutes before. When the survivor of the accident gets home her roommate questions her. The survivor is afraid that her roommate might know something and might tell the police so the survivor gets irritated and hits her roommate.
- D. There are these two brothers. Emmanuel is a homosexual, and John denies Emmanuel as his brother. John tells his friends who are homophobic that his brother is homosexual and that he doesn't approve of his brother's sexuality because it isn't right. The next day John's friends see Emmanuel waking in the streets. John's friends hazed and killed Emmanuel. John finds out what happened and so he questioned himself and regretted what he had done.
- E. A wife feared that her husband was cheating on her. She approaches her husband in a negative way by yelling etc. He denies everything and threatens her by leaving her. She feels that she can't live without him and to keep him from leaving she decides to cut herself and threatens him by saying that she'll kill him.

*To the students:* Have you ever experienced any of these? Tell us about other violent situations that commonly happen in your life not seen here (bullying).

Match a letter with an emotion or emotions that is/are most demonstrated in each scenario:

Sadness	Fear
Obsession/denial	Love
Depression/low self-esteem	Hate
Jealousy	Desire

List the scenario or scenarios under the type of violence to which you believe they belong:

Verbal Abuse

Mental Abuse

Physical Abuse (towards another)

Physical Abuse (towards yourself)

Sexual Abuse

Love relationships can lead to violence. If a couple can't communicate with each other then it could lead to arguments and violence.

Scenario: You have a boyfriend/girlfriend. Your boyfriend/girlfriend loves you to death. He/she gives you anything you want and does whatever they want for you. He/she is also very overprotective of you and very jealous. One day he/she comes up to you really mad, and tells you that they heard that you were kissing someone else. Your boyfriend/girlfriend doesn't let you explain and hits you. You love this person to death and you feel that you can't live without this person.

Discussion: would you forgive him or her, would you not forgive him or her, or are you neutral?

Once you choose, discuss why you chose what you did.

Conclusion: Why do you think it's important to be aware of your and other people's emotions?

## Appendix G

### My Instructions for the Youth Design Sessions

#### Designing Your Session – Instructions

##### Task: Combine Your Raw Materials

Original Curriculum

Your ideas placed into the new curriculum outline

Handouts from original curriculum

Add relevant skits

##### People Organization:

- Make sure everyone contributes to designing the session (you'll have to write a list of who did what)
- One person needs to record at all times about decisions and changes. Either select a person or rotate.
- Each team member will be responsible for presenting/teaching one section of the lesson. Make sure you each know what you have to do (first design the lesson and then assign roles at the end).

##### Ideas Organization:

- Combine the original curriculum with your ideas. See where you want to cut and where you want to add.
- Organize the lesson in categorize and subcategories. Think how a textbook chapter is organized. It has an overview of what the chapter will address (introduction), then continues with the sections and subsections.
  - For example, *types of violence*, *statistics* and *risk factors* are subsections of the large Introduction to the curriculum session. Next, for *types of violence*, you will want to assign separate smaller sections (or paragraphs or bullet points) to each type of violence you list, the meaning of each, the level (individual or national or international) and how it affects young people.
  - Or, *risk factors/causes*: you could organize them by internal (in the mind) or external (in society, like wars or drugs, or video games).
  - The same categorization could work for *strategies*. These could be internal (dealing with the self) or external (talking to people, intervening to help, peer mediation, etc.). You can also divide strategies into *prevention* or *intervention*.

**Pointers:**

- Familiarize yourselves with the original curriculum sessions. See what each section tries to convey. Then, look at the list of additions you have come up with and try to find places where they fit in the original curriculum. Decide what you want to keep and what is not worth having in the new curriculum.
- Organize the parts of the lesson in the order in which they will be taught. Have a logical sequence (Order) of sections.
- In designing/writing the sessions, you could make statements, pose questions of the students, have activities to illustrate points or help students think of what you want them to learn (such as handouts, skits, brainstorming, debates, etc.).
- The skits; have one per session. They should be relevant to what is being learned. The idea is that by having students act out skits, they would learn the concepts better and in a more fun way. First think of what you want them to learn (like an important part of the lesson) and then think of a skit that could bring those ideas out or could illustrate them well.
- Besides the content, you have to think of how it's all going to play out (the mechanics of teaching). Do you have students write for a few minutes? Do you have them break in small groups? These are all things you need to plan for. And WRITE THEM IN THE LESSON PLAN so that any teacher who may want to follow your lesson plan would be able to look at your instructions and follow them easily.
- Lastly, design a session that YOU YOURSELF would like to learn (you'd have fun learning). Do not lecture! Keep people involved, just like you like it to be presented to you.

## Appendix H

### NOTES FROM MY LAST SESSION WITH THE ‘THIRD GROUP’

[All names are pseudonyms]

“...I welcomed the two weeks of respite from the group. I was exhausted by the sessions and figuring out (fast) how to respond with a new “better” session for next time, every time. Not being a teacher was taking its toll on me. Only three weeks to go. Only three weeks. This was supposed to be fun! Well, it was, with my other group. I couldn’t figure out why they were so different. There are many things, probably, like age, SES, quality of education, gender (the third group had a majority of boys) that may explain the differences. I asked my first group (let’s call them ‘the girls’) if they wanted to present their unique session on Emotions to the third group. They were enthusiastic to show the world what they’d created. We prepared, strengthened the session, had them evaluate it critically to improve it and prepared them to take on ‘teacher’ roles. However, we built in opportunities for the girls to learn from the third group as well. It was going to be an exchange, no sole experts, only knowledge “sharers”.

The day came- June 8<sup>th</sup> - when I went to prepare the third group for the following week when the two groups would meet. Tamy [the group’s coordinator] gave me the green light to bring in the girls. Now I had to tell the kids, which I didn’t think was going to be a big deal. I walked in at 4:35. We usually begin at 4:45. This time the kids were sitting around the table watching Curly and Pam play cards. Curly and Pam are smart and manipulative, they seem to be leaders. I had never seen them this quiet. As soon as I walk in, Curly threw a question at me. The TV was loud and the question didn’t make sense. I didn’t understand it. I asked him three times, still couldn’t get it. Tamy smiled and asked me to ignore him. She then said that he asked if my train didn’t stop at Green Street, implying that I was late. Hm... I wasn’t late. I began defending myself. Always a trap for me with these kids. They ‘smell’ my emotions and play me. How dare he tell me I was late when I wasn’t and when he was the main reason for interruption and

delay all throughout?! I put my bag down. Tamy takes out the kids who were not part of the group. The group seemed smaller and smaller every time. I saw Jamal, I was hoping he'd stay. I liked him. Turk wasn't there. Neither was Music. I liked them too. Curly and Pam asked me to pay them double that day because I hadn't gone the previous week. They said: 'it was you, not us. We were here, you weren't'. I opened my mouth to say that they were told we'd take a week off. They continued asking for double the money. I stopped myself and said that I would not get into that with them. Then Pam said that they knew about my not coming. They were playing me again. Every step of the way.

Tamy was still negotiating with one boy who was not allowed to come back to the group because he had been disruptive early on and taken out by Tamy. He wanted to come back every single time. I felt bad, my heart was breaking seeing him by the door looking in every time. He was nowhere near Curly and Pam's caliber, I didn't understand why he was the one to go and not the other two. But, it was not my decision.

While Tamy was out dealing with him, I tried to get the kids to listen to me. I couldn't. Curly was shuffling cards. Mala was arguing with two other girls about the length of her hair. Jamal was smiling and showing me a green piece of chewing gum peeking through his white teeth. I tried to get their attention again. I took Curly's cards and put them aside. Mala was now playing a basketball under the table. It was really loud. I asked her to stop a few times. She finally did. Pam started hitting the table really hard with rhythm. I asked her to stop. The kids were yelling at each other. No one was listening. I said to myself that I'd get Tamy and Ms. Amala to yell at them and calm them down, as always, to begin our group. That's wrong. Why am I using this punitive method? There may not be a way around it, but it's still what I'm against with all my being (and my research!). Hm.... I tried talking again. Someone turned on the TV, very loudly. Mala began hitting the ball again, loudly. I went to take the ball. She screamed at me: 'what are you doing? What do you want?' I give up. I scream: we have to get ready for next time, we'll have guests. They all froze. 'What guests?' Curly jumped up and began signaling with his hands and yelling: 'it's not in the contract! it's not in the contract'! [the set of rules I had asked

them to sign after two sessions, such as ‘no cursing’] He repeated this over and over while I remained speechless to their reaction. No guests! Then they asked: who are they? ‘The other group I’m working with,’ I said. ‘Oh.... Girls or boys?, Pam asks. ‘Girls’. She was happy, cheering. ‘How old are they?’ ‘14-18’. When they heard that, they exploded. Pam stood up hitting one fist against her other palm, hard: ‘we’re gonna jump them, we’re gonna jump them!’ My heart sank into my stomach thinking: ‘I should get Tamy and Ms. Amala. No, this is not gonna happen, I can’t do this anymore. I can’t expose the girls to this either. This is gonna be a disaster. Well, can it get worse than this?’ I made a quick decision. I hadn’t felt more sure in my entire project with this group about what I was about to do. I began packing my bag – put back the recorders, my lesson, the handouts. The kids were in chaos. I walked out. Tamy was at the door finally having a nice conversation with the boy who wanted back in. He was just about to leave. I let it out: ‘I can’t deal with this anymore.’ She’s shocked. We talked, she told me that it was my decision, that she’d been under the press as well. I felt bad for her. She’d been so helpful, and I had put a lot of pressure on her. The kids began hitting the door from the inside, wanting out. Tamy held the door with all her force. They were cursing at each other.

For a split second I thought that Tamy would calm them down and scold them. She didn’t. That was good because I didn’t want this forced disciplining and teaching to go on any longer. I didn’t want to buy them any longer. It was all about the money for them. Or at least so it seemed. I had created everything that my project was against. In my vision of learning teachers and students are not rivals but partners. This was a rotten relationship. I don’t know why and how we got there. Tamy walked in and asked them to be quiet for me to tell them something. They listened. I thanked them for everything and said that it was the end, I was leaving. They erupted again, negotiating. They said they didn’t do anything wrong, it wasn’t fair. A few said that they should not be punished just because the others were bad. Then Pam said that they had all done something bad. We were finally in agreement. I thanked them again. Curly said: ‘for what?’ Tamy said: ‘yes, Curly, that’s a very good question.’ I walked out.”

## Appendix I

### Tables

**Table I1. Content Codes Frequencies**

Code	Code Frequency							Total
	3/4	3/18	3/25	4/1	4/15	4/22	5/13	
<b>Session Dates</b>								
Agenda for change	3	13	13	6	0	15	0	50
Preservation (scientific concept)	1	1	3	1	0	1	0	7
Modification/Extension	1	2	9	6	0	19	0	37
Original addition (everyday concept)	2	20	21	11	2	7	1	64
Resistance	1	5	12	10	0	3	0	31
Language issue	0	0	2	1	1	11	0	15
Youth curriculum rationale development	2	11	3	4	0	17	0	37
Student programmatic recommendations	2	6	0	0	0	7	6	21
Youth knowledge (everyday concepts)	7	23	23	15	1	10	0	79
Youth perspectives	11	34	29	15	3	18	1	111

**Table I2. Content Codes Definitions**

Code	Definition
Agenda for change	the most problematic elements students identified in the original curriculum that became guides for the more detailed transformation
Preservation (scientific concept)	a segment of the original curriculum that the students decided to keep
Modification*	a segment of the original curriculum that the students changed
Extension*	a segment of the original curriculum that was preserved but because it was seen as incomplete, something new was added to it
Original addition (everyday concept)	a novel addition to the adult curriculum that is unique to youth thinking
Resistance	Youth resistance to adult curricular values. Examples would be their debates about justified violence, the price of not being violent or that of being violence, the possibility of avoiding violence (not always an option), or simply taking the discussions of violence far beyond the confines of the curriculum (interpersonal violence) to gangs, discrimination, governmental issues and policies, global conflicts, etc.

**Table I2 (continued).**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Language issue	Instance when the language in the original curriculum is questioned and often modified to better represent youth perspectives.
Youth curriculum rationale development	This will document how the students construct the rationale behind the new curriculum and how decisions to include or exclude concepts are justified.
Student programmatic recommendations	Direct recommendations made by students that are not only about curricular values but also about procedures for learning and teaching the curriculum
Youth knowledge (everyday concepts)	The students make use of a priori knowledge (from home, media, school, afterschool programs, etc) to transform the curriculum.
Youth perspectives	Unique student perspectives that are clearly distinguishable from adult views and that represent valuable knowledge

\* Merged once coding was completed due to their close conceptual definition.

**Table I3. Process Codes Frequencies**

Code	Code Frequency							Total
	3/4	3/18	3/25	4/1	4/15	4/22	5/13	
<b>Session Dates</b>								
Positioning and shifting roles	0	16	16	16	1	30	2	81
Peer collaboration	1	15	17	17	4	14	1	69
Peer-facilitator collaboration	0	8	7	3	4	20	0	42
Peer help and clarification	0	1	1	2	2	11	0	17
Impromptu discussion	0	12	5	11	0	2	1	31
Facilitator guidance	3	13	13	7	9	13	1	59
Facilitator overview/summary	2	2	0	3	1	1	1	10
Debates and resolution	0	3	8	8	1	8	0	28
Use of everyday and scientific concepts	1	12	18	21	3	11	0	66
Power relations	0	18	15	16	1	26	2	78
Youth perspectives	1	18	12	15	2	15	0	63

**Table I4. Process Codes Definitions**

Code	Definition
Positioning and shifting roles	Will describe relevant types of positioning and how these are transformed over time (e.g., from novice to expert; adoption of multiple positions concomitantly – of knowledgeable author who is at the same time the learner
Peer collaboration	Instances of two or multiple students working together to develop an idea or solve a problem; peers learn from each other in constructing a youth curriculum
Peer-facilitator collaboration	This will capture whole group collaborations to solve issues related to constructing a youth curriculum. Student and facilitator borders are crossed as they build on each other ideas
Peer help and clarification	Instances when peers jump to help a confused student
Impromptu discussion	Instance when the students take on a discussion about an issue they struggle with or need clarification for without being prompted by the adult curriculum or the facilitator. It serves an important role in discovering knowledge and learning. It goes hand in hand with peer collaboration.
Facilitator guidance	Direct instruction from the facilitator
Facilitator overview/summary	In order to move forward, the facilitator reviews/reminds the students of what was accomplished or the task at hand to orient the group.

**Table I4 (continued).**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Debates and resolution	Disagreements over concepts or curricular structure, usually between two students or two camps; of interest are modes and types of resolution, or the lack of resolution
Use of everyday and scientific concepts	Identification of everyday vs. scientific knowledge (in the Content coding) and then analysis of how they were fused together by students
Power relations	Through positioning, students gain power shared with them by facilitator.
Youth perspectives	Use of youth perspectives to handle adult and youth curricular knowledge

**Table I5. Pedagogy Codes Frequencies**

Code	Code Frequency							
	<u>3/4</u>	<u>3/18</u>	<u>3/25</u>	<u>4/1</u>	<u>4/15</u>	<u>4/22</u>	<u>5/13</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Session Dates</b>								
Positioning and shifting roles (expertise, power, responsibility)	1	14	18	13	0	28	11	85
Power relations	2	15	17	13	0	26	11	84
Peer collaboration	0	14	15	9	0	14	4	56
Peer help and clarification	0	1	1	1	0	11	0	14
Peer-facilitator collaboration	1	8	7	2	0	20	0	38
Facilitator guidance	0	8	12	1	2	12	3	38
Youth on knowledge in schools	5	2	0	0	0	0	6	14
Youth on knowledge in afterschool and group	2	2	0	0	0	0	4	9
Youth on pedagogy in school	6	2	0	0	0	0	6	14
Current education	7	1	0	0	0	0	12	20
Non-dialogical education	6	2	0	0	0	0	6	14
Progressive pedagogy	0	15	21	18	0	0	11	65
Youth on pedagogy in afterschool and group	2	2	0	0	0	0	6	10
Youth on their position/role in schools	8	2	0	0	0	0	9	19
Youth on their position/role in after school and group	2	3	0	0	0	0	8	13
Youth perspectives	7	14	5	9	0	8	21	64

**Table I6. Pedagogy Codes Definitions**

Code	Definition
Positioning and shifting roles (expertise, power, responsibility)	The way the adult and students position each other is in constant flux, which gives different actors the position of experts at different times. With expertise come power and responsibility, which are constantly redistributed in the teaching, learning and transformation of the curriculum.
Power relations	Reconfiguration of traditional teacher, student, and peer roles and relations necessitated by the task of transforming a curriculum from a youth perspective.
Peer collaboration	Instances of two or multiple students working together to develop an idea or solve a problem; peers learn from each other in constructing a youth curriculum
Peer help and clarification	Instances when peers jump to help a confused student
Peer-facilitator collaboration	This will capture whole group collaborations to solve issues related to constructing a youth curriculum. Student and facilitator borders are crossed as they build on each other ideas
Facilitator guidance	Direct instruction from the facilitator

**Table I6 (continued).**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Youth on knowledge in schools	Reflections by youth on what is learned in their schools
Youth on knowledge in afterschool and group	Reflections by youth on what is learned in after school and/or in our group
Youth on pedagogy in school	Reflections by youth on how things are learned, the conduct of their teachers and the administration's stances in their schools
Current education	Students speak from a traditional education perspective, where the teachers are the knowers with power and the students are novices who absorb the unidirectional flow of information coming from the teachers. It's not dialogical or cooperative.
Non-dialogical education	There is no bridge between teachers and students, no exchange of information, no collaboration.
Progressive pedagogy	Reference to progressive pedagogy
Youth on pedagogy in afterschool and group	Reflections by youth on how things are learned, the conduct of their facilitator in after school and our group
Youth on their position/role in schools	Reflections by youth on their roles as students in their schools
Youth on their position/role in after school and group	Reflections by youth on their roles as novices and experts in after school and our group
Youth perspectives	Unique student perspectives that are clearly distinguishable from adult views. They constitute valuable knowledge and are necessary in this type of student centered pedagogy.

**Table 17. Violence Related Codes Frequencies**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Code Frequency</b>							<b>Total</b>
	<b>3/4</b>	<b>3/18</b>	<b>3/25</b>	<b>4/1</b>	<b>4/15</b>	<b>4/22</b>	<b>5/13</b>	
<b>Session Dates</b>								
Prevention ineffective	4	0	1	4	0	0	0	9
Individual	0	2	2	1	1	0	0	6
Social and systemic	1	4	11	0	0	0	1	17
A priori knowledge	7	20	19	17	27	0	0	90
Controversial issue	0	6	13	9	2	0	0	30

**Table 18. Violence Related Codes Definitions**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Prevention ineffective	Previous experiences with prevention that seemed not to have had an impact from a youth point of view.
Individual	Violence viewed by students as the result of an individual act.
Social and systemic	Violence viewed by students as the result of large social systems at work.
A priori knowledge	Student knowledge of violence drawn from other sources than the current experience.
Controversial issue	Issue of violence that seemed controversial to the students.

**Table 19. Other Codes Frequencies**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Code Frequency</b>							
	<b>3/4</b>	<b>3/18</b>	<b>3/25</b>	<b>4/1</b>	<b>4/15</b>	<b>4/22</b>	<b>5/13</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Session Dates</b>								
Resourcefulness	1	6	1	1	1	4	0	14
Interesting quote	10	20	10	19	0	7	11	77
Nested and social systemic perspective	7	7	6	1	0	0	1	22

**Table 110. Other Codes Definitions**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Resourcefulness	Peers find unique creative solutions or ideas.
Interesting quote	Quotes that are meaningful in one way or another, aside from the other coding categories.
Nested and social systemic perspective	Students adopt a systemic explanation or approach, going beyond individual and myopic perspectives found in traditional pedagogy and curriculum.

**Table I11. Youth Transformation of the Two Adult Curriculum Sessions on Anger**

<b>Curricular Values/Concepts</b>	<b>Final Youth Decision about AC Value</b>
<u>AC Session</u>	
<b>Anger is Normal</b>	
Anger is a normal part of life.	Preserved.
Anger triggers physiological changes that prepare the body for the fight or flight response. Students are asked to brainstorm about these physiological changes.	Found unnecessary to include here.
Explain the fight and flight response. People have other options besides these.	Moved to the YC's Prevention Strategies session, but not a preferred strategy.
Brainstorm and discuss the stimuli that lead to anger, tension, stress and adrenaline.	Preserved; more detailed in YC's Introduction session.
Learn how to handle anger.	Expanded to other emotions; more detailed in Prevention Strategies session.
Anger is a potentially positive emotion that fuels energy and creativity.	Preserved.
Discuss that there are degrees of anger. Anger is broad, depending on the stimuli and its intensity.	Found unnecessary to include.
Although anger-provoking situations involve other emotions, students will only concentrate on anger in this curriculum.	Vastly expanded.
Anger results when a need is denied- basic or even issues of social injustice- or when there's lack of control over events.	Expanded; illustration through complex skits.

**Table I11 (continued).**

<b>Curricular Values/Concepts</b>	<b>Final Youth Decision about AC Value</b>
<u>AC Session</u>	
<b>There Are Healthy and Unhealthy Ways to Express Anger</b>	
Review the role of anger in homicide, fight or flight response, and anger stimuli.	Illustrated in YC skits, except for fight or flight.
Brainstorm ways to deal with anger, both healthy and unhealthy.	Preserved; expanded in YC Prevention Strategies session.
The teacher can provide examples of healthy/unhealthy ways, should students have a hard time brainstorming.	Preserved.
First recognize that you're angry, then you can choose how to deal with anger from the many options that exist.	Preserved; expanded in YC Prevention Strategies session.
Ask students what kind of criteria they would use to evaluate the healthy and unhealthy ways (harming oneself or others, getting in trouble, etc). Label them as positive (+) or negative (-).	Considered during session design, but not included in the final version.
Ask why it is difficult to deal with anger (violent feelings make us uncomfortable, expressing anger can cause trouble).	Not included, found unnecessary.
Ask how we learn to deal with anger.	Not included, found unnecessary.
Discuss the difference between controlling, expressing and channeling anger.	Preserved with slight language modifications.
There is a difference between dealing with the feelings of anger vs. the situation that created the anger. It's best to deal with the feelings when you cannot change the situation.	Preserved; mostly addressed in YC Prevention Strategies session.
What is the role of other emotions vis-à-vis anger (fear can help one walk away from anger-inducing situations)?	Vastly expanded.

**Table I12. Tasks in the Adult Curriculum with Examples and Functions**

Task	Example	Function
Introduction of a topic	<p>“For the next ten or so class sessions, we will be studying violence: what it is, why it occurs, and possible ways to prevent it. We will focus on just a few aspects of violence. First, let’s take a look at how widespread we think violence is” (p. 16).</p>	<p>From the start, the sequence of concepts addressed is established (what, why and prevention) and the limits are set (just a few aspects). Small door to view violence in its multiple forms and through students’ eyes is opened for a short while (how widespread it is), which could be an opportunity for permeability. However, the goal to focus on “just a few aspects” minimizes the transformation of scientific knowledge by youth perspectives.</p>
Questions for students to lead their thinking towards an adult desired understanding	<p>“Why is it difficult to deal with anger? (It can bring up violent feelings that make us uncomfortable; expressing anger can cause trouble; we like things to go smoothly)” (p. 50).</p>	<p>Even though the questions are teacher generated and closely tied to the narrow focus of the AC on anger, they could potentially lend themselves to permeable moments by tapping into youth spontaneous knowledge. However, that possibility is lost due to the very specific answers expected and eventually recited by the teacher.</p>

**Table I12 (continued).**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Function</b>
Presentation of certain data/facts such as statistics or violence scenarios	“Fights don’t just happen; certain steps precede them. There is always a history to the relationship ... The fight begins with a conflict between people that escalates ... and the fight begins with the first act of aggression” (p.63).	This excerpt is from the AC’s Session 7, which was eliminated by this group because it seemed redundant with previous AC sessions and a priori youth knowledge. Further, it presents fighting in one way, which is supposed to be representative of violence (just like the typical homicide), which is conceptually confining to student potential for transformative learning.
Review of concepts studied in the previous session	“Remind students that this course will be focusing on physical violence (fighting) between people who are acquainted (know each other). The activities in this session will focus on the characteristics of such violence, and of homicide in particular” (p. 23).	Students are tightly kept on task to adhere to the narrow focus of the AC. The activities are set to study very specific concepts (typical homicide) and rule out potential others (like meaning of taking a life, as our group explored).

**Table I12 (continued).**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Function</b>
Brainstorming around concepts (types of violence, triggers of anger, or healthy vs. unhealthy methods to deal with anger)	“The goal is to help students generate an extensive list of anger-provoking situations . . . State that although anger-provoking situations often involve other emotions, such as fear or sadness, students should concentrate only on those situations in which anger is the predominant feeling” (p. 42).	Brainstorming is the most participatory activity of the AC, next to skits. However, even within this creative task, a highly controlling quality is built in to keep out unwanted concepts. This process bars permeability. To the contrary, our project, by allowing students to <u>both</u> brainstorm <u>and</u> transform scientific knowledge, led to a more comprehensive understanding of emotions and violence, resulting in a unique youth session on Emotions.
Role plays	Here are two examples: (1) someone’s books fall on the floor when a student accidentally knocks them; apology and excuse; (2) peer in position to tell friend about a negative comment made by someone else (I discuss these later in greater detail.)	The idea of skits is fun, interactive and participatory. However, the students were mostly given the scenarios as opposed to designing them. This, again, minimizes the opportunities for permeability.
Discussions of various activity outcomes	Analyses of homicide statistics, elements of violence or prevention seen in skits performed, or weighing the positives/negatives of fighting.	These were centered exclusively around concepts promoted by the AC, were directed with focused questions by the teacher and were meant to convey the message of the AC.

**Table I13. Adult Curriculum Skits**

Skits in the Adult Curriculum	Values
<b>Reverse Role-Play Cards</b>	Envy, friendship
<p>Situation 1: Student 1 is hard working, stays out of trouble to get a college scholarship. Student 2 used to be good friends with Student 1 who let her copy during tests and hung out with her. Now Student 1 is busy and Student 2 thinks she's better than everyone else.</p>	Interpersonal violence
<p>Situation 2: Student 1: Someone tells you that Student 2 is bragging about how he came on to your girlfriend. You are mad because you thought he was your friend. Student 2: You know Student 1 well but he is not your friend. His girlfriend was in the hallway and you started talking to her. She seemed interested in you but you were only talking because she was nice.</p>	<p>Romantic jealousy, misunderstanding, peer role in spreading the rumor Interpersonal violence</p>
<b>Throwing a Curve Role-Plays</b>	Bully-like behavior, picking on fellow student; humor
<p>1. Student 1: Student 2 annoys you when he parades around as if he's better than everyone. You tell your friends that he's a chump. Student 2: You mind your business but there is a guy in school who won't let up on you. He harasses you, calls you a chump and comments about you in class. You've had it, you'd fight him if necessary but you'd rather not. It's not worth the trouble and you only want him off your back. <i>Throw a curve</i>: Do not fight, like he's expecting you to, but use humor to keep it light.</p>	<p>is used to keep it light Interpersonal violence</p>

**Table I13 (continued).**

<b>Skits in the Adult Curriculum</b>	<b>Values</b>
<p>2. Student 1: You're in a bad mood, nothing's going right and you're sitting at your desk waiting for the stupid class to start. Student 1 walks by and knocks your stuff on the floor, and you think he/she did it on purpose. Tell the chump what's on your mind.</p> <p>Student 2: You accidentally knock Student 1's stuff on the floor. He's angry and calls you a chump, while you don't like being called names. <i>Throw a curve:</i> Student 1 is taking his/her anger on you and it's not arguing about. Try to give him/her a way out by apologizing or excusing yourself.</p>	<p>Someone's books fall on the floor when a student accidentally knocks them; apology and excuse</p> <p>Interpersonal violence</p>
<p><b>Prevention Role Plays:</b></p> <p>1. Girl 1: After hearing Shawna in the bathroom telling other girls how she will steal Girl 2's boyfriend, you can't wait to tell that to Girl 2. Girl 2: Girl 1 just told you about Shawana. How will you prevent a fight? <i>Suggestions:</i> Ignore it because Shawana can't steal your boyfriend. Or talk to Girl 1 asking why she is trying to start trouble.</p>	<p>Threats to steal someone's boyfriend, a peer spreads the news; ignore it or talk it out</p> <p>Interpersonal violence</p>
<p>2. Boy 1: You heard Jerome telling people that Boy 2 is a real chump. Boy 2 is approaching you; how will you prevent a fight? <i>Suggestions:</i> Don't tell him because no one cares what Jerome says. Or tell him privately. Boy 2: You're having a good day and have just run into Boy 1 (your friend).</p>	<p>Peer in position to tell friend about a negative comment made by someone else</p> <p>Interpersonal violence</p>

**Table I14. Youth Curriculum Skits**

<b>Skits in the Youth Curriculum</b>	<b>Concepts</b>
<p>A girl named Jessica and a guy named Joel chat on the Internet regularly. Jessica describes to Joel how pretty she is and how perfect her body is. Joel becomes interested and he longs to be with her. One day they decided to meet. On the day that they met Joel approached Jessica and she quickly rejected him. Joel wanted her bad and he couldn't believe that he was rejected. Jessica decides to leave but Joel forcefully held her back and unfortunately rapes her.</p>	<p>Internet dating, rejection, rape</p> <p>Interpersonal violence</p> <p>Presence of media form seminal to young people, which provides limitless possibilities, including danger.</p> <p>Rape is bluntly presented, as it should be, given its being a real danger for women. The AC was not as explicit about consequences in its skits.</p>
<p>Janelle's mother died. Janelle missed her mother very much and constantly cried. Her mother was the only person in the world for her. No one would ever listen to Janelle but her mother. Janelle loved her with all her heart but one day she couldn't take it any more so she committed suicide.</p>	<p>Girl loses her mother, her only friend; she commits suicide.</p> <p>Self-violence</p> <p>Social isolation, which is rarely talked about in prevention. However, it is a reality for some adolescents who are depressed and lost.</p>
<p>Two friends get into an accident. One immediately died and one was able to live. They had both been drinking alcohol a couple of minutes before. When the survivor of the accident gets home her roommate questions her. The survivor is afraid that her roommate might know something and might tell the police so the survivor gets irritated and hits her roommate.</p>	<p>Car accident, alcohol, one friend dies, the other is safe but afraid that her roommate will call the police; she hits her.</p> <p>Interpersonal violence, yet interestingly extended beyond a dyadic relationship.</p> <p>A car accident in which the blame is placed on the survivor alone is often seen in the news and is a difficult problem to solve. Further, the violence by death is here accompanied by interpersonal violence as the survivor's attempt to prevent the involvement of a feared institution, the police.</p> <p>This is meaningful skit layered with several social practices in a domino effect relationship.</p>

**Table I14 (continued).**

<b>Skits in the Youth Curriculum</b>	<b>Concepts</b>
<p>There are these two brothers. Emmanuel is a homosexual, and John denies Emmanuel as his brother. John tells his friends who are homophobic that his brother is homosexual and that he doesn't approve of his brother's sexuality because it isn't right. The next day John's friends see Emmanuel waking in the streets. John's friends hazed and killed Emmanuel. John finds out what happened and so he questioned himself and regretted what he had done.</p>	<p>Gang homicide due to homophobia; act committed because the gay man's brother didn't approve of his sexuality.</p> <p>This is a hate crime (far from the messages found in the AC), which continues to be a brutal reality for everyone today.</p> <p>This is another complicatedly layered skit, involving three elements, which, if combined in specific ways have tragic consequences: (1) gangs; (2) homophobia; (3) complicated sibling relationships. Violence is contextualized at the intersection of three very different types of social relations.</p>
<p>A wife feared that her husband was cheating on her. She approaches her husband in a negative way by yelling etc. He denies everything and threatens her by leaving her. She feels that she can't live without him and to keep him from leaving she decides to cut herself and threatens him by saying that she'll kill him.</p>	<p>Reversed domestic violence as a result of the only male student's one time participation in the group.</p> <p>Self-violence</p>
<p>Nancy likes this guy named Andrew. Andrew doesn't like Nancy instead he likes this girl named Katie. Andrew rejected Nancy and him and Katie became boyfriend and girlfriend. Nancy is hung up on the idea that Andrew likes her (which is not true) and that she is gonna get him no matter what. Nancy was furious and planned to hurt/harm Katie.</p>	<p>Love, jealousy</p> <p>Consequences of emotions were preponderant in the group, which are relevant perspectives to these particular students and is probably gender-related.</p> <p>Similar to the AC, but the scenario is more elaborate.</p>
<p>A girl is too concerned about her appearance. She thinks she's ugly and that she's fat. Later on she develops bulimia.</p>	<p>Self-violence (unique to the YC)</p> <p>Reflection of an idealized idea of beauty that is oppressive and has serious repercussions on girls like the ones in this group. This was important for them to convey.</p>

**Table I14 (continued).**

<b>Skits in the Youth Curriculum</b>	<b>Concepts</b>
<p>Sarah likes Imani's jacket. Sarah has always wanted that jacket but she just couldn't have it. Sarah approaches Imani and tells her to give her the jacket. Imani refuses. Sarah orders Imani to give her the jacket, but once again Imani refuses. Sarah verbally abuses and threatens Imani. Imani ends up giving her the jacket</p>	
<p>Child abuse by mother due to life hardships spousal mistreatment</p> <p>Domestic violence</p>	<p>These were proposed by a new group of students who first wanted to visit the group once and then decided to join it. They were unique to the YC.</p>
<p>Bad older sibling and friend role model to younger girl; mother ignores her</p>	<p>Presented by the Introduction design team during their teaching session, and was a product of what they learned by introducing spontaneous knowledge. Based on past group discussions, lack of role models for young kids (from peers and adults) has a domino effect on children's social, emotional and academic development. One of the grave consequences of this violation of nurturance rights is involvement in violence, besides drugs and academic failure.</p>

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<sup>1</sup> Lee defined *signifying* “as a rhetorical stance, an attitude toward language, and a means of cultural self-definition” (p. 197), born in the 19<sup>th</sup> century slave spirituals and narratives (Gates, 1984). Signifying was known as *marking*, *loud-talking*, *specifying*, *testifying*, *rapping*, *playing the dozens* (Gates, 1984).