



Learning and Creativity

LECTURE

Learning about Conflict
through Drama




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By

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Cooling Conflicts You Tube

- ⇒ Cooling Conflicts Video
 - ⇒ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3WrLvUPIdA>
 - ⇒ Racism No Way Lesson
 - ⇒ http://www.racismnoway.com.au/teaching-resources/anti-racism-activities/lesson_ideas/20040505_68.html
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Notions of Creativity, Learning, Ecology and Meaning Making

Look at this image, what does it tell you
about notions of learning in school?

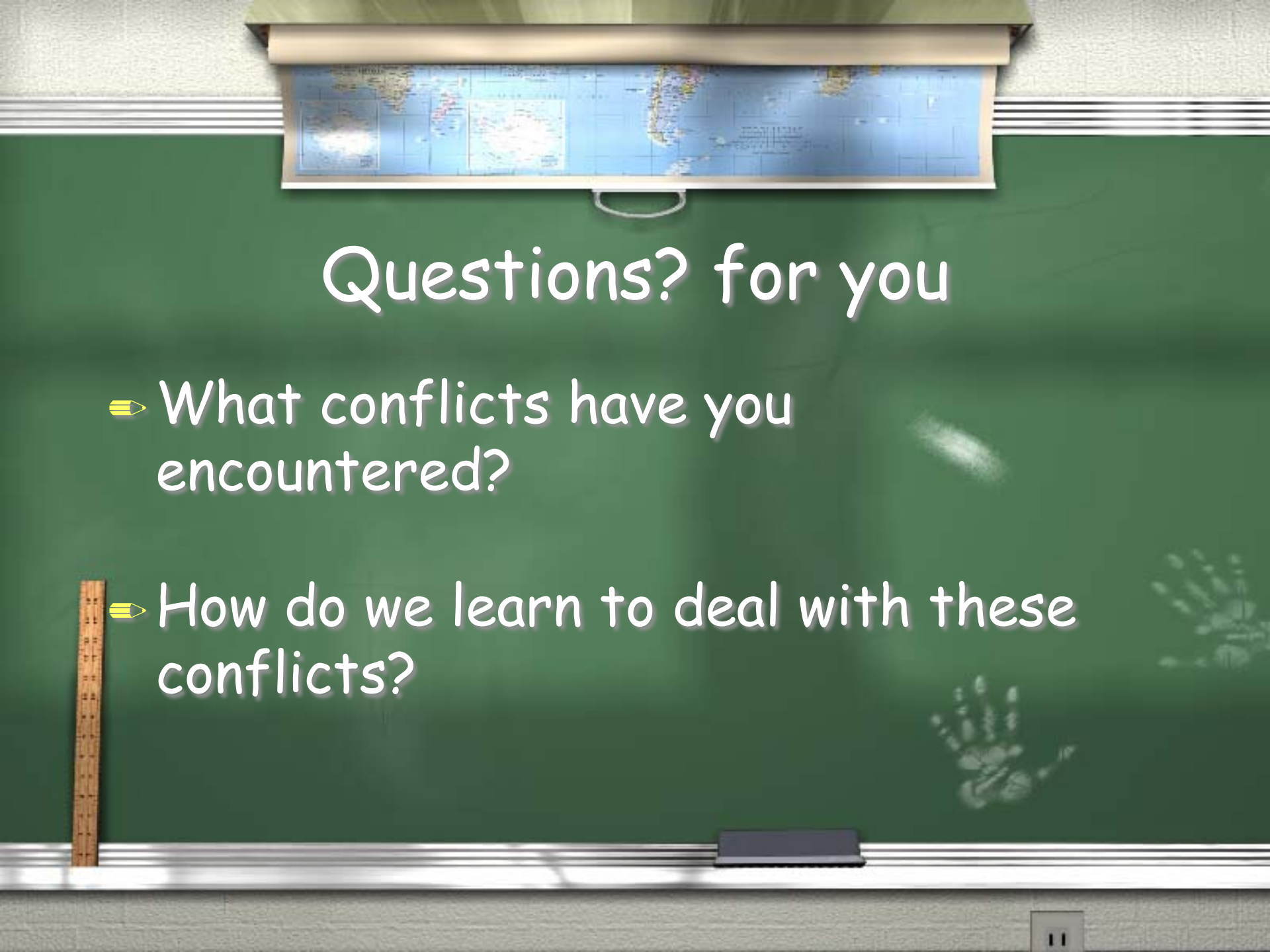




Participatory learning, creativity and imagination lie at the heart of this approach...the students work in small groups or

"clubs" on curricula and non-curricula subjects.





Questions? for you

- What conflicts have you encountered?
- How do we learn to deal with these conflicts?




What is learning?

- Who in this lecture theatre is a learner?
- What is it that you are learning right now?
- How do you know you've learnt something?



Know Thyself

- ⇒ It was through the practice, the teaching and study of drama that I learnt a great deal about myself
 - ⇒ The first step of the social ecology process that begins with the **personal self**, and then expands to the **social-cultural self**, the **ecological self** and finally the **spiritual self**
 - ⇒ In this way, learning and creativity can work and play together, they are both vital to the process of knowing ourselves
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***Delphi* was a Temple/sanctuary/monument/tomb.**

Delphi is at the foot of Mount Parnassos

It was the site of one of the most important pan-Hellenic oracles of the Greek world, that of Pythian Apollo

Delphi





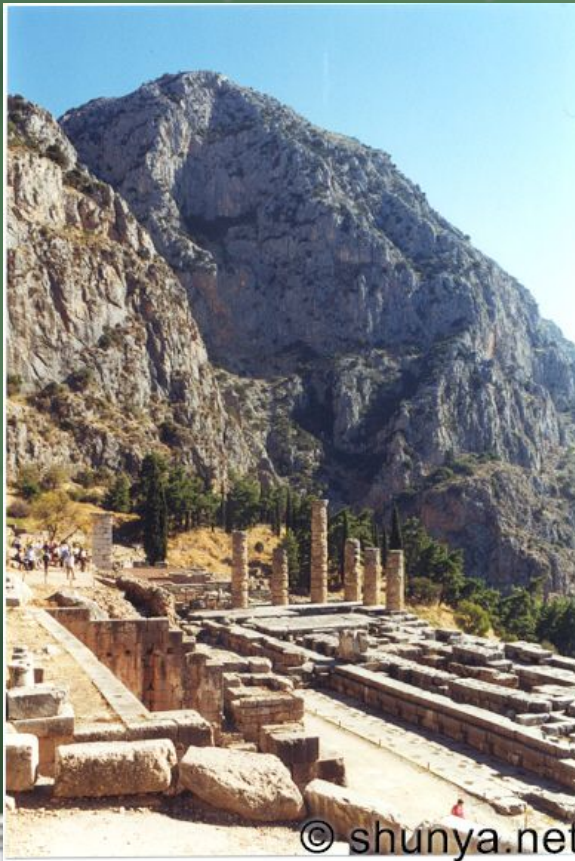
The site of Delphi served as a cultic centre beginning
some time before the 10th century B.C.E.

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Temple of Apollo Delphinios (worship of an island deity in dolphin form) and the Theatre looking down the valley



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Know Thyself 2

- ⇒ One example of this process for me was through watching, reading and working on a presentation of the classic ancient Greek play *Oedipus Rex*, by *Sophocles*, one of the great playwrights of all time. The play is the story of a man who has to learn who he really is, because he is the king of a place called Thebes and the city is experiencing a plague which has resulted from his actions of unknowingly killing his father and marrying his mother.

Oedipus the King

- ⇒ Antigone Leads Oedipus out of Thebes by Charles Francois Jalabert (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oedipus_the_King)

Acessed 6/3/08)

- ⇒ His teacher is the priest Tiresias, who is from the sacred city of Delphi, where there is the Temple of Apollo. On the temple are written two **statements**:

Know Thyself and All Things in Moderation.

These are the wholesome principles of the teachings of the Delphic Apollo. The scene where the blind seer Tiresias confronts the seeing but inwardly blind king Oedipus, is an amazing piece of drama, which demonstrates how painful it can be to truly learn who we are.






Learning through Drama

- ⇒ It was while working on plays like Oedipus that I learnt just how much we can learn through drama, which was part of the inspiration for my wanting to become a drama teacher.
- ⇒ In my master's and my PhD thesis I researched the question:
 - ⇒ *what can we learn through drama?*
- ⇒ Drama can present a moment of truth for all to see, as a form of moral education. As Joe Winston (1999) observes, drama is a public communal art form:
 - ⇒ Our values, including our moral values, are not at base the results of individual choice. In Bruner's terms:
 - ⇒ 'They are communal and consequential in terms of our relations to a cultural community...They become incorporated in one's self identity and at the same time, they locate one in a culture (1990, p29)'
 - ⇒ The stories that a community shares, and particularly those stories that gain mythic status, serve to confirm those values. In educational terms, such stories instruct the young and help initiate them into the moral values of the culture into which they are born. (p5)




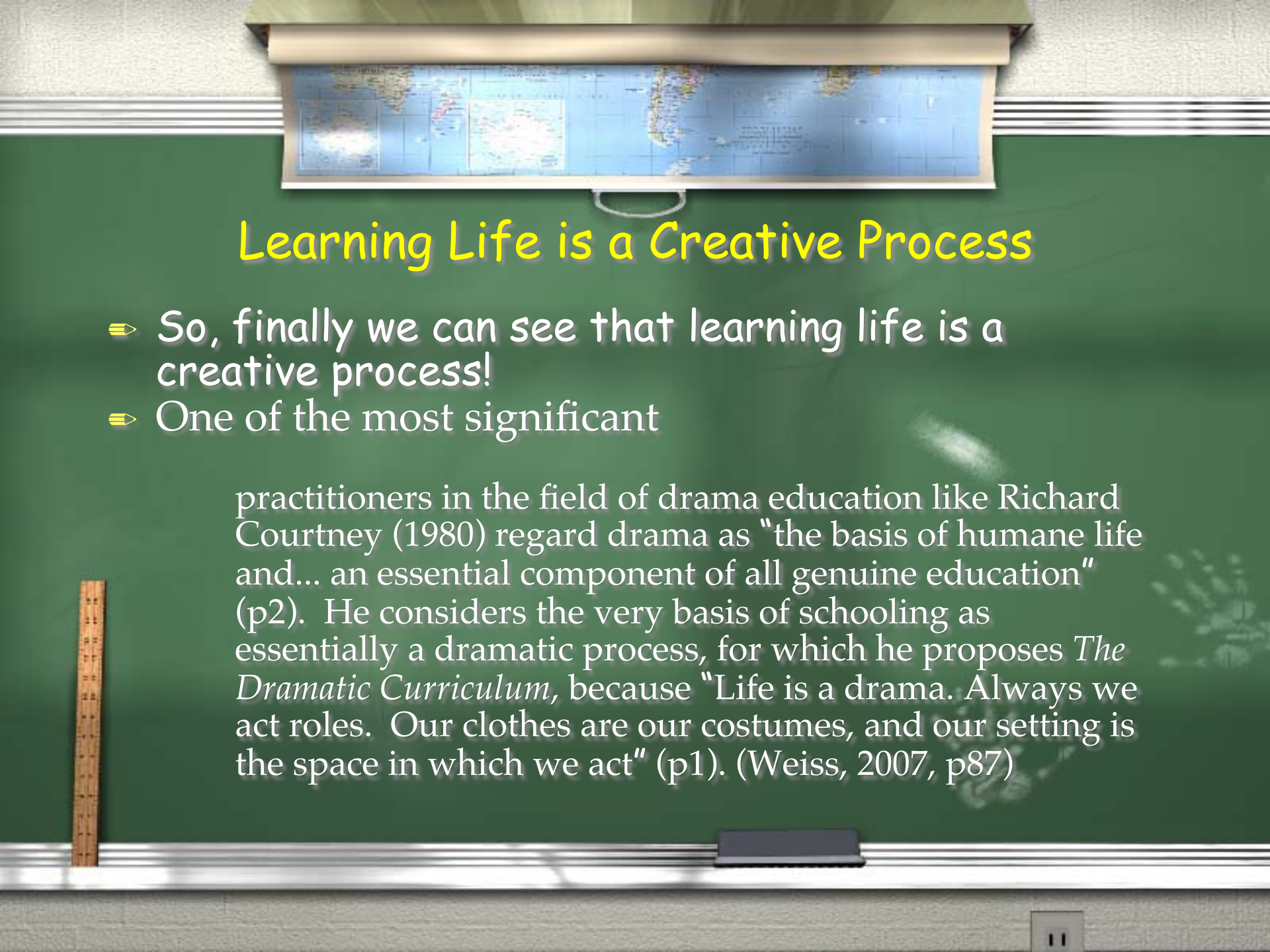
Learning through Drama 2

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- My PhD thesis examines how drama education is a way of learning through experience, by using action learning techniques, stories, role-plays, drama games, role theory, drawing from fields such as psychodrama, sociodrama and playback theatre. I examine the way systems theory, play theory and embodied learning helped me to understand learning through drama. I examine how techniques developed from Boal's (1979, 1996) work could be used in anti-racism education, in *DRACON* (now called *Cooling Conflicts*).
 - Drama involves actors learning to play roles of people in conflict. I argue that our cultural identity is a role. It is a role that we learn to play as part of growing up and learning to live in our culture.



Learning through Drama 3

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- ⇒ Joe Winston (1999) summarises some of these ideas and particularly draws attention to the difficulty of dealing with a social issue like racism. Bruner's idea of a cultural community points to the challenge of racism and anti-racism education. While individuals make choices about acting in a racist way, they do so as a form of learnt behaviour from their culture. Therefore, it is not enough to challenge people as individuals; I also have to challenge aspects of their culture. Drama can do both. (Weiss, 2007, p73)



Learning Life is a Creative Process

- ⇒ So, finally we can see that learning life is a creative process!
- ⇒ One of the most significant

practitioners in the field of drama education like Richard Courtney (1980) regard drama as "the basis of humane life and... an essential component of all genuine education" (p2). He considers the very basis of schooling as essentially a dramatic process, for which he proposes *The Dramatic Curriculum*, because "Life is a drama. Always we act roles. Our clothes are our costumes, and our setting is the space in which we act" (p1). (Weiss, 2007, p87)



Cooling Conflicts

Cooling Conflicts is:

- ❖ About conflict management, not conflict resolution or direct prevention
- ❖ Democratic - training in responsibility & tools to manage personal conflicts
- ❖ Based on assumptions
 - that students are concerned about conflict & their ability to resolve it
 - they know most about their conflicts and can be helped to understand them
 - they are in the best position to teach their peers
- ❖ Curricular - built into standard subject structures



Cooling Conflicts

Cooling Conflicts aims:

- ❖ To give students understanding about how and why conflicts happen, and the structures of conflict, in a form that they can use in their own lives
- ❖ To empower the students to share their understanding with each other, younger students and the school community
- ❖ To empower them to take the major role in their conflict management personally and in terms of the school community
- ❖ To make the exploration of conflict experiential, satisfying and pleasurable



Cooling Conflicts

Cooling Conflicts methods

Educational drama

- ❖ To learn about the nature, stages and structures of conflict
- ❖ To explore experientially the causes and dynamics of conflict
- ❖ To try out techniques of mediation and resolution

Peer teaching

- ❖ To reinforce the knowledge for the 'teachers'
- ❖ To learn from people close in age, who understand 'our' problems
- ❖ To democratise conflict management by:
 - providing a mentoring web of support
 - giving the students the tools themselves to take control
 - giving them the tools to start changing the culture of schools



Cooling Conflicts

Conflict theory

- ❖ Conflict is natural and not always a bad thing
- ❖ Clashes of rights, interests and/or power
- ❖ Result of misunderstanding, misplaced expectations and/or stereotyping
- ❖ Three discernible stages:
 - Latent
 - Emerging
 - Manifest
- ❖ Can be escalated or de-escalated
- ❖ Mediation: protagonist, antagonist, mediator



Cooling Conflicts

Drama and conflict (1)

- ❖ Drama is nearly always about conflict
- ❖ Drama provides fictional, lifelike models for exploring human behaviour
- ❖ Conflict is one of the most interesting aspects of human behaviour
- ❖ Drama is descended from children's play and is fun - a natural, purposeful and pleasurable way of learning



Cooling Conflicts

Peer teaching and drama

- ❖ Peer teaching not peer mediation
- ❖ Empowering the teachers
- ❖ Empowering the learners
- ❖ Democratic



Cooling Conflicts

History of Cooling Conflicts

- ❖ **1996** - first trial within senior drama syllabus
- ❖ **1997** - first use of peer teaching
- ❖ **1998** - first community theatre-in-education
- ❖ **1999** - move to different type of school first use of primary students
- ❖ **2000** - expansion into four schools
- ❖ **2001** - expansion into four new schools & further development with primary students
- ❖ **2002-3** Concentration on teacher development and policy change
- ❖ **2003-11** Teacher development and implementation in NSW schools

Now implemented in some 120 schools in NSW



Cooling Conflicts

Drama's constraints and limitations

- ❖ **Fiction** - drama demands **empathy** and **distance** so cannot be used for real conflict resolution
- ❖ **Protection & exposure** - protection only with trust - this has to be established by contract
- ❖ **Questions not answers** - drama rarely provides simple answers: it raises questions
- ❖ **Unpredictability** - because people behave in drama like they do in real life
- ❖ **Evanescence** - easy to dismiss because it only exists in the moment




Cooling Conflicts

Drama and conflict (2)

- ❖ In Drama, we step into others' shoes to find out what they feel and how they see the clashes of rights, interest and power
- ❖ We can move back and forth in time to explore the three stages of conflict, and cause and effect
- ❖ We can change characters and viewpoints
- ❖ We can try out conflict and behaviour change safely, with no 'real-world' consequences



Research into Cooling Conflicts

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- In around 120 NSW and Queensland schools the Cooling Conflicts approach has attacked the problems related to bullying and conflict management with strong effect. Cooling Conflicts asks students to respond to the causes of bullying and, through intervening in scenes of bullying, they can contribute to changes in behaviour.
 - The approach uses a structured sequence of Applied Theatre techniques and peer teaching with students in Years 5-6 and in the senior years of high school.



Research into Cooling Conflicts 2

- ⇒ The students undertaking the Cooling Conflicts program reported higher levels of resilience and felt more confident about their responses to bullying. The research evidence suggests this approach helps young people combat the bullies.
- ⇒ The program's evaluation reports that 50 per cent of the Year 11 students involved used the knowledge from the Cooling Conflicts, with over 90 per cent of students saying they found the program useful and intended to use the knowledge they gained during the program.



<http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=6538> (accessed 27/9/10)



Website, Book & Thesis

⇒ Cooling Conflicts Website
<http://coolingconflicts.edu.au>

http://www.racismnoway.com.au/teaching-resources/anti-racism-activities/lesson_ideas/20040505_68.html

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3WrLvUPIdA>

⇒ O' Toole, J., Burton, B. & Plunkett, A., 2005
Cooling Conflict, A new approach to managing bullying and conflict in schools,
Sydney: Pearson

⇒ Weiss, B-Z, 2007, **Challenging Understandings of Racism through Drama Education Praxis: Steps to an Ecology of Culture**, A doctoral thesis University of Western Sydney