Peer-to-Peer Accountability through Cooperative Literacy

by Ron Klemp

Coordinator of Reading for middle schools, Los Angeles Unified School District
Teacher, Teacher Credential Program at California State University, Northridge,CA

An old proverb states that "If you starve with a tiger, the tiger eats last." This proverb provides a metaphor for some of the incredible challenges that middle school and high school teachers face with classroom management. As accountabilities surface regarding the implementation of standards, classroom management must be filtered through concerns, which include student performances to demonstrate understanding, and the perpetuation of literacy. At the same time, the forces of "active learning" and even cooperative learning may have a tendency to collapse under the students' failure to successfully self-manage in typical classes. A system which affords teachers and students partnerships in the "way things go around here" is *Cooperative Literacy*.

While research has been done to explore the psychosocial issues that adolescents bring to the classroom, there has not been much linkage to the literacy efforts of teachers. Most middle school teachers would surmise that socialization plays a major role in many facets of adolescents' lives. James Gee observed, "You can no more cut the literacy out of the overall social practice, or cut away the non-literacy parts of the overall practice, than you can subtract the white squares from a chessboard and still have a chessboard (Gee, 1996, p. 41)." For students who may not have access to these experiences, an intervening approach may be necessary to bridge the social literacy gap. *Cooperative Literacy* (Klemp, Hon, Shorr, 1992) emanates from the idea that while all teachers are teachers of literacy, students are also responsible for promoting each other's literacy in a community of learning. Implementation of this organizational approach is intended to inspire more transactional learning classrooms as teachers find new management opportunities to support those efforts.

Some of the complexities of classroom management can be drawn from the allusion to the *Company Store* scenario. This scenario asks teachers to explore their strategies in managing a company where the workers show up, are sometimes reluctant to work, and cannot be paid, fired, or given time off for good

behavior or production. The scenario yields many consistent responses with all groups of teachers from veteran or neophyte. Essentially, the responses include involving the workers in running the company, recognizing the employees and providing flexibility of tasks, room for advancement, choice and sense of purpose to the work. The same dynamic plays out in the classroom.

Further examination of the adolescent clientele of secondary schools acknowledges their unpredictability as they struggle with their world, their peers and their adult relationships. Changes for this age group involving physical, emotional, intellectual and social issues create turmoil for many young adolescents, often with dramatic results within the three year "tour" of the middle grades and the subsequent high school experience. Even changes in mood can add to the element of unpredictability (Milgram, 1992, p. 17).

Implementation of a peer-to-peer accountability management system suggested by Cooperative Literacy allows students to maintain attachments in the classroom and function together. "Cooperation leads to ownership, involvement and great opportunities for self-discipline, but first must come trust. Students learn to trust through opportunities to take ownership and take responsibility for their own actions and those of others (Cole, 1995, p.8)." In this design, students are organized into interdependent learning teams of four to five students. These groups are called *pods*. Grouping strategies may be dependent on specific needs of a particular class, but heterogeneous groups are preferred. The teacher directs, but students manage. The reason for use of this term in favor of the more general *teams* or *groups* is mainly a concern of connotation. Whereas the word teams implies competition, this organization is not competitive. Pods remain intact for a period of four to six weeks. An outcome of Cooperative Literacy is that students begin to engage in thought about others' perspectives, ideas and struggles.

In a classroom of thirty-two students, the teacher would have eight pods or eight groups of four. Occasionally, a pod of five might be necessary. Pods sit with two students side by side and two other group members behind them in tandem. This arrangement causes a subtle change in the appearance of the classroom. From a bird's eye view, the room would look as if it were inhabited by a collection of islands (Figure 1). There is enough space between each pod to allow the teacher to walk around the pod without hitting any other desks, which is important when the teacher is monitoring the pods. Monitoring the pods is accomplished as the teacher walks through the class, providing a more interactive style of management. Students at tables are also grouped into pods of four or five students. Some pods may have five students such as the pod on the left in Figure 1.
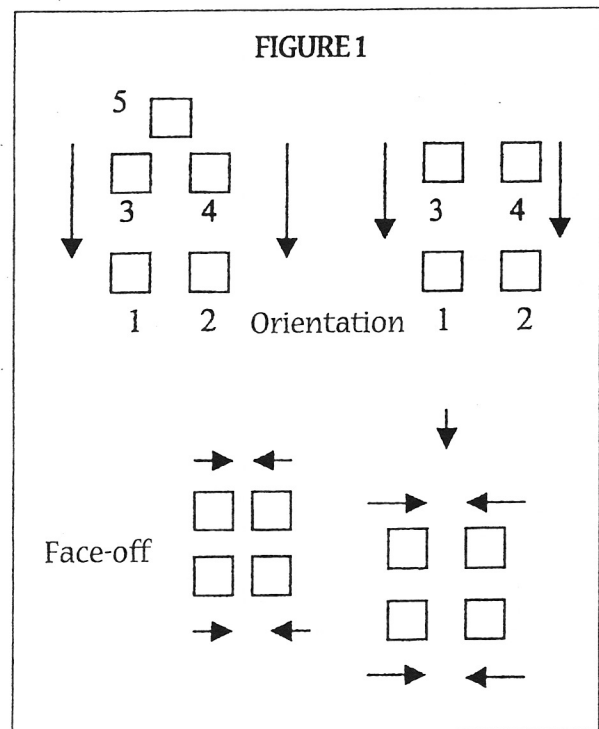
FIGURE 1

To make expectations clear, teachers use the *Pod Point Sheet* (Figure 2). One pod point sheet is used for each pod on a weekly basis. Management issues, such as punctuality, attendance, bringing materials and completion

Figure 2

POD POINT SHEET

No tardies	5 points
No absence	5 points
1 absence	3 points
Homework	5 points
Materials	5 points
Assignment	5 points
Behavior	5 points

Pod # _____ Pod name _____

Members	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	

MONDAY	POINTS
Arrival	
Absence	
Homework	
Materials	
Assignment	
Expected Behavior	
Daily Total	

THURSDAY	POINTS
Arrival	
Absence	
Homework	
Materials	
Assignment	
Expected Behavior	
Daily Total	

TUESDAY	POINTS
Arrival	
Absence	
Homework	
Materials	
Assignment	
Expected Behavior	
Daily Total	

FRIDAY	POINTS
Arrival	
Absence	
Homework	
Materials	
Assignment	
Expected Behavior	
Daily Total	

WEDNESDAY	POINTS
Arrival	
Absence	
Homework	
Materials	
Assignment	
Expected Behavior	
Daily Total	

BONUS!	POINTS
Sharing information	
Encouraging	
Listening	
Participating	

WEEKLY TOTAL _____

of homework assignments, can be dealt with prior to the start of the learning activity. During group work, students seated in desks can turn ninety degrees so that the four students in the pod are sitting facing each other. When the students are working in pairs, the desks can remain as they are at the beginning and end of the class period in a position of *orientation*. Each class period should begin and end with the students out of face-off, seated in pods in orientation. Teachers can modify the Pod Point Sheet criteria to suit the

demands of their particular classroom. Positions are also numbered to allow the teacher to specify certain roles in the learning activity, such as reporting, recording, observing, questioning and answering, etc.

Each week a new coordinator is selected to manage the point sheet. Coordinators record the points for the teacher and also add the pod's names to the sheet each week. On a daily basis, the teacher assesses the pods based on selected categories on the point sheet. For instance, if bringing materials ceases to become

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an issue, then the teacher may not assess regularly. Meanwhile, arrival, absences and the assignment phase of the class period will probably be used more regularly.

The Pod Point Sheet, aside from providing a guide or script for the pods to follow, becomes an assessment (and self-assessment) tool. In this sense, the pods manage and assess themselves even though the teacher directs the placing of points. That pod coordinator is directed by the teacher to record the number of points for the week. In the weeks that follow, each member of the group assumes the coordinator's role.

The criteria include managerial issues such as arrival, materials and homework. The *assignment* category relates to the *on stage* time when students are engaged in a class activity that is either whole group, independent or in pod. Points are given by the teacher and are based upon the pods' success in acquiring those management skills and *in time* classwork expectations deemed necessary by the teacher. It is important for the teacher to understand that the points are not for the purpose of having pods compete to see who earns the most points. Rather, their purpose is to provide a means of feedback for the teacher and the students.

The section listed as *expected behavior* draws from the categories in the lower right hand corner under the *bonus* label. These categories provide an elective choice based on the type of lesson. For instance, if the pods were engaged in a cooperative activity, the behavioral demand of the assignment might be *sharing information*. In that instance, the teacher would tell the pod coordinators to list *sharing information* under the category of *expected behavior* and then provide feedback based on their observation. Any of the four *expected behaviors* can be used in most typical classroom situations.

The Power Walk

During the work period, the teacher can monitor group performance and assess points depending on the degree of success of the pods. While points are issued, it is suggested that students have the opportunity to recapture the total possible points. The time the teacher is monitoring the pods or circulating around the room is referred to as the *power walk*. (It should be noted that students are always responsible for their own work.) At this time, performance points and behavior points can be generated and as each student understands his responsibilities, there may be less resistance to participate. Points are never deducted, but students who go off task may also cause the pod to earn fewer points. For a learning activity which requires whole class attention in a traditional seating arrangement, such as a lecture, the class can maintain a more traditional *facing the front* or *orientation* position while still in pods.

Even the simplest operations or routines now take on new appearances. For example, a typical practice for teachers who wish to conduct a class discussion is to ask a content question of the whole class. In any cooperative structure, the element of simultaneity is often the missing ingredient. In the Cooperative Literacy classroom, a teacher might ask a question of the class, but allow thirty seconds or so to have the pods caucus. At the signal, the teacher will direct one member from each pod, by number, to stand and either hold up a written answer or more to a place on the chalkboard to produce the pod's response. This simple strategy involves everyone while also introducing a high amount of coaching so that even the student who may previously have been reticent now has the capability to respond.

Group Processing Behavioral of Issues

The characteristic of positive interdependence is such that groups realize that each must contribute for the sake of the others. In the event that pods encounter difficulty, the teacher can confer with the pods to discuss and evaluate the pod's performance and recommend changes. This form of processing is critical as a means of problem

solving. Groups that don't have the opportunity to solve each other's problems from within may become hostile to the student who brings the group down and the efficiency of the group dissipates. Use of the *Class Processing Worksheet* (Figure 3) allows for reflection and assessment of performance for the student and becomes an instrument for the teacher to use when situations of a behavioral nature arise.

The use of the *Class Processing Worksheet* provides a format for an initial intervention. Students answer the questions in a directed lesson format as the teacher gives one sheet to each member of the class. Students are then directed to answer the questions and, at the end of an allotted time, the students are polled and the responses are discussed. Teachers should be wary when students' answers are generalizations. For instance, in response to Question 4, concerning what the students need to do to be successful in class, some students may state "do my work" which does not provide enough details. The teacher's capability to challenge responses is one reason why the activity becomes a facilitated discussion.

Question 6 concerns attitudes. After the

Figure 3

CLASS PROCESSING WORKSHEET

The purpose of this worksheet is to determine if members of your class are behaving in a manner appropriate for learning. You will answer the following questions on your own. when time is called, a class discussion will be held to consider your answers.

1. Write your first and last name_____

2. What is the title of this class› _____

3. In your opinion, how would you describe the behavior of this class?
   _____

4. What are some actions you need to take to make sure that you can learn in this classroom?
   _____
   _____
   _____

5. What are examples of requests your teacher asks of you?_____
   _____
   _____
   _____

6. Which of the following words best describes you? Circle those that describe you.
   happy   boring   studious   conscientious   caring
   indifferent   concerned   worried   lost   misunderstood
   curious   eager   positive   negative   humorous

7. What can you do to make this class better for you?_____
   _____

Figure 4

MEDIATION WORKSHEET

Student's name_____ Teacher_____

1. **Description of conflict** (in the student's words, while the teacher writes)
   For instance: "What would we see you doing in class if we were watching you on television?"

2. **Justification** "What makes it OK?" (In the student's mind, how does he/she justify his/her actions?)

3. What are some occasions that the student can remember where the conflict did not exist?

4. **Analysis** What other aspects of the class contribute to the problem? (Other students, misunderstanding of the rules, misunderstanding of class work, failure to pay attention, misunderstanding of expectations)

5. **Roles** What can the teacher do to assist you in allowing this situation to improve?

6. **Strategies** What specific action will make the situation better? (in the student's own words) "What are you going to do differently?"

7. Follow up meeting where student determines ??????????????????

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS Date_____
Comments:

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students select a word, they will make a journal entry on the back of the Processing Worksheet. This *journal* may provide information crucial for the teacher when problems arise.

To initiate this, the students simply write the day's date and a sentence completion using the word they selected.

September 19, 2002. I am _____ today because_____ .

At the completion of the last answer, the worksheets are collected and placed in a file. In the coming weeks, the sheets are redistributed to the class the the teacher asks the students to make any changes on what they've written so far. Another word or face is chosen for Question 6. Then another journal entry is made with the sentence completion. The sheets are once again collected, filed and redistributed a week or two later. The continual reexamination of the worksheet allows the students to reflect on whether or not they are fulfilling their own expectations concerning what they said they needed to do to be successful in the class. This continual revisiting implies a personal and individual contract and in the event that the contract is broken, the teacher now has some instruments to use to manage the problem to a solution through a management conference.

The Management Conference:
Teacher and Student Mediation

This conference is held during a teacher's preparation period or after school when students would usually be detained. The teacher brings the *Pod Point Sheet*, the students' *Class Processing Worksheet* and a *Mediation Worksheet* (Figure 4). The mediation is held with a third party mediator such as another teacher on the team or an administrator. However, this mediation process can also take place with the teacher fulfilling that role. In a work situation, a manager and an employee might meet to explore the causes of a counterproductive or non-productive situation. The mediation conference provides the opportunity for the teacher and student to explore the behavioral aspects of the problem. This dialog-based strategy provides the teacher with a means of guiding the student's thinking to help solve the observed problem behavior. Part of the significance of this approach is the avoidance of an adversarial relationship. "Students will not respond to your motivational attempts if they are fearful, resentful or otherwise focused on negative emotions. To create conditions that favor your motivational efforts, you will need to establish and maintain your classroom as a learning community — a place where students come primarily to learn and succeed in doing so through collaboration with you and their classmates (Brophy, 1996, p.21)."

The conference begins with the teacher explaining that there has been an observation that the student's pod has diminished point totals and that the purpose of the conference is to solve this problem. The teacher then questions the student about his or her response to Item 3 on the *Class Processing Worksheet* which asks about the behavior of the whole class. This question sets the tone for the remainder of the conference and the teacher or third party mediator needs to be sure that her tone remains calm and objective. The next question of the students involves a response to Question 4 on the Class Processing Worksheet that asks what the student needs to do to be successful in class.

Once the teacher reads that response, it is time for the mediation process to begin. The mediation is conducted as an interview with the teacher transcribing the student's responses onto the Mediation Worksheet. The interview shifts the focus from the teacher to the student and provides legitimacy to the process. The questions on the Mediation Worksheet are starting points for the teachers and would be paraphrased in language the student would understand. The first question provides a chance for the student to reflect on some of the behaviors presented in class. The metaphor of the video creates dissociation from those behaviors as they view themselves in the classroom. As the student discloses the transgression, the teacher transcribes those responses onto the worksheet.

The second question is the *pivotal* point of the protocol. Each of the behaviors listed in the answers to the first question is repeated and the student is simple asked, "What makes that okay to do?" Because this question challenges the motivation behind the behavior rather than just the action, the student is likely to respond with, "It's not okay." If he is confused or says, "I don't know," the teacher simply repeats the question but adds the phrase, "What made it okay this time?"

The importance of this challenge to each of the behaviors mentioned in the first response is the acknowledgement of incongruence with what the student stated as actions needed to be successful in the class and those that they are presenting. Once this acknowledgement occurs, there is now an occasion for growth and the understanding that prosocial behavior may provide a pathway for success. Additionally, this protocol objectifies the encounter and the teacher avoids becoming the student's adversary. The student is invited to acknowledge that some of the chosen behaviors will have long-term negative effects in terms of their personal outcomes.

The Mediation Worksheet provides a script

for the teacher to follow to engage the student in questions that surround the dynamic of the conflict. The questions may need to be transposed into comprehensible language for the student and are only guides for the person conducting the mediation. Issues involving other students, other situations or circumstances may come out as the questioning continues. The final part of the mediation asks the student to strategize about how the behavior can cease or be controlled. The student selects a sign-off date for the teacher to check her progress. That sign-off procedure may be as simple as the teacher acknowledging improvement as she *power walks* that day. Along with the avoidance of teacher and student becoming adversaries, this protocol allows the teacher the opportunity to model how people can use reasoning skills to problem-solve.

Scenarios for mediations are varied. The teacher and an individual student may be involved in mediation, a process which should take approximately fifteen minutes. A team of teachers and the student can be involved, or a teacher or team of teachers and the students' pod may also be involved. Bringing the pod together for a conference can be an effective way for the students to generate ideas for avoiding a recurrence of the behavior. Parents may also be involved in the mediation as observers and then as partners.

Pods and Learning Strategy

Many cooperative learning assignments may not provide enough *payoff* because either the nature of the assignment was not cooperative or the task was too complex for the ability level of the students. Students may lack prerequisite abilities to read, to research or to work with others in order to come up with a final cooperative project such as a group report or skit. Students who work independently and then transition into a *face-off* become a consensus group. In other words, they are in position to examine previously-held knowledge,

discuss, revisit text and come up with a mutually-agreed-upon response as a means of having multiple opportunities to process the information. Additionally, the importance of linking literacy and social growth cannot be understated. Recent research on middle grades education takes note of the 'lack of fit between developmental imperatives of early adolescence and the schools established to enhance the power of adolescents' intellect and to socialize them into adulthood (Felner, Kasak, Mulall & Flowers, 1997, p.521)."

When teachers begin to examine their belief system of management, new resources may come to light. The first resource, and probably the most powerful, is our ability to engage the students in becoming part of the learning community through their accountability to the larger groups and their immediate *pod*. What occurs is a *shift in the center of gravity* which releases the locus of control from the teacher to the students (not to be confused with the authority of the teacher). Cooperative Literacy applied to a daily classroom routine can be a vehicle for easing the transition to middle grades and to high school as well. The strength in the procedure lies in the ability to address learning and social needs of adolescent students and successfully managing the *company store* in today's secondary school classroom.

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Sustaining "Positivity" in the Middle School Classroom:
A Teacher / Student Mediation Protocol

Ron Klemp, Ed.D.

The challenge to middle school teachers for creating and sustaining the harmonious learning environment in such a diverse world is ever present unlike in past eras. But today the positive classroom is also different. Positive classrooms buzz with the excitement of student discussion, and there is energy and a humor that makes the classroom a fun and engaging place to be. Students may be caught up in their arguing over ideas and concepts. There is a strong sense of identity that the students and teachers feel about their room, their class, and there are strong connections among the students.

However, students present different challenges to their teachers in their varying degrees of literacy and numeracy skills, language differences as well as learning differences. Societal issues including poverty, transience, and juvenile crime also make teaching more complex. In short, "The reality of today's schools often demands that classroom teachers address these severe issues, even though this task is not always considered a part of their regular job (Marzano & Marzano, 2003)." Teachers may find themselves in a default position of having to help "raise" kids in their everyday classroom settings. Students, on the other hand, develop a whole

repertoire of coping skills including remaining hidden in the classroom, or intentionally getting ejected as a result of their disrupting the instruction (Brozo, 1990).

Teachers may use grouping structures that build mutual interdependence can provide ways and means of engaging more students. Teachers can also take advantages of approaches such as Cooperative Literacy, that utilize grouping structures that maximize student engagement and heighten student interaction using mutually interdependent learning teams to produce greater individual competence (Ogle, Klemp, & McBride, 2007) and lead to more opportunities for cooperative learning. Classrooms become more transactional and group process induces more students to engage in instructional activities, reduces students' sense of isolation, and even diminish racial tensions. Furthermore, "research in very diverse school settings and across a wide range of content areas, have revealed that students completing cooperative learning group tasks tend to have higher academic test scores, higher self-esteem, greater numbers of positive social skills, fewer stereotypes of individuals of other races or ethnic groups, and greater comprehension of the content and skills they

are studying (Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec 1993).

When teachers are inevitably challenged by student defiance or misbehavior, the use of a mediation protocol that engages students in thinking about their actions may provide a "remedy" when things go awry. Teachers who utilize a mediation protocol may give students the opportunity to reflect on their action, or inaction. In the end the teacher's relationship with the student is pivotal to student's resistance to the social norms of the classroom and the unmet expectations of the teacher. This process can also emphasize building the student's strength in problem solving as opposed to finding and accenting fault: "Symptoms of students' emotional struggles produce more heat than light. Noncompliance, anger, and aggression don't ordinarily engender acceptance and understanding. Yet, teachers who focus on developing students' strengths are more successful than those who focus on fixing flaws (Henley &Long 2003)."

The Class Processing Worksheet:

To initiate students' reflection about their role as students, the class processing worksheet (Appendix 1) is an initial probe into their thinking. It functions somewhat like a group intake procedure. The activity is conducted as a whole class lesson with the teacher in a facilitating role. Its duration should be approximately twenty minutes. The teacher conducts the activity with the following steps: The processing sheets are distributed to

each class member and students complete questions one and two: Name, and title of class. The following steps (figure 1) are then followed.

Figure 1

Beginning with question #3, the teacher conducts a "think and write" in which they read the statement as the students follow along. The teacher then silently counts to twenty before allowing the students to respond to give them time to reflect on their answer. The teacher solicits answers from two or three students and then moves to question #4. (A process note: It is suggested that the teacher call on only the first student, and that the each successive respondent call on another student. For questions #4 and #5 the process repeats.)

For question #4 some elaboration is required, as students tend to generalize their answers. A response such as "do my work" is a generalization. The teacher might suggest that the students give specific examples of actions that would indicate that they are presenting a "learning" action. Once again the teacher solicits responses from a few students.

For question #5 the process is repeated but again the teacher needs to give examples of actions to avoid the students' generalizations or "party line" answers such as "do my work." One example might be "raise my hand when I have a question." Again, the teacher calls on two or three students.

For question #6, the teacher will direct the students to select a word that they feel best describes how they feel

that day. On the reverse side of the sheet, students will begin an informal journal in which they list the date and complete the following sentence: "I am _____ today because...." This journal allows the teacher to check in with students who may appear to be having difficulty.

After giving the students time to respond, the teacher then moves to question # 7. (The responses to # 6 and #7 are more personal and therefore are not shared.)

For question #7, the students are simply asked how they can improve the class to make things better for themselves. After some time allotment of about three or four minutes the papers are then collected.

Once the papers are collected, they are filed and are brought out for review by the students approximately every two weeks. At that time, students are asked to examine the papers, make changes or revisions, and then another word is selected from #6 and a new sentence is added to the journal. By the end of the semester, the students would have examined their worksheets approximately ten to twenty times. Teachers suggest that part of the value for this procedure is that it makes the students aware of themselves in the classroom. The worksheet becomes a social contract indicating that the teacher cares for and is interested in the students not only in terms of their learning but also as people.

Mediation Worksheet

Emotional literacy is described as the ability to recognize, understand, and

express our emotions in ways that are beneficial to others and ourselves. The skills also link to enhanced cognitive functioning, critical thinking, effective decision-making and positive social interactions (Magro, 2007). Many of the skills that students learn and that are embedded into social situations, including problem solving, making friends, establishing alliances, and other "playground" politics are the types of skills that comprise those unspoken rules that come to play in social situations and in the workplace (Goleman, 2006).

One of the important management tools that teachers have is their capacity to establish and maintain positive relationships with their students." Teachers need sustained, intensive relationships with students (Darling-Hammond, 1998). When high school students were asked about their concept of a good teacher, one of the overriding comments was a sense that the teacher cared about them as individuals (Phelan, Davidson, & Thanh Cao, 1992).

The mediation process is conducted with the Mediation Worksheet, (Appendix 2) and occurs either upon a student's return from a suspension or other penalty, or when the teacher feels that the disruption or lack of performance has become a chronic situation. The mediation occurs at a time when the teacher is free of the class, and is normally a one-on-one situation, though a guidance counselor, fellow teacher, or even a parent may be attending. It is important to note that the mediation, while only lasting fifteen or twenty minutes, should be conducted as an interview

with the teacher posing questions in a non-confrontational manner. Thus the teacher must maintain a positive and somewhat casual demeanor. If the student feels threatened there will be resistance and a good outcome is less likely.

It is said that through verbal transaction, thoughts, feelings, and actions become available to both parties in the mediation. The process of mediation allows the learner to engage in deeper cognitive, emotional, attitudinal thinking, and can lead to change (Costa & Garmston, 2002). Once these ideas are articulated they can be refined and changed. The purpose of a mediation protocol is to allow the teacher to explore the student's thinking process to assist them in resolving conflicts while preserving the teacher / student relationship. Often teachers surrender to anger or resort to sanctions that promote an adversarial relationship. When adversity arises between teacher and students, "all bets are off" when it comes to academics. The mediation worksheet is an instrument that allows the student to explore the dimensions of conflict without sacrificing the teacher's dominance. In short, the teacher guides the student through this thinking process while maintaining an objective stance and the focus is not personal.

The mediation protocol should be set up with the student and parent(s) in advance. The teacher might begin with a statement such as, "I called you into this meeting today to see how we can improve your performance in this class. However, if the student is perceived as

being uncomfortable it important that the teacher engages in some casual conversation so that rapport is established. Prior to initiating the interview, the teacher builds some background knowledge through a look at the Class Processing Worksheet. The teacher asks the student to examine their Class Processing Worksheet and recite the response to question #3 concerning the behavior of the class. This recitation allows the student to gain awareness of how he or she views the class. The teacher then reads the student's response to #4, concerning what they needed to do to be successful, or learn in the class.

The teacher continues. "During our time here I will ask you some questions and I'm going to write down your answers." The reason why the mediation is done as an interview is that we allow the student to express their thinking as opposed to coming up with the "right" answer. The teacher's role as a listener shifts the dynamic of the relationship.

Once the process begins, the teacher asks the questions on the mediation worksheet and records the student's answers. The questions need to be paraphrased into more "student friendly" language. It should also be noted that the ratio of student to teacher talk should be roughly 80% student talk. Below is the questioning sequence.

Question #1: The teacher might ask the student if or she knows why they were called to the mediation or of they are aware of their having a prob-

lem with either behavior or academics.

Question #2: "The first question I want to ask is, "If I were watching you on a video tape of our class (sometimes the teacher might invoke the name 'America's Funniest Videos' to use a touch of humor), what would be some things I might see you doing?" The student will sometimes recall events that are routine, but also some events of which the teacher was unaware. If there is a particular event that the student doesn't state that the teacher feels should be brought out, the teacher can interject "What about the time that you...?" and the student will probably allow that to be added. Occasionally there is a humorous response that is an indication that there is recognition on the part of the student that something may be inappropriate. The humor may mask discomfort.

Question #3 is the pivotal part of the mediation. It is the justification response to the presupposed behavior that allows the student to make available the incongruence of their previously stated learning actions and what they are actually presenting. The question begins with a simple statement, such as "One of the things you said you were doing in #2 is ....? My question to you is what makes that okay?" While this question seems to have no weight, it is interesting to watch students' reactions.

(Many times students readily admit that it is "not okay." Other times, they may fidget and blame another person, in which case we state that the focus is on their performance and no

one else. If they respond with a simple "I don't know" then the question is restated with the ending phrase, "this time," or "What made it okay this time? More often than not the student will say that "it's not okay" and the teacher can move on. At this point other aspects of the conflict can be explored. For example, in question #4 there is a question about an occasion when the behavior is not occurring, or if their lack of performance is an issue in other classes.)

Question #5 probes other aspects that contribute; other students, misunderstanding rules, paying attention, etc.

Question #6 asks what the teacher can do the help the situation. The student might suggest a change in seating, writing larger on the chalkboard, explaining things differently, or allowing more activity.

Question #7 asks the student to come up with a strategy or two to help solve the problem, and usually the teacher will ask for at least two.

Question #8 asks the student to frame the strategy in a cognitive operation, asking them to predict, analyze, or make an inference with respect to the result of their strategy.

Question #9 asks them to select a "sign-off" date whereby the teacher will typically acknowledge the student's progress and then the worksheet is signed, dated, and attached to the Class Processing Sheet so that each re-inspection of that form makes the resolution of the situation more concrete for the student. If there is no resolution, the teacher has documen-

tation of a student conference and can ask for further assistance.

Linda Darling Hammond (1998) suggests that to create significant experiences for adolescents requires that we have an understanding of who they are cognitively, socially, physically, and emotionally. It is only with that knowledge that we can more fully support their growth and development. Part of today's challenge is to address the students' behavior, including the lack of performance, that inhibits their success as students and members of the learning community so that they may successfully emerge into the citizenry of this country.

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About the Author

Ron Klemp is a secondary literacy coordinator with the Los Angeles Unified School District and an instructor at California State University, Northridge. He has coauthored three books on secondary literacy and has presented his Cooperative Literacy model throughout the country.

Cooperative Literacy P.O.D.S. POINT SHEET

On time	5 points
No absence	5 points
1 absence	3 points
Homework	5 points
Materials	5 points
Assignment	5 points
Behavior	5 points

Pod # _____   POD Name _____

Members:
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Monday Date:	Points	Thursday Date:	Points
Arrival		Arrival	
Absences		Absences	
Homework		Homework	
Materials		Materials	
Assignment		Assignment	
Expected Behavior	_____	Expected Behavior	_____
Daily Total		Daily Total	
Tuesday Date:		**Friday Date:**	**Points**
Arrival		Arrival	
Absences		Absences	
Homework		Homework	
Materials		Materials	
Assignment		Assignment	
Expected Behavior	_____	Expected Behavior	_____
Daily Total		Daily Total	
Wednesday Date:	**Points**	**Bonus!**	**Points**
Arrival		Sharing Information	
Absences		Encouraging	
Homework		Listening	
Materials		Participating	
Assignment	_____		
Expected Behavior		**WEEKLY TOTAL**	
Daily Total			

POD POINT Sheet

WEEKLY GOAL _____

Pod Name _____

Members: _____ Pod # ____

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

Monday	Points	Total
Arrival		
Homework / folder		
Materials Ready		
Independent Work		
Expected Behavior		
Daily Total		

Tuesday	Points	Total
Arrival		
Homework / folder		
Materials Ready		
Independent Work		
Expected Behavior		
Daily Total		

Wednesday	Points	Total
Arrival		
Homework / folder		
Materials Ready		
Independent Work		
Expected Behavior		
Daily Total		

Thursday	Points	Total
Arrival		
Homework / folder		
Materials Ready		
Independent Work		
Expected Behavior		
Daily Total		

Friday	Points	Total
Arrival		
Homework / folder		
Materials Ready		
Independent Work		
Expected Behavior		
Daily Total		

BONUS!	Points	Total
Share Information		
Encourage		
Listen		
Participate		
Daily Total		

POINTS	
Homework folder	2
Homework	5
Arrivals	2
Takeoffs	2
Materials ready	2
Independent work	4
Behavior	3

Mon.	
Tues.	
Wed.	
Thurs.	
Fri.	
Bonus	
WEEKLY TOTAL	

Mediation Worksheet
Cooperative Literacy

Student's name _____ Teacher _____

1) <u>Description of conflict</u>: (in student's own words, while teacher writes)

2) For a starter: "What would we see you doing in class if we were watching you on television?

3) <u>Justification</u>: "What makes it okay?" (In the student's mind, how do they justify their actions?)

4) What are some occasions that the student can remember where the conflict did not exist?

5) <u>Analysis</u>: What other aspects of the class contribute to the problems: other students, misunderstanding of the rules, misunderstanding of class work, failure to pay attention, misunderstanding of expectations

6) <u>Roles</u>: What can the teacher do to assist you in allowing this situation to improve?

7) <u>Strategies</u>: Specific action which will make the situation better (in the student's own words. "What are you going to do differently?"

8) As you consider the strategies that you mention, predict (infer, analyze, suggest) what might result from those changes?

9) Follow up meeting where student determines assessment of progress: Date:_____
   Comment:

3

Cooperative Literacy
Observation Worksheet

Student's Name ——————————
Teacher's Name ——————————

Cooperative Literacy

<u>Directions</u>: In the spaces below put a check mark each time you observe one of the behaviors listed below. At the conclusion of the observation period, you will answer the questions below. You will receive full credit for the period of time you are observing and will have time to complete any missing work.

Talking out ——————————————————————————

Teasing others ——————————————————————————

Hitting others ——————————————————————————

Leaving seat ——————————————————————————

Distracting others ——————————————————————————

Put downs ——————————————————————————

Search for materials ——————————————————————————

Late arrivals ——————————————————————————

1) What is your general impression of how the class behaved?

2) What suggestions can you make to the teacher to solve any problems you might have seen?

3) What could you do to improve the situation for yourself and the class?

Cooperative Literacy

POD Assessment Inventory

Name: _____

When working with a group or POD, it is important to maintain awareness of how your efforts paid off. In the spaces below there is a discussion procedure for the POD to examine the POD's assessment performance. **Discuss the questions and then each POD member will complete the form.**

1. Circle the number that best corresponds to how you would rate your performance on the assessment.

Needs to Improve   Average   Great!

1   2   3   4   5

2. Circle the number that best corresponds to how you would rate your *POD's* performance on the assessment.

Needs to Improve   Average   Great!
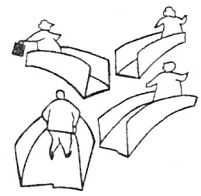
1   2   3   4   5

3. What were some of the ways in which your POD was successful with the assessment?

4. What are some of the ways in which your POD could improve on the assessment?

5. If you could redo the assessment, what would be some different strategies you would use to improve?

6. What did you learn from this exercise? (Use back if necessary)

5

Appointment Book

Hour	Name	Date:
1:00		
2:00		
3:00		
4:00		
5:00		
6:00		
7:00		
8:00		
9:00		
10:00		
11:00		
12:00		

Ron Klemp Cooperative Literacy

6

Cooperative Literacy

The purpose of this worksheet is to determine if members of the class are behaving in a manner appropriate for learning. You will answer the following questions on your own. When time is called a class discussion will be held to consider your answers.

1) Write your first and last name _____

2) What is the title of this class? _____

3) In your opinion, how would you describe the behavior of this class?

4) What are some actions you need to take to make sure that you can learn in this classroom?

5) What are examples of requests your teacher asks of you?

6) Which of the following words best describes you? Draw a circle around all words that describe you.

happy	boring	studious	conscientious	caring
indifferent	concerned	worried	lost	misunderstood
curious	eager	positive	negative	humorous

7) What can you do to make this class better for you?