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Title: STARstreams: Development and Evaluation of a Prototype Web-Enhanced Curriculum for Improving Adolescent Social Problem Solving

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STARstreams:

Improving Adolescent Social Problem Solving
through a Web-enhanced Conflict Resolution Curriculum¹

The STARstreams project's primary goal is to aid in the development of adolescents' conflict resolution capabilities. Specifically, the STARstreams project is developing a suite of resources for teachers to use to integrate conflict resolution activities within their idiosyncratic, usually domain-based, daily curricula. Several sub-goals underlay our design and development of the STARstreams Conflict Resolution Project:

- Improve students' critical thinking abilities, especially in identifying problems and generating creative solutions, maintaining multiple perspectives, and tolerating ambiguity.
- Enhance and evaluate the effectiveness of interactive multimedia programming in the area of conflict resolution.
- Provide an opportunity for students to put conflict resolution skills into practice in their classrooms.
- Increase the probability of consistent extended instruction in conflict resolution through shifting the emphasis from teaching to learning, from using teacher time to using student time.
- Encourage and support students' use of multimedia technology to form collaborative learning communities.

The resources to be provided to support the project's overall goal may be delivered via a wide-array of media; however, one innovative and potentially effective distribution mechanism, and the one principally pursued under this project, is the web and streaming media as an adjunct to classroom-based conflict resolution efforts. The resources are composed of two main components: (1) the "core" conflict resolution curriculum consisting of six modules, and (2) the Workbench, a web-based database of additional resources and activities. Within these two areas, three primary tools are used to support learning:

1. video-based scenarios that engage students in social problems and allow them to examine possible resolution strategies and outcomes
2. critical-thinking supportive web-based conferences for adolescents to discuss among themselves, across classrooms, and with experts in conflict resolution, including the performers in the scenarios, and
3. a set of teacher support structures that provide ways to incorporate conflict resolution activities within classrooms and effective strategies for engaging learners in those activities.

All of these components are being brought together within one overarching web-based learning environment in which the adolescents' support each other and form a community through interaction and also the teachers' themselves establish ties through discussion of their own successes and failures in working with conflict resolution strategies in their classrooms. This study designed, developed, and evaluated a prototype of four scenarios, an online discussion environment, and a limited subset of the teacher support materials. Future efforts will develop a full set of six core conflict resolution modules, create the resources and activity guides for the Workbench, populate the support structure database with *teacher*-submitted and *team*-developed lessons, strategies, and stories, and expand the online conferencing program so that it is scalable to handle a "critical mass" of participants for a self-sustaining online community.

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