



# Editorial

## Treasa Kenny and Kieran Doyle

This edition comprises four articles on quite diverse topics. **Alec Coakley's** article "Peer mediation - Conflict management in a class of its own" looks at implementation of peer mediation programmes in school settings. It is particularly timely given the growing interest in and development of peer mediation programmes in schools and, indeed, other settings in Ireland. Peer mediation has the potential to help resolve conflict, impact positively on school cultures, improve learning environments and enhance student development. Correct implementation is critical and the article focuses on practical aspects of setting up peer mediation programmes, with primary reference to schools in Ireland but with wider relevance. It outlines associated theoretical concepts and considers where mediation could fit in the school curriculum, before discussing two broad approaches to peer mediation - a 'whole-school' approach (where every student is trained on how to manage conflict constructively) and a 'cadre' approach (where a small group of students is trained). The article goes on to make apposite recommendations on the development of peer mediation in schools and on future research.

The article by **Angela Cora Garcia** delves into the less-explored area of interaction between mediators and disputants in caucuses with the individual parties. In a discourse-analytic study using video-taped material, she identifies both constructive and potentially problematic aspects of mediator interaction with disputants. Constructive actions included disputants revealing bottom line negotiation positions and sharing new information while negative aspects included unhelpful remarks about the opposing party. Mediators' actions on occasions also undermined their ability to display neutrality. The article discusses the implications for practice of these negative aspects and also provides helpful insights where good practice is observed.

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In the previous issue of the Journal, **Michael Tophoff** focused in his article “Quieting the Mind” on how mediators can contribute to lowering levels of emotion in reconciling parties in a conflict. Now in this issue, he examines the relevance of classical Daoism to establishing harmony in conflict resolution through mediation. His novel, thought-provoking article “Harmony and conflict resolution in mediation – a classical Daoist contribution” looks at the concept of harmony and its loss and return as well as Daoist practices for mediator self-cultivation and conflict resolution. It is an abbreviated version of a more detailed paper which makes its potentially challenging, complex ideas more readily accessible. For those intrigued and enthused by the article, the longer version is available from the author, whose contact details are provided in a footnote to the article.

In the final article, “Family Mediation in International Child Abduction Cases in Ireland: One Size Will Not Fit All”, **Emily Dunne** reports on interviews with legal and mediation professionals with experience in child abduction cases or extensive training in this field in Ireland. The interviews were conducted as part of research for a Master’s degree in mediation and conflict intervention. The article looks at the potential of mediation against the backdrop of the legal framework of the 1980 Hague Convention. Use of mediation in Ireland has been limited to date but legal professionals now appear to be more open to its use, partly because of growing familiarity with mediation in other disputes. The article calls for a model of mediation adapted to international child abduction cases.

We conclude our introduction as usual by extending the invitation to share knowledge in the Journal of Mediation and Applied Conflict Analysis. Submission details can be found in Author Information on the home page.

The Edward M Kennedy Institute for Conflict Intervention provides a range of programmes that may be of interest to peace-makers and those engaging with others in conflict situations. These programmes are:

MA in Mediation and Conflict Intervention

MA in International Peacebuilding, Security and Development

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Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificates  
Diploma in Mediation, Negotiation and Conflict Intervention  
Certificate in Restorative Practices and Mediation  
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