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From mistrust to collaboration: Using Transformational Social Therapy to Support Participation in School-Community Educational Reform in a French Banlieue

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Abstract

Collaborative relationships are held as all important in school reform, but the research and practice literature provides little guidance on how to create them across social divides marked by mistrust and even violence. Using a qualitative case study methodology, this chapter provides a detailed analysis of a successful practice, Transformational Social Therapy (TST), as it was applied in a school-community planning project in the French equivalent of an inner city. TST combines a variant of action research, consensus-based community organizing, and techniques from group therapy to facilitate dialogue, information sharing, and the development of action plans. The chapter examines the TST theory of action, grounding it in the research on intergroup conflict and collaboration, organizational change, and trust and mistrust. TST helps reweave social relationships and the development of trust by providing supports for the emotional understanding of self and other. The case study analysis selects four moments that appeared central to moving the initially mistrusting and reluctant would-be partners toward collaboration. The first moment shows that agency was exercised through dynamics including victimization, blame, rebellion, exclusion and violence. Encouraging participants to give free expression to their grievances and related emotions was a key to the second moment, gaining their participation and beginning to build trust leading to collaboration. The third and fourth moments illustrate how these very expressions created spaces in which participants could show their vulnerability and how this process, perhaps strangely and counter intuitively, provides an important key to human connection.

Introduction: The Project and the Context

This chapter examines a process, Transformational Social Therapy (TST), which is designed to foster collaborative action to address problems in organizations and communities where fractured relationships and mistrust create blocks to collaboration.1 The case details collaborative planning in a school-community network, the Maville - TST School Success Project, which took place between April 2005 and October 2006 in one of the banlieues2 on the outskirts of Paris, France. Maville (a fictitious name) is an economically depressed town that is home to a large multi-ethnic population, both French-born and immigrant, with roots in North and West Africa and other European and non-European countries. The area is considered volatile and, in fact, riots that were widely reported internationally exploded there and in other banlieues in October 2005, while this project was taking place (Coleman, 2006). At the time project activities began, tensions in the community were high and many of the local schools - among the lowest performing in France - were in disarray and closed off from each other and the neighborhood. Mandates from a recently revived national education reform policy that called for school-community collaborative planning provided an opportunity and some resources, and the principal of the lead school in the network, Collège Picasso (a fictitious name) invited the Charles Rojzman Institute, the hub for TST activities, to facilitate the planning process. Between April and October 2005, TST facilitators worked first with a group of students over two weekends (April and May) and subsequently with a group of educators, parents, and community members, also for two weekends (May and October). The process continued into 2006 and 2007. The intervention with students and adults used a process that is the trademark of TST: it combines a variant of action research (Toulmin, 1996), consensus-based community organizing (Eichler, 2006) and techniques from group therapy (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005) to facilitate dialogue, information sharing (or "collective intelligence"; see Rojzman, 2009; Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004), and the development of action plans. The intervention succeeded in creating the groundwork for collaboration in an environment where the starting point had been mistrust and violence and by October 2005 a group of students, teachers, parents and community members were able to have an open dialogue that subsequently informed the action plans. The meetings also helped initiate collaborations between educators, parents, and community-based social workers and organizers (Héraud, 2007). The project continued into 2006 and the French Ministry of Education provided funding for more intensive follow-up in 2007-2008. I became interested in studying this intervention because it seemed to provide an answer to a pressing question: how to create school-community partnerships in

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circumstances where the starting point is mistrust, avoidance, and fear. The problems in Maville were in some ways similar - though in some ways much worse - to those that face school-community partnerships in U.S. cities, which are my main area of interest for research and practice; in addition, the TST process has been heralded in France and elsewhere as part of new interventions that contribute to humanizing education "for the 21st century" (Tarpinian, 2010). What was the theory of action and what aspects of the process might account for the results?

The chapter explores these questions using a qualitative case study methodology. I focus on the first four sessions, two with the students and two with the adults, so as to understand how trust and relationships are built initially in contexts such as Maville. The chapter begins with a brief description of the setting, which is followed by a discussion of TST, its main tenets, and related theory and research. The literature review provides evidence of the need for understanding the process through which TST engenders collaboration and support for the TST approach. This discussion is followed by an account of the research methods and the presentation and analysis of the data. The conclusion summarizes the main findings.

The Context

The Maville-TST project was responsive to and supported by the third wave of a French national educational reform initiative dating to 1981, which had created Priority Education Areas (zones d'éducation prioritaires or ZEPs) targeted for compensatory funding to address inequalities in economic and educational attainment. In 1999, the second wave of the policy created Networks of Priority Education (réseaux d'éducation prioritaire, or REPs), designed to promote collaboration and mutual learning among feeder schools (pre-primary, primary, and middle) in the ZEPs; however, many of these networks did not remain active, including the one in the REP Picasso (named for the lead middle school, Collège Picasso), where this project took place (Héraud, 2007). The policy was revived in 2004-2005, in the wake of scathing reports, the threat of riots and a new government (Hargreaves, 2009; Pugin, 2007). Especially targeted were schools in the most volatile high poverty areas with the lowest educational achievement, which were now named Striving for Success Networks (réseaux ambition réussite). Maville has 20 pre-primary schools, 21 elementary schools, eight collèges (middle schools), five lycées (high schools) and four tertiary institutions. All the pre-tertiary institutions in Maville fall within ZEPs. The REP Picasso included five elementary schools, three preschools, and the middle school.3 A historic shift in the French national government's practice of allocating the same level of funding for all schools, the new policy was part of a larger agenda providing compensatory funding to address "the challenges associated with minority ethnic cultures and social disadvantage" (Hargreaves, 2004, p. 227). France has the highest Muslim population of Western Europe (5 to 6 million, or approximately 9% of its population). Severe discrimination directed especially against youth and families of Muslim origins made the banlieues areas of seething resentment that periodically exploded in urban rioting. A 2004 study of "sensitive neighborhoods" with a high Muslim population, conducted by a police agency, reported that half of these neighborhoods "showed worrisome signs of community isolation . . . from social and political life" (Lawrence & Vaisse, 2006). According to 2006 reports, youth unemployment in the département (administrative region) of Seine-Saint-Denis, which includes Maville, stood at 50 percent - the highest in Europe (Chrisafis, 2006). The poverty rate stood at 18 percent, or 5.5 percentage points higher than that of the greater Paris region and the income of some 60 percent of households in Maville and nearby towns (compared to 35 percent in the Greater Paris region) was low enough to be exempt from income taxes (Lawrence & Vaisse, 2006). Academic attainment is similarly inequitably distributed. What was always a differentiated educational system has become more strikingly so. Trica Keaton, who conducted a multi-year ethnographic study of Muslim girls in Seine-Saint-Denis, reports that schools in these outer cities are plagued by material inequalities, intensive tracking toward dead-end vocational studies, and high failure and dropout rates magnified by under-resourced conditions. In the late 1990s, concerns over inferior facilities, inadequate funding, crushing course loads, high teacher turnover, low salaries, and the elimination of critical teaching positions in a system in which classroom sizes have doubled and tripled over the years ignited massive teacher and student protests. (Keaton, 2005, p. 407)

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The renewed emphasis on educational reform came partly in the hope that improvements in education could pacify young people and ease ever present threats to the public order (Chrisafis, 2006; Hargreaves, 2004). Calling for local-level planning and action to improve educational achievement, the policy constituted a measure of decentralization in a system that is otherwise tightly administered at the national level and includes a national curriculum. Planning would bring together teachers and administrators from network schools, families, and civic and municipal organizations, under the joint leadership of an administrator from the National Ministry of Education (Inspecteur de l'éducation nationale) whose position was roughly equivalent to a district superintendent, and the principal of Collège Picasso, the middle school that the children in the network would attend. The social environment would make collaboration exceedingly difficult, however, given seemingly intractable problems in both school and community. The percentage of young, inexperienced, and white teachers in the schools was high, as was teacher turnover (Pugin, 2007). Many schools, including those in the REP Picasso, had a garrison mentality: they did not welcome parents and neighbors and the latter, in turn, perceived them as foreign enclaves. Collège Picasso, the middle school in the network that is the site of this study, was considered one of the most difficult schools in France (Héraud, 2007). This is the context in which the principal of Collège Picasso suggested a TST intervention by the Charles Rojzman Institute.

From Mistrust to Collaborative Action through Transformational Social Therapy

TST interventions are based on a process developed by French social psychologist Charles Rojzman.4 Rather than healing individuals, as its name might suggest, TST focuses on reweaving the fabric of social relationships that are torn apart by various expressions of violence. TST works through small groups of ten to fifteen people who are personally affected by a local problem and reflects the social divisions and divergent perspectives on the problem (the "primary group"). The group is taken through a developmental process that enables participants to move from violence and mistrust to collaboration. Violence here is defined broadly to include not only physical aggression but also emotional harm to self and others, such as abuse, shaming, and rejection. As in the field of peace studies, violence is understood to have intra-personal, interpersonal, institutional, and structural dimensions and to include phenomena such as discrimination, marginalization and social isolation (Galtung, 1969). The TST process is based on the understanding that violence is an unhealthy adaptation to meeting one's basic human needs. Violence is thus the symptom of a more deeply underlying problem generated by social contexts that do not provide healthy pathways for meeting one's need for respect, affiliation, safety, agency and the like (i.e. see Staub, 2003b). The TST process is geared to creating a group in which participants can meet their needs in healthier ways. As the process creates self-awareness and heals relationships among participants, they become motivated to collaborate. A particular kind of trust comes into play here: trust that grows from emotional understanding and emotional supports and can thus withstand and even grow through constructive conflict. Through this process, group members are able to get beyond communication that conforms with cordial relations (Keith, 2010), and engage in open, democratic dialogue that potentially yields creative and workable approaches to organizational or community problems (Yankelovich, 1999). Here the TST primary group is connected to decision makers who are invested in working with the group to implement action proposals. What follows is a brief discussion of TST theory and practice in light of its supports from the literature. I also look at the literature on trust and mistrust as it relates to promoting collaboration in settings such as Maville. Whereas much of this literature focuses on behaviors or cognitive processes, TST is in line with a relatively new emphasis in research and practice that looks at both emotions and cognition (Eisenberg, 2006). This section establishes the theoretical framework for the subsequent analysis of data from the Maville-TST School Success Project. Transformational Social Therapy: Theory and Practice TST is informed by a comprehensive theory of change that takes into account the interconnectedness of the person, social institutions, and society at large, or what social scientists refer to respectively as the micro, meso, and macro-levels. As Emirbayer and Mische (1998) assert, our identity and our agency incorporate all these levels as well as temporal dimensions: our past, both historical and personal, our present experiences, and our goals and plans for the future. How we act in particular circumstances is not determined by these factors there is fluidity and possibility - but we are not entirely free to make and remake ourselves (Booth, 2008; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Lasky, 2005). TST's theory of change centers on

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understanding oneself and others in the context of social institutions, with a particular focus on the emotions that underlie violence and on their transformation (see Greenberg, 2009; Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004). Accordingly, the essence of violence resides in a denial of the humanity of the other, as when the other is thought to be so different from oneself and so devoid of the emotions that make us human as to make relationships and communication impossible (Anzaldúa, 1987; Said, 1978). Violence is thus different from conflict, which entails engagement with the other, expressing, as needed, our disagreement, anger, hurt, and other emotions. Conflict can thus rebuild relationships that violence severs (e.g. see Melchin & Picard, 2008). Expressing emotions, including negative ones, is an important part of TST: a supportive environment helps participants let down their masks (Craig, 1994; Goffman, 1959) and speak openly about their fears, frustrations, failures, pain, prejudices, and violence. In the process, participants share information which, coming from multiple perspectives, typically enables the group to develop new understandings of the problem. Solutions thus emerge that are generally more viable than is the case when planning and decision making are either expert-driven or not informed by multiple perspectives. The literature refers to this sharing of information as collective intelligence, a fast-growing practice that is based on the evolving model of the learning organization and on complexity theory (Atlee, 2003; Boud, Cressey, & Docherty, 2006; Hamilton, et al., 2004; Page, 2007; Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004; Taylor, 2003). The central idea is that expert approaches to problems are not viable in fast-paced environments marked by complexity; in these contexts, dealing with complex problems requires pulling together information from multiple sources, and especially from diverse perspectives. In particular, those who are on the ground, experiencing a problem first-hand, constitute a vital new source of information. Page's (2007) own cutting-edge research demonstrates the superior outcomes produced by diverse groups. A key question then centers on how diverse groups can come to share information and generate a genuine collective intelligence from the exchange. Pierre Levy (1995) makes the important distinction between the exchange of information and the co-construction of knowledge, suggesting that the latter is less frequent and much more difficult to achieve. A collective is not necessarily intelligent and might be overly conformist. Collective intelligence, according to Levy, requires bringing together groups that include as much diversity as possible - of opinion, capacities, knowledge base - so participants can engage in collective reflection and dialogue that valorizes diversity and leads to a creative and productive synergy (Zara, 2004). Given that diverse groups are often separated by prejudices and violence, Rojzman adds the important insight that before truthful information can be shared, one must foster sufficient trust to allow members of diverse groups to get beyond in-group conformity, mutual suspicions, stereotypes, and prejudices. Rojzman's account of the emotions involved in inter-group enmity and violence conforms with studies of prejudice and inter-group bias (Hewstone, Rubin, & Willis, 2002; Pettigrew, 2008) and genocide (Staub, 2003b). As Ervin Staub's voluminous research demonstrates, at the intra-personal level, we experience negative feelings toward a stranger when the stranger brings out our fears, which may be evoked by real or imagined dangers, and are different for different people, while some may fear being judged or rejected, others may anticipate aggression, whether physical or emotional, and still others may be fearful because they do not understand what is going on and what is expected - a fear of too much uncertainty and of the unknown, in the context of confident expectations of harm - one of the definitions of mistrust. These negative emotions and their accompanying attitudes and behaviors are complicated by the severing of social bonds across different social groups and by vicious cycles of prejudice and stereotypes. The social capital literature refers to this problem, though the focus is not on the emotional subtext (Dika & Singh, 2002). Social dominance theory makes the final linkage from this intergroup level to the macro level: power plays, social hierarchies, ideologies, and cultural and political factors interact to produce group-level and structural oppression, directing these expressions toward outgroups (Sidanius, Pratto, van Laar, & Levin, 2004). As these authors assert, it is important to consider and study interactions across these levels. TST takes this caution to heart: its starting point are basic human needs and the ways individuals, groups, institutions, and sociopolitical structures interact and, in the process, create more or less healthy environments for meeting such needs (Eckersley, 2006). As Eckersley and others suggest, social environments can be pathological when extreme social selfishness and acquisitiveness lead some to disregard others' well-being. According to Staub (2003a, 2003b), although specifics may vary, researchers generally agree that human needs include affiliation and belonging, meaning, recognition, certainty, safety, and power (defined as "the capacity to act"). An important insight is that tensions around meeting these needs are never fully resolved: they begin early in life and become an important and mostly unconscious influence on how we respond to our environment (Daniele & Gordon, 1996). Enacting good or evil, in Ervin Staub's (2003a) purposefully moral language, is related to experiences in our childhood as well as to processes of social dominance, including histories of colonial dominance and out-group

oppression. The connection to the emotional realm is through pain and fear experienced when our emotional and existential needs are not met. In this sense, as Eckersley and many other social commentators have argued, modern Western culture is itself promoting pathologies. Changes in the social environment, including societal crises, can make people regress toward pathologies such as paranoia and its potential for hatred and violence; they can also, however, turn the tables and promote altruism and positive connections to others (Staub, 2005). For instance, unresolved needs for safety or love in early life, in contexts characterized by social selfishness and the lack of proverbial safety nets may contribute to excessive fears of being attacked, rejected, and abandoned and, in a move to projection, generate tendencies to interpret the actions of feared or unknown others as attacks against which we must protect ourselves. This is the main import of the well-known research into the authoritarian personality (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950; Fromm, 1941/1969; Fromm, 1955) and the political psychology of Nazism and genocide (Staub, 2003b) that saw the light in the aftermath of the rise of the Nazi and Fascist regimes. According to these authors, relations to authority such as blind obedience, compliance, and participation in mass actions led by autocratic and dictatorial leaders are a pathological way of satisfying psychic needs for certainty, affiliation, and power. Contributing to this well-known literature, TST group practice applies these insights to interrupt pathological intergroup behaviors and support the kind of personal development that favors collaboration and democratic action (Rojzman & Rojzman, 2007). When a facilitator intervenes by changing the group's social environment in ways that reduce fears, it creates a space for the emergence of healthy relationships. Indeed, one of the very few interventions that manage to create school-community collaboration in urban settings, starting from mistrust, is James Comer's School Development Program, which is based on promoting healthy adult development and adult relationships (Comer, 2004). Comer's premise is that circumstances experienced as threatening - so often present in impoverished and isolated neighborhoods and their schools - can bring forth survival and aggressive energies that exist in all of us. The disruptive and even violent child is acting out the aggression and violence expressed by the meaningful adults in his or her life. The task of the reformer, then, is to develop supports for adults and organizations that care for and educate children so that they can "channel their energy into improving conditions and outcomes for students rather than expressing it in harmful adult conflicts" (Comer, 2004, p.164).

Building Trust from Mistrust

Since the 1990s, many studies of collaborative or participatory school reform have established the importance of trust, provided guidance on how to foster it, and documented positive learning outcomes resulting from relationships of trust, which foster collaboration and engagement inside schools and between school and community (see Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Bryk, Bender Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010; Cook-Sather, 2009; Gordon & Seashore Louis, 2009; Jeynes, 2003; Kensler, 2008; Tschannen-Moran, 2001). However, with the exception of Comer's SDP, few practices are available to help school leaders, educators, and change agents engage in collaborative reforms in communities wracked by deep social divisions, poverty and its accompanying ills, and power asymmetries - sites where school-community interactions are likely to include a surfeit of conflict, fear, mistrust, aggression, and incivility. As one telling example, Bryk and Scheider's (2002) study of the Chicago school reform found that in the initial stages of reform, fully two-thirds of the schools most in need of improvements were either left behind or struggling, with the former generally located in racially isolated high poverty neighborhoods. The paucity of supportive practices for intervening in these environments is matched by the state of research on trust. In an extensive and growing research literature on trust and trust building there are few studies on mistrust and on how to move from mistrust to collaboration (Kramer, 1999; Lewicki & Wiethoff, 2000). Lewicki and Wiethoff propose that mistrust is not merely the absence or the opposite of trust. Whereas trust involves confidently positive expectations and beliefs about the other person or group, distrust involves confidently negative expectations and beliefs about the other, which means fear of the other. Following this line of thought, Saunders and Thornhill (2004) consider trust and mistrust in relation to a desire to reduce complexity and uncertainty with regard to one's expectations about others: "mistrust reduces complexity and uncertainty by removing favourable expectations and allowing unfavourable expectations to be seen as certain" (2004, p. 495). Kramer interestingly connects several threads in the literature: Distrust has been defined as a "lack of confidence in the other, a concern that the other may act so as to harm one, that he does not care about one's welfare or intends to act harmfully, or is hostile" (Grovier, 1994, p. 240). Suspicion

has been viewed as one of the central cognitive components of distrust (Deutsch, 1958) and has been characterized as a psychological state in which perceivers "actively entertain multiple, possibly rival, hypotheses about the motives or genuineness of a person's behavior" (Fein & Hilton, 1994, p. 168) (Kramer, 1999, 587).

Further, the literature on categorization alerts us to the presence of category-based distrust and suspicion (i.e. directed to different identity groups), where outgroup members are evaluated as less honest, open, and trustworthy than members of one's own group (Kramer, 1999) and even as less prone to experiencing distinctly human emotions (Leyens, et al., 2003). Furthermore, the anxiety and other negative emotions that characterize interactions across social divisions may strengthen stereotyping and prejudice, hamper communication, and increase distrust (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Kawakami, 2003). Some studies suggest that trust building and reduction of mistrust operate differently in dominant and subordinated groups (Dessel & Rogge, 2008). Shared goals, respect, reflective inquiry, and feelings of interdependence are commonly regarded as central to collaboration (on professional learning communities, see Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace & Thomas, 2006). However, these are not likely to come easily when relationships start from suspicion and unfavorable expectations. Let me quote Bryk & Schneider (2002) at some length:

Embedded in the daily social routines of schools is an interrelated set of mutual dependencies among all key actors: students, teachers, principals and administrators, and parents. These structural dependencies create feelings of vulnerability for the individuals involved; this vulnerability is especially salient in the context of asymmetric power relations, such as those between parents and local school professionals. A recognition of this vulnerability by the superordinate party (in this instance, the local school professionals) and a conscious commitment on their part to relieve the uncertainty and unease of the other (that is, poor parents) can create a very intense, meaningful social bond among the parties. (2002, p. 20)

Bryk and Schneider's comments remind us of the importance of context. Rather than looking for generally valid definitions of trust and mistrust and ways of enabling collaboration where mistrust reigns, we need to start by considering that the process involves relationships between a trusting agent and a trusted one (or vice versa, mistrusting and mistrusted agents), interacting in their particular context (Hardin, 1992, in Kramer, 1999, p. 574). Here, micro, meso, and macro come together: what are the personal, organizational, and even national histories, narratives, and memories that provide the interpretive lenses for one determining that another's intentions are harmful and their actions are suspicious? Considering the earlier discussion, we also need to take into account how individuals' basic human needs are being met, and the pain, fear, and violence that emerge from pathological adaptations to meeting one's needs; the realm of the emotions must be included in the picture.

Chart 1 brings together the main points in the above discussion. Based on the TST theory of change and supportive research, it highlights the actions the TST facilitator undertakes in order to enable a group to move from mistrust to collaboration and the underlying rationale for those actions: changing the group environment so as to create healthy ways for members to meet their basic needs. The chart provides the framework in light of which the data are analyzed. The grand tour research question pertains to the correspondence between the theory of change and observable moves from mistrust to collaboration in the TST groups. In other words, what I am testing here is the explanatory power of the theory.

Masks, emotions, needs and interventions do not break down neatly into categories and should be seen as fluid and interactive rather than fixed. The chart constitutes a heuristic that guides the facilitator's interventions in the group. In the first column are some expressions and behaviors relating to mistrust that may be present in the group, while the second column names emotions and expressions of violence connected to these behaviors. Here, it is important not to assume the posture of the expert who knows and analyzes participants, but to use the heuristic to interrogate the situation, considering the question: what might be going on here? (Charles Rojzman, personal communication). The third column names the needs that underlie the behaviors and emotions in the first two columns, which become a guide for the facilitator's interventions in the group (fourth column). These interventions are directed at creating enough safety and trust so participants will be motivated to take some risks in removing their masks, becoming

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vulnerable, engaging in authentic communication, and collaborating. The facilitator looks for central dynamics that revolve around the process of (a) reflecting and developing self-awareness; (b) moving from binary thinking, such as victim-oppressor, self-Other, and in-group/our-group toward complex understandings of the situation; and (c) moving from a sense of victimization and powerlessness toward the assumption of responsibility and empowerment.

Research Methods

The TST project began with a stakeholders' meeting that included principals and teachers from network schools, a member of the local Community Governing Council, the two lead administrators for REP Picasso, and Charles, the TST facilitator. The leadership team clarified and affirmed the goal of the project (to plan for specific local actions that would foster students' academic achievement) and the design of the intervention, which involved creating two groups that would go through the TST process: a student group comprised of nine 14- to 17-year-olds from 3rd and 4th forms (8th and 9th grades) at Collège Picasso; and a group of ten to fifteen adult participants that included educators and school professionals (social workers) from the different levels of schooling in the network, as well as parents and members of local community organizations. Both groups would approach their work as action research, learning to collaborate in order to become a vehicle for understanding the problem and proposing ways to address it. The student group would meet separately from the adults, since experience suggested the students would not speak freely in the presence of the adults. The facilitator would find an appropriate time to introduce the students' input and ideas into the adult conversation, in ways as yet to be determined. The leadership team then proceeded with recruitment of participants. The criterion for selection was maximum diversity: it was important that groups include vociferous critics and failing students and not only willing volunteers (Planning meeting transcript, March 14, 2005). Participants for the student group were recruited through a flyer drafted by the TST assistant facilitator, Théa Rojzman, based on several days of observation at the school. The flyer is reproduced here to show the approach to gaining a population of discontented and failing students who would not normally trust or participate in any initiatives by the school.

School Isn't Perfect?

In this school, there are students who are hurting, not doing well, afraid of failing; students who feel like they are alone, attacked, and victims of injustice. To all those who are having difficulties and are angry, who feel deceived, outraged, dissatisfied, or even happy (why not?), we propose four days of exchange and interactive research. We invite students in 8th and 9th grade to participate in a group of "young researchers" . . . The mission of this group will be to find solutions to deal students' problems, your own problems . . . Do you have anything to say, any ideas or criticisms? Come, you can change the school! (Rojzman, T., 2005a, p.1)

Based on the TST theory of change, the flyer also named the emotions students might be experiencing, including negative ones. It did so without judgment and without naming a problem or the students as the problem. Instead, disengaged and disaffected students were asked to contribute their ideas so that the school might change. The flyer was posted on school walls and nine students responded, all known as troublemakers by school personnel and all ethnic French of North African and African origins. The recruitment method had produced the intended results. Leadership team members recruited adult participants from schools, the neighborhood and local organizations. Given a few changes in membership, the adult group consisted of 14 to 16 participants and included parents (3 to 4), educators (9 to 11 teachers, school directors, assistant principal), community social workers (1 to 2) and representatives of community/civic organizations (1 to 3). Some overlap in participants' roles accounts for numeric discrepancies. The parents were all mothers who were of non-European ethnic origins and the community representatives and social workers included both white French and French "of color." All the educators were white French. The student group met for two weekend sessions held prior to the adult group meetings (April 25-26 and May

2-3, 2005). Student representatives also participated in two meetings with the principal and vice-principal of Collège Picasso (April 26 and June 22, 2005), and six of the students also met subsequently with the adult group in October 2005, on the latter's invitation. The adult group met for a total of four weekends (May 23-24, 2005; October 17-18, 2005; March 2006; October 2006) of which only the first two are of interest here. Each day lasted around 5 hours. Group members also engaged in various related actions in between sessions. Théa Rojzman collected and transcribed verbatim data for most of the group sessions and wrote thematic analytical summaries that included observable non-verbal behaviors. Charles Rojzman provided clarifications and further analytical commentary relating the project to TST theory and practice. Novella Keith translated data from the French, analyzed the data, searched for and reviewed related literature, and wrote the chapter. Data sources used in this chapter are verbatim notes of the planning meeting, all meetings with students and the first weekend meeting with adults, and thematic summaries of the two meetings with students and the second meeting with adults. Verbatim field notes, including direct quotations, are referred to as "field notes," followed by the date of the meeting and the page number(s) where the account appears in the transcript. Data, including direct quotations, from thematic summaries are referenced as Rojzman, T., 2005a (student data) and Rojzman, T., 2005b (adult data), followed by the page number(s) where the data appear in the document. Data were interrogated in light of TST's theory of change and the reviewed literature on trust and mistrust. In an iterative process between the grand tour research question and the data, I selected four moments in the students' and adults' groups that seemed to provide rich details relating to the research question. The first moment is the initial encounter between the students and the TST facilitator (April 25, 2005). The main focus here is on the process of moving from mistrust to sufficient trust to enable collaboration. The second moment centers on the students' role plays featured in a film (May 3-4, 2005) that was later shown to the adult group. The focus here is on the TST approach to developing trustworthy information with the students about the problem of school success. The third moment occurs when the adults watch the students' film (May 23, 2005) and illustrates the process through which adults establish the students as a source of trustworthy information that can be incorporated into collective intelligence for school reform. The fourth moment features a meeting between students and adults (October 18, 2005), which takes the form of a dialogue in which all participants consider one another trustworthy partners. Data analysis followed the standard qualitative approach consisting of a search for themes that related to the theoretical framework and research question. As I interrogated the fit between the theory and the data, I paid particular attention to the ways the group process appeared to build trust and support collaboration. This approach is in line with "critical realist" research, which establishes the study of processes, contextualized through qualitative research (here, a case study), as a valid and powerful alternative to experimental research (Maxwell, 2005). The aim is not to establish a generalizable connection between context-free causes and effects, but to understand and interpret how events and actions in the particular and the local are connected, taking into full account the context-rich environments that constitute the site of social science research (Flyvbjerg, 2001). In so doing, we are provided with an internally rich way of linking causes and effects than sheds light on the intricacies of social life.

From Mistrust to Dialogue: Four Key Moments

Moment 4: "Should we meet again in three months?" "No, no, in two weeks!" I start with the last moment, at the end of the second session with adults, because this point marks the beginning of collaboration between the adult and student groups. Moments 1 to 3, presented subsequently, will look for the path that led to this moment. The adult group had viewed the students' film during their first session, in May 2005, and decided on the first day of their October session to invite the students to meet. Six students agreed to come. It is now the morning of October 18. The students arrive on time and participate fully in an intense three-hour dialogue on the theme of "what is a good day at school," during which no one asks for a break. At the end, when the facilitator suggests another meeting in three months, one of the students objects: "no, no, in two weeks!" (Field notes, October 18, 2005, 10-15). The meeting starts with the director of a primary school explaining the objectives of the meeting to the students: the group of adults has been trying to come to grips with the issue of school success but is having problems: they want things to work out, but they don't seem to be getting there. The adults would like to know from the students: "How do you see the problem of school success? What do you think can make a difference?" (Field notes, October 18, 2005, 1). As agreed by the adults the day before, the director proposes that teachers and students talk together about "a good

day at school." The students agree. The adults start. Before continuing the narrative, let me briefly comment on this introduction, which may have struck readers as somewhat unusual. What stands out is the way the students are being addressed: the adult admits to not knowing what to do and needing the students' knowledge. As the research on youth adult partnerships documents, adults generally find it difficult to enact their side of the partnership because they tend to relate to young people in ways that are either infantilizing and overly directive or too laissez-faire: the point instead is to act as guides, mentors, coaches - to provide young adult roles and trust young people to fulfill them, but not trust them blindly. They need appropriate adult guidance (Camino, 2005). In fact, earlier interactions among the adults revealed the same problematic relationship between teachers and parents, with the latter feeling either infantilized or marginalized by teachers (Field notes, May 24, 2005, 4). If the educators in this meeting are treating the students as partners, it makes sense to ask whether the process has changed their taken-for-granted attitudes and demeanors. Analysis of the process will address this point. For the teachers, a good day at school comes down to two main issues. The first involves good relationships, good feelings, having a sense of work well done and students who are satisfied. "Everyone leaves happy" and the next day "we are motivated," and "we feel like coming back." There is an almost primordial sense about the importance of good relationships in school. The second issue pertains to meaningful work: not feeling useless, having the sense of teaching something important and of one's presence making a difference. For instance, one teacher remembers teachers who made him want to learn by giving him a larger perspective on the world. That is what he wants here, to produce "magical moments in the classroom." Thus, indirectly, this issue also has to do with relationships, not for their own sake, but for a proper role for adults in guiding, mentoring, and coaching the young (Field notes, October 18, 2005, 10). The students start by saying they want an orderly environment without any fights and problems, teachers who understand them, but most importantly, they want to understand the materials the teacher is presenting and be able to get good grades: understanding the teachers should not require an enormous effort and teachers should slow down if needed, encourage the students and help them. The lively exchange includes the students' criticisms of the school and of teachers but also a sense of camaraderie with the adults. At one point, a student asks what school was like "before," for the adults who are present. He and his peers seem astounded that the adults, as students, were afraid, kept quiet, tried to avoid getting into problems, went to school mainly to see their friends and not especially because they liked school, and the adults "were always right." "Same as for us - the students exclaim - nothing has changed!" (Field notes, October 18, 2005, 10-11). However, as it later transpires, unlike the adults, students now are not afraid of teachers but only of their older brothers, who will get physical and hit them, and of their parents' emotional reactions when things are not going well at school. The conversation is wide-ranging, going from issues of scheduling and class size, to teachers who don't want to explain and just throw them out of class, the problem of labels that stick, from the beginning of the year ("troublemaker", "no good"), without the opportunity for change. As time goes on, participants take risks and speak frankly about their emotions and fears. For a student, a teacher's unjust punishment means lack of care and lack of love. A teacher admits to an increasingly lower tolerance threshold in the classroom, due to fearing loss of control. The adults do not simply agree with the students or make polite comments. They engage them, disagree, and throw back their own hard questions. When an adult asks the students about their own responsibility for the problems in school ("what if the students just aren't working hard enough, or aren't motivated?") the dialogue turns to the very meaning of the school that the students are asked to "be motivated" to attend, and a problematic match between the school's lack of clear focus and relevant curriculum, and the students' lack of a clear sense about their future. The adults also want to explore peer pressure and internal groups divisions among the students, and the students explain that, for them, the issue is not peer pressure but some students being weak; it is about life in the neighborhood and does not necessarily relate to life in school (Field notes, October 18, 2005, 11-13). Daniel Yankelovitch (1999) says "in dialogue, we penetrate behind the polite superficialities and defenses in which we habitually armor ourselves. We listen and respond to one another with an authenticity that forces a bond between us." He calls on Martin Buber's I and Thou to propose that "life itself is a form of meeting and dialogue is the 'ridge' on which we meet." (Yankelovitch,1999, p.15). Recalling Saunders and Thornhill (2004), showing our vulnerabilities is also a way of connecting and building trust. It seems evident that this sort of existential meeting is taking place here. Students and adults are partners in a conversation that interrogates the ridges where their lives meet and that seems to fit the definition of collective intelligence. Here, the understandings and constructions of problems that emerge from the different ways participants experience classroom and community yield a collective understanding of what it will take to change the school. In comparing this exchange with interpretations of the problem that both students and adults voiced earlier during the project, one is struck by the

richness of this dialogue in producing insights, awareness, and information that could lead to appropriate local actions to address the problem. Information was not the only outcome, as there was motivation and energy that comes when people discover that they are not alone and they can in fact act as a team and with its support. I cannot provide full supports for this statement given the space limitations of this chapter. Putting side by side the proposals for action the adults identified at the beginning of the process and at the end of the second weekend does provide suggestive evidence. Day 4 proposals seem to reflect new perspectives (e.g. the recognition of the oppressive nature of education), attention to the multiple dimensions of the issue (e.g., the importance of the affective domain in academic achievement), and appreciation of the ongoing creation of collective intelligence through "spaces for conversation". Beyond this brief comment, I must let readers reach their own conclusions. Action proposals, day 1 (May 23, 2005, 10) Keys to school success, day 4 (October 18, 2005, 16) "Get parents to come to school for one or two weeks so as to reduce the discrepancies in the messages students receive from home and from school, as well as inform parents about how school works; Bring all the stakeholders to the table, including parents, to learn about reciprocal expectations and put in place 'something in common'; Help students develop by taking them on outings out of the neighborhood and motivate them to do well by showing them that their success is valued." The School: Consider the school schedule Match school work to the rhythm of family life Take into account different levels of student performance Institute group work and peer supports Further develop and stabilize teams, inside school and in the network Create spaces for conversations Find ways to make acceptable the legitimate violence of the educational system Affective domain [issues to be considered]: Motivation and effort Being valued Trust Respect and consideration

My sense is that the difference between the two lists is not simply a matter of three more days the group spent together, but of the collective intelligence that resulted from collaboration. How did project participants become partners, each with trustworthy information to contribute to the project? It is time to return to the first moment and trace the steps to this conclusion. Moment 1: Give this project a grade I begin with a somewhat detailed description of the initial meeting with students, because the analysis of transcripts shows that it exemplifies a process that was followed with each group and is part of the TST strategy for getting a group of mistrusting agents to move toward developing sufficient trust to participate (Charles Rojzman, personal communication). It is the morning of April 25, 2005, later than the expected starting time. After some calls and reminders, nine students (seven boys and two girls, aged 14 to 17), the facilitator (Charles) and his assistant (Théa) are ready to start. Charles begins by explaining the overall project: a number of different groups are being brought together that include all the stakeholders in the educational system - parents, teachers, other educators, social workers, students and neighborhood representatives - in order to develop proposals on the topic of school success in this neighborhood. The demeanor of the students suggests a wait-and-see attitude: some are slumped in their chairs, others look indifferent, no one is smiling. Charles asks them to introduce themselves and also to say how they feel about the prospects of this project: "Do you believe that this work will bear results and help students succeed? Give it a grade, from 0 to 20." (April 25, 2005, 1-2) The students' grades range from 7 to 12, as they talk about their hopes (good idea, it's good to think about this, it would be good if it could work), and about the obstacles they anticipate. Several themes emerge, captured by the following quotes: "teachers always want to be right"; "it might work for a while but then they will let it fall by the wayside"; "some teachers won't want to do it", they "won't listen", they "pay no attention"; "a week won't change much"; "there has to be give-and-take, and teachers always have the last word". One remarks that it's not only the teachersâ€”some of the students don't want to change, either. At the end, Charles proposes an exercise addressing the question: who's responsible for the students' failure? He adds: "Complete the sentence: if we don't succeed it's because the students [blank]; or, because the teachers [blank]. Explain why." (April 25, 2005, 2) This beginning is similar to that of the adults, who were asked to introduce themselves and also speak to the question of who was mainly responsible for problems pertaining to school success. Following these long introductions, the adults were then asked to pair up with someone whose views had perhaps shocked them, or with whom they had some significant disagreements. Referring to chart 1, the facilitator is intervening to change the group's social environment through the following: signaling that negative emotions, expressions and expectations are welcome, and not only positive or polite ones; creating opportunities for participants who are unlike one another to interact in a personalized and intimate (small group, pairs) setting and begin to develop personal connections that also help break up in-groups; engaging the group in reflection about responsibility for the problem, so as to encourage self-awareness and complex thinking; and addressing powerlessness and victimization by signaling that group members are

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collaborators whose experiential knowledge is a valued asset for institutional change. Returning to the students (in a pattern that is also observed in the adult group), the exercise does not result in much perspective taking. Their narrative continues to construct teachers as the problem, providing examples of unfairness, preferences and biases that constitute a fundamental injustice. Students also name lack of consideration or attention to family problems that affect them, lack of care, teachers not seeing them except as categories of students, no one showing concern for them, and failure to provide academic support when needed. Charles does not point out to the students that they have failed to follow directions and have not done the exercise correctly, nor does he assert that they must also, necessarily, bear some responsibility for the problem. He listens and introduces probing questions: are all teachers like that (answer: no, not all); how are students responsible (answer: students create problems, as well, they're not all obedient; we're not all saints, either!). He also reminds them that one of the goals toward which they are working is to determine how to share their knowledge about the problem with the adult group. Here, he is behaving according to well-established group therapy practice: as Yalom and Leszcz assert, "the basic posture of the therapist must be one of concern, acceptance, genuineness, empathy. Nothing, no technical consideration, takes precedence over this attitude." (2005, p. 117). Returning to the chart (column 1), the facilitator understands these expressions as masks. Listening for unmet needs (column 3), he may consider the conversation as indicating possible needs for recognition and affiliation. The facilitator responds by modeling openness and acceptance and asking reflective questions that may lead students to consider their binary constructions of reality. In this environment that appears to be non-judgmental and caring and is becoming relatively safe, students begin to exercise their agency in ways that act on the school environment rather than against it. Having seemingly understood the importance of reflection and awareness, one of them suggests making posters "to make teachers and students reflect." Another student proposes making a film, with scenes that show adults the students' view of how they get thrown out of class and eventually suspended from school. They begin by brainstorming words for teachers and for students. Théa comments: "a list of around one hundred words is quickly generated, many of which are quite violent toward the teachers. [The students] laugh and throw out the words without thinking" (TS students, 5). The brainstorming exercise also produces negative words for students. After small groups work on creating slogans from the words, the group decides on five slogans for students and 13 for teachers. The slogans for teachers include: "I treat you with respect, you treat me with respect", "Moussa, Kadhidja, Kader = Maxime, Bertrand, Géraldine" (meaning that students with Arab first names are not different from students with French first names), "Tell me when I'm doing well, too", "I exist, why don't you see me?" "We all want the same things." "Why don't you give me support?" We need it to make progress." "Don't get physical." "If you're wrong, accept it." Slogans for students: "Put yourself in the teachers' place; their job's not easy.", "School is not the hood.", "Bastard, prick, fuck-up, these aren't words for school.", "Pride, for both students and teachers, that's what gets us stuck in power games.", "Problems between students and teachers are often created by misunderstandings. Do you agree?" (April 25, 2005, 5-6). Referring to Chart 1, two issues seem to emerge. First, the students' slogans for the teachers can be heard through the filter of their own needs, which include not only recognition and affiliation, but also safety and information. Second, the slogans for their peers signal a beginning of owning some responsibility for the problem, which may create a path out of the sense of powerlessness induced by victimization and rebellion. On the second day, the students make up the posters and explore their ideas for the film. There is also a meeting with the principal to discuss the posters. Moment 2: Of Clowns and Rabble The following weekend is devoted to preparing and making the film. Two additional adults have been brought in by the Rojzman Institute to participate in small group work with the students. The first day serves to deepen understanding of the problems aired during the first session and help the students express themselves on the difficulties they experience as well as on their ideas about how to promote school success. Students are invited to create two stories in their small groups: one of a student who succeeds in school and another one of a failing student. They are asked to talk personally about their own lives in the context of their families, community, and school. The role of the adults is explained: they are not there to help the students, but to talk about their experiences in school, from their own perspective (May 2, 2005, 1-2). The emphasis on self-awareness through reflection and on speaking from one's personal experience is in evidence in both the student and the adult group and is part of well-established therapeutic practices that connect emotional experience with cognitive understanding and experience inside the group with what exists outside the group and in one's past. Yalom and Leszcz (2005, 30) comment that "the self-reflective loop is crucial if an emotional experience is to be transformed into a therapeutic one." They also explain how personal history and current life situations fit into the group's orientation to the "here and now": It is not that the group doesn't deal with the past; it is what is done with the past: the crucial task is not to

uncover, to piece together, to fully understand the past, but to use the past for the help it offers in understanding (and changing) the individual's mode of relating to the others in the present. (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005, 155. Italics in the original)

Here, students are learning to relate to adults in a different way from usual - and thus experiencing healthy bonds with the adult world - by sharing their past and present experiences in school, home, and the neighborhood with those in the adults' past. The result is a nuanced discussion of the problem, which examines interactions among students and students and teachers. As the students reflect on their experiences, they begin to break down the binary categories that were part of their original masks, in which they inhabit a student world composed of clowns (bouffons) and rabble (cailleras). The clowns do well in school, don't question authority, never leave home, and are boring; the rabble don't succeed, don't see the point of school and thus rebel and have fun; they often have family problems and are always singled out as troublemakers in school. The students explain: "there are always some students who do well and others who don't." As they develop the scenes, however, one hears comments such as, "it's not always like that," "there are lots of different circumstances," and "there are different kinds of clowns; it's not necessarily bad to be a clown." (Rojzman, T., 2005a, 8). As binaries begin to give way to multiplicity and complexity, some of the students carefully define other categories. It transpires that their group is not comprised of unified rabble: there are conflicts brewing behind the masks of group unity, which point to in-group differences. In this context, the students develop and role play nine scenes. (May 3, 2005, 7-9). The following day brings more nuanced explorations of interactions between students, teachers, and parents and eventually eleven scenes are filmed: three scenes in a classroom, six scenes of meetings between teachers and parents, one scene of parents and a child, at home, and one of a meeting between students and teachers (May 4, 2005). Dialogues surrounding role plays of good and bad teachers provide mounds of insight and formation. A scene between parents and children at home shows the adults as more understanding of the children than a scene of parents meeting with a teacher. Nonetheless, the parents seem powerless, asking plaintively at times: Why do you behave like that? What's going to happen to you - do you want to become a chamber maid?" Ashamed of their children's behavior, the parents don't seem to know what to do other than agree with the teacher. (PS students, 11) How does a "good" adult behave? The initial picture of the good teacher depicts one who pays attention to the students' needs and maintains order by establishing an alliance with the students that at times creates an in-group against the administration. When students talk and do not pay attention, he asks for "some respect"; he is attentive to students and goes by their desks, asking how things are going and if there is a problem. When one student doesn't reply, the teacher asks another student to come sit by him and help him; he always speaks nicely and smiles; he lends his book to a student who does not have one. When a student is being disruptive in spite of these efforts, and goes by him and says, "stop, otherwise the principal will say that I don't do my work well." These efforts result in less chaos, but the students are not engaged in the lesson. When asked why, students explain that the teacher is too permissive and does not have enough authority (Rojzman, T., 2005a, 10-11). However, the student who plays the very strict (bad) teacher has trouble controlling the class. Asked if he's responsible for the chaos, he says no, "the students have just come back in from their break, sometimes they're just like that." Another student comments: "he is strict, but he's alone"; "on the one hand, I understand him, on the other, he's not necessarily right." We see again a severing of binaries and more complexity. The students recognize that they need adults who are both responsive and responsible, who can guide them and they do not know how to make that happen. In this context, the facilitator plays that adult: referencing the chart, he is acting in ways that meet their needs in healthier ways: he follows their lead but not blindly so, treating them as responsible and knowing agents, while also providing gentle guidance. He is somewhat like a mentor, except that he does not have all the answers: they must make the road together. Similarly, working with adults in small groups to prepare the scenes creates an additional experience and demonstration for the students that collaboration between youth and adults is possible. In this room, an environment has been created that makes openness, trust and thus collaboration possible. I suggest that having met the students' needs in healthy ways provides a reasonable explanation for the transformation. Moment 3: "I had no idea that they see us so well" The session begins with Charles giving the adult group an account of the students' work, including the film they have prepared for the adults' viewing. Reactions are mixed, as participants voice expectations that the students' portrayals are likely to be stereotypes and caricatures, also noting that the expectedâ€”and excessiveâ€”criticism would only represent the views of problem students. Some of the participants remain shocked at hearing about the violence in some students' remarks about teachers. One even expresses disgust. Charles agrees that the students' views are subjective and do

not represent the views of all students. He also confesses that he is not sure how to proceed toward the goal of the groups being able to work together: "yesterday, the conversation was interesting, but whose fault is it? We are steeped in a sense of powerlessness. We can't change others. So we need to talk about how we can change, what can change in ourselves, here and now." The group, he adds, needs to find ways to work together, while incorporating the diverse motivations of students. He suggests reflecting on what each person in the group does that contributes to the problems. The idea is to have an exchange that is close to the lived reality of each one and goes beyond the structure of usual meetings: speaking not in the name of their group but personally about their own difficulties and responsibilities will enable the group to work on real problems, leading to solutions that can be adopted locally, and thus overcome feelings of powerlessness. A conversation ensues in which participants explore the risks and vulnerabilities involved in such an approach. Some are guarded, claiming their right not to make themselves vulnerable, but in the end all agree to work in this way. Against this backdrop, the group agrees to view the students' film. Following the film, an exploration of the adults' own schooling experiences, including their successes and failures, will enable them to reflect on the students' experiences in light of their own. Based on TST theory (see chart 1), this exchange appears to be primarily about the participants' need for safety, power, and information. The facilitator names these themes, making them the subject of reflection about how to move out of powerlessness and toward joint action. The process is clearly guided by the facilitator, but the group is given the time it needs to express fears and other emotions before agreeing to move forward. Different kinds of power are in evidence: the power of self-awareness (as in naming and understanding one's emotional reactions); the power to maintain a sense of control over the process; and the power of becoming agents of institutional change which, as they agree, requires gathering the collective knowledge of the students as well as adults. A new light is thrown on collective intelligence in this particular context: co-constructing knowledge with diverse groups is much more than the technical matter of pooling together information from different and diverse sources. Rather, it requires delving into realms that participants may passionately want to ignore. In this context, gathering collective intelligence requires building trust by addressing the realm of emotions (fears and motivation for change) and valorizing the potential contribution of mistrusted others (here, the students). Having their emotions and power acknowledged appears to create enough safety and trust for participants to hear potentially painful information without falling into defensive postures. As the film ends, the adults come to see that their fears were not entirely justified: the film reveals that the students are trustworthy partners with valuable knowledge to contribute to the project. Their keen observation of adults comes as a surprise, as one teacher comments, "I didn't realize they see us so well." After the film, trust is not fully established and fears have not disappeared. Indeed, the objective is only to create enough trust to be able to share knowledge and work together, and in some contexts it may be realistic to be afraid. One participant names a feeling others share: "sometimes I think, poor kids; then, other times, I wouldn't want to meet a group of them in the dark." At the same time, what happened in the group of students is also transpiring here: binary constructions are being replaced by more complex understandings. Gone is the sense that the portrayals of a few troublemakers should be dismissed because they are necessarily grossly biased. The students' violent expressions notwithstanding, their knowledge is now considered valid. What accounts for this change? Some comment on how well the students have captured the teachers' actions and feelings. Relations with parents and interactions among students also match the adults' impressions and knowledge and so seem realistic. Beyond this, what appears to move the teachers toward trust is the students' feelings: there is surprise about their concern and need for their parents to be involved in their schooling, as well as a sense of connection with the students' struggles. Research on categorization shows that we tend to attribute inherently human or "secondary" emotions (such as love, admiration, fondness, compassion) to our own groups, and not to others (Leyens, et al., 2003). Uniquely human emotions are internally caused and long lasting, rather than sudden and involve morality, cognition, and sensitivity (for instance, love, admiration, compassion, contempt, sorrow). One gets the sense that the film has humanized students in the eyes of the teachers: the students have complex feelings and needs, as in that sense they can be trusted. As the knowledge from the film begins to be integrated with the adults' knowledge, there is a sense that the wealth of diverse experiences is beginning to suggest some possible paths for action. The process is not linear however, and the ambiance at the end of this first session with adults contrasts markedly with their next meeting in October, in which the group was floundering. The day before the dialogue that introduced this section of the chapter, there is a great sense of urgency accompanied by a feeling of near-drowning in an "ocean of difficulties": a crisis-ridden start of the school year contrasted markedly with a voluntary-attendance summer school session in which students were pleasant and acted responsibly. The facilitator had intervened: "can I make a suggestion? For me, the only way to

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move forward is for everyone to be able to work together." This was the context for the group's decision to invite the students to meet with them. In preparation for the meeting, they had identified areas for information gathering (i.e. issues around peer group pressure and violence in class; how to get students and adults to communicate better about what happened in class) and worked on and exercise that had them remember themselves as they were in middle school: "you are the same as you were then, but you are attending this school, in this neighborhood. What's going on? How do you react?" Through the exercise, the group had come to insightful realizations concerning similarities and differences between themselves as students and the young people in school now. At first, it seemed that "it is two different worlds that have nothing to do one with the other": as students, they had showed respect to the teachers and even if they detested some, they would never dare say it. Then came the realization: "the system was founded on fear of the teachers [and that] was what kept us quiet." "It relied on fear and injustice, but it worked"; and "the more violence there was from teachers, the more quiet the students got" (10/17/05, 6). The exploration of these differences that followed seemed to energize all participants: gone was the doubt and sense of powerlessness, and insight brought a renewed sense of purpose that was taken into the dialogue the following day. Conclusion How can we build trust and engender collaboration across social divides marked by mistrust and violence? Starting from this vexing and pressing question led me to a process, Transformational Social Therapy that is known for its capacity to accomplish this goal. This chapter examined the TST theory of change in light of its supports from research and with regard to its explanatory power: could the theory draw useful and insightful connections between the various aspects of a process that ended in a productive dialogue among students, educators, parents, and neighborhood representatives? Analysis of the case study featuring the initial stages of the Maville-TST School Success Project highlighted four moments that appeared central to moving the initially mistrusting and reluctant would-be partners toward collaboration. The first moment showed that in the context under study, agency was exercised through dynamics that included victimization, blame, rebellion, exclusion and violence. Combined insights from the second and third moments also showed that encouraging participants to give free expression to these dynamics was a key to gaining their participation and beginning to build trust leading to collaboration. The literature on partnerships affirms the importance of including participants' interests in the process: in Russell Linden's (2010) apt phrase, the point is to ensure everyone can answer affirmatively the WIIFM question, "what's in it for me?" In the context of Maville and perhaps more generally in the context of mistrust, the answer to this question involved being able to express one's grievances as well as one's emotions, including one's fears and violence. The third and fourth moments illustrate how these very expressions created spaces in which participants could show their vulnerability and how this process, perhaps strangely and counter intuitively, provided an important key to human connection.

Theories are never proven and readers could well add that I have not explored disconfirming evidence. There is always the possibility that the facts of this case could be explained through some other pattern joining causes and effects. Nonetheless, I hope I have provided sufficiently reasonable arguments and evidence that TST, as a well-supported theory of change, does indeed have strong explanatory power in illuminating the path from mistrust to collaboration in the Maville case study. In addition to transforming relationships and providing new collective understandings to inform local reform, the analysis also shows the vital importance of appropriate facilitation. While processes such as inter-group dialogues tend to establish safety and trust by creating rules for behavior (Dessel & Rogge, 2008), the therapeutic foundations that inform TST assert that the modicum of safety and trust required for a group to overcome obstacles to collaboration can be created by intervening in the social environment of the group in ways that reduce social pathologies and support free communication and a move toward healthy relationships (Staub, 2005).

Finally, readers might point out that community participants are not visibly featured in the analysis. The transcripts do show clear divergences and frank disagreements, not only between teachers and parents and their constructions of each other and of schooling, but also among parents and representatives of community organizations. A measure of unpacking "the adults" and showing how their group went through a similar process as the students would thus have been interesting. I chose not to emphasize these issues both because of space limitations and because they did not seem as central as the story that led to the dialogue in the fourth moment. While all participants were essential to the process, reconnecting students and the adult world emerged in this case as a main task to be accomplished. The students embodied in their very identities the possibility of joining school, family and community. Healing

relationships among the adults was thus part of working to restore their relationships with youth. The case should thus provide useful insights for building sound partnerships that include youth as well as community members in the search for trustworthy knowledge and solutions to problems of schooling in "difficult" contexts.

Chart 1. TST Approach to Moving from Mistrust to Trust and Collaboration

SOURCES AND MANIFESTATIONS OF MISTRUST BUILDING TRUST AND COLLABORATION 1. MASKS & PATHOLOGICAL EXPRESSIONS 2. FEARS, VIOLENCE & RELATED EMOTIONAL REACTIONS 3. UNMET NEEDS 4. TST FACILITATOR'S ACTIONS

Delinquency & rebellion from authority figures. Peer and in-groups as alternative sources of respect. Humiliation & contempt. Victimization

Respect Recognition Valorization Treat fairly & without bias. Recognize talents, capacities, knowledge, contributions. Pathological cooperation (submit to authority). Rejection & isolation: Feeling victimized; loneliness, being misunderstood, devalued, despised. Affiliation Love Connection Community

Model acceptance and non-judgment; create bonds between people who would not interact; support free self-expression, including negative emotions & expectations; confidentiality in the group. Racist/ jingoistic discourse and rejection of racial mixing, immigrants, others. Being a victim and not responsible for one's actions, since they are reactions to the actions of powerful others. Aggression (physical, emotional & symbolic): sense of powerlessness and helplessness. Power Safety Security Give power/ authority to make decisions. Ability to make a difference in one's environment. Address denial of responsibility, sense of victimization, and Manichean worldview of victim/oppressor. Participants' roles shift from dependency to autonomy Fanaticism; Manichean worldviews (either good or bad). Seek absolute truths, expert knowledge; insist on rigid structures, discipline, & controls. The unknown: anxiety, doubt Meaning Certainty Information Order Reduce anxiety, reassure and maintain clear sense of direction. Ensure open flow of information. Help group appreciate complexity. Each member has partial truths that together lead to collective intelligence.

Post-scriptum :

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