



Erasmus+



# MENTOR - MENTORING BETWEEN TEACHERS IN SECONDARY AND HIGH SCHOOLS

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# What is a conflict?

## **CONFLICT vs DISAGREEMENT:**

A conflict is a disagreement during which the two parties involved feel that their personal needs and interests are threatened. It is this feeling of threat that differentiates a conflict from a simple disagreement.

When two people disagree on a topic, they try to persuade each other without putting their initial relationship at risk.

However, when they feel that they are threatened somehow (physically, mentally, morally), they need to defend themselves and the disagreement results into a conflict (Harry Wene Behrman, 1998).

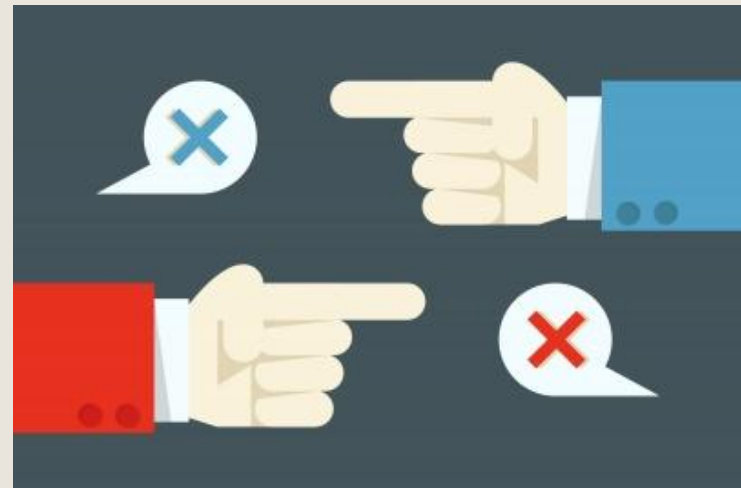


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# THE FIVE MOST COMMON TYPES OF CONFLICT.

**1. Competing:** each person wants to come out of the conflict as a winner, beating the other one. The threat is increased and the conflict may result in a violent episode.

**2. Smoothing:** one of the two withdraws so as to put an end to the conflict. This person is usually dependent on the other one and would rather sacrifice his own needs than lose his friend.

**3. Avoiding:** one or both avoid the conflict by all means, because they don't want to face the consequences. This way, they never express their different views and their relationship gradually breaks down.



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**4. Compromising:** both parties take one step backwards and end up in a mutual agreement. However, the difference remains, and may arise again in the future.

**5. Collaborating:** through discussion new ideas are developed and new perspectives are created. The relationship is strengthened.

**NOTE:** Obviously, as teachers we want to promote the fifth type, cooperation and communication. This type is also known as **WIN –WIN** (Harry Webne-Behrman, 1998)

Schools are places where completely different people meet. In schools, we observe all kinds of differences among students:

- ❑ Cultural;
- ❑ Social;
- ❑ Economic;
- ❑ Religious;
- ❑ Differences in skills;
- ❑ Differences in behavior;
- ❑ Individual differences (family background, personal experiences and opinions);
- ❑ Even physical appearance may bring about a conflict, especially among younger students (Townley A., 1994, DeJong W., 1994).



**THE CAUSES  
OF CONFLICT  
IN THE  
CLASSROOM.**



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# THE TEACHER'S DILEMMA: TURN A BLIND EYE or TAKE ACTION?

- Listen carefully to both sides;
- Look for the cause;
- Try to be neutral;
- Try to be fair;
- Respect both students' dignity;
- Estimate the seriousness of the conflict and act accordingly:



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a. Easy to solve, the students are calm and willing to discuss the problem and give an end to it in front of the class

b. Difficult, the students look angry and upset, they need time to calm down, discuss it later in private.