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Experiential Learning Application in The Mediation of School Conflicts

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Abstract

School as an institutional medium is a space where conflicts and often violence manifest. The provocation addressed to teachers is to help teenagers approach these phenomena in a constructive manner. Learning from their own experience or from others' experience plays an important part within the actions regarding conflicts transformation: it may lead to the awareness of the causes and their dynamics, it increases the sensibility to desired and undesired consequences, and it contributes to the development of some life abilities and the improving of teenagers' social life.

Keywords: conflict, conflict management, learning experience.

Introduction

Conflict is an extremely usual phenomenon in teenagers' life (Jigău, Liiceanu & Preuteasa, 2004), be it as participants or witnesses. The manifestation of a violent behavior as an answer to their conflicts affects the level of the educative acquisitions, considerably reduces

teenagers' life quality (Titlei, 2004) and, even more, it degrades the democratic and civic values, generally speaking (Smith, 2003). The purpose of this work is to present the ways in which we may approach interpersonal conflicts and to emphasize the importance of using teenagers' life experience as a source of learning some non-violent strategies in order to solve conflicts.

The sources of the conflict

In order to solve a conflict it is necessary to identify the sources that generated it. The diagnostic of a conflict origin could help us define the problem, and the defining of the problem is the starting point in any attempt to find solutions (Cornelius & Faire, 1989).

The conflict may be described depending on the causes that produced it. In one of the classical theories on conflict, Daniel Katz (1965) proposed a conflict typology that distinguishes its three major sources: the limited resources (the economical conflict occurs when two or more persons want at the same time access to the same resources of time, space, money, equipment, facilities, property, etc), values incompatibility, of the life style, ideologies, preferences, principles and traditions, expressed in terms of "good/ bad", "right/ wrong", etc (the value conflict) and the tendency of each party involved to maintain or emphasize the influence it has on the other and to control its behavior (power conflict). Kreidler (1984) partially resumes this theory, also considering, as conflict causes the limited resources and different values. In his opinion, values incompatibility determines conflicts solved in a more difficult way, because they impose standards according to which individuals guide their actions. When values are in conflict, individuals usually perceive the dispute as a personal

attack or as a profound discrepancy between a familial belief and an alternative vision on a certain problem, they consider themselves threatened, they become defensive and they rely more and more on their own position. The disputes based on the discrepancy between values may have their root in the social diversity (cultural, social, physical or mental differences) that are usually expressed as differed beliefs, opinions, principles, but they also imply prejudices, and in this case ignorance, fear and misunderstanding determine aggressive behaviors. Solving a value conflict does not mean making disputants change their principles, but helping them find the interests or needs that constitute the basis of the conflicting values and teaching them how to interact in a different way than they have already done. The third important conflict source is represented by personal needs (friendship, membership, power, esteem and recognition, acceptation, independence, etc.), when they contradict the others' needs (Kreidler, 1984). The solving of the conflicts is almost impossible as long as one of the parties considers that its psychological needs are threatened by the other party. No matter how limited resources are and no matter how different values would be, conflicts have their root in the individuals' unaccomplished needs (Kreidler, 1984).

William Glasser (1998) also states that the source of interpersonal conflicts is inside. Individuals' behaviors have as a target the satisfaction of some of the fundamental needs, as the need to survive, the need for membership – accomplished by love, share and cooperation with the others, the need for power – accomplished by achievements, acknowledgement and respect, the need for freedom – given by the choices in our life, the need for entertainment – accomplished by laughing and playing. It seems that the needs are always in conflict one with

the other and the constant need to satisfy them leads us to a continuous renegotiation of the equilibrium (Bodine & Crawford, 1997).

Another source of the interpersonal conflicts refers to the actors of these interactions, each of them with his own personality, needs and fears, desires and resistances that produce interior tension, with the group role and statute, but, especially, each of them with his own representations system, information, beliefs, attitudes and opinions he has in relation to a certain object or situation. The individual does not react to an objective reality, but a subjective one, he represents and that plays the role of interpretative filter. Depending on how he represents the situation, how he interprets it, everybody makes a series of expectations and anticipations that refer to the other's behavior, the content of his message. Three elements regarding the representation of the situation can play an important part when determining the causes for which individuals are in conflict (Abric, 2002): the representation of the self, of the other and of the interaction context.
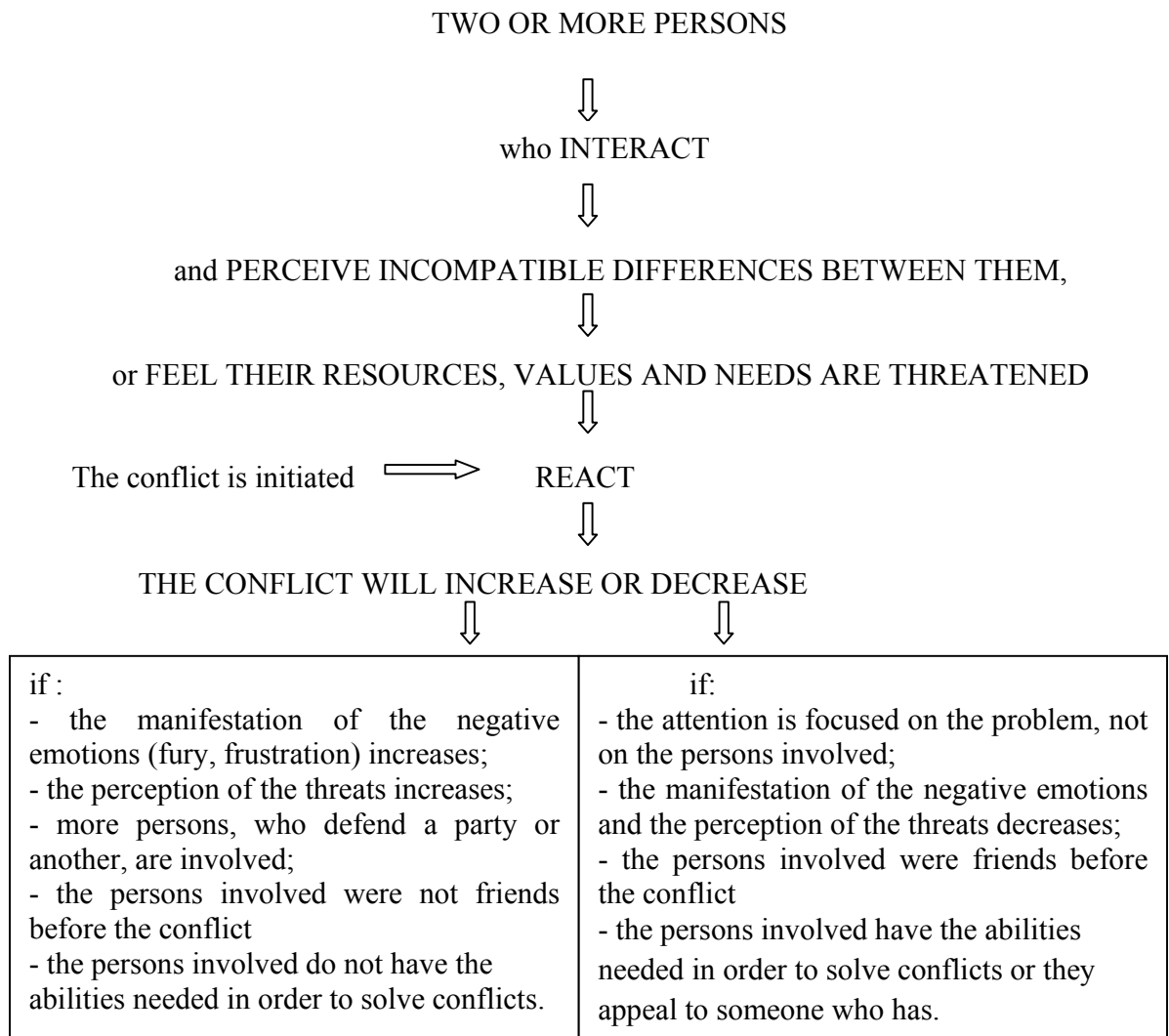
The self image is the concrete expression of the way in which a person sees himself or represents himself, the individual perspective on his own personality. When constituting the self image the others' opinion is important, the elements that constitute the basis of the others' perception, the conduct and motivation that constitute its basis. The intimate ego, the individuals' private image about its competences and features, often differ from the public, shown one, offered to the others. Although, in any interaction, the individual will also act depending on what he thinks he is and depending on what he wants to seem to be.

The representation about the other includes the image of his personality features, the cognitive ones (competence), social (statute) and the appreciation that results from the

comparison with the self. The social statute is a central element of the social identity construction and self image. But, this statute may be associated with a given social situation, as a result it may vary and it may lead to very different answers for the same problem. Prejudices and stereotypes also have an important role when forming the representation about the others in the meanings attributed to the conflict situation.

The image of the interaction context, as well as the task it has to accomplish (that is a determining element of the individual's efficiency) will influence the choice of a certain cognitive demarche, of a reasoning that will constitute the basis of the individual reaction. S. Moscovici (1997) considers that the representations of this context include values, notions and practices systems that allow them to establish the rules in a group and constitute themselves in an instrument for the orientation of the perception and elaboration of the answers to stimuli, provocations, conflict.

The right meaning of the conflicts helps individuals examine the previous experiences, attitudes, fears, in order to make a global image of their situation. It is difficult to make the distinction between the types of conflict, but it is useful when choosing a way to solve it. Kreidler (1984) considers that the ability to define a conflict is as important as the knowledge of the fact that any conflict follows, more or less the same pattern, represented in figure 1:

TWO OR MORE PERSONS

⇩

who INTERACT

⇩

and PERCEIVE INCOMPATIBLE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THEM,

⇩

or FEEL THEIR RESOURCES, VALUES AND NEEDS ARE THREATENED

⇩

The conflict is initiated ⟹ REACT

⇩

THE CONFLICT WILL INCREASE OR DECREASE

⇩   ⇩

if :	if:
- the manifestation of the negative emotions (fury, frustration) increases; - the perception of the threats increases; - more persons, who defend a party or another, are involved; - the persons involved were not friends before the conflict - the persons involved do not have the abilities needed in order to solve conflicts.	- the attention is focused on the problem, not on the persons involved; - the manifestation of the negative emotions and the perception of the threats decreases; - the persons involved were friends before the conflict - the persons involved have the abilities needed in order to solve conflicts or they appeal to someone who has.

Ways of handling interpersonal conflicts

There are several ways in which individuals react when they are in conflict situations. Blake and Mouton (1964) were among the first to classify the styles of handling interpersonal conflicts into five types: forcing, withdrawing, smoothing, compromising, and problem solving.

Thomas and Kilman (1974) have proposed an instrument designed to measure a person's behavior in conflict situations, taking into account assertiveness and cooperativeness. These two

basic dimensions of behavior define five different modes for responding to conflict situations: competition (an assertive, but uncooperative behavior, a power-oriented mode in which you use whatever power seems appropriate to win your own position, defending a position which you believe is correct), accommodation (the complete opposite of competing, unassertive and cooperative, in which the individual neglects his own concerns or needs to satisfy the concerns of the other persons), avoidance (unassertive and uncooperative, occurs when the person does not deal with the conflict, avoiding diplomatically the problem, postponing it until a better time, or simply withdrawing from a threatening situation), collaboration (assertive and cooperative - the complete opposite of avoiding, might take the form of exploring a disagreement to learn from each other's insights or trying to find a creative solution to a personal problem) and compromise (moderate in both assertiveness and cooperativeness, its objective is to find a mutually accepted solution that partially satisfies both parties).

Both Thomas (1976) and Pruitt (1983) put forth a model based on the concerns of the parties involved in the conflict (self confidence, assertiveness and cooperativeness), which determines a particular conflict management style: yielding (low assertiveness/ high cooperativeness), problem solving (high assertiveness/ high cooperativeness), lack of inaction (low assertiveness/ low cooperativeness) and contending (high assertiveness/ low cooperativeness).

M. Deutsch (1969, 1973, 1998) developed the theory of cooperation and competition and he offered an overview of the factors which influence conflicts towards productive or destructive outcomes. Deutsch had as a starting point several ideas generally accepted about conflict: the parties involved in conflicts usually have more reasons, the conflict may be positive and

Oana-Paula Zaharia, Experiential Learning Application In The Mediation Of School Conflicts

HSSRP, vol. I, no. 1 (2012): 38–62

productive, or negative and destructive, the goal is not to eliminate any conflict, but to transform it into a positive one, both cooperation and competition may be useful in solving conflicts, the conflicting process may vary between competition and cooperation.

Kozan (1997) described three models of conflict management: the one based on confrontation and compromise (conflicts are governed by norms of fair play, mutual understanding, problem solving, expressing of negative emotions), regulative model (meant to minimize conflicts, avoid direct confrontations and personal use of authority by bureaucratic means and the extensively use of norms) and harmony model (the values involved are independence and harmony, suppression of negative emotions, avoidance and accommodation).

Other ways of conflict management are distributed approach (where conflict is seen as the distribution between results and consumed resources, where a party wins and the other one loses) and integrative (conflict is seen as a chance to integrate the needs and concerns of all parties involved and to obtain the best result possible, even if the emphasis is on compromise) (Khun & Poole, 2000).

M. Afzalur Rahim (2002), analyzing different styles of conflict school management, created a model based on two features behavior of the disputing persons: self concern and the concern for the others and he mentioned five management approaches: integrating (integration involves openness, exchanging information, looking for alternatives, and solving the problem in a manner that is acceptable to both parties), obliging (it is associated with attempting to minimize the differences and highlight the commonalities to satisfy the concern of the other party), dominating(when one party makes anything to win and, as a result, often ignores the needs and expectations of the other party), avoiding (when one of the parties fails to satisfy his or her own

goals or needs but it neither contributes to the achievement of the other party's objectives) and compromising (when both parties give up something to make a mutually acceptable decision).

The role of the experiential learning in approaching school conflicts

Analyzing the attitudes towards school conflict Sharp, Cooper and Cowei (2005) proved that in case these ones are negative and lead to the occurrence of winners and losers, children learn to face this situation in two ways: "fight or run". The abilities to solve conflicts are learned and they may be improved by practice. Johnson, Johnson, & Smith (1991) stated that students with high abilities are usually unable to approach a conflict in a positive and constructive way, if they do not know some solving techniques and strategies. Whitney and Smith (1993) prove the same thing when they draw the conclusion that a fourth of the children from the primary school and a fifth of those attending secondary school solve their problems by repeated emotional, verbal or physical attacks against other vulnerable classmates, who cannot defeat (Samson, 2002). This sort of behavior occurs among students of different ages, from all over the world (Sharp & Cowei, 1994).

Experience plays an important part in approaching conflicts. Experiential learning, resulted from everyone's meeting the conflict by direct participation, not only from the reflection on what the others lived (Borzak, 1981), may be used as a deductive strategy for problem solving (Itin, 1999). Although it seems an inherent process, that occurs naturally, so that experience may lead to the acquiring of authentic knowledge, students need certain qualities (Kolb & Fry, 1975): to be willing to involve actively in the experience, to be able to reflect on the experience, to have

certain abilities when making decisions and solving problems in order to use efficiently the new ideas resulting from the lived experience.

David A. Kolb (1975) created a model that represents graphically the cycle of experiential learning, made up of four elements: the concrete experience, analysis (observation and reflection), generalization and application (testing in new situations). Subsequently, he established four distinct learning styles (divergent, by assimilation, convergent and adaptive) that is based on this one. The cycle may start from any of the four points, being approached as a continuous spiral (Kolb & Fry, 1975) (figure 2).
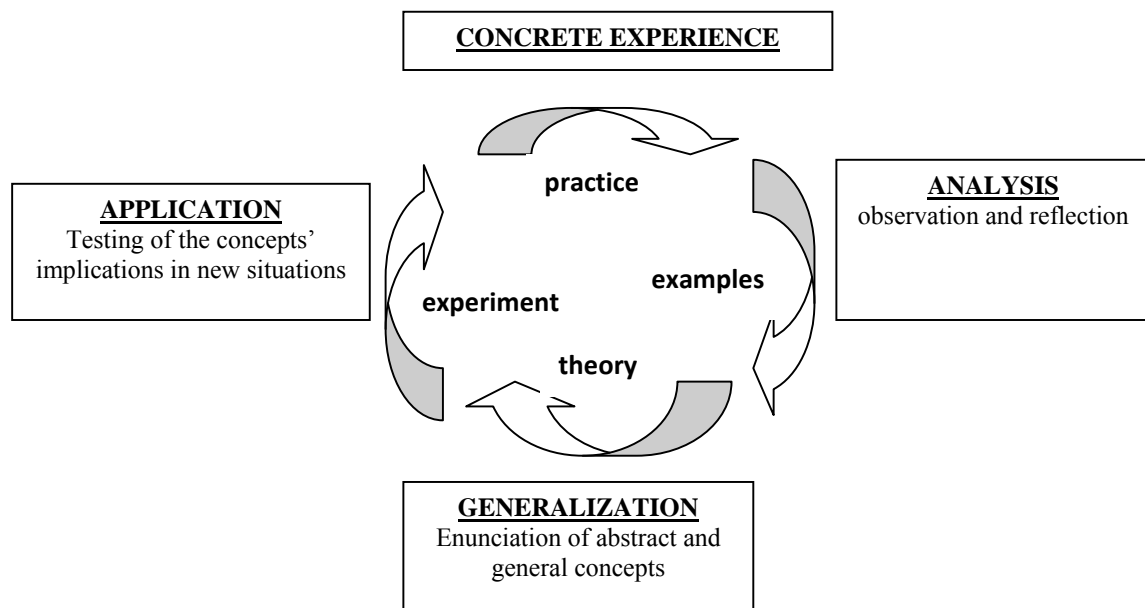

Figure 2 Graphic representation of the experiential learning model (according to D. Kolb).

In the interactions among students, the role of the attitudes is essential: they decide the relational climate, influence the quality of the relations, define the social status and determine the way to answer the conflict. The reference to the other supposes both the approaching and

alienation from him, by a permanent exchange of information. Interacting, individuals permanently achieve information transaction, becoming interlocutors deliberately or involuntarily, because any behavior has the value of a message (Watzlawick, 1972). Information is the binder that connects communication partners. It confesses their identity and concomitant difference (Mircea, 1979). The contradicting tension given by this difference describes any conflict. Communication units (puts together, shares, mixes) and, at the same time, disunites, determining the partners to be aware of the differences between their opinions, ideas, beliefs, customs, making them learn.

Mediation of conflicts starting from students' experiences

Each conflict situation requires an adapted exceeding strategy and each individual has to develop personal strategies adapted to his way of being. However, it is helpful to dispose of a diverse repertoire of strategies regarding conflicts resolution. In schools we meet mediation (Schellemberg, 1996) more and more often, collaborative process, in which the finding of the points of view, of the common interests, the creation of the victory-victory situation and the assessment of the options are guided by a mediator within the common and individual meetings. This may be the best approach of a conflict in school, when it has lasted for some time, the negotiation attempts have failed, when one of the parties feels that the other party has more power or it is not reliable. The objectives of mediation in school exceed the simple resolution of conflicts and the conclusion of an agreement, subordinating first of all to the educational purpose to teach the persons involved how to describe and construe the behaviors of the persons around,

Oana-Paula Zaharia, Experiential Learning Application In The Mediation Of School Conflicts

HSSRP, vol. I, no. 1 (2012): 38–62

to define, to identify alternative solutions to problems, based on direct, personal experiences or based on indirect experiences, of the other persons.

A type of mediation in school is the mediation between equal persons, peer mediation (Johnson & Johnson, 1996), which is based on the traditional structure of problems solving, the conflict being seen as a problem which can be and should be solved (Thompson, 1996). Such a strategy may help to postponing the escalation of a lot of minor incidents, to avoiding the increase of the conflict, the accumulation of emotions and negative feelings (Lantieri & Patti, 1996). More importantly, peer mediation develops a set of abilities that students may apply in any conflict situation. During training, mediators learn that any conflict may be constructive and positive and that their role is to mediate and not to judge or to impose an agreement or a solution. Otherwise, mediator students are volunteers, and their purpose is to place emphasis from "finding the guilty person", to "finding the best solution", accepted by all the persons involved in the conflict. As time goes by, they learn how to identify and apply alternative behaviors to violence, in order to solve personal problems or to interfere in interpersonal conflicts. Learning always starts from students' life experiences.

The role of the mediator is to supervise and structure the information exchange, to guide the discussion, to ask open questions and to help the participants to communicate efficiently, in order to reach an agreement. Starting from students' previous experiences, the mediator has the task to make them aware that many times, the same message (verbal or nonverbal) may have different meanings depending on the context in which it is used, being necessary to make a distinction between the ad-litteram meaning, the one the transmitter intended to assign and the one the receiver intended or managed to get. Mostly, this depends on the existence of common

Oana-Paula Zaharia, Experiential Learning Application In The Mediation Of School Conflicts

HSSRP, vol. I, no. 1 (2012): 38–62

knowledge regarding information, attitudes, values, reasons that the persons that interact have, these being the result of the personal perceptions regarding the world, the result of our own experiences.

Stages of mediation

So as to help students to settle the conflicts occurred between them we follow a series of steps from focusing on defining the problem for the identification of the interests and fears, development of possible solutions and the settlement of an agreement (Schrumpf, Crawford & Bodine,1997).

a. Defining the problem. After arranging the physical background, preparing the materials, defining the mediation and presenting its basic rules, each disputant is asked to express his point of view, his perception regarding the conflict. In the conflict situations, more than the lack of a common repertory of personal experiences, the incorrect perception of an aspect of the message may lead to incorrect assumptions about what the interlocutors know or do not know. By reference to the experience they already have, the persons involved in the conflict try to define and classify the conflict situation in a familiar pattern and they react according to it. Many times they suppose the others have the same information, beliefs or values, but understanding the intention of a message may require knowledge they do not have, especially if these belong to different cultures. The quantity of the differences of perception to which they have to get used may also be an important source of conflict. The perceived differences determine the classification and division of the interlocutors into groups: those who are alike and have lived similar life experiences (reflected in thinking, beliefs, values, etc.) and those who are not alike.

Those who are perceived as belonging to the same group are more often characterized in positive terms, and their actions are described as having rather positive valences, passing over negative aspects more tolerantly. The communication with them is more open, the emphasis being placed on its collaborative aspect (Pilstz, Shapiro & Shapiro 2004).

Paul Watzlawick (1972) used to show that there is the "logic of communication" based on a series of rules, codes of behavior which organizes somehow the personal behavior and the interpersonal relationships. This process of interactions create the social reality in which each person may have access to the subjectivity of another person, to his intentions and reasons and may change deliberately or not the behavior of the others. Thus, we perform the comprehension and cognition of the self and of the others, the development of consistent relations with the others, of socialization and the influencing and transformation of the others (Gamble & Gamble, 1993).

The stage of conflict defining is important in the mediation in school not just for clarifying the disputants' position, but especially, for learning some new methods of interpretation of the behaviors of the persons around. Following the pattern of the learning cycle of Kolb (1975), starting from concrete experience, through analysis (observation and reflection) and generalization, students may start applying or testing what they learn in new situations (in other conflicts in which they are involved). Students learn that beyond words, when expressing their points of view, the way in which the message is transmitted is very important. The elements referring to voice characteristics, pronunciation peculiarities, intonation, intensity, shaping of the voice tone, volume, rhythm, speed of the speech, fluency, but also those referring to choosing the words, sentences, their sound effects may cause, increase or solve the conflict (Stoica-

Constantin, 2004). The mimicry, the gestures, the posture, the attitude express the emotional echo of the message, balance and discharge the accumulated overtension. The expression of the face, the visual contact (orientation, focus, avoidance, duration of the look, absent-mindedness, ignorance), the body language, the physical contact (from touching and reassuring consolations to striking) and even the personal appearance (clothes, make-up, perfume, etc.) are much more eloquent than the verbal message. Within the mediation sessions, students may learn to construe them correctly, using the experience they live at that moment. Other elements that may be construed are space and time. The distance between interlocutors conditions and influences the evolution of the conflict transmitting itself messages, being able to define the condition of the persons involved and also their role in the conflict (the short distance denotes the acknowledgement of the condition equivalence, and the longer distance denotes the superiority and the dominant note of one of them in relation to the other). The pauses or the silence, the punctuality, the selection of the moment when one of the partners communicates or does something, the postponement, the interruption, the importance they grant to the past, present or future offer a lot of information about the interlocutor's personal characteristics, intentions, attitudes.

The perception of the conflict only from one point of view and the conviction that the other is not right may lead to the belief in our own innocence and in the right of blaming the other. Many times students cannot imagine that they have somehow contributed to creating the occurred problem, because they do not discern the impact of their behavior on the others. The cultural factors and personal characteristics have a significant impact in the communication process and in the subsequent decisions made by the participants in the mediation. The students

involved in a conflict have a relationship which goes beyond it, and one of the purposes of the mediation is to keep or even improve the relationship, not to destroy it. To separate the person from problems does not mean to ignore the aspects related to the person and to focus only on concrete problems, but to identify the needs, the concerns, the emotions the other has. The ignorance of all the data of the problem may lead to the achievement of some unrealistic hasty commitments, and difficulties in maintaining and applying them.

b. Debating upon interests. It is the stage when the interests of each disputant, the wishes, the reasons, the fears etc. are identified and clarified, in order to conclude an agreement. Within this stage, students confront directly and they exhibit their attitudes towards the others and towards the conflict situation in which they are. Jean-Claude Abric (2002) identifies several types of attitudes that may be exhibited: interpretation (formulation for the other of the hidden reasons that are the basis of his words and deeds), evaluation (formulation of a value judgment proportional to what the other says or does), co-operation or counseling (it occurs when a partner proposes solutions to the other and it is usually based on a difference of condition), questioning (inquiry of the partner in order to allow him or to force him to express himself), and comprehension (showing the interest in what the partner says in order to try to understand him, not to judge him; it is made by reformulation and it determines the creation of a relational climate which facilitates the conveyance of emotions). Within the dynamics of a conflict, each type of attitude may lead to dependency relationships of some of the persons involved towards the others, to counter-dependency relationships (which are manifested through aggressiveness), to the blockage of the other's verbalization or to the channelization of the partner's speech, its manipulation.

The best situation of inter-individual communication within a conflict is difficult to be described, communication representing an open system, and its efficiency is influenced by a lot of factors. Concerning the role that communication has in conflicts determination, escalation or settlement, the finding of the "barriers" in communication is essential. By analyzing their own conflict or some situations well directed by the teacher, students learn that a good communication means that the message transmitted by the partner is completely and correctly received by the other and that, as a matter of fact, the integrity and accurateness of the message are distorted either by the used communication channel, or by the protagonists of the communication (both the transmitter and the receiver). Most of the times, the transmitter does not transmit what he thinks or wants to transmit, and the receiver has a very active role and he "contaminates" the received message with informational subjective, cognitive, affective, attitude, contextual factors, etc. There a lot of variables contributing to the transformation of the communication in a constructive force in order to settle a conflict. However, there are some rules that may be applied so as to make the communication efficient in conflict situations (Bodine & Crawford, 1997). The first one regards noise reduction: the higher this undesired surplus to the message is, the weaker and more distorted the message shall be received. A second rule suggests formulating the messages as concisely as possible, but without giving rise to false interpretations. Taking into account the perspective of the communication partner and making a sufficient effort to understand the meaning the latter intended to give to the message, the collaboration for creating common meanings of the messages in order to reach an agreement represent other rules that may make communication efficient in the process of conflict settlement.

The conflict and the solving methods that students experience are sources for learning and developing some abilities that will be useful to them the whole life. A method of efficient adaptation to interpersonal conflict situations is the assertive communication. Students learn to say what they have to say, firmly, spontaneously, sincerely and directly, keeping their dignity and without assaulting the opponent (Stoica-Constantin, 2004). This implies empathy, understanding the other, participating in his emotional problems without trying to solve them, and also the adoption of some attitudes and behaviors whose purpose is to improve both self-confidence and social relationships. By exercising the assertive communication, students learn to express their interests, needs, fears, looking directly at his interlocutor (the lack of visual contact may transmit messages denoting incertitude, mistrust or fear), to grant meaning to the message and to influence the partner's reaction using the tone of the voice (if the voice is weak, whispered, it transmits the impression of incertitude, if the voice is too strong it may activate the interlocutor's defensive behavior), using the position of the body (if it is too rigid it expresses a state of tension, if it is too relaxed it may be construed as lack of respect), using the mimicry and gestures suitable and congruent for the content of the message etc. (Collet, 2003).

Not just the transmission of the message is important. Listening, when it is active may be transformed, several times into a technique for optimizing the communication, extremely useful in settling conflicts, and it may used for three purposes: information (obtaining from the interlocutor a clear image of the problem, necessary for the conflict settlement), moral support (counseling, reassuring the other, admitting and understanding the situation of the interlocutor) and reply to the verbal assault (decreasing the aggressor's negative feeling convincing him that his problem is known). Ana Stoica-Constantin (2004) highlights the general rules for achieving

an active learning: equal concentration both on the transmitted feelings, and on the content of the message, on finding the needs, concerns, anxieties and difficulties of the interlocutor, using open, unique questions, and terms known by the interlocutor, using paraphrases, avoiding inhibitory conducts, honesty (not to pretend that the message is understood if it is not so).

c. Identifying and evaluating solutions. The mediator's greatest challenge is not to find a solution and impose it, but to determine the recognition and mutual responsibility awareness of the parties involved. The recognition allows those involved in the conflict to accept and understand the others' points of view, to understand how they define the problem, their reasons, and how the others see the solving of the problems, even if they do not agree with them. Responsibility awareness allows them to define their own problems and to find solutions on their own (Spangler, 2003), determines them to self-reveal, to transmit information about themselves to other persons. Identifying as many solutions as possible, evaluating them depending on the needs of each individual and choosing one help not only to obtain an agreement but also to develop some life abilities which are important for students.

d. Creating an agreement. It is the moment when the experiential learning cycle closes: students apply a solution chosen as a result of the observation, analysis and generalization of all the information and test it in new situations. Depending on the viability of the solution, they will use it or not in similar situations. A viable agreement is: efficient (it correctly solves the problems of each party), advantageous for both parties, specific (it answers the questions who, what, where, when and how), realistic (it is reasonable and it can be achieved by both opponents) and balanced (each person shall be responsible for something).

Conclusions

The conflict in school is a phenomenon that cannot be avoided or really reduced, suppressed or eliminated. Teaching students that there are different ways of approaching the conflict we can help them not to become prisoners of only one unproductive vision. The presence of conflicts does not represent a problem, but the attitudes of those involved in them, the patterns of thinking and behavior oriented towards total conquering: the losses sustained by one of the parties represent benefits for the other.

In the classroom, the conflict offers the opportunity of individual and group development, if it is considered a challenge to creativity and change (Caluschi, 2001). Thus, facing the conflict (through direct or indirect participation) we may optimize, at students, conflicts settlement strategies.

Mediation is one of the strategies in which, through the intervention of the third party (neutral and with formative intention), students are encouraged to get actively involved in experience, to meditate on it, to make decisions efficiently using the new knowledge obtained from it and to apply them in new situations. Fructifying the teenager's experiences and approaching the conflict situations from their perspective are important in learning the mediation strategies. The evaluation of the entire process is, in its turn, a learning experience that students apply in their real life.

The experiential strategies and techniques applied in conflicts' mediation in school bring profits both for students and teachers, and for the act of learning itself: communicating with the others, identifying several alternatives, extending the semantic area through a connotative and

transferred language, spontaneity, teamwork and assuming responsibilities, diversity of solutions regarding problem solving and their originality.

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