



# Pestalozzi

## Training Resources

PESTALOZZI CORE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ATTITUDES  
FOR ALL TEACHERS (PCORE)

“From conflict resolution to mutual understanding”

by

**Author:** Dragana Radoman – Montenegro

**Editor:** Rasa Askinyte-Degesiene



The Pestalozzi Programme  
Council of Europe Training Programme for education professionals

# PESTALOZZI CORE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ATTITUDES FOR ALL TEACHERS (PCORE) “From conflict resolution to mutual understanding”

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*The opinions expressed in this work are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Council of Europe.*

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**Theme:** How to make school a better place? How to work together here and now? What triggers the conflict? Are conflicts positive or negative? How to deal with conflicts in our surrounding? What is my strategy in the conflict resolution?

### Expected outcome

- ➔ To understand conflict as an opportunity for development.
- ➔ To show the importance of creating a safe learning environment.
- ➔ To raise the participants' awareness on the way conflicts emerge, develop and intensify.
- ➔ To raise the participants' awareness on the different styles for conflict resolution.

### Target group

Type of training	School level / age	Subject area
In-service training	Primary school	Any

### Brief description of the unit

The activities are divided into three sections. The first activity emphasizes the importance of team work, cooperation and joint initiatives, as well as researches on the different needs of students, teachers and parents. The second activity deals with the stages of conflicts, analysing conflict and the different factors which influence it. The third activity presents different styles in dealing with conflict, and how we can use them to solve certain situations.

### Methods/techniques used

- Individual work
- Group work
- Discussion

- Cooperative and collaborative learning
- Cafe Montenegro
- Pair work
- Plenary
- Creative writing

**Time 2 hours 15 minutes**

Activity 1	▶ 45 minutes
Activity 2	▶ 45 minutes
Activity 3	▶ 45 minutes

### Tips for trainers:

These activities are an introduction to the conflict resolution field, and they can be adopted and upgraded according to the specific objectives you would like to achieve.

### Resources

Hand-out “Café Montenegro”	Appendix 1
Hand-out: “Stages of Conflict”	Appendix 2
Hand-out: “What’s your style?”	Appendix 3
Pictures of animals	Appendix 4

## Activity 1 How to make school a better place? How to work together here and now?



45 minutes

	Notes
<p>▶ <b>General aim:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To think about the importance of creating a safe learning environment.</li> </ul> <p>▶ <b>Specific aims:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To raise the participants' awareness on the importance of cooperation, team work and joint initiatives.</li> <li>➤ To emphasize the importance of critical thinking.</li> <li>➤ To raise the participants' awareness on the importance of students' needs.</li> </ul>	
<p>▶ <b>Methods /techniques used:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Individual and group work</li> <li>➤ Discussion</li> <li>➤ Cooperative and collaborative learning</li> <li>➤ Plenary</li> </ul>	
<p>▶ <b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Coloured paper</li> <li>➤ Flipchart papers and markers</li> <li>➤ Crayons, pencils</li> <li>➤ Appendix 1: Hand-out "Cafe Montenegro" (cut to pieces according to the colours)</li> </ul>	
<p>▶ <b>Practical arrangements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Providing space where 3 groups can work without disturbing others.</li> </ul>	

**► Instructions/procedure:**

- The participants form three groups by taking out a colour. Each colour represents different stakeholders, important for school joint initiatives (teachers, parents, students).
- Introduce the activity “Cafe Montenegro” by setting up the space with 3 tables and chairs for each group, like in the cafe. On each table there should be a tablecloth (flipchart paper) and the menu (question for that group written on the coloured paper, depending on their role) (Appendix 1).
- The groups have 15 minutes to come up with different ideas/solutions. They can make a drawing; write a song, do a role-play, by their own choice. After that they choose two representatives/hosts of the table, who will stay there and welcome the other groups and encourage them to give comments and ideas, putting themselves in the role which is on the menu, not the role from the initial group. The rest of the group is visiting other tables, change their roles, where other hosts will welcome them and include them in the discussion about their questions. When visiting other tables, they will have 5 minutes to come up with the ideas.
- When the participants come back in the initial group, the hosts present them what was changed and added and the group presents their tablecloths by summarizing the ideas/comments, depending on the way they have chosen to do it (presentation, drawing, song, role play).

**► Tips to trainers/anticipated difficulties:**

- The trainer should encourage the teachers to put themselves into different roles.
- The trainer should emphasise the importance of understanding others’ people opinions about the same issue. The participants may negatively approach to the other roles involved in the process, considering the fact that all participants are teachers. The trainer should be well prepared and offer them examples of good practice and encourage them to be objective in other roles. It is also very important to mention that these obstacles can be overcome by cooperation and mutual understanding.
- The trainer should go around and visit the small groups, checking if they need any help.
- This activity can be done with students, too. It is very interesting to hear what they say about school from the measure of child. And even more useful is to see how students see the school from their parents’ and teachers’ position. When doing this exercise with students, it is very important to be open and encourage students to freely express their thoughts. It can be a great evaluation for

<p>school, showing the overall picture, what are the main issues in the school and it is very challenging too.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Emphasise how it is important, when working with people from different interested groups, such as education, to be familiar with the needs of all these interested groups. This is very important for each group, so that they can coordinate their work with the work of other groups. It is always good to come back on the ideas mentioned in the training and to use those examples when summarising the activity. Outcomes from the groups are the best material to discuss about, because every presentation has a message from different roles.</li> <li>➤ It is important that we always ask what for example students think is best for them, never assume that we know the answer.</li> </ul>	
<p>▶ <b>Debriefing/reflecting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Were you able to put yourself into different roles? Why/why not?</li> <li>➤ Do the position and needs of other roles surprised you, or did you know them before?</li> <li>➤ Do you have a better understanding of the other roles now?</li> <li>➤ What have you found out about the different expectations/needs? Is it important to know others' needs in the same institution/system?</li> <li>➤ Is it possible to deal with problems in schools if not all 3 parts are involved? Why and why not?</li> <li>➤ Can you accomplish cooperation style with your students? Why/why not?</li> <li>➤ What will be the challenges for you in the classroom/school?</li> </ul>	

## Activity 2 What triggers the conflict? Are conflicts positive or negative?



45 minutes

	Notes
<p>▶ <b>General aim:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To raise awareness on the way conflicts emerge, develop and intensify.</li> </ul> <p>▶ <b>Specific aims:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To understand conflict as an opportunity for development.</li> <li>➤ To understand the important factors which influence on the development of the conflict.</li> </ul>	
<p>▶ <b>Methods /techniques used:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Brainstorming</li> <li>➤ Pair work</li> <li>➤ Individual and group work</li> <li>➤ Cooperative learning</li> </ul>	
<p>▶ <b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Markers and flip chart papers</li> <li>➤ A 4 paper for drawing battle</li> <li>➤ Appendix 2: Hand-out “Stages of Conflict” (one copy for each participant)</li> </ul>	
<p>▶ <b>Practical arrangements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ If there is an odd number of participants, one will have the role of observer and report how it functioned with each pair. If the group is bigger, chose 2-3 observers to follow the situation within pairs.</li> </ul>	
<p>▶ <b>Instructions/procedure:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The group is divided into pairs, one person in pair is A, and the other person is B.</li> </ul>	



- This activity should be done without talking and participants are asked not to talk.
- Pairs are given one piece of paper and one marker.
- The trainer gives separate instructions for As and Bs.
- A-s are given instruction to draw **the town when the sun sets** and B-s are given the instruction to draw a **beach full of people**.
- Both participants in the pair hold the marker at the same time, and they need to draw on one side of the paper.
- The drawing race lasts 5 minutes.
- After 5 minutes we stop the game and see if everybody succeeded in accomplishing their task.
- Debriefing of the activity.
- The trainer presents the chart with the conflict's stages (latent, emergence, escalation, stalemate, dispute settlement and post conflict peace building) (Appendix 2), asking the participants to connect the stages with the previous activity, explaining that those stages usually don't change that fast. The details are to be found in the appendix.

► **Tips to trainers/anticipated difficulties:**

- This activity can provoke negative feelings among participants. It is important to introduce an activity for the training about conflicts. Instructions should be very clear and not misunderstood. The trainer and observers must pay attention how each pair is doing the task. During the debriefing, it is necessary to hear the observers and to understand how they saw the situation from aside.
- This activity can also be done with students. In that case, I suggest not having more than ten pairs, and other students can be observers. Children can be very aggressive when trying to accomplish their task and don't pay attention to the feelings of the other in the pair. Debriefing is the main part, when every student, no matter withdrawn one or aggressive one, will tell about their feelings, reactions and behavior.
- Some of the participants maybe will expect offered solutions for their issues and conflicts. The trainer should explain that advice is not offered as a handbook of solving conflicts, and that their reactions on the situations are important. And provoke questions:
  - What would you do in that situation?
  - What else can be done, involving other participants in the discussion?
 The trainer should explain that the way of dealing with conflict situations vary depending on the

different circumstances, e.g. Person's strategy in the conflict resolution, his or her involvement in the situation.

► **Debriefing/reflecting:**

- Who didn't succeed and why?
- What was your first reaction when you understood your partner is drawing something else?
- What was your feeling and thoughts at that moment?
- If you would be allowed to speak, what would you say to your partner at that moment?
- How your feelings changed during all the activity?
- Reflect on your partner's feelings – what do you think, how he/she was feeling (and what thinking) during the activity?
- When did you understand you and your partner had different tasks?
- How did it effect on your feelings and behaviour?
- Have you tried to find personal solution how to fill this task?
- Have you tried to find common solutions?
- What do you think – why you were not allowed to speak?
- Do you think that people who speak different languages sometimes feel the same (when they can speak, but cannot understand each other)?
- What helps more in conflict situations – possibility to speak or willingness to solve the conflict?
- What is important if you want to solve the conflict?
- Can you connect it with the development of the conflict?
- Does it have to be that one side is the winner and the other is a loser?
- Can you notice stages in developing conflict through that activity?
- Do you recognize yourselves and your reactions in the different stages of conflict?
- Do you believe in possible common solutions?

### Activity 3 What is my strategy in the conflict resolution?



xx minutes

	Notes
<p>▶ <b>General aim:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To raise the participants' awareness on different conflict resolution.</li> </ul> <p>▶ <b>Specific aims:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To encourage the participants to think about their own styles in solving conflicts.</li> <li>➤ To raise the participants' awareness on the importance of understanding different styles of conflict resolution.</li> </ul>	
<p>▶ <b>Methods /techniques used:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Group work</li> <li>➤ Individual</li> <li>➤ Discussion</li> <li>➤ Cooperative learning</li> </ul>	
<p>▶ <b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Flipchart board</li> <li>➤ Markers and flip chart papers</li> <li>➤ Appendix 3: Prepared lists of characteristics about every style</li> <li>➤ Appendix 4: Printed animals representing different styles</li> </ul>	
<p>▶ <b>Practical arrangements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The trainer should have in mind to provide enough space for five groups which will look for their own style in conflict resolution.</li> </ul>	

**► Instructions/procedure:**

- Use table from Appendix 4. On the five spots in the space (four corners, and one in the middle) the trainer puts pictures of different animals, connected with the conflict resolution styles.
- The same chart is drawn on a flip chart paper.
- The participants pull out the lists with characteristics of different styles, and try to put themselves in the right place, depending on what they think, which characteristics they have – shark, dolphin, fox, tortoise or teddy bear (Appendix 3).
- When all the participants position themselves, and one by one read the characteristics, other participants discuss whether they think it should be on a different place or not, and when agreed, the characteristic is put on the flipchart, next to the animal it represents.
- When all the characteristics are connected with their own styles and animals, all the participants sit back in the circle, and the trainer summarises the chart and lead the discussion about it.
- If there is time left, the group is divided into five smaller groups. Each group has a task to think about the life motto/sentence/verse, on all of these different positions, and present it to a group.

**► Tips to trainers/anticipated difficulties:**

- Encourage the group to be actively involved in the discussions. When some participants are in the middle of attention, they can feel uncomfortable. First ask volunteers to explain why they think one certain characteristic belongs to one certain style, and that will provide enough time for other participants to think about their explanation.
- If the group cannot agree about some characteristics, to which styles they belong, the trainer should put the same characteristic on two places, and when summarising, explain where its right place is.
- This activity can have variations, according to the specific objectives. If you would like to connect it with stereotypes, just put pictures without the names of the styles, this would be harder to match with characteristics and it would lead the discussion in another way.
- This activity can also be done with students, but it is recommendable to put both pictures and styles.

**► Debriefing/reflecting:**

- Did you recognize your usual style?
- Is the style different in personal and professional conflict?
- In what other situations is the style different?
- What about the use of power?
- Are you able to recognize the styles of other involved in the conflict?
- Why is that important?
- Try to imagine conflict situation you had and would the consequences be different if you have used another style, different from the usual one?
- Which one of the proposed behaviours helps to solve the conflict, and which one doesn't?
- Why if sometimes we know this reaction will not help to solve the conflict, we anyway react this way and don't do something else?

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## References

- Prirucnik za voditelje radionica iz oblasti obrazovanja za vjestine medijacije *Od svadje sladje*, Z. Trikic, D. Koruga, J. Vranjesevic, V. Dejanovic, S. Vidovic, GTZ, Beograd 2006.
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- *Dijalogom do resenja* prirucnik za mirno resavanje sukoba, S. Bryn, D. Smith, D. Cuk Milankov, S. Williams, N. Stojanovic, Nansen dijalog centar, Beograd 2008.
- *Samopouzdana deca*, Gejl Lindenfeld, Plato, Beograd 2003.
- *Svako dijete je pametno na svoj nacin*, Mel Levin, Moc knjige, Beograd 2002.

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## Appendix 1: Hand-out “Cafe Montenegro”

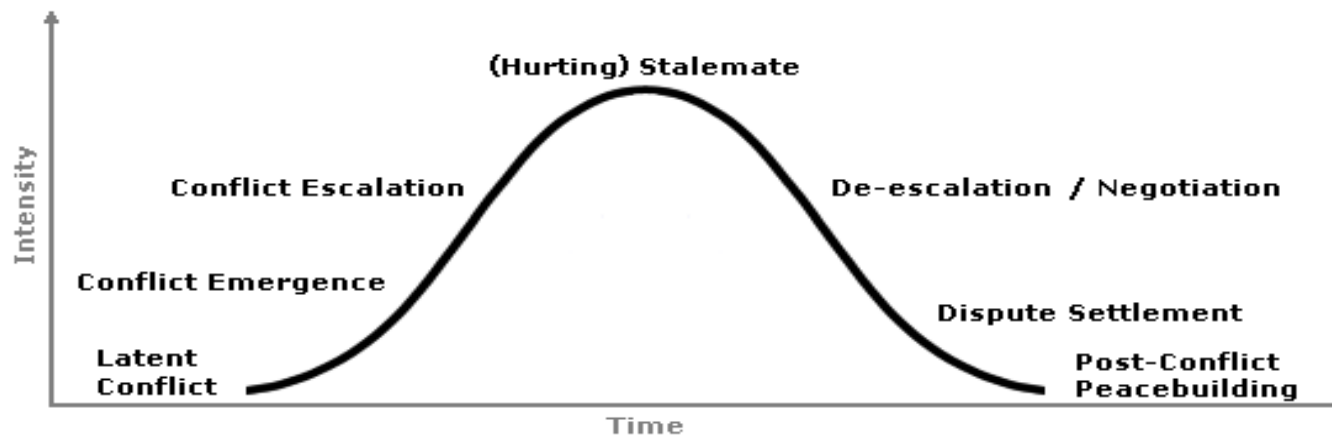
- **Group number one /blue/:** You are teachers – From the position of teachers, think about the school by the measure of teachers – your role and expectations from the educational system.
- **Group number two /red/:** You are parents – From the position of parents, think about the school by the measure of parents - your role and expectations from the educational system.
- **Group number three /green/:** You are students – From the position of students, think about the school by the measure of students - your role and expectations from the educational system.

## Appendix 2: Stages of Conflict

It has become common to describe conflicts as passing through a series of phases. Different authors name and describe these stages differently, but most of them include, at a minimum:

- No conflict
- Latent conflict
- Emergence
- Escalation
- (Hurting) Stalemate
- De-Escalation
- Settlement/Resolution
- Post-Conflict Peace building and Reconciliation

These phases are frequently shown on a diagram that looks something like this, although the accompanying text will always explain that the progress from one stage to the next one is not smooth, and conflicts may repeat stages several times.





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These stages are described briefly in this introductory essay, and then each is discussed in more depth in other essays.

The potential for conflict exists whenever people have different needs, values, or interests; this is the ["latent" conflict stage](#). The conflict may not become apparent until a "triggering event" leads to the [emergence](#) (or beginning) of the obvious conflict. Emergence may be followed quickly by [settlement or resolution](#), or it may be followed by [escalation](#), which can become very destructive.

Escalation, however, cannot continue indefinitely. [De-escalation](#) can be temporary or can be part of a broader trend toward settlement or resolution. Or escalation may lead to a [stalemate](#), a situation in which neither side can win. If the pain of continuing the conflict exceeds that of maintaining the confrontation, the parties are in what Zartman calls a "[hurting stalemate](#)," which often presents an ideal opportunity for [negotiation](#) and a potential settlement. Finally, if and when an agreement is reached, [peace building](#) efforts work to [repair damaged relationships](#) with the long-term goal of [reconciling](#) former opponents.

Some scholars add other phases to this list. For intractable conflict, in particular, Kriesberg adds [failed peacemaking](#) efforts after escalation and [institutionalization](#) of destructive conflict after that. This latter stage is closely linked with the hurting stalemate.

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## Appendix 3: What's Your Style?

Most people have a dominant method or style of dealing with conflict. In some cases, that style may be appropriate, but it may not be, depending on the situation. In most cases, the best style to use is the one that achieves an acceptable solution to both parties. This is a collaboration style, and to a lesser extent, a compromising style. This list of styles describes the five most common styles people use to deal with conflict. Which one describes you best?

1. **Avoiding** (uncooperative and unassertive)

Your customary manner is to be passive and withdraw from conflict situations. Your most frequent attitude is to be accepting and patient, often suppressing your strong feelings to avoid confrontation. This type of behaviour usually victimizes one's self, and tends to make it difficult for others to know there is a problem.

Avoiding can be useful when: an issue is trivial, you have no chance of getting your way, potential harm outweighs the benefits, or you need time to let people cool down.

2. **Accommodating** (co-operative and unassertive)

You try to satisfy the other person's concerns at the expense of your own. You strive to understand, listen and put yourself in the other person's place. The mood is often co-operative and even conciliatory. An accommodating style may be useful when: you know you are wrong, as a gesture of good will, to build favours owed, when you are clearly losing, when harmony is very important.

3. **Competing** (uncooperative and assertive)

You use direct tactics and have a strong need to control the situation and/or people. You want to straighten out the other person, to argue about who is right, and are ready to defend your ideas forcibly. You use whatever seems appropriate to win. This style may be most useful and effective in emergencies, discipline, enforcement of unpopular rules, when doing unpopular things that must be done.

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4. **Collaborating** (co-operative and assertive)

You work with the other person to find a solution that fully satisfies both sides. You are ready to defend a stand without being too pushy. You are willing to work towards a mutually agreeable solution through negotiation. Verbal skills are used to move the discussion forward.






This style is helpful when: both sides are important, learning something new is important, to merge insights, buy-in from others is important, to deal with hard feelings.

5. **Compromising** (intermediate in co-operating and assertiveness)

You work to seek a middle-ground solution for both parties. The solution provides partial satisfaction for both, but in the interest of time and a lack of commitment or effort to do better, this will do.

This style is most helpful when: neither side is very important, power on both sides is equal, to arrive at the best solution because you are pressed for time, as a backup when other ways fail.

Appendix 4: Pictures of animals

Focused on themselves	 Shark or peacock (competing)	 Dolphin (collaborating)
	Fox or chameleon (compromising) 	
	 Tortoise (avoiding)	Sheep or teddy bear (accommodating) 
Focused on others		