

Authors/Autores: Castelli, Stefano (stefano.castelli@unimib.it); Pepe, Alessandro; Addimando, Loredana and Vanin, Luca. University of Study of Milano-Bicocca. Italy

Title/Título: When organizations clash: Training teachers (and parents) to manage conflicts between school and parents

Cuando las organizaciones colisionan: Formación del profesorado (y de los padres) para afrontar los conflictos entre el centro docente y los padres

Topic: Strategies and methodologies to promote family-school-community partnership

Estrategias y metodologías para promover la cooperación entre las familias, los centros docentes y las entidades sociales comunitarias

Presentation time/Día de presentación: Session in English. Thursday 15, 4:00-5:30 p.m. Room 2, Third Floor

Sesión en Inglés. Jueves 15, 4:00-5:30 p.m. Sala 2, Tercer Piso

Abstract

It is not uncommon that organizations, apparently sharing the same values (i.e. fostering children's well-being and learning opportunities, democratic participation of all the parties involved in school management, and so on), come into sharp conflict. This is very likely to happen when the school structure is compelled to change under external pressures (new regulations set up by the Ministry of Education) and/or changes in leadership styles (a new manager is appointed), which alters the balance of power between formal and informal organizations. In this paper we discuss the main outcomes of an action-research intervention we conducted in a Primary and Junior Secondary school in Milan (Italy). Due to a variety of reasons, the school was perceived as a "double" entity ("a school with two speeds"), a sort of battlefield where different parents' organizations conflicted with different groups of conflicting teachers. This state of things was dangerous for the wellbeing of all the parties involved. The intervention was aimed at building a more coherent organization, capable of promoting fruitful partnerships with parents and the surrounding community. After a preliminary diagnostic study, two groups of teachers and two mixed groups of teachers and parents were formed, who started four different training processes intended to promote, through four different learning paths and the creation of products useful to improve school-parents communication, a comprehensive co-sense-making process.