



## **The co constructivist model: teacher partnership and mediation**

The title may have confused you already, so I will start with by clarifying three main concepts. The first one is the co-constructivist model. This model suggests that knowledge can be created together by research, experiment, and creative work and brainstorming. The key work here is tighter. It is not simply together, it is together with a common purpose and goal and clear understanding of there. Together with sufficient willingness and maturity to follow the necessary principles of co constructivism.

Now I will talk about teacher partnership. There is clearly a lot to say about that and the philosophical basis for it needs to be set as well. But here I will focus on a very practical aspect by giving some examples. Teacher partnership in assisting a student overcome an issue or solve the problems in the classroom of one teacher. Here you might be thinking – oh, that is like passing responsibility someone else and having someone else deal with the problem. But this is not the case. It is only about understanding that an issue in one classroom is an issue in the school. It happens in the school, right? So other teachers can assist, guide, partner in the solving process. The teacher having the issue will still look at what s/he can improve and what is her/his share in generating the problem. (link to where is the problem article) But in so doing s/he will have at least two more points of view. And in creating a solution s/he can include someone else. How? Here we come to the third element on the title – mediation.

A teacher with good classroom management skills is having a class with two students who have a “deep” conflict and sometimes this is translated into smaller, superficial conflicts. She doesn’t have the full picture and is not neutral. In class suddenly another conflict erupts. Class cannot continue the conflict escalates. Another teacher comes in in a very respectful manner with the mindset that her colleague is doing well her jobs asks if she can have both students for ten minutes. The teacher, who has the best judgment of her class, says “No, only this one”. The mediating teacher takes the students out for a conversation. The underlying reason for the conflict is identified; the student feels understood and gets some important messages about communication. He returns to the classroom with the mediating teacher who asks if she can have the other boy for 5 minutes. Same thing occurs – underlying problem identified, important points in communicating with other made. When class continues natural apologies occur and class starts flowing again. Sounds utopia? But it is a true case. What is important to understand is what makes it successful:

The mindset of the teacher who allows the informal mediation is one of maturity and great self awareness. She knows and understands she is doing her job well, but certain situations and issues require team work. She has done her contribution in class and because she is centered allows the mediation.

Her contribution is the points she makes in class before and after the mediation which make the message complete. Also allowing this to happen is a great contribution.



The mediating teacher does not step in with the idea that her colleague is not doing well her job – that would be a killer intervention. She steps in with the idea that her colleague is doing well her job, but certain situations require the students to leave the classroom and calm down. She uses that opportunity to mediate.

Her contribution is making visible things that cannot be visible with both students present, identifying the underlying cause for the conflict, the one under the surface and making a lesson out of it.

Do you know what is really cool about this? That they can switch roles and the first teacher can mediate for students of the other. Utopia? No. This is a true story. It takes laying out the basic principles – some suggestions here. It is crucial to have the right mindset. Finally it is all about practice – try it, work it out, see the results yourself.

Want to try? Let's chat about that – send a form and I can schedule a meeting to talk about this.