

INTERDISCIPLINARY SKILLS

FOR COOPERATION AND
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

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INTRODUCTION

About this book and the project
By Dana Rone and Kristine Tihanova

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Nowadays communication, teamwork, cooperation, conflict management, also known as soft skills are very important for any professional in all fields. Experience shows that at times students lack those interdisciplinary skills. Only rarely university curriculum includes specific courses tackling these topics and skills. The same can be said about volume of training materials which academics could use in the study process in order to train the above mentioned skills of students.

These reasons motivated the authors to create this book, which can be useful material in teaching process and also can be exciting reading and training material for anyone interested in the soft skills' topic.

This book is a collection of articles developed by authors from six partner universities from Latvia, Lithuania, Italy, Austria, Poland and the Netherlands. In the second part of the book there are exercises for individual work and group work.

A target audience of this book is teachers, educators and trainers from various fields. Teachers can raise their knowledge about related soft skills and also can use methods and exercises in their teaching process – regardless of what subject they teach. Also students who are willing to develop their soft skills can use articles as valuable reading materials and practice exercises, especially those which are created for individual work.

ABOUT THE DISCOM PROJECT

The DISCOM project is ERASMUS+ Strategic partnership project financed by the European Union. Partnerships for cooperation are transnational projects designed to develop and share innovative practices and to promote cooperation, peer learning, and exchanges of experiences in the fields of education, training

and youth. Another aim of the DISCOM project was to develop and implement innovative practices, to elaborate interdisciplinary study materials and tools (including a mobile application) for students and teachers of different faculties.

The project was started in autumn 2019 and completed in summer 2022. The project was implemented by Turība University from Latvia in cooperation with five partner Universities – Genoa University from Italy, Mykolas Romeris University from Lithuania, the Netherlands Business Academy from the Netherlands, Jagiellonian University from Poland and Graz University from Austria.

This ERASMUS+ project focused on five significant soft skills – 1) the ability of students to cooperate in team, 2) setting professional and academic goals, 3) time management skills and efficient planning, 4) multicultural communication and 5) conflict diagnostics and conflict management. These skills are crucial for the ability to study efficiently in universities of the modern world. Curriculum of universities mostly do not offer separate courses to develop those specific skills. Moreover, these skills are required not only during academic studies, but even after graduation, to be prepared for professional life challenges. Therefore the project partners went for elaboration of inter-faculty study materials for the students from Law, Business, Communication and other Social science faculties in order to increase these skills and for the university teachers could widely access such study materials.

This book is only one of the products developed in frame of this project. The authors of the book encourage the readers to explore other soft skills' training materials – video lectures, reading materials, exercises for individual work and group work, and the mobile phone application. All materials are available on project website: <http://skills.turiba.lv>

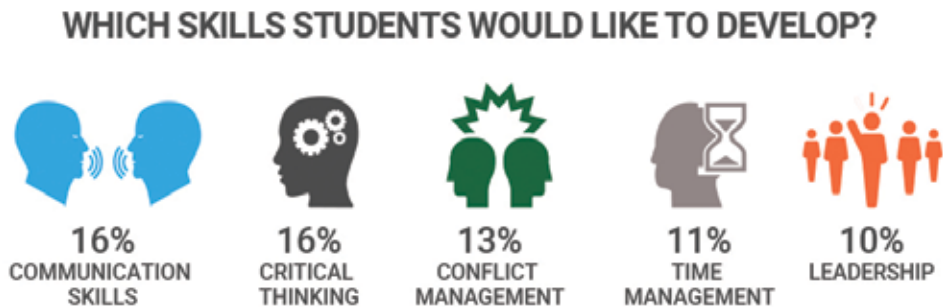
SURVEY ABOUT SOFT SKILLS

In the spring of 2020 the project partners made a survey and asked to the students and teachers from different countries at what extent they have heard about „soft skills”, do they think universities are paying sufficient attention to training of soft skills to the students and which are the most important skills that students would like to develop.

340 students from six countries and 76 teachers from nine countries took part in the survey. Analysis of the profile of students showed that the bachelor level students are 61%, master level students 35% and doctoral level students

4%. Most of the students (70%) confirmed that they have heard about soft skills, but 54% of them pointed out that in their study programs they do not have courses which tackle to develop soft skills. Communication was highlighted most frequently in a list of crucial soft skills (23%), followed by critical thinking (19%), team work (12%), time management (11%), positive thinking (11%) and conflict management (9%). More than a half of students (54%) think that universities are not paying sufficient attention to the development of “soft skills” of their students.

Students pointed out that they would be interested during their studies to develop more intensively such soft skills as communication (16%), critical thinking (16%), conflict management skills (13%), time management and effective planning skills (11%) and leadership (10%).



The project partners gathered also valuable feedback from the teachers, who shared their experience about soft skills and their experience and teaching practice.

The teachers were asked if they agree with the statement, that nowadays in order to succeed at work and personal life “soft skills” of students have the same importance as professional skills (hard skills). 89% of the teachers agreed with the statement and assured that soft skills in a modern world is a key to success. Almost the same number of teachers (86%) pointed out that their universities should pay more attention to the development of soft skills of the students. 43% of the teachers who participated in the survey stressed that students absolutely lack or have weak conflict diagnostics and conflict management skills. 35% of the teachers think that multicultural communication skills of the students are weak and should be trained more. Most of the teachers also agreed that such skills as setting professional and academic goals, time management skills, efficient planning and ability to cooperate in team are average or should be improved.

Teachers emphasized in the survey that lack of those skills can possibly lead to difficulties to find job, make good carrier or even to failure in private or professional life. Young professionals risk not being able to solve complex problems, their performance results will be average or even below the standard. It can bring to fear and narrow-mindedness. If the students don't learn soft skills in universities, it can take them long years and life-experience to learn these skills in practice.

Analysis of survey shows that teachers suggest to introduce changes in universities. The best and the most obvious solution is to include additional courses in the study program. However not all universities can afford immediate changes to their curriculum. Many study programs already now have very busy schedule and adding additional courses is not an option. Most of the teachers suggest to revise and update already existing courses and teaching techniques. It is important to include more practical studies – group works, practical exercises, role-plays, discussions, field work, web-quests, project work, simulations, debates and similar methods. Additionally, voluntary work as a part of the study program or in study program, recognized volunteering time during study period can teach some of the soft skills. There are universities in Europe which are already including voluntary work as a part of the study process. Also support, advice or coaching from the side of university can be very helpful. Those universities who have career centers or anowther structures providing guidance, professional support or coaching are better situated and can track and provide support in development of soft skills.

It is clear that in the future soft skills have the same importance as professional skills. At the moment the Z generation starts to study in universities – young people with high requirements and expectations, the ones who already request universities to provide education which suite their academic needs and the needs of the labor market. And consequently the universities will respond to the needs of modern society.

CHAPTER 1

SOFT SKILLS



MODERN REALITY – SOFT SKILLS

By Daina Škuškovnika

Annotation: This article highlights the importance of role of soft skills in modern society. The aim of this small volume study is to explore terminology, measurement tools and typology of soft skills. The article starts with an introduction to term soft skills and explores the roles of those skills in modern society and labour market. Furthermore, article explores importance of soft skills in the context of higher education.

Focusing on soft skills development at the university may have a positive impact not only on academic successes, but also on future professional life.

Keywords: soft skills, hard skills, soft skills typology, soft skills in higher education, learning process, development, lifelong learning

Summary: Introduction – 1. The role of soft skills in modern society. – 2. The modern educator – student’s personality development coach. – Conclusions.

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to provide an insight into recent research on the role of soft skills in modern society. Different approaches to defining soft and hard skills and its typology are considered. The article examines the experience of different countries and universities in developing soft skills in the learning process. It is emphasized that the development of successful soft skills requires strategic planning and interaction at five levels: national, institutional, curricula, extracurricular activities and the individual level. The second chapter of the article deals with teaching/learning methods used for teacher-student interaction. At the end of the article, the 5-step method proposed within the ERASMUS+ Strategic partnership project DISCOM is described, which can help students decide about the need to consciously improve certain aspects of their personality. This small-scale study was conducted using the analysis of scientific literature and the author’s professional experience.

1. The role of soft skills in modern society

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report on education policies for the 21st century emphasizes that in order to live and work in the knowledge society, students need to gain a deeper conceptual understanding of the world through learning, rather than superficial facts and procedures. The World Economic Forum (2020)¹ points out that greater robotization and the rapid introduction of new technologies over the next five years will mean a demand for new skills in the workplace. A study by McKinsey estimates that up to 30 percent of the hours worked globally could be automated by 2030. It is projected² that during the period 2015 – 2030 total spending on technology will increase by more than 50%. About half the spending would be on information technology services. This means that by 2030, this trend could create 20 to 50 million jobs worldwide. It is estimated,³ that global consumption could grow by USD 23 trillion between 2015 and 2030, most of which will come from the fast-growing consumer economy. The impact of these new consumers will be felt not only in the countries where the income is generated, but also in the economies that export to these countries. The impact of income growth alone on consumer goods alone is projected to create 250 to 280 million new jobs, with an additional 50 to 85 million jobs resulting from higher health and education spending.

Employers talk about the lack of skills and competencies of college and university graduates necessary to optimise work performance: lack of skills to communicate, work in a team, solve problems and critically evaluate information. The majority of professions in the 21st century will need knowledge and understanding of globalization and the ability to communicate with different cultures. To promote the enterprise's competitiveness employers⁴ are in the search for candidates, who are fluent in English. The necessary 21st century skills include learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live.⁵

¹ The World Economic Forum (2020). These are the top 10 job skills of tomorrow – and how long it takes to learn them. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/10/top-10-work-skills-of-tomorrow-how-long-it-takes-to-learn-them/>

² Manyika, J., L und S., Chui, M., Bughin, J., Woetzel, J., Batra, P., Ko, R., & Sanghvi, S. (2017). Jobs lost, jobs gained: What the future of work will mean for jobs, skills, and wages. McKinsey Global Institute <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/jobs-lost-jobs-gained-what-the-future-of-work-will-mean-for-jobs-skills-and-wages#>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Zainuddin, S. Z., Pillai, S., Dumanig, F. P., & Phillip, A. (2019). English language and graduate employability. *Education and Training*, 61(2), pp. 79–93; DOI: 10.1108/ET-06-2017-0089

⁵ Zubaidah, S. (2016). 21st century skills: skills taught through learning (in Bahasa). Seminar Nasional Pendidikan, 2(2), pp. 1-17

The new knowledge economy⁶ resulting from technological development requires graduates in all disciplines with flexible thinking and transferable skill sets, who are able to innovate and adapt to a dynamic work environment. Consequently, universities need to develop the transferable general skills needed for graduates to advance their careers and foster economic innovation and social development.

1.1. Hard and soft skills

Skills are the ability and capacity to carry out processes and to be able to use one's knowledge in a responsible way to achieve a goal. Skills are part of a holistic concept of competency, involving the mobilisation of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to meet complex demands.⁷

Hard skills are methods or knowledge that a person acquires at school or in the workplace. Soft skills are interpersonal characteristics, also known as human skills, and personal characteristics that a person possesses. Soft skills are related to personality, human skills and work ethics. The majority of soft skills an individual possesses are not taught directly but are developed through life experience both in the family, at school and in communication with friends. A study on the role of soft skills in the workplace conducted by Klaus in 2010 found that 75% of long-term success at work depends on people skills, while only 25% depend on technical knowledge. Hard skills contribute only 15% to success, whereas 85% of success is related to soft skills.

Countries	Equivalent names for soft skills
Australia	Generic graduate attributes, generic skills, key competencies, employability skills
UK	Key skills, core skills, life skills, key transferable skills, cross competencies
USA	Necessary skills, workplace know-how
New Zealand	Essential skills
Germany	Schlüsselkompetenzen (key competencies), Übergreifende kompetenzen (general competencies)

⁶ Bunney, D., Sharplin, E., & Howitt, C. (2015). Generic skills for graduate accountants: The bigger picture, a social and economic imperative in the new knowledge economy. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 34(2), pp. 256–269, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2014.956700>

⁷ OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030 https://www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/teaching-and-learning/learning/skills/Skills_for_2030_concept_note.pdf

Denmark	Nøglekompetence (key competencies)
France	Compétences transversales (transversal competencies)
Spain	Competencias generales (general competencies)
Vietnam	Kỹ năng sống (life skills), kĩ năng mềm (soft skills)

Table 1: Terms referring to soft skills in some countries⁸

Examining and comparing students' and employers' perceptions of the importance of soft skills in different European countries, it was found that 86% of respondents indicate that there has been an increased emphasis on soft skills over the last 5–10 years and that companies consider them more important than students'/graduates' academic knowledge. In addition, significant differences were found in the different levels of soft skills priorities.

Several studies indicate that despite the universal perception that soft skills are very much needed in modern society, soft skills terminology and measurement tools vary widely across organizations and academia, with no standard definitions or assessment methods (refer table 1). As can be seen from figure 1, the most widely used concepts are key competencies (Australia, Germany, Denmark) and life skills (UK, Vietnam). An analysis of German job advertisements revealed⁹ that the most commonly used terms when looking for employees were working style, teamwork, communication skills and flexibility (Arbeitsweise, Teamfähigkeit, Kommunikationsfähigkeit and Flexibilität). Apart from the terms listed in figure 1, the following terms could also be found in literature: 21st century skills,¹⁰ transferable skills,¹¹ future work skills,¹² Soft Skills for Talent,¹³ Skills for Social Progress¹⁴ etc., which could cause confusion – what exactly is being discussed, as well as confusion on what really should be understood by the use of one or the other term.

⁸ Tran Le Huu Nghia (2021). *Building Soft Skills for Employability. Challenges and Practices in Vietnam*. Routledge, ISBN 9781032089508

⁹ Kozhanova, N. V. (2021). Language peculiarities of “soft skills” in German electronic texts of vacancy advertisements. *Vestnik of North-Eastern Federal University Named After M. K. Ammosov*, 82 (2), pp. 39–46, DOI: 10.25587/p6523-9839-2389-x

¹⁰ Ananiadou, K. & Claro, M. (2009). 21st Century Skills and Competences for New Millennium Learners in OECD Countries, <https://doi.org/10.1787/19939019>

¹¹ Eportfolio (2011). <http://www.eportfolio.eu/organisations/rpic-vip>

¹² IFTF (2010). The Future is a High Resolution Game: The 2010 Map of the Decade, <https://www.iftf.org/our-work/global-landscape/ten-year-forecast/2010-ten-year-forecast/2010-map-of-the-decade/>

¹³ Manpower Group (2014). <https://www.manpowergroup.com/wcm/>

¹⁴ OECD (2015). Skills for Social Progress, <https://www.oecd.org/education/skills-for-social-progress-9789264226159-en.htm>

1.2. Soft skills typology

A diversity in soft skills typology could also be observed, which is often linked to changes in the labour market. In 2012, business executives emphasized the following skills as the most important¹⁵: integrity, communication, courtesy, responsibility, social skills, positive attitude, professionalism, flexibility, teamwork and work ethics. On the other hand graduates¹⁶ in 2020 named flexibility and adaptation skills and communication skills as essential soft skills required for work. Summarizing the research results, Ibrahim et al.¹⁷ point out that the most frequently mentioned areas of soft skills are: 1) communication, 2) critical thinking, creative thinking and problem solving, 3) moral and professional ethics, 4) teamwork, 5) leadership, 6) entrepreneurship and 7) emotional intelligence.

Practical and physical skills	Cognitive and meta-cognitive skills	Social and emotional skills
<p>are those required to use and manipulate materials, tools, equipment and artefacts to achieve particular outcomes, include using new information and communication technology devices.</p>	<p>a set of thinking strategies that enable the use of language, numbers, reasoning and acquired knowledge. They comprise verbal, nonverbal and higher-order thinking skills, include critical thinking, creative thinking, learning-to-learn and self-regulation; the ability to recognise one's knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.</p>	<p>a set of individual capacities that can be manifested in consistent patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviours that enable people to develop themselves, cultivate their relationships at home, school, work and in the community, and exercise their civic responsibilities and include empathy, self-efficacy, responsibility and collaboration.</p>

Table 2: Three different types of skills¹⁸

¹⁵ Robles, M. M. (2012). Executive Perceptions of the Top 10 Soft Skills Needed in Today's Workplace. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 75 (4), pp. 453–465

¹⁶ Handayani, A., & Wienanda, W. K. (2020). International mobility programs to improve soft skills of Vocational College students and alumni. *Journal of Education and Learning (EduLearn)*, 14(3), pp. 377–384, ISSN 2089-9823, DOI: 10.11591/edulearn.v14i3.14538

¹⁷ Ibrahim, R., Boerhannoeddin, A. & Bakare, K. K. (2017). The effect of soft skills and training methodology on employee performance. *European Journal of Training and Development*, V41(4), pp. 388–406, DOI: 10.1108/EJTD-08-2016-0066

¹⁸ OECD (2018). The OECD Learning Compass 2030, <https://www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/teaching-and-learning/learning/>

The OECD Learning Compass 2030 distinguishes between three different types of skills (see table 2): Practical and physical skills, Cognitive and meta-cognitive skills, Social and emotional skills. Physical and practical skills are essential for students' overall functioning and well-being. Components of cognitive skills¹⁹ are interwoven with social and emotional skills so closely that it is difficult to tease apart and attribute the acquisition of these skills to one category or another. For instance, critical thinking involves questioning and evaluating ideas and solutions. This definition encompasses components of metacognition, social and emotional skills (reflection and evaluation within a cultural context), and even attitudes and values (moral judgement and integration with one's own goals and values), depending on the context. Critical thinking skills are also significantly affected by both traditional school experiences and by life experiences outside the classroom.

While cognitive skills have also long been considered the most important determinants of success in employment, recent studies show²⁰ that social and emotional skills also directly affect occupational status and income. In fact, social and emotional skills can be equally – and in some cases even more – important as cognitive skills in determining future employment.

1.3. Soft skills development opportunities in tertiary education

According to The OECD Learning Compass 2030 the future conceptual learning system will enable students to implement transformative competencies to help them be competent and, if necessary, flexible and ready for change. The vast majority of business leaders²¹ (94%) now expect employees to pick up new skills on the job. Respondents to the Future of Jobs Survey estimate that around 40% of workers will require reskilling of six months or less, but that number is higher for those in the consumer industry and in the health and healthcare industry. Training will be delivered internally, according to 39% of employers. But, as Professor Schwab noted, this will be supplemented by online learning platforms (16% of training) and external consultants (11% of training).

¹⁹ OECD (2016). Preliminary reflections and research on knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary for 2030, <https://www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/about/documents/PRELIMINARY-REFLECTIONS-AND-RESEARCH-ON-KNOWLEDGE-SKILLS-ATTITUDES-AND-VALUES-NECESSARY-FOR-2030.pdf>

²⁰ OECD (n.d). Social and Emotional Skills: Well-being connectedness and success, [https://www.oecd.org/education/school/UPDATED%20Social%20and%20Emotional%20Skills%20-%20Well-being,%20connectedness%20and%20success.pdf%20\(website\).pdf](https://www.oecd.org/education/school/UPDATED%20Social%20and%20Emotional%20Skills%20-%20Well-being,%20connectedness%20and%20success.pdf%20(website).pdf)

²¹ The World Economic Forum (2020). These are the top 10 job skills of tomorrow – and how long it takes to learn them. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/10/top-10-work-skills-of-tomorrow-how-long-it-takes-to-learn-them/>

Understanding the nature of skills²² is essential for the successful implementation of these skills in the context of higher education. Bunney et al.²³ point out that the issue of general skills of university students needs to be addressed from a systemic perspective, across national and disciplinary boundaries. Based on the analysis of research and theories related to the implementation of education policy in different countries around the world, four levels for the implementation of conceptual foundations of soft skills in higher education institutions can be distinguished²⁴:

1. National level: implementation of soft skills in the general context
2. Institutional level: Specific mechanisms and strategies for soft skills policy implementation
3. Curricula level: setting goals for soft skills development and defining the dynamics of soft skills development
4. Extracurricular level: extracurricular programs to develop soft skills.

It is also necessary to emphasize the 5th level for the implementation of the conceptual basis of soft skills in everyday life – the conscious decision of each individual to take responsibility for the development of their skills. The acquisition of soft skills²⁵ is positively influenced by students' educational / professional experience, students' preparedness to acquire the course and the desire to improve not only their academic and professional, but also personal skills.

Policies and programs to measure and improve socio-emotional skills vary considerably from country to country. The OECD report²⁶ provides an analytical synthesis of the importance of socio-emotional skills and proposes strategies to enhance them. It analyses the impact of skills on various indicators of individual well-being and social progress, covering as diverse aspects of our lives as education, labour market outcomes, health, family life, civic participation and life satisfaction. The report emphasizes that policy makers, schools and families facilitate the development of socio-emotional skills through intervention programs, teaching/learning and parenting practices.

²² Stewart, C., Marciniak, S., Lawrence, D. & Joyner-McGraw, L. (2020). Thinkubator Approach to Solving the Soft Skills Gap. *American Journal of Management*, 20 (2), pp. 78–89

²³ Bunney, D., Sharplin, E., & Howitt, C. (2015). Generic skills for graduate accountants: The bigger picture, a social and economic imperative in the new knowledge economy. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 34(2), pp. 256–269, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2014.956700>

²⁴ Tran Le Huu Nghia (2021). *Building Soft Skills for Employability. Challenges and Practices in Vietnam*. Routledge, ISBN 9781032089508

²⁵ ElShaabany, M. M. (2021). Does Accounting and Finance Courses Enable Soft Skill Learning? A Mediation study. *World Journal of Education*, 11(1), pp. 42–50

²⁶ OECD (2015). Skills for Social Progress, <https://www.oecd.org/education/skills-for-social-progress-9789264226159-en.htm>

Many projects are currently being implemented at the EU level with the aim of promoting the development of modern work skills of students and graduates, to educate and train flexible future specialists, who are ready to meet the changes. An example is the ERASMUS+ Strategic Partnership project DISCOM,²⁷ under which this book was written. The development and implementation of the project is being carried out by 6 partner universities. This project focuses on soft skills such as: cooperation in a team, setting goals, time management, multicultural communication and conflict management.

The development of several soft skills takes place most naturally in a real communication process in communication with strangers using foreign language knowledge to learn or provide the necessary information. Determining the advantages of international mobility programs in the development of soft skills²⁸, it has been found that particularly high development rates are observed in the development of language and communication and interpersonal skills, teamwork skills, cultural awareness and adaptability and openness.

The significance of tertiary education systems is the major concern in meeting the countries' economic and social requirements that are rising globally.²⁹ Given that most of the accreditation criteria for educational institutions are related to general competencies, it may be necessary to improve the accreditation processes in order to keep pace with the changing requirements of the labour market. Higher education institutions develop their own development strategies based on international standards and national education strategies.³⁰ Based on them, specialists in each specific professional field develop concepts that are the basis for the content of specific courses. For example a study by M. M. ElShaabany³¹ confirms that students studying accounting and finance are interested in learning soft skills in addition to professional courses. 81% of the respondents³² (accounting and finance students) recognize that group work and other communication skills acquired together with professional knowledge help them in their work. Graduates attributed³³ a higher level of importance to the following macro-areas of skills:

²⁷ Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP "Development of Interdisciplinary skills for cooperation and conflict management"

²⁸ Handayani, A. & Wienanda, W. K. (2020). International Mobility Programs to Improve Soft Skills of Vocational College Students and Alumni. *Journal of Education and Learning (EduLearn)*, 14(3), pp. 377-384

²⁹ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development OECD (2005). <https://www.oecd.org/about/34711139.pdf>

³⁰ Mutalemwa, D. U. & Harold M. N. (2020). Soft Skills as a Problem and a Purpose for Tanzanian Industry: Views of Graduates. *Economic Insights – Trends & Challenges*, 4, pp. 45-64

³¹ ElShaabany, M. M. (2021). Does Accounting and Finance Courses Enable Soft Skill Learning? A Mediation Study. *World Journal of Education*, 11(1) pp. 42-50, <https://doi.org/10.5430/wje.v11n1p42>

³² ElShaabany, M. M. & Ahmad, M. U. (2020). An EFA based stakeholder's perspective on Accounting and Finance courses. *Journal of Xidian University*, 14(4), pp. 1510-1524, <https://doi.org/10.37896/jxu14.4/174>

³³ Dolce, V., Emanuel, F., Cisi, M., & Ghislieri, C. (2019). *The soft skills of accounting graduates: perceptions versus*

task orientation, motivation, self-awareness, valorisation, and interpersonal relationships. In turn the MarLEM³⁴ project implementers³⁵ point out that in addition to professional knowledge, a great deal of attention is paid to the development of people skills in student training, which includes creativity and innovation; personal and team leadership; critical thinking and problem solving; decision making; intercultural communication and negotiation. In order to educate and train university graduates to meet modern requirements and be competitive in the labour market, it is necessary to purposefully integrate the process of hard and soft skills development during studies, using integrative and innovative teaching methods.

2. The modern educator – student’s personality development coach

The need for a paradigm shift in education is a global reality. If in the past good education was treated as knowing a lot, then today the goal of education is to understand the essence and be able to use knowledge.³⁶ The knowledge base should not be divided according to the principle of separate subjects and courses, but should be oriented towards interdisciplinary or transversal skills. The student must be able to use knowledge, skills and express attitudes in a complex way, solving problems in changing real life situations.

2.1. Teaching/learning methods for soft skills development

To a certain extent, the modern educator becomes a student’s personal development coach, helping the student not only to acquire certain knowledge, but also promoting the student’s desire to be aware of how the acquired will be put into practice, what soft skills are needed to make it more effective. Already while defining the goal and tasks of a particular study course, it is necessary to include the conscious development of the student’s soft skills as an essential task

expectations. Accounting Education, DOI: 10.1080/09639284.2019.1697937

³⁴ Maritime Logistics Engineering and Management aims to develop a joint Master’s program in Maritime Logistics Engineering and Management and to promote cooperation between Industry and Academia

³⁵ Geada Borda de Água, P. M., Dias da Silva, F. A., de Jesus Carrasqueira, M. & Manuel Modas Daniel, J. (2020). Future of maritime education and training: blending hard and soft skills. *Scientific Journal of Maritime Research*, 34(2), pp. 345–353

³⁶ Right to education (2021). *Education 2030*, <https://www.right-to-education.org/issue-page/education-2030>

and encourage students to evaluate their skills. Training students to become successful professionals requires the faculty to use a myriad of approaches.

Active learning is widely used in the development of soft skills, which requires students to engage and collaborate to create their own experience in the classroom; understand the problem, analyse it, discuss and based on the acquired knowledge, develop solutions that would be presented to the teacher and other students. Structured team activities³⁷ focused on solving realistic problems develop students' soft skills. Group discussions³⁸ are a robust way to teach not only communication skills to the students but also non-verbal communication, difference between assertiveness and aggressiveness, how to be polite, how to put across your points, how to encourage the reticent participants. Group-Based Learning³⁹: a blended mode where classroom-based training is also offered as a support and Game-Based Learning: playing games in simulated condition that form the basis of developing soft skills are often used. The role of Problem-based learning⁴⁰ in the development of soft skills while training students of the technical and other specialities is invaluable. This form of training enables not only enhancing students' conflict resolution skills, leadership and interpersonal skills, but also factors influencing the process; clarity of instruction, instructor personality, lead time, etc. One of the approaches that has been widely used in recent years is client-sponsored projects as an excellent method of transferring practical experience compared to using text case studies. Educators can use a variety of procedures to develop classroom experiences by integrating real business world pressures, coaching, and responsibilities to better prepare graduates for their careers and meet the skills expected by business leaders.^{41; 42}

The development of soft skills became even more difficult during the Covid-19 pandemic. Universities were forced to adapt quickly to digital learning

³⁷ Martin, T. N. (2019). Review of Student Soft Skills Development Using the 5Ws/H Approach Resulting in a Realistic, Experiential, Applied, Active Learning and Teaching Pedagogical Classroom. *Journal of Behavioral & Applied Management*, 19 (1), pp. 41–57, Database: Academic Search Ultimate

³⁸ Sharma, S. & Shekhawat, S. (2020). Learning Soft Skills Through Group Discussion. *IUP Journal of Soft Skills*, 14 (4), pp. 12–19, Business Source Ultimate

³⁹ Manishankar, C. (2021). The Dynamics of Soft Skills. *IUP Journal of Soft Skills*, 15(1), pp. 20–26, Database: Business Source Ultimate

⁴⁰ Deep, S., Ahmed, A., Suleman, N., Abbas, M., Nazar, U., Shaheen, H. & Razzaq, A. (2020). The Problem-Based Learning Approach towards Developing Soft Skills: A Systematic Review. *Qualitative Report*, 25 (11), pp. 4029–4054, Database: Academic Search Ultimate

⁴¹ Thompson, K., Conde, R., Gade, M. & Mims, T. (2021). An Immersion Approach to Client-Sponsored Projects: Preparing Students with Soft Skills Required for Hiring – Face to Face & Virtual Methods. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 10(2), pp. 42–61, Database: ERIC

⁴² Jalinus, N., Syahril, N., & Rahmat, A. (2020). How Project-Based Learning and Direct Teaching Models Affect Teamwork and Welding Skills among Students. Online Submission. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, 11 (11), pp. 85–111, Database: ERIC

methods and the use of different platforms for e-learning. A method and tools⁴³ have been developed for the development of soft skills in students, which can be used in various subjects and as part of the strategy of higher education institutions. Although pilot studies are still ongoing, it is believed that this method will help integrate the development of soft skills through online learning and their link with the course subjects will help universities better train students for 21st century reality even after the Covid-19 crisis. Santora⁴⁴ recommends special training for e-coaches who, using e-coaching methods, can remotely develop the soft skills of individuals.

In order to promote student learning, it is also important to assess effective performance by providing quality feedback. When analysing group work on a specific phenomenon that is being acquired, during the feedback, it is necessary to encourage students to assess their soft skills, which were necessary to complete the specific learning task. When creating the traditional feedback on what has been learned and understood during the lesson, it is necessary to encourage students to analyse questions such as: What soft skills are needed to apply what has been learned in practice? How do I currently assess my own level of development of the required soft skills? What can I do to increase these soft skill levels? A tool to evaluate team based learning in nursing has been developed and tested⁴⁵, with the help of which it is possible to assess group synergies and team learning among nursing students. ePortfolio⁴⁶ is an innovative tool for promoting the development of soft skills. Three ePortfolios can be distinguished according to their main tasks: 1) e-portfolio to support learning; 2) an e-portfolio related to learning outcomes 3) an e-portfolio to present yourself in the world of work. The authors emphasize that the e-portfolio is a powerful tool to support the self-assessment of individuals throughout the studies with the provision of feedback from teachers and practice managers not only on academic or professional results, but specifically on the development of soft skills.

It should be noted that soft skills help to be dynamic, ready for change, to look for solutions in every situation.⁴⁷ During the Covid-19 pandemic, employers

⁴³ Naamati, S. L., Meirovich, A., & Dolev, N. (2020). Soft Skills On-Line Development in Times of Crisis. *Romanian Journal for Multidimensional Education*, 12, pp. 122–129, DOI: 10.18662/rrem/12.1sup2/255

⁴⁴ Santora, J. C. (2021). E-Coaching: Building Better Employee Soft Skills. *International Leadership Journal*, 13 (1), pp. 120–123

⁴⁵ Keister, K. J., Farra, S. L., Smith, S. J., & Bottomley, M. (2021). Development of a Scale to Measure Synergy: A Tool to Evaluate Team-Based Learning in Nursing. *Nursing Education Perspectives (Wolters Kluwer Health)*, 42 (2), pp. 87–92, DOI: 10.1097/01.NEP.0000000000000783

⁴⁶ Cimatti, B. (2016). Assessment of soft skills and their role for the quality of organizations and enterprises. *International Journal for Quality Research*, 10(1), pp. 97–130, DOI: 10.18421/IJQR10.01-05

⁴⁷ Manishankar, C. (2021). The Dynamics of Soft Skills. *IUP Journal of Soft Skills*, 15(1), pp. 20–26, Database: Business Source Ultimate

had to make great use of both their own and employees' soft skills – to react quickly to the situation, often to restructure their activities, train employees to perform new duties, where it was important to understand the employee and apply the most appropriate type of communication and training.

2.2. Soft skills development – personal decision of every individual

Students learn not only to obtain an academic degree, but get competencies and abilities that will be developed lifelong (Longlife Learning). Soft Skills acquisition, of course, does not occur only in the university, competencies are also obtained outside the school in everyday personal and social life and so one of the higher education missions is to create a desire in students to develop, improve and enhance their abilities throughout their lifetime. It has been found⁴⁸ that soft skills acquisition has a positive impact not only on students' education / professional experience, students' readiness to learn the course and willingness to improve academic and professional skills and abilities, but also on their readiness and motivation to develop soft skills. Ammani & Chitra⁴⁹ point out that the existence of soft skills helps create a good working environment for sharing knowledge, ideas and information. It is therefore necessary to focus on developing areas such as individual self-confidence, self-motivation, cooperation, empathy, interpersonal skills, listening skills, negotiation and humour. Work performance and the expression of other soft skills affects the individual's skills to realize and manage their stress. Even in situations that create stress, it is possible to gain strong positive and constructive energy that can be used productively, focusing on the goal. M. Tripathy⁵⁰ emphasizes that deliberate stress management in the workplace promotes wellbeing and emotional freedom.

To develop future capabilities and skills, every individual needs to understand their personality, be aware of their strengths and weaknesses and consciously decide on the development of their skills and abilities. If individuals consciously set the objective of improving themselves, it is up to them to decide what to focus on – the identification and development of their talents or on training skills and abilities that are not so well developed. Nobel Prize winners

⁴⁸ ElShaabany, M. M. (2021). Does Accounting and Finance Courses Enable Soft Skill Learning? A Mediation Study. *World Journal of Education*, 11(1), pp. 42–50, <https://doi.org/10.5430/wje.v11n1p42>

⁴⁹ Ammani, S. & Chitra, V. B. (2020). Blended Learning of Soft Skills Through Life Skills in an Organization. *IUP Journal of Soft Skills*, 14 (4), pp. 7–11

⁵⁰ Tripathy, M. (2018). Recognizing & Handling the Underlying Causes of Stress at Workplace: An Approach through Soft Skills. *International Journal of Management, Accounting & Economics*, 5 (7), pp. 619–632, Database: Business Source Ultimate

in the economics, Kahneman⁵¹ and Thaler⁵² in their work describe thinking systems characterising two ways of personality thinking. People of system 1 take decisions automatically, quickly, without mental effort (or minimal effort), without conscious control, intuitively, easily changing their views. They have little sense of what may happen in the future. On the other hand people of system 2 are able to actively use rational thinking, pay attention to the effort-related mental actions. People of this system make deliberate decisions, plan their future and assume responsibility for their decisions. Individuals, who mostly use system 2 thinking make more informed, more rational decisions regarding self-improvement and the development of certain soft skills and most often – the decisions are also realized. Individuals, who in their thinking rely more on the confluence of circumstances may find it not only difficult to make decisions on the development of their soft skills but also in implementing such decisions. Therefore the educator’s recommendations, planned and controlled soft skills development process during the whole study period play an important role. In order to make decisions regarding the necessity for change, it is possible to use the “5 steps to designing the life you want” model developed by Professor Bill Burnett.⁵³

One and the same person, in different circumstances, may act very differently and even the most in depth personality research does not allow 100% certainty in predicting human behaviour in real life situations. However, such research could prove useful in order to understand oneself, make conscious decisions on self-improvement and changing one’s life. Within the framework of the DISCOM project, a step 5 method is offered, which can help students consciously make decisions on the need to improve certain aspects of their personality (refer figure 1).

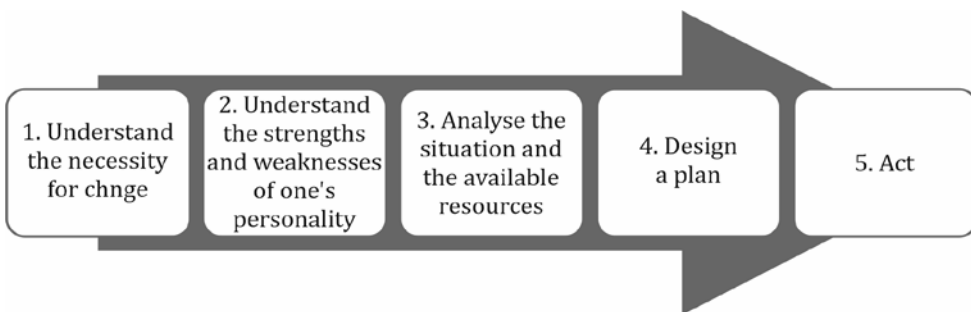


Figure 1. Model for making decisions regarding development of one’s soft skills

⁵¹ Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, fast and slow*. London: Penguin Books, ISBN 9780141033570

⁵² Thaler, R., & Sunstein, C. (2008). *Nudge: Improving Decisions on Health, Wealth, and Happiness*. Yale University Press

⁵³ Burnett, B. (2017). 5 steps to designing the life you want. TED x Talks, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SemHh0n19LA>

Using this model⁵⁴, it is possible to be continuously aware of the need for change, analyse the strengths and weaknesses of your personality, analyse the situation and available resources, develop a plan and not only make a decision, but also start to implement this decision. The person realizes the need for change (step 1) by receiving external encouragement (feedback from friends, parents, teachers, direct managers), by being aware of his/her insufficient ability to do something, and also by feeling stressed about how to succeed in realizing an idea. To identify the strengths and weaknesses of your personality (step 2), you can use the online personality tests and get an interpretation of the test results. However, it should be remembered that professional personality research tools are the work tools of certified psychologists^{55, 56} and a direct conversation with a psychologist, career counsellor, personality development coach or any other type of certified specialist can help to make a qualitative analysis of the person's strengths and weaknesses, as well as a situational analysis, which will facilitate the development and implementation of the plan. When analysing the situation and the available resources (step 3), it may also be useful to talk to someone who has already dealt with a similar situation or is currently dealing with it. Logical Levels model⁵⁷, which is extensively used in coaching, makes it easier to understand and be aware of the need for change in order to decide on the goal a person wants to achieve and choose the appropriate actions.

People who consciously set goals value their happiness higher when they achieve them than those who have also achieved the same goal, but this has not happened as a result of a conscious decision. The conscious setting of short term and long term goals, the creation of a conscious plan, is a step that a person takes using system 2 thinking. While setting goals and developing a plan, keep in mind that goals must meet the SMART⁵⁸ criteria: S – Specific (or Significant); M – Measurable (or Meaningful); A – Attainable (or Action-Oriented); R – Relevant (or Rewarding); T – Time-bound (or Trackable). In order to stimulate the introduction of new habits and ensure the preservation of new activities in the long run, the plan must provide for “small peaks”, at which a person gives himself a small “prize” (which, of course, will be completely individual). In order to make it easier to start the implementation of the plan (step 5), it is recommended to take at least a small step in its implementation already at the moment of accepting the plan.

⁵⁴ Škuškovnika, D. (2021). Soft skills – what does it mean? <http://skills.turiba.lv/files/ABOUT%20SOFT%20SKILLS%20.pdf>

⁵⁵ Mental help (2021). Introduction to Psychological Testing, <https://www.mentalhelp.net/psychological-testing/>

⁵⁶ Personality Project (2018). Personality Theory and Research, <https://personality-project.org/>

⁵⁷ Dilts, R. (b.g.). Agile, The Dilts Pyramid and the Changes, <http://agile-space.com/en/agile-dilts-pyramid-changes/>

⁵⁸ Personal Goal Setting. Planning to Live Your Life Your Way (b.g.). <https://www.mindtools.com/page6.html>

To make soft skills development programs more effective, it is possible to use different approaches and methods that help learners do, know or understand.

Conclusion

The 21st century skills required include learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live. The new knowledge economy resulting from technological development requires graduates in all disciplines with flexible thinking and transferable skill sets that are able to innovate and adapt to a dynamic work environment. As a result, universities need to develop the transferable general skills necessary for graduates to advance their careers and foster economic innovation and social development. The student must be able to use knowledge, skills and express attitudes in a complex way, solving problems in changing real life situations.

It is concluded that the implementation of the basics of soft skills should be taken care of at 5 levels: national, institutional, curricula, extracurricular activities and the individual level. Businesses and higher education institutions need to work together not only to raise students' awareness of the importance of soft skills, but also to make them individually responsible for acquiring and developing these essential skills in order to adapt to a constantly changing labour market. In order to promote student learning, it is important to use modern teaching/learning methods and also to provide quality feedback when assessing the effectiveness of student performance.

The article describes the 5-step method offered within the ERASMUS+ Strategic Partnership DISCOM project, which can help students make decisions regarding the need to consciously improve certain aspects of their personality. Using this model, it is possible to be aware of the need for change, analyse the strengths and weaknesses of one's personality, analyse the situation and available resources, develop a plan and not only make a decision, but also start to implement this decision.

CHAPTER 2

TIME MANAGEMENT



ADVANTAGES OF LEARNING TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS DURING COLLEGE STUDIES AND IN PROFESSIONAL LIFE: LITERATURE REVIEW AND PROSPECTS

By Francesco Pesce, Stefano Dominelli, Francesca Maoli

Annotation: This article explores time management under the different profiles of the social and practical relevance of the soft skill in the contemporary professional context, the role of time management for well-being, as well as the relationship with procrastination. Through a review of the existing literature on time management, the article's objective is to establish whether the topic is relevant for the future professional life of university students. Learning time management techniques while at the university may have a positive impact not only on grades and academic successes, but most of all as concerns the future personal and professional life.

Keywords: time management, efficient planning, procrastination, performance, motivation

Summary: Introduction – 1. Social and practical relevance of the topic. – 2. The relationship between time management and well-being from a holistic point of view. – 3. The impact of time management on achievement and motivation. – 4. The relationship between procrastination and performance: time management as an effective tool against procrastination. – Conclusions.

Introduction

“Time”, as known, is a social construct, i.e. – is created by humans and society to measure life and activities. It is an immaterial thing that cannot be perceived by the senses. This is the reason why the Roman philosopher Seneca lamented that people are unable to manage time because of the poor value attributed to it, because time is “something incorporeal, because it does not fall under the eyes, and therefore it is considered a small thing, indeed it has almost no price.”¹ However, time is an element that pervades our existence and is present

¹ Seneca, L. A. *De Brevitate Vitae*, 49 AD, VIII

in every aspect of life: all our activities require, de facto, time.²

Whereas some events are “natural” and “objective”, such as “day” and “night”, others are “artificial” and “objective”, such as “hours”, whilst others are influenced by psychological and internal factors. For example, how “long” an hour is perceived by a person according to his or her emotional state at a given moment? The perception of time also depends on our culture and on our environment.³ As a preliminary remark, it is important to note at the outset that “time management”, as understood below, can only refer to the last of the three understandings of time, namely the internal and personal one.⁴ A “day”, in its natural sense, cannot be managed by a person; so cannot an hour, as this is only the social construct of humanity⁵ and does not exist in the world of real and material things.

What can be “managed” are the activities a single person, and so – in last instance his or her productivity – can proficiently carry out within the specific time-space of the social construct she or he has at disposal.

However, if “time-management” turns into the paradigm of “activity management during a given set of time”, and thus if the focus rests on the third understanding of time (the internal perception), the existence of a multitude of subjective and psychological elements – variable over time – make it difficult to elaborate a general and absolute theory and model for time management. In other words, it seems difficult, if not impossible at all, to elaborate a good-for-all forecast time management solution model that applies to everyone, in all situations.

Moreover, time management studies can contribute in the increase of personal productivity by suggesting new approaches and solutions to (smart) work, through planning and organization schemes aimed at rationalizing efforts and concentrate actions, also by way of avoiding distractions and procrastination.

The present contribution reviews the existing literature on time management, with the scope to establish whether the topic is relevant for the future professional life of university students. Most college studies and universities have traditionally disregarded the importance of soft skills in the job market and thus have not provided specific courses aimed at teaching those

² Drucker, P. (1967). *The effective executive*. Oxford, UK: Butterworth-Heinemann, p. 22, wrote, “Everything requires time. It is the one truly universal condition. All work takes place in time and uses up time”

³ Hall, E. T. (1959). *The Silent Language*. New York: Anchor Books, p. 6; Pant, B. (2016). Different cultures see deadlines differently, *Harvard Business Review*, May 23, available at: <https://hbr.org/2016/05/different-cultures-see-deadlines-differently>

⁴ Orlikowski, W., & Yates, J. (2002). *It's about time: temporal structuring in organizations*. *Organization Science*, Vol. 13, No. 6, pp. 684–700

⁵ Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. New York: Doubleday; Zerubavel, E. (1981). *Hidden rhythms*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press

kind of competences to pupils and students – rather focusing on “hard skills”. However, several studies can constitute the basis for affirming that learning time management techniques while at the university may have a positive impact not only on grades and academic successes, but most of all as concerns the future personal and professional life.

1. Social and practical relevance of the topic

Time management and efficient planning refers to the world of the so-called “soft skills” that defined as a set of character traits, attitudes and behaviours that enhance a person’s interactions and job performances.⁶ Acquiring strong and effective time management skills is of crucial importance in current society. Today, students and workers at any stage and level experience difficulties in making good choices, because of the wide range of possibilities that suggest “consumers” to do many things in order to be successful. This is even more difficult considering that people are constantly exposed to any kind of distractions (e.g. social media) in their daily life.⁷ The absence of a real method for addressing the demands of daily life makes more and more difficult to manage our daily choices and actions in a way that is effective for reaching our most important goals.

Higher demands in performance have made time management and efficient planning skills a substantial prerequisite in the professional and occupational context. The strong competitiveness business organizations face in an environment of continuous change involves the search for cost reduction and increased productivity, all of which require the employee greater requirements in terms of tasks and hours of work.⁸ There is a clear understanding on the relation between time and organizational productivity, as the first is a fundamental element of the second: according to Doob,⁹ the efficiency of an operation is measured on its accomplishment with the smallest expenditure of energy and time.

⁶ Robles, M. M. (2012). Executive Perceptions of the Top 10 Soft Skills Needed in Today’s Workplace, in *Business Communication Quarterly*, 4, pp. 453–456, at p. 457; T. L. Parsons (2008). *Definition: Soft Skills*, as cited in Robles (2012)

⁷ According to the Global Digital Report 2020. Available at <http://wearesocial.com>, in January 2019 there were 3.48 billion social media users, with the worldwide total growing by 288 million (9 percent) since January 2018. There were 3.26 billion people using social media on mobile devices in January 2019, with a growth of 297 million new users representing a year-on-year increase of more than 10 percent

⁸ Garhammer, M. (2002). Pace of life and enjoyment of life, *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 3, pp. 217–256

⁹ Doob, L. W. (1971). *Patterning of Time*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, p. 349

It appears particularly important to remember how the first studies of time management were originally directed to ensure better performances of leading figures within top-ranking companies.¹⁰ “Managers” were the first natural target group of time management studies and recipients of deliverables. Nonetheless, over time, more and more worker categories have been attracted in those included within the “beneficiaries” of these studies, as a better individual management of productivity at *any* level bears positive outcomes, not only for the single worker or employee, but for the market as well. Workers who can better manage their time are more efficient than those falling behind schedule. Those trends are not surprising, in the light of the growing flexibility of work in terms of organization and time schedules, that puts the burden of time management on employers instead of companies.¹¹

Notwithstanding this growing need of time mastering skills – as well as the great philosophical and scientific concern for the topic – there has traditionally been a lack of attention for this aspect in significant areas of education.

Several studies have examined the effects of time management training programs on job performance:¹² for instance, Van Eerde in 2003¹³ found that participants showed a more frequent use of time management behaviors, that significantly decreased worrying and trait procrastination. Another study indicated that one’s success depends at 85% on soft skills and at 15% on “hard skills” (that are the technical expertise and knowledge needed for a job).¹⁴ Learning time management skills as a student in organized and well-rounded way allows to consolidate effective capacities before accessing to the labor market, other than enhancing academic results that increase their chances of better job-placement. Having the possibility to acquire and learn those skills enable students to develop a consolidated personalized method, which can easily be applied in the future.

If Universities are supposed to prepare people for their future professional life, a teaching on time management and efficient planning should be offered, if not even considered compulsory, since those abilities have evident effects on how jobs are and will be performed, as well as they might contribute in attaining an acceptable work-life balance.

¹⁰ See for instance Blanchard, K. H., & Johnson, S. (1982). *The One Minute Manager*. New York: William Morrow & Co

¹¹ Aeon, B., & Aguinis, H. (2017). It’s About Time: New Perspectives and Insights on Time Management, in *Academy of Management Perspectives*, Vol. 31, No. 4, p. 324

¹² Green & Skinner, 005; King & al. (1986); Macan (1994); Slaven & Totterdell (1993); Van Eerde (2003); Hall & Hirsch (1982); Orpen (1994)

¹³ Van Eerde, W. (2003). Procrastination at work and time management training, in *Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 137, p. 421 ff.

¹⁴ Watts & Watts (2008)

2. The relationship between time management and well-being from A holistic point of view

As mentioned, the first studies on time management were focused on managers, in order to enable them to reach better performances at work. Subsequently, time management investigations turned to the work environment and techniques in the field as a whole, reaching also employees and, in general, the overall organization of workplaces. Later on, the science of time management has evolved and further broadened its scope: many researches had started to find out the impact of time management and organization skills over the quality of people's life in a broader and more general sense.

Time management has caught an attention not only of business, but also of the self-development literature that follows a more holistic approach, embracing life in general and with aspects of educational perspective.¹⁵ In this context, time management represent a self-regulation behavior that consists in a series of individual initiatives to monitor and regulate time use,¹⁶ that also has beneficial outcomes for people's physical and mental health, and for overall satisfaction and well-being.

The relationship of time management with non-economic variables such as the ones mentioned above has been analyzed by various authors.¹⁷ Person-related outcomes such as reduced anxiety, reduced job-induced and somatic tensions, job satisfaction and overall life satisfaction have been related to the learning and application of time management, organization and planning skills. In general, the outcomes have confirmed the existence of a positive relationship between the control of time (expressed through time management behaviors) and the so called work-life balance.

¹⁵ Zimmermann, B. (2008). Investigating self-regulation and motivation: Historical background, methodological developments, and future prospects, in *American Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 45, p. 166 ff.; Ning, H. K., & Downing, K. (2010). The reciprocal relationship between motivation and self-regulation: A longitudinal study on academic performance, in *learning and Individual Differences*, v. 69, p. 205 ff.; Xu, J., Du, J., Wang, C., Liu, F., Huang, B., Zhang, M., & Lie, J. (2020). Intrinsic motivation, favorability, time management, and achievement: A cross-lagged panel analysis, in *Learning and Motivation*, Vol. 72, p. 1 ff.

¹⁶ Pintrich, P. R. (2004). A conceptual framework for assessing motivation and self-regulated learning in college students, in *Educational Psychology Review*, Vol. 16, p. 385 ff.

¹⁷ Macan, T. H. (1994). Time management: test of a process model, in *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 79, p. 381 ff.; Misra, R., & McKean, M. (2000). College students' academic stress and its relation to their anxiety, time management, and leisure satisfaction, in *American Journal of Health Studies*, Vol. 16, p. 41 ff.; Pérez-González, F., García-Ros, R., & Talaya González, I. (2003). Learning styles and management skills of academic time in secondary education, *Revista Portuguesa de Educação*, Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 59-74; Strazdins, L., Griffin, A. L., Broom, D. H., Banwell, C., Korda, R., & Dixon, J. (2011). Time scarcity: another health inequality? *Environment and Planning A*, Vol. 43, No. 3, pp. 545-559; Boixadós, M., Hernández-Encuentra, E., & Pousada, M. (2012). *Personal time management and quality of life in the network society*, in Stoilov, T. (Ed.). *Time Management, InTech*, New York, 19 p., ISBN: 978-953-51-0335-6, available at: www.intechopen.com/books/timemanagement/personal-time-management-and-quality-of-life-in-the-network-society

In this sense, an important aspect concerns the consideration of time management and its positive outcomes not only in the work environment – and within the professional performance – but also in relationship with personal life: work-life balance has been studied as an outcome of the application of time management skills.¹⁸ In this perspective, the positive effects following a proper time management are naturally experienced at work, on the basis of the most recent approach that considers personal and professional life as two communicating vessels, where the dynamics occurring in one context necessarily influence the others'. Starting from the assumption that our lives are not made of clean, separated and disconnected "boxes", the natural interference between family life and work constitutes a field of study on the well-being of people as a consequence of a certain type of organization.¹⁹ Since family and work "interfere" with each other²⁰ (so to say), if this relationship is conflictual it is possible to experience dissatisfaction and even health complaints. In this context, the learning and application of time management behaviors²¹ has proven to be beneficial for the reduction of work-family conflicts, through a specific influence on the perceived control of time. This means that workers who perceive themselves as having greater control over their (work, but also family) time are less prone to stress caused by a dysfunctional work-family balance, to job dissatisfaction and to health problems.

From the above, it is apparent how soft skills acquired mainly for professional purposes, if correctly employed in other contexts, may exert positive direct or indirect externalities – either because a better work time management helps reducing a work-life conflict, either because methodologies and techniques for time management can be replicated in non-professional tasks as well increasing the capacity to perform task and reduce anxiety. The beneficial effects of time management are the result of a better self-perception of one's ability to be in charge of roles, tasks and duties. In other words, a more active role in the definition of one's goals and priorities, as well as a better schedule and application of organization techniques, determines a better psychological self-perception of one's success in managing all aspects of life.

¹⁸ Adams, G. A., & Jex, S. M. (1999). Relationships between time management, control, work-family conflict, and strain. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 4, pp. 72-7

¹⁹ See Adams, G. A., & Jex, S. M. (1999). Relationships between time management, control, work-family conflict, and strain, in *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, Vol. 4, p. 72 ff.

²⁰ Reference is made, for the purpose of this contribution, to time-based conflicts where time demands associated with family roles and work roles interfere with each other: Adams, G. A., & Jex, S. M. (1999). cit., p. 72

²¹ Following the accredited work of Macan, T. H. (1994). *Time management: test of a process model*, cit., time management behaviours are divided in three main categories: a) setting goals and priorities; b) making lists and schedules; c) organization.

3. The impact of time management on achievement and motivation

Researches showing that student's academic performances are influenced by various factors, among which there is time management, have also highlighted the importance of the role of Universities in identifying those factors and in improving the acquisitions that those factors and the related skills by students.²² When studying the effects of time management behaviors on learning outcomes and academic results, it was found that there is a positive relationship between time management and achievement.²³ The latter indicates the capacity to be successful in an activity or, in other terms, the act of reaching a goal, thus concerning the actual outcomes of a performance.²⁴ The prior use of self-regulatory strategies of that kind showed subsequent better results in those terms.

Other than achievement, motivation is another factor which enables people to reach their goals. In psychology, motivation is defined as the drive or impulse that gives purpose or direction to human behavior.²⁵ Motivation psychology addresses the “whys” and “hows” of activities that reflect the pursuit of a particular goal.²⁶ According to some studies, a correlation between time management and motivation has been found, according to which prior time management conduces to higher motivation.²⁷

In order to understand the reasons why certain self-regulation behaviors may increase motivation, it is necessary to introduce the concepts of intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation.²⁸ Intrinsic motivation is the impetus or inspiration to do something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable. When acting because of an intrinsic motivation, there is no obvious external reward, but the act is driven by an internal will: the end result satisfies the

²² Womble, P. (2003). Impacts of Stress factors on college student's academic performance. *Undergraduate Journal of Psychology*, 16(1), pp. 16–23

²³ Britton, B. K., & Tesser, A. (1991). *Effects of Time-Management Practices on College Grades*, cit.; Núñez, J. C., Suárez, N., Rosário, P., Vallejo, G., Valle, A. & Epstein, J. L. (2015). Relationships between perceived parental involvement in homework, student homework behaviors, and academic achievement: differences among elementary, junior high, and high school students, in *Metacognition and learning*, Vol. 10(3), p. 375 ff.

²⁴ Winne, P. H., & Nesbit, J. C. (2010). The Psychology of Academic Achievement, in *Annual Review of Psychology*, Vol. 61, p. 653 ff.

²⁵ APA Dictionary of Psychology, available at <https://dictionary.apa.org/> (last accessed November 12th, 2020)

²⁶ Heckhausen, J., Heckhausen, H. (2018). *Motivation and Action: Introduction and Overview*, in J. Heckhausen, H. Heckhausen (eds.), *Motivation and Action*, 3rd ed., p. 1 ff.

²⁷ Ning, H. K., & Downing, K. (2010). *The reciprocal relationship between motivation and self-regulation*, cit., p. 205 ff.; Xu, J., Du, J., Wang, C., Liu, F., Huang, B., Zhang, M. & Lie, J. (2020). *Intrinsic motivation, favorability, time management, and achievement*, cit., p. 9 ff.

²⁸ In this contribution we follow the definitions given by Ryan R. M. and Deci E. L. within their Self-Determination Theory: see Ryan, R. M. & Deci, E. L. (2000). Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: Classic Definitions and New Directions, in *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, Vol. 25, p. 54

conscious, the ego, or the self-esteem in a positive way. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome: there are many sources of extrinsic motivation, whose common trait is to stem from a source that is external and separate from (although not necessarily in conflict with) the inner goals and aspirations of the subject. Extrinsic motivation may also occur when a person carries out an action because there will be a tangible reward to it (such as good grades or an increment in salary).

According to some studies, there is a close relationship between time management and intrinsic motivation.²⁹ On the one hand, the emotional implications that underline our intrinsic motivation, the value each person assigns to his or her work, and the self-perception of competences and abilities may affect to the way we manage our time. On the other hand, if we acquire time management skills, our perceived control of time may affect positively our motivation to perform a certain task. The underlying attitudes and goals that give rise to action are psychological, in the sense that increasing our perceived control of time makes us more confident in the performance of activities. The prior organization of time, eventually through the development of a clear plan and the reservation of specific time slots for the performance of an activity, raises the perceived importance of the tasks to be done and makes the subsequent, effective performance more likely.

In this context, time management seems to play an important role especially for students. Assuming that students' motivation and performances are often affected by their way of coping with academic stress and anxiety (*e.g.* following a negative result or before a deadline or an exam), students who take advantage of time management skills should be able to manage stress more effectively. In this regard, research has shown that time management skills bring more positive effects than leisure satisfaction activities,³⁰ that may have a role in reducing stress in the short-term, but may obviously obstacle the effective achievement of academic goals in the long run. In other terms, time management skills would consent a better use of time also for the purpose of engaging in leisure and stress-reducing activities and without compromising academic success.

As concerns the work environment, the management of human resources is very much focused on the improvement in performance of employers, with a view of increasing their efficiency through motivation.³¹ Time management

²⁹ See the studies cited above, at note 34

³⁰ Misra, R., & McKean, M. (2000). College students' academic stress and its relation to their anxiety, time management, and leisure satisfaction, in *American Journal of Health Studies*, Vol. 16, p. 41 ff.

³¹ Awosusi, O. O. (2011). *International Journal of Pharma and Bio Sciences*. Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria,

behaviors have been found to be positively correlated with job satisfaction, health³² and motivation.³³ Time management also has an important role in reducing the risk of burnout. Burnout is a stress syndrome generally caused by heavy workloads or high performance demands in a job's given time throughout its lifespan. Other than the burnout that may occur during university studies, this phenomenon is one of the most studied problems in the field of organizational psychology.³⁴ Indeed, one of the factors that has a main role in job-related stress is time perceived as a "resource": the feeling of having too much to do and not enough time to do it is what causes the negative consequences linked to stress and burnout. "Time famine" is the expression used by Perlow to indicate this feeling.³⁵

Among the factors that are particularly likely to influence burnout, motivation has been studied as a key to break the vicious circle between high demands, accumulation of tasks and the stress resulting from the heavy workload. In particular, intrinsic motivation can improve well-being and performance, since persons who are intrinsically motivated may have more persistence, concentration and effort.³⁶

Since the good application of time management techniques may improve our perceived control of time and therefore may result beneficial for our intrinsic motivation, it could be possible to infer that an improvement in the management of time may have a certain role in preventing and/or reducing the risk of burnout as well. Moreover, people who have excellent time management skills can better cope with a heavy workload, thus preventing demand accumulation.³⁷

On the basis of these considerations, institutions of higher education that offer courses in soft skills, and specifically on time management, usually serve their students well. Firstly, the acquisition and application of time management

Motivation and Job Performances Among Nurses in the Ekiti State Environment of Nigeria, Vol. 2; Ahmad, Nor Lela & Yusuf, Ahmad & Shobri, Nor & Wahab, Samsudin (2012). The Relationship between Time Management and Job Performance in Event Management. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 65, pp. 937-941; Erwin, M. (2009). 21st Century Time management: New Delhi: time creation press; Goddard, R. (2001). Time in Organisations. *Journal of management and development*, Vol. 20, Iss/pp. 19-27; Häfner, A., & Stock, A. (2010). Time Management Training and Perceived Control of Time at Work, *The Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 144, pp. 429-447

³² Claessens, B. J. C., Eerde, W. V., Rutte, C. G., & Roe, R. A. (2007). *A review of the time management literature. Personnel Review*, Emerald Group Publishing, 36 (2), pp. 255-276

³³ Alvani, C. M. (2008). *Public management*. Tehran: Ney publication

³⁴ Brummelhuis, L. L., Hoeven, C. L., Bakker, A. B., & Peper, B. (2011). Breaking through the loss cycle of burnout: The role of motivation, in *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 84, p. 268; Khodaveisi, M., Bahar, G. S., & Ahmadi, S. (2015). The Relation between time management and job stress in physical education lecturers and faculty members of Hamedan Universities. *Sport Science*, 8(1), pp. 60-63

³⁵ Perlow, L. A. (1999). The time famine: Toward a sociology of work time. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44, pp. 51-81

³⁶ Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development and well-being, in *American Psychologist*, Vol. 55, p. 68-78

³⁷ Macan (1994)

skills improves academic performance. Secondly, academic performance is connected and leads to better job opportunities. Thirdly, the positive effects of the acquisition of time management skills is able to affect offers students with techniques and methodologies that can be adapted to the work market and thus serve stress management also outside the academic environment, after graduation in the professional life.³⁸

4. The relationship between procrastination and performance: time management as an effective tool against procrastination.

Procrastination is defined as a behavior that consists in the avoidance of the execution of an intended action.³⁹ In other words, it is a dilatory tendency that consists in postponing tasks and activities that are perceived as unpleasant, using an alternative and less important activity as a distraction. The latter usually is an action that can be taken up and abandoned within a short time span.⁴⁰ This behavior produces an immediate – yet temporary – release from stress, but may seriously negatively affect fundamental and significant academic and professional achievements and satisfaction in the long term. Procrastinators are more likely to be behind schedule on personal and professional projects, to study for an exams less hours than intended, to miss deadlines and to engage in higher level of anxiety and agitation. It is no coincidence that procrastination has been defined as the “thief of life”.⁴¹

There are many root causes of procrastination, since the phenomenon involves many psychological aspects⁴²: people may adopt dilatory behaviors when motivation or enthusiasm are lacking, when they are worried about failing or when they engage in perfectionist tendencies. Therefore, procrastination cannot be defined solely as a “time management issue”, but rather is an “emotional management issues” that affects the way we use our time, the way we pursue our goals and the overall results of our work.

Yet, procrastination is one of the most discussed topics in the field of

³⁸ As out outlined by Al Khatib AS, Time management and its relation to students' stress, gender and academic achievement among sample of students at Al Ain University of science and technology, UAE. *International Journal of Business and Social Research*, 2014, 4(5), pp. 47–58

³⁹ Van Eerde, W. (2003). Procrastination at Work and Time Management Training, *The Journal of Psychology*, 137:5, pp. 421–434

⁴⁰ Sabini, J., Silver, M. (1982). *Moralities of everyday life*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press

⁴¹ Tracy, B. (2013). *Time management*. New York, NY: AMACOM, p. 67

⁴² Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. New York: Springer

time management, because it is a highly diffused behavior among people⁴³ that affects the use of time resources.

One of the most recurring cause of procrastination is the emotional state connected with the fear of failure. This trait may also be connected with perfectionist tendencies. Individuals who possess the trait procrastination tend to believe they are not capable or are inadequate to perform a certain task and that assignments or job demands are too numerous and/or difficult.⁴⁴ It has been studied that it is plausible that a connection exists between procrastination and an individual's sense of competence, meaning that a low self-perception of competence may rise fear of failure and therefore lead to procrastinating behaviors.⁴⁵ It follows that an intervention that targets general perceived competence and ability to successfully complete certain tasks can potentially reduce the risk of procrastination. Other than the specific primary competences that are necessary to engage in a professional activity, time management should be considered as a secondary skill that enables individual to have a better self-perception of their ability to perform certain tasks. The perceived control of time may help in increasing self-confidence in the possession of the necessary competences.

Indeed, the relationship between time management and procrastination has been studied in the sense that the first can have a positive impact on the second. Lay and Schouwenburg in 1993⁴⁶ presented the result of a research that intended to study the positive or negative relation between time management skills and procrastination, as well as between time management and negative states as agitation or depression. According to the study, a better perceived control of time (improved through time management skills) is able to reduce behaviors related to procrastination. This reduces, as a consequence, the occurrence of dilatory behavior, agitation and depression.

Van Eerde in 2003⁴⁷ argued that time management training can decrease significantly avoidance behavior and can lessen overall procrastination in

⁴³ Procrastination affects between 40 and 70 percent of university students and is closely related to academic performance (see Pastana, J. V. and Codina, N. (2014). The academic performance of university students: their temporary perspectives and procrastinating tendencies, in en Pérez-Serrano, G. and De-Juana Oliva, A. (Eds), Education and Youth in Times of Change, pp. 1-27)

⁴⁴ Ellis, A., & Knaus, W. J. (1977). *Overcoming procrastination*. New York: Institute for Rational Living; Solomon, L. J., & Rothblum, B. D. (1984). Academic procrastination: frequency and cognitive behavioural correlates. *Journal of Counselling Psychology*, 31, pp. 503-509; Kachgal, M. M., Hansen, L. S., & Nutter, K. J. (2001). Academic procrastination prevention/intervention: Strategies and recommendations. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 25, pp. 14-24

⁴⁵ Haghbin, M., McCaffrey, A. Pychyl, T. A. (2012). The Complexity of the Relation between Fear of Failure and Procrastination. *J Rat-Emo Cognitive-Behav Ther*, Vol. 30, pp. 249-263

⁴⁶ Lay, C., Schouwenburg, H. (1993). Trait Procrastination, Time Management, and Academic Behavior. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, 8, pp. 647-662

⁴⁷ Van Eerde, W. (2003). *Procrastination at Work and Time Management Training*, cit.

employers. Similarly, other researchers⁴⁸ have concluded that people with more training in relation to time management are able to better control procrastination, through a more equitable allocation of time to tasks.

With specific regard to this last point, planning has positive outcomes as concerns the development of anti-procrastination habits. Planning can make a distant outcome more tangible, because it splits a final goal in smaller processes and steps⁴⁹. Indeed, the most prominent challenge when it comes to pursuing a goal is getting started with goal-directed actions. In fact, even when a goal is clear and defined, the difficulties – especially for individuals who are prone to procrastination – are inherent to transform intentions into actions. This strong relationship between “task aversiveness” and procrastination is thought the result from a conflict between attractive long-term consequences of an action and less attractive short-term consequences⁵⁰: this means that a person chooses to perform a task that is more attractive in the present moment, instead of a task that is more useful for the pursue of the goal.

In the light of the above, the individuation of well-defined actions that will conduce to a goal is useful for subsequent performance. This may also help to strengthen determination and self-control, because following a plan means consciously choosing to act according to the long-term outcome rather than distracting oneself with less important tasks.

Conclusions

This contribution fosters the idea that time management and efficient planning skills should be acquired before an individual enters the job market. If students already face many challenges in the management of their time during their academic career and those challenges are not processed in a well-rounded and constructive way, personal tendencies and habits will occur also in professional life.

The cited studies that have addressed many aspects of time management strengthen the idea that time management skills may have beneficial effects on

⁴⁸ Gallander, M., Dilouya, B., Mark, S., Pratt, M., Birnie-Lefcovitch, S., Polivy, J., & Adams, G. (2011). Academic achievement in first-year university: who maintains their high school average? *High Education*, Vol. 62 No. 4, pp. 467–481, DOI: 10.1007/s10734-010-9399-2; Häfner, A., Oberst, V., & Stock, A. (2014). Avoiding procrastination through time management: an experimental intervention study, *Educational Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 3, pp. 352–360

⁴⁹ Pham, L. B., & Taylor, S. E. (1999). From Thought to Action: Effects of Process-Versus Outcome-Based Mental Simulations on Performance. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, Vol. 25, pp. 250–260

⁵⁰ Wieber, F., & Gollwitzer, P. (2010). Overcoming Procrastination through Planning. Publ. in: *The thief of time: Philosophical essays on procrastination* / ed. by Andreou C., White M. D, New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 185–205

achievement, motivation and general goal striving. Moreover, time management now results to be an important tool in order to reach a correct work-life balance, with positive effects in both aspects of life and – most of all – for the overall wellbeing of an individual.

A general conclusion that can be drawn from the present analysis is that time management is conditioned by the existence of a multitude of subjective and psychological elements, that make it difficult to elaborate a general and absolute theory and model for time management. If the task to create a time management model valid in any circumstance for anyone seems impossible to reach – than the quest of time management becomes more narrow, but feasible and social utile: increase awareness in people about factors subjective and objective factors that usually lower efficiency in productivity and help them understand to which degree they are exposed to such factors.⁵¹ This first step can usually be carried out by ways of self-assessment instruments, by which persons review their approach to work or study methodology, and environment and are called to analyze the most critical habits.

Following all the above, it is certain that the current working scenario makes it essential to manage time efficiently: the logical consequence is time management being perceived as a skill that should be learned at the university. However, this is not always the case, since soft skills are not always reserved an adequate attention within college curricula.⁵² At the same time, the acquisition of those skills results to be very much needed in the higher education environment, where students start to face challenges related to the management of workload, the coordination of different duties and responsibilities, the fulfilment of the activities of academic and personal life.⁵³ Those difficulties of college students, in absence of concrete strategies and tools to overcome them, often result in higher levels of stress and anxiety,⁵⁴ in lower academic performances,⁵⁵ in the inability to reason from a long-term perspective in setting academic goals.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Wratcher, M. A., & Jones, R. O. (1988). A time management workshop for adult learners, in *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 27, p. 566 ff.

⁵² On the contrary, education systems should contribute in building soft skills, as a recognition of individuals' capacity, including non-academic knowledge: in this sense Levy, P. (2000). La cibercultura y la educación, *Pedagogía y Saberes*, No. 14, pp. 23–31, available at: doi.org/10.17227/01212494.14pys23.31

⁵³ See the studies by Britton, B. K., & Tesser, A. (1991). Effects of Time-Management Practices on College Grades, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, Vol. 83 No. 3, pp. 405–410; Lay, C. H. & Schouwenburg, H. C. (1993). Trait procrastination, time management, and academic behavior. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, Vol. 8, No. 4, pp. 647–66

⁵⁴ Macan, T. H., & Shahani, C. (1990). College Students' Time Management: Correlations With Academic Performance and Stress. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, Vol. 82, No. 4, pp. 760–768

⁵⁵ Britton, B. K., & Tesser, A. (1991). *Effects of Time-Management Practices on College Grades*, cit.; Khanam, N., Sahu T., Rao, E. V., Kar, S. K., & Syeed Zahiruddin Quazi (2017). A study on university student's time management and academic achievement. *International Journal of Community Medicine and Public Health*, Vol. 4, No. 12, pp. 4761–4765

⁵⁶ Seinz, M. A., Ferrero, A. M., & Ugidos, A. (2019). Time management: skills to learn and put into practice, in *Education and Training*

The acquisition of time management and planning skills in college may result in more effective positive outcomes if those capacities are developed through specific and well-structured training programs. Moreover, employers have become more sensitive to candidates already having acquired sets of soft skills, which are now considered valuable assets in a future employee.⁵⁷ University curricula should align with this demand from the employment market, giving students the possibility to be aware of the importance of soft skills.

⁵⁷ Robles, M. M. (2012). *Executive Perceptions of the Top 10 Soft Skills*, cit., p. 453 ff.; Klaus, P. (2010). Communication Breakdown, in *California Job Journal*, Vol. 28, p. 1 ff.

CHAPTER 3

ABILITY TO COOPERATE IN A TEAM



THE NEXT LEVEL OF A HIGH-PERFORMANCE TEAM

By Jan van Zwieten

Annotation: A well-functioning care team consists of individuals whose motivation, mutual interaction and communication are essential for good team performance. A well-functioning team should also pay attention to ethical awareness in various areas such as sustainability, social responsibility and quality of life. Attention should also be paid to the personality characteristics of team members. Research shows that a TopTeam requires more than just the individual capabilities of team members.

A well-composed team is based on optimising the knowledge, skills, and personal motivations of all team members in the areas described in this article.

Keywords: high performance team, leadership, development, sustainability, personality analysis, alignment.

Summary: Introduction – 1. Why are people together and when can one speak of a team? – 2. Team development. – 3. Teamstar model. – Conclusions.

Introduction

During the second half of the twentieth century, many companies have started working with the concept of “High Performance Team”. What is new in this manner of thinking, is that there is much more attention to the team members, their mindset and their behaviour. We started to realise that a team consists of individual persons and that motivation, interaction and communication are essential for performance. In 1950, the Tavistock Institute (U.K.) had already described the characteristics of a high performing team, yet it would still take many years before larger companies welcomed the concept with open arms. This acceptance (mostly in the United States) grew simultaneously with the results of successful implementations into a select group of big organisations. However, as is often the case, success may become a pitfall. Many advisors developed variants that did not always lead to better results. The concept’s popularity thereupon decreased, but the general way of thinking about the

successful functioning of teams remained.^{1, 2}

At the start of this century, we thus saw a revival of this concept, albeit with a few contemporary additions. In this article, we will refer to it as the strive for a “dream team”. Most changes to the ‘old’ concept were caused by external factors. The development in company life (with a culture of short-term results and a number of large fraud cases) gave input for extra attention to the ethical awareness. Besides, we now also take sustainability (climate) and social responsibility and the quality of life into account. It should therefore come as no surprise that we have seen this arise in the manner of thinking about dream teams as well.

The basic definition of a team that comes forward in all publications is simple: **“Two or more individuals that cooperate in order to reach a common goal.”**

However, the basic thought of how High-Performance Team expresses itself might be best clarified by Dutch philosopher (and football player) Johan Cruyff: **“If you choose the best player for every position, you would not have a strong team, but one that falls apart like loose sand”.**

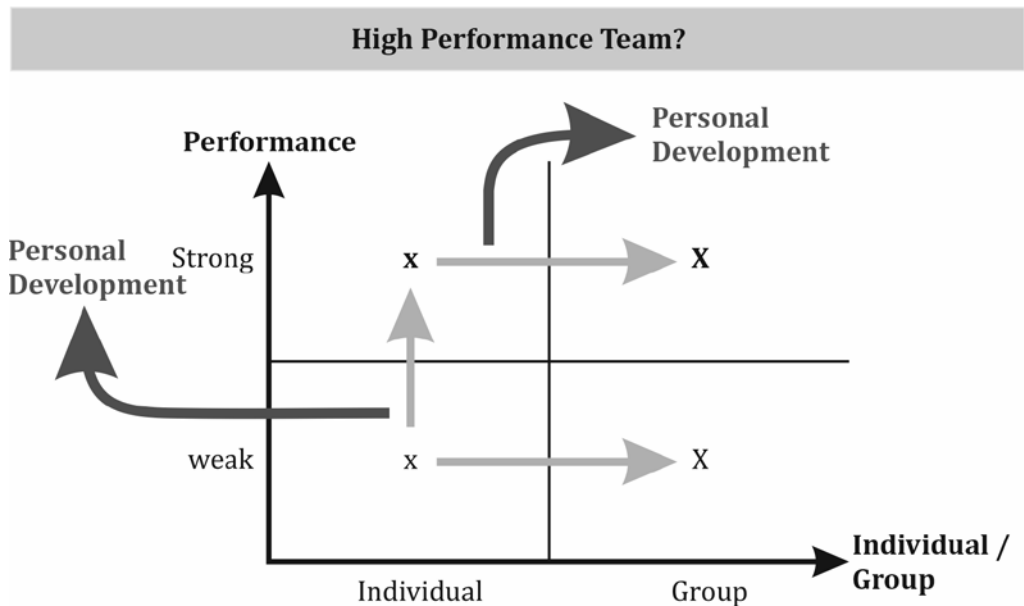


Figure 1. High Performing team

¹ Katzenbach, et al. (2003). *The Wisdom of Teams*, Harper Business

² Bard, R. (2015). *Strategies to achieve high performance in hybrid project teams: Addressing the relationship between Swedish project managers and Indian specialists at IBM Global Services*. Chalmers University of Technolog

When thinking about teams in the elementary form, we thus find a clear dichotomy: the core of this thought is that it is not only about making the individual members of the team stronger, but that there is also a dimension to make them optimally work together. This collaboration starts with divisions of tasks and placing the right person in the right place, yet evidently goes much further. How do we make sure that they actually work together to achieve the goals?³ The interpretation of the characteristics and thus the formula for success as a team is always different for all authors.

In this article we follow the structure of the Teamstar model. This model includes all the characteristics that have emerged in major, serious investigations since 1950, and in addition includes thinking in continuity and sustainability. Out of this we can construct the following structure:

- Unifying separate individuals into a single entity; alignment and involvement;
- The optimal level of functioning as a dream team; efficiency and effectivity;
- Ensuring a sustainable dream team is created; development and vitality.

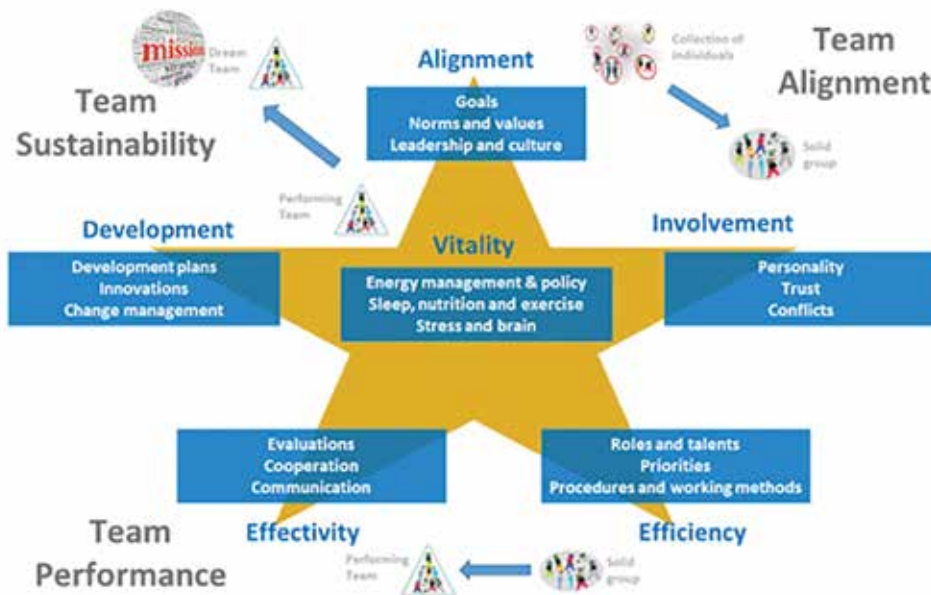


Figure 2. Teamstar by van Zwieten and Smit, 2019

³ Van Zwieten, et al. (2015). *De Talent Coach*, Vakmedianet

This article discusses the basic structure of thinking about teams. What is a team? In what way has thinking about teams developed over time? What are the characteristics of a dream team? This all comes together in the three aforementioned main elements. These key elements are the core for successful working in teams.

1. Why are people together and when can one speak of a team?

1.1 Social cohesion

There are many different reasons why people are together, and with that comes a variety of forms of cooperation. This is important to understand, because it also determines what leads to optimal collaboration. What interests do people have? What moves them? Why do they do what they do? And in this context, when are we talking about a team? To answer these questions, a number of elements are decisive:

- **The degree of connectedness.** There is a significant difference in whether people are together only once for example to watch a disaster, artist or event, whether people are connected based on a common identity (religion, culture), or whether they have to perform a common task together (organisation, sports team).
- **The duration of cooperation.** Often groups are connected for a certain period of time. This may be for one-time activities, a project, time-related or permanent.
- **The frequency of being together.**

Basically, the subdivision of the partnerships is as follows:

- Crowd (or mob); unrelated individuals who are together for a temporary goal;
- Alliance; a partnership of groups who (often for a limited amount of time) want to solve a particular problem;
- Group; a number of people with a common identity;
- Team; a group that regularly works together on related tasks to achieve a common goal or goals.

A **crowd** is a number of stand-alone individuals who are together for a specific (usually fairly general) purpose. We can actually split this in two categories; crowd and mob. A crowd comes together for something specific (a fire or a VIP), but what is missing is the common purpose, the feeling of belonging, there is no real bond between the people and they also do not pursue a common goal in which they need each other. It is therefore known from psychology that people tend to blend in with the masses and do not take responsibility in such a situation. In the event of an accident involving many bystanders, only with great exception will one take initiative. In the case of a mob, there is a certain form of structure, there is a common goal for which people want to work hard, for example the call of the masses for the resignation of a president. Since it is about connecting many people on one subject, without a deeper basis of identity, it is in almost all cases focussed on one aspect, and thus ephemeral and variable.

An **alliance** is a partnership in which a number of groups unite to pursue an important goal. In doing so, they often give up part of their autonomy. However, the strength of this binding force is proportional to the importance attached to it. In the fight against Islamic State (IS/Daesh), an alliance of all militarily active parties in the region emerged. The weaker IS became, the looser the alliance would return to action. The United Nations is an alliance that has a much longer life. But here too we see that the common interest does not always come first. This phenomenon is seen in many areas, such as politics, businesses or even children at schools.

A **group** has its own identity, one may speak of social cohesion. This provides a more structural basis for the sense belonging. This is expressed in a common goal (at least reflecting the connection to this identity) and the values and standards that fit the identity of the group. We can think of nations, religious groups, diversity groups, economic partnerships, political connectedness. People often belong to different groups (faith, country, gender, party, etc.) and therefore have different elements in their identity. People can belong to the same group (country), but because of belonging to other groups they still can be in conflict. Consider the persecution of minorities in a country.

Social psychologist Muzafer Sherif defined a social unit (group) as a number of individuals that have common ground on the following aspects:

- Common motives and goals;
- An agreed upon division of tasks, i.e., roles;
- Established status (social rang, dominance), relationships;
- Accepted norms and values relating to relevant problems for the group;
- Development of affirmed sanctions (reward and punishment) if and when norms are strived for or violated.

In a **team**, people work together based on a division of tasks to achieve certain goals. It is clearly defined what participation in the team entails and in what manner individual roles are divided. However, the core is that even when everyone makes their own contribution, the team as a whole is responsible for the result. Teams are therefore formed if the tasks are too extensive and/or too complex for an individual. Different qualities and competencies are often necessary to achieve certain goals. For example, a football team not only consists of forwards, but of defenders, midfielders and a goalkeeper as well. In addition, we look at right-footed or left-footed players and their captain, a coach, a caretaker, etcetera. It is in no way any different in business.⁴



Depending on the objective, the tasks are determined. These are thereafter assigned to team members. Whenever a team lacks expertise, it will look for this outside the team.

⁴ Ragala, S. (2020). *Crowd, Mob, Group & A Cohesive Team*

Crowd	Alliance	Group	Team
Temporary goal	Specific targeted goal	Common binding through feelings and interests	Team goal-setting
No identity	No identity	Common identity and characteristics	Task descriptions focused on goal
Little binding	Full own autonomy	Affirmed norms and values	Accepted norms and values
Temporary, unpredictable	Dependent on duration and importance of goal	Long-term	Dependent on task
		Established status and relationships	Clear tasks and roles
		Sanction/reward for norms and values	Individual and team results
			Limited size (direct contact between members)

Table 1. Characteristics of crowd, alliance, group and team

Characteristic for a team is therefore mainly the specific objective and the clear division of tasks. It is important that the individual results are clearly defined and people bear responsibility for them as well. A team always consists of a limited number of people who can communicate with each other effectively to perform the tasks together. Research by MIT (Prof Alex “Sandy” Pentland) has shown a direct link between the degree of direct contact and the results of a team.⁵ Direct contact (instead of email and remote steering) provides energy, creativity and common will in order to reach certain goals. More contact resulted in significantly better performance. But the contacts must always be short and effective. Based on this, the optimal team size is maintained at 7 to 10 people.

The underlying thought when discussing a team, is that the cooperation leads to synergy, i.e., the output of the team is higher than the sum of the performances of individual team members.

⁵ Pentland, A. (2012). The New Science of Building Great Teams, *Harvard Business Review*

1.2. Development of general visions regarding team

Our way of thinking about teams origins in the 1950s. This is a logical looking at the development of society over the years. Between 1750 and 1950 (Industrial Revolution), we see companies are managed primarily on operations. Logistics, planning and structure must occupy center-stage. The principles of Frenchman Henri Fayol and the American Frederick Taylor (described and put into practice between 1860 and 1920) are regarded as a model for the aforementioned way of management. This is described as scientific management or knowledge management. People (employees) are not important as human beings and treated as a machine.

Around 1950 managers start realizing that teams are made up of people. The first studies are carried out to see how we can bring these people to reach optimal performance. In particular, the publications of the “Tavistock Institute” in the 1950s gave a good overall view of the new way of thinking, people are key. Their concept of “High Performance Teams” (HPT) was quickly gaining popularity.

The concept of HPT is basically quite simple; a solid team that continuously achieves good results because of cooperation and innovation. The focus on the results ensures that they as a unity manage to solve all problems.

Follow-up studies such as those of Gully (from 1995 to 2002)⁶ and Baker (2006)⁷ gave a new boost with additional evidence that the following elements lead to more effective team performance:

- A clear goal in which involved individuals actually believe;
- The required knowledge, ability and skills in order to realise the goals;
- Flexibility and capacity to adapt (self confidence in one’s own abilities);
- All team members are individually prepared to do what it takes in order to reach the goals and do take their responsibility;
- Participants give up part of their autonomy and tune their actions in accordance with colleagues. Hereby, we find good mutual relationships;
- Conflicts and feedback are used constructively and do not affect the atmosphere.

During later phases, a few elements were added and/or specified:

- A democratic leadership style (participative leadership), in which team members are feeling involved;

⁶ Gully, et al. (1995). *A Meta-Analysis of Cohesion and Performance: Effects of Level of Analysis and Task Interdependence*, Michigan State University

⁷ Baker, et al. (2006). *Teamwork as an Essential Component of High-Reliability Organizations*

- Effective decision-making (both rational and intuitive, depending on the decision);
- Open and clear communication;
- Open to look for complementarity. Usage of all available knowledge and abilities in the team;
- Mutual trust; trust in the team and one's co-workers;
- Clear roles, task descriptions and responsibilities that are acknowledged by all team members;
- Culture characterised by openness, transparency, positivity and future-oriented; Everything is focussed on the successful execution of the goal.



Figure 3. Elements of High-Performance team

2. Team development

2.1. Phases of Tuckman

The basis of thinking about the phases a team experiences has been laid by Professor Bruce Tuckman. In 1965, he described the phases of group development. He concluded there are four phases: forming – storming – norming –

performing. In 1977 he added adjournment (farewell). Schematically, this can be displayed as follows:⁸

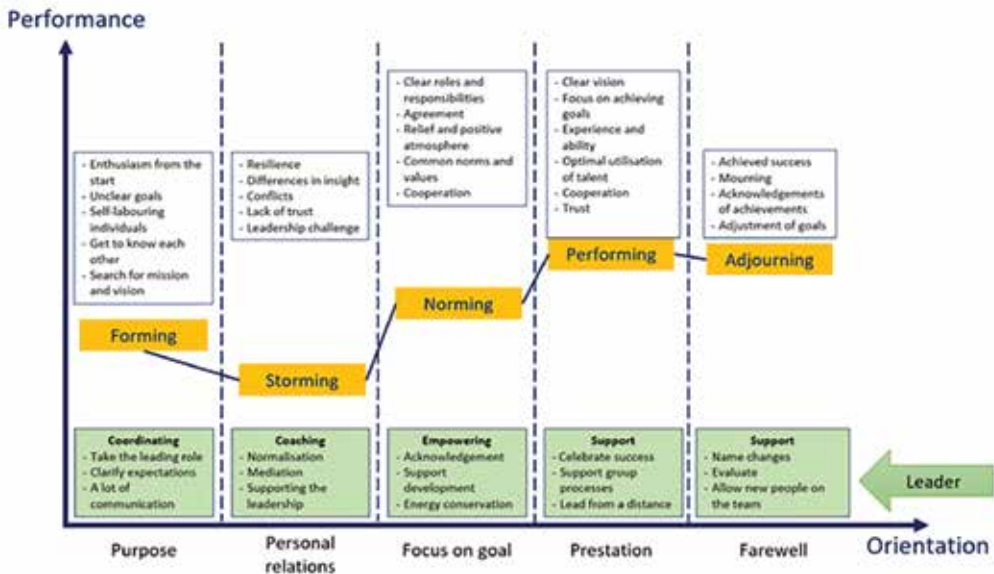


Figure 4. The phases of a team, Tuckman, 1965–1977

Tuckman's studies showed that about 50% of the teams skipped phase 2 (storming) and went directly from phase 1 to phase 3. Teams that did go through the storming phase risked getting stuck inside it or falling back into it because the relations were structurally disturbed.



⁸ Tuckman, B. W. (1965). Developmental sequence in small groups, *Psychological Bulletin*; Tuckman, B. W., & Jensen, M. A. C (1971). *Stages of Small-Group Development Revisited*, Group and Organisation Studies

In Tuckman's phases, we see that the processes of a High-Performance Team are central:

- **Determination of strategy;** the tasks of the team are derived from the goals that are to be achieved. The basis is therefore a clear determination of the mission, vision and the strategic objectives to be deduced from it. In this development, the way in which these goals are determined moves from "Tell" to "Ask". The further the team gets, the more the objectives are determined in consultation and the more the leader is distanced from.
- **Social interaction;** how do teams cope with differences of opinion and the frictions or even conflicts that arise from this. In later phases the way members are motivated and want to cooperate.
- **Operational processes;** in order to achieve the goals, it is important to optimise the operational processes. The start therefore mainly concerns the coordination of activities. The further the team develops, the more it shifts to coaching and supporting the team members and their interaction. Ultimately, monitoring progress and evaluating the deployment of people and resources become part of this category.

2.2 Personality analysis – DISC and Belbin

More and more, the emphasis of thinking about teams has shifted to partnership. It is therefore not surprising that there is much attention paid to personality traits of team members. The starting point is often that one searches for characteristics that match the primary task and purpose of the team. Later, however, people became aware that there must be sufficient diversity. The complementarity ensures that all the necessary competencies are present when the team ultimately has to execute the tasks. An overly one-sided composition of the team presents problems in performing certain tasks and possible blind spots that can prevent the team from reaching its goals or even break up the team. As an example – the management team of a construction company consisted of all structured rational thinkers who had made their mark in carrying out complex construction projects. Eventually, they were unsuccessful on the market, because of a lack of creativity and flexibility. In an ever changing market, they did not move fast enough and the strategy was not focused on future challenges.

Initially, DISC was often used as one of the first methodologies in the field of behavioural determination. Then, in 1981, Belbin published his book

“Management Teams”. As DISC is more focused on individuals, Belbin developed an assessment on the same bases that mapped 9 team roles. Belbin worked for 7 years with specialists from a completely different background. They were hence able to make a statement about a team’s performance with reasonable certainty.

Belbin has derived some important conclusions:

- Having too many comparable profiles begets a one-sided manner of team functioning;
- Similar profiles are inclined to compete against one another, something that results in unproductive conflicts;
- People must be awarded a role that fits their natural preferences;
- Almost everybody has two preferences. Using them, it becomes easy to cover all tasks;
- Team members must learn to think complementary instead of divergent (which, in their opinion, implies dysfunctional behaviour).

Seeing personality traits as part of specific competencies has given it an extra dimension. This complements the aforementioned studies by the Tavistock Institute and Tuckman.⁹

2.3 Lencioni

Although Patrick Lencioni’s most important work was published in 2002 (“The Five Dysfunctions of a Team”), it is still undoubtedly popular to this day. Notwithstanding that the book is negatively formulated (dysfunctions), one can also suggest it contains the ingredients for successful functioning. Unlike a number of the aforementioned authors, the methodology is not a result of structural research but is based on a lot of experience in consultancy.

Lencioni describes the five frustrations as a cohesive whole. This also indicates that the dysfunction on one of the five axiomatically leads to lower performance. He displays this in the following model:

⁹ Belbin, M. (1981). *Management Teams: Why They Succeed To Fail*, Elsevier Butterworth Heinemann; Belbin, M. (1983). *Team Roles At Work*, Elsevier Butterworth Heinemann

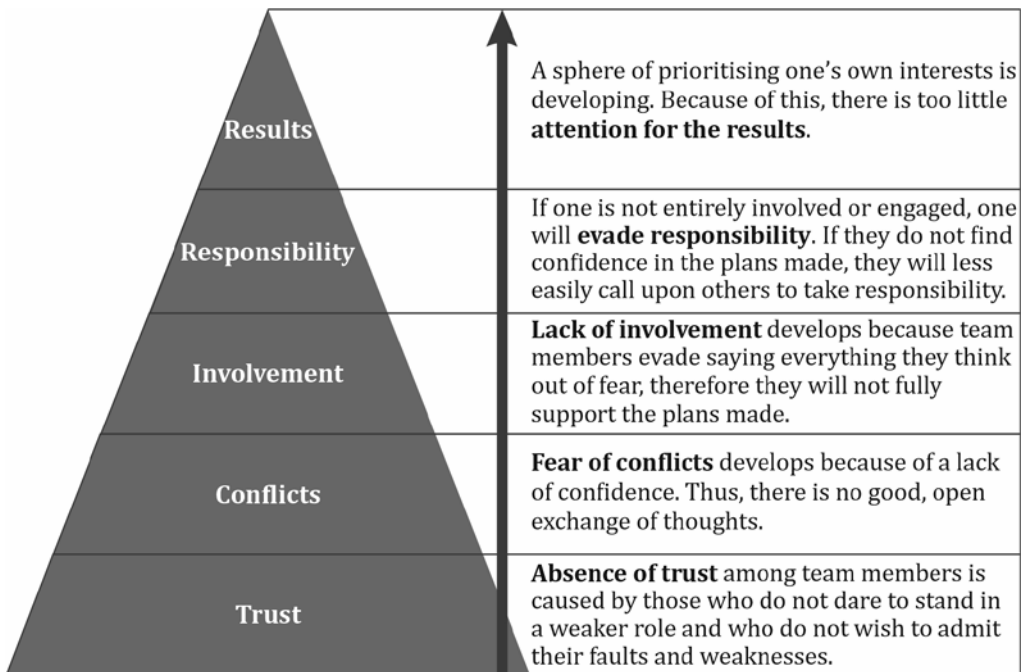


Figure 5. Mofdel of Patrick Lencioni, 2002

It is striking that there are no specific new elements in his vision. What makes this point of view special, is the choice of the most important characteristics of a successful team and the coherence of the elements. The assessments Lencioni has developed for measuring these elements have contributed a great deal to the popularity of his vision.¹⁰

3. Teamstar Model

The Teamstar model consists of three main elements:

- Bringing unrelated individuals to a solid group (alignment); alignment and involvement;
- The optimal functioning of a performing team; efficiency and effectivity;
- Setting the basis for a sustainable dream team; development and vitality.

¹⁰ Lencioni, P. (2002). *The five dysfunctions of a team*, John Wiley & Sons Inc; Lencioni, P. (2012). *The Advantage*, John Wiley & Sons Inc

Here, especially thinking about the future in development and vitality is new. The current requirements call for longer-term thinking. Here, the individual remains central. At a time when it is difficult to attain (skillful) people, attention should be paid to retaining the people (retainment) and maintaining the performance of the employees.

3.1 Alignment

How do we get some loose individuals to act as a team? In sports, we see this in its most extreme form because the results are immediately visible. How is it possible that a team that did not perform well under one coach suddenly wins everything when the coach is changed? Even with the same players! And this is no different in business, but the effect is often only visible on the slightly longer term. So, it is not the level of the team members. It is about the mindset in which participants work together to achieve their goals. We distinguish two main themes; Alignment and Involvement.



Figure 6. Teamstar by van Zwieten and Smit, 2019, Alignment and Involvement

On the one hand, the goal must be clear and appealing. If we do not know where we are going, we will never get there. But it also is demanding good leadership. Does the leader know how to inspire and motivate people to go for these goals? Because we are speaking of a team, this goes beyond just the interests and motivation of the individual. The willingness to support individual interests to the team interest requires a culture of trust based on conformity of

shared values and norms. Understanding the personality of the team members helps to inspire and motivate them. If the culture is such that open feedback can be given and conflicts have a constructive character in the cooperation, the team will be able to achieve synergy.

3.2 Performance

To perform well the team must function effective and efficient.



Figure 7. Teamstar by van Zwieten and Smit, 2019, Effectivity and Efficiency

In order to function efficiently, all the necessary competencies must be present. It is therefore imperative the team have a clear understanding of the tasks, procedures and practices in order to know which expertise is required. Contrastingly, as Belbin has shown, it is not just about the competencies related to the primary processes. It is also necessary to analyse on the basis of the personalities whether the team has what is needed given the task on the long run. Diversity and balance are often the most important factors. Good insight into the procedures and working methods also ensures the efficient distribution of tasks. A well-known phenomenon is the loss of focus on the things that are most important. Therefore, thinking and working according to priorities significantly improves results.

When one discusses the role of a team member, there are a number of extra requirements. Effectiveness is therefore mainly about the interaction between the group members. How do we work together? In what way do we communicate? As Pentland has researched, active but efficient 'live' communication is essential for performance. A system of continuous evaluation, feedback and communication regarding this ensures a lasting growth.

3.3 Sustainability

After a long period in which companies only focussed on short-term (financial) results, there has been a change in thinking patterns. The first reason was the publication of major fraud cases and later the banking crisis. This has led to a call for ethical awareness and the control of excesses in rewards.

In addition, the mentality about quality of life is also different. The increasing number of people with burnouts, structural stress, sleep problems and poor health (obesity, diabetes), alongside the increasing ageing of people accompanied by their necessary need for care, has made people realise that it is not only about the sustainability of companies but also about the sustainability of the people in them.

A third factor is the climate debate and the call for corporate social responsibility. Under pressure of the younger generation and the studies on problems in the (near) future that can no longer be denied, thinking in sustainability and social accountability for companies has become a reality.

The final phase therefore forces a company to implement innovations and changes to meet the requirements of our time. This implies adjusting the way of doing business to meet the demands of sustainability and climate, as well as better handling of the people in the organisation.

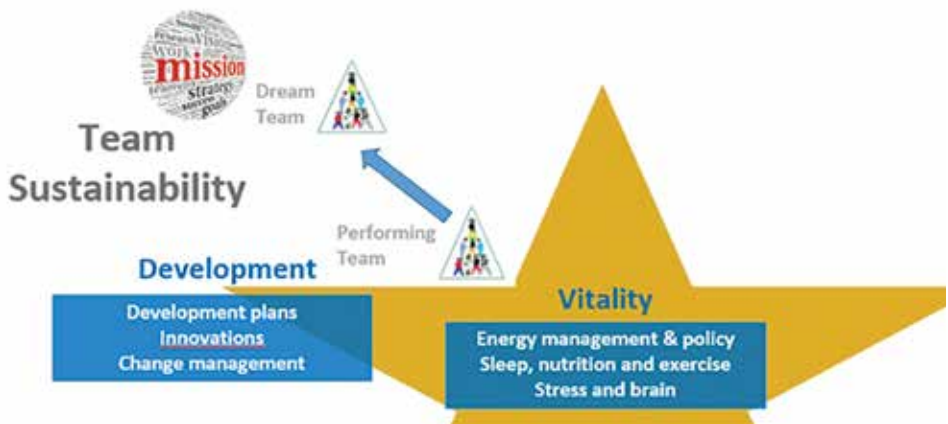


Figure 8. Teamstar by van Zwieten and Smit, 2019, Development and Vitality

Working with Personal Development Plans (PDP) and Team Development Plans (TDP) is not new, but has been given a different interpretation. It is not primarily about the direct functioning and competences that are discussed

periodically, but is rather a continuous process of monitoring the objectives of growth, development and vitality.

Speaking of vitality, the organisation is also expected to develop a structural policy in this area. While many companies have done this many years ago on safety, it is now also the new standard in terms of vitality. At its core is that an employee is stimulated and motivated to let vitality guide the entire lifestyle, the work-life balance. Elements that are considered in the block of vitality are therefore in addition to the policy general energy management, physical elements such as sleep, nutrition and movement and also stress and the brain performance.

The three main elements of Teamstar cannot be seen as phases that a team goes through, like with Tuckman's development phases. It is a vision to continuously monitor and evaluate a team in order to continue the growth.



Conclusions

If we want to create a dream team there are three major aspects:

- Team alignment; How to motivate people to work together and feel as a cohesive team;
- Team performance; How to make the team work as efficient and effective as possible;
- Team sustainability; How to make sure that the team, and its people, will be successful on the long term.

Traditionally teamwork and concept of High performance team is seen as important aspect in business world. In recent years Team work has become important topic and top skill also for the education institutions and their students. It is important to prepare young professionals who will be able to work in teams and become good team leaders. And it's applies not only for Business education. No matter if we are preparing young engineers, scientists or managers – most likely they all will be working in bigger or smaller teams. They will need to cooperate with different professionals, different personalities and specialists. And it is clear that success will be possible only in case if the team will be able to cooperate and team members will have good team working skills.

Research done in ERASMUS+ Project Dsicom shows that students consider team work as third most important soft skill necessary for their professional life. Students know what soft skills are and they are convinced that those skills will be necessary in their professional life. Also, survey showed that 54% of the students think that in their study programmes they do not have enough courses which develop their soft skills, including team work skills.¹¹

This shows that nowadays it is very important to integrate team work into the study process in order to improve students' awareness about the topic and also practically train their skills. It is necessary to revise and update already existing courses and teaching techniques and to include more practical studies in the teaching process – group works, practical exercises, role-plays, simulations.

¹¹ ERASMUS+ Strategic Partnership "Development of interdisciplinary skills for cooperation and conflict management" – DISCOM, Project number 2019-1-LV01-KA203-060423, Survey about soft skills, Report, <http://skills.turiba.lv/files/SOFT%20SKILLS%20SURVEY%20REPORT.pdf>

CHAPTER 4

SETTING THE GOALS BY MEANS OF COACHING



SETTING PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC GOALS BY MEANS OF MODERN COACHING: GETTING TO KNOW COACHING TO GROW IN LIFE

By Dana Rone and Kristina Nesterova

Annotation: This article describes the concept of coaching, its main models and techniques as well as the benefits of coaching for university students. The aim of this article is to get university students acquainted with means and instruments of modern coaching for setting professional and academic goals. The introduction of the article briefly describes the history of coaching, its connection with psychology, neuro-linguistic programming and other related studies and disciplines. The main part of the article defines the concept of coaching and relation with mentoring as well as the most popular models and techniques of coaching and its advantages for university students. The conclusions of the article emphasize the benefits and importance of coaching integration into the study process in order to unleash students' potential and maximize their professional and academic performance.

Keywords: coaching, neuro-linguistic programming, goals, self-development, vision

Summary: Introduction – 1. Concept of coaching and relation with mentoring. – 2. Coaching models and techniques. – 3. Coaching as a tool to work with university students. – Conclusions.

Introduction

Coaching has become a popular instrument to open potential of humans in any activity. In the beginning coaching was used to stimulate performance of sportsmen (although opinions differ about beginnings of coaching)¹. Over the years reputation of coaching has grown so much, that representatives from other areas became interested in the possibility of using coaching techniques in their

¹ Fellman, D., & Simberg, S. (2017). Prevalence and Risk Factors for Voice Problems Among Soccer Coaches. *Journal of Voice*, No. 31 (1), p. 121

sectors – commerce,² psychology,³ health-care⁴ and education.⁵ Nowadays, the vast majority of managers, entrepreneurs and employees are using coaching, mentoring or other support methods to be more effective in their work.⁶ Most of the existing reviews of coaching histories examine the ties to psychotherapy, athletic development, education or management and leadership development.⁷ In fact, psychology has been one of the major influences on coaching. Coaches use methods and techniques that are similar but nonetheless not equal to the methods and techniques of psychologists, consultants and other field advisers. Coaching uses a set of special skills to promote development of human powers.

One of the powerful skills for a coach to have is Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP). NLP combines neuroscience with linguistics in understanding how what people think and speak, and therefore act is influenced by their brain or the larger mind intelligence.⁸ One of presuppositions of NLP is that people have all the resources they need to succeed.⁹ Expectations of who we are and what we are capable of actually influence our performance. Such an assumption, if healthy, helps people to increase confidence and encourages them to achieve goals as well as not to take external circumstances as a nuisance. If false, it means that objective differences that exist between people in their individual circumstances are being ignored. Coaches encourage and support their coachees in order to achieve their personal, professional or academic goals, using a broad spectra of traditional and creative coaching methods and techniques. As a concept, coaching is still in development where new methods and tools are being introduced regularly.

Coaching is a flexible and modern instrument that is easy to apply in large-spectrum cases. It is about empowering and helping people change in a way they want to. As a matter of fact, we are being held hostages of our own habits as it is approximately 90% of our everyday actions.¹⁰ This is a reason why many people are repeating the same thing and expecting different results. Coaching comes as a very helpful set of tools to guide a person through changes towards

² Беспятова, В. (2016). *Коучинг в предпринимательстве. Социологический аспект*. Moscow, pp. 6–8; Stambaugh, J., & Mitchell, R. (2018). The fight is the coach: Creating expertise during the fight to avoid entrepreneurial failure. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, 24(1), pp. 2–21

³ Чернецов, А. В. (2015). Коучинг как направление психологического консультирования. *Гуманитарные науки в XXI веке*, No. XXIX, с. 168–169

⁴ Cosgrove, F., & Corrie, S. (2020). Promoting wellbeing through the emerging specialism of health and wellness coaching. *The Coaching Psychologist*, Vol. 16, No. 2, p. 35

⁵ Devine, M., Meyers, R., & Houssemand, C. (2013). How can coaching make a positive impact within educational setting? 3rd World Conference on Learning, Teaching and Educational Leadership (WCLTA-2012). *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, No. 93, pp. 1382–1389

⁶ Stambaugh, J., & Mitchell, R. (2018). The fight is the coach: Creating expertise during the fight to avoid entrepreneurial failure. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, 24(1), pp. 2–21

⁷ Boysen-Rotelli, S. (2020). Executive coaching history: Growing out of organisational development. *The Coaching Psychologist*, Vol. 16, No. 2, p. 33

⁸ Grimley, B. (2012). NLP a Promising Coaching Paradigm. *The Coaching Psychologist*, No. 2, pp. 26

⁹ Melbārde, I. (2008). *Kad sapņi piepildās*. Rīga: NPL, 24. lpp.

¹⁰ Heal, A. (2016). Are You Being Held Hostage By Your Habits? Published in: <https://purposevisionfuture.com/being-held-hostage-by-your-habits/>

desired results. As regards the composition of the implementation of coaching, it is used on an individual basis, where people separately ask assistance of coaches to develop or improve their skills and talents, as well as collectively by strengthening forces of larger groups, for instance – human resources in enterprises¹¹ or students in universities. Managers themselves also are encouraged to coach their employees.¹² Coaching as a flexible tool is suitable for both cases. While one-on-one coaching is highly effective for working with people who wish to transform their lives, it has its limitations. The approach of group coaching is becoming increasingly popular in organizations where it makes better use of employees' time and cuts training overheads.¹³

For areas of coaching, there is no sector where coaching could not be applied. Whatever the field and how professional a person works in it, in order to achieve goals and growth a coach can help to find the necessary resources within the person or to create a detailed plan to obtain them from the outside. Similarly, knowledge and techniques of coaching are helpful on an individual basis, so-called 'self-coaching' without supervision of a professional. A person can grow independently towards his/her own purposes and achieve desired results in a selected field.

This contribution overviews literature on history, methods and techniques of modern coaching, with the scope to establish how coaching can be used to set personal, professional and academic goals, especially for university students. A growing number of researches show that coaching as a soft skill is equally important with "hard skills", the latter being included in curriculum of universities. Life important skill of coaching can help a student to become a more successful graduate and can help a teacher to encourage students to use all potential of their students.

1. Concept of coaching and relation with mentoring

Since its first use, the meaning of the words coaching and mentoring changed.¹⁴ According to Greek mythology and the Homeric epic *The Odyssey*, Mentor was the son of Alcimus, who at the old age was a close friend of Odysseus. The

¹¹ Tak-yin Hui, R. & Sue-Chan, C. (2018). Variations in coaching style and their impact on subordinates' work outcome. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, No. 39, p. 663

¹² McCarthy, & Ahrens, j. (2011). Challenges of the coaching manager. 25th Annual Australia New Zealand Academy of Management Conference (ANZAM 2011). Wellington, New Zealand

¹³ Sutton, J. (2021). What is the Group Coaching Model? Published in: <https://positivepsychology.com/group-coaching-model/>

¹⁴ Koopman, R., Danskin, P., Ehgrenhard, M. L., & Groen, A. (2021). The Chronological Development of Coaching and Mentoring: Side by Side Disciplines. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, Vol. 19(1), pp. 137–15

warrior and world traveller Odysseus placed Mentor in responsibility of his son Telemachus, while the hero was away fighting at the Trojan War. When Athena visited Telemachus, she took the disguise of Mentor and encouraged Telemachus to go abroad to find out what happened to his father. Because of Mentor's relationship with Telemachus, and the disguised Athena's encouragement and practical plans for dealing with personal dilemmas the personal name *Mentor* has been adopted in Latin, English and other languages, as a term meaning someone who imparts wisdom to and shares knowledge with a less-experienced person.¹⁵ The combination of Athena and Mentor represents the focus on the instrumental male role of the mentor (Mentor) like counselling or guiding, on the one hand, and the (emotional) female role (Athena) affective or emotional quality on the other hand.¹⁶ The combination of male and female roles is known as psychological androgyny.¹⁷ Since then a mentor was described as tutor or as a person, who provides a variety of functions that support, guide, and counsel the young adult.¹⁸ St-Jean, Radu-Lefebvre, and Mathieu describe the goal of mentoring programs is to strengthen the mentees' self-efficacy.¹⁹

During the Renaissance, aristocrats and scientific communities used mentoring practices to educate promising young people.²⁰ The word "mentor" became synonymous with wisdom, guidance, counselling and advising.²¹

In its turn coaching can be defined as the process of on-going, on-the-job training carried out regularly by a person with the intent of developing another person's skills.²² Asking questions is one of the most typical coaching techniques, first developed in the ancient Greece, where several philosophers, including Aristotle and Plato followed the "Socratic Method" of asking questions instead of presenting an argument.²³ Socrates is regarded as one of the first

¹⁵ Roberts, A. (1999). The origins of the term mentor. *History of Education Society Bulletin*, No. 64, November, pp. 313-329

¹⁶ Roberts, A. (1998). The androgynous mentor: Bringing gender stereotypes in mentoring. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 6(1-2), pp. 18-30

¹⁷ Koopman, R., Danskin, P., Ehgrehard, M. L., & Groen, A. (2021). The Chronological Development of Coaching and Mentoring: Side by Side Disciplines. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, Vol. 19(1), p. 139

¹⁸ Kram, K. E. (1983). Phases of the mentor relationship. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 26(4), pp. 608-625

¹⁹ St-Jean, E. Radu-Lefebvre, M., & Mathieu, C. (2018). Can less be more? Mentoring functions, learning goal orientation, and novice entrepreneurs' self-efficacy. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, 24(1), pp. 2-21

²⁰ Wickman, C., & Sjodin, T. (1997). *Mentoring: The most obvious yet overlooked key to achieving more in life than you dreamed possible*. A success guide for mentors, New York: McGraw-Hill

²¹ Koopman, R., Danskin, P., Ehgrehard, M. L., & Groen, A. (2021). The Chronological Development of Coaching and Mentoring: Side by Side Disciplines. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, Vol. 19(1), p. 139

²² Ritter, M. L. (1994). *Senior leader mentoring: Its role in leader development doctrine (Master's theses)*. West Point, USA: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College

²³ Garvey, B., Stokes, P., & Megginson, D. (2009). *Coaching and mentoring, theory and practice*. London: Sage

coaches although the name “coach” emerged much later.²⁴

In “The History or Pendennis” by Thackeray (1849), the term coaching is used for the first time with personal support.²⁵ In this story some students are travelling in a coach while receiving tutor support. The students use the same word for the vehicle and for being tutored, while travelling in that vehicle. Lately coaching has shifted from instructing to more facilitating development.²⁶ By the end of the 19th century, coaching was used to support sportsmen such as in football with the establishment of paid coaching²⁷ and in rowing where a cyclist shouted advice to the rowers on the river. Coaching sportsmen was seen by several people as an unsporting way of support because the sportsmen got support from others.²⁸

Both disciplines – mentoring and coaching – struggle with a lack of clear understanding of their professions²⁹, and they also struggle with each other. Coaching and mentoring have developed side by side and both are engaged in personal development with assistance of third person – coach in coaching or mentor in mentoring. Following Parsloe arguing that coaching and mentoring are similar,³⁰ a debate started about definitions of coaching and mentoring.³¹ Also the original of coaching and mentoring was questioned as it was suggested that the techniques were borrowed from other disciplines like counselling, psychology, teaching and consulting.

Knowing benefits and possibilities of both instruments – coaching and mentoring – the universities can use them to assist their students for better performance. Although there are differences in origin or coaching and mentoring, they are not competing, rather collaborative tools with the same goals, namely, to help and support a person in development and acquiring new skills and education.

²⁴ De Haan, E. (2007). *Relationele coaching. Wegen naar meesterschap in helpende gesprekken*. Assen, the Netherlands: Van Gorcum

²⁵ Koopman, R., Danskin, P., Ehgrenhard, M. L., & Groen, A. (2021). The Chronological Development of Coaching and Mentoring: Side by Side Disciplines. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, Vol. 19(1), p. 139

²⁶ Ibid., p. 138

²⁷ Dixon, P., Garnham, N., & Jackson, A. (2004). Shareholders and shareholding: The case of football company in late Victorian England. *Business History*, 46(4), pp. 503–524

²⁸ Garvey, B. (2012). *A very short, fairly interesting and reasonably cheap book about coaching and mentoring*. London: Sage

²⁹ Haggard, D. L., Dougherty, T. W., Turban, D. B., & Wilbanks, J. E. (2010). Who is a mentor? A review of evolving definitions and implications for research. *Journal of Management*, 37(1), pp. 280–304

³⁰ Parsloe, E. (1995). *Coaching, mentoring and assessing: A practical guide to developing competence* (revised edn.). London: Kogan Page

³¹ Bozeman, B., & Feeney, M. K. (2007). Toward a useful theory of mentoring: A conceptual analysis and critique. *Administration & Society*, 39(6), pp. 719–739

2. Coaching models and techniques

Modern coaching offers a wide range of models and techniques. Coaching models are methods designed to guide an individual through a process of transition from where they currently are to where they want to be. The purpose of a coaching model is to create a framework for guiding another person through the following steps:

1. establishing a desired goal,
2. understanding where they are,
3. exploring options for where they are headed,
4. determining what may be obstacles and
5. establishing a plan of action.

Some of the most popular coaching models to be used are GROW,³² SMART,³³ CLEAR,³⁴ SOLVE,³⁵ FUEL,³⁶ STEPPA,³⁷ ACHIEVE³⁸ and OSKAR³⁹ models. As seen, coaching models are typically comprised of the steps that are outlined by an easy to remember acronym. Although every model is in some way different, however they have some fundamental similarities. These models mostly focus on trust, questioning and open communication. They aim to set the coachee's specific goals, to explore his/her options, and to develop a plan of action in order to achieve those goals.

There are three theoretical foundations of coaching: 1) the sociocultural foundation- regards ethics, societal and socially constructed self-identity as central to its meaning – making frames,⁴⁰ 2) the learning foundation⁴¹ – emphasis on experiential learning, scaffolding changes to result in new actions known as proximal development,⁴² and 3) positive psychology⁴³ – focused on

³² The acronym stands for: Goal setting, Reality, Options, What Action is Next

³³ The acronym stands for: Specific, Measurable, Actionable/Achievable, Realistic, Time bound

³⁴ The acronym stands for: Contracting, Listening, Exploring, Action, Review

³⁵ The acronym stands for: State the problem, Observe the problem resolved, List the Exceptions, Verify the plan, Execute the plan

³⁶ The acronym stands for: Frame the conversation, Understand the current state, Explore the desired state, Lay out a success

³⁷ The acronym stands for: Subject, Target, Emotion, Perception, Plan, Pace, Adapt or Act

³⁸ The acronym stands for: Assess the current situation, Creatively brainstorm alternatives, Hone goals, Initiate options, Evaluate options, Validate an action program design, Encourage momentum

³⁹ Outcome of coaching that is expected, Scaling the situation on a slide of 1 to 10, Know-how and resources available, Affirm plan and take action, Review what worked

⁴⁰ Law, H. (2019). Narrative coaching – Part 1: An introduction and the first step. *The Coaching Psychologist*, Vol. 15, No. 2, December, p. 40

⁴¹ Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall

⁴² Also see Drake, D. (2018). Reating zones of proximal development in coaching: The power of working at Thresholds. *The Coaching Psychologist*, 14(1), pp. 42–47

⁴³ Seligman, M. E. P., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), pp. 152–164

individuals and communities, emphasizing knowledge, skills, strengths, virtues, aspirations, hopes, feeling of satisfaction⁴⁴ and dreams rather than weaknesses and despairs. Grounded on these foundations coaching is unique and special activity, by application of which one can activate potential of a coachee.

Coaching is about conversation amongst peers where understanding and knowledge of the issue are exchanged, transferred and learning takes place.⁴⁵ A coach guides a coachee towards coachee's own solutions mostly by asking right and so called powerful questions. A powerful question ignites the imagination of a coachee, helping him or her to overcome boundaries. Good coaching questions are able to provoke thought, invite creativity, generate energy, touch deep meanings and stimulate reflective conversation.⁴⁶ Usually, powerful coaching questions are open-ended, solution-oriented, direct, and lead to action⁴⁷. Additionally, in order to get a better outcome and for a coaching question to become powerful, it should contain positive assumption and be asked at the right time.

According to 16 Forbes Coaches Council members⁴⁸ these are some of the most powerful questions to be asked to coachees:

- What's standing in your way?
- Can you tell me more?
- What will happen in you don't take this step?
- What does success look like?
- What are you most proud of?
- What do you want?
- What have you done to try to solve the problem?
- What are you doing to *not* achieve your goal?
- If your main obstacle didn't exist, how would your life look like?
- What do you need most right now?
- What will things look like after you've been successful?
- What is the most important thing in the world to you, and why?
- So what?
- Why not?

⁴⁴ Regarding feeling of professional satisfaction in academic work, see: Phillips, N. (2019). What is academic success anyway? A rejoinder to "confronting the crisis of confidence in management studies". *Academy of management learning and education*, Vol. 18, No. 2, p. 306

⁴⁵ Law, H. (2019). Narrative coaching – Part 1: An introduction and the first step. *The Coaching Psychologist*, Vol. 15, No. 2, December, p. 39

⁴⁶ Miller, K. D. 73 powerful coaching questions to ask your clients, <https://positivepsychology.com/coaching-questions>

⁴⁷ Moore, C. (2021). 100 Most Powerful Life Coaching Questions, <https://positivepsychology.com/life-coaching-questions/>

⁴⁸ Forbes Coaches Council, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2018/06/21/16-powerful-questions-coaches-ask-their-clients-to-help-achieve-their-goals/>

A question, whether it is in a coaching or teaching context, is stronger when it encourages the person to reflect and elaborate. For instance, asking, “Do you like to study Insurance law?” has the potential to stop the conversation. Instead an open-ended question, “What about studying Insurance law is satisfying to you?” stimulates a person to think about this topic and engage in a deeper meaning conversation.

The most basic coaching model, developed by Whitmore is so called GROW model, which is usually taught to new coaches.⁴⁹ Its strength lies in enabling the coach to structure the conversation and reach a meaningful result. It is the default, go to model for most coaches in supporting coachees to bring about behavioural (and cognitive) change.⁵⁰ For not working intuitively a more successful coaching session is the one where certain sequence of key stages exist. According to GROW model the letters is an abbreviation of goal, reality, options and will. At the stage of “goal” a coach asks about goals of the coaching sessions. Further at the stage of “reality” a coach asks about actual situation, events, problems and efforts to settle. At the third stage of “options” a coach questions about other possibilities to solve the situation, about different approaches and possible solutions. Finally at the stage of “will” wraps up and asks what, when and how the coachee is going to proceed in a very concrete way.

Another coaching model, which especially emphasis clear and defined expected outcomes is so called SMART model. It means setting goals in specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound manner, where the first letter of each word stands for SMART. Unclear goals are one of the biggest stumbling blocks to effective goal setting and performance. On the contrary articulated and measurable goals channel a person to focus on the efforts. For instance, a goal “I want to be the best student in a faculty” is not a SMART goal, as it does not confirm any of the SMART parameters. With an assistance of the coach this semi-goal can be transferred into the SMART goal. The same goal can become:

1. S – specific if it says “I want to be the best student in the Civil Law subject”;
2. M – measurable if it says “I will pass an exam and get 10 points in the final exam of Civil Law”;
3. A – achievable if it is added “I will pass the Civil Law exam and get 10 points, because I already have good grades, and I will study constantly to know the Civil Law topics even better”;
4. R – relevant by saying “I will pass the Civil Law exam, as this subject is included in curriculum for my year students”;
5. T – time bound “I will pass an exam of Civil Law and get 10 points by the end of this semester in January 15”.

⁴⁹ Whitmore, J. (2004). *Coaching for performance. GROWing people, performance and purpose*. Nicholas Brealey Publishing

⁵⁰ Panchal, S., & Riddell, P. (2020). The GROWS model: Extending the GROW coaching model to support behavioural change. *The Coaching Psychologist*, Vol. 16, No. 2, p. 12

Now the goal is transformed in a more specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound way and meets SMART model requirements.

There are several most widespread coaching techniques used by successful coaches in work with their clients. In fact, these techniques are not unique only for coaching, but instead also applied in other areas and professions, where work with people and personal development is at stake. Some of the commonly used coaching techniques are the following eight:

1. Active listening – focusing of coachees thoughts, needs and concerns;
2. Asking open-ended questions – encouraging the coachee to tell more and think wider about his or her story;
3. Collaboration – promoting a coachee to cooperate with the coach in personal development process;
4. Making good use of time – respecting time allocated for coaching session and using time efficiently;
5. Emotional intelligence – having ability to understand feelings of coachee and properly reacting to emotions;
6. Communication – using ability to clearly and informatively voice an opinion and observations;
7. Good judgment – expressing thoughts, hypothetical suggestions and proposals for coachee;
8. Follow through – monitoring progress of coachees after completion of coaching sessions, making sure the coachee keeps up with promised goals and feels support and observation of the coach.

A topical coaching technique worth mentioning in this article is a narrative coaching technique. It is based not only on a belief that storytelling has power to transform life which is deep rooted since the dawn of human civilization, but also because it has long established psychological foundation which the discipline on coaching psychology is based – both in research and practice.⁵¹ A Stelter (2012) defined, a narrative coaching is a developmental conversation and dialogue, a co-creative process between coach and coachee with a purpose of giving the coachee a space and an opportunity for immersing him/herself in reflection on and understanding of: i) his/her own experiences in the specific context; and ii) his or her interactions, relations and negotiations with others in specific contexts and situations.⁵² A narrative coaching is a co-creative process – a developmental conversation where the coach listens to the coachee's stories

⁵¹ Panchal, S., & Riddell, P. (2020). The GROWS model: Extending the GROW coaching model to support behavioural change. *The Coaching Psychologist*, Vol. 16, No. 2, p. 12

⁵² Stelter, R. (2012). *A guide to third generation coaching: Narrative-collaborative theory and practice*. Dordrecht Heidelberg, Germany: Springer, p. 8

of lived experience and supports them to identify values, skills, meaning and strengths in order to redevelop those stories and re-author them, which opens new possibilities in the future.⁵³ As noted by Thomson, if you listen to a client as though he is from another planet, you learn a lot.⁵⁴ A great way to start coaching intervention is to ask the client to tell their life story. By listening and observing the story a coach can have the first impression of a person, values, goals and ways to work further with a particular person.

According to White the narrative approach may consist of the following techniques: i) externalizing conversations, ii) remembering/re-authoring, iii) outsider witness re-telling (in group) and iv) definitional ceremony (community) – re-tellings of re-tellings.⁵⁵ Going through step by step the narrative coaching process a coach first of all invites a coachee to tell a story about recent events and the personal experiences about them, focusing on specific and unique outcomes, learning and problem-solving skills identified in the story. A coach asks broad and also narrow questions to precise time, place, environment and other aspects of the story. Further a coach encourages a coachee to reflect and evaluate the impact of the story, and then asks to justify coachee's action and make judgments about the agreed action in relation to dreams, hopes and values. The coachee is invited to think about what he or she will do next. In the conclusion a coachee shall be encouraged to formulate preferred commitments, desires, hopes and plan of action.

One of the newest coaching techniques is a coaching whilst walking.⁵⁶ According to this technique a coach has coaching session in motion, having a walk together with a client. Such technique departing from traditional environment indoors is especially topical in the epoch of Covid-19, where outdoors is even healthier place for conversation.

Thus it can be seen a wide diversity of coaching models and techniques possible to be used by coaches during coaching sessions. Although coaching models are conventionally applied between at least one coach and one coachee, still these models and techniques can be used individually under condition that a person, who wants to develop in some way, is ready to have a look at own situation with eyes of neutral observer. All coaching models and techniques have positive outcome if used correctly.

⁵³ Law, H. (2019). Narrative coaching – Part 1: An introduction and the first step. *The Coaching Psychologist*, Vol. 15, No. 2, December, p. 40

⁵⁴ Thomson, C. (2009). Enneagram styles, coaching, and the use of metaphor. *The Enneagram Journal*, July, p. 140

⁵⁵ White, M. (2007). *Maps of narrative practice*. New York: Norton

⁵⁶ Cook, S., & van Nieuwerburgh, C. (2020). The experience of coaching whilst walking: A pilot study. *The Coaching Psychologist*, Vol. 16, No. 2, p. 46

3. Coaching as a tool to work with university students

A research of Lancer proves that one-on-one coaching can have profound effects on university students and can also help them to maximize their time at university.⁵⁷ A coach can increase confidence of students, positively affect career choices and relationship among peers and with academics. In her research Lancer recommends universities to invest in one-on-one coaching for all students to improve students' experience and promote their personal growth. Indeed, a coach in universities as a personal growth assistant can be significant supporter of students. Lancer explains in a diagram that there are eight tensions for university students:⁵⁸

1. Narrowing down – Opening up
2. Treading water – Pushing forward
3. Owned action – Absorption in mass of ideas
4. Being you – Fitting in
5. Connection – Separation
6. Day to day – Thinking forward
7. Fixed plans – Fluidity of life
8. Doing enough – Going all in

Coaches can support students to navigate these typical tensions, recognizing both ends of each polarity and understanding that being human means to constantly live in these tensions – challenges and according to van Deurzen so called “ordinary difficulties”.⁵⁹

If teachers are in a role of coach, it requires them to adopt themselves to a different kind of interaction with students. A role of teacher and a role of coach differs in way that a coach is more coachee orienteered and neutral then the teacher.

In the light of the above, the individuation of well-defined actions that will conduce to a goal is useful for subsequent performance. This may also help to strengthen determination and self-control, because following a plan means consciously choosing to act according to the long-term outcome rather than distracting oneself with less important tasks.

⁵⁷ Lancer, N. (2020). “Yes Woman”: A career coach reflects on the experience of doing a PhD and its contribution to coaching psychology. *The Coaching Psychologist*, Vol. 16, No. 2, p. 10

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 9

⁵⁹ Van Deurzen, E., & Arnold-Baker, C. (2018). *Existential therapy: Distinctive features*. Oxford: Routledge, p. 185

Conclusions

This contribution explains a concept of coaching as useful soft-skill to learn and to apply by persons willing to develop personally or professionally in any area. Coaching models and techniques are traditionally created to be applied by neutral and separate coach – a person, who guides through coaching process the client – a coachee. However a responsible and self-disciplined individual with a basic knowledge of coaching can apply these models and techniques without assistance of a professional coach.

Researches show that people often are not sufficiently precise in formulating their goals, which endangers reaching positive outcomes. For this reason, coaching encourages them to be more specific, realistic and time-bound when setting their personal, professional or academic goals.

Study years in universities is significant period of time for every student, where further life path is being chosen and established. Therefore it is especially important to integrate coaching models and techniques into the study process in order to improve students' self-confidence and unleash their full potential for academic and professional future. Other benefits of coaching are developing such skills as organizational leadership as well as public speaking.

Universities should be encouraged to consider coaching as supporting service to their students to help them to reach higher academic and professional results. If during study process students could study basics of coaching, it could help them to become more aware about benefits of such a soft skill and use it for their personal development.

CHAPTER 5

MULTICULTURAL COMMUNICATION



MULTICULTURAL COMMUNICATION – A SOUGHT-AFTER SOFT-SKILL IN THE XXI CENTURY?

An introduction to the topic and an overview of the multicultural communication obstacles

By Agnieszka Góra and Jacek Czaja

Annotation: The article focuses on multicultural communication skills and its importance in today's world. As it is becoming smaller, the communication and cultural competencies are more and more sought-after and recognized. The main goal of the article is to provide an introduction to the very broad topic and to familiarize addressees with key concepts. However, the paper not only elaborates on the essence of concepts such as communication, culture and intercultural communication but also, provides a reader with an overview of obstacles followed by the presentation of effective tools and techniques instrumental in overcoming such. The article is of pragmatical nature and aims at deliberating on such questions as: "What are communication and culture? When does the communication process occur? What role does culture play in the communication process? How do communication and culture affect one another? What are the most common obstacles in intercultural communication? How can we overcome such? What to do when they occur?"

Keywords: communication, culture, intercultural communication, multicultural communication, effective communication, communication across culture, communication obstacles.

Summary: Introduction – 1. Communication – art or science? – 2. Culture and communication, communication and culture. – 3. Do our cultural backgrounds make it harder to communicate? – Overview of the cultural obstacles in the communication process. – Conclusions.

Introduction

Multicultural communication skills are crucial. As the world is becoming a smaller and smaller place, differences that occur on both our professional and personal paths are increasingly bigger and more noticeable. While working and living across nations and cultures, the comprehension and awareness of the intercultural competency is the survival issue. Very much needed to thrive. The importance of cultural competency is becoming more recognized and materials helping to develop such are required.¹ On many occasions, the cultural communication skill is enumerated as one of most needed to become a global leader, succeed in professional live or develop generally.

The main goal of the article is to provide an introduction to the very broad topic and familiarize addressees with key concepts. As such, its character is of the popular science. At the same time, the article is of the pragmatic nature, striving to offer some practical guidelines and instruction. It is authors' intention to balance presentation of basic theory needed to understand core concepts of the topic with introduction of tools enhancing the effectiveness of the intercultural communication that could be applied immediately after reading the paper.

Having in mind the above explained nature and goals of the article, the authors decided to implement the following structure of the article. In the first two parts, the article focuses on the definitions, context, components and intricacies of respectively the concepts of communication and culture. The content includes the authors' intakes on the essentials of the concepts and is limited in scope by the mentioned character of the paper. Throughout these parts the following questions as are addressed: "What are communication and culture? When does the communication process occur? What role does culture play in the communication process? How communication and culture affect one another?" Part three, being the most extensive one, provides a brief introduction to a concept of the intercultural communication obstacles. Such is followed by a differentiation between linguistic and non-linguistic based obstacles (the differentiation being artificial in nature is introduced simply for the purpose of easier comprehension of the idea). In the final part, in order to enhance the practical application of the paper, in each of above-mention categories of the obstacles, the authors include a non-exhaustive list of the obstacles, followed by the tools and techniques instrumental in overcoming such.

¹ Good example of such recognition is a survey conducted for the purpose of the Project "Development of Interdisciplinary skills for cooperation and conflict management". To see the outcomes, of the survey go to: <http://skills.turiba.lv/files/SOFT%20SKILLS%20SURVEY%20REPORT.pdf>

The article, while it contemplates theoretical concepts developed in existing literature, is aimed at providing a frame of reference for individuals and groups, students and professionals, with regard to any multi-cultural situations they will participate in. It is for people who seek to understand and to be understood others. Certainly, a deeper understanding of communication process, culture, links between them and available communication tools help in enhancing the effectiveness of multicultural communication.

1. Communication – art or science?

Communication is difficult. Most people make a mistake by assuming that since we all communicate on a daily basis, almost constantly, we all have the skill mastered. To quote business author Brian Tracy “Communication is a skill that you can learn. It’s like riding a bicycle or typing. If you’re willing to work at it, you can rapidly improve the quality of every part of your life.”²

Before the reader delves into various deliberations on an effective multi-cultural communication, it is crucial to define what communication actually is. There is more than a dozen definitions of communication focusing on various elements of the phenomena³, as well as multiple communication theories created for the purposes of categorization and easier comprehension of this complex process.⁴ Irrelevant of whether particular definitions bring more focus to the participants, the goal of communication or the mechanisms utilized to make the communication process effective, the focal point is the fact that communication is essentially a process of sending a message (conveying a meaning) from one

² Gallo, C. (2016). Richard Branson: “Communication Is The Most Important Skill Any Leader Can Possess.” *Forbes*, August 9, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/carminnegallo/2015/07/07/richard-branson-communication-is-the-most-important-skill-any-leader-can-possess/?sh=16695fe52e8a>. Retrieved 26.11.2020.

³ To give an example of a few scholar definitions John Adair understood communication as ‘*the ability of one person to make contact with another and make himself or herself understood*’. Whereas Allen Louis defined that ‘*communication is the sum of all the things one person does; when he wants to create understanding in the mind of another. It involves a systematic and continuous process of telling, listening and understanding*’, when Peter Little emphasized that ‘*communication is a process by which information is transmitted between individuals and/or organizations so that an understanding response results*’ or William Newman and Charles Summer: said that ‘*Communication is an exchange of ideas, facts, opinions or emotions of two or more persons*’. The above-mentioned illustrate their various focus in the definition that is from the participants (interlocutors) to the goal of communication or the mechanisms utilized to make the communication process more effective. Examples of definitions can be found i.a.: R. (2020), May 29, What is Communication? Definition, Concept, Process, & Types. ReadingJunction: <https://readingjunction.com/communication-definition-concept-process-types/> Retrieved 19.09.2020.

⁴ Among noted theorists of such are: Aristotle, Lasswell, Shannon, Weaver, McLuhan, MacLean, Rileys, Westley, Gerbner, Rothstein, Schramm, Berlo, Osgood, Johnson or Cherry. To illustrate the manifold of theories and models one can refer to a number of linear (e.g. Aristotle model of communication) and non-linear models of communication (such as sadharanikaran model of communication).

entity to another to receive feedback.⁵ There is also no unanimity whatsoever in enumerating elements of a process of communication.⁶ For the purposes of this article the authors choose to indicate the following elements involved: a sender, a message, a medium and a channel, a receiver, a response and a feedback. Therefore, to simplify, the communication process consists of the following actions: sender has an idea and intention to send a message, then encoding of the message occurs, after that the message goes through channel process, and next the receiver decodes the message and finally discerns, followed by their response.⁷

Communication channels form the basis to differentiate between two main types of communication: verbal and non-verbal. In a verbal communication one uses language and words to pass the intended message. A non-verbal communication is a process of sending information in wordless messages such as gestures, body language, symbols and expressions. As long as in most situations communication occurs simultaneously via both channels, research confirms that majority of the communication is non-verbal.⁸

A successful communication is but merely limited to an exchange of information. What is deemed to be an effective communication is about understanding emotions and intentions behind the information. Understanding such is necessary to gain the full meaning behind the messages received and express fully those one sends. To communicate effectively one needs to be aware of all the elements that influence the message they intend to convey (both verbal and non-verbal). Therefore, summing up the recipe for good communication is:

⁵ The two-way traffic emphasized by receiving feedback tends to align more with the non-linear models of communication – unidirectional in nature, with a focus on mutual understanding of both sender and receiver. See also: Adhikary, N. M. (1970). The Sadharanikaran Model and Aristotle's Model of Communication: A Comparative Study. *Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 2(1), pp. 268–289, <https://doi.org/10.3126/bodhi.v2i1.2877>.

⁶ *Inter alia* the previously mentioned Sadharanikaran model consists of nine elements, whereas the Aristotle model of communication features five elements

⁷ For more information on the process of communication, coding and decoding messages see i.a.: Gruman, J., Schneider, F., & Coutts, L. (Eds.) (2017). *Applied social psychology Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc* DOI: 10.4135/9781071800591

⁸ The authors, nonetheless, do not intend to indicate any numbers or proportion. Whether it be two thirds of all communications as stated by some authors (see: Hogan, K.; Stubbs, R. (2003). *Can't Get Through: 8 Barriers to Communication*. Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Company. ISBN 978-1589800755, Burgoon, Judee K; Guerrero, Laura k; Floyd, Kory (2016). *Introduction to Nonverbal Communication*. Nonverbal communication. New York: Routledge, pp. 1–26, ISBN 978-0205525003 and other.) or the frequently-quoted 7% Rule according to which communication is only 7 percent verbal and 93 percent non-verbal, as referred to in a book published Albert Mehrabian in which he elaborated on research on non-verbal communication (see: Mehrabian, A. (1981). *Silent Messages: Implicit Communication of Emotions and Attitudes* (2nd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. ISBN 0-534-00910-7 and others). The explicit numbers are further argued with by i.a David Lapakko in: Lapakko, D. (2007). *Communication is 93% Nonverbal: An Urban Legend Proliferates*. *Communication and Theater Association of Minnesota Journal*, 34, pp. 7–19 or by Philip Yaffe in: Philip Yaffe. 2011. *The 7% rule: fact, fiction, or misunderstanding*. *Ubiquity* 2011, October, Article 1 (October 2011), 5 pages. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1145/2043155.2043156>. Despite disagreement about the exact numbers, researchers are unanimous in stating that communication is in majority a non-verbal process

common communication environment, the sender's and the receiver's mutual cooperation, selection of an appropriate channel, encoding and decoding of the message in a correct way (effective overcoming of communication obstacles), as well as a receipt of the desired response and feedback.

While the authors will not in detail describe the enumerated components of the communication process, it is in their opinion that communication in its' nature is simply a process of an intentional interaction between at least two people happening in a particular reality – context and culture – aimed at passing the message from one person to the other to elicit the response.

The intercultural communication, as name indicates, emphasizes communication and culture. Having understood what communication is, the next natural step is to cast some light on the concept of culture and its links with communication.

2. Culture and communication, communication and culture

There is no one unanimously agreed definition of the word (and more importantly the concept) of 'culture'. Some authors do not even believe that it is possible or useful to achieve such. Best example would be A. Lang's conclusion "that attempts at defining culture in a definite way are futile".⁹ The authors of this article share the view that the technical definition of the concept is not the most important and siding with one definitely does not fall within the scope of this paper.

Having said that, there are some things we can definitely say about culture. Firstly, it came a long way from its origins stemming from 'to cultivate' and its connection to agriculture, as well as its first known usage in connection to philosophy (Cicero's cultural *mentis*).¹⁰ Secondly, nowadays it is a polysemous.¹¹ Lastly, it plays an important role in a way we see the world around us.

Each of us is a part of different cultures (maybe to some extent we could even dare to state that one is a combination of multiple cultures) and at the same time no one is a perfect representation of any culture. Culture is something learnt and acquired. Transmitted from generation to generation. No one is

⁹ Lang, A. (1997). Thinking Rich as Well as Simple: Boesch's Cultural Psychology in Semiotic Perspective. *Culture & Psychology*, 3(3), pp. 383–394, 387, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067x9733009>

¹⁰ Bagby, P. (2021). *Cicero, Tusculanae disputationes 2, 5, 13*. Culture and History (Underlining ed.). University of California, p. 114

¹¹ An interesting overview of the definition and evolution of the concept is provided in Jahoda, G. (2012). Critical reflections on some recent definitions of "culture". *Culture & Psychology*, 3(3), pp. 289–303, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067X12446229>. Retrieved: 18.10.2020.

born ‘with’ a culture and yet, everyone is born ‘into’ so many of them. Cultural groups can be based on numerous identities, such as: gender, race, nationality, religion, sex orientation, geography, social status, age – to name just a few. Such groups create their own specific systems of beliefs, values, customs, lifestyles, behaviours and perceptions.

What is important to be acknowledged for the purpose of this paper is that culture has (or should we rather say cultures have) a profound influence on the way we experience and perceive the world and people around us, as well as on how we express ourselves. One illustration of such was given by Debra Chopp “Our choice of words, our tone of voice, our proximity to another person when we speak to them are all influenced by the cultures in which we were raised. Culture also affects the attributions we make about others. If we experience someone as rude, it is (in part) because we have a culturally contingent understating of what it means to be polite.”¹²

What cannot be overemphasized is how complex the concept of culture is and typically, how much we are only “scratching the surface” of it. The perfect illustration of such is a very well-known metaphor of the “culture as an iceberg”.¹³

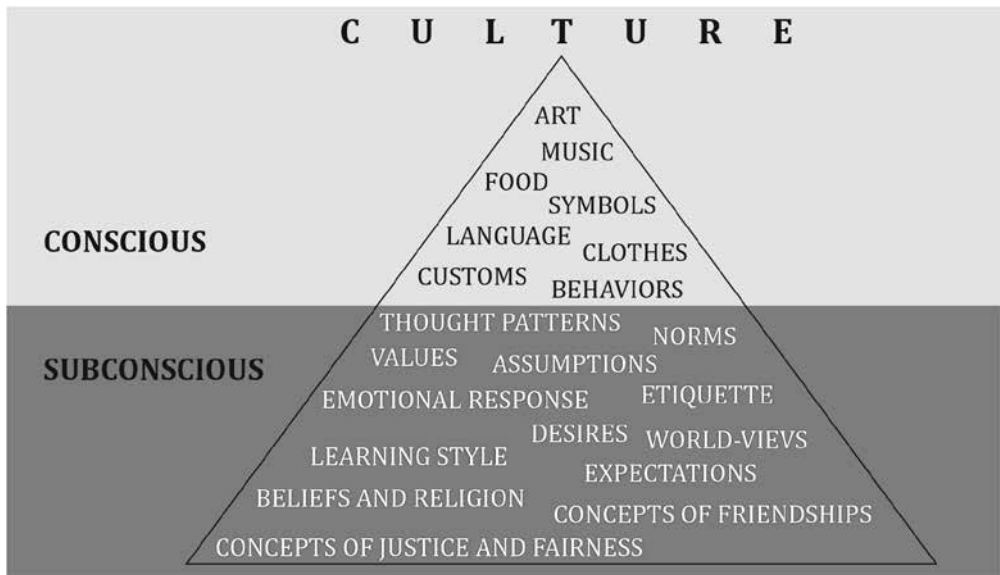


Figure 1. Culture as an iceberg

¹² Chopp, D. (2017). Addressing Cultural Bias in the Legal Profession. *NYU Rev. of L. and Soc. Change* 41, No. 3, pp. 367–406, <https://repository.law.umich.edu/articles/1874/> Retrieved: 20.10.2020.

¹³ For more on the concept of culture as an iceberg which states that there is more than what we see on a first glance – which is merely a visible culture – and describes unseen culture and deep culture concepts go to e.g.: Hall, E. T. (1997). *Beyond Culture* by Edward T. Hall (1977-01-07), Anchor Books

On the other hand (what might be not that obvious), since communication (inter alia) is a process during which beliefs, views and values are discussed and shared between different members of the community, the communication is a prerequisite for shaping cultures (or, from a different perspective, one of the processes through which cultures are created and shared).¹⁴ To sum up, there is no culture without communication.

To quote Victor “Communication and culture are inextricably intertwined. Indeed, culture itself is one form of communication.... Consequently, the study of cultural differences and similarities so essential to international business success is largely inseparable from the study of international business communication.”¹⁵

World is shrinking into a smaller place. More diversified and more global every day. Due to such factors as: migrations, internalization, global economy, world-wide media, social media and spreading internet accessibility, tourism, increasing role of huge, multi-billion-worth companies, having offices all over the world, both in our private and professional lives, we are offered a chance to (and/or are forced to) meet and deal with people coming from different backgrounds. We all have been communicating with people different from us our all life (after all, there are no two identical people). Those differences, however, are getting bigger, appear more often and become more apparent. Therefore, not only communication skills but also cultural competency is becoming increasingly crucial and useful – necessary to achieve our goals, become successful, but most importantly, desperately needed to better understand the reality we live in and people surrounding us. To see the bigger picture, if you will.

3. Do our cultural backgrounds make it harder to communicate? – Overview of the cultural obstacles in the communication process

3.1. Overview

Knowing what both communication and culture are, as well how they are inherently intertwined, this article of the paper aims at providing the overview of the obstacles that typically occur when dealing with communication in

¹⁴ Knutson, K. (2014). June 11, Definition of Culture [Video]. YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CyrC9iLQF0s>

¹⁵ Victor, D. A. (1992). *International Business Communication* (1st ed.). Harpercollins College Div

a multicultural context. Before doing so, it should be stressed that almost every conversation, discussion and other form of human interaction happens in an intercultural context. However, typically what is understood by the intercultural context is an interaction by individuals coming from significantly different backgrounds (regardless of whether it is due to their geographical origin, gender, system of beliefs, social status etc.). Of course, in general, the bigger the difference of the said backgrounds, the more influence culture has on the effectiveness of the communication process.

Moreover, the overview provided below is not a comprehensive list of the obstacles that may occur, but rather aims to bring awareness to some key impediments one can trip over while performing a multicultural 'dance'. The paper is also strongly influenced by the personal experience of its authors gathered in the course of their careers¹⁶ as well as pragmatical aspirations of the paper being a brief introduction to a widely broad topic.

3.2. Intercultural language competency

Language as an obstacle in intercultural communication

In this part, the authors focus solely on one category of obstacles out of many. Namely, the obstacles occurring on a linguistic level.

Language is arguably the most essential and commonly used way of expression of humans. Whether in a context of a face-to-face conversation, emails exchange or phone conference, at the heart of communication in most scenarios lies the usage of some sort of language.

The number of languages present in the world is growing steadily. Just to give some example, the 1911 (11th) edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica,¹⁷ implies a figure somewhere around 1,000 languages existing worldwide, whereas currently Ethnologue (published by SIL International, being one of the generally authoritative lists) presents that right now there are more than 7000 languages spoken. What is worth mentioning, "meanwhile, just 23 languages account for more than half the world's population."¹⁸

With such a heterogenous world one can simply not expect to deal only with native speakers of their own language, having same accent, dialect,

¹⁶ The authors professionally teach negotiation and communication. Due to that, they have worked with people coming from several dozens of nationalities, also oversaw projects and negotiations processes between many nationals having place in almost all parts of the world

¹⁷ Anderson, S. R. (2010). How many languages are there in the world? Linguistic Society of America. Linguistic Society of America, <https://www.linguisticsociety.org/content/how-many-languages-are-there-world>

¹⁸ How many languages are there in the world? (2021, February 23). Ethnologue, <https://www.ethnologue.com/guides/how-many-languages>

vocabulary choice, using same proverbs and metaphors, structure and style of communication. And although those remarks seem trivial in nature, speaking from experience, as non-native English speakers, in most intercultural scenarios, their role is prominent and understanding such is the first crucial barrier to overcome on the road to effective multicultural communication.

When discussing language as a potential barrier in a communication process it is important to acknowledge that is not only about simple knowledge of vocabulary and grammar individuals involved in the communication possess. It is also about the pace, volume and accent. Our day-to-day language is filled with ambiguous words and phrases, professional jargon, abbreviations, colloquialism, references to current events, famous quotes, metaphors, phrasal verbs etc. Difficulties in effective communication occur primarily between individuals who are native-speakers of different languages, yet are not uncommon also between two parties originating from the same language region. There is no doubt 'language competency' in intercultural context is crucial for successful communication. At the same time in such a context, language competency should not be understood as simply a comprehensive knowledge and fluency in the language, but rather a competency to adjust usage of a language depending on a person one is communicating with. In most scenarios that might even be more difficult, as it is something one has to learn independently from simply learning the language.

To give some kind of illustration. Imagine a professional ballroom dancer. It is one thing to know all the steps and know how to dance their part. Completely another thing is to be able, depending on the level of skills the person they are paired with possesses, to adjust their choreography, not to start too advanced sequences, to lead in a distinctive and unequivocal way and not to use gestures and signals only they and their previous partner understand.

Overcoming language-based obstacles

Then, what can be done to increase chances that the above-mentioned dance performance will go smoothly? To increase 'intercultural language competency' so to speak. Below, the authors present their intake on most important tips.

First and foremost, one should internalize that in order to make sure misunderstanding, misinterpretation, misevaluation are avoided, it is needed to 'take the burden' of the communication on their shoulders. It is better to assume nothing is understandable unless proven otherwise (opposite to common assumption being that everything is understood until proven otherwise). Never equate poor foreign language competency with lack of knowledge or professional expertise in a field.

We would suggest starting with assessing the other person's competency of the language used in a communication process and then keeping verifying the evaluation on such throughout the entire process of communication. Accordingly, adjustments to the way intended message is being sent – should be made. What may be considered is to:

- slow down the pace of speaking, increase enunciation of the words, simplify the structure and vocabulary (i.e. avoid inversion, passive verbs, eloquent vocabulary or archaisms, compound sentences);
- not use colloquial language or very professional jargon, abbreviations, phrasal verbs, elaborate metaphors or any other words or expressions having ambiguous or figurative meaning;
- whenever using expression requiring the frame of reference, providing such a frame (it is fine if the other person stops the sender while explaining it due to the fact that such context is familiar to them);
- keep verifying if what is being said is understood properly and comprehensively – summarize, invite paraphrasing, ask questions if particular statement is received without any problems, use repetition when needed, encourage clarifying questions and interruptions when elaboration and more clarity is required;
- get comfortable with silence – do not feel a need to jump and fill it in as soon as the other person takes a bit of a break; also, considering taking more breaks as normally just to give some more time to gather thoughts; plan and schedule more time for the meeting;
- encourage speaking by the other person, be very careful not to embarrass them (i.e. do not excessively (if ever) correct their grammar if it is not needed for the sake of clarity);
- use visualizations, gestures (as long as they have similar meaning in their' culture), graphs, presentations, as well as tools introducing structure and enhancing clarity (such as: agenda, usage of the board, modules);
- send summary, minutes or notes after the meeting and seek confirmation.¹⁹

Equally important as making sure one is being understood properly is to ensure one's reception of the other person's message is undisturbed. Respectively, it is crucial to deploy the above-mentioned suggestions to the

¹⁹ For the more detailed description of some of the listed recommendations go to: Nancy J. Adler & Moses N. Kiggundu *Awareness at the Crossroad: Designing Translator-Based Training Programs* in D. Landis and R. Brislin, *Handbook of Intercultural Training: Issues in Training Mythology*, Vol. II. New York: Pergamin Press, (1983), pp. 124–150

process of listening, as well as to introduce active listening techniques. The tools and exercises instrumental in developing such are provided in the article by Karin Sonnleitner and Verena Gschweidl "Conflict Diagnosis: How to deal with a conflict"²⁰ as well as in study materials available in project webpage <http://skills.turiba.lv>.

3.3. Beyond language – meeting of diverse worlds. Non-language-based approach

Introduction to non-linguistic approach

It is essential to note that each individual uses and understands language in their own unique way. Unlike with coding languages where multiple '0' and '1' create clear-cut commands, humans do not operate in a binary system. That means that communication does not rely only on purely linguistic meaning of words. Form of communication, environment in which communication takes place as well as other non-linguistic elements are necessary for a person to hear and to be heard.

Communication – even more so when performed in an intercultural setting – besides the exchange of words, is a process of sharing beliefs, values and worldviews. Forbes contributor Carol Kinsey Goman once said: "Every culture has rules that its members take for granted. Few of us are aware of our own biases because cultural imprinting is begun at a very early age. And while some of culture's knowledge, rules, beliefs, values, phobias and anxieties are taught explicitly, most is absorbed subconsciously."²¹ Hence, the awareness of the whole message which is sent by the communicating person to the receiver using both language and via all the non-verbal interaction, as well as proper decoding of the message and understanding of what one's culture brings to a conversation (how it influences their way of communicating intentions, emotions and feelings) are absolutely essential for an effective intercultural communication.

Non-linguistic obstacles – non-exhaustive overview

Whether a particular behaviour is perceived to be 'right' or 'normal' rather than 'strange' or 'inadequate' derives from cultural upbringing and values. It may be challenging to recognize and respond to culturally-dependent obstacles in a communication process.

²⁰ See: Sonnleitner, K., & Gschweidl, V. (2021). Chapter 6. Conflict management. *Conflict Diagnosis: How to deal with a conflict?*

²¹ Goman, C. K. (2011). How Culture Controls Communication. *Forbes*, November 28, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/carolkinseygoman/2011/11/28/how-culture-controls-communication/?sh=4d9630ec263b>

The first intrinsic element in dealing with potential hurdle of that kind is to notice when communicating parties use culturally different frameworks and mechanisms that may hinder full mutual understanding. Below, the authors present the non-exhaustive list of non-linguistic and other internal barriers to an effective communication.

Different dependence on context. Non-verbal communication includes facial expressions and gestures; but also room and seating arrangements, personal distance, sense of time or the level of assertiveness in communicating. The importance of non-verbal aspects in communication vary across cultures. Messages are coded in a physical context or in a non-verbal way, with few explicit words. Dependent on the importance and scope of context coded messages, scientists identify two types of cultures: high and low context cultures, where high-context cultures rely to a greater extent on more ambiguous methods of communication, with a lot of meaning assigned to a non-verbal communication, symbolism, customs and tradition. Stereotypically, some examples of high-context cultures would be Japan, Saudi Arabia or Spain, whereas among low-context cultures are typically Canada or USA.²²

Bypassing – as it was indicated on the linguistic level (see the previous part above) and defined as when the symbolic meaning of words is not read correctly by communicators and the receiver gets the wrong meaning to what the sender intended, the same applies to non-verbal communication: tones, pitch of voice, other vocal cues.

In authors view, the perfect example of such bypassing would be a usage of a dot (".") at the end of a one-word-long text message. *To illustrate, the authors encourage the readers to think of a possible reaction to a text: 'Fine.' received from an elderly professor or a teenage Snapchat user. Would the meaning and emotions associated differ when the same text comes from different people?*

Bias – is a phenomenon of misinterpretation and misjudgement of a message by applying tests and standards inherent and unique to one's own culture. Ethnocentrism is the example of a more extreme cultural bias which takes place when someone deems their particular culture to be the only lens to look through at other cultures with an implied belief that their approach and culture are better than the other, leading to a negative opinion of behaviours

²² Research shows, however, that the extent to which high or low-context is used in communication is also dependent on whether a conversation is happening in a work or non-work contexts, with some interesting changes, that are not typically in line with the general exemplification of high- or low-context cultures based on nationalities or countries. For the mentioned research see: Sanchez-Burks, J., Lee, F., Choi, I., Nisbett, R., Zhao, S., & Koo, J. (2003). Conversing across cultures: East-West communication styles in work and nonwork contexts. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85(2), pp. 363–372, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.85.2.363>.

different to the one-and-only right vision one presents.²³ *To exemplify bias, imagine what would be the reaction one might have while hearing that someone ate a dog compared to eating snails, shrimps, octopuses or pigs, cows, horses. Is it really that different?*

Stereotyping – is simply an overestimation of the degree of a link between group membership and psychological attributes. Even though, undoubtedly there is a link between group membership and particular traits or characteristics of its members, it is a mistake to depend and derive on it about individuals to the extent when one relies on oversimplified clichés. *The authors knowingly will not present any particular example of a stereotype, but rather will ask the addressee to think about the remark about their own nation/society which they deem impolite and/or hurtful.*

Conflicting values and communication styles²⁴ – behaviours are conditioned by culture. Above, in the paragraph about culture, the authors referred to the concept of culture as an iceberg – where values are ‘underwater’, and behaviours are the visible after effects thereof. Cultural misunderstandings may occur also when someone’s behaviours are conflicting with the other person’s values. Since cultural norms presented by individuals are not identical, therefore the intention and goal of behaviours is often confused and misjudged. What one struggles to understand will be often opposed or rendered wrong. Values we share strongly affect the way we communicate. Dependent on the system of values most common in particular culture, preferences as to communication styles and the way people express themselves are being shaped. Some common values/culture conditioned communication norms may be listed as follows: direct vs. indirect communication,²⁵ informality vs. formality, open vs. subtle disagreement, egalitarian vs. hierarchical. Operating in other systems could cause frustration, out-of-depth feeling or even feeling of being disrespected.

One example, from authors experience would be when they – back while being first-time-visitors in India – were confused on whether a cab driver is just acknowledging they heard an inquiry about a possible ride or accepting the

²³ Sanchez-Burks, J., Lee, F., Choi, I., Nisbett, R., Zhao, S., & Koo, J. (2003). Conversing across cultures: East-West communication styles in work and nonwork contexts. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85(2), pp. 363–372, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.85.2.363>

²⁴ Compoin, T. (2018). July 9, Six barriers to cross-cultural communications (Part 2 of 3). Déclic International, <https://declicinternational.com/6-barriers-to-cross-cultural-communications/>

²⁵ Indirectness occurs when there is a discrepancy between sentence meaning and speaker meaning. Sentence meaning refers to the literal or semantic meaning of an utterance, and speaker meaning refers to what the speaker intends to accomplish with the remark. Sanchez-Burks, J., Lee, F., Choi, I., Nisbett, R., Zhao, S., & Koo, J. (2003). Conversing across cultures: East-West communication styles in work and nonwork contexts. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85(2), pp. 63–372, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.85.2.363>

*request for a lift by responding 'Oki-fine.'*²⁶

Last, but not least – Physical noise²⁷ – subtly, yet greatly influences communication. Communication can be hindered not only by lack of understanding while the process takes place, but also by wrongly-adjusted conditions for such. *Wrong scheduling of a meeting, lack of coordination between time-zones, lack of mitigation of any negative effects the distance between communicating parties has on the process, a bad physical disposition of an individual (including the so called 'Zoom fatigue' or other)*²⁸ and *not-optimal physical condition of the other party* – are all potential factors that can interfere with effective communication. While according to Alistair Cockburn the most effective form of communication is a direct conversation between two people with the use of visual aids such as a whiteboard,²⁹ nowadays the significance of physical noises of all kinds is growing. The bigger the distance between interlocutors and the more technical channels are used as mediums (especially, in an era of quarantines, frequent home offices and limited travel opportunities) this category of obstacles simply cannot be overlooked.

Dealing with non-linguistic obstacles

To deal with the above-mentioned obstacles to an effective communication, it is crucial to present intercultural traits, develop intercultural mind-set and master international capabilities.

Vital traits while communicating in a multi-cultural setting are such as open-mindedness, tolerance of ambiguity, patience and flexibility. For a successful communication it is necessary to identify how many and what types of cultures play a role in every particular conversation, video-call or even an e-mail exchange. Respect and deep understanding of cultural differences are key to successful cross-cultural communication.

Ethnocentrism or simplistic attitudes are bound to lead to miscommunication. On the contrary – sophisticated worldviews embracing diversity among people, their various backgrounds, cultural differences and similarities

²⁶ Another example would be the use of irony and sarcasm in Japanese culture, as one might argue that the use thereof is not typical in that culture. It is reasonable to learn beforehand about the culture of someone so as not to be deemed offensive or unserious, especially in an effort of having a sensitive conversation with someone whose origins are in Japanese culture. E. (2019). September 23, *The Role of Communication in Conflict*. Penn State. Cultural Leadership Blog, <https://sites.psu.edu/global/2019/09/23/the-role-of-communication-in-conflict/>

²⁷ By definition a physical noise is any factor – external or environmental- distracting from receiving the intended message sent by a communicator. Rothwell, D. J. (2017). *In the Company of Others: An Introduction to Communication* (Illustrated ed.). Oxford University Press, USA

²⁸ How to Combat Zoom Fatigue (2021). *Harvard Business Review*, February 2, <https://hbr.org/2020/04/how-to-combat-zoom-fatigue%20or%20https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/2020/04/coronavirus-zoom-fatigue-is-taxing-the-brain-here-is-why-that-happens/>

²⁹ Cockburn, A. (2001). *Agile Software Development*. Addison-Wesley

foster the sense of a friendly, good-faith communication environment. Curiosity and ultimate capability to distinguish statements and facts from opinions, contexts and values are critical.

Below the authors list some guidelines to apply with the aim to avoid potential miscommunications and obtain more productive cross-cultural interaction. It is crucial to:

- never forget to do the homework – learning and showing knowledge of other countries and cultures; becoming aware of customs in relevant regions, while guarding against stereotypes as it is not possible to predict a person's behaviour based solely on their nationality or origin. Each individual is unique and should be deemed as such;
- show respect – to an individual as a person, to their community and their background; it may help to explicitly mention in a conversation that different cultures meet and merge all in order to set the right tone of a conversation and foster the atmosphere of good faith and openness;
- stay flexible in social interactions – it is essential to be ready to flex one's own style by adjusting the directness of communication, gestures, posture and more; an effective communicator should stay alert to what is new or against their natural preferences and should try to determine if it is a cultural difference, so as to consciously tune in or address it without harmful disruption in a communication process;
- never assume full understanding of a message and its meaning, (neither that messages sent were received without any disturbance by the listener nor that they grasped fully those of whomever they communicated with); to deal with mishaps in that regard, one could resort to labelling as it allows communicating parties to identify correctly the dynamics, emotions or circumstances implied from the other party's words, actions or demeanor; moreover, it transpires to be helpful to put a positive label on what is heard or seen from the other side; just as important as being forthcoming and labelling actions, it is to explain words or manner in order to convey the full meaning and help the receiver correctly decode messages. It is crucial to remember that the owner of the message owns the results, so once again it is good to 'take the burden' of the communication.
- normalize – communicating across cultures is often a foreign territory where it is easy to be taken aback by the other sides' words or behaviours that are particular to other cultures and uncommon

to ours; firstly, each individual should make an effort to become comfortable with the fact that surprises or astonishment are more than certain to occur; in no situation should they be allowed to hinder communication. Simple inquiries, questions and seeking clarifications could be used as normalizing tools. Shock or other such feelings are – most likely – equally true to the other side as well, so it is essential never to forget to explain in a more explicit way intentions behind the sent messages, always highlight the goal of the undertaken action and the words said. Also, in an effort to normalize – one can ask for feedback.

Good communication comes as a result of knowing and understanding who the other party is and what is the environment of communication, as well as properly preparing for the process of intercultural communication.

Conclusions

Ultimately, multicultural communication competency can and should be learnt as it is considered crucial for a successful professional and personal life. Due to the fact that each person is an individual who was born and raised into many cultures, people do not communicate in void and culture plays a crucial role in communication. Therefore, culture needs to be acknowledged as one of the factors influencing the result of communication and whether speakers will understand each other and their messages to the fullest extent possible. In view of the above, a similar attention one gives to mastering language skills and careful choice of words, should be directed to intercultural awareness as it a fundamental puzzle in each and every conversation, e-mail exchange or any other cross-cultural interaction. Different cultures have different standards and rules. A deep understanding of conscious and unconscious effects that language-based and non-linguistic cultural elements have on the process of communication, helps in adjusting communication style to ensure it is effective. Individuals, however, while shaped by their cultural background, are not limited by it. To succeed in multicultural communication, it is important to recognize any present obstacles of cultural origin and make necessary efforts to mitigate any negative effect they may have. It is crucial to acknowledge that no one is born proficient in multicultural communication. It is a skill and the authors of the article are certain, it can be acquired, mastered and applied in the future.

CHAPTER 6

CONFLICT DIAGNOSIS AND MANAGEMENT



CONFLICT DIAGNOSIS: HOW TO DEAL WITH A CONFLICT?

By Karin Sonnleitner and Verena Gschweitl

Annotation: The following article describes the importance of the recognition of conflicts and their dynamics. Therefore, it provides helpful approaches for dealing with conflicts. These approaches include exploring the cause and circumstances of conflicts through communication techniques and defining the type of a certain conflict. Furthermore, the diagnostic tool of the nine escalation levels by Glasl is described.

Even though conflicts are necessary for the evolution of society, they can be very challenging. However, by looking at them analytically, they can in some cases be transformed in a way which can be useful – to the as equal as possible extend – for all parties. The article aims to generate an awareness for an analytical approach and gives examples how conflict diagnosis can be taught.

Keywords: conflict diagnosis, type of conflict, classifying the stage of conflict, appropriate dispute resolution tool, practical examples

Summary: Introduction. – 1. Exploring the exterior cause of the conflict (circumstances of the case). – 2. Defining the type of conflict. – 3. Classifying the stage of conflict. – 4. Finding an appropriate dispute resolution tool. – Conclusions.

Introduction

Conflicts are inevitable, they can arise whenever and wherever people meet (may it be at the workplace, at the place of study/vocational training, within families, with friends, etc.). Despite being often considered to have negative – sometimes even destructive – effects, conflicts bear potential for growth and development, if those, who are involved, want to change old attitudes.¹ Without conflicts, society would not evolve. If they are treated in a constructive way, however, progress is initiated. Therefore, it is necessary to work on conflicts with a systematic approach. In this regard, scientists are examining the different facets of conflicts and developing models and tools for conflict analysis and diagnosis.

¹ Solarte-Vásquez, M. C. *The Wider Context: An Introduction to Conflict Management and Dispute Resolution. Mediation in Civil and Criminal Cases to Foster European Wide Settlement of Disputes* (e-Book). Retrieved 01.03.2021. from <https://mediation.turiba.lv/index.php?id=42>

The ability to deal with conflicts includes the competence to approach conflicts self-confidently, analytically and in a solution-oriented manner in order to successfully resolve them.² Productive tensions and challenges lead to an increase in competence in the form of an increased ability to resolve conflicts.³ Diagnosing conflicts is an essential part of this ability and can roughly be divided into the following elements:

- exploring the exterior cause of the conflict (circumstances of the case);
- defining the type of conflict;
- classifying the level of escalation;
- finding an appropriate dispute resolution tool.⁴

These elements are of importance, since in order to react adequately and/or give good advice it is necessary to understand the dynamics behind the problem, to find out who is involved, what are their interests and goals as well as how the conflict has progressed.⁵ Otherwise the dispute may not be solved at all, personal or business relationships may be damaged and/or the parties to the conflict may find themselves unsatisfied with the outcome, because an inappropriate dispute resolution strategy was chosen.⁶

This article provides different approaches to the above-mentioned aspects. It shall introduce students as well as teachers to some basic techniques, models and tools that can be applied either to one's own conflicts or to the conflicts of others from the position of a third neutral party.

1. Exploring the exterior cause of the conflict (circumstances of the case)

The first step when dealing with a conflict is to identify its exterior cause, which, according to Hagen⁷, corresponds to the cause of action in a lawsuit (e.g. breach of contract). In this regard one must clarify which persons are involved and what roles they have. Further in the process, the different positions and interests of these persons are explored to path the way for a potential consensus. In order

² Böttcher, W., & Lindart, M. (2009). *Schlüsselqualifiziert*. Weinheim: Beltz Verlag, p. 112

³ Heyse, V., & Erpenbeck, J. (2004). *Kompetenztraining: 64 Informations- und Trainingsprogramme*. Stuttgart: Schäffer-Poeschel Verlag für Wirtschaft, p. 329

⁴ Based on Hagen, J. J., & Lenz C. (2008). *Wirtschaftsmediation*. Wien: Manz Verlag, p. 33

⁵ Proksch, S. (2016). *Conflict Management*. Cham: Springer, pp. 3–8

⁶ Glasl, F. (2017). Konfliktdiagnose. *Mediation und Konfliktmanagement* (2nd ed.). Trenczek T., Berning D., Lenz C., Will H.-D. (edt.). Baden-Baden: Nomos, p. 157; Proksch, S. (2016). *Conflict Management*. Cham: Springer, p. 3 f.

⁷ Hagen, J. J., & Lenz, C. (2008). *Wirtschaftsmediation*. Wien: Manz Verlag, p. 33

to gather all necessary information and to fully comprehend the situation, it is important to master some basic communication techniques, which are presented in the following.

1.1. Asking questions

Asking questions is one of the two core competences in conflict diagnosis and management. Although it may sound simple, asking the right question(s) at the right time can pose its challenges. Kessen⁸ identifies three attributes useful questions have in common: 1. They are understandable, which means the person asking has to adopt her/his language to the person asked. 2. They are open (as opposed to closed, which means that closed questions can only be answered with “yes” or “no”). 3. They arouse interest, i.e. they address cognitive and affective needs. Open questions are suitable for gathering information, getting a different picture and supporting the conflict parties in opening up. Especially helpful are the so-called “W-questions” (**W**hat? **H**ow? **W**ho? **W**here? **W**hen? **W**hich? etc.). However, closed questions might also be useful to come to decisions or for clarification (e.g. “Do you accept this proposal?”, “Have you already spoken about the problem?”).

Apart from the distinction between open and closed questions there exist a variety of other question types like circular questions (“How would your friend describe the situation?”), paradox questions (“What could be done to make the situation worse?”) or concretizing questions (“How exactly did your meeting go?”)⁹ that are beyond the scope of this article. The most important recommendation to keep in mind, however, is to maintain an open, curious, respectful and appreciative attitude.¹⁰

1.2. Active Listening

The second core competence – active listening – can be described as ‘classical’ method.¹¹ It means listening on an emotional level from an empathetic

⁸ Kessen, S. (2017). Die Kunst des Fragens. *Mediation und Konfliktmanagement* (2nd ed.). Trenzcek T, Berning D., Lenz C., Will H.-D. (edt.). Baden-Baden: Nomos, pp. 324–325

⁹ Geier, F. (2017). Kommunikation in der Mediation. *Mediation und Konfliktmanagement* (2nd ed.). Trenzcek T, Berning D., Lenz C., Will H.-D. (edt.). Baden-Baden: Nomos, p. 321

¹⁰ Kessen, S. (2017). Die Kunst des Fragens, *Mediation und Konfliktmanagement* (2nd ed.). Trenzcek T, Berning D., Lenz C., Will H.-D. (edt.). Baden-Baden: Nomos, p. 324 f.

¹¹ Thomann, C., & Schulz von Thun, F. (2017). *Klärungshilfe 1, Handbuch für Therapeuten, Gesprächshelfer und Moderatoren in schwierigen Gesprächen*. Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, pp. 92 f.

position. The person listening devotes their full attention to the person talking, signaling the reception of their message on a non-verbal and verbal level (nodding their head, saying “yes”, “okay” etc.). Often the mistake is made to immediately give advice or to talk about similar experiences made by oneself, but the intention should be to completely understand the other person’s story, the facts and circumstances as well as the underlying needs and feelings.¹²

Part of active listening is to ask questions and to paraphrase what was said. The latter means to summarize/repeat the story in one’s own words neutrally and without any judgment. It helps to reassure oneself that what was heard was also understood correctly.¹³ Moreover, one should try to include the “sub-text” (the actual meaning, the feelings and interests) in the paraphrase. This way the person speaking feels understood, is supported in reflecting her/his own situation and feelings and is invited to open up even more. These communication techniques are not only useful in the first stage of conflict diagnosis, but also during all steps. Furthermore, showing empathy helps to build rapport and to prevent conflicts from escalating.¹⁴

2. Defining the type of conflict

A distinction of the type of conflicts must be made regarding the conflict parties (internal and interpersonal conflicts), the different forms of the conflict’s appearance (hot vs cold conflicts and latent vs manifest conflicts) as well as the matter of dispute (conflicts of interest, value and relationship conflicts). To provide an example: Two co-workers are having a dispute that seems like a personal conflict between them, while the real cause of the problem lies within the structure of the organization. It could be the case that the roles of the employees are organized in a way that they inevitably constrain each other when fulfilling their tasks.¹⁵ Trying to find a consensus on a personal level without considering the structural problem will not be successful in this situation. By defining the type of conflict, the root cause can be found and treated, which will give the parties the best chance to find sustainable solutions.

¹² Proksch, S. (2016). *Conflict Management*. Cham: Springer, pp. 61–62

¹³ Deutsch, M. (2014). *Cooperation, Competition, and Conflict. The Handbook of Conflict Resolution* (3rd ed.). Coleman, P., Deutsch, M. & Marcus, E. (edt.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, p. 15.

¹⁴ Kraus, R., Morsella, E. (2014). *Communication and Conflict. The Handbook of Conflict Resolution* (3rd ed.). Coleman, P., Deutsch, M. & Marcus, E. (edt.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, pp. 174–178

¹⁵ Proksch, S. (2016). *Conflict Management*. Cham: Springer, p. 6

2.1. Difference according to the conflict parties

Internal conflicts (intrapersonal)

Internal conflicts are the conflicts we fight with ourselves. Tensions arise within a person resulting from contradicting needs.¹⁶ Mostly we have to make different decisions in our daily life, and reflect if it was really the right decision. On the other side you have to live with the feeling that the decision could possibly turn out to be wrong. The following variants can be distinguished:

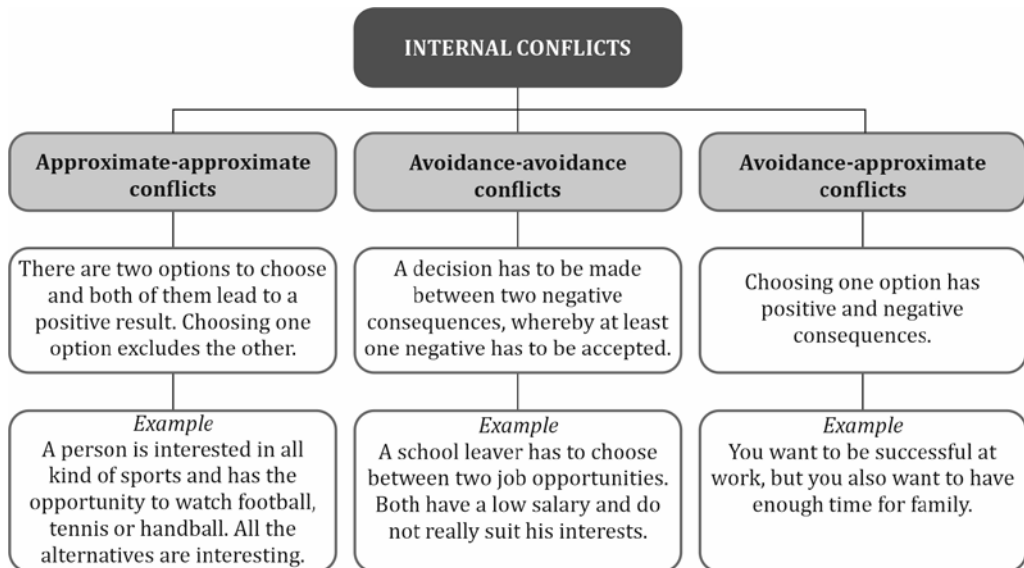


Figure 1. Internal conflicts¹⁷

An unresolved internal conflict is characterized by the fact that you want or need two things at the same time, but they contradict each other. This internal conflict is particularly relevant in psychology.

Social conflicts (interpersonal)

All interpersonal conflicts, in which two people or small groups are involved, are called social conflicts. Feelings, needs, our role behavior and basic attitude towards other people are relevant for our behavior. A distinction can be made between **conflicts of needs** and **conflicts of value**. When there is a conflict of needs, one feels directly disturbed by the behavior of another or hindered in fulfilling their own needs.

¹⁶ Röhl, K. R. (1987). *Rechtssoziologie. Ein Lehrbuch*. Köln: Carl Heymanns Verlag, p. 483

¹⁷ Glasl, F., & Weeks, D. (2008). *Die Kernkompetenzen für Mediation und Konfliktmanagement*. Stuttgart: Concadora-Verlag, pp. 96 f.

For example, you want to go home quickly after work, but you have to finish an urgent job for your boss. Conversely, conflicts of value have no direct impact on you personally, but you would like another person to change his/her behavior. For example, parents do not want their children to be pierced or tattooed.

According to Glasl, a social conflict is an interaction (a related communication or action) between actors (individuals, groups, organizations etc.), whereby at least one actor has incompatibilities in his/her thinking/imagining/perceiving and/or feeling with the other actor (other actors), experienced in such a way that an impairment by another actor or other actors occurs in trying a realization.¹⁸

The following types of conflict also belong to the interpersonal level. **Conflicts of goals** occur when two people pursue two goals that are difficult or incompatible. In a team there could be a disagreement about the goals and the expected outcome. For example, the boss expects his assistant to complete all tasks quickly and spontaneously. For the assistant, this means that other work remains unfinished, which in turn often leads to unpaid overtime. The secretary feels overwhelmed and sometimes not respected. Often a lack of agreements and coordination are the cause of a conflict of goals. A **distributional conflict** arises as a result of a dispute over a scarce good. If someone does not get what he/she thinks he/she is entitled to (e.g. salary, further education), we speak about a distribution conflict. A lack of resources can be the cause of a distributional conflict. In a **solution conflict** there are different ideas about how to solve a task in a group. In a **relationship conflict** the parties experience disruptive interpersonal tensions while working or living together. Relationship conflicts occur when the “chemistry” is not right anymore. These two factors can exacerbate a conflict.¹⁹ The last type of conflict also belongs to the category “difference according to the subject of dispute” which will be described in the next chapter.

2.2. Difference according to the subject of dispute

For Glasl, the subject of the dispute is one of the main aspects of the conflict division. Possible subjects of the dispute are different relationships, interests, needs, values, beliefs, etc.

¹⁸ Glasl, F. (2020). *Konfliktmanagement: ein Handbuch für Führung, Beratung und Mediation* (12th ed.). Bern – Haupt – Stuttgart: Verlag Freies Geistesleben, pp. 17 f.

¹⁹ Rüttinger, B., & Sauer, J. (2016). *Konflikt und Konfliktlösen*. Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler, p. 90

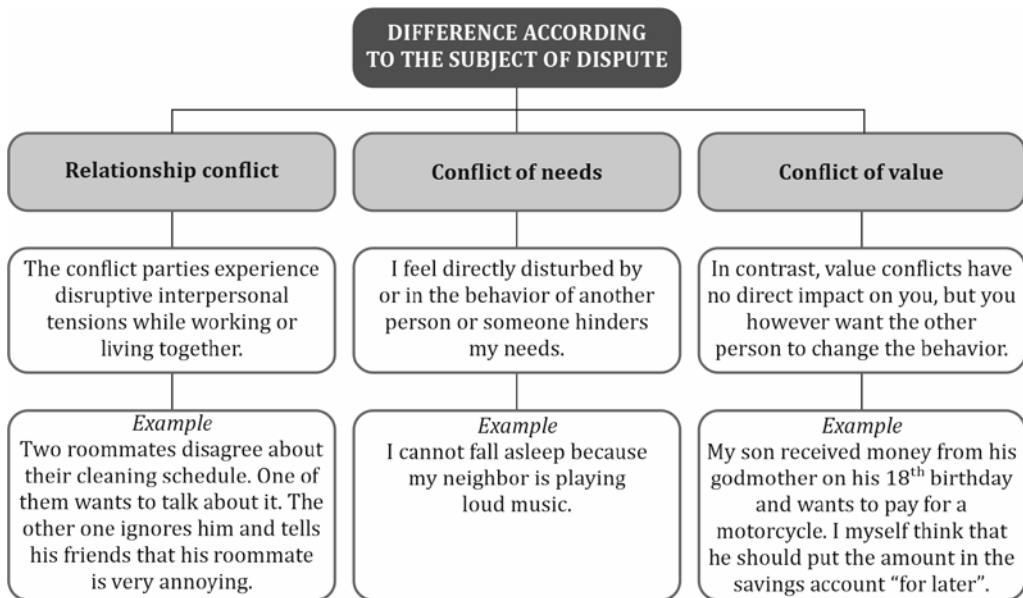


Figure 2: Difference according to the subject of dispute.²⁰

2.3. Difference according to the appearance

This differentiation/distinction of conflicts focuses on the interaction of the conflict parties. In **hot conflicts** the atmosphere is characterized by oversensitivity and over-activity. The conflicts are fought out loud and there is often a focus on one opinion leader. The own motives are not up for discussion and attempts are made to convince the opponent. In **cold conflicts** the climate is determined by disappointment and frustration. Communication comes to a complete standstill and the mutual attacks are also designed calculative. Self-esteem drops and the parties avoid each other more and more. These conflicts are difficult to recognize and in order to be able to deal with them at all, you usually have to "warm them up".²¹ A **latent conflict** means that the conflict already exists and can also be perceived, but has not yet been openly discussed. A **manifest conflict** is an open conflict, which is expressed in the conflict behavior.²²

²⁰ Glasl, F. (2020). *Konfliktmanagement: ein Handbuch für Führung, Beratung und Mediation* (12th ed.). Bern – Haupt – Stuttgart: Verlag Freies Geistesleben, pp. 55 ff.

²¹ Höher, P., & Höher, F. (2004). *Konfliktmanagement – Konflikte kompetent erkennen und lösen*. Bergisch Gladbach: EHP-Verlag, p. 50; Glasl, F. (2020). *Konfliktmanagement: ein Handbuch für Führung, Beratung und Mediation* (12th ed.). Bern – Haupt – Stuttgart: Verlag Freies Geistesleben, pp. 78 ff.

²² Dahrendorf, R. (1996). *Zu einer Theorie des sozialen Konflikts. Konflikttheorien*. Bonacker, T. (ed.). Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien, pp. 279–295; Pondy, L. R. (1967). Organizational conflicts: concepts and methods. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 12, pp. 296–320

3. Classifying the stage of conflict

After reflecting with what type of conflict you are dealing with, the model of Glasl²³ can be used so that the conflict parties know which of the nine levels of escalation the conflict has reached. It is therefore a very useful diagnostic tool for the conflict facilitator and sensitizes people to the mechanisms of conflict escalation. Such sensitizing may lead to a greater awareness of the steps one should take care to avoid if one wants to prevent a conflict from escalating out of control.

The first stage of conflict escalation develops when there is a disagreement about some issue or frustration in a relationship. It is called **tension**. The problem remains and leads to irritation. Interests and opinions crystallize into standpoints, i.e. fixed positions about a certain issue. In the perception of the conflict parties, these standpoints tend to become mutually incompatible. The positions attract adherents, which means groups start to form around certain standpoints, and for or against a certain standpoint. Interactions with the other side are disappointing, and are perceived as a waste of time and energy. The communication between the parties is still based on mutuality. **In stage 2, the debate**, the discussions lead to verbal confrontations. The parties look for more forceful ways of pushing through their standpoints and want to appear successful, strong and skillful rather than compliant, insecure and incompetent. Debates are no longer only focused on which standpoint has more merits, but also on who is most successful in promoting the standpoints. The behavior introduces mistrust in the relationship. Discussions turn into debates, where inflexible standpoints collide with each other. The growing mistrust creates a sense of insecurity and loss of control. **At stage 3, actions not words**, the parties no longer believe that further talks will resolve anything, and they shift their attention to actions. The most important goal at this stage is to block the counterpart from reaching their goal, and to push through one's own interests. Actions and non-verbal communication dominate the course of events, which tends to speed up the escalation process. Fantasies about possible motives and hidden strategies can develop unchecked. The feeling of being blocked is further increased by the limited possibility of genuine verbal communication.

²³ Glasl, F. (2020). *Konfliktmanagement: ein Handbuch für Führung, Beratung und Mediation* (12th ed.). Bern – Haupt – Stuttgart: Verlag Freies Geistesleben, pp. 243 ff; Proksch, S. (2016). *Conflict Management*. Cham: Springer, pp. 7 f.



Figure 3. Stages of conflict

At stage 4, which is called **images and coalitions**, the conflict is no longer about concrete issues, but about victory or defeat. Defending one's reputation is a major concern. The images are now stereotypical, highly fixed and very resilient to change. The conflict parties start to attribute collective characteristics, both to members of the other side and to ingroup members. The negative images are now screens that occupy the field of vision whenever the parties meet each other. These screens prevent the parties from seeing each other's true complexity and individuality. During this stage, the parties actively try to enlist support from bystanders and the conflict activities are now focused on affecting the counterpart.

The transition to **stage 5** is dramatic. **Loss of face** means that the conflict parties feel that they have seen through the mask of the other party and discovered an immoral, insane or criminal inside. The whole conflict history is reinterpreted: one feels that the other side has followed a consequent and immoral strategy. They think that there are angels and devils involved in the conflict, representing two sides. One's own side is a representation of the good forces in the world, the other side represents the destructive and bestial forces. Loss of face and pursuing retaliatory acts often isolate the conflict parties from bystanders. The conflict parties develop **threat strategies at stage 6** and lose control over the course of events. They create pressure and act rapidly and radically. There is a serious risk that stress and complexity result in the disintegration of the parties.

Stage 7 leads to **limited destruction**. Threats turn into real attacks and the damage grows bigger. The parties are only able to reach lose-lose solutions, because the goal is to hurt the opponent. There is no chance to communicate anymore and no possibility to win the conflict. During **stage 8**, which is called **disintegration**, the attacks intensify and have the aim to destroy the counterpart. Only one's own survival is important. This survival instinct changes at **stage 9. Together into the abyss** is the central interest, because there is no returning back to a normal respectful relationship. Instead of having a conflict, the parties fight against each other like they are in war, without scruples, remorse and ethics.

4. Finding an appropriate dispute resolution tool

As long as the dispute is still on level 1 to 3 the parties can either solve their conflict on their own or use moderation as an appropriate method. Conflicts in phases 3 to 5 have the chance to be solved with the help of a process conciliator (process or sociotherapeutic process consultation). A conflict that is in phases 5 to 7 can be dealt with mediation. If the conflict intensifies, the conflicting parties increasingly lose the ability to settle the conflict without outside intervention. At phase 6 of the escalation model, the parties are no longer able to resolve the dispute without outside help. However, the neutral “mediator role” without decision-making power is sufficient. From phase 6 onwards, the conflicting parties should generally think about “delegating” the decision to a third party. In phases 8 and 9 the dispute will have to be decided by the ordinary courts or an arbitration tribunal. These disputes can also be dealt with the decision of an intervening power. With regard to the choice of conflict resolution options, preference should generally be given to those that aim at a consensus. It is essential to note that the conflicting parties can be in different phases. This means, it is possible that A is already thinking of filing a lawsuit (phase 7), while B perceives the conflict as less escalating (phase 5).²⁴

Alberstötter²⁵ created a similar model, especially for conflicts between parents, summing up the escalation process to 3 levels. During the first stage

²⁴ Glasl, F. (1982). The process of conflict escalation and roles of third parties. *Conflict Management and Industrial Relations*. Bomers, G., Peterson, R. (edt.). Dordrecht: Springer-Science + Business Media, pp. 132 ff; Glasl, F. (2015). *Selbsthilfe in Konflikten. Konzepte – Übungen – Praktische Methoden* (7th ed.). Bern: Haupt Verlag, pp. 137 ff.

²⁵ Alberstötter, U. (2006). Wenn Eltern Krieg gegen einander führen. *Eskalierte Elternkonflikte. Beratungsarbeit im Interesse des Kindes bei hoch strittigen Scheidungen*. Weber M., Schilling H. (edt.). Weinheim and Munich: Juventa, p. 36

of the model it comes to a hardening between those involved in the conflict (level 1: sporadic words and actions against one another). As a next step, the field of conflict is expanded (level 2: hurtful actions and expansion of the field of conflict), until one can speak of a relationship war (level 3: relationship war – fight at any price), in which revenge and active destruction dominate. This information helps in the following with the decision on the most appropriate and promising conflict resolution strategy.

Conclusions

When people live together, conflicts and contradictions are indispensable. At the same time, conflicts can have positive effects. If people are sensitized to the possible causes and types of conflicts, the escalation dynamics as well as different resolution methods, they are more likely to find sustainable solutions.²⁶ By using the above described techniques, tools and models, it is possible to approach conflicts from an analytical angle. This helps to take a step back, to reflect and to make choices about the most appropriate dispute resolution method. The model of Glasl on the escalation phases²⁷ can provide especially useful guidance in the process. It shows that at the beginning of the resentment phase (1–3) self-help is possible to find a win-win outcome.²⁸ Towards the end of this phase and during the next phases (4–6) a neutral third party (a mediator) is necessary to settle the conflict. Once the destruction, the lose-lose phase, is reached (7–9), only a powerful intervention that forcibly separates the conflict parties can help.

It is, for example, not advisable to file a lawsuit if the conflict has only reached stage 4, since it might be solved with less invasive methods that preserve the decision-making autonomy of the parties. On the other hand, a lot of effort and resources can be saved if the parties do not try to solve their highly escalated conflict by using mediation (stage 8). Moreover, a respectful, open and curious way of communicating helps to gather the necessary information needed for conflict analysis, prevent the conflict from escalating and most importantly, brings the solution one step closer.

²⁶ Schwarz, G. (2014). *Konfliktmanagement. Konflikte erkennen, analysieren, lösen* (9th ed.). Wiesbaden: Springer pp. 39 ff.

²⁷ See chapter 4

²⁸ Love, L., & Stulberg, J. (2019). Using Mediation for Advantage. *Negotiation Essentials for Lawyers*. Kupfer Schneider, A., Honeymann, Ch. (edt.). Chicago: American Bar Association, p. 299

In summary, as described, refraining from conflict diagnosis can lead to various difficulties, including not solving the conflict at all. Therefore, the ability to diagnose conflicts is an asset for anyone who wants to succeed in the personal, academic and/or professional life.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO LEARN, AND HOW TO IMPROVE?

By Daiva Račelytė and Agnė Tvaronavičienė

Annotation: This article highlights the importance of conflict management skills for successful interpersonal communication. The aim of this small volume study is to encourage students for their conflict management skills development and serves for their communication skills improvement using ability to move from the position towards the interests and real needs of the people. The article starts with an introduction to main conflicts styles, continues with discussion on individual factors of effective conflict management and ends with suggestions for more collaborative approach towards conflict resolution and concrete techniques to achieve it. This small volume study was carried on using the scientific literature analyses and professional experience of the authors. Conclusions of the article emphasize the inevitable importance of individual characteristics of a person in conflict management, as first of all every individual should know well himself and be able to evaluate its own conflict intelligence. The role of educators, university staff and practitioners is named as crucial in students' motivation and encouragement to gain more knowledge and skills in conflict management.

Keywords: conflict management, interests, needs, conflict styles, conflict intelligence

Summary: Introduction. – 1. Conflict styles as a frame for conflict management skills improvement. – 2. Integrated individual factors of effective conflict management and model for conflict management competences. – 3. Building more collaborative approach towards conflict resolution by moving the conflict resolution from position to the interests of the people. – Conclusions.

Introduction

Conflicts are necessary element of human interaction and unavoidable part of social relationships. Unmanaged or unsuccessfully managed conflicts can destroy relationship, produce the experience of more stress and reduced well-

being, increase dissatisfaction, turnover and absenteeism.¹ Contrary, effective conflict resolution skills and the successful interpersonal relationships are related to psychologically safe environment, innovative top management decisions, and effective organizational leadership.² Conflicts have an important role for university students in many ways. It can be harmful as the destructive consequences of interpersonal conflicts may include internal loss such as self-worth, control, and confidence, as well as external loss such as funding, mentoring support, research opportunities, or even missed career.³ Conversely, constructive conflict management can help to clarify values, social status, individual and group identity, promote personal growth, and generate interpersonal insights.⁴ In many cases, conflict management is more productive to compare with attempts to eliminate conflict. Constant dynamics of interpersonal relations, experience of multiple and intense pressures, growing complexity of relations and organizations nowadays create great challenges to conflict management practice. In a university, constructive conflict is necessary for intellectual debate, new ideas, creative solutions. The academic community should be encouraged to engage in conflict at an appropriate level.⁵ Managing conflicts in a constructive manner is one of the most important competencies that university students need to develop. However, the current curricula of many Universities do not reflect student's need for effective conflict management skills.⁶ Conflicts need to be managed for changing their process and consequences from destructive to constructive and encourage a peaceful coexistence of people sharing different views and values. The aim of this article is to reveal the main conflict management variables and skills, which are

¹ De Wit, F. R. C., Greer, L. L., & Jehn, K. A. (2012). The paradox of intragroup conflict: a meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 97(2), pp. 360–390; O'Neill, T. A., Allen, N. J. & Hastings, S. E. (2013). Examining the “Pros” and “Cons” of Team Conflict: A Team-Level Meta-Analysis of Task, Relationship, and Process Conflict. *Human Performance*, 26(3), pp. 236–260, DOI: 10.1080/08959285.2013.795573; De Dreu, C. K. W., & Beersma, B. (2005). Conflict in organizations: Beyond effectiveness and performance. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 14 (2), pp. 105–117, DOI: 10.1080/13594320444000227

² Seitchik, M. (2019). The goldilocks approach to team conflict: how leaders can maximize innovation and revenue growth. *The Psychologist-Manager Journal*, 22(1), pp. 37–45, DOI: 10.1037/mgr0000082; Vollmer, A. (2015). Conflicts in innovation and how to approach the “last mile” on conflict management research – a literature review. *The International Journal of Conflict Management*, 26 (2), pp. 192–213, DOI: 10.1108/IJCM-09-2012-0062

³ Brockman, J. L., Nunez, A. A., & Basu, A. (2010). Effectiveness of a Conflict Resolution Training Program in Changing Graduate Students Style of Managing Conflict with their Faculty Advisors. *Innovation in Higher Education*, 35, p. 278, DOI: 10.1007/s10755-010-9142-z

⁴ Brockman, J. L., Nunez, A. A., & Basu, A. (2010). Effectiveness of a Conflict Resolution Training Program in Changing Graduate Students Style of Managing Conflict with their Faculty Advisors. *Innovation in Higher Education*, 35, pp. 277–293, DOI: 10.1007/s10755-010-9142-z; Waithaka, A. G. (2014). *Conflict handling styles among college students: the influence of conflict training, personality, and family conflict resolution*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Liberty University, UMI 3632486 Published by ProQuest LLC

⁵ Jacobson, R. A. (2012). *Managing conflicts and resolving disputes involving students on university campuses: the present and the future*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. York University, Toronto, Ontario, p. 86

⁶ Lang, M. (2009). Conflict Management: A Gap in Business Education Curricula. *Journal of Education for Business*. March/April, pp. 240–245

necessary for students. Thus, it is so important to identify individual factors that influence success in conflict management, to define the most effective ways to improve them, to apply appropriate model for conflict management competences. The article focuses on the encouragements of students to adopt the most suitable approach towards complicated conflicts and serves for their communication skills improvement using ability to move from the position towards the interests and real needs of the people. The article starts with an introduction to main conflicts styles, continues with discussion on individual factors of effective conflict management and ends with suggestions for more collaborative approach towards conflict resolutions and concrete techniques to achieve it. This small volume study was carried on using the scientific literature analyses and professional experience of the authors.

1. Conflict styles as a frame for conflict management skills improvement

For many years, the dominant approach to studying how people response to conflict has been conflict styles approach, or “dual-concerns” model.⁷ This approach defines that five styles responding to conflict (cooperative (also problem solving, integrating), competitive (also dominating, contending, confronting or forcing), avoiding, accommodating (also yielding or obliging) and compromising) are based on two main dimensions: concern for one’s own goals, and concern for the other person’s goals. Accommodating style reflects a high concern for others with low concern for self, whereas competing styles can be illustrated by a high concern for self with low concern for others; avoidance means a low concern for both self and others, whereas collaboration style reflects a high concern for both self and others.

People use different behaviors to manage various conflicts. Which style is most effective in specific situation for particular participants? Specifically, effectiveness can be defined in two approaches. Relational outcomes are bound up in relationship quality (e.g., interpersonal trust in parties), value of relationship, likelihood of future relationships. Substantive outcomes are more based upon specific goals and acceptable solutions being reached or not reached. Various factors of the conflict context have a big impact on the selection and usage of conflict style. It can be listed: complexity of the conflict

⁷ Thomas, K. W., & Kilmann, R. H. (2010). Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument, <http://www.mrema.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/THOMAS-KILMANN-CONFLICT-MODE-INSTRUMENT5.6.16.pdf>

issue, time, which party are able to allocated for the resolution, importance of conflict issue to parties involved, power of parties, their relationship value, and resources, which are available for parties.⁸ Person will reach higher levels of conflict management effectiveness if she/he is more aware of contextual features and possess an ability to use diverse styles of conflict management. It is proved, that using a diversity of conflict handling styles results in enhanced conflict handling effectiveness only when both the contextual factors inherent in conflict are considered and the individual differences profile necessary to navigate conflict is possessed.⁹ This means that if person applies conflict style frame dealing with conflict, conflict management process needs a good preparation, gained knowledge and skills, which let a person to identify important contextual factors and choose the most appropriate strategy for the resolution of the conflict.

The results of many studies provide a strong support for a conceptual fit between personality traits and conflict management styles, and more specifically, establish agreeableness as a key predictor of various conflict management styles.¹⁰ Even different facets of agreeableness can explain significant variance in each of the five conflict management styles. For example, low scores on straightforwardness, compliance and modesty predict dominant style, implying that more Machiavellian or deceitful individuals preferred to dominate those with whom they disagreed. Compliant individuals tend to be obliging and sacrifice their needs for others, they also may be less trusting of others and choose to be passive and to avoid conflict. Altruistic individuals are most likely to be self-sacrificing and willing to compromise in finding an integrative solution.¹¹ Extraverts are more likely than introverts to use integrating, obliging, compromising and avoiding styles. Emotional stability predicts integrating style, while neuroticism predicts dominating style.¹² Personality traits stay relatively stable across the lifespan. The personality traits should, therefore, be understood and considered for conflict experience, conflict management and performance. Every person should first know himself and be aware that his /her personal traits may have influence on conflict management strategy preferences and choices.

⁸ Rahim, M. A. (2002). Toward theory of managing organizational conflict. *The International Journal of Conflict Management*, 13, pp. 206–235

⁹ Lamia, J. F. (2011). *A theory of conflict handling: integration of individual differences and contextual factors*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Saint Louis University, p. 52, UMI 3440158 Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Thesis database

¹⁰ Komarraju, M., Dollinger, S. J., & Lovell, J. (2012). Agreeableness and Conflict Management Styles: A Cross-Validated Extension. *Journal of Organizational Psychology*, 12(1), pp. 19–31

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ayub, N., AlQurashi, S. M., Al-Yafi, W. A., & Jehn, K. (2017). Personality traits and conflict management styles in predicting job performance and conflict. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 28 (5), p. 685, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCM-12-2016-0105>

Conflict researchers find other important individual variables. For example, cooperating was clearly named as the highest preferred conflict style for participants who were assessed with a high level of Emotional Intelligence (EQ), and directing was a preferred conflict style for participants who were assessed with a lower level of EQ.¹³ Forcing related positively and problem solving related negatively to being a perpetrator at bullying.¹⁴ Achievement motivation is positively related to an integrative approach. Thus, creating conditions that motivates people to succeed may enhance the use of an integrative approach. The results indicate that individual characteristics can be a potent cause to integration. Regardless of situation, integrative approach was associated with high quality outcomes in terms of decision quality, fairness, satisfaction, and trust.¹⁵ Empathy and knowledge of context are related to number of conflict styles used to conflict handling effectiveness.¹⁶ Individual characteristics (empathy, political skill, and need for cognition) together with situational (contextual factors) mediate the effect of number of conflict styles used on effective conflict handling.¹⁷ One of important findings of such studies is that the direct and indirect effects of individual differences on conflict handling effectiveness are unstable when viewed as individual components. However, when these individual differences are aggregated and viewed as a system through which individuals channel their efforts during conflict direct and indirect effects on conflict handling effectiveness become apparent.¹⁸ Therefore, conflict is a complex process that requires a mastery of both individual and contextual factors.

Learning how to manage conflicts appropriately is an important task for every person. The main context for children and adolescents to learn and practice conflict management skills is the family, and, for adults, work and study environment becomes more important. Practitioners suggest various forms for group training or individual learning: exercises, reflections, case studies to improve conflict style awareness and effectiveness. For example, case studies in form of vignettes are useful to comprehend and consider a

¹³ Ellis, A. C. (2010). *Exploring the Relationship of Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Management Styles*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, UMI 3434138 Copyright 2011 by ProQuest LLC

¹⁴ Baillien, E., Bollen, K., Euwema, M., & De Witte, H. (2013). Conflicts and conflict management styles as precursors of workplace bullying: A two-wave longitudinal study. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, DOI: 10.1080/1359432X.2012.752899

¹⁵ Rognes, J. K., & Schei, V. (2010). Understanding the integrative approach to conflict management. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 25 (1), pp. 82–97, DOI: 10.1108/02683941011013885

¹⁶ Lamia, J. F. (2011). *A theory of conflict handling: integration of individual differences and contextual factors*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Saint Louis University, p. 44, UMI 3440158 Copyright 2011 by ProQuest LLC

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 50

¹⁸ Ibid.

variety of possible process designs based on the situation presented in a case¹⁹. Reflecting on personal conflict management styles and adopting a positive attitude to personal and professional development is also one of the tools that are most helpful in managing conflict.²⁰ One of very important tools is simulation that can be based on real life cases or using pseudo-reality approach. The core principles to be included in training through simulations are: focus on preparation with stakeholder analysis to deepen understanding of self, other party, and context or situation; apply and model a collaborative process throughout the simulation.²¹ Conflict coaching also seems to be one of useful tools to increase constructive behavior skills and to improve conflict style.²² The variety of possible tasks for improvement of conflict management skills proves, that these skills may be developed by trainings and self-education.

It may be concluded that all five conflict styles serves well in different situations, for different persons and relationships, as there is no “one fits all” style. People have relatively stable individual characteristics (for example, personality traits) that influence conflict management style preferences, flexibility in conflict management style changes, or number of conflict styles used to effective conflict management. Other individual variables (as empathy, emotional intelligence, need for cognition) that are important for effective conflict management style, can be developed through various forms of self-learning and conflict management style training.

2. Integrated individual factors of effective conflict management and model for conflict management competences

Every person enjoys a set of individual characteristics, which make him unique. This diversity in society is a big value because it enables us to reach the synergy effect by combining different traits in fulfilling certain tasks or finding solutions for some problems. The scientific research literature describes different

¹⁹ Johnson, K. E., & Hall, A. (2018). Validity of self-reported conflict handling preferences and the role of self-enhancement. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 29 (4), pp. 43–563, DOI: org/10.1108/IJCM-03-2018-0039

²⁰ Siew, N. M., & Jones, S. (2018). Training approaches for improving school managers' conflict resolution skills: A case study. *Problems of Education in the 21st Century*, 76(5), pp. 720–735

²¹ Fisher, J., & Fisher-Yoshida, B. (2017). Educating Negotiators: Using Theory, Practice, Case Studies, and Simulations in an Integrated Learning Experience. *Negotiation and Conflict Management Research*, 10 (4), p. 298, DOI: 10.1111/ncmr.12104

²² Bubbers, T. A. (2015). *Intensive conflict management training for managers in a health care facility*. University of Phoenix. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. ProQuest LLC (2016)

individual and organizational factors of effective conflict management. Oore, Leiter, LeBlanc (2015)²³ integrated psychological research literature across social, personality, family and negotiation fields and identified four broad individual factors that allow to be successful in conflict:

Cognitive flexibility. Cognitive ability to move flexibly through various perspectives on the conflict situation, cognitive perspective taking, thinking of a conflict in increasingly abstract or distant terms facilitates generation out-of-the-box solutions. Perspective-takers use more collaborative and problem-solving approaches and seem to reduce the dyadic level of retaliation in the interpersonal interaction.

A balance of self and other focus. Jointly high self-interest and other-interest motivates a collaborative or integrative approach and lets do not miss joint opportunities for mutual benefit with other party. Satisfying self-interests and meeting one's own needs with concern for one's partner's needs let to maintain positive relationships.

Emotional regulation. Emotion regulation means exercising cognitive control to manage or redirect the impact of distractive emotions (such as escalated anger, hatred), and includes such tactics as attention deployment (distracting oneself away from emotions), reappraisal (reinterpretation or modification of emotion), suppression (inhibiting or tamping down feelings).

A fit of person and their conflict approach to the context (person-conflict compatibility). The ability to either choose to react in situations that have a good fit between one's habitual conflict handling tendencies and the environment, or to flexibly adapt one's behavioral approach to best match the other person or specific conflict situation, to make wise choices about when to apply which conflict management strategy.

These factors (perspective-taking, focusing on both one's own and other party's interests and needs, mastery to choose appropriate conflict style that fit to the conflict situation, and emotion regulation) can be improved through conflict management training. This can be reached through special training course, workshops, and individual learning.

One of recent models for conflict management competences and skills is proposed by Peter T. Coleman.²⁴ This framework describes Conflict Intelligence and Systemic Wisdom as meta-competences for engaging conflict. Conflict intelligence is the set of competences and skills used to manage different types of normative conflicts in diverse or changing situations effectively and

²³ Oore, D. G., Leiter, M. P., & LeBlanc, D. E. (2015). Individual and organizational factors promoting successful responses to workplace conflict. *Canadian Psychology*, 56(3), pp. 301-310, DOI: 10.1037/cap0000032

²⁴ Coleman, P. T. (2018). Conflict Intelligence and Systemic Wisdom: Meta-Competences for Engaging Conflict in a Complex, Dynamic World. *Negotiation Journal*, 34 (1), pp. 7-35, DOI :10.1111/nejo.12211

constructively. The author states that “...the meta-competency of conflict intelligence can be particularly useful for addressing the vast majority of more straightforward, negotiable, or manageable interpersonal and intergroup conflict dynamics we face in our normal daily lives”.²⁵

According to Coleman, core competences of conflict intelligence are:

Self-knowledge and regulation. Knowing and managing your-self in conflict. This can include awareness of cognitive, motivational, moral and action orientations to conflict situations that guide one’s conflict behaviors and responses. Conflict intelligence requires adequate self-regulation in conflict, or the ability to inhibit impulsive, automatic, or “hot” emotional responses to conflict.

Constructive conflict resolution. Understanding the constructive and destructive potential of conflict and developing the knowledge, attitudes, and skills for constructive resolution. Constructive conflict resolution requires understanding the constructive and destructive potential of conflict, its dynamic nature, and one’s own preferences and tendencies for conflict resolution. The basic skills include effective listening, perspective taking, probing for needs and interests, establishing rapport, focusing on similarities and common ground, reframing issues at a needs level, and generating creative and integrative solutions.

Conflict optimality. The capacity to navigate between different or competing motives, and emotions, and combine different approaches to conflict to achieve desired outcomes.

Conflict adaptivity. The capacity to employ distinct strategies in different types of conflict situations in a manner that achieves goals and is fitting with demands of the situation.

To sum up, individual traits of a person are inevitably important for the effective conflict management. Every individual should know well himself and in the process of self-knowledge he or she need to assess his/her behavioral reaction, cognitive flexibility, balance of self and others focus, emotional regulation and ability to adapt to the context of the conflict. In fact, these factors are reflected in one of the latest model of conflict management competences, known as conflict intelligence, as core basic competences Self-knowledge and regulation, and Constructive conflict resolution. For effective conflict management, students need not only be aware of individual factors promoting successful responses to conflict, but also to develop cognitive flexibility as well as flexibility in behavioral reaction to conflict, and improve emotional regulation.

²⁵ Coleman, P. T. (2018). Conflict Intelligence and Systemic Wisdom: Meta-Competences for Engaging Conflict in a Complex, Dynamic World. *Negotiation Journal*, 34 (1), pp. 7–35, DOI :10.1111/nejo.12211

3. Building more collaborative approach towards conflict resolution by moving the conflict resolution from position to the interests of the people

Collaborative style of conflict management presents a win-win perspective, which means the highest satisfaction of interests of both parties. This style, as it was mentioned before, reflects best a high concern for both self and others. One of the most effective tools, which may be adopted for the collaborative conflict management style, is finding out the interests of the parties to a conflict instead of dealing with their positions. This classical idea leads students to understanding that certain positions often reflect only one of the possible ways to satisfy the interests of the parties. On contrary, managing the conflict in the level of position, means minimum the necessity to compromise, which in some situations may not satisfy parties, as they are not allowed to full satisfaction of their interests.

Positions are widely understood as a proposal or point of view that is adapted, or a demand, what is brought by one party to the other in a conflict. It might be, for example, demand to change a supervisor, as previously he or she did not provide sufficient help in preparing final thesis. Interest is something for which one feels concern or in which one has a stake. In conflicts, interests are those real or perceived personal or corporate requirements from which goals and objectives are derived.²⁶ Interests may be described as a goal of a person, which he/she is willing to achieve in a conflict. Interests are the most easily accessible or observable type of need and lie to the heart of most negotiations.²⁷ Interest reflects the answer to the question why conflict party needs such an outcome as it was stated. In case of our example, the answer may vary from wish to have more effective communication with a supervisor to the need to rely on professional expertise, competence or knowledge of the supervisor. Every answer predicts new different possible solutions to this problem.

According Roger Fisher and William Ury, reconciling interests rather than positions works for several reasons. For every interest there usually exist several possible positions that could satisfy it.²⁸ Going back to the example of the necessity to change the scientific supervisor, it is predictable, that the interest of the student is to get help in writing his thesis. It might be achieved not only by changing supervisor, but as well as changing the communication

²⁶ Yarn, D. H. (1999). *Dictionary of Conflict Resolution*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers, p. 228

²⁷ Mayer, B. (2012). *The Dynamics of Conflict: A Guide to Engagement and Intervention* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey Bass, p. 22

²⁸ Fisher, R., & Ury, W. (1981). *Getting to Yes*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, p. 24

with current supervisor or appointing an additional consultant in the process. All these three solutions are oriented towards the satisfying the interest of students, but enjoying such variety instead of one primary position opens widely the gates for solution which would serve best for student, supervisor and the university management. It should be agreed, that reconciling interests rather than compromising between positions also works because behind opposed positions lie many more interests than conflicting ones.²⁹ As positions presents a narrow and one person's interests-oriented solution it takes the parties to an impasse, which is often is difficult to overcome. Looking behind the positions broadens our perspective and enables people to see other options, which may be better solutions taking into consideration the need to find a balance between the interests of both parties to a conflict. It should be denied that opposite position always means opposite interests. Members of certain society, or in our case of university community, often share the same interests and values, especially in universities as it come to the quality and environment of the studies.

Conflict parties often experience conflict at different levels. A challenge practitioners face in the particular conflict is to determine what level of interests and needs best explains a conflict. It is worth to remind that not necessarily people are ready to talk about their interests in the concrete situation. As positions reflects the most common means of fixing the problems in certain environment, bringing people to their interest may require additional efforts and their motivation. Roger Fisher and William Ury admit that as position is likely to be concrete and explicit; the interests underlying it may well be unexpressed, intangible, and perhaps inconsistent. These legendary negotiations experts suggest using questions "why" and "why not" for the clarification of the interests.³⁰ The question "Why" is helpful for getting information on the desired result of both of the parties. The answers to the question "Why not" may lead us to the better understanding, why our suggested decision is not suitable for other. If we fail to look at the deeper level of interests, we are likely to end up working on the wrong issues and overlooking some important areas of mutual concern.³¹ Knowing this information and being able to see the underlying interests of the parties is a key to the setting up the criterions of the win-win solution, which may be achieved in the further process of conflict management.

In an ideal world, collaborative approach results in an outcome that satisfies both parties' needs. In reality, different constraints, opposing values

²⁹ Fisher, R., & Ury, W. (1981). *Getting to Yes*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, p. 24

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 25

³¹ Mayer, B. (2012). *The Dynamics of Conflict: A Guide to Engagement and Intervention* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey Bass, p. 23

often make a pure collaborative approach to conflict management unrealistic, or inappropriate. While interplay of cooperation and competition is always present in interpersonal interactions, how we engage in this process and the strategies we use to respond to them are more complex, varied, and inconsistent than choosing a cooperative or competitive response.³² Anyway, ability to identify interests and needs of opponent as well as one's own needs helps to find more constructive way in complex conflict situations. People face in addressing the cooperative and competitive elements of all contextual interactions, and it is so important to be aware of it, and be nuanced, realistic and effective in various interpersonal communication during conflict management.

Conclusions

Classical model of conflict management styles (competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating) remains a suitable tool for the better self-knowledge and improvement in conflict management. All these styles serve well in different situations, as there is no "one fits all" style. Still in academic community interpersonal relationship conflicts are complex and require finding a balance between different interests, what in many cases can be most effectively done by collaboration of the parties to a conflict.

It should be admitted that individual characteristics of a person are inevitably important for the effective conflict management. Every individual should know well himself/herself and be able to understand his/her individual tendencies that guide one's conflict behaviors, and cognitive, motivational, action orientation to conflict situations. Development of conflict intelligence as the set of competences and skills used to manage different types of conflicts in diverse or changing situations is one of the most constructive ways to improve soft skills of students. For students, it is especially important to develop advanced core competencies of conflict intelligence: the ability to respond optimally in conflict by combining different approaches to conflict to achieve the most appropriate outcomes, and conflict adaptivity, that means capacity to use a variety of conflict management strategies, and the ability to assess fit of conflict strategy to conflict situation.

One of the popular tools for improving the conflict management skills and building more collaboration-oriented style of conflict management is a

³² Mayer, B. (2015). *The Conflict Paradox: Seven dilemmas at the core of disputes*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, p. 48

classical interests-based approach. Positions as a clear demand statement should be changed to interests, which reflect the aim of a person in a conflict. Managing conflict in interest level opens broader perspective for collaboration as not all interests of opposite parties are competing.

Development and integration of conflict management approaches that involve understanding and employing conflict resolution skills in context, contextualizing conflict management decisions can help to reach the goal of expanding and enhancing capacities to manage and transform conflicts more effectively. People are sensitive about engaging in conflict and managing conflict differently because of situational constraints and personality characteristics of conflict parties. Educators can encourage students to manage conflicts differently depending on whether interpersonal relationships or other outcomes matter more in any given situation. Similarly, university staff and conflict resolution practitioners who engage in conflict management trainings can also empower others to more effectively handle conflicts with the insights by sharing the different effects of distinct motives and frames.

APPENDIX

Examples for Training About Conflict Styles (Conflict Management Strategies)

1. Recognition of different conflict styles (Beatty, Barker Scott, 2004)

It's Friday afternoon at 3:15 p.m., and your team meeting was supposed to start at 3:00 p.m. Everyone is present, except for Brenda, who is late again. The team has agreed that being on time for meetings is an important norm. At 3:25 p.m., she rushes in, apologizing for her tardiness and explaining that the computer ate her document.

Which of the following are members most likely to do?

1. Ignore the problem and continue discussion.
2. Acknowledge the problem but do nothing to correct the situation.
3. Acknowledge the problem and attempt to solve it.
4. Acknowledge the problem, solve it, and discuss and agree on a procedure for dealing with similar problems in the future.

Explanation

Avoiding. Members choose not to confront or be involved. In the previous case, members would choose to ignore Brenda's tardiness, even though they are bothered by it.

Accommodating. Members adapt or agree to satisfy the needs of others above their own needs. Here, members might choose to sympathize with Brenda and not raise the issue. As a result, Brenda will probably be late for the next meeting as well.

Competing. Members choose to satisfy their own needs by asserting, controlling, or resisting. Here, members would likely confront Brenda by telling her in no uncertain terms that her tardiness is unacceptable and dictate their expectations for the future: Be on time, or else.

Collaborating. Members attempt to create mutually satisfying solutions through win-win strategies. Here, members would likely acknowledge the problem, explore the causes, and work with Brenda to create a protocol that will meet the team's needs and Brenda's as well.

2. The Five Styles in Action (McCorkle & Reese, 2018, p. 121)

Julia and Layla are assigned as roommates their freshman year. From different

backgrounds, they have little in common. Soon their differences begin to surface, and conflict is inevitable. Julia asks if she can borrow a scarf from Layla, who agrees. Soon Julia is borrowing shirts, coats, and whatever else she wants without asking.

Explanation

If Layla is an *avoider*, she will suffer silently, think bad thoughts about Julia, and probably complain to friends. If Julia asks what is wrong, Layla will say she has to go study in the library and leave the room.

If Layla is an *accommodator*, she will say she doesn't mind that Julia borrows things. If Layla has a competitive style, she will confront Julia and demand that all her clothes be washed and never borrowed again.

If Layla uses a *compromiser* style, she will raise the issue of borrowing clothes with Julia. Then some middle ground will be sought. For example, the clothes can be borrowed if Julia asks every time in advance and washes and irons the clothes when returning them.

If Layla is a *collaborator*, she will ask Julia to sit down with her to discuss the roommate situation. She will frame the issue in a comprehensive way, asking what it means to be roommates and discussing each of their expectations. At some point, borrowing clothes will be discussed as part of the bigger picture.

3. Conflict behavior preferences (CB-Pref) (Johnson & Hall, 2018, pp. 560–561)

Task

Please read the following scenarios. For each situation, read all of the potential responses you might have to the person described, and rank order each option from 1 (I would be most likely to behave this way) to 5 (I would be least likely to behave this way). The most preferred item should be given the rank of 1. Remember, this is what YOU WOULD do, not what you think is best to do. Try to honestly depict how you would behave in each situation. There are many ways to handle conflicts, and several ways may be equally good or bad for a given situation. In general, there is no one correct way to handle a conflict. Some ways may be good in some situations and not good in others. If the situation is one you have not experienced or are unlikely to experience, you should still imagine being in that situation or one very much like it.

(1) You have gotten into a heated political debate with your friend. As you voice your opinion, you feel that your friend is not open to what you have to say about the subject because they continue repeating their same argument over and

over. Alternatively, your friend feels that they are open to your opinion but they have not been persuaded so their position has not changed:

- You continue to restate your beliefs until it seems like your friend is beginning to yield to your opinions. You really want to persuade them to adopt your viewpoint (*force*).
- You tell them you understand their position and suggest your opinions really are not so different. You would rather not continue arguing (*avoid*).
- You give up arguing and tell the other person you understand their viewpoint. You may even decide to give up and simply agree with them (*yield*).
- You emphasize that there is some common ground between the two of you, and you point it out. You try to persuade the other person to accept that you have some points you agree on and accept that there are some points which you cannot agree on (*compromise*).
- You acknowledge that your friend's opinions are legitimate, but you tell them you would appreciate it if they would take some time to think about and really consider your position. You tell them you will also do the same (honestly consider their points) before you continue your discussion (*problem solve*).

(2) Your parents feel they do not see you often enough so they have asked you to visit this weekend. However, you are particularly busy this week and would prefer to relax during the weekend rather than travel to visit your parents. Your parents are upset because they are eager to see you, but you know you will be exhausted and visiting them would require a lot of effort on your part:

- You tell them you would not be able to see them this weekend. You want to relax and spend time doing your own thing (*force*).
- You decide to go see them. You do not want to hurt their feelings (*yield*).
- You avoid responding to your parents and set this issue aside. You focus on your daily routine, and make a decision last minute (*avoid*).
- You tell them you would love to see them but suggest that next week will be better, and you ask if this would work just as well. You know you are going to need your down time this weekend (*problem solve*).
- You agree to visit them this weekend as long as they are aware of, and considerate of, your desire to relax (*compromise*).

EXERCISES

TIME MANAGEMENT

Methodology for Teachers

Exercises for Student's Individual Work

Exercises for Student's Group Work



METHODOLOGY FOR TEACHERS

By Francesco Pesce, Stefano Dominelli and Francesca Maoli

*"It is more than certain that we all
have the same 24 hours in one day.
It's how we use them that matters."*

Introduction

As a preliminary remark, it is important to note at the outset that "time management", as understood below, can only refer to the last of the three understandings of time, namely the internal and personal one. A "day", in its natural sense, cannot be managed by a person; so cannot an hour, as this is only the social construct of humanity and does not exist in the world of real and material things.

What can be "managed" are the activities a single person, and so – in last instance his or her productivity – can proficiently carry out within the specific time-space of the social construct she or he has at disposal.

However, if "time-management" turns into the paradigm of "activity management during a given set of time", and thus if the focus rests on the third understanding of time (the internal perception), the existence of a multitude of subjective and psychological elements – variable over time – make it difficult to elaborate a general and absolute theory and model for time management. In other words, it seems difficult, if not impossible, to elaborate a good-for-all forecast time management solution model that applies to everyone, in all situations.

If the task to create a time management model valid in any circumstance for anyone seems impossible to reach – than the quest of time management becomes more narrow, but feasible and social utile: increase awareness in people about factors subjective and objective factors that usually lower efficiency in productivity and help them understand to which degree they are exposed to such factors.

Need for time management and efficient planning skills

Time management and efficient planning skills are aimed at (i) managing time effectively so that the right time is allocated to the right activity; (ii) planning your actions according to your own goals.

The development of specific skills on time management and efficient planning has now consolidated its importance in the professional and occupational context.

Like every other soft skill, the ability to manage time can be learned and trained, until it becomes an automatic and consolidated habit. Time management is not an emergency plan, to use only when you are falling behind your work, but a long-term and sustainable lifestyle. For this purpose, and since time management strongly depends on each individual's personal approach towards work and life, it is very to proceed with a preliminary subjective self-assessment test.

Time management and efficient planning skills are in high demand across all industries and jobs. Employers and recruiters are expecting strong capacities in the management of the work from their employees or future colleagues. They require the achievement of great results in less time: the ability to use time makes the all the difference in the choice of a good employee or associate, and in the success of your own business. Therefore, the ability to efficiently use your time, avoiding at the same time stress, burnouts and a poor quality of work, is critical.

The key idea is that the ability to plan and to manage time efficiently allows us to work smarter than harder. A poor time management may result in: low work quality, missing deadlines and appointments, poor professional reputation, dealing only with urgencies, inability to learn new things and inability to pursue long-term goals. On the "personal" side, this might lead to work and life imbalance and, consequently, to dissatisfaction and possibly to burnouts.

Learning time management skills as a student allows to consolidate effective capacities before accessing to the labor market, other than enhancing academic results that increase their chances of better job-placement. Having the possibility to acquire and learn those skills enable students to develop a consolidated personalized method that can easily be applied in the future.

If universities are supposed to prepare people for their future professional life, a teaching on time management and efficient planning should be considered compulsory, since those abilities have evident effects on how jobs are and will be performed, as well as they might contribute in attaining an acceptable work-life balance.

Main goals and learning outcomes

These exercises are developed in order to help students and professionals:

- to explore key concepts of time management and efficient planning;
- to explore concepts to understand time as a resource and time management as a process;
- to learn the basic techniques to use time better according individual goals, as well as to manage time according to personal energy necessities;
- to learn how to overcome the most common “time wasters” and to learn strategies to reduce them;
- to learn techniques to work “smarter, not harder”;
- to learn to use a tool to develop a personalized plan for short, mid and long-term goals.

Guidelines for teachers – how to use exercises in teaching process

In the following sections we offer 4 exercises for individual work and 5 exercises for the group work. Exercises for individual work are marked with numbers (Exercise 1, Exercise 2, Exercise 3, Exercise 4). Exercises for group work are marked with letters (A, B, C, D, E). Below you will find short explanation how to use those exercises.

Exercise 1

Self-assessment of time management attitude

The Britton-Tesser TMQ (Time management questionnaire)

The development of an individual (effective) time management plan is not a contingency strategy, but rather requires time, and adjustment. This can only be constructed over the self-assessment of each persons’ daily activity. Only after weaknesses and strong points in the management of daily activities are carefully analysed by the persons, the subsequent study of the “interference” factors and their “degree” of interference over productivity can lead to identify the priority action to be taken to increase effectiveness and efficiency. However, to change a model, the previous one must be known.

In order to assess the time management capacities of college students, the “Time management questionnaire” developed by Britton and Tesser in 1991 is being used (Britton & Tesser, 1991). Students shall answer questions according to their own perception, assigning it a value between *always*, *frequently*, *sometimes*, *infrequently*, and *never*.

In scoring, 5 points are assigned to the response at the end of the scale that is defined a priori as a “good” practice, while 1 point is assigned to the response at the other end of the scale. Intermediate values are given to the other responses. Higher values on the scale correspond to better time management practices.

The following version contains questions, with the points assigned to each answer. Students are provided with a clean version of the questionnaire. In order to determine the final score of each students, sum up the points of each given answer.

Short-range planning					
1. Do you make a list of the things you have to do each day?	Always 5	Frequently 4	Sometimes 3	Infrequently 2	Never 1
2. Do you plan your day before you start it?	Always 5	Frequently 4	Sometimes 3	Infrequently 2	Never 1
3. Do you make a schedule of the activities you have to do on work days?	Always 5	Frequently 4	Sometimes 3	Infrequently 2	Never 1
4. Do you write a set of goals for yourself for each day?	Always 5	Frequently 4	Sometimes 3	Infrequently 2	Never 1
5. Do you spend time each day planning?	Always 5	Frequently 4	Sometimes 3	Infrequently 2	Never 1
6. Do you have a clear idea of what you want to accomplish during the next week?	Always 5	Frequently 4	Sometimes 3	Infrequently 2	Never 1
7. Do you set and honor priorities?	Always 5	Frequently 4	Sometimes 3	Infrequently 2	Never 1
Time attitudes					
1. Do you often find yourself doing things which interfere with your schoolwork simply because you hate to say “No” to people?	Always 1	Frequently 2	Sometimes 3	Infrequently 4	Never 5

2. Do you feel you are in charge of your own time, by and large?	Always 5	Frequently 4	Sometimes 3	Infrequently 2	Never 1
3. On an average class day do you spend more time with personal grooming than doing schoolwork?	Always 1	Frequently 2	Sometimes 3	Infrequently 4	Never 5
4. Do you believe that there is room for improvement in the way you manage your time?	Always 5	Frequently 4	Sometimes 3	Infrequently 2	Never 1
5. Do you make constructive use of your time?	Always 5	Frequently 4	Sometimes 3	Infrequently 2	Never 1
6. Do you continue unprofitable routines or activities?	Always 1	Frequently 2	Sometimes 3	Infrequently 4	Never 5
Long-range planning					
1. Do you usually keep your desk clear of everything other than what you are currently working on?	Always 5	Frequently 4	Sometimes 3	Infrequently 2	Never 1
2. Do you have a set of goals for the entire quarter?	Always 5	Frequently 4	Sometimes 3	Infrequently 2	Never 1
3. The night before a major assignment is due, are you usually still working on it?	Always 5	Frequently 4	Sometimes 3	Infrequently 2	Never 1
4. When you have several things to do, do you think it is best to do a little bit of work on each one?	Always 1	Frequently 2	Sometimes 3	Infrequently 4	Never 5
5. Do you regularly review your class notes, even when a test is not imminent?	Always 5	Frequently 4	Sometimes 3	Infrequently 2	Never 1

Exercise 2 Manage your distractions

The goal of this exercise is to teach students about external distractions which tend to steal time.

1. The students are invited to analyze the environment they usually work in and count the number of times they get distracted.
2. The teacher's task is to suggest students identify "silence working areas" in libraries (or close the doors in offices with "no disturb" signs) for 2 hours in the morning and identify one hour for work in common spaces (or work in the office with open door) for 2 weeks.
3. After 2 weeks the teacher has a discussion with the students to evaluate whether their perception of external distraction has increased their capacity for time management.

Exercise 3 The art of setting priorities

1. The goal of this exercise is to teach students to set their priorities effectively by deciding in which tasks to engage first and the amount of time to dedicate to each task.
2. Students are invited to make a list of goals they want to achieve in the upcoming week or month and give a score to each goal.
3. After the scoring is done, the students are asked to split each goal into specific activities which are necessary in order to reach that goal. Each activity should also be ranked by the students
4. Students make a new list of goals, with the order that reflects the score given to each goal (1 to 4). At the right side of each goal, the students shall put the list of the activities assigned to each goal, with the order that reflects the ranking given to each activity (a to c). Activities with ranking "d" should be left out.
5. When the task is done, students are asked to fill in a weekly (or a monthly) calendar, in which to plan the activities that they would like to perform each day (or each week) according to the fixed set of priorities.
6. At the end of the week (or month) students make a self-assessment included in the exercise.

Exercise 4

The urgent important matrix

1. The goal of this exercise is to teach students prioritize their tasks by urgency and importance as well as to deal with problems before they become critical.
2. Students are asked to fill the four quadrants with the activities that they must and want to perform in one day/week/month according to the qualifications given in the exercise.
3. As it is not always possible to foreseen all the activities that may fall in *Quadrant 1 (Crises)* and in *Quadrant 3 (interruptions)*. Therefore, students are asked to regularly update their chart, signing up those activities that come unexpectedly and can be classified into those quadrants.
4. During the day/week/month, students are asked to try to operate as much as possible in *Quadrant 2 (Preparation and Planning)*. They may prepare a daily/weekly/monthly plan that fits with this objective.
5. In the end of the exercise, students are asked to discuss in groups and answer questions given after the exrercise.

Exercise A

Roles and responsibilities in a team

The goal of this exercise is to train the ability of the students: i) to identify the personal characteristics and abilities of the members of a group, in order to find the most useful ones to perform a particular assignment; ii) to split a big task in small passages; iii) to valorize the capacities of each member of the team; iv) to be aware of the positive outcomes that may derive from a correct allocation of tasks.

1. This exercise is done in groups of 5–6 students.
2. The teacher's task is to assign each group one of the given scenarios (the same scenario can be assigned to more than one group if necessary):
3. Each member of the group lists all the personal characteristics and abilities that they think would be useful for the group in performing the assignment.
4. The group works together on a list of tasks that will need to be done

in order to correctly perform the assignment and distributes the tasks among the group members

5. The teacher discusses with each group whether they were able to valorize the capacity of each member of the team and the positive outcomes that may derive from a correct allocation of tasks.

The exercise should highlight the importance to valorize the capacity of each member of the team in order to better perform a task or reach a particular goal. When each member is able to offer what he/she can do better, the overall energy of the group will be spent more efficiently.

Exercise B **Planning and delegating**

The following exercise is very useful for groups in order to learn the importance of a good planning and of delegating, in order to achieve a task in the shortest amount of time.

Arrange the cards:

1. This exercise is done in groups of 5–6 students.
2. The teacher would need a deck of cards for each group.
3. Each group receives a deck of playing cards to shuffle them.
4. The teacher shows to all the groups a composition of six cards arranged in a specific order. It can be a picture on a screen (that was previously prepared), or it can be a deck of cards at disposal for this purpose.
5. Each group is asked to search the same cards from their deck and to arrange the cards in the same specific order. The team that completes the task in the shortest amount of time wins.
6. It is recommended to perform this exercise for a few rounds. In this way the groups shall be able to refine their strategy and to try different ones, if needed.
7. At the end of the rounds, groups are invited to discuss their strategies. Planning and delegating should come out, from the discussion, as key elements to manage time successfully.

Exercise C Fighting time-wasters

1. This exercise is done in groups of 5–6 students. Each group has a set of blank cards or papers and a pen.
2. There should be as many envelopes as there are groups.
3. On the back of every envelope, the teacher writes names of time-wasters: *e.g.* Facebook/Instagram; unexpected visitor; excessive meetings; e-mail overload; inability to say “no”; perfectionism; multi-tasking; lack of motivation.
4. Each group receives one envelope to write on a blank card/paper all the possible ways to overcome the time-waster that is written on the envelope. Time for this task is 4 minutes,
5. After the 4 minutes are up, each group is asked to put the compiled card/paper on the envelope and to pass their envelope to the next group. In this way, each group shall have a different envelope at every round.
6. It is recommended to perform this exercise for a few rounds. (if possible, each group shall have the possibility to work on each time-waster).
7. At the end of all rounds, students are invited to discuss the results of the exercise and share their opinions. Each time-waster can be examined together with the multiple ways participant found to overcome it. Participants could also discuss about the best strategies to fight each time-wasters.

Exercise D The Parkinson’s law

The work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion.

1. This exercise is done in groups.
2. The teacher gives the groups a task to do. It can be a simple task, like organize a deck of cards in a specific way, or to arrange furniture, or to color some papers.
3. Some of the teams receive a time limit (*e.g.* 10 minutes) to complete the exercise. And other teams get a shorter time limit (*e.g.* 5 minutes). The rest of the teams have no time limit.

4. However, all teams are asked to finish their tasks as soon as they can.
5. Chances are that the teams with the shortest time limit will be finished first, followed by the teams with the longer time limit. Those who had open-ended time frames will take the longest.
6. Students learn about the Parkinson's law and the practical ways to incorporate it into real life.

Exercise E **Identification of priorities**

The following exercise will help students to gain a different perspective on their way to set a specific plan for their pre-determined goals.

1. For this exercise, it is better to divide the class into small groups of no more than 4 people.
2. Each group will work in autonomy. In turn, one person of the group will write on a piece of paper a personal goal for the future. The goal can relate to any area of life. He/she can show the goal to other members of the group.
3. The same person is asked to write, on another piece of paper, a list of actions which are necessary in order to reach that goal.
4. At the same time, the other members of the group will do the same: each of them will write down the actions that *he* or *she* considers necessary to reach that goal.
5. After a couple of minutes, each group is invited to discuss together their lists of activities. The person that has chosen the goal will notice if there are differences between his/her list and the other member's list.
6. After the first round, other rounds can be performed in which other members of each group will share a personal goal and different ways of implementation can be discussed.

EXERCISES FOR STUDENTS' INDIVIDUAL WORK

By Francesco Pesce, Stefano Dominelli and Francesca Maoli

Please see below 4 exercises for individual work:

1. Self-assessment of time management attitude
2. Manage your distractions
3. The art of setting priorities
4. The urgent important matrix

These exercises will help you to improve your time management and planning skills.

Exercise 1

Self-assessment of time management attitude

Introduction

The first step that is necessary in order to acquire new skills and integrate them into our daily life is to know from which point we are starting.

The development of an effective individual time management plan is not a contingency strategy, but rather requires time, and adjustment. This can only be constructed over the self-assessment of our daily activity and habits.

Exercise

The following questionnaire will enable you to acquire knowledge about the way time is managed in your life at the present moment. Please compile the questionnaire and submit it to your teacher for the score calculation.

Short-Range Planning					
1. Do you make a list of the things you have to do each day?	Always ○	Frequently ○	Sometimes ○	Infrequently ○	Never ○
2. Do you plan your day before you start it?	Always ○	Frequently ○	Sometimes ○	Infrequently ○	Never ○

3. Do you make a schedule of the activities you have to do on work days?	Always <input type="radio"/>	Frequently <input type="radio"/>	Sometimes <input type="radio"/>	Infrequently <input type="radio"/>	Never <input type="radio"/>
4. Do you write a set of goals for yourself for each day?	Always <input type="radio"/>	Frequently <input type="radio"/>	Sometimes <input type="radio"/>	Infrequently <input type="radio"/>	Never <input type="radio"/>
5. Do you spend time each day planning?	Always <input type="radio"/>	Frequently <input type="radio"/>	Sometimes <input type="radio"/>	Infrequently <input type="radio"/>	Never <input type="radio"/>
6. Do you have a clear idea of what you want to accomplish during the next week?	Always <input type="radio"/>	Frequently <input type="radio"/>	Sometimes <input type="radio"/>	Infrequently <input type="radio"/>	Never <input type="radio"/>
7. Do you set and honor priorities?	Always <input type="radio"/>	Frequently <input type="radio"/>	Sometimes <input type="radio"/>	Infrequently <input type="radio"/>	Never <input type="radio"/>
Time Attitudes					
1. Do you often find yourself doing things which interfere with your schoolwork simply because you hate to say "No" to people?	Always <input type="radio"/>	Frequently <input type="radio"/>	Sometimes <input type="radio"/>	Infrequently <input type="radio"/>	Never <input type="radio"/>
2. Do you feel you are in charge of your own time, by and large?	Always <input type="radio"/>	Frequently <input type="radio"/>	Sometimes <input type="radio"/>	Infrequently <input type="radio"/>	Never <input type="radio"/>
3. On an average class day do you spend more time with personal grooming than doing schoolwork?	Always <input type="radio"/>	Frequently <input type="radio"/>	Sometimes <input type="radio"/>	Infrequently <input type="radio"/>	Never <input type="radio"/>
4. Do you believe that there is room for improvement in the way you manage your time?	Always <input type="radio"/>	Frequently <input type="radio"/>	Sometimes <input type="radio"/>	Infrequently <input type="radio"/>	Never <input type="radio"/>
5. Do you make constructive use of your time?	Always <input type="radio"/>	Frequently <input type="radio"/>	Sometimes <input type="radio"/>	Infrequently <input type="radio"/>	Never <input type="radio"/>
6. Do you continue unprofitable routines or activities?	Always <input type="radio"/>	Frequently <input type="radio"/>	Sometimes <input type="radio"/>	Infrequently <input type="radio"/>	Never <input type="radio"/>
Long-Range Planning					
1. Do you usually keep your desk clear of everything other than what you are currently working on?	Always <input type="radio"/>	Frequently <input type="radio"/>	Sometimes <input type="radio"/>	Infrequently <input type="radio"/>	Never <input type="radio"/>

2. Do you have a set of goals for the entire quarter?	Always ○	Frequently ○	Sometimes ○	Infrequently ○	Never ○
3. The night before a major assignment is due, are you usually still working on it?	Always ○	Frequently ○	Sometimes ○	Infrequently ○	Never ○
4. When you have several things to do, do you think it is best to do a little bit of work on each one?	Always ○	Frequently ○	Sometimes ○	Infrequently ○	Never ○
5. Do you regularly review your class notes, even when a test is not imminent?	Always ○	Frequently ○	Sometimes ○	Infrequently ○	Never ○

Exercise 2 **Manage your distractions**

Introduction

In most occasions, in particular where work is performed in groups, the possibility to carry our activities is greatly influenced by the surrounding environment. Colleagues and distractions (such as cell phone, social media, etc.) negatively affect your time management. Whereas some negative factors can easily be controlled (even though not necessarily completely eliminated as a moment of relax is not per se negative), a multitude of interruptions can prejudice if not even nullify a well-constructed time-management plan, obliging you to keep up with work or study at home, thus breaking the work-life balance time management should contribute to preserve.

This exercise will make possible that your well-reasoned time management plan is not negatively affected by outside elements and sources.

Exercise

Step 1

Analyse the environment you usually work in and count i) the number of times that you check the phone (to check what time it is; to check social media account, etc.); ii) the number of times you are interrupted by people (even if they are just passing by and greeting);

Step 2

How many minutes in average in 3 working hours did you lose due points i) and ii) above?

Step 3

Try to identify “silence working areas” in libraries (or close the doors in offices with “no disturb” signs) for 2 hours in the morning and identify one hour for work in common spaces (or work in the office with open door). For the same time, avoid using cell phones for non-professional purposes.

Evaluation

Check after two weeks if your perception of external distraction has increased your capacity of time management.

Remember: The “concentration” of “distractions” in one single, “controlled” and pre-defined time-slot (most probably, the working hours where you feel yourself less able to better perform) should allow you to better keep you on track with your time-management schedule without necessarily being unfriendly in a working place – as your door will always be open (just in specific times, your times!)

Exercise 3

The art of setting priorities

Introduction

Most people think time management is about doing as more activities as possible in the shortest amount of time. However, time management is an instrument that allows us to achieve previously established goals according to our desires and duties. In establishing goals (and the executive activities that are necessary to achieve them), we set them in a hierarchical order on the basis of priority.

As Stephen Covey wrote in *The seven habits of highly effective people*, “The key is not to prioritize what’s on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities”.

We should rely to our priority hierarchy while deciding:

1. In which tasks to engage first;
2. The amount of time to dedicate to each task.

Exercise*Step 1*

Make a list of goals you want to achieve in the upcoming week or month (the time span can be modulated according the course schedule).

Step 2

Examine the list and give a score to each goal:

1 = Extremely important

2 = Very important

3 = Somewhat important

4 = Less important

Warning: Avoid the procrastination trap! This scoring should avoid lists filled with unimportant goals that gives us the impression that we are progressing in something, instead of addressing the elephant in the room.

Step 3

Take into consideration each goal and split it in a list of activities which are necessary in order to reach that goal. Activities should be as specific as possible.

Subsequently, rank each activity (within a single goal), according to its importance in achieving that goal:

a = extremely important

b = very important

c = somewhat important

d = unimportant

Step 4

Make a new list of goals, with the order that reflects the score given to each goal (1 to 4). At the right side of each goal, the students shall put the list of the activities assigned to each goal, with the order that reflects the ranking given to each activity (a to c). Activities with ranking “d” should be left out.

Step 5

Fill in a weekly (or a monthly) calendar, in which to plan the activities that you would like to perform each day (or each week) according to the fixed set of priorities.

Evaluation

At the end of the week (or month), make an assessment of:

- goals reached;
- activities effectively performed;
- amount of effort dedicated to the activities performed, compared with the importance ranking given to each activity at the beginning of the exercise.

Exercise 4 The urgent important matrix

Introduction

The urgent important matrix has been developed by Stephen Covey following an inspirational quote of the former US president Eisenhower: *“What is important is seldom urgent and what is urgent is seldom important”*. It is an important tool to move us towards our goals, because it enable us to manage our time more effectively.

Using a simple grid, Covey helps us to define our tasks according to two parameters:

1. **Urgent tasks** are the tasks that we are required to perform immediately, or within a short time framework. We are usually obliged to stop what we are doing to focus on the urgent task instead. Not dealing with urgent tasks usually brings immediate consequences. E.g.
2. **Important tasks** are the tasks that move us towards our bigger goals and projects. Since those tasks are often not associated with a close deadline, it is easier to procrastinate on them: we are more likely to prioritize tasks with a deadline, even if other tasks may have major payoffs in the long term.

Starting from this, The urgent important matrix consists in four quadrants that classify your daily/weekly/monthly activities on the basis of the aforementioned parameters.

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	<p>Quadrant 1 Crises</p>	<p>Quadrant 2 Preparation and planning</p>
NOT IMPORTANT	<p>Quadrant 3 Interruptions</p>	<p>Quadrant 4 Distractions</p>

Quadrant 1 (Crises) – contains all the activities that are urgent and require our immediate attention. They may be unexpected events, emergencies at work or in personal life (like sudden health issues), sudden deadlines, urgent meetings, pressing problems. Those activities are also qualified as important, because we cannot avoid to perform them.

When our schedule becomes very busy and we are overwhelmed by the workload, we tend to operate mostly in *Quadrant 1 (Crises)*. Therefore, we find ourselves shifting from one activity to another, in the attempt to manage all the sudden emergencies. At the same time, if we spend all day dealing only with urgent tasks, the latter will most probably pile up because we do not have time to plan our work and to work on the real priorities.

Quadrant 2 (Preparation and planning) – contains all the activities that lead us towards our goals and projects and are not urgent in the present moment. Their positive impact is experienced in the long term. If we make sure to have enough time to deal with this things properly, we will significantly reduce the load of *Quadrant 1* and we will spend our energies on what really matters. If we deal with activities in *Quadrant 2* before they become urgent, we will gain more control over our daily schedule.

Quadrant 3 (Interruptions) – contains the activities that are not important for the purposes of our goals, but we have to do anyway. In addition, they need to be done immediately. For instance, in this quadrant there are unimportant meetings, interruptions from co-workers, unnecessary checking our emails or phone calls. Those activities are not “important” under the perspective of our personal goals (although they may be important for others).

Those activities usually interrupt or take us away from important tasks. It is important to minimize our time in this quadrant by reviewing and prioritizing our tasks.

Quadrant 4 (Distractions) – If the activities in *Quadrant 3* are distractions with deadlines, the activities in *Quadrant 4* are the frivolous distractions: checking social media, surfing the web without a purpose, watching TV, etc. Sometimes, it is important to linger in those activities when we feel tired and we need a break. However, if we spend too much time in this quadrant we will be late on our projects and deadlines

The objective of The urgent important matrix is to spend as much time as possible in Quadrant 2, in order to prevent the overflow of Quadrant 1, and to limit the time spent on Quadrants 3 and 4.

Exercise

Step 1

List all the activities that you must and want to perform in one day, one week or one month. It is possible to use the list developed in the previous exercise.

Step 2

At the beginning of the day/week/month, fill the four quadrants according to the qualifications given in the introduction.

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT		
NOT IMPORTANT		

Step 3

Please keep in mind that it is not always possible to foresee all the activities that may fall in *Quadrant 1 (Crises)* and in *Quadrant 3 (interruptions)*. Therefore, you should regularly update the chart, signing up those activities that come unexpectedly and can be classified into those quadrants.

Step 4

During the day/week/month, try to operate as much as possible in *Quadrant 2 (preparation and planning)*. You may prepare a daily/weekly/monthly plan that fits with this objective.

Evaluation

- If you find *Quadrant 1* filled with a lot of urgent and important activities, are there some activities that you could have foreseen? How those activities could have been scheduled in advance in order to deal with them before they became urgent?
- Did you manage to spend as less time as possible in *Quadrant 3* and *Quadrant 4*?
- On average, do you think that you have spent enough time on *Quadrant 2*?

EXERCISES FOR STUDENTS' GROUP WORK

By Francesco Pesce, Stefano Dominelli and Francesca Maoli

Please see below 5 exercises for group work:

- A. Roles and responsibilities in a team
- B. Planning and delegating
- C. Fighting time-wasters
- D. Parkinson's law
- E. Identification of priorities

The following exercises are designed to engage in collective learning of time management techniques; *to* understand the dynamics of collective environments that affect time management in an organization and to improve time management skills of a collective reality as a whole.

Exercise A **Roles and responsibilities in a team**

Introduction

Each group, be it a company, an association of professionals, or a team of any kind, has its own characteristics. Identifying those characteristics enables the group to understand what to improve and what to valorize. This is also true for time management and efficient planning.

A group is different from a mere gathering of people. In a group, two or more people are connected by common characteristics or goals.

Knowing your team is the first step to determine the best use of time and achieve an overall effective organization. A clear identification of roles and responsibilities is a way to correctly balance the energies and strengths of a team.

This exercise should highlight the importance to valorize the capacity of each member of the team in order to better perform a task or reach a particular goal. When each member is able to offer what he/she can do better, the overall energy of the group will be spent more efficiently.

Exercise

1. Divide into small groups of 5–6 people.
2. Each group is given one of the following scenarios:

Scenario 1

You are a study group. You have to perform a scientific experiment that involves to plant five little jars of basil and to take care of the plants until the gems come off the ground. This means providing the necessary materials and to take care of the experiment in all the phases. Meanwhile, it will also be necessary to conduct a scientific study on the ways to plant, grow and harvest basil and on the properties of the plant for health and nutrition purpose. The results of the research will need to be written in a report of 20 pages.

Scenario 2

You are employed in a bank as a team of the HR office. You are presented with 20 curriculums of candidates for a new position in the bank. You have 2 weeks to make a first selection of CVs, to conduct all interviews and to choose the ideal candidate.

Scenario 3

You are a team and you have to organize a half-day conference on “Time management and efficient planning” in two months. This requires choosing the topics of the presentations (how many presentations?), inviting speakers, setting the location, setting the travel and accommodation arrangements for each speakers, advertising the event and organizing the subscriptions for participants. A person in charge of taking care of speakers during their stay in town will also be necessary.

Scenario 4

You are a team and you have to help a family of six people in need. You need to raise some money through charity in order to buy food, clothes, medicines, etc. Someone has to take care of the budget and has to decide what to buy and when. You also need to establish who will run the direct contact with the family (go visit, talk with them, bring them necessary items).

3. After reading the assignment, each member of the team writes down all the personal characteristics and abilities that they think would be useful for their team in performing the assignment.

4. Each team develops a list of tasks that needs to be done in order to perform the assignment effectively and distributes the tasks among the members, discussing the abilities/strengths that each of them has offered to contribute in the assignment.

Exercise B **Planning and delegating**

Introduction

The following exercise is very useful for groups in order to learn the importance of a good planning and delegating, in order to achieve a task in the shortest amount of time.

Exercise

1. Divide into small groups of 5–6 people.
2. Each group is given a deck of playing cards to shuffle them.
3. The teacher shows to all the groups a composition of six cards arranged in a specific order.
4. Each group starts searching the same cards from their deck and in order to arrange the cards in the same specific order that you have shown. The team that completes the task in the shortest amount of time wins.
5. It is recommended to do more than one round.

Evaluation

- What was the strategy of your team to perform this exercise?
- Did you use planning and delegating in order to manage time successfully?

Exercise C **Fighting time-wasters**

Introduction

Time wasters are one of the most common reasons for not achieving goals in a set amount of time. They can occur anytime during the day, interrupting us from our main activity. There are many strategies to avoid time-wasters: working in groups on this will enable participants to learn a high number of ways to cope with time wasters in a short amount of time.

Exercise

1. Divide into small groups of 5–6 people. Each group should have a set of blank cards or papers and a pen.
2. Each group is given one envelope and 4 minutes to write on a blank card/paper all the possible ways to overcome the time-waster that is written on the envelope.
3. The compiled card/paper should be put in the envelope and passed to the next group. In this way, each group shall have a different envelope at every round.
4. If possible, each group shall have the possibility to work on each time-waster.

Evaluation

- How do you overcome these time-wasters?
- What is your best strategies to fight each time-wasters?

Exercise D **Parkinson's law**

Introduction

This is the famous Parkinson's law, coined by Cyril Northcote Parkinson in 1955, that explains the importance of deadlines and to give a pre-selected amount of time of each activity we need/want to accomplish. If we set one hour to write a paper, it will probably take us one hour to do the job. However, if you set four hours, the very same task will probably take you four hours to be completed.

Procrastination is a key component in understanding Parkinson's Law: looming deadlines makes us hesitant to start a task, especially if it is adverse or undesirable or unpleasant for us. As a consequence, if we set a certain period of time to perform that task, it likely that we will use all the time available.

Exercise

1. Divide into small groups.
2. Each group receives a task from the teacher.
3. Some teams are given a time limit, others work without a time limit. However, all teams should finish their task as soon as they can.

Evaluation

Do you know any practical ways to incorporate the Parkinson's law into real life?

Exercise E **Identification of priorities**

Introduction

Our perception of an efficient use of time may be undermined by the fact that we perform non-important tasks and we postpone important ones. In establishing goals, it is very important to identify the executive activities that are necessary to achieve them and to set them in a hierarchical order on the basis of priority. We should rely to our priority hierarchy while deciding: a) in which tasks to engage first; b) the amount of time to dedicate to each task.

The development of an effective planning finds its basis in the ability to set into actions our pre-determined desires and goals. Once we have established our direction, and we have identified our long-term and short-term goals, we need to translate them into a well-defined set of actions.

Exercise

1. Divide into small groups no more than 4 students in one group.
2. Each group member writes on a piece of paper a personal goal for the future and shows this goal to the other members of his/her group. The goal can relate to work, study or any other area of life.
3. Each member of the group individually writes down actions/activities that *he* or *she* considers necessary to reach that goal. Activities should be as specific as possible.
4. After a couple of minutes, each group discusses together their lists of activities. The person that has chosen the goal will notice if there are differences between his/her list and the other member's list.
5. After the first round, other rounds can be performed in which other members of each group shares a personal goal and different ways of implementation can be discussed.

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EXERCISES

ABILITY TO COOPERATE IN A TEAM

Methodology for Teachers

Exercises for Student's Individual Work

Exercises for Student's Group Work



METHODOLOGY FOR TEACHERS

By Gea van Klompenburg, Marjon Kuipers and Jan van Zwieten

Introduction

Soft skills are personality traits and interpersonal skills that characterise an individual's professional behaviour and how they relate to others. In the workplace, soft skills are considered to complement "hard skills", which refer to an individual's knowledge and concrete abilities. A well-functioning team consists of several individuals whose motivations, interactions and communication synergize to produce effective team results. Individual and joint consciousness exercises contribute to the development of a strong team.

Need for cooperation in a team

The relationships among the team members themselves are of great importance for the team's functioning, both in the short and the long run. Well-cared-for relationships within the team ensure the development of a sense of well-being and safety. Via this process, (temporary) loss of team members and, consequently, the team's loss can be minimised as much as possible. The exercises mentioned above are intended to enable team members to gain experience with their self-consciousness.

Main goals and learning outcomes

The main goals when teaching students soft skills in teams include the following:

- Providing knowledge about what is important when forming a team
- Ensuring awareness of everyone's individual patterns and their influence on mutual dynamics
- Outlining the requirements for viable and durable cooperation

In a well-functioning team, attention must be paid to ethical awareness in different fields, such as durability, social responsibility and life quality. Moreover, one must examine the personality characteristics of all team members. Research has demonstrated that a team requires more than just the capacities of individual members.

Rather, a well-composed team requires the optimisation of all skills, knowledge and personal drivers of each team member according to the Teamstar model (van Zwieten & Smit, 2019).

The Teamstar model consists of three main elements:

1. **Team alignment:** This element focuses on alignment and involvement and entails the process of bringing unrelated individuals together into a solid group;
2. **Team sustainability:** This element focuses on efficiency and effectivity and achieving an optimal level of functioning as a team;
3. **Team performance:** This element focuses on development and vitality and setting the basis for a sustainable dream team.

The three main elements of Teamstar cannot be considered phases that a team passes through, such as is the case with Tuckman's development phases. Rather, they provide a vision by which to continuously monitor and evaluate a team in order to ensure continued growth.

Guidelines for teachers – how to use exercises in teaching process

In following sections we offer 4 exercises for individual work and 6 exercises for the group work. Exercises for individual work are marked with numbers (Exercise 1, Exercise 2, Exercise 3, Exercise 4). Exercises for group work are marked with letters (A, B, C, D, E and F). Below you will find short explanation how to use those exercises.

Exercise 1 Personal development plan

This exercise is intended as a tool for personal development. The student makes a personal development plan at home and has three or four weeks to accomplish this so that there is also time to observe progress. In the classroom, each student's experiences with the personal development plans are exchanged with two other fellow students after this period.

How much time the student spends on this exercise depends on how seriously the student is working on their personal development plan; it could take up to several hours.

The sharing of experience is recommended to last approximately 15 minutes per student, so with three students, 45 minutes.

Exercise 2 Awareness of vitality

This exercise relates to awareness of vitality.

The exercise is a self-assessment which does not require any background knowledge of teamwork. The student's awareness of the importance of vitality is the most important goal of this exercise.

The exercise is recommended to be conducted in approximately 10 to 15 minutes.

Exercise 3 Perception

This exercise is connected to exercise D (groupwork).

This exercise is about perception and realising that every person has their own perception of what they see, hear and feel.

This is an individual assignment in which the student writes down three items per observation category: three things they see, three things they hear and three things they feel.

This exercise is recommended to take approximately 5 minutes.

Exercise 4 Self-reflection

This exercise does not require any background knowledge. The purpose of this exercise is for the student to become aware that their own behaviours and reactions determine how communication with other people proceeds.

The exercise is recommended to take approximately 15 minutes.

Exercise A Values I

Students start with exercise A.

(Exercise B is the sequel of A)

The purpose of this exercise is to investigate one's programming: to become aware of one's subconscious drivers, what energises them, and what fatigues them.

Students work in pairs and ask each other 10 questions about their values.

Person A asks person B, "What do you find important? And what else? Do you value other things as well?" The person asking questions also writes down these values. Students should continue until they have discovered 10 values.

If both have found 10 values, they can order them based on personal importance. This means the most important value ranks as number 1 and a slightly less critical value as number 2. Students should continue to evaluate and rank their values until they are happy with the results.

Students then continue to write the individual values on separate sheets of paper, which they then place on the ground. Person A, whose values are on the floor, can stand on "10", and Person B will ask them the following questions:

Imagine that you either have (value on place "10")
while lacking (value on place "9")
or you have (value on place "9")
while lacking (value on place "10"),
which would you choose?

If the value on "10" feels more important than the value on "9", these should be exchanged.

Repeat this process for all 10 values until it feels correct for the person whose values are on the floor. Students have now created a “top 10” list of their values with the (current) most important values on top.

This exercise can take up to 40 minutes (20 minutes per person).

Exercise B Values II

Exercise B is the continuation of exercise A, so students continue to work in pairs.

The “top 10” must be reduced to a “top 5”.

Students must choose the five most important (core) values for this complementary exercise.

After doing so, person A asks the following questions of person B and simultaneously writes down as much as possible to preserve the answers.

Answer the following questions for each value:

1. What does value mean to you?
2. Why is value important to you?
And why is that important to you?
And why is that important to you?
3. Why is value also important to you?
And why is that important to you?
And why is that important to you?
4. What is for you the opposite of value?
5. Where and when did you first encounter the opposite of value?
(Discover if there is still an unprocessed negative emotion connected to this encounter.)

The exercise can take up to 40 minutes (20 minutes per person).

Exercise C Compliments

Round I

One person sits in front of the group, and the others take turns giving them a compliment. The recipient acknowledges the compliment with a “thank

you” and says nothing else. Once everyone has had their turn, participants should discuss their experience of the exercise.

Round II

One person sits in front of the group and the others take turns making negative comments about them. The recipient is not allowed to say anything.

Both the group and the recipient should then discuss the following questions:

1. How did this round differ from the round of compliments?
2. What is it that you see or feel?

Always end with a round of compliments!

The purpose of this exercise is to become aware of the effects of receiving feedback, both in a positive and a negative way. In other words, feedback according to the sandwich method is recommended.

This exercise can take up to 30 minutes.

Exercise D **Perception**

This exercise is the continuation of exercise 3 (individual student). The results are intended to reveal differences in perception.

Every student shares their experiences of what they saw, heard or felt. Then the students (team members) discuss the resulting differences in terms of perception. Some people notice details while others see broad outlines; some hear sounds close by while others notice sounds further away; and some may feel the chair they sit on while others feel internal sensations (such as a headache).

The exercise can take up to 20 minutes.

Exercise E **Lie or actually the truth?**

The purpose of this exercise is for students to get to know each other better.

Each person writes down three sentences about themselves that are true and one that is a lie. Each participant must read their statements in a random

order. Listeners discuss the stories and must evaluate which statements are true and which one is made up.

Subsequently, students discuss questions that delve further into whether or not they are honest about what they feel or say, such as whether they ever tell white lie or exaggerate.

The exercise can take up to 30 minutes.

Exercise F

White board or flipchart back-to-back drawing

This exercise involves collaborative drawing and relates to efficiency and trust in the team.

The students are divided into two or three groups.

Two individuals of each group will walk up to the whiteboard or flipchart while the other students stand opposite of them on the other side of the room. One person is blindfolded and will be the one to draw. The person without a blindfold will be shown a drawing by the people on the other side of the room. The person without a blindfold must give directions to the blindfolded person who must attempt to recreate the aforementioned drawing. However, nobody is allowed to say the name of what the drawing depicts.

Instead, they are to provide hints such as “move up now” or “a little bit to the right”.

It is easier to choose fairly simple drawings, such as the outline of a house or a fruit such as an apple. Blindfolded drawing is much harder than one might think.

After the exercise is concluded, students can change roles with others in the group.

The exercise can take up to 40 minutes, depending on how many people will take a turn drawing.

EXERCISES FOR STUDENTS' INDIVIDUAL WORK

By Gea van Klompenburg, Marjon Kuipers and Jan van Zwieten

Please see below 4 exercises for individual work:

1. Personal development plan
2. Awareness of vitality
3. Perception I
4. Self-reflection

Exercise 1 **Personal development plan**

In order to achieve your goals you should develop personal development plan. In establishing your plan, you must accomplish several following steps.

Please do following steps:

- Set goals;
- Prioritise those goals;
- Set deadlines for achieving them;
- Recognise threats and opportunities;
- Develop skills or increase knowledge;
- Use the support network; and
- Measure your progress.

Congratulations! You have done your first step for achieving your goals and developing your personality. If the goals are set, they are prioritised, deadlines are fixed, you have analysed threats and opportunities then everything is set. Now just keep going and monitor your progress. Do not forget about learning, increasing your skills and knowledge on the way of implementation of your plan!

Exercise 2 **Awareness of vitality**

To work on your vitality now and in the future, please answer the following questions:

1. What is the most crucial motive for you to work on your vitality?
2. What kind of vital student do you want to be?
3. What is your ultimate goal for your vitality?
4. What are your expectations about your vitality?
5. What challenges do you encounter when developing your vitality?
6. Which behavioral pattern do you recognize in yourself that you would like to develop further?

Vitality means the state of being strong and active, having energy. If you do not follow your vitality you might experience burnout, structural stress, sleep problems and poor health (such as obesity or diabetes). Question of this exercise will help you to formulate your vitality formula and help yourself to find your balance.

Exercise 3 **Preception exercise**

This exercise will help you to analyse your perception and feelings.
Note and write down:



What you see

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



What you hear

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



What you feel

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Everyone can have different perception. Ask to fill in this worksheet to your friend, family member and you will see that he or she can see/feel/hear something totally different.

Exercise 4

Self-reflection feedback questions

In this exercise, you will reflect on how you deal with giving and receiving feedback.

** Below you will find a number of questions about dealing with feedback that you answer by underlining one of the three words.*

Question 1: What do you do when someone else tells you something you do not understand?

- I frown [sometimes / often / never *]
- I ask for clarification [sometimes / often / never *]
- I am annoyed because the other person is so unclear [sometimes / often / never *]
- I tell the other person that they are unclear [sometimes / often / never *]
- I stop listening to the other person [sometimes / often / never *]

Question 2: What do you do when you tell someone else something?

- I say what I want as clearly as possible and assume that the other person will understand me [sometimes / often / never *]
- I will go into what the other person answers me [sometimes / often / never *]
- I pay attention to the other person's facial expression [sometimes / often / never *]
- I ask the other person from time to time if they can still follow me [sometimes / often / never *]
- I say what I want as clearly as possible and at the same time pay attention to the reaction of the other person [sometimes / often / never *]

Question 3: You are in a working group together with three other people. You think one participant talks too much.

- What do you do in such a situation?

- If possible, I will no longer attend that working group [sometimes / often / never *]
- I do not listen when they talk. I let it pass me by [sometimes / often / never *]
- I get annoyed to death. I do not let any sign of my annoyance show [sometimes / often / never *]
- I tell them they talk too much [sometimes / often / never *]
- I tell them that I am annoyed by their excessive talking and that I can no longer listen to what they have to say [sometimes / often / never *]
- I blame them for talking too much [sometimes / often / never *]

Question 4: How do you give and receive feedback?

- When giving feedback, I use I-language [sometimes / often / never *]
- When giving feedback, I separate concrete behaviour and concrete facts from my own opinion and interpretation [sometimes / often / never *]
- When I give feedback, I describe the effect that the named behaviour has on myself [sometimes / often / never *]
- When giving feedback, I provide the other person with space to respond, and I listen to that as well [sometimes / often / never *]
- I conclude feedback by formulating a conclusion, common agreement, and intention with the other person [sometimes / often / never *]
- When giving feedback, I am willing to examine my own part in this process [sometimes / often / never *]
- When I receive feedback, I take the time to absorb what the other person is saying and to investigate whether I can do something with it [sometimes / often / never *]
- When I receive feedback, I ask if the feedback is not clear to me [sometimes / often / never *]
- If I have received feedback, I thank the other person for their feedback [sometimes / often / never *]

When working in the team it is important to give and receive feedback. Evaluate your answers to the questions and think – maybe you need to change your attitude to the feedback.

EXERCISES FOR STUDENTS' GROUP WORK

By Gea van Klompenburg, Marjon Kuipers and Jan van Zwieten

Please see below 6 exercises for group work:

- A. Questioning values I
- B. Questioning values II
- C. Compliments
- D. Perception II
- E. Lie or actually the truth?
- F. White board or flipchart back-to-back drawing

Exercise A **Questioning values I**

The goal of this exercise is to help students to investigate their programming and to become aware of their subconscious drivers and what energises and fatigues them.

1. Work in pairs and ask questions about your partner's values. Person A asks person B, "What do you find important? And what else? Do you value other things as well?" The person asking questions also writes down these values. Continue until you have discovered 10 values.
2. Once you have both identified 10 values, order them based on their importance to you. This means your most important value ranks as number 1 and a slightly less critical value as number 2. Continue to evaluate and rank your values until you are happy with the results.
3. Next, write the individual values on separate sheets of paper, which you then place on the ground. Person A, whose values are on the floor, can stand on "10", and Person B will ask them the following questions:
 - Imagine that you either have (value on place "10")
 - while lacking (value on place "9")
 - or you have (value on place "9")
 - while lacking (value on place "10"),
 - Which would you choose?
4. If the value on "10" feels more important than the value on "9", these should be exchanged.

5. Repeat this process for all 10 values until it feels correct for the person whose values are on the floor. You now have created a “top 10” list of your values with the (current) most important values on top.

Exercise B **Questioning values II**

1. Choose 5 most important (core) values for this complementary exercise.
2. Person A shall ask the following questions to person B for each value and simultaneously write down as much as possible to preserve the answers:
 - What does value mean to you?
 - Why is value important to you?
 - And why is that important to you?
 - And why is that important to you?
 - Why is value also important to you?
 - And why is that important to you?
 - And why is that important to you?
 - What is for you the opposite of value?
 - Where and when did you first encounter the opposite of value? (Discover if there is still an unprocessed negative emotion connected to this encounter.)

With this exercise students will challenge each other to think more about their values, what those values really mean and why they are important to them.

Exercise C **Compliments**

Round I

- One person sits in front of the group and the others take turns giving them a compliment.
- The recipient acknowledges the compliment with a “thank you” and says nothing else.
- Once everyone has had their turn, they should discuss their experiences of this exercise.

Round II

- Can you handle hearing negative sentiments about your personality as well? You will most certainly feel that they affect you in one way or another.
- One person sits in front of the group and the others take turns making negative comments about that person. The recipient is not allowed to say anything.
- Note for the group: pay attention to any non-verbal signals coming from the recipient.
- How did this differ from the round of compliments? What is it that you see? Solicit responses from both the group and the recipient.
- Finish with a round of compliments!

Exercise D **Perception II**

1. Write down for yourself what you have seen, heard and felt. You can use worksheet from Collection of exercises for individual work – Exercise 3.
2. Then, discuss it with your team members and answer the following questions:
 - What differences exist in terms of perception?
 - Do you see that which is very close to you or further away, and do you see details or broad outlines?
 - Do you hear the sounds close by, or do you hear the sounds further away better?
 - What sounds did you filter out when your colleague mentioned them first?
 - And regarding feeling, how do you differ in experiencing heat or cold?
 - Do you feel sensations internally, such as unrest or peace, or feel only that which is external, such as the chair you are sitting on or the shoes on your feet?
3. Discuss the differences with each other and see where adjustments are needed or where you can support each other.

Exercise E **Lie or actually the truth?**

1. Each team member receives four pieces of paper to write down three truths and one lie about themselves. The lie must be to some extent believable (so avoid sentences like “I drank a bottle of vodka with the Pope”).
2. Each participant reads their statements in a random order. The rest of the participants discuss the stories and decide which story is true and which is made up.

Discussion after the exercise:

- How often do you not say what you actually think or feel?
- How often do you hold back the truth?
- What does it mean to you when someone does not tell the truth, such as when a colleague describes what they think of you?
- Is it still lying if you only slightly exaggerate the truth?
- What is your belief about this?

Trust is priority number one in a strong and close team!

Exercise F **White board or flipchart back-to-back drawing**

This exercise entails breaching students’ comfort zone and daring to let go of others’ opinions of their actions.

1. The team will be divided into two or three groups.
2. Two individuals will walk up to the whiteboard or flipchart while the other team members stand opposite of them on the other side of the room. One person is blindfolded, who will be the one to draw. The person without a blindfold will be shown a drawing by the people on the other side of the room. This person must give directions to the blindfolded person with the goal of recreating the aforementioned drawing. However, no one is allowed to say the name of what the drawing depicts.
3. The objective of this exercise is for people to work together in a team. They are to provide hints such as “move up now” or “a little bit to the right”.

4. It is easier to choose fairly simple drawings, such as the outline of a house or a fruit such as an apple. Blindfolded drawing is much harder than one might think.

This exercise will help to the team to understand how they are functioning and how well they can cooperate. There should be trust, clear and well defined communication in order to complete this task.

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EXERCISES

SETTING THE GOALS BY MEANS OF COACHING



Methodology for Teachers

**Exercises for Student's
Individual Work**

**Exercises for Student's
Group Work**

METHODOLOGY FOR TEACHERS

By Kristina Nesterova and Dana Rone

Introduction

The definition of coaching is helping persons to make changes in their life and to go in a direction they want to go. Everyone wants to be happy and more satisfied with their life but many don't know how, therefore coaching helps to become more self-aware, empowers choices and leads to change. It unlocks a person's potential to maximise his or her performance.

Traditionally, coaching has been associated with sports. Nowadays, it is quite common to see coaching as a helping set of tools in order to achieve goals in life and work. Coaching links the world of dreaming with the reality.

Need for coaching skills

Coaching provides actionable realization and opportunity to grow based on given areas an individual wishes to improve. Coaching provides a set of practical tools which can be used individually co-called 'self-coaching' and in teams.

Self-coaching helps to reduce anxiety, panic, relationship struggle and more importantly to get rid of the habit of insecurity and negative thinking. It helps to understand exactly what needs to be done to eliminate psychological friction and maintain complete control of one's own success.

It is possible to gain self-confidence, determination and motivation by empowering a person through self-coaching.

Additionally, team coaching with the use of specific tools and techniques can help to develop commitment and talent of the members; improve organisational performance; motivate and engage members as well as facilitate the adoption of a new culture/management style.

Main goals and learning outcomes

These exercises are developed in order to help students and professionals:

- to become more productive and to achieve a higher performance at work as well as everyday life;
- to gain more self-confidence as it is connected to almost every element involved in a happy life. It is very important to believe in own strength and worth as well as to have an inner peace. Self-confidence is attractive, brings success and helps to connect better with other people;
- to define true goals and values. A lot of people think they know what they want to accomplish in life but in fact they just do what others (parents, partners, society, etc.) expect them to do. Coaching helps to become clearer about what people want in life;
- to have more balanced life. There is a number of practical coaching tools and self-assessments which help quickly to understand how balanced and fulfilled a person's life is and to identify the 'weak' spots in order to focus and improve them;
- to get intellectual stimulation from discussing important ideas. Almost every topic in coaching can be analysed and observed in everyday life. Coaching makes people understand that there is no 'black and white' objects or subjects in life, most of the people's behaviour and actions, even bad ones, have their positive intention underneath;
- to be more satisfied with life and to become a person you want to be. Coaching makes people dream and helps to shape dreams into goals and the goals into reality.

Guidelines for teachers – how to use exercises in teaching process

In following sections we offer 2 exercises for individual work and 2 exercises for the group work. Exercises for individual work are marked with numbers (Exercise 1, Exercise 2). Exercises for group work are marked with letters (A and B). Below you will find short explanation how to use those exercises.

Exercise 1 Life balance wheel

This exercise is a self-assessment which does not require any background knowledge on coaching. The Wheel consists of eight areas and students individually rate their level of satisfaction with each area. This gives an immediate summary of their current “life balance”.

After the rating is done, it is required to make connections between areas, to see the development of which areas give a positive impact on others. Students do it individually.

The exercise is recommended to be done between 15–30 minutes.

The results are supposed to show the areas of the students’ life, which require to focus on more, in order to improve them.

The exercise is well-explained and has visual examples for students for better understanding.

Exercise 2 Setting the right goals

This exercise does not require any background knowledge.

The goal of the ‘Setting the Right Goals’ exercise is to teach students to formulate their goals correctly and explicitly. For that reason, two concepts of goal setting are presented: HUGGS (Huge, Unbelievably Good Goals) and SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attractive, Realistic and Time Bound).

The exercise can take up to 30 minutes.

Exercise A Drama triangle

This is a group exercise which requires an advance reading for better understanding. The recommended articles to read are the following:

- ‘The three faces of victim – An overview of the victim triangle’ by Lynne Forrest,
- ‘Breaking the drama triangle’ by Goule John.

Students are divided into groups of 4–6 persons per group. The distribution is better to be done randomly and students who are not very close to each other, get a chance to work together in one team. An example of how to team students up can be to find something common in their appearance (colour of their clothing, glasses or those who wear blazers, birthday months, preferred outdoor activities, etc.). Students who match, start building a team for this exercise.

The exercise includes two dialogues between two different family members. After students have read both dialogues, they are asked to discuss in the groups: Who from the fictional characters is right and who is wrong?

The next task is to distribute the roles of: V = victim; R = rescuer and P = persecutor for each speaker. Note, one speaker can keep switching roles during the conversation. The example of how the exercise should be done is shown in the first 3 lines of the dialogue A.

When the task is complete, students are required to discuss in groups a question of ‘who is a missing person in the given situations?’ (the answer is ‘an adult’ or ‘a responsible person’).

The conclusion provides an answer to the question and students can compare it to their answers.

Exercise B **Powerful questions**

Coaching is an art of questioning. Good coaching questions are powerful and empowering.

This is a group exercise which requires an advance reading for better understanding. The recommended article to read is the following:

‘Coaching 101: Ask Powerful Questions’ by Stephanie Soler

The main purpose of this exercise is to help students to learn the importance of asking ‘right’ questions in order to get powerful answers.

This exercise is done in groups of 4–6 students. The students can keep working in same groups as in the previous exercise of ‘Drama triangle’.

There should be one client in each group with a request or a goal they want to accomplish in the nearest future. The rest of the group members are performing a team coaching.

The client announces his/her request, and the team of coaches starts questioning clockwise. A client gives one answer to every question regarding his/her request. There should be 2 or 3 rounds so every coach has a chance to ask 2–3 questions, one question at a time.

Below the exercise, there is an evaluation sheet provided, where 1 means a very weak question and 10 is the strongest question. Every group member should write the questions down in order to give a constructive feedback after the session and use the evaluation sheet to rate each question, which coaches have asked.

The exercise is well-described to students and has examples of weak and strong questions for better understanding.

After the evaluation is made, the students are welcome to share their feedbacks and thoughts regarding every question they have heard and the exercise in general.

EXERCISES FOR STUDENTS' INDIVIDUAL WORK

By Kristina Nesterova and Dana Rone

Here we offer you 2 exercises for individual work:

1. Life balance wheel
2. Setting the right goals

These exercises will help you to become more self-aware and get them a long-term development vision.

Exercise 1 **Life balance wheel**

Introduction

The “Life balance wheel” or the “Wheel of life” is a visual tool used in coaching to help people quickly understand how balanced and fulfilled their life is at the moment.

The concept was originally created by Paul J. Meyer, founder of Success Motivation Institute, Inc. In 1960. Today different variations of the wheel are used in coaching for personal development reasons.

Life balance wheel usually consists of eight areas considered as important to have a balanced and happy life. A coachee rates their level of satisfaction and fulfilment with every area, then map this onto an image of a wheel. The exercise gives an immediate summary of the current “life balance”.

The key areas on the life balance wheel:

1. Family and friends. The relationship between you and your family as well as the close ones who you can truly call ‘friends’;
2. Physical environment. It includes the country and town you live in, your home and working place;
3. Fun & recreation. How you spend your leisure time;
4. Health. This category includes both “Emotional” and “Physical” health;
5. Personal growth. It involves self-development and self-enhancement, the feelings you have about yourself, and your effectiveness in life.

6. Business and career. The job you do for living. It can be: self-employment, work, motherhood or volunteering;
7. Finance: Your financial security, dependency on loans and debts (including cars, student loans, and mortgage);
8. Romance: This category includes your 'dating' situation, whether you have found a partner for life or still in process.

Now, how balanced your life is?!

Exercise

Below you can see an empty wheel, looking like eight pieces of a pie or a bicycle wheel, which you should fill in with your current level of satisfaction and fulfilment in life. The entire circle represents your overall life and you can not know the exact numbers, so, do it according to your feelings.

Each of the categories can be assigned a value of 1 (very dissatisfied) to 10 (very satisfied). The value of 1 is closest to the centre of the wheel and the value 10 is at the edge.

Before doing this exercise, try to clear your mind and remember there is no right answer just be honest with yourself, that is the key.

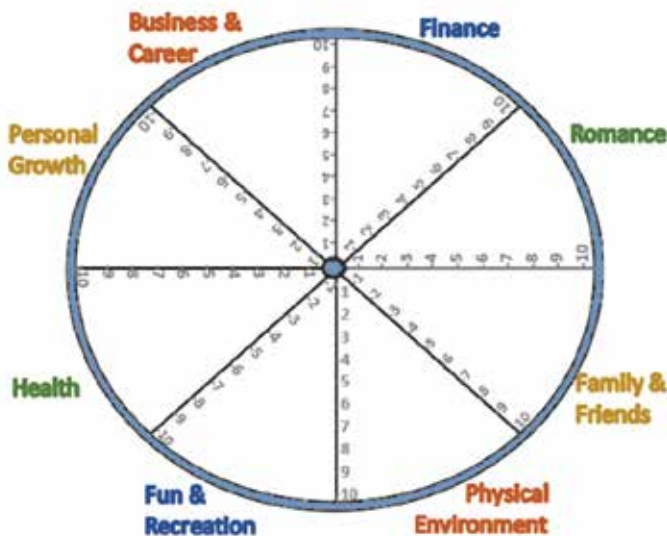


Figure 1. Life balance wheel

Step 1

Please have a look at the Wheel (see figure 1).

- Which category would you like to start from?

After choosing one, go clockwise to the rest of the areas of the Life balance wheel.

Step 2

- How much are you satisfied with this category (the answer from the Step 1) from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 10 (very satisfied)?

Starting from the center of the wheel, colour the slice according to your answer (see figure 1). Below you can see an example how it should look like (see figure 2).

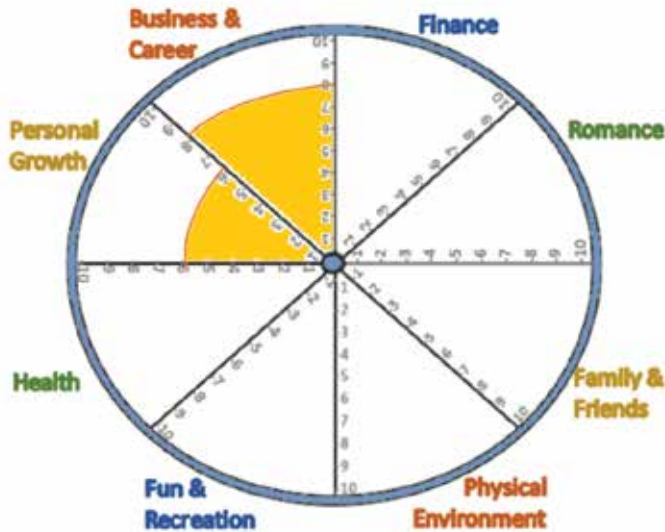


Figure 2. The satisfaction level with 'Personal growth' and 'Business & career' categories

The example above shows the satisfaction rates with two categories: 'Personal growth' (the rate is 6) and 'Business & career' (the rate is 8).

Step 3

Evaluate all eight areas of your Life balance wheel.

When it is done, answer the following questions:

- How well-balanced is your wheel?
- As a bicycle wheel, is it possible to ride?

Step 4

If you completed your Life balance wheel and do not feel satisfied with the results, let's try to find out how it can be improved.

- In your opinion, which areas of the wheel impact others?
- What depends on what?

Make connections between them as it is shown in the example below (see figure 3). Draw arrows from the categories which gives the biggest impact on others using different color ink. Try to make as many connections as possible, to see which area is the most influencing.

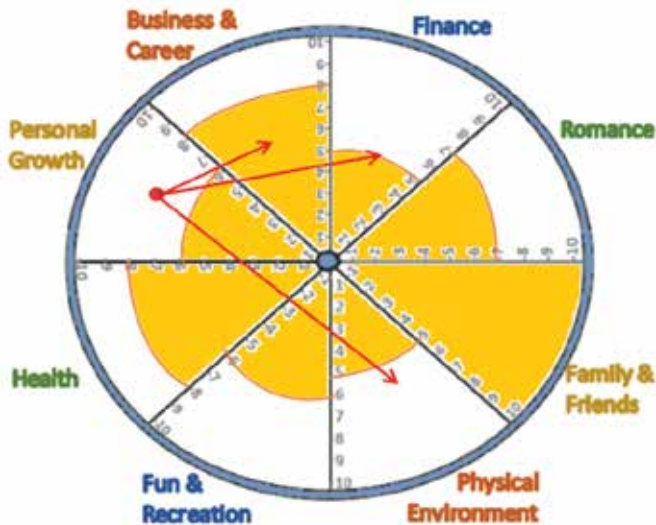


Figure 3. The impact of 'Personal growth' on 'Finance', 'Business and career' and 'Physical environment' development

Step 5

When the connections are done, answer the following questions:

- In which area do you want to make the difference first?
- How much from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 10 (very satisfied) do you want to be satisfied with it?
- What can you do to make the growth happen?
(write down 5–8 options)

Step 6

Now when having several options,

- What will be your first step already today?
- How will you motivate yourself in reaching your goal?

Step 7

Think of a reminder for yourself. It can be something materialistic, such as: a bracelet, a key chain, a pen, a notebook and etc. Put some time and effort in order to find the right reminder for yourself. Have this item with you everywhere, it will remind you of your main goal which have to accomplished in the nearest future. Good luck!

Exercise 2

Setting the right goals

Introduction

All successful people set goals. Goals are dreams with legs, they are going somewhere. Coaching inspires and supports in achieving goals.

The concept of HUGGs

HUGGs stands for Huge, Unbelievably Good Goals and have the following qualities:

- they are long term (5–30 years);
- they connect with the person's identity and core values;
- when they are first set, they seem impossible. As the time goes on, they start to manifest more and more;
- they make a person feel strongly about them.

Examples of HUGGs:

- become a published author;
- become a millionaire;
- establish your own successful company.

Exercise

Set between 2–4 long-term HUGGs for your life. Use your Life Balance Wheel to help setting these goals. As these goals are in the far future, they may not be very specific but positive and in very simple language.

Goal 1

Goal 2

Goal 3

Goal 4

One year goals

Now, take each of your long-term HUGGs goals and set goals that you want to accomplish within one year in order to be on track. You need to set a goal for every part of your Life Balance Wheel, it will give a more clear picture of your future.

To make sure the goals are clear, motivating and reachable, each one should be set in a SMART form:

Specific: to focus all the efforts and feel truly motivated for achieving goals, they should be simple, sensible and significant;

Measurable: the goals should be meaningful in order to track progress and stay motivated;

Attractive: they goals should be likeable by the client;

Realistic: The goals also needs to be reasonable and attainable to be successful. It should stretch a person's abilities but still remain possible.

Time bound: every goal needs a target date, so there is a deadline to focus on and something to work toward.

Goal 1. Family and friends

Goal 2. Physical environment

Goal 3. Fun & recreation

Goal 4. Health

Goal 5. Personal growth

Goal 6. Business and career

Goal 7. Finance

Goal 8. Romance

What are the immediate steps you need to take now in order to achieve your goals in the nearest future?

Save your goals and read them through as a reminder of your BIG DREAMS!

EXERCISES FOR STUDENTS' GROUP WORK

By Kristina Nesterova and Dana Rone

Here we offer you 2 exercises for group work:

- A. The drama triangle
- B. Powerful questions

These exercises will help you to become more responsible and to unlock your potential in professional, academic and personal life.

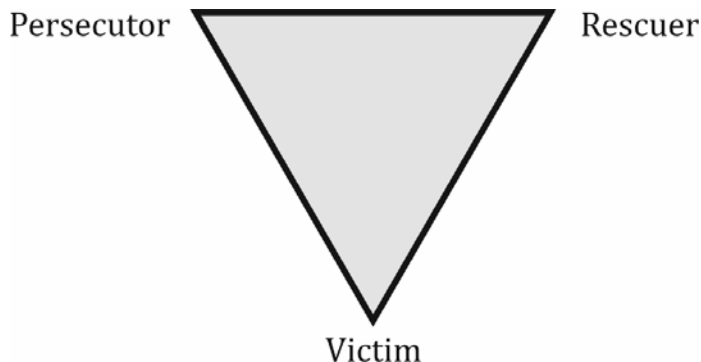
Exercise A **The drama triangle**

Introduction

Many of us at times act like we are being victims in our lives. Every time when we refuse to take responsibility for ourselves, we are unconsciously choosing to act like victims.

The drama triangle is a dynamic model of social interaction and conflict developed by Stephen B. Karpman. He specifies that “victim, rescuer and persecutor” refer to roles people unconsciously play, or try to manipulate others to play, and not the real circumstances in life, such as victims of crime or abuse, etc.

The three roles of the drama triangle are typical and easily recognizable in their extreme versions.



- **V = victim.** Victims usually feel helpless, oppressed and powerless. Their typical attitude is “Poor me!” Victims are unable to make decisions, solve problems, take responsibilities for their own lives. Being powerless, victims constantly seek for rescuers to save them and solve their problems.
- **R = rescuer.** The stance of a rescuer is “Let me help you.” Rescuers can feel guilty if they do not ‘save’ someone. Although rescuers have positive intentions, their attitude at times has negative impact. It keeps the Victim dependent and gives them Victim permission to fail. The role of rescuer, in reality, is an avoidance of dealing with their own issues.
- **P = persecutor.** Persecutors are controlling, authoritative and unpleasant to deal with. They usually criticize and blame the victim, set strict limits, but they don’t actually solve any problems or help anyone else. They make the victim feeling ‘small’ through threats and bullying. On the other hand, persecutors are scared of being a victim themselves.

Exercise

1. Divide into groups of 4–6 students and read the following two fictional stories. After reading these A and B stories below
2. Discuss in the groups who from these 4 fictional characters is right and who is wrong?
3. Distribute roles of: V = victim; R = rescuer and P = persecutor for each speaker. Note, one speaker can keep switching roles during the conversation.

Story A

The first situation is happening between Richard and Ann, a married couple with children.

Richard: You burned dinner again! That’s not the first time this month, Ann!

Ann: Well, little Johnny fell and skinned his elbow, poor thing. I was busy getting him a bandage and the dinner accidentally burnt.

Richard: You baby that kid too much!

Ann: I do not think you would want him to get an infection. I’d end up taking care of him while he’s sick.

Richard: He’s big enough to be able to get his own bandage.

Ann: I just didn’t want leave our son bleeding all over the carpet.

Richard: You know, that's the problem with these kids? They expect you to do everything for them

Ann: That's natural, they are just children.

Richard: I work like a dog all day at a job I hate...

Ann: Yes, you do work very hard, dear.

Richard: And I can't even have a good dinner home!

Ann: I can cook something else, it won't take too long.

Richard: A waste of an expensive steak!

Ann: Well maybe if you could have stood up out of your chair for a minute while I was busy, it wouldn't have gotten burned!

Richard: You didn't say anything! How was I supposed to know?

Ann: As if you couldn't hear Johnny crying? You always ignore the kids!

Richard: I do not. I just need time to sit and relax and unwind after working all day! You don't know what it's like...

Ann: Sure, as if taking care of the house and kids isn't work!

Story B

The second fictional argument is happening between David and Kathy, a young couple.

David: Kathy, why are you late again? I am sick of it, you are always late!

Kathy: I'm sorry, I just did not hear my alarm ringing. Please don't be mad at me.

David: Well, you have absolutely no respect for my time. I've no idea why I still put up with you!

Kathy: But you are not perfect yourself. Stop yelling at me otherwise you will regret it!

David: OK, OK. Calm down. I didn't mean to upset you.

Kathy: Well you never help me with my lateness so what do you expect?

David: OK, so from now on I will make sure you get out of the house on time.

After compiling the exercise, discuss in the groups: who could be a missing person in the given situations?

Conclusion

'The only way to "escape" the drama triangle is to function as an "adult" and not participate in the game.' – John Goulet, MFT, Breaking the drama triangle

Each role of the drama triangle has its own outcomes. Rescuers take care of Victims and feel good about it. Victims are usually convinced that they are powerless or defective and needing rescue. This way have someone to blame for their failures and to solve their problems for them. In of these circumstances, Persecutors get a feeling of being more powerful and 'higher' than both victim and rescuer.

The biggest cost of this 'role-play' is to keep going a dysfunctional social dynamic and to miss out on the possibilities of healthy and strong relationships.

In fact, if every participant of the drama triangle starts making decisions for themselves and taking responsibility for their own life, the triangle will no longer 'poison' the interpersonal relationship.

Exercise B **Powerful Questions**

Introduction

Most people think of coaching as giving advice and instructions. In reality, coaching is an art of questioning. Good coaching questions are often complex but powerful and there is more than one right answer. Powerful coaching questions help a coachee to think and uncover what's really important for them.

This exercise helps to learn the importance of asking the 'right' questions in order to get a powerful answer.

Exercise

1. Divide into groups of 4–6 students.
2. Choose 1 person among your group, who will play a role of the "Client". The "Client" formulates and announces his/her long-term goal for the nearest future. For instance "I want to write and publish a novel".
3. The rest of the group members perform a team coaching by asking the "Client" one question at a time.
4. The Client gives one answer to each question.
5. There should be 2 or 3 rounds, so every coach has a chance to ask 2–3 questions.
6. After each question asked, every group member rates the quality question in their evaluation sheet (see attachment 1), where 1 is the lowest (the weakest question) and 10 is the highest (the strongest question).
7. Everyone should write the questions down in order to give a constructive feedback when the exercise is done.

The principles of powerful questions

1. Open-ended questions. Open-ended questions help to uncover the real issue and show a variety of options without limitations. For example: "What your novel will be about?"
2. Future-oriented. Focussing on the future often brings positive emotions as let us dream.
3. Solution-oriented. Usually, there is no point to search for the cause of a problem as it already exists. It is more effective to search for the right solution to overcome the problem.
4. Timely asked. It is extremely important to ask the right questions at the right time so they become powerful. Some questions require more rapport from a coachee than others and should be asked at the right moment to reach their target.
5. Lead to action. In order to make a change there should be an action. Even a small action is already the first step towards the new direction. Without action there is no point in coaching.
6. Direct. The powerful questions are easy to understand and simply constructed.
7. Contain positive assumption. In powerful coaching questions, there is no judgement, over-generalisation, pressure or any kind of presupposition, especially negative.
8. No 'why' questions. Questions beginning with 'why' tend to be judging, evoke details and justifications of the situation. Understanding the situation in detail does not necessarily help to resolve it. It is much more effective to look for solutions and focus on the future. Questions starting with "What" are usually stronger.

Examples

Weak questions	Powerful questions
What should you do?	What do you want?
Whose fault is this?	What is the solution?
Why is this happening to you?	What can you learn from this?

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EXERCISES

MULTICULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Methodology for Teachers

Exercises for Student's Individual Work

Exercises for Student's Group Work



METHODOLOGY FOR TEACHERS

By Agnieszka Góra and Jacek Czaja

*“Every human is like all other humans,
some other humans and no other human.”*

– Clyde Kluckhohn

Introduction

Multicultural communication skills are crucial. As the world is becoming a smaller and smaller place, differences that occur on both our professional and personal paths are increasingly bigger and more noticeable. While working and living across nations and cultures, the comprehension and awareness of the intercultural competency is the survival issue. Very much needed to thrive. The importance of cultural competency is becoming more recognized and materials helping to develop such are required.

Here you will find methodology designed to assist you and help you navigate the topic of multicultural communication. The exercises are designed to help students develop their knowledge and skills to communicate cross-culturally in a more effective way.

Need for multicultural communication skills

Multicultural communication can be defined in many ways, typically it is said to be: a verbal or written interaction involving two or more participants who have different cultural values and beliefs. In other words, it is an interaction between individuals coming from significantly different backgrounds (the said differences may regard: origin, gender, system of beliefs, social status and many more).

Students and professionals should learn how to effectively communicate in a multicultural context with an emphasis on globalization, professional relevance. Until now, however, despite the universal need for everyone to

be skilled in that topic, little or no teaching at educational institutions on multicultural communication is offered.

Main goals and learning outcomes

The ultimate goal of teaching multicultural communication skills is for learner to obtain Intercultural communication competency (ICC). The ICC is simply the ability to navigate a communication process in order to minimize the [negative] influence of culture on [the effectiveness of] communication.

In pursuance of mastering their intercultural communication competency learners need to become aware, to transform their attitudes, develop their flexibility and adaptability as well as transform knowledge into competence – with a set of skills helpful in reaching full potential of intercultural interaction.



The ICC does not require simply learning about each and every culture in the world. Moreover, it cannot be measured by the number of cultures one learnt about. Simply put, when Leslie has studied 7 cultures, it does not mean they are have higher cross cultural competency than Alex who has learnt 3.

The ICC is adequate when cultural differences between interacting people do not hinder the outcome of the communication process. In other words, when you understand and are understood to the same extend by people of 'your culture' as you are understood by representatives of the 'other culture'.

The main goals of the following materials are to help learners understand:

- basic concepts e.g.: communication, culture, biases, preferences as per communication styles, multicultural influence on communication;
- factors playing important roles in the way one communicates;
- role of importance of effective communication;
- role of culture in communication.

In order for learners to be able to:

- observe and analyze their personal and other people communication styles;
- recognize differences in communication;
- discuss differences in communication;
- overcome obstacles in communication;
- adjust communication style and methods to maximize communication effectiveness.

Guidelines for teachers – how to use exercises in teaching process

In following sections we offer 3 exercises for individual work and 3 exercises for the group work. Exercises for use of individual students are marked with numbers (Exercise 1, Exercise 2, Exercise 3), whereas group exercises are marked with letters (A, B and C). Below you will find short explanation how to use those exercises.

Teacher DO's

One important perspective in teaching multicultural communication skills is to emphasize the importance of learner's individual efforts put into an intercultural conversation or other interaction – in other words, one needs to take the burden of communication on their shoulders. With that perspective, their self-knowledge (knowing and managing oneself in a multicultural scenario) is crucial. As well as the ability to identify which communication happens in a multicultural context – in order for learners to be able to entail appropriate measures and use proper communication methods. Hence, there are two main concepts: that should be taught and explained **CULTURE** and **COMMUNICATION**.

Teacher DON'Ts

However, it is extremely crucial to avoid some counter-productive attitudes in teaching about multicultural communication such as:

1. be careful to not reinforce stereotypes,
2. do not equate:
 - a country with a culture;
 - a citizen of a country with an ideal representative of a particular 'culture of a country';
 - a person with a stereotype;
3. do not generalize and regionalize – as in an era of communication geographical boundaries are becoming less *solid*.

Intercultural communication competency is not only about learning about other cultures; it is about developing mindset and instruments universal and applicable in multicultural scenarios.

Exercise 1 How many cultures?

This exercise explores what is culture, how students understand culture and clarifies its visible and less visible elements. It is in a form of self-assessment exercise which does not require any background knowledge on multicultural communication.

The exercise is recommended to be done between 25–45 minutes.

For the purposes of this exercise use Exercise 1 worksheet. With the aim of discussing the concept of culture – you may use the Culture as an iceberg graphic included in Chapter 5 of this Book.

Note: This exercise is appropriate as an individual study material. However, it may also serve as an introductory work in a group meeting, when debrief may take on a form of a group discussion.

Observations and suggestions for discussions

1. Seeing the Culture as an iceberg graphic, which of the elements – above or below *the water* – students listed to describe another culture compared to which traits and qualities they indicated when referring to their own culture?
2. Use group reflections to discuss:
 - Who they chose to describe? Was it someone from a different country, language, ethnicity?

- Culture as a concept. Culture does not equal nationality. The term 'culture' includes not only culture related to nationality, race, ethnicity, but e.g. beliefs, experiences and ways of being in the world shared by people with common characteristics – people with disabilities, people who are members of faith and spiritual communities, people of various socio-economic status etc. Conclusion: there are more cultural differences 'near you' and you interact cross-culturally more often than you could think.
- Assumptions. Be aware of the assumptions that you hold about people of cultures different from your own.
- Stereotypes. Are you aware of your stereotypes as they arise?
- Ambiguity and assessment of the limits of one's knowledge. Do you recognize that your knowledge of certain cultural groups is limited? How much are you committed to create opportunities to learn more?

Exercise 2

What is your personal communication style?

This exercise explores communication styles and their importance in the communication process.

As well as provides for self-assessment of individual preferences as to communication styles.

The exercise can take up to 30 minutes.

There are multiple styles of communication. Some possible style-pairs are listed below. It is important to note, that there are no two separate boxes for each communication style pair. It is rather a spectrum – a continuum.

Ask your students to put a mark on a graph in each pair – as they feel they communicate. E.g. Are they more indirect or direct? They can place the mark wherever they feel, there is however no possibility to put a mark in the middle (always one of the styles is prevailing over the other in the pair). Next (or – when style names are too ambiguous to your students – before completing the graph), present your students with definitions of each style as listed in the worksheet.

Observations and suggestions for discussions

- Understanding one's own communication preference, while discovering the preferences of others can be a very useful mechanism to enhance the effectiveness of communication. Communication style

influences HOW one speaks, not WHAT one says. Hence, differences in communication styles can have an impact on whether the intent of our message and the impact it has on the receiver of that message. Differences in communication styles may in some cases hinder communication and lead to misunderstandings.

- There is no one right or universal communication style, as each of them have their strengths and possible challenges. Ask your students to give some examples. Communication styles can be used as a profiling and analysing tool in a multicultural communication situation.
- It is crucial to remember that, each of the above-mentioned pairs is independent from other pairs. In other words 'the left column' does not always go together as well 'the right column' does not always go together either. Therefore, an individual always needs to stay alert to the other person's styles, rather than assume *formal=indirect*, etc.
- Communication styles are not separate boxes – rather a continuum, a scale. While every individual uses multiple styles, they also move on the spectrum (more towards right or left as per the graph presented in the Worksheet) dependent on the person they communicate with (e.g. in a conversation with a principal a student is more indirect, whereas at home while conversing with their siblings they may be more direct).
- Use of multiple styles is common, even though, individuals tend to have personal preference, some kind of a *default mode* they lean towards while under pressure.

Exercise 3 E-mail time

This exercise explores the impact of style and the need for adjustment of communication tools used in each individual communication situation in order to understand and be understood by the other person.

The exercise can take up to 30 minutes.

For the purposes of this exercise student must finish Exercise 2. Ask your students to list on Worksheet 3 which of the styles in all of the indicated six categories is their prevailing (automatically assumed) one. Next, ask them to list the opposite styles. The task is to write an e-mail according to instruction included in the Exercise 3 worksheet.

Observations and suggestions for discussions

- Ask your students how they felt to switch to a different style? Often it is not automatic, unintuitive and even hard. Adapting to a different style requires analysis and awareness of oneself and others.
- Discuss what the students learnt from this activity. Conscious adjustments to style of the other person may help in better understanding one another.
- Ask your students what things they altered/adapted. Brainstorm with the group possible other elements/tools in written and spoken communication.

Exercise A

Tell me... What do you think?

This exercise explores the concept of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism. The purpose of this exercise is to develop an understanding of the influence of both attitudes on the communication.

The exercise is recommended to be done between 20–35 minutes.

Read one of the two proposed scenarios to your group. Scenario I is a story about child care standards, traditions. Whereas Scenario II regards freedom of choice and religion as well as gender issues and this case may be appropriate and interesting especially for a slightly older group of learners.

Ask your students to write their individual, personal opinion on the matter. Next, divide them in groups of 3–4 and ask them to exchange their opinions and reflections (read them out loud) and then to decide upon a GROUP response. There are a couple of rules for the said group response:

- one group needs to prepare just ONE response that all group members agree on or say they could not consent within their *small* group;
- the response should be written in full sentences, evaluation everyone can agree upon ;
- the group response cannot be a copy of any individual member response.

Observations and suggestions for discussions

Introduce the concepts of:

- Ethnocentrism – is the tendency to look at the world primarily from the perspective of one's own culture;

- Cultural relativism – is the principle of regarding and valuing the practices of a culture from the point of view of that culture and to avoid making hasty judgments;
- Xenocentrism – is the opposite of ethnocentrism, and refers to the belief that another culture is superior to one's own.

The discussion on the above mentioned concepts may be expanded further. Ask one half of your group to write an ethnocentric response to the story and the other half to write a culturally relative response to the story. How these two responses differ?

Discuss with the group what are risks and positives of each of these attitudes.

Exercise B **How I see you**

This exercise explores communication styles in depth and their impact on communication.

Exercise shows the phenomena of the Self-Reference Criterion or SRC (Varner & Beamer, 2011). By SRC we see other cultures from our own perspective. Our own values, priorities and behaviours seem accepted and familiar – NATURAL. And they serve as a reference point. For example, if someone comes from a very formal culture, that approach is normal and desirable. They will judge other people if they are more formal or less formal than them.

Such a perspective, to no surprise is very subjective. A good example may be when in a group (the more diverse group, the more differences in opinion will most likely occur) one behaviour is deemed very formal by some of group members and may be deemed informal by the others. In a communication process, it is crucial how the interacting parties are capable to adjust communication tools to the styles they use, in an effort to understand and be understood, rather than some general classification.

The exercise is recommended to be done between 15–30 minutes. Please note, that Exercise 2 needs to be completed BEFORE the group work with Exercise B.

For the purposes of this exercise you will need to have one volunteer (or choose one participant to assume that role). Kindly, be mindful, that it needs to be someone who would feel comfortable while sharing their continuum with the group. Once, that one student is chosen, ask the other students to fill in the worksheet for the volunteer (how they see her/him in each category).

Discuss with the group (while staying cautious to not allow pointing fingers or putting anyone on the spotlight – rather facilitate the discussion in a non-accusatory direction):

- What is the chosen communication style of the volunteer as per their continuum worksheet?
- Are the other students surprised of her/his responses?
- How different is the volunteer worksheet to how he/she was described by the other students?

Observations and suggestions for discussions

- Use the above-mentioned discussion questions to show that communication style of individuals is always subjective in nature. How we may think we are is not how a person we communicate with may see us, as they will use their own communication style as a reference point. It is important to always stay conscious and adapt if needed for the sake of the effectiveness of communication.
- Ask your students to reflect on the importance and impact of differences in communication styles on individuals and on teams.
- Discuss how students – as communicators – can behave in order not to harm the other person’s feelings (if they present a different style) and what elements they should be alert to in order to be a considerate and respectful in a communication process.

Exercise C

Cross-cultural sensitivity as a goal?

This exercise explores Milton J. Bennett model on cultural sensitivity – the framework describes the different ways in which people can react to cultural differences. The goal of this task is to show the link between knowledge of cultures and the attitude.

Present and discuss with your students the model on cultural sensitivity by Milton J. Bennett, for that purpose you can use information provided in the Exercise C worksheet. Next, ask your students to write down three stories describing their cross cultural interactions. One of the three stories should be a positive memory, one a neutral one and the last one representing a bad memory. Students are asked to mark which level of Bennett model is appropriate for each of their stories. Ask your students to share stories according to good-neutral-bad memories.

Observations and suggestions for discussions

- No one is a master fully aware of other cultures.
- Where does knowledge of other cultures come from?
- How can we show cross-cultural sensitivity?
- What are three examples of desirable behaviours when we communicate in an intercultural context? On the contrary, what are three examples of multicultural DON'Ts?

EXERCISES FOR STUDENTS' INDIVIDUAL WORK

By Agnieszka Góra and Jacek Czaja

Please see below 3 exercises for individual work:

1. How many cultures?
2. What is your personal communication style?
3. E-mail time!

These individual exercises were designed for the purpose to help students develop knowledge and skills to communicate cross-culturally in a more effective way.

Exercise 1 **How many cultures?**

Worksheet

This exercise explores what is culture, how to understand culture and clarifies it's visible and less visible elements.

Exercise

I Please come up with up with and list five things that, to you represent a culture of a person from a different culture than yours:

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____

II Now, please come up with and list five things that, to you, represent your own culture.

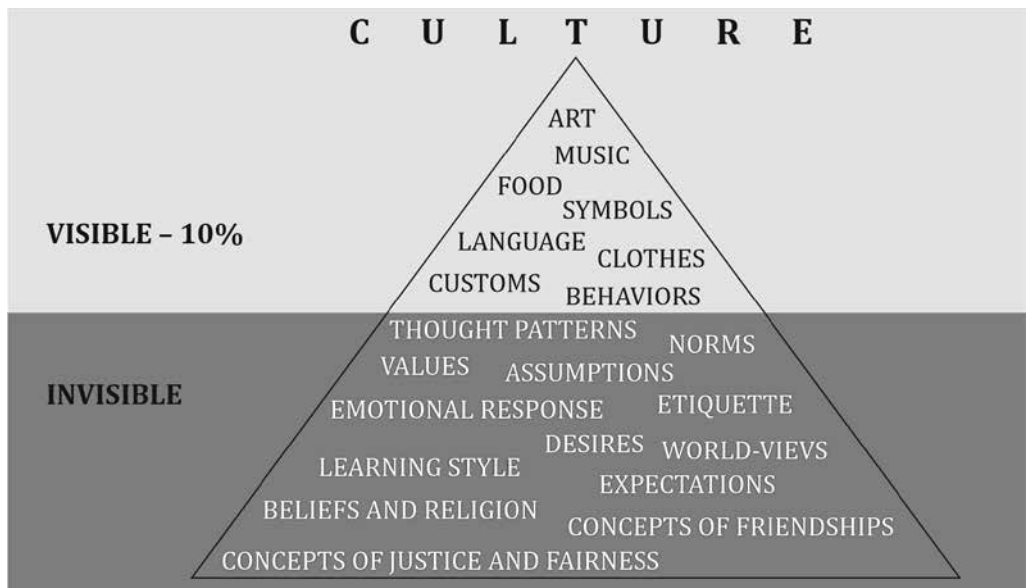
1. _____
2. _____

- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

III Next, come up with and list five more things that, to you, represent your culture. However, no outsider should be able to easily learn about/guess those.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

IV Having completed the three elements of this exercise, please take a look at the following graphic portraying culture as an iceberg.



Observations and evaluation

- 1. Which of the indicated elements – above or below *the water* – you chose to describe another culture?

2. Which elements – visible or invisible – you indicated when referring to your own culture? Are any of them assumptions or stereotypes?

3. Who did you choose to describe as a representative of a different culture? Was it someone from a different country, language, ethnicity?

Key takeaway points

Remember, a culture:

- Can be defined as something accepted and familiar,
- Is learnt – not inborn;
- Describes the characteristics of particular group;
- Culture influences perceptions, interpretations, communication style, behaviours, manners and much more.

Having seen the Culture as an iceberg graphic, it often times transpires that we tend to go more in-depth when describing our own culture – as we know it best. At the same time it is more difficult to touch **the core of** another cultures. We are not born with any culture, we rather grow into many cultures and they have profound influence on our behaviour and the way we communicate. Be sure to try to understand the other culture to it's core, just like you see your own one, as deep understanding helps to have a more effective communication process.

Don't forget that:

- There are more cultures than nationalities
- The term 'culture' includes not only culture related to nationality, race, ethnicity, but e.g. beliefs, experiences and ways of being in the world shared by people with common characteristics – people with disabilities, people who are members of faith and spiritual communities, people of various socio-economic status etc.
- There are more cultural differences 'near you' and you interact cross-culturally more often than you think!

Beware of:

- The assumptions that you hold about people of cultures different from your own. The same goes to stereotypes. Did you refer to any stereotypes in describing the other culture? Are you aware of your stereotypes as they arise?
- Ambiguity and assessment of the limits of our knowledge. Do you recognize that your knowledge of certain cultural groups is limited? How much are you committed to create opportunities to learn more?

V BONUS task!

Make an effort to get to know better someone representing a culture different than yours. Choose to learn more about their culture. Pick three elements from “under-water” culture iceberg which you would like to inquire about and note down what you learnt.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Exercise 2

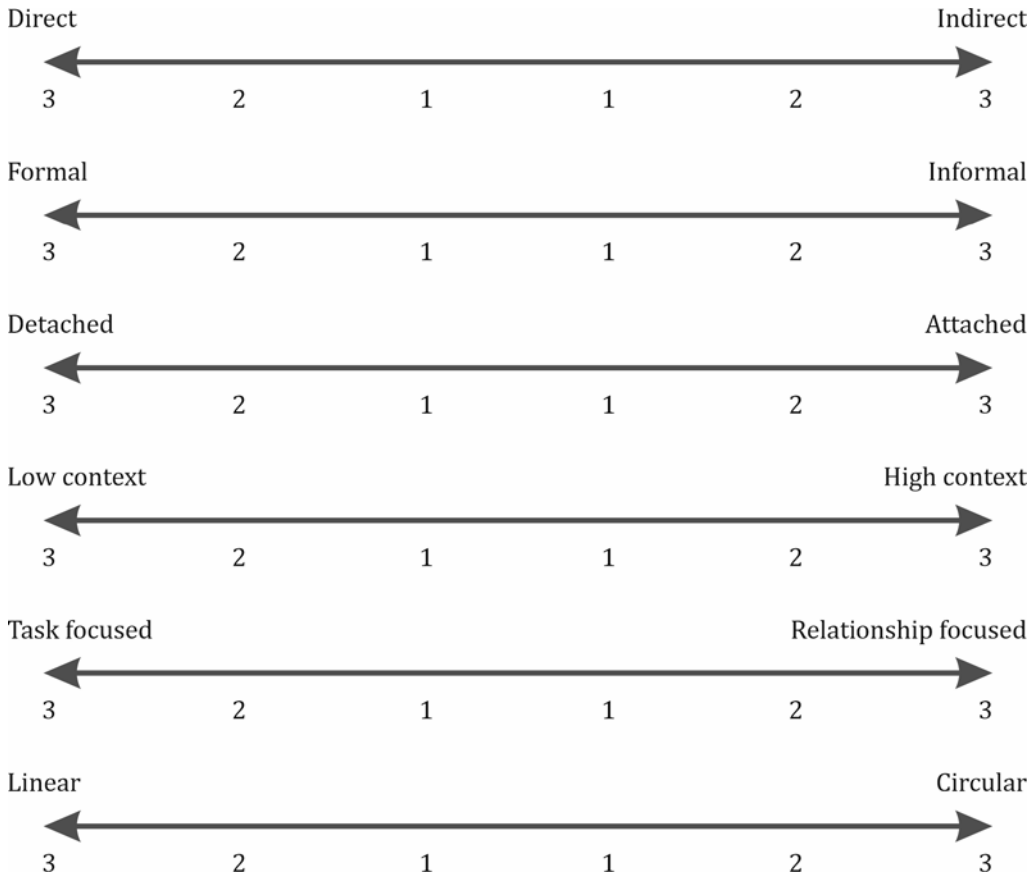
What is your personal communication style?

This exercise explores communication styles and their importance in the communication process. As well as provides for self-assessment of individual preferences as to communication styles.

Exercise

There are multiple communication styles. Some possible style-pairs are listed below. It is important to note, that there are no two separate boxes for each communication style pair.

It is rather a spectrum – a continuum. Please, mark on the graph in each of the six pairs as you feel is your communication style. There is one important rule – no mark can be put in the middle!



Before filling in this graphs, you can take a look at the definitions of each communication style:

<p>DIRECT A straightforward way of expressing thoughts and feelings; Directness is equated with honesty and respect for the other person and their time; Do not create ambiguity or uncertainty by avoiding discussion on the issue (even trivial ones) – state specifics; Values time, so every communication is simple and clear to be quick.</p>	<p>INDIRECT Meaning is conveyed in a subtle way using non-verbal cues, parables and stories; High respect for other person’s emotions and feelings; Indirectness is equated with politeness and respect for the other person; Do not put the other person on a spot by being blatantly direct. Citing a mistake or voicing disapproval is deemed impolite, subtle implication allows for ‘face-saving’.</p>
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<p>FORMAL Status of each person is important and acknowledged (age, topics, rituals), Strict communication rules apply. They regard i.a.: forms of address, ways to address persons of different age and status, topics that can and cannot be discussed; Formal communication supports the values of status and hierarchy; Communication is highly ritualized.</p>	<p>INFORMAL Communication is less limited by conventions, a person has more flexibility in what, to whom and under what circumstances they say (e.g. the use of first name is welcome); Indirectness supports the value of fairness and equity; Communication has few rules – find out what is allowable in that particular group and follow the conventions.</p>
<p>DETTACHED Unemotional, calm, objective, impersonal communication; Dispassionate statements are considered professional and equated with objectivism, which is valued; Focus is on objective information/data; Disagreement is with the idea, not the person – it is not seen as personal attack; Highly expressive communication is inappropriate as it is deemed biased.</p>	<p>ATTACHED Emotional, expressive way of speaking; Strong feelings are shown and vocalized; Issues are discussed with passion and commitment, Ideas, issues and a person are not separate; There is strong personal stake in the outcome – if one cares about the idea, they show it; Sharing ones values and feelings about the issue is highly valued.</p>
<p>LOW-CONTEXT The communication context is not assumed to be shared and known; Things and meanings are explained clearly and precisely.</p>	<p>HIGH-CONTEXT The context of communication is assumed to be known; It is unnecessary or even insulting to overexplain and state meaning precisely, as meaning is understood from context.</p>
<p>TASK FOCUSED Accomplishing the goals is a priority; Feelings of other people are secondary; Little or no small-talk; If there is disagreement or discontent with the work of other people, it is polite and expected to be discussed publicly.</p>	<p>RELATIONSHIP FOCUSED Group harmony, relations are priority; The need to make everyone feel heard; Any concern for the task, does not hurt or exploit someone, their feelings and well-being; Frequent appraisals to participants for their good work; No individual criticism on a forum.</p>
<p>LINEAR Communication is like a straight line – moving in a linear way toward the main point; ‘The point’ is stated as quick as possible; Brief and explicit communication, Lengthy deviations from the main point are considered time wasters.</p>	<p>CIRCULAR Communication takes circular manner – ‘around the main point’; It is not necessary to state main point clearly, as verbal and non-verbal messages provides for sufficient understanding; Elegant and flowing communication full of stories and anecdotes where stories make a point; Meaning is inferred from stories and parables; Supports the values of relationships, history and group meaning.</p>

Observations and evaluation

There is no one right or universal communication style, as each of them have their strengths and possible challenges. Please, think of examples when extreme communication style can pose challenges in effective communication and how can you overcome them?

Style: _____

Challenge: _____

Solution: _____

Style: _____

Challenge: _____

Solution: _____

Key takeaway points

- Communication style influences **HOW** one speaks, not **WHAT** one says. Hence, differences in communication styles can have an impact on whether the intent of our message and the impact it has on the receiver of that message. Differences in communication styles may in some cases hinder communication and lead to misunderstandings.
- Understanding your own communication preference, while discovering the preferences of others can be a very useful mechanism to enhance the effectiveness of communication. Communication styles can be used as a profiling and analysing tool in a multicultural communication situation.
- Use of multiple styles is common, even though, individuals tend to have personal preference, some kind of a *default mode* they lean towards while under pressure.
- It is crucial to remember that, each of the above-mentioned pairs is independent from other pairs. In other words 'the left column' does not always go together as well 'the right column' does not always go together either. Therefore, an individual always needs to stay alert to the other person's styles, rather than assume *formal=indirect*, etc.
- Communication styles are not separate boxes- rather a continuum, a scale. While every individual uses multiple styles, they also move on the spectrum (more towards right or left as per the graph presented in the Worksheet) dependent on the person they communicate with

(e.g. in a conversation with a principal a student is more indirect, whereas at home while conversing with their siblings they may be more direct).

Exercise 3

E-mail time!

This exercise explores the impact of style and the need for adjustment of communication tools used in each individual communication situation in order to understand and be understood by the other person.

Exercise

For the purposes of this exercise use your completed Exercise 2. Also, feel free to refer to Communication Styles definition list.

Using the Exercise 2 graph, in each of the six categories, please highlight your own prevailing (automatically assumed) style in each of the six categories:

1.	Direct	Indirect
2.	Formal	Informal
3.	Detached	Attached
4.	Low context	High context
5.	Task focused	Relationship focused
6.	Linear	Circular

Now, list the opposite styles:

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

E. _____

F. _____

Your task

Imagine you are a representative of a team working with a group of internationals and your task is to write an email to Jesse – the representative of the other group with an invitation to a work meeting at your headquarters.

Important fact is that Jesse represents completely opposite styles to you (as A-F listed above). Note at least three elements in your email that you intentionally changed – compared to when you would draft an email to someone like you.

Three adjustments:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Observations and suggestions for discussions

- How did it felt to switch to a different style? Often it is not automatic, unintuitive and even hard. Adapting to a different style requires analysis and awareness of oneself and others.
- What did you learn from this activity? Conscious adjustments to style of the other person may help in better understanding one another.
- Which elements did you change? Consider the elements that you altered/adapted. Brainstorm other elements/tools in written and spoken communication which may need adjustments when interacting with a person who has a different style compared to yours.

EXERCISES FOR STUDENTS' GROUP WORK

By Agnieszka Góra and Jacek Czaja

Please see below 3 exercises for group work:

- A. Tell me... what do you think?
- B. How I see you
- C. Cross-cultural sensitivity as a goal?

These group exercises were developed for the purpose to help students develop knowledge and skills to communicate cross-culturally in a more effective way.

Exercise A

Tell me... what do you think?

This exercise explores the concept of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism. The purpose of this exercise is to develop an understanding of the influence of both attitudes on the communication.

Exercise

Below you will find two scenarios. Both of them describe situations with culture-based elements. The whole group should pick just one for your further work. Each group member is asked to read it.

Scenario I

In your country, there is a pending proceeding to deprive the mother of parental rights arose from following circumstances. Monika is a single mum who moved to your country quite recently from X (X is a name of the country). One day Monika came back home after work at 22.30 and sit to dinner with her 12-year-old beloved Sara. Only 30 mins after finishing the dinner Sara's stomach started to ache. Since it did not stop after a painkiller, Monika rushed to a hospital and described the situation to doctors. As it turned out, there was no reason to worry. At least this time. The doctors, however, got very upset about the fact that Sara was alone at home for two hours before Monika's arrival, did

not sleep till 23.00 and, last by not least, that food prepared by Monika was not appropriate for kids her age at all!

Monika was shocked! Sara has stayed alone at home since she was 10, as did Monika, all her colleagues, family and friends from X. Moreover, the meal which she prepared for Sara was Monika's favourite when she was her age. Of course it is quite heavy and definitely not healthy – but it is what everyone eats from time to time.... Isn't it?

Scenario II

Tom is 17 years old citizen of your country, of Z's origin. His parents are very conservative and religious. According to both: their parents' religion and traditions of Z, gender is not fluid and there is no such thing as changing the sex. 'You are who you were born as – biologically of course!' – they say. As indicated in a custom, every kid in Z upon birth gets a tattoos depending on the gender (sun – a boy and moon – a girl). Tom was born as Ola, and this is how his parents address him. As Tom identifies as a boy and indicates that he will fully transition the day he is an adult (in 6 months according to your country's law), he wants to have his tat changed. Parents do not consent and no tat's artist agrees to do it without the parents' consent.

Your task

1. Each group member has 5–10 minutes to write their individual, personal response and opinion on the matter. Your statement has to be written in full sentences. Please, note it down and keep it for next steps of this exercise.

2. Next, divide in groups of 3–4 and exchange your opinions (read out loud your individual responses as written above). The group task is to decide upon a GROUP RESPONSE. There are a couple of rules you need to follow while coming up with the said response:

- one group needs to prepare just ONE response that all group members agree on or say they could not consent on the matter;
- the response should be written in full sentences and carefully examined by all group members to ensure they all agree with the response fully;
- the group response cannot be a copy of any individual member response.

3. One representative of each group reads out the statement mutually agreed by their groups. Follow with group discussion.

Observations and suggestions for discussions

The goal of this task is to introduce the concepts of

- Ethnocentrism – which is the tendency to look at the world primarily from the perspective of one’s own culture;
- Cultural relativism – which is the principle of regarding and valuing the practices of a culture from the point of view of that culture and to avoid making hasty judgments;
- Xenocentrism – which is the opposite of ethnocentrism, and refers to the belief that another culture is superior to one’s own.

4. Now, half of your group will have the task to write an ethnocentric response to the scenario you chose and the other half to write a culturally relative response to the same story. How these two responses differ?

5. Having learnt about those concepts, please brainstorm:

Which of the individual as well as group responses could be defined as ethnocentric? And WHY?

Which of the individual as well as group responses could be defined as culturally relative? And WHY?

6. Discuss with the group what are the risks and positives of each of the two attitudes.

CULTURAL RELATIVISM	ETHNOCENTRISM

Exercise B **How I see you**

This exercise explores communication styles in depth and their importance in the communication process as well as how communication styles are perceived and what is their impact on communication.

Exercise 2 needs to be completed BEFORE the group work with Exercise B.

Exercise

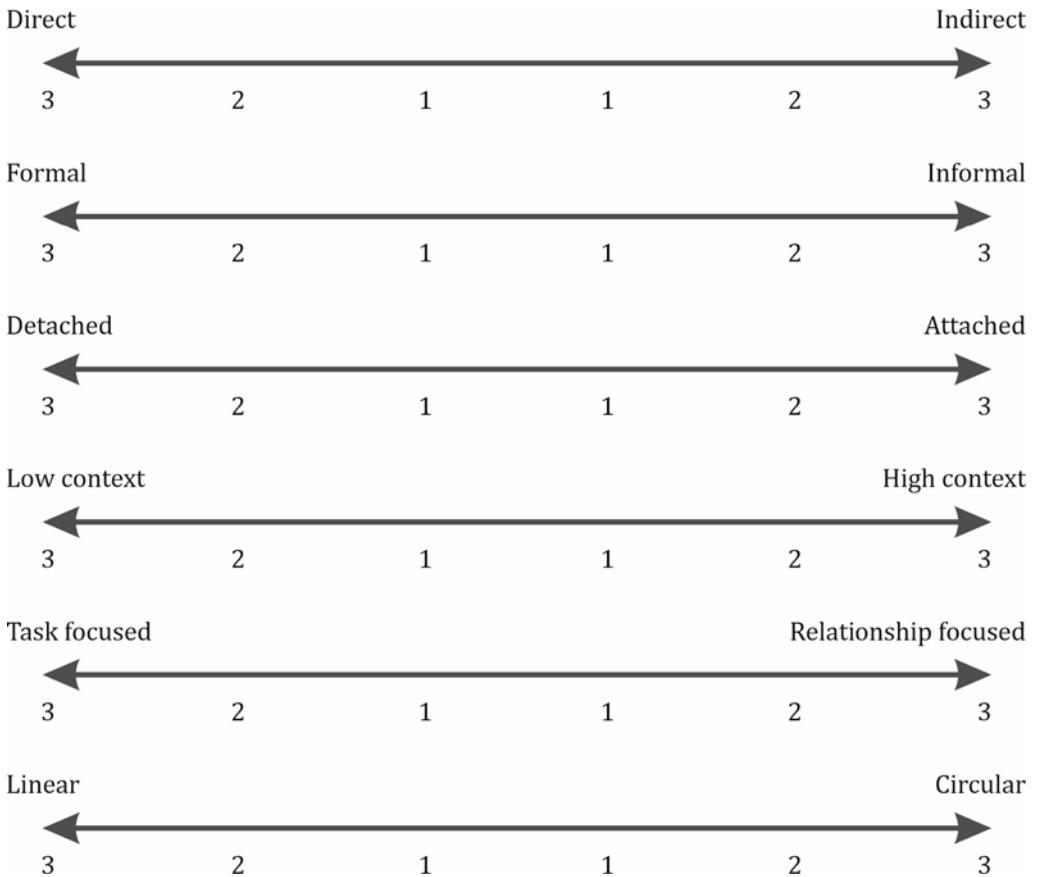
1. Ask one of the group members to volunteer to share their continuum with the group. Remember, a volunteer should be a person who will feel comfortable with sharing their continuum graph with the group. When one of the group members volunteered ask them to keep their graph to themselves.
2. The group task is for everyone fill in the communication styles worksheet for the volunteer – how each of the group members sees the volunteer in each of the six indicated communication style pairs? (For that purpose, you can use again the worksheet as provided on the next page). Remember, do not confer with one another yet!
3. Only after everyone has filled in their Communication style of the Volunteer worksheet (see below), ask the volunteer to show the group her/his personal communication styles graph and next explore:
 - What is the chosen communication style of the volunteer as per their continuum worksheet?
 - Are the other students surprised of her/his responses?

- How different is the volunteer worksheet to how he/she was described by the other students?

4. Ask the group members to indicate WHY – which particular behaviour of the volunteer made them assign the volunteer to particular styles.

Remember, be kind and respectful! The purpose of this exercise is not to be judgmental, rather to learn and better understand oneself and how we perceive the world around us!

**Communication style of the volunteer
WORKSHEET**



Observations and suggestions for discussions

- Do you agree that communication style of individuals is always subjective in nature? How we may think we are is not how a person we

communicate with may see us, as they will use their own communication style as a reference point. It is important to always stay conscious and adapt, if needed, for the sake of the effectiveness of communication.

- Communication style influences **HOW** one speaks, not **WHAT** one says. Hence, differences in communication styles can have an impact on whether the intent of our message and the impact it has on the receiver of that message. Differences in communication styles may in some cases hinder communication and lead to misunderstandings.
- There is no one right or universal communication style – as each of them have their strengths and possible challenges. True or false?
- Reflect on the importance and impact of differences in communication styles on individuals and on teams.

Exercise C

Cross-cultural sensitivity as a goal?

This exercise explores Milton J. Bennett model on cultural sensitivity. The framework describes the different ways in which people can react to cultural differences. The goal of this task is to show the link between knowledge of cultures and the attitude.

Exercise

1. Present and discuss with the group the model on cultural sensitivity by Milton J. Bennett briefly described below. Where there is culture (or rather- cultures!) there are cultural differences. The developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (the DMIS) identifies the underlying cognitive orientations individuals use to understand cultural difference. Below you will see the simplified DMIS model by Milton J. Bennett.

Developmental model of intercultural sensitivity

by Milton J. Bennett

Six stages of intercultural sensitivity



The first three stages are ethnocentric as one's own culture is central to the perception of reality. Moving up the scale, an individual/group develops a more and more culturally relative point of view. The experience shifts to experiencing one's own culture as in the context of other cultures.

The stages provide a good framework for outlining a possible way to work with and improve the capacity for intercultural sensitivity and collaboration. Both leading to development of the Intercultural Communication Competency.

STAGE	CHARACTERISTICS	SKILLS NEEDED?
DENIAL	No recognition of cultural differences.	Recognize – choose to see differences!
DEFENSE	Recognition of some cultural differences, but negative perception of those	Tolerate – Become more tolerant of differences and see basic similarities among people of different cultures!
MINIMIZATION	Attempt to avoid stereotypes and even appreciate differences in language and culture, but own values are deemed universal and superior (unaware projection of own cultural values)	Learn more about our own culture and avoid projecting that culture onto other people's experience.
ACCEPTANCE	Able to shift perspective, while still maintaining one's commitments to values	Shift perspectives to understand that the same ordinary behaviour may have different meaning in different cultures.
ADAPTATION	Ability to evaluate other's behaviour from one's individual frame of reference and adapt behaviour to fit the norms of different culture.	Learn how to step into the other person's shoes – <i>Cognitive adaptation</i> and <i>behavioural adaptation</i> . Be non-judgmental and behave appropriately in other culture.
INTEGRATION	Ability to shift frame of reference and also deal with (resulting identity issues)	Become adept at evaluating any from multiple frames of reference.

2. Next, each group member is asked to write down **three stories** describing their cross cultural interactions. One of the three stories should be a positive memory, one a neutral one and the last one representing a bad memory. Also, please mark which level of Bennett model is appropriate for each of your stories.

STORY		DMIS Level
Positive memory		
Neutral memory		
Bad memory		

3. When completed make a poll within the group:

- which of the Bennett levels was most often quoted?
- which of the DMIS levels was the source of majority of bad memories?

4. Share the group stories according to good-neutral-bad memories.

Key takeaway points

- No one is a master fully aware of other cultures!
- RESPECTFUL CURIOSITY as an attitude in an intercultural context – give it a try!
- Be kind and expect kindness.

Points for discussion

- Where does knowledge of other cultures come from?
- How can we show cross-cultural sensitivity?
- What are three examples of desirable behaviours when we communicate in an intercultural context? On the contrary, what are three examples of multicultural DON'Ts?

Multicultural DOs	Multicultural DON'Ts

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EXERCISES

CONFLICT DIAGNOSIS AND MANAGEMENT



Methodology for Teachers

**Exercises for Student's
Individual Work**

**Exercises for Student's
Group Work**

CONFLICT DIAGNOSIS METHODOLOGY FOR TEACHERS

By Karin Sonnleitner and Verena Gschweitl

Introduction

Conflict diagnosis is an important topic for everyone. Whenever people meet (may it be at the workplace, at university, within families, with friends, etc.) there is the possibility of disputes to arise.

It is an asset to be able to analyze these conflicts in order to subsequently deescalate and solve them. Especially people working in leading or counseling positions (e.g. employees of human resources departments, social workers, lawyers) find themselves often confronted with different conflict situations. In order to react adequately and/or give good advice it is necessary to understand the dynamics behind the problem. Otherwise the dispute may not be solved at all, personal or business relationships may be damaged and/or the parties may find themselves unsatisfied with the outcome. Diagnosing conflicts is therefore a great support in making smart decisions when solving disputes.

Need for the conflict diagnosis skills

A European-wide survey among 340 students with different study backgrounds shows the importance of the topic. More than half of the students (54%) answered that they do not think that their university pays sufficient attention to the development of soft skills of the students. The soft skill “conflict management” was chosen by 13% of the students as a skill they would like to develop. This seems comprehensible, since unsolved conflicts in organizations lead, inter alia, to a loss of productivity and higher sickness rates, which ultimately results in high conflict costs and therefore people with the skill to diagnose and manage conflicts are very popular and in demand on the labor market.

Main goals and learning outcomes

The main goal when teaching students conflict diagnosis is to enable them to analyze conflict situations from various angles. They can identify the current circumstances of the conflict, which type of conflict they are dealing with, what level of escalation it has reached and which procedure of dispute resolution would possibly be most appropriate to achieve a satisfying outcome for the parties involved.

Guidelines for teachers – how to use exercises in teaching process

In the following sections we offer 2 exercises for individual work and 2 exercises for group work. Exercises for individual work are marked with numbers (Exercise 1, Exercise 2). Exercises for group work are marked with letters (A and B). Below you will find a short explanation how to use those exercises.

Exercise 1 **The War of Roses**

This exercise will help students to understand different levels of conflict escalation according to the theory of Glasl.

This exercise is based on the movie “War of Roses” from 1989 and is an (exaggerated) example of how a conflict might escalate. Suggest your students to watch this movie.

In order to complete the exercise students must read about the different levels of conflict escalation according to Glasl explained in Chapter 6 of this book.

First, students are asked to put the different levels of conflict escalation into the right order. In the second task students are asked to identify at which level of escalation the conflict is in each of the given situations.

Correct answers for the task “Martial dispute”

The situations were given in the following order: Level 2, 5, 7, 9, 1, 3, 8, 6, 4.

Suggestions for discussions

Effective conflict diagnosis includes:

- Identifying the circumstances of the case (what causes the conflict, who is part of the conflict, how are their roles defined, what are the relations between them, what are their interests and needs in solving the dispute etc.);
- Identifying the type of conflict (inter- or intrapersonal, structural, distributional etc.);
- Identifying the current stage of the conflict (level of escalation, are the parties willing to cooperate etc.).

If conflicts are not diagnosed right (or not at all) before taking action various problems might occur:

- The conflict might not be solved at all, because the real cause of the dispute was not found;
- The false dispute resolution method or strategy might be chosen if the level of conflict escalation is not diagnosed;
- One or more of the conflicting parties may be very unsatisfied with the outcome of the chosen method/strategy, since their needs and interests in solving the dispute were not identified right or not at all.

Exercise 2

Different ways to deal with conflicts

This exercise will help students to understand different conflict resolution behaviours according to Schwarz.

In order to complete the exercise students must read about the different conflict resolution behaviours according to Schwarz explained in Chapter 6 of this book.

Students must read the dialogue examples and try to figure out what conflict resolution behaviour should be used in each situation.

Correct answers of the exercise: 1. Escape, 2. Destruction, 3. Subordination, 4. Delegation, 5. Compromise, 6. Consensus

Suggestions for discussions

You can initiate a discussion about common mistakes in conflict diagnosis. Give students real life examples.

A common mistake that is made when conflicts within organizations occur is the wrong analysis of the conflict cause, respectively conflict type.

For example, when co-workers are having a dispute it might often seem like a personal conflict between them, while the real cause of the problem lies within the structure of the organization. It could be that the roles of the employees are organized in a way that they inevitably constrain each other when fulfilling their tasks. Trying to find a consensus on a personal level without working on the structural problem will not work.

Another mistake would be to refer parties to the court, although the level of escalation of their dispute would allow them still to find a solution with the help of e.g. mediation. In practice, many people do not know about the alternatives when (legal) problems arise and therefore immediately think about court proceedings that should actually be ultima ratio.

Exercise A

Difficult divorce I – conflict analysis

Exercise B

Difficult divorce II – conflict analysis

Those are group exercises which require an advance reading for better understanding. Students must read the Chapter 6 of this book. Please give an introduction to the students about effective conflict diagnosis:

- Identifying the circumstances of the case;
- Identifying the type of conflict (inter- or intrapersonal, structural, distributional etc.);
- Identifying the current stage of the conflict (level of escalation, are the parties willing to cooperate etc.).

In the given situation students in groups by 2 will learn to paraphrase the given situation and later they will analyze each given case.

CONFLICT DIAGNOSIS EXERCISES FOR STUDENTS' INDIVIDUAL WORK

By Karin Sonnleitner and Verena Gschweitl

Please see below 2 exercises for individual work:

1. The War of Roses;
2. Different ways to deal with conflicts

Exercise 1 **The War of Roses**

This exercise is based on the movie “War of Roses” from 1989 and is an (exaggerated) example of how a conflict might escalate. We suggest to watch this movie before completing the exercise.

In order to complete the exercise you must read about the different levels of conflict escalation according to Glasl explained in Chapter 6 of this book.

Exercise

Please explore one more time the different levels of conflict escalation according to Glasl.

1. Bring the different levels of conflict escalation into the right order.

Debate – Level __
Action not words – Level __
Threat strategies – Level __
Tension – Level __
Limited destruction – Level __
Loss of face – Level __
Coalitions – Level __
Together into the abyss – Level __
Disintegration – Level __

2. Identify at which level of escalation the conflict is in each of the given situations of the marital dispute.

Level __

The Roses buy a house, which Barbara chooses and Oliver pays for. Over the next few years, Barbara decorates the house meticulously. Once there is nothing left to decorate in the house, she decides to set up a catering company. Oliver agrees but places an assistant at her disposal despite Barbara's repudiation. In the meantime, Oliver moved up the career ladder and is a top lawyer. He promises to look through Barbara's company contracts but instead, he swats a fly with them. In turn, she seeks revenge by being noisy when he makes important phone calls. In bed, she fights off his advances with martial arts techniques.

Level __

A fight in front of the children and the housekeeper escalates and Oliver spreads intimate details about his wife on the street. The lighting of the Christmas tree flickers and the couple accuse each other of their respective inability to look after technical issues. At night, an electrical short circuit sets the Christmas tree on fire, the house and the family can be saved at the very last minute.

Level __

Oliver tells Barbara about the accident with the cat. As a result, Barbara locks him in the sauna. Just before he threatens to suffocate, she lets him out but utters further threats.

Level __

In front of Barbara's guests, the couple stages a battle. As Oliver refuses to exit his vintage car, Barbara drives over his car and all its occupants. Oliver enters the house armed with an iron bar. The situation escalates and turns into a fight to the death. During the fight, Barbara falls over the handrail on the second floor and lands on the chandelier. Oliver jumps on top of her and the chandelier plummets. The housekeeper and the sent for lawyer find both of them dead.

Level __

Three years after the birth of their youngest child, the Roses' marriage is plunged into a crisis. Oliver starts a promising career as lawyer and spends

less time with his family. The married couple fights over trivialities such as the placing of the Christmas star. A serious incident occurs during a dinner with Oliver's superiors where he stifles his wife's halting story and continues to tell the story instead of her. At night he apologises for his behaviour saying: "I hope they didn't notice what a jerk I am."

Level __

Oliver collapses in the middle of a work meeting and is taken to hospital in suspicion of a heart attack. Barbara does not visit him in hospital. When his work colleague takes him home, Barbara demands a divorce. She ignores the love letter Oliver wrote in his hospital bed and says: "I couldn't read your handwriting." Oliver moves out.

Level __

Oliver saws off the heels of Barbara's much-loved high heels. Barbara visits Oliver's lawyer and wants to take advantage of his weakness for attractive women. He declines her offers and says: "If you want this to end, all of us have to sit down and compromise." Oliver shows up drunk at a reception Barbara organised for her clients and causes a scandal by his obscene entrance. Consequently, Barbara drives her Jeep against her husband's vintage car.

Level __

Barbara and Oliver divide the house into differently coloured zones, which may not be entered by the opposite party. Oliver's lawyer issues the following warning: "There are other houses, too, and other women. Nobody will win this case; it is only about HOW MUCH you will lose." Oliver disagrees: "I have more square metres." After a fight he hits Barbara's cat by accident.

Level __

Barbara and Oliver meet at Barbara's lawyer's office, Oliver's former partner, who quotes from Oliver's love letter: "Everything I have I owe to you", a statement he wants to use to prove that Barbara is entitled to the house. Oliver feels betrayed and announces an unconditional fight over the house. The lawyer calms Barbara down: "My dear, once all this is over, this will be one of your happiest days." Oliver discusses counter-strategies with his own lawyer and moves back into the embattled house.

You can find the correct answers in the previous chapter.

3. Think about 1–2 aspects you have learned from this exercise.

Different levels of conflict by Glasl



Exercise 2

Different ways to deal with conflicts

This exercise will help you to understand the different conflict resolution behaviours according to Schwarz.

In order to complete the exercise you must read about the different conflict resolution behaviours explained in Chapter 6 of this book.

Exercise

Read through the examples and try to figure out what conflict resolution behaviour is shown (according to Schwarz: delegation, escape, consensus, destruction, compromise, subordination).

In all examples, A and B live together in a shared apartment.

Example 1

A: "You never put your dishes away! I can't cook anymore because the whole sink is full! Whenever I come home from my night shift, I have to clean up the kitchen first!"

B: "That's not true, I always put my dishes away!" – and goes into his room.

Example 2

A: "I am the main tenant and I want you to move out. It just can't go on like this!"

B: bursts into tears and packs his bags.

Example 3

A: "It just can't go on like this! You never put your dishes away! If that doesn't change immediately, you'll move out tomorrow! You know that I am the main tenant here!"

B: "You're so mean, but then I'll just do it ..."

Example 4

A + B: argue again about the dishes that have not been cleared away, the dispute escalates, landlady C is called in.

C: "The kitchen always needs to be tidied up! I don't want to see leftovers lying around or bugs crawling around here! If you don't pull yourself together, you'll both have to move out!"

Example 5

A: "How about if we agree that the sink is always free ..."

B: "... and I can leave the dishes on the sideboard. Fits!"

A: "Ok, all right!"

Example 6

B: "What if I cook for us every day and you clean up afterwards?"

A: "Yes, you cook so well, that's a good idea! Let's try it!"

You can find the correct answers in the previous chapter.

Specific actions to be taken to increase the ability to diagnose conflicts:

- Practice active listening (summarizing, paraphrasing and questioning);
- Learn about the different types of conflicts;
- Learn about the different dispute resolution methods (e.g. mediation, arbitration, conciliation, court proceedings);
- Learn about the different models to analyze conflicts (e.g. Glasl, Schwarz);
- Study real case examples;
- Practice with mock cases.

CONFLICT DIAGNOSIS EXERCISES FOR STUDENTS' GROUP WORK

By Karin Sonnleitner and Verena Gschweitl

Please see below 2 exercises for group work:

- A. Difficult divorce I – conflict analysis
- B. Difficult divorce II – conflict analysis

Exercise A

Difficult divorce I – conflict analysis

First, please paraphrase the following statement in pairs. It is an excerpt from a husband's account of his divorce. Afterwards, discuss together in a group of 4–6 people what you think the circumstances of the conflict are, the topics to work on, the type of conflict, the level of escalation of the conflict. Furthermore, think about what might be the needs of the husband in this situation and what could be the needs of his (ex-)wife. What needs and interests might be the same? What needs and interests are different, maybe even opposing?

“... I don't understand why everything was so downplayed by the youth welfare office later. “That could happen sometimes.” Strangely, my wife could afford to make some mistakes, she didn't keep appointments at the youth welfare office or they believed her lies without checking. As a result, I have not seen our children for over four years, except in court. I have a suspicion that I want to be careful about. I have always tried to treat the children and my wife properly. Therefore I cannot understand that according to the youth welfare office, the well-being of my children is guaranteed if I have not been in contact with them for more than four years. From the start, people were using time against me to alienate the children.”

Exercise B
Difficult divorce II - conflict analysis

First, please paraphrase the following statement in pairs. It is an excerpt from a husband's account of his divorce. Afterwards, discuss together in a group of 4–6 people what you think the circumstances of the conflict are, the topics to work on, the type of conflict, the level of escalation of the conflict. Furthermore, think about what might be the needs of the husband in this situation and what could be the needs of his (ex-)wife. What needs and interests might be the same? What needs and interests are different, maybe even opposing?

“... I had always behaved correctly towards my wife in the year of the separation and tried to talk about it again in a proper conversation without arguing with her. She just said that I hadn't done anything wrong. She even said that it's not me. However, she couldn't tell me exactly what led her to this step (separation). At first she wanted to try again. But then she was manipulated by Mr. X (my rival) again. He was obsessed with destroying our marriage and acted out of selfishness. Every means was right for him“.

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CONFLICT MANAGEMENT METHODOLOGY FOR TEACHERS

By Daiva Račelytė and Agnė Tvaronavičienė

Introduction

It is evident that no society can exist without conflicts between individuals and organizations. Conflicts are an inevitable part of social interaction and no one is able to be free from it. However, conflicts not obligatory lead us to the negative consequences. On the contrary, conflicts can educate, encourage to explore the interests of the parties and strive to improve their relationships through mutually satisfying outcomes whenever possible.

We offer a set of simple and easy to follow exercises designed to obtain the basic knowledge and skills of conflict management. The main aim is to show variety of ways how we can engage in constructive conflict management and reach the positive outcomes of the conflicts. As well it focuses on teachers' perspective and strives to disclose the teachers' role in helping students to develop their knowledge and skills in conflict management.

Need for conflict management skills

The development of conflict management skills is necessary for the future professionals. As the other soft skills, conflict management helps students to be ready for the successful social interaction in organizations. Moreover, such skills will help them in their personal life, as conflicts lead us in all fields of social interaction.

Destructive conflicts in professional and personal activities have negative influence on people, worsens their emotional state of mind, causes tension and stress. Conflict management is one of the most important skills, which each individual should develop in order to create a positive basis for further achievements. In organizations such a soft skill as conflict management is always valuable. On contrary lack of conflict management skills often lead to failures and difficulties in pursuing a professional career as conflicting people are often avoided, eliminated, feel misunderstood, and not encouraged.

Conflict management skills should be developed from the early childhood in family, later improved in schools and universities. Naturally, every individual, who is studying in university, already has personal approach towards conflict situations and its own level of conflict intelligence. Thus contemporary labour market requires more than self-education based knowledge and skills. Following a generally recognized mission of universities to develop all covering education it is obvious that students should have a guided access to the scientifically based sources of conflict management.

Knowledge, attitudes and skills for managing conflicts may be developed in different ways. These exercises are designed to guide teachers and to facilitate the process of education. Still, it is really useful to adapt the suggested tasks and exercises with the content of the topics connected to the subjects of the students, which they are studying according to their syllabus. In this way, conflict management skills may be developed together with a professional knowledge in different fields (for example, particular aspects of conflicts are always close to the subjects of legal studies, social work, communication, political sciences and etc.).

Main goals and learning outcomes

The main goal of conflict management topic is to develop conflict intelligence. According to Coleman (2018, 14), *conflict intelligence is the set of competences and skills used to manage different types of normative conflicts in diverse or changing situations effectively and constructively.*

The main learning outcomes may be connected with the acquiring of the core competences of conflict intelligence (Coleman, 2018):

- **Self-knowledge:** Knowing and managing yourself in conflict. This includes awareness of cognitive, motivational, moral and action orientations to conflict situations that guide one's conflict behaviours and responses.
- **Constructive conflict resolution:** understanding the constructive and destructive potential of conflict and developing the knowledge, attitudes and skills for constructive resolution.
- **Conflict optimality:** The capacity to navigate between different or competing motives, and emotions, and combine different approaches to conflict to achieve desired outcomes.
- **Conflict adaptivity:** the capacity to employ distinct strategies in different types of conflict situations in a manner that achieves goals and is fitting with demands of the situation.

Guidelines for teachers – how to use exercises in teaching process

In following sections we offer 5 exercises for individual work and 4 exercises for the group work. Exercises for individual work are marked with numbers (Exercise 1, Exercise 2, Exercise 3, Exercise 4 and Exercise 5). Exercises for group work are marked with letters (A, B, C and D). Below you will find short explanation how to use those exercises.

Attention! It should be taken into account that emotionally safe environment and interpersonal trust is especially important for sharing personal experiences in study group. For some students may be too painful and difficult to disclose certain conflicts situations. Teachers should respect different approaches and be not demanding and strict on the active involvement of all students to this kind of discussions. As well such a task may be done in written form and provided only for the teacher.

Exercise 1

Self-reflection and discussion on the personal experiences of students in conflict situations

This exercise can help to enhance self-awareness of the students in the field of conflict management. It does not require any specific background knowledge.

Students should be asked to answer provided questions individually. After it is done, teacher could ask students to share their experience and insights about their current conflict management skills.

The exercise can take up to 60 minutes.

Exercise 2

Which conflict style the parties to the below described conflict have chosen?

This exercise requires presenting some theoretical material before student will be able to do it. Teachers should get acquainted well with materials presented in introduction. Teacher is expected to explain how conflict style differences cause or escalate interpersonal conflict and recognize their impact on conflict.

Teachers should present for the student situation and ask them to identify the conflict management styles, which were used by the people in this situations.

The exercise can take up to 30 minutes.

Exercise 3 **Supervisor conflict-related roles quiz**

This exercise requires presenting some theoretical material before student will be able to do it. Teachers should get acquainted well with materials presented below. Teacher is expected to explain the main supervisor conflict related roles and their differences.

Teacher should provide students with stories and ask to choose the most appropriate supervisor role(s) for each situation.

The exercise can take up to 30 minutes.

Exercise 4 **Using authority and creativity in conflict management**

Teacher should briefly explain students about the meaning of authority and creativity in conflict management.

Teacher should ask students to remember two situations. In first of them, they should be using a creative solution to resolve a conflict. In second – simply used any kind of power.

The exercise can take up to 30 minutes.

Exercise 5 **Self-score conflict management style test**

Students should be asked to complete a test for self-scoring their conflict management style.

The exercise can take up to 30 minutes.

Exercise A **My criticism log**

Wilmott and Hocker (2011) suggested a great task for a group work, helping to identify the main issues of social interaction, which drives individual towards conflicts. This task consists of two parts: individual preparation and small groups' discussions.

Firstly, students are asked to keep track of all their negative thoughts they have about people in their world over a few days.

Secondly, students are invited to discuss with the group of 3–4 people their main identity “themes” and how they predict with whom you will have conflict or struggles.

The exercise can take up to 60 minutes depending on the group size.

Exercise B

Hot buttons and constructive responses to conflict

This activity will help participants to be aware of some of their emotional hot buttons, and to find more constructive ways to deal with conflict more effectively.

Firstly, students are asked to write down and later present to the group possible emotional hot buttons.

Secondly, in groups 4–7, every student shares identified emotional hot buttons.

Thirdly, students discuss questions related to their personal reactions to the hot buttons and possibilities to control it.

The exercise can take up to 60 minutes depending on the group size.

Exercise C

Interview

This exercise may serve well for showing the importance of conflict management skills during the job interview, and discussing conflict management strategies used in organizational settings.

Students should be asked in small groups to develop a list of interview questions that might be used for potential new hires.

In addition to designing appropriate interview questions, discuss what other sources of information will provide clues as to how this person deals with problem solving and teamwork?

Teacher may present some additional question for the further discussion. Although the conflict management strategies usually are used as an individual-level tool, we often see analogous behaviours within teams and even entire organizations.

- Which style best describes the unit in which you study? Why?
- Which style best describes your organization as a whole?
- How does your individual style fit in with those in your study environment?

The exercise can take up to 60 minutes depending on the group size.

Exercise D **The doggie discontent**

This activity will help students to identify conflict management styles and conflict related roles.

The exercise consists of a story, written by McCorkle and Reese (2018, p. 130).

Students should be asked to analyse this case and try to identify used conflict management styles, discuss dynamics and efficiency of different conflict management styles.

In addition, it is highly recommended to simulate the situation by asking students to choose different roles and try to solve conflict in role play using different ways. At the end a group discussion should be organized.

The exercise can take up to 60 minutes depending on the group size.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT EXERCISES FOR STUDENTS' INDIVIDUAL WORK

By Daiva Račelytė and Agnė Tvaronavičienė

Please see below 5 exercises for individual work:

1. Self-reflection and discussion on the personal experiences of students in conflict situations
2. Which conflict style the parties to the below described conflict have chosen?
3. Supervisor conflict-related roles quiz
4. Using authority and creativity in conflict management
5. Self-score conflict management style test

These exercises will help you to improve your conflict management skills.

Exercise 1

Self-reflection and discussion on the personal experiences of students in conflict situations

Introduction

The first step in a process of developing personal conflict intelligence is raising the self-knowledge. Student should be encouraged to analyse his or her own approaches towards conflict situations and be guided in raising his or her awareness of cognitive, motivational, moral and action orientations to conflict situations that affects his or her conflict behaviour and responses. Moreover, conflict intelligence requires adequate self-regulation in conflict, or the ability to inhibit impulsive, automatic, or “hot” emotional responses to conflict. Such kind of managed responses are possible to gain only knowing yourself and your common natural reaction to the conflicts in advance.

Exercise

Student is invited for the reflection based on streaming to answer these questions (based on Wilmott, Hocker, 2011):

1. Think – what is your usual response to conflicts?

- Do you generally like to get everything out in the open, even if such an effort creates tension and strong feelings?
 - Or do you usually seek peace, harmony, and reduction of strong emotions? How would you describe yourself?
2. What emotions are most common for you when you experience conflict?
- Think of three areas of conflict: family, romantic, and studies (or work). In each area, list your most common emotions.
 - If there doesn't seem to be a set of common emotions, think of one conflict as an example in each area. How did/do you feel? Be sure to use words of feeling, not judgment or description.
 - Think of the most disturbing conflict you have experienced in the past half-year or so. What was your emotional response to this conflict?
3. Think about influences.
- List the 10 most important influences on your personal response to conflict, in order of importance.
4. What influence, if any, does violence have on your conflict responses?
- You may answer this question in your own notebook, or with a small group. What experiences have you had with violence, whether verbal, physical, or sexual?
 - Of course, you may keep your privacy in this discussion. The important issue is to begin to think about the influence of violence on your life. If you did not experience violence directly, what experiences that others had have influenced you?

Exercise 2

Which conflict style the parties to the below described conflict have chosen?

Introduction

Conflict styles are patterned responses, or clusters of behaviour, that people use in conflict (Wilmot & Hocker, 2011). Style preferences develop over person's lifetime based on a cumulative blend of genetics, life experiences, family background, and personal beliefs and values. Developing a repertoire of diverse styles and tactics may require some stretching of one's comfort zone. However, having expanded choice of styles person can use will enhance his/her chances for effective conflict management.

McCorkle and Reese (2018, p. 121) provided a really helpful example of the five conflict styles in action. They presented a short story:

Julia and Layla are assigned as roommates their freshman year. From

different backgrounds, they have little in common. Soon their differences begin to surface, and conflict is inevitable. Julia asks if she can borrow a scarf from Layla, who agrees. Soon Julia is borrowing shirts, coats, and whatever else she wants without asking.

After it McCorkle and Reese (2018) provided explanations of every style and it's specific:

- If Layla is an **avoider**, she will suffer silently, think bad thoughts about Julia, and probably complain to friends. If Julia asks what is wrong, Layla will say she has to go study in the library and leave the room.
- If Layla is an **accommodator**, she will say she doesn't mind that Julia borrows things. If Layla has a competitive style, she will confront Julia and demand that all her clothes be washed and never borrowed again.
- If Layla uses a **compromiser** style, she will raise the issue of borrowing clothes with Julia. Then some middle ground will be sought. For example, the clothes can be borrowed if Julia asks every time in advance and washes and irons the clothes when returning them.
- If Layla is a **collaborator**, she will ask Julia to sit down with her to discuss the roommate situation. She will frame the issue in a comprehensive way, asking what it means to be roommates and discussing each of their expectations. At some point, borrowing clothes will be discussed as part of the bigger picture.

Conflict style explains how different people can see the same thing in opposite ways, and choose different ways of responding to conflict. Actually, we can't change somebody else's basic style. Still, we can recognize it and understand that person better. Styles can mesh together if we are aware of our strengths and weaknesses. Relationships are stronger if people recognize style differences, it brings when to mutual understanding quicker. Strong teams lean into each other's strengths and prop up each other's weaknesses. The most important thing, that with time and effort, new styles can be learned.

Which conflict style is most effective?

It is important to be familiar with the results of conflict style studies and to know when these strategies are the most effective. General suggestions of Thomas and Kilmann (2010), based on empirical study:

Accommodating is especially useful and effective:

- When person realizes that he/she is wrong – to allow a better solution to be considered, to learn from others, and to show that one is reasonable.
- When issue is much more important to other person – to satisfy the needs of others and as goodwill gesture to maintain a cooperative relationship.

- When person wants to build up social credits for later issues that are important to him/her.
- When preserving harmony and avoiding disruption are especially important.
- When person want to help others to develop by allowing them to experiment and learn from their mistakes.

Competing is useful and effective:

- When quick, decisive action is vital.
- On important issues when unpopular courses of action need implementing – for example, enforcing unpopular rules, discipline.
- On issues vital to person welfare and when he/she is sure in being right.
- When person needs to protect himself/herself from people who take advantage on non-competitive behaviour.

Compromising is useful and effective:

- When goals are moderately important but not worth the effort or the potential disruption in more assertive strategies.
- When two opponents with equal power are strongly committed to mutually exclusive goals.
- When person wants to achieve a temporary settlement of a complex issue.
- When person needs to arrive at an expedient solution under time pressure.
- As a backup strategy when collaboration or competition fails.

Avoiding is useful and effective:

- When an issue is unimportant or when other, more important issues are pressing.
- When person perceives no chance of satisfying his/her concerns-when he/she has low power or he/she is frustrated by something that would be very difficult to change.
- When the potential costs of confronting a conflict outweigh the benefits of its resolution.
- When person needs to let people cool down – to reduce tensions to a productive level and to regain perspective and composure.
- When gathering more information outweighs the advantages of an immediate decision.
- When others can resolve the issue more effectively.
- When the issue seems tangential or symptomatic of another, more basic issue.

Collaborating is useful and effective:

- When person needs to find an integrative solution and the concerns of both parties are too important to be compromised.
- When person's objective is to learn and person wishes to test his/her assumptions and understand others' views.
- When person wants to merge insights from people with different perspectives on a problem.
- When person wants to gain commitment by incorporating others' concerns into a consensual decision.
- When person needs to work through hard feelings that have been interfering with a interpersonal relationship.

Exercise

For getting acquainted with different conflicts styles it is advised to discuss a specific case with several different models of behaviour.

Beatty and Barker Scott (2004) presented such case for conflict styles studies:

It's Friday afternoon at 3:15, and your team meeting was supposed to start at 3:00. Everyone is present, except for Brenda, who is late again. The team has agreed that being on time for meetings is an important norm. At 3:25 p.m., she rushes in, apologizing for her tardiness and explaining that the computer ate her document.

1. Student should answer, which of the following are members most likely to do?

- Ignore the problem and continue discussion.
- Acknowledge the problem but do nothing to correct the situation.
- Acknowledge the problem and attempt to solve it.
- Acknowledge the problem, solve it, and discuss and agree on a procedure for dealing with similar problems in the future.

2. According to the answers it is easy to explain what style was selected by the concrete individual. See explanation of this case below this task.

Beatty and Barker Scott (2004) suggest such description of well-known conflict styles for the situation in Exercise 9 (see below):

- *Avoiding.* Members choose not to confront or be involved. In the previous case, members would choose to ignore Brenda's tardiness, even though they are bothered by it.
- *Accommodating.* Members adapt or agree to satisfy the needs of others above their own needs. Here, members might choose to sympathize

with Brenda and not raise the issue. As a result, Brenda will probably be late for the next meeting as well.

- *Competing*. Members choose to satisfy their own needs by asserting, controlling, or resisting. Here, members would likely confront Brenda by telling her in no uncertain terms that her tardiness is unacceptable and dictate their expectations for the future: Be on time, or else.
- *Collaborating*. Members attempt to create mutually satisfying solutions through win-win strategies. Here, members would likely acknowledge the problem, explore the causes, and work with Brenda to create a protocol that will meet the team's needs and Brenda's as well.

Exercise 3

Supervisor conflict-related roles quiz

Introduction

One of possible ways to explore how people accept conflict is to consider the roles that they most ready to take on during conflict. The roles that people as individuals are ordinarily most comfortable with are related to their professional or formal roles they may choose to assume as conflict interveners, but these formal roles are not identical to the roles that conflict may demand of them, which they usually assume formally. Although people play many de facto roles in conflict, the following six are key roles in the structure of most conflicts (Mayer, 2012):

- *Advocate (negotiator)*: Arguing or pushing for a particular outcome or set of needs.
- *Decision maker (arbitrator)*: deciding among competing positions or claims.
- *Facilitator (mediator)*: helping others communicate and negotiate.
- *Conciliator (empathizer)*: tuning into and addressing the emotional elements of a conflict.
- *Information provider (expert)*: providing information or opinions to decision makers or negotiators.
- *Observer (witness, audience)*: watching, reporting, and reacting to others in conflict.

Each role can be played in many different ways, and each can influence conflict process, conflict escalation or de-escalation. Elements of several roles are often present in how people participate in any given conflict. Often disputants enter a conflict primarily in one role but then change roles, sometimes repeatedly and rapidly. Conflict can easily escalate when people present themselves as playing one role (for example, facilitator or information provider) but actually take on a different role (decision maker), and such misapprehension can be done consciously or can be mistakenly perceived by role player. Maintaining clarity about the role person is playing and how it might be altered as circumstances change is a significant challenge and everybody face when participates in conflicts as disputants or interveners (Mayer, 2012). Ability to be aware and choose appropriate role is one of important skills for person who is competent in conflict management.

Table 1. Supervisor conflict - related roles
(based on Chavez Rudolph, 2006, pp. 140–141)

CONFLICT RELATED ROLES	How this role may be defined?	(This is someone who...)	For what purpose is this role intended? (Intended Outcome)
Rule Enforcer	One who knows and informs others about applicable rules, policies, procedures, laws, etc. and gives people clear expectations about how to comply with them.	A violation or potential violation is seen and a duty is felt to prevent or correct violations to the extent possible.	To inform in an effort to gain compliance with applicable rules, policies, procedures, laws, etc. and/or to prevent or correct violations. (Note: This may require the administration of consequences.)
Mediator	Neutral party who assists others in the resolution of their conflicts by providing a structured process to help them reach agreements.	Chair/Manager does not have a vested interest in the outcome other than to see agreements reached between conflicting parties. This could be chosen because the Chair/Manager wants the process by which disputing parties interact to be effective (i.e., manageable, productive, respectful).	To help others reach agreements to resolve their disputes The best decision will come from the disputing parties making the decision themselves.
Arbitrator	Decision-maker who determines how a conflict will be resolved	Chair/Manager has delegated decision making authority and/or content area knowledge and utilizes authority to resolve a conflict, especially when time is limited.	To make a decision to resolve a conflict

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Facilitator	Chair/Manager helps groups identify issues and make decisions by providing a process for discussion.	A group needs assistance in identifying issues and making decisions but doesn't need the kind of tightly controlled process provided by mediation.	To allow group members to have input and to help a group make decisions about how they will be resolved. Participation and buy-in are important.
Negotiator	Chair/Manager by helping all parties (including her/himself) to identify interests and options to achieve a "win-win" outcome.	Chair/Manager cares about both the content and the relationship(s) involved in the dispute.	To gain the cooperation of others to resolve disputes in a mutually satisfactory manner
Coach	Chair/Manager educates or advises disputing parties about options and strategies for negotiating effectively.	The Chair/Manager sees the need for a disputing party to be more effective in negotiating with others or when the disputing party wants to be more effective in negotiating with others.	To assist and advise a disputing party to negotiate more effectively when conflicts arise.
Referral Agent	Chair/Manager listens to disputing party and then with the disputing party determines the appropriate individual, department, agency, etc. most able to assist with his/her particular need.	Chair/Manager does not have expertise in the content area and/or additional information is needed by the disputing party to resolve his/her conflict. This role may be especially called for when a disputing party needs emotional support and a counsellor is called for – which in regards to conflict, in most cases, is not an appropriate role for Chair/Manager.	Assist the disputing party to obtain the needed services necessary to resolve the conflict or to obtain support while working through the conflict.
Investigator	Chair/Director makes inquiries, conducts research, etc. in order to obtain additional information necessary to resolve a conflict.	Chair/Manager or disputing parties require additional information, or additional information would be helpful, in order to resolve a conflict.	Obtain additional information. (Note: Often times the Chair/Manager will serve in an investigator role and then move into one of the other roles listed above.)
Shuttle diplomat	Serves as a "go between" in an attempt to resolve conflicts between two parties.	Parties in conflict do not wish to occupy the same physical space simultaneously or you determine that for safety reasons it is best for the two parties not to occupy the same physical space simultaneously.	To help others reach agreements to resolve their disputes

Exercise

Students should be provided with an 8 stories and asked to choose the most appropriate supervisor role(s) for each situation. Every decision should be explained and grounded. This task is based on materials published by Chavez Rudolph (pp. 142–143)

Choices:

- Enforcer
- Mediator
- Arbitrator
- Facilitator
- Negotiator
- Coach
- Referral agent
- Investigator

Situations

1. Celina approaches you to say she and Mikolaj keep getting locked in disputes over how to divide their workload. They want you to decide it for them. You trust both of them and want them to decide this on their own. You are willing to help them decide but you do not want to decide for them.

2. Emma and Lucas work in the same office. Emma came to see you and said, “Lucas isn’t listening to me and, frankly, I’ve been offended several times at how he has been talking to me. I stood right up to him but things between us are still tense. I think we need someone to help us communicate better.” Lucas was a close friend of yours for many years before you became his (and Emma’s) supervisor. Although you have tried to keep some distance between you since becoming his supervisor, everyone in your department – including Emma – is aware of your long friendship with Lucas.

3. You supervise a department which includes Aivars and Roberts, and seven others. Roberts came in to see you to say that Aivars just called him a very offensive name. He also said three of your other supervisees were present and heard him say it.

4. The staff of another department (not your own) is trying to determine how to best spend 10 000 Euro before the June 30 deadline (or they will lose the money). You have been approached by the Director of that department (who cannot be at the meeting where it will be discussed due to her vacation) and asked to help them decide. She says whatever the group decides is fine with her but everyone has his or her own ideas about how to spend the money

and, although she doesn't want to lose the money, she is tired of hearing all the lobbying for various purchases. She tells you privately that she is glad she won't be there.

5. You supervise both Lena and Daniela, who work side-by-side in computer related jobs. Lena is shy and tells you privately that, although it really irritates her, she has not yet told Daniela how much she dislikes Daniela listening to the radio in the office. "It's not that it's too loud," Lena said. "I just can't stand that elevator music she listens to. It puts me to sleep!" You do not object to these employees listening to the radio at work.

6. According to one of your supervisees, Julia, Nora (another of your staff members) gave confidential information about an upcoming organizational change to a member of another department who had no need to know that information. Nora was in the meeting where the change was discussed and where you clearly stated that this information needed to remain confidential until it was released by the Public Relations department. You decide to speak to Nora and she admits to having given confidential information.

7. Emilija and Daan have come in to talk to you. They cannot seem to agree about how to divide the work on an important project you assigned to them. It looks to you like both of them are both being stubborn. Your boss is expecting the results of this project by Friday. It is now Tuesday at 11:30 am. You estimate that if they don't start actually doing the work by this afternoon at the latest, they cannot get the work done.

8. You and Jonas have been discussing the staff meeting schedule for the next year. The most likely times for the meetings are early in the morning or late in the afternoon. Jonas has a strong preference for afternoon meetings and you have an equally strong one for morning meetings. Jonas has to take his kids to day care in the morning and would probably be late for most of the meetings. As his supervisor you could "pull rank" on him and simply set the meetings for mornings but you would like Jonas to be at the meetings. Also, he is so valuable to your operation, you don't want him to feel disregarded or unappreciated.

Exercise 4

Using authority and creativity in conflict management

Introduction

There are two major variables conflict competent individuals can use to distinguish among the types of conflict situations within their organizations: the organizational relationship of the participants and the degree to which the

person is involved in the conflict. In addition, they can use two basic tools in managing conflict: authority (direct power) and creativity.

The following guidelines should be helpful in deciding how to approach conflict:

- In conflict involving peers, superiors, or both, individuals should usually rely on creativity rather than on authority. Collaboration can be efficient strategy in such kind of conflicts.
- In conflict involving subordinates only, individuals may rely more on their own authority, use competing style, even though creativity and collaborative problem solving may still be the best way to manage conflict.

In conflict in which their level of authority is medium to low, individuals should avoid a high level of involvement (if they have such possibility), particularly if the situation involves their superiors.

Exercise

1. Student should think about a time when he or she used a creative solution to resolve a conflict. He or she should briefly describe the conflict and his or her solution.
2. The same should be done regarding a conflict when he or she simply used power.
3. Student should compare outcomes of previous conflicts and identify his/her own priorities (what is more acceptable for her/him, and in what cases). One of important questions is how to combine creativity and different sources of power in conflict management.

Exercise 5

Self-score conflict management style test

Student should think of two different contexts where they have conflicts or disagreements with someone in study, work, or live (A and B). Then, according to the following scale, he or she is requested to fill in his or hers scores for situations and person A, and situations and person B. For each statement student will have two scores.

1 - never 2 - seldom 3 - sometimes 4 - often 5 - always**Person A/Person B**

1. ___/___ I avoid open discussion of my differences with the other.
2. ___/___ I use my authority to make decision in my favour.
3. ___/___ I try to find middle course to resolve impasse.
4. ___/___ I accommodate the other's wishes.
5. ___/___ I try to integrate my ideas with the other's to come up with a decision jointly.
6. ___/___ I try to stay away from disagreement with the other.
7. ___/___ I use my influence to get my ideas accepted.
8. ___/___ I propose a middle ground for breaking deadlocks.
9. ___/___ I give in to the other's wishes.
10. ___/___ I try to work with the other to find solutions that satisfy both our expectations.
11. ___/___ I try to keep my disagreement to myself in order to avoid hard feelings.
12. ___/___ I generally pursue my side of an issue.
13. ___/___ I negotiate with the other to reach a compromise.
14. ___/___ I generally try to satisfy the other's needs.
15. ___/___ I try to investigate an issue to find a solution acceptable to us.
16. ___/___ I try to avoid unpleasant exchanges with the other.
17. ___/___ I use my power to win.
18. ___/___ I use "give and take" so that a compromise can be made.
19. ___/___ I try to satisfy the other's expectations.
20. ___/___ I try to bring all our concerns out in the open so that the issues can be resolved.

Scoring: Student should transfer their scores on the following statements to the appropriate cell in the table below. Then add the columns: to obtain a total for each category.

A/B	A/B	A/B	A/B	A/B
1. /	2. /	3. /	4. /	5. /
6. /	7. /	8. /	9. /	10. /
11. /	12. /	13. /	14. /	15. /
16. /	17. /	18. /	19. /	20. /
/	/	/	/	/
Totals:	Totals:	Totals:	Totals:	Totals:
Avoiding, withdrawal	Dominating, competition	Compromising	Obliging, accommodation	Integrating, collaboration

Results

Scores for the five conflict management strategies, across two different contexts should be visible. The column with the highest point totals shows conflict management strategy the most typical for the person.

Student is encouraged to compare their score totals for both A and B contexts. If results for the most typical conflict management strategy are relatively consistent in both contexts, it means that this conflict management strategy is his or her consistent conflict management style.

1+6+11+16	2+7+12+17	3+8+13+18	4+9+14+19	5+10+15+20
Avoidance	Competition	Compromise	Accommodation	Collaboration

Source: Corvete (2007), Adapted from M. H. Rahim and N. R. Magner (1995)

Another interesting tool to determine personal conflict style is suggested by Cornely and Tripathy (2004). To make more valid generalization about student's personal conflict style, teacher may encourage them to compare own results of both tests.

Source: Conerly, K., Tripathi, A. (2004). What is your conflict style? Understanding and dealing with your conflict style. *The Journal for Quality and Participation*, Summer, pp. 16–20

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT EXERCISES FOR STUDENTS' GROUP WORK

By Daiva Račelytė and Agnė Tvaronavičienė

Please see below 4 exercises for group work:

- A. My criticism log
- A. Hot buttons and constructive responses to conflict
- C. Interview
- D. The doggie discontent

These exercises will help you to improve your conflict management skills.

Exercise A **My criticism log**

Introduction

Every individual has specific attitudes towards others and their personal characteristics, behaviour and etc. When we talk about the issues, which may raise the conflicts and involve an individual person in it, it should be admitted that this is also personal. For example, one individual cannot stand the unfair behaviour and always involves in conflicts in regards of it. On contrary, other individual may feel really neutral in regard of such issues and being able to ignore the same unfair behaviour. Some people hate being late and do not respect other, who is always late. On contrary, some of them are neutral for it and do not sees the reason to conflict if their friends or colleagues are late. Knowing yourself well helps to identify the issues, which drives one angry and ready to struggle, helps in managing those situations.

Exercise

Wilmott and Hocker (2011) suggested a useful task for a group work, helping to identify the main issues of social interaction, which drives individual towards conflicts. This task consists of two parts: individual preparation and small groups' discussions.

1. Individual preparation for the task.

Please keep track of all the negative thoughts you have about people in your world over a few days. You don't need to track the type of relationship, who the other is, or anything else – just list the negative thoughts you have or comments you make. Some examples are “he is so rigid”, “I can't believe how stupid she is”, “he is so subservient to everyone”, and “she is absolutely selfish”.

2. Discussion in small groups.

In groups of 3–4 people, discuss with the group your main identity “themes” and how they predict with whom you will have conflict or struggles.

Please share your answers with your colleagues. Don't hesitate to read them aloud to others and don't worry about how it will sound (even though they are sometimes difficult to share).

Discuss with group members helping identify to every individual his/her two or three main “themes” for the criticisms of others. Most of people have two or three main identity dimensions that arise in criticisms of others. You should help to put these “themes” in non-judgmental or positive terms. For example, if person says such things about his colleagues such as “I doubt the wisdom of confiding in his insight,” “she didn't do very well in university”, “I just don't know how he became a professional given his inability to process all the details”, and “he isn't very bright”. These examples clearly identify the theme of “lack of intelligence”.

Group should discuss not only the important “themes” of every individual, but also as well how they predict with whom that individual will have conflict or how such criticisms can effect conflict management process.

Exercise B

Hot buttons and constructive responses to conflict

Introduction

This activity will help participants to be aware of some of their emotional hot buttons, and to find more constructive ways to deal with conflict more effectively.

Exercise

1. For the next five minutes, you will have a chance to tell the other members of your group how to push their emotional hot buttons. Please write down as many specific things as you can. For example:

How to push my buttons ...:

Rude tone; Know-it-alls; People who don't get to the point; "What you should do is ..."; "You never/always ..."; "Shut up!"

For group discussion, form small groups of four to seven see how many emotional hot buttons everybody can come up with.

Discussion Questions:

- What are your usual responses to hot buttons and what can you do about it?
- What are some ways we can learn to recognize and to control our hot buttons when interacting with others?
- What happens if we push someone else's buttons?

2. Please read descriptions of constructive responses to conflict (see text below) and compare your personal ways to deal with hot buttons.

3. Question for final discussion: How does this activity can help you deal with conflict more effectively?

Runde and Flanagan (2007) stress importance of appropriate actions for conflict competent leader behaviour. Our constructive responses to conflict can be analysed as active and passive constructive behaviours. You can analyse your personal behaviour or group conflict situations using these explanations (based on Davies, Kraus, Capobianco, 2004):

Active constructive responses to conflict

Active Constructive Behaviours are responses to conflict that involve doing or saying things that reduce conflict tension, deescalate conflict and improve the conflict situation.

Perspective taking has these components:

- Listening to the other conflict participant with the intent of understanding rather than debating;
- Summarizing the other conflict participant's point of view about the conflict to his or her satisfaction;
- Expressing empathy by identifying the other conflict participant's emotions and demonstrating understanding.

Creating solutions has these components:

- Identifying multiple potential solutions with other conflict participants (one potential solution is not enough!);

- Discussing the viability of potential solutions with other conflict participant;
- Agreeing on solutions to try.

Expressing emotions has these components:

- Identifying and disclosing emotions to other conflict participant;
- Open discussion about thoughts and feelings and their impact on the situation;
- Casting no blame.

Reaching out includes these components:

- Making the first move to resume communicating with a other conflict participant
- Attempting to repair emotional damage caused during the conflict
- Offering an apology or making amends when warranted

Passive constructive responses to conflict

Passive Constructive Behaviours often are characterized by withholding comments or refraining from some action and often require very little overt effort, but they usually result in conflict de-escalation and the reduction of mutual tensions and harmful effects of conflict and can maximize opportunities for creative or innovative solutions in trying circumstances.

Reflective thinking has these components:

- Taking the time to notice and analyse one's own and other parties' reactions during conflict;
- Reviewing the immediate and potential ongoing impact of the conflict;
- Thinking through alternatives for effectively responding to the conflict.

Delay responding has these components:

- Calling a time-out when one or both parties feel injured or downtrodden;
- Suggesting a temporary disengagement from the conflict conversation to interrupt the flow of a conflict escalation cycle;
- Creating a pause during the conflict when tensions are so high that the interaction becomes ineffective.

Adapting includes these components:

- An optimistic mind-set that views conflict as inevitable and resolvable
- Willingness for flexibility by entertaining alternatives for resolution
- Being alert for changes that may show new opportunities for engaging in resolution dialogue.

Exercise C **Interview**

Introduction

Conflict management skills of employees are necessary in every organization. In order to gain for knowledge how ability to identify the conflict style may be used in practice, please engage in the fulfilment of this task oriented towards job interview experience (this task is suggested by Raines (2012).

Exercise

1. In small groups, develop a list of interview questions that you will use for potential new hires. These questions should give you a sense of how this person responds to conflict and how well she or he will fit into your team's environment. Compare lists of different groups.
2. In addition to designing appropriate interview questions, discuss what other sources of information will provide clues as to how this person deals with problem solving and teamwork?
3. Questions for further discussion:
 - Although the conflict management strategies usually are used as an individual-level tool, we often see analogous behaviours within teams and even entire organizations. Which style best describes the unit in which you study? Why?
 - Which style best describes your organization as a whole?
 - How does your individual style fit in with those in your study environment?

Exercise D **The doggie discontent**

Introduction

This activity will help you to identify conflict management styles and conflict related roles.

Exercise

McCorkle and Reese (2018, p. 130) suggest such an exercise for developing skills to identify the most evident styles in concrete situation. The case is presented below:

Before Tess and Molly became roommates, Tess made sure that Molly would be fine with her lovable little dog Gretel, a five-year-old schnauzer. After about two months, Molly met Tess at the door, obviously upset:

Molly: "We need to talk. I hate living here! I can't stand your dog anymore. She jumps on me and the house smells like a dog. I like some animals, but I hate your dog!" Tess: (Shocked). "You knew about Gretel when we moved in. She's a schnauzer for God's sake – they love everybody. It's not like she's a pit bull and going to attack you. What did you expect?" Molly: "I was hoping the apartment wouldn't allow dogs." Tess: "I wouldn't have moved in with you then. I could never live without Gretel." Molly: "I think you should get rid of her." Tess: "That is not going to happen! You knew I had a dog. And I don't have the money to move. You got yourself into this situation, so you figure a way out of it."

Molly left the apartment and slammed the door. Gretel, sensing something was wrong, walked over to comfort Tess.

1. Please read presented case to identify conflict management styles participants use in this situation. Discuss dynamics and efficiency of different styles.
2. Please read description of supervisor related roles (see table 1 in section Individual work exercises). 5–8 participants of group can choose different roles and try to solve conflict in role play using different ways.
3. After completing role plays a group discussion should be provided to explore strengths and weaknesses or challenges of different roles in conflict.

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