**Title: Conflict ahead: A workshop on conflict and negotiation pedagogy**

**Track/Stream: Management Education & Development**

Abstract:

The ability to effectively resolve conflicts and negotiate with diverse others--even for those who naturally avoid conflict--is one of the most important interpersonal skills for a global leader to have. This workshop addresses the needs by introducing participants to four activities which will help them learn about and/or practice becoming more effective conflict resolvers and negotiations. These cover an array of topics, including global and intercultural negotiations, that will be useful for participants to both improve their own skills as well as having new activities to share with their students.

Why the workshop should be of interest to Management Education & Development:

We believe this session will be of interest to all faculty who teach conflict or negotiation as a course or part of a course. In addition to introducing several powerful exercises/simulations that can be used to illustrate the challenges of conflict and negotiations, we also intend to challenge widely held beliefs and approaches to teaching negotiation. Sharing these activities and personal insights is consistent with Management Education & Development’s focus on teaching methods to facilitate the acquisition of skills for managing in a global economy.  Participants will leave the session with both a better understanding of negotiation and conflict resolution for themselves, as well as four new exercises/activities that they can utilize when teaching these skills in the future.

Overview of the Session

The proposed session builds on the concepts of conflict and negotiation and how as individuals, partners, managers, and members of larger communities, we must face our conscious and unconscious biases in processes where we attempt to resolve or negotiate the conflict.  We bring together four educators with diverse experiences and perspectives on teaching negotiation and conflict resolution. Together they have approximately 100 years of combined experience teaching and have numerous publications and presentations (both pedagogical and theoretical) on the skills involved.  In addition to teaching students about global issues, the presenters have lived or worked in numerous North/South American, European, and Asian countries, as well as Australia. presenters will each share an activity that they use to enable their students to learn about and/or practice skills to become more effective negotiators and conflict resolvers.

Each of these exercises addresses the challenge of fairness when two or more parties need to decide how to share the scarce resources.  Individual values, perceptions, expectations, history, and bias all come into play—and often lead to conflict.  How the parties approach the conflict—reflecting a combination of their degree of concern for the outcome and for the relationship—and how this impacts the resolution and parties’ ensuing feelings about each other presents fodder for important discussions in OB, HR, and conflict resolution (CR) classrooms.  It also has long-term impacts on how colleagues/partners/friends, families, communities, countries, and entire regions co-exist.

In the first exercise, the challenge appears basic (though students learn otherwise as they progress through the exercise):  two people are presented with two notes (currency) and have to decide how to allocate the money.  We build on this in the second exercise presented:  students’ beliefs and biases about roles and expectations in future marital/committed relationships (captured real-time in an individual survey) are shared back in the aggregate, highlighting gender and culture differences and conflict that are difficult to resolve.  In the third exercise, students are challenged to decide how to allocate a pool of money (taxes collected) among competing districts (communities).  Whether each community is awarded the same amount (e.g., equality) or according to their needs (equity) is a theme that is central to the fourth and final exercise, a simulation wherein representatives of several countries/territories present prepared opening statements and negotiate their dispute at a United Nations summit aimed at resolving growing interstate conflict over vast undersea gas and oil fields discovered in the Eastern Mediterranean (near Cypress).

Workshop Format: (90 minutes requested)

Introduction -5 min

The session will begin with each presenter introducing her-/him-self.  The introduction will also include each presenter sharing the inspiration and overview of her/his specific topics/activity.

Individual Activities and Q&A – (approximately 15 min each; see below for more detail)

Each presenter will share her/his own activity.  Depending on the activity and time provided for the session, each of the four presenters will share a combination of the objectives and topics covered, how to use/implement it, as well as Q&A.

Group Debrief and Discussion – (25 min)

The remaining time in the session will be devoted to a group debrief and discussion.  This will include common themes among the activities as well as concerns with teaching negotiation and conflict resolution.  Each presenter will provide documentation for his or her exercise, with the goal of participants being able easily employ the exercises in their classes.

The following four activities presented include:

**Activity 1:**  Splitting Two Notes:  Is the Simplest Solution Always the Best?

This exercise provides students with an overview of several basic concepts of negotiation, including distributive vs. integrative bargaining, negotiation ranges, bargaining strategies, and the influence of intangibles (e.g., relationships) on bargaining outcomes.

Overview of Exercise:  Students are divided into pairs and asked to divide two equal bank notes (dollars, euros, etc.), however they see fit.  In the initial round, students will commonly agree to each take one of the notes.

In the second round, students then move to a different partner.  Beginning this round, students are also given private instructions about the negotiation objective (e.g., “we really want to do business with this person in the long-term, so do whatever you can to win this person over now”), the partner (e.g., “nobody else in the industry would do business with this person’s company, so we can get whatever we want”), or external circumstances (e.g., “your job is riding on how much money you can make out of the deal”) that make an even-split a less desirable option.  In light of these instructions, students are considerably less likely to opt for an even-split approach. Instructors may opt to repeat several rounds in this manner or skip to the final round.

In the final round, students are paired with their original partners from Round 1.  However, unlike the first round, where they most likely split the money equally, having had the experience of tough opponents (or having received a note instructing them to be a tough opponent), they are much less likely to engage in even-split negotiating in this round.

In the debriefing, students are introduced to the concepts of positive and negative bargaining ranges, bargaining tactics (such as instructions to say as little as possible), and the role of previous interactions.

**Activity 2:**  Welcome to Squareville: This exercise takes place in a fictitious city and asks students to determine how best to divide a pot of money, set aside to improve the individual wards in the city.  The exercise is distributive which forces students to decide whether it is best to divide the money equally (i.e., same amount per ward) or equitably (i.e., money is given according to a ward’s needs).  Afterwards, students learn that this is based on how a real city is trying to divide funds from a special tax levy.

Overview of exercise: Students are given background materials on the fictitious city of Squareville.  This includes a map and a spreadsheet that provides information on each ward (which can easily be converted to metric).  This information includes: miles of road, acres of park, and average income. Students are randomly assigned to represent a specific ward.  The spreadsheet also makes clear whether the student’s ward is above or below average (i.e., would benefit more from an equal or equitable decision).

Students are given time to review the materials and decide both how they want the money divided and how they will negotiate with and try to persuade their fellow alderpersons/ classmates.  The class makes the decision together. It is left to students to determine how they will make decision (e.g., form coalitions).

After the class decides on how to divide the money, it is assessed in terms of equity versus equality.  Students are also asked to consider the extent that self-interest (i.e., whether their ward would benefit more from equity or equality), influenced their decision-making and advocacy.  In addition, you can review the persuasion and negotiation tactics that were used. In concluding the exercise, students are given a copy of a news article which discusses how a real city is dealing with this specific decision.

**Activity 3:** Discovering and Negotiating Beliefs about Work and Family. The work-family exercise involves having students complete a one-page survey before class (sample questions listed below). The instructor analyzes the data to report back the information—in the aggregate—to the class. This survey examines students’ expectations about their future career and family plans. It provides a window to examine potential role conflict (and the values and beliefs that give rise to those conflicts) that students will likely face and helps students to think proactively about how to navigate these roles.

Sample Questions:

Q1. Do you plan to get married? 1. Yes 2. No (If no go to Q6).

Q 2. If you plan to get married, at what age do you think you will marry? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Q3. How many years will you work before getting married? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Q4. Will you continue to work after you are married? 1. Yes 2. No

Q6. Do you plan to have children? 1. Yes 2. No (if no, skip to Q14)

Q7. How many children do you want to have? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Q10. Do you plan to continue working after having your first child? 1. Yes 2. No

Q11. How many months do you plan to stay home (not working) to care for your child/children? \_\_\_\_\_\_ months

Q12. Do you expect your spouse to quit working and stay home to care for your child/children? 1. Yes 2. No

Q13. Would you still have children if you knew that you would have to quit your job and stay home to care for them because there was no adequate alternative childcare available? 1. Yes 2. No

Implications and Debrief: This exercise works well for classes with students from multiple countries as it allows for an examination of the impact of country culture on career and family role expectations. I recently conducted this exercise in a class with European and Chinese students and was able to discuss the cultural differences with the students as well as gender differences in expectations. Many issues are brought up through discussing the results of the survey including how childcare is handled in the country, maternity leave laws, and gender role norms.

**Activity 4:** Adding Fuel to the Fire: Energy Resources in the Eastern Mediterranean

In this simulation (which can take on ore more class periods), representatives of several countries/territories will prepare opening statements and negotiate their dispute at a United Nations summit aimed at preventing interstate conflict over vast undersea gas and oil fields discovered in the Eastern Mediterranean (see map, next page). The discovery of these valuable resources has sparked tension between parties already embroiled in longstanding conflicts over identity and territory, namely the Republic of Cyprus, Greece, Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot Administration/TRNC,[[1]](#footnote-1) Israel, and Lebanon. This UN summit is an attempt to obtain the agreement of all parties to negotiate disputes within the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), a treaty which several of the parties have not yet ratified.

Overview of the exercise: Students are assigned roles (e.g., representative of Turkey, Lebanon, Republic of Cypress) and are asked to provide an opening statement based on research they do (film clips and newspaper stories provided) about the situation (discovery of hydrocarbons near/off the coast of Cypress) and the history of their country, economic issues, relations with other countries, etc. Four parts follow:

Part 1:

The professor and the UN Mediator will provide an overview of the Summit, Summit Guidelines (ground rules and procedural details), Goals, and Aspirations, Role of UNCLOS and International Law

Part 2:

Each of the six country representatives present their opening statement. During these opening statements, any representative may raise a red flag signaling concerns or objections. The UN mediator keeps a list of all parties raising flags during the statement. Next, s/he will recognize parties who raised objections to the preceding statement. Each has 60 seconds to explain their objection or ask clarifying questions. If time permits, presenters can respond briefly to objections and questions.

Part 3:

After a brief break, the UN Mediator will present a suggested negotiation agenda, with a list of issues for resolution, based on notes from the presentations and objections. The parties ask for clarifications, discuss, and ultimately vote to approve/disapprove the agenda, going item by item. This vote should inform the agenda but is not binding; the UN Mediator (in consultation with the professor) will ultimately decide the issues to be negotiated in Round II of the Summit. The UN Mediator then delivers a closing statement, summarizing his/her view of the First Round of the Summit and providing guidelines for Round II.

Part 4:

With the agreement on a negotiation agenda, the parties will attempt to hear each other out and attempt to identify common ground re: the rights to the undersea resources and, based on this, suggest a plan or agreement. At the end of the talks parties are asked to state whether they accept the plan or not, and why.

Debrief of the exercise: includes discussion of the process, how representatives felt during and after the session, perceptions of fairness, and how these issues impact the enforcement and sustainability of any agreement that is reached.

1. TRNC: Since Turkey's 1974 military intervention in the Cyprus conflict, the north of the island has been an enclave governed by the Turkish-Cypriot minority. Turkey maintains a large military presence there and is the only state to grant official recognition to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)