



Great Public Schools for Every Student

Understanding and Applying Conflict Management Styles for Team Success

Paraeducator and teachers understand and apply conflict management styles to improve the effectiveness of their team.

Key Method

Paraeducators and teachers analyze conflict management styles to gain a deeper understanding, assess the styles used within their team and their impact on team effectiveness, apply/practice the styles, and reflect on the process.

Method Components

Guiding Principles

To enhance student outcomes, it is critical that paraeducators and teachers see themselves as partners in the educational process and continuously work to ensure they have an effective working relationship.

Conflict is a natural, though uncomfortable, occurrence in any working relationship that usually arises when two or more people have opposing ideas or interests. It often involves emotions, especially when either party feels that they are right or that they know best. Teams need to understand the nature of conflict and use conflict resolution strategies to resolve issues early in order to lessen the emotional response and to avoid an interruption in services to students. It is also important to understand conflict management styles, your typical response to conflict, and which styles are more appropriate to use in certain situations.

Conflict management styles include:

- Collaborating
- Competing
- Avoiding
- Accommodating
- Compromising

See the Resource section to learn more about conflict management styles and resolution strategies.

Note: Paraeducators support certified/licensed educators, including teachers and other related service providers. Teams participating in the micro-credential process can also include related service providers, although the design of some of the micro-credentials and related artifacts are specific to the partnership between paraeducators and teachers. Related service providers might include speech-language pathologists, school nurses, transition specialists, school psychologists, school social workers, creative arts therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and school counselors. Most of these professions are currently defined as “providers of related services” in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) and “specialized instructional support personnel” (SISP) in the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015). NEA and the National Alliance of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (NASISP) both recognize and use the term SISP. See the Resource Section to learn more about SISP.

Method Components

Through analysis, assessment, application, and reflection, paraeducator-teacher teams will understand and demonstrate conflict management styles to improve the effectiveness of their team.

Step 1 – Analysis (Individual Analysis)

In this step, paraeducators and teachers will demonstrate an understanding of conflict management styles by creating a graphic organizer explaining the different styles.

Step 2 – Assessment (Individual Assessment)

In this step, paraeducators and teachers will complete an assessment to identify their preferred conflict management style. They will also assess how their style impacts team effectiveness, how they think their partner's style impacts team effectiveness, and areas in need of improvement.

Step 3 – Application/Practice (Team Process)

In this step, paraeducator-teacher teams will apply/practice the conflict management styles identified in Step 2.

Step 4 – Reflection (Team Process)

Lastly, paraeducator-teacher teams will reflect on the process. Reflecting on what you have learned about yourself, your partner, your team, and conflict management styles will cement learning, further improve team effectiveness, and encourage continued professional growth.

Supporting Research

Conflict Management and Resolution Strategies

Shapiro, Gail Joyce. 2014. Identifying the Factors That Influence Conflict Management Behavior of Human Resource Professionals in the Workplace: An Analysis of the Relationship Between Personality and Conflict Management Behavior. Nova Southeastern University.

https://nsuworks.nova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1025&context=shss_dcar_etd

Effective Paraeducator-Teacher Teams

Flowers, Nancy & Mertens, Steven & Mulhall, Peter. (2000). How Teaming Influences Classroom Practices. Middle School Journal. 32. 52-59.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254164177_How_Teaming_Influences_Classroom_Practices

Sharon Mickan and Sylvia Rodger. (2000). Characteristics of Effective Teams: A Literature Review. Australian Health Review. Vol 23. No 3.

<http://tlmerrill.pbworks.com/w/file/fetch/85213915/Mickan%2520and%2520Rodger%2520-%2520Characteristics%2520of%2520Effective%2520Teams.pdf>

Berdi Safford, MD, and Cynthia A. Manning, MA. (2012). Six Characteristics of Effective Practice Teams. Family Practice Management. 2012 May-June; 19(3):26-30.

<https://www.aafp.org/fpm/2012/0500/p26.html>

Ruedel, K., Diamond, M., Zaidi, A., Aboud, A. (2002) The Inclusive Environment: Paraeducators and Teachers Working Together. Wed. May 11, 2018

http://www.academia.edu/922366/The_Inclusive_Environment_Paraeducators_and_Teachers_Working_Together

(scroll down to read paper or provide email to download)

Keefe, E.B., Moore, V., Duff, F. The Four "Knows" of Collaborative Teaching. Council for Exceptional Children, May/June 2004.

<https://www.scribd.com/document/371822820/the-fours-knows-of-collaborative-teaching-keefe-et-al>

Resources

NEA Building Winning Teams: Effective Paraeducator-Teacher Teams Training Resources

Teaming and Characteristics of Effective Paraeducator-Teacher Teams https://drive.google.com/open?id=1n_X1x1DzC0qVa9eMmUtlZ4h2-oil6C6_

Roles and Responsibilities of Paraeducators, Teachers and Administrators

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1sThOxYiYAdR1BTziWFWzUvj-vsf64MMa>

The Five "Knows" of Collaborative Teaming

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=169LxOaBy0oiFmt1RxA6t7eQmjPNjrfWA>

Effective Communication

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1RyzvYt_ESKan52iT3tFvfsDF2atRzag_

Generational Differences: Impact on Teaming and Communication

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1qCPGNqFny6jTY85pts3efTBAgH0vxgoS>

Conflict Management and Resolution Strategies

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hdjgyeDRKmBJzu15JM4niopoogeQ0luG/view?usp=sharing>

Problem Solving and Action Planning

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1mZ9t1Psio9jv_SqC5wkjbz6gC8_-4pBg

Conflict Management and Resolution Strategies

What is Conflict

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQsSd6rSvw8>

How to Handle Conflict in the Workplace

<https://blink.ucsd.edu/HR/supervising/conflict/handle.html>

5 Keys of Dealing with Workplace Conflict

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/mikemyatt/2012/02/22/5-keys-to-dealing-with-workplace-conflict/#648f07cd1e95>

3 Effective Strategies to Manage Workplace Conflict

<https://www.extension.harvard.edu/professional-development/blog/3-effective-strategies-manage-workplace-conflict>

Conflict Resolution: Using the "Interest-Based Relational" Approach

https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_81.htm

Dealing with Conflicts in School: Advice from a Former Principal

<https://www.wgu.edu/heyteach/article/dealing-teacher-conflicts-school-advice-former-principal1710.html>

Conflict Resolution Programs

<http://www.nea.org/tools/15828.htm>

Common Barriers to Conflict Management

Barriers to Conflict Resolution

<https://conflictresolutionolution.weebly.com/barriers-to-conflict-resolution.html>

6 Conflict Resolution Barriers

<http://crestcomleadership.com/2016/01/06/6-conflict-resolution-barriers/>

Barriers Encountered in Resolving Conflict

<https://smallbusiness.chron.com/barriers-encountered-resolving-conflict-73766.html>

Conflict Management Styles

Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PFlydyH2H8Y>

Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument http://www.organizationimpact.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/TKI_Sample_Report.pdf

5 Conflict Management Styles for Every Personality Type

<https://blog.hubspot.com/service/conflict-management-styles>

Effective Paraeducator-Teacher Teams

Let's Team Up: What Every Paraprofessional Needs for Student Success and Effective Teamwork

<https://www.nprinc.com/content/free-resources/Lets-Team-Up-Gerlach-Nov-2016.pdf>

Teacher and Paraeducator Team Perfects the Art of Collaboration

<http://neatoday.org/2017/08/02/teacher-and-paraeducator-team-perfects-art-of-collaboration/>

To Teachers: What Paraeducators Want You to Know

<https://dsagsl.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/what-paras-want-teachers-to-know.pdf>

Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP)

Specialized Instructional Support Personnel – NEA webpage

<http://www.nea.org/sisp>

National Alliance of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (NASISP)

<http://nasisp.org/aboutus2/>

Artifact Templates

Conflict Management Styles Assessment (Artifact 2)

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LdQ0VYj32ZW6dCw2RX3cn3MY8Og9Wif1Pa0EUfiAUtl/edit?usp=sharing>

Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

To earn the micro-credential, you must receive a passing score in Parts 1 and 3, and receive a proficient for all components in Part 2.

Part 1. Overview Questions

250 - 350 words

Please answer the following contextual questions to help our assessor understand your current situation. Please do not include any information that will make you, your partner, or your students identifiable to your reviewers.

1. Describe the context of the classroom or setting in which you work (e.g., general ed classroom, resource room, community-based setting). Include grade level, subject area, any relevant cultural/demographic information, and special considerations regarding student characteristics.
2. Describe the makeup of your team (with whom you work with regularly to directly support students). Include who is on your team (i.e., teachers, paraeducators, related service providers/SISP), each team member's roles/responsibilities, and how long you have worked together.
3. What did you know about conflict management styles before any information or resources were made available to you?
4. Describe your strengths and weaknesses related to conflict management.
5. What current process or strategies does your team use to identify conflict management styles?
6. Explain why you chose to complete this micro-credential.

- **Passing:** Responses should completely answer each question, cite specific examples from personal experience, and justify the reason for choosing this micro-credential to address the specific needs of both the paraeducator-teacher team and students. Writing is organized and easy to understand.

Part 2. Work Examples / Artifacts

To earn this micro-credential, please submit the following **four artifacts** as evidence of your learning. Please do not include any information that will make you, your partner, or your students identifiable to your reviewers. **Templates can be found in the Resource section.**

Artifact 1: Analysis (Graphic Organizer)

Submit a graphic organizer that includes:

- At least three characteristics of each conflict management style
- The pros and cons of each style
- Situations when each style is appropriate
- Specific examples of how you, your partner, or your students have used each style

The artifact should include an indication of your role on your team (i.e., paraeducator, teacher, related service provider/SISP).

Note: Paraeducators and teachers must complete this artifact independently.

Artifact 2: Assessment

Using the template provided, complete the assessment to identify your preferred conflict management style. Reflect on how your style impacts team effectiveness, how you think your partner's style impacts team effectiveness, and areas in need of improvement

Note: Paraeducators and teachers must complete this artifact independently.

Artifact 3: Application/Practice Video

Using the scenarios below, submit a video of your paraeducator-teacher team addressing the source of conflict using any of the conflict management styles identified in Artifact 2. Each team member must practice at least two different conflict management styles. The video should be 10 minutes maximum.

At the beginning of your video, indicate your role on your team (i.e., paraeducator, teacher, related service provider/SISP).

Scenario 1: You are Chris Baxter, an elementary teacher in a large urban school district. You have been a teacher for five years and have been in your present position for two years. Several months ago, you were assigned a new paraeducator, Joan Kelly, an experienced, outgoing, and committed individual. She has worked as a paraeducator for 15 years. Her length of experience is a source of discomfort for you. You previously had paraeducators who consistently argued with you about methods of treatment and instruction, something which is a drain on your time and energy. You are not looking forward to the possibility of this occurring again. You have seen Joan periodically not follow your instructions when working with some students. To date, you have not said anything to her. You and Joan are meeting today to discuss a plan of action for dealing with one student's poor math performance. You also plan, if the opportunity presents itself, to raise your concerns about Joan.

Scenario 2: You are Joan Kelly, a paraeducator in a large urban school district. You have been a paraeducator for 15 years and love working with children. You have three children of your own, two of whom have learning disabilities. You've spent the past five years working at another school system with a teacher who recognized your commitment and respected your expertise. You were continually involved in planning lessons and providing classroom monitoring as well as evaluative input in the development of the students' lessons. Several months ago, you were transferred to work with Chris Baxter, a special education teacher. You find her cordial and competent but disagree with some of the instructions she has given you when monitoring certain students' work. You've not discussed these disagreements with her, however, because of your workloads. You have instead gone ahead and relied on your own expertise when you felt it necessary. Chris has scheduled a meeting to discuss the poor performance of one of the students with whom you have been working very closely. You plan to contribute your perspectives on improving the student's performance.

Note: Paraeducators and teachers should complete this artifact together. They can submit the same video.

Artifact 4: Reflection Video

Submit a video of your paraeducator-teacher team reflecting on the process. In the video, the paraeducator-teacher team must answer the following questions. The video should be 10 minutes maximum.

- What is the preferred conflict management style of each team member?
- Which conflict management styles did you practice and why did you choose them?
- What did you find most and/or least challenging about the styles that you practiced?
- How effective in resolving the conflict were the styles that you practiced?
- For styles that you identified as areas in need of improvement, do you still agree with your choice? If yes, how does your team plan to continue to practice and improve in this area? If no, did you identify other areas in need of improvement?

At the beginning of your video, indicate your role on your team (i.e., paraeducator, teacher, related service provider/SISP). Both team members must actively participate in the reflection.

Note: Paraeducators and teachers should complete this artifact together. They can submit the same video.

	Proficient	Basic	Developing
Artifact 1: Analysis (Graphic Organizer)	<p>Graphic organizer includes a response for each of the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -At least three characteristics of each conflict management style -The pros and cons of each style -Situations when each style is appropriate -Specific examples of how you, your partner, or your students have used each style <p>Graphic organizer explicitly demonstrates an understanding of the four communication styles.</p>	<p>A response is missing for one or two of the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -At least three characteristics of each conflict management style -The pros and cons of each style -Situations when each style is appropriate -Specific examples of how you, your partner, or your students have used each style <p>Graphic organizer partially demonstrates an understanding of the four communication styles.</p>	<p>A response is missing for more than two of the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -At least three characteristics of each conflict management style -The pros and cons of each style -Situations when each style is appropriate -Specific examples of how you, your partner, or your students have used each style <p>Graphic organizer does not demonstrate an understanding of the four communication styles.</p>
Artifact 2: Assessment	<p>All elements of the assessment are completed and a preferred style is identified.</p> <p>Reflection clearly describes 1) the preferred style of each team member, 2) specific situations where the style was evident, 3) how they impact team effectiveness, and 4) areas in need of improvement. Specific examples are cited.</p>	<p>Some elements of the assessment are completed and a preferred style is identified.</p> <p>Reflection partially describes 1) the preferred style of each team member, 2) specific situations where the style was evident, 3) how they impact team effectiveness, and 4) areas in need of improvement. Specific examples are cited.</p>	<p>Some elements of the assessment are completed and a preferred style is identified.</p> <p>Reflection minimally describes 1) the preferred style of each team member, 2) specific situations where the style was evident, 3) how they impact team effectiveness, and 4) areas in need of improvement. Specific examples are not cited.</p>

Artifact 3:
Application/
Practice Video

Team members demonstrate accurate application of each conflict management style practiced.

Team members practiced at least two different conflict management styles.

Team members demonstrate somewhat accurate application of each conflict management style practiced.

Team members practiced at least two different conflict management styles.

Team members demonstrate inaccurate application of each conflict management style practiced.

Team members practiced only one conflict management style.

Artifact 4: Reflection Video

Reflection clearly describes each of the following elements:
-The preferred styles of each team member
-The styles practiced and a rationale as to why each were chosen
-What was most and/or least challenging about the styles practiced
-How effective the styles were in resolving the conflict
-If thinking around the styles identified as areas in need of improvement has changed and how the team plans to continue to practice/improve in that area

Both the paraeducator and teacher actively participated in the reflection.

Reflection is missing a clear description of one or two of the following elements:
-The preferred styles of each team member
-The styles practiced and a rationale as to why each were chosen
-What was most and/or least challenging about the styles practiced
-How effective the styles were in resolving the conflict
-If thinking around the styles identified as areas in need of improvement has changed and how the team plans to continue to practice/improve in that area

Both the paraeducator and teacher actively participated in the reflection.

Reflection is missing a clear description of more than two of the following elements:
-The preferred styles of each team member
-The styles practiced and a rationale as to why each were chosen
-What was most and/or least challenging about the styles practiced
-How effective the styles were in resolving the conflict
-If thinking around the styles identified as areas in need of improvement has changed and how the team plans to continue to practice/improve in that area

The paraeducator or teacher actively participated in the reflection, but not both.

Part 3. Reflection

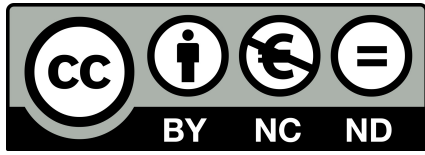
250 - 350 words

Please answer the following reflective questions Please do not include any information that will make you, your partner, or your students identifiable to your reviewers.

- 1. How does being aware of your and your partner’s preferred conflict management styles help build a more effective team?
- 2. How did the process of understanding and applying conflict management styles impact team effectiveness? How did it impact students?
- 3. How has this experience affected you in your role as a paraeducator or teacher?
- 4. How do you envision using your new learnings with existing or new team members in the future?

■ **Passing:** Responses should completely answer each question, cite specific examples from personal experience, and describe how the process and learnings have impacted the paraeducator-teacher team as well as students.

Specific actionable steps that demonstrate how the new learnings will be integrated into future practices are also cited. Writing is organized and easy to understand.



Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under:

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>