

Conflict Management in the International Classroom

Worksheet: Conceptualizing Conflict and Understanding Types of Conflict

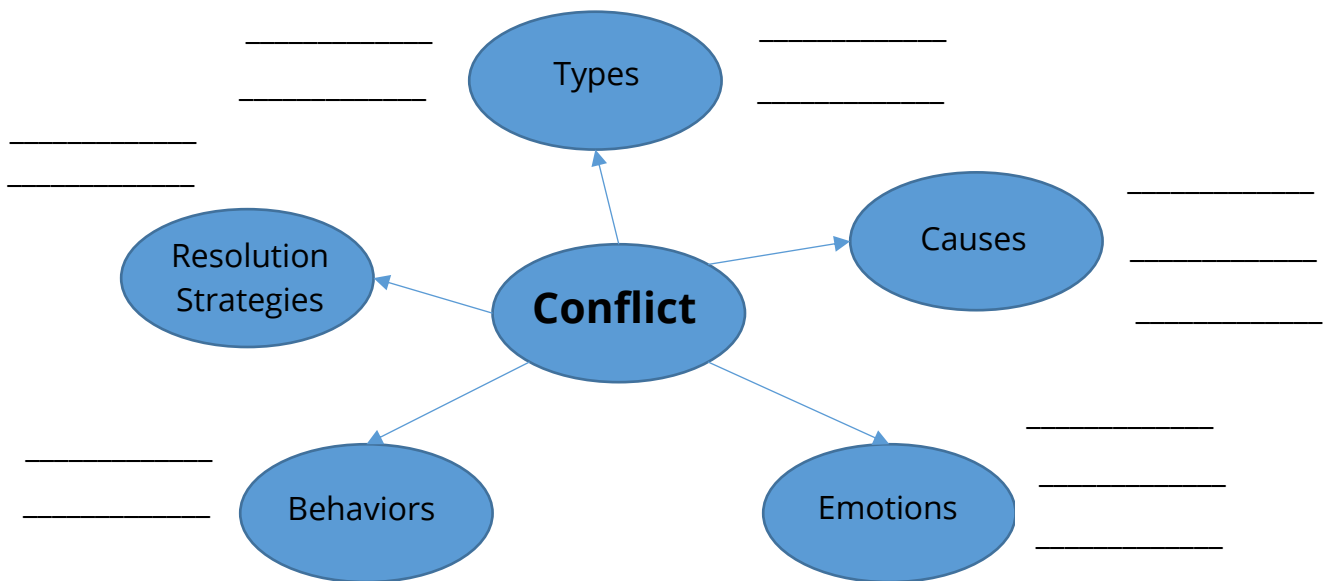
Title of Lesson: Defining Conflict and Categorizing Types of Conflict

Learning Objectives:

Defining Conflict

Brainstorming Mindmap:

What words can you think of to describe the concept of conflict? Complete the following diagram with two or three words for each category:



Read the definition below. Are the words you wrote in the diagram related to the definition of conflict?

Conflict:

Conflict is “perceived incompatibilities, or perceptions by the parties [e.g., students, teachers or tutors] involved” due to “discrepant views, or have incompatible wishes and desires” (Jehn, 2014, p. 9) in relation to interactions, activities, or tasks in class.

Types of Conflict

Pre-Activity:

Look at the following image and write what conflict(s) you notice or think might be happening. Write at least five ideas.



Created by Freepik

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Types of Conflict in International Classes:¹

1. **Emotional conflict** refers to the recognition of interpersonal incompatibilities between individuals or groups. These may manifest through differences in personality, preferences, values, opinions, behaviors, communication styles, or approaches to work and learning. Such conflicts often arise not from specific tasks, but from underlying relational tensions and mismatches in how people relate to and interact with one another. An attitude to solve this type of conflict is to think or say to oneself: we may not get along but we can work together.
2. **Task-content conflict** has a lot of labels like **content or Task or realistic or even cognitive conflict**. It has to do with the awareness of parties or the people involved that there are disagreements in relation to ideas, opinions, content, and issues about a task being performed. Unlike emotional conflict, task-content conflict is often considered constructive

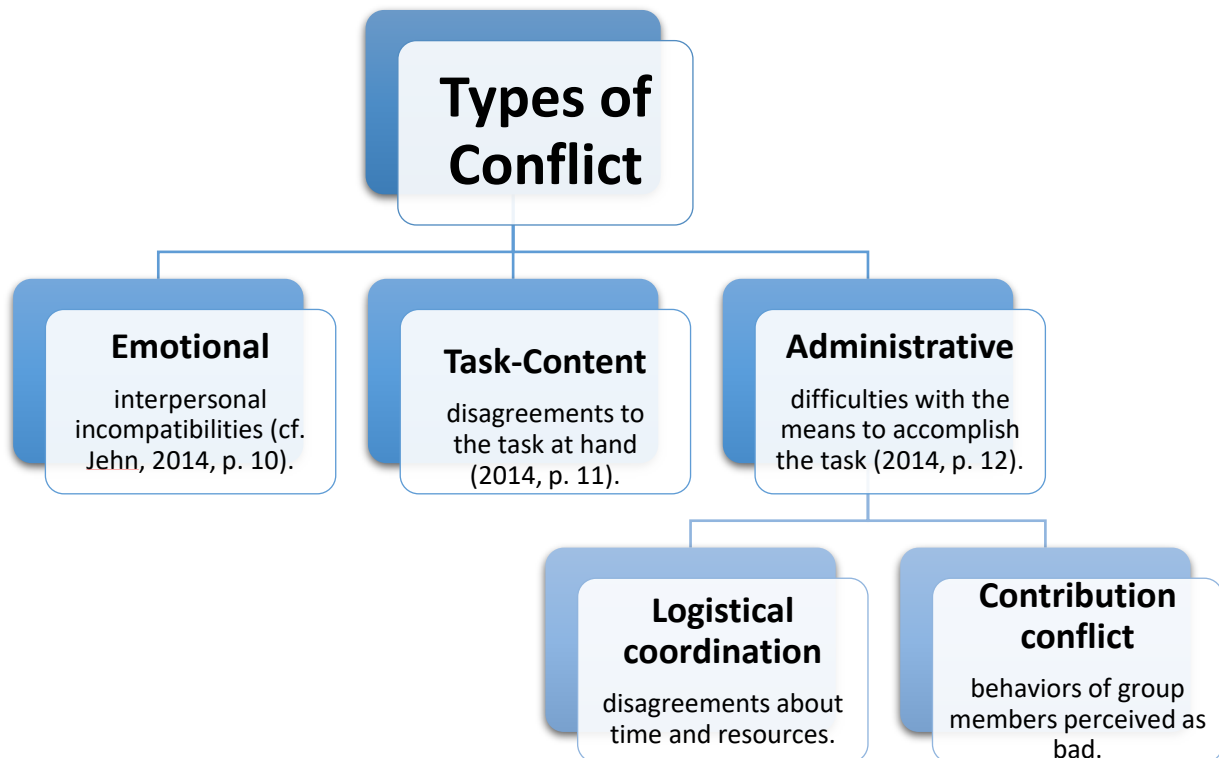
¹ For more on other types of conflicts in international contexts, see Altbach & Knight, 2007, Marginson, 2010, Kezar & Eckel, 2002 among others.

when managed effectively, as it can stimulate critical thinking, innovation, and improved decision-making. Awareness and open communication are essential for transforming this form of conflict into a productive dialogue.

3. **Administrative conflict** is related to the means, methods or logistics to accomplish a task and not about its specific content. These conflicts often involve issues such as task delegation, scheduling, procedures, role assignments, deadlines, and the allocation of resources. Such disagreements may arise when team members have differing expectations about how the work should be organized or carried out. Two tips to try to solve this kind of conflicts are: clarify and get into an agreement of roles and responsibilities early and established-shared decision as the project evolves.

Task:

Review the diagram below and the explanation of the three types of conflict above. Then, write three examples for each type: emotional, task/content, and administrative. Finally, look back at the ideas you wrote in the pre-activity — can you match any of them to one of the conflict types?



1. Emotional

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

References

- Altbach, P. G., & Knight, J. (2007). The Internationalization of Higher Education: Motivations and Realities. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 11(3-4), 290–305.
- Jehn, K. A. (2014). Types of conflict: The history and future of conflict definitions and typologies. In O. B. Ayoko, N. M. Ashkanasy, & K. A. Jehn (Eds.), *Handbook of Conflict Management Research* (pp. 3–18). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Kezar, A., & Eckel, P. D. (2002). The Effect of Institutional Culture on Change Strategies in Higher Education. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 73(4), 435–460.
- Marginson, S. (2010). Higher Education in the Global Knowledge Economy. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2(5), 6962–6980.