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ENACT KA3 – Multilateral Project

Enhancing Negotiation skills through on-line Assessment of Competencies and interactive mobile Training

Lifelong Learning Programme 2013
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D4.3. Online contents on negotiation training and assessment (learning material)

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Introduction

This document aims to present the definition of negotiation adopted in the ENACT project as dimension inextricably related to effective communication based on assertive behaviour (par. 1). The negotiation model adopted in the project takes inspiration from Rahim's model of handling interpersonal conflict. It represents the ideal ground for designing the ENACT training scenarios because the stress of the model on the learning process, the idea of enabling people to learn the appropriate use of a conflict styles depending on situations (par. 2).

1. Concept of negotiation within the ENACT project

The negotiation concept adopted within the ENACT project takes inspiration from the Integrative approach of negotiation (Walton and McKersie, 1965; Fisher and Ury, 1981; Zartman and Berman, 1982) which is based on cooperative processes, rather than competitive-distributive processes.

Distributive process refers to a negotiation method in which two parties strive to divide a fixed pool of resources (e.g. money), where each party tries to maximize its portion of the distribution. The distributive approach is also defined as a) a fixed-sum game, as the outcome involves dividing up a fixed amount of limited resources (also called as a fixed pie) between parties: b) termed a zero-sum process because one party loses whatever amount is gained by the other.

Integrative approach regards searching for reciprocal mutually satisfying solutions. It is also called an expanded-pie approach (in comparison to the distributive fixed-sum approach) because parties search for better and alternative solutions than the obvious proposal that meet only one party's personal interests. In other words, parties cooperate to maximise benefits by integrating their interests into an agreement that can satisfy both parties.

In particular, we are interested to the concept of negotiating as the process of effectively communicating back and forth (constructive feedback process), in order to identify a joint view or solution about differing needs or ideas (understand, inquiry, explore, propose). Being able to negotiate an integrative and collaborative solution implies adopting an effective and assertive style of communication involving: proactivity; active listening; empathy; assertiveness; giving and receiving effective feedbacks; and seeking to understand before seeking to be understood.

Following will be described a model of communication based on 3 different styles of communication: assertive, aggressive or passive (Dryen & Constantonou, 2004). According to this model the communication process can be seen as occurring along a continuum from passive styles on one end to aggressive style the other, by passing through an assertive communicational attitude.

Both passive and aggression behaviours distort the possibility of creating positive and constructive relations through mutual and reciprocal processes.

With **passive** style people communicate in a way that tent to continuously please others at the expense of personal interests, needs and goals. This styles mainly is expression of avoiding standing up for ourselves, our needs and rights, and give too much regard to the opinions and the preferences of others. One of the main purposes of passivity is avoiding the discomfort of conflict. As immediate results passive people experience reduction of anxiety, sense of guilt, as they feel that personal disclosure can upset, disappoint, hurt, and offend others. However the long term effect can lead to loss of confidence, frustration, resentment and aggressive reactions. At the other extreme the **aggressive** style represents a way to communicate mainly with hostile attitude, depreciating and bulling with the aim to protect

personal interests at detrimental of others. Relationships are based on fear, resentment and intimidation. This style fuels the unhealthy and unrealistic idea that we are superior to others, and consequently consider our rights and needs are more important than others'.
As immediate payoff people by using this style experience power and control, however the long term on themselves is detrimental as they feel to be in a continue state of alert from external attach from others.
Being **assertive** involves awareness our own needs, rights wants and goals and asking for them to be met while acknowledging the needs, rights, wants and goals of others. In contrast to passive and aggressive behaviours, assertiveness is a way of communicating our feelings, thoughts, and beliefs in an open, honest way without violating rights feelings, needs and opinions of others. Assertion is not about winning, as involves being able to effectively express thoughts, needs and feelings, and not at the expense of others. It involves self-awareness, self-confidence, and positive understanding other people's point of views recognised as source of richness from which we can benefit. It also involves the capability to establish healthy boundaries in a relationship, avoiding that others trespass on your boundaries, and respecting other people's boundaries.
Please click on the follow link to watch an explicative video clip on "*How to be assertive*": *http://www.videojug.com/film/how-to-be-assertive*

2. Rahim's model

Whit regards to the negotiation model underpinning the definition of the online ENACT training scenarios is based on the five styles of handling conflict proposed by Rahim (Rahim, 2011), described below: Integrating, *Obliging, Dominating, Avoiding* and *Compromising*. Within this model conflict not considered a negative concept itself, although as an opportunity for people to grow, learn and work even more effectively.
The ***Integrating*** style, also known as Problem Solving, indicates high concern for self and others. It involves collaboration between the parties that are willing to reach a mutual and acceptable solution through openness, exchange of information, examination and exploration of differences for arriving to a constructive solution that goes far beyond personal and limited visions of the problem. Please click on the follow link to watch an explicative video clip of the *Integrating* style:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4SzYIpX5qdo&list=PL5EBFF28B8AB68F74&index=5
The ***Obliging*** style, also known as accommodating indicates low concern for self and high concern for others. An obliging person neglects and sacrifices personal concern so to satisfy the concern of the other party. This style is associated with a non-confrontation element characterised by the attempt of minimising differences and emphasizing commonalities to satisfy the concern of the other party. As suggested by Rahim this style may take the form of selfless generosity, charity, or obedience to the party's order. An obliging person can be defined as a "conflict absorber" terms describing a reaction of low hostility or even friendliness to a perceived hostile act. Please click on the follow link to watch an explicative video clip of the *Obliging* style:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_umreW608I&list=PL5EBFF28B8AB68F74&index=2
The ***Dominating*** style, also known as competing, indicates high concern for self and low concern for others. A dominating person stands up for own rights and ignore others' needs and expectation; try to defend personal positions that he believes being as correct and right. This is a win-lose style expression of a forcing behaviour in order to win one's position. Please click on the follow link to watch an explicative video clip of the *Dominating* style:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tD8t4BEwz5g&index=3&list=PL5EBFF28B8AB68F74

The ***Avoiding*** style, also known as suppression, indicates low concern for self and others. Therefore an avoiding person fails to satisfy personal concern as well as the concern of the other party. It has been associated with withdrawal, buck-passing, sidestepping situations.
As suggested by Rahim this style may take the form of postponing an issue until a better time or simply withdrawing from a threatening situation. This style often reflect little concern toward the issues or parties involved in conflict, and the attitude to refuse or denying to acknowledge the existence of a conflict in public. Please click on the follow link to watch an explicative video clip of the *Avoiding* style:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5sBRLZLPTY&index=1&list=PL5EBFF28B8AB68F74
The ***Compromising*** style indicates intermediate concern for self and others. The styles sees both parties involved in give and-take or sharing solutions, whereby both parties accept to give up something to make mutually acceptable decisions. Compromising style may involve splitting the difference, exchanging concession, or seeking a quick, middle-ground position. A compromising person or party gives up more than a dominating but less than an obliging person or party. Similarly a compromising person or party addresses an issue more openly than an avoiding person or party but does not explore alternative solutions as an integrating person or party. Please click on the follow link to watch an explicative video clip of the *Compromising* style:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=udfEnC1kJZ8&list=PL5EBFF28B8AB68F74&index=4
The advantages and disadvantages of using one of the different 5 styles depend on the situation of conflict. The *Integrating* style can be useful for effectively dealing with conflicts involving complex problems, when decisions cannot be taken by a single individual thus the value of the differences of both parties involved. It can be unappropriated when immediate action is required, there is no time for problem solving, when the task to solve is simple, and the parties are unconcerned about outcomes or when they have not experience of problem solving.
The *Obliging* style can be useful when the party is not familiar with the issues involved in a conflict, when the party is unconcerned about outcomes, and for preserving a relationship that might be more important that the immediate outcomes, yet as a strategy when a party is willing to give up something with the hope of getting some benefits in the future. This style is not appropriate if the issue involved in a conflict is important to the party, and when there is a belief that the other party is wrong or acting unethically.
The *Dominating* style may useful when an immediate action is needed, or when an unfavourable decision taken by one of the parties involved in a conflict may be harmful to this party itself, when dealing with people who have not technical expertise to make decisions. This style is unappropriated if the issues involved in conflict are complex and there is enough time to make a good decision, by using problem solving, and when the issues are not important to the party.
The *Avoiding* style may be appropriate when the potential costs of confronting a conflict outweigh the benefits of its resolution, and when the task or problem to solve is trivial or simple. It may not be appropriate to use when the issue involved in a conflict is important to a party, when party it is given responsibility to make decisions, or when prompt action is required.
The *Compromising* style is advantageous when the goals of the conflicting parties are mutually exclusive, when an impasse occurs between parties equally powerful, when it is difficult to reach a consensus, or other styles have been used and found to be not effective in resolving the issues. This style is unappropriated when the issues involved in conflict refers to values, when are complex and there is enough time to make a good decision, by using problem solving.

Rahim model recognises that the appropriate use of one of the five styles depends on the conflict situation, therefore on the understanding of conflict and related capabilities to manage and resolve conflict. Therefore, the essence of conflict resolution and conflict management is the ability to communicate effectively.

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