



Student Focused Role-Playing Scenarios

Playful Pathways Towards Equity in Higher Education

Welcome to ROCKET

ROCKET is an innovative project co-funded by the Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnerships program. It seeks to develop a working concept for Critical Virtual Exchange which implements Role-Playing Games and Conflict Transformation. These novel modes of online interaction can aid participants to take on new perspectives and gain a deeper understanding of issues relating to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. In addition to students, the initiative offers educational formats aimed at teaching and administrative staff. Conceived by the universities of Göttingen, Groningen, and Uppsala, ROCKET seeks to improve European Higher Education while also connecting to local communities.

For more information visit <https://rocket-erasmus.eu/>

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STUDENT FOCUSED ROLE-PLAYING SCENARIOS



This document describes the role-playing game workshops and offers scenarios developed for students in Higher Education for the Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnership ROCKET. Developed by the universities of Uppsala, Göttingen, and Groningen, ROCKET develops critical virtual exchange (CVE) learning opportunities that train skills in conflict transformation through role-playing games (RPGs) to address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in higher education. For more on ROCKET, see [our linked website](#).

Note that this document is part of a larger Open Educational Resource (OER) that includes the entire trainings for students, teachers, and administrative staff. Please see those more extensive resources if you would like to adapt parts or all of the trainings for your own learning contexts. Our aim is to make these materials as accessible for new facilitators as possible, so we encourage you to feel emboldened to try these practices with your learners regardless of how experienced with role-playing games you are.

Overview of the ROCKET scenario design

In ROCKET, we focus on short, easy to play role-playing game scenarios with minimal details so that players can easily engage without feeling cognitively overwhelmed. The scenarios focus on common, everyday conflicts that occur in higher education settings. The characters are usually students, faculty members, and/or administrative staff. While students may not have experience working in a university setting, these roles are familiar enough that they can easily engage. Furthermore, imagining oneself in various positions can be illuminating, especially when exploring issues related to power and inclusion.

In terms of conflict related to DEI, we have decided upon a careful approach. Because of our emphasis on intercultural communication, some scenarios integrate common conflicts that arise as a result of language, cultural, belief systems, or religious differences. In some cases, characters will have caring responsibilities and other pressures related to diverse backgrounds. However, role-playing characters with marginalizations that one does not share can lead to stereotypical or even harmful behavior (Leonard, Janjetovic, and Usman 2021). Therefore, we do not usually detail the character's demographic characteristics, e.g., age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity.

We also try to avoid scenarios that prompt players to engage in micro- or macroaggressions toward one another. While such role-play can be illuminating in the right conditions, they require much stronger consent and safety practices than we believe can be established within the short timeframe and online context of a Critical Virtual Exchange with mandatory participation. For an example of a longer-form scenario designed to explore microaggressions, see Bowman, Hatcher, and Kim (2018).

Instead, we instead encourage participants to bring aspects of their own identities into the scenarios to the extent they feel comfortable doing so. We ask players to choose their character's name and pronouns, which can add elements of diversity, privilege, and/or marginalization depending on the context. We also lead them through improvisational play using metatechniques called the Hot Seat and Monologue, which prompt players to improvise their characters' inner thoughts and speak them externally. This practice allows them to insert content that is relevant to their own experience. These inner thoughts are heard by the players, but not the characters; the players can use them to subtly escalate the scene. For example, one character monologues, "I can't believe they are expecting me to do schoolwork on the weekends. I have to babysit my siblings all day." The player can then direct their own play accordingly to increase drama, e.g., having their character say, "It's not like you have anything better to do this weekend."

In this way, our role-playing game scenarios are not intended to be a competition between players with winners and losers, but rather exercises to help players increase intensity so they can feel conflict somatically in their body and have enough insight into the situation to analyze it, e.g., through identifying their character's positions, interests (Fischer and Ury 1981), feelings, and needs (Glasser 1998). They have the opportunity to practice different conflict styles, such as competing, avoiding, accommodating, compromising, and collaborating (Kilman 2024; Kraybill 2024). Students can also practice skills in nonviolent communication (Rosenberg 2015), e.g., through "I" Statements (adapted from Ohio Commission 2020).

Our aim is to teach students the basics of conflict transformation in an environment that feels safe enough for them to engage, but not so activating that they have difficulty learning. Important to this process is immediate debriefing just after the scene ends, so that players are still experiencing *bleed*, or the spillover of psychological aspects from the character to the player (Bowman 2015; Hugaas 2024). In this state, they can better understand the motivations and inner world of the character, as well as locate in their body where they can feel their reactions to conflict, e.g., somatically. This practice is built upon the principle that conflict is not just an intellectual exercise, but often deeply affects us emotionally in ways that can make it difficult to engage constructively, e.g., if we experience fight, flight, or fawn responses. Thus, ROCKET grounds socioemotional learning in embodied practice in addition to teaching theoretical knowledge relevant to conflict transformation.

Scenario structure

The scenarios are basic: no more than 2-3 lines. They feature 3 characters: Character A, who is confronting Character B and possibly also Character C about a conflict situation. Character B is sometimes directly involved in the conflict; other times they just happen to be the person delivering information or handling the situation.

Characters A and B are the primary people in the scene, with Character C also involved, observing, mediating or supporting in some way. This practice enables scenes with 3 students to take part. If your group only has 2 groups, you can remove Character C. An extra character is also briefly present to deliver the starting line, e.g., the administrative assistant, department head, or teacher. The facilitator will play that role and say the start phrase, then exit the scene as the character, transitioning back to the facilitator role.

The scenarios are intended to describe the situation neutrally, meaning no party is clearly in the right or wrong. This enables players to explore more nuanced aspects of conflict rather than leaning on stereotypical behavior or moralizing through the character. However, they are intended to be short. They should take no more than 3-5 minutes total with workshop and debrief, although in practice sometimes they take longer, especially if students ask questions or want to discuss at length in the debrief.

These scenes are intended to be tightly facilitated: one facilitator for every 3 characters. Therefore, in large classes, you will need multiple facilitators, e.g., a ratio of 1:6. In these cases, we recommend making sure you have at least 30 minutes for the actual role-playing part of the session, which gives you enough time to play two scenes and rotate among the players so everyone has a chance.

However, if you run out of time or only have time for one scene, you can allow the others to watch in their small group. As we tell the students, "Observation is also potent." We do not recommend asking students to role-play in front of the entire class, as they may feel more inhibited, which can lead to shyness, shutting down, shallow play, or disruptive behavior. However, in some cases, if you have willing participants who are eager to play, this practice may be your best option. Alternatively, you can ask facilitators to demo 2-person scenes in front of the whole class and have the students analyze what is happening.

Regardless of the number of facilitators, we usually include a demo session before every role-play. This practice allows students to understand the flow of the role-play, witness the meta-techniques in action, and see how the scene should be played. Also, the thought of escalating conflict in a classroom setting may feel uncomfortable for students, so watching teachers model this behavior can often be a great ice-breaker and give them permission to play more bravely. Importantly, you should model for them that the scenario is not meant to be solved, but rather escalated. Active conflict often feels uncomfortable for people. In polite settings, they will often unconsciously role-play constructive collaboration rather than allowing the conflict to increase in intensity. You may need to pause the scene and remind them to escalate. They will also be given a safety technique called Softer they can use to decrease the intensity of the scene if needed.

The facilitator does not need to be an expert at role-playing, but does need to have some skills at guiding a group workshop, being assertive, and managing time. Some of the metatechniques require interrupting the players, e.g., to ask for a Monologue or ask one of the characters to say the Last Line. This practice is described in more detail in the Facilitation video featured later in this document.

After the scenarios, we recommend bringing the larger class together to have more general debriefing questions for them. These questions should invite them to share, but not require personal details about their role-playing experience; allow them to opt-in to how deeply they want to share with the big group.

Similarly, if a player wants to opt-out of a scenario and just watch or pass during a debriefing round, we recommend allowing them to do so, provided they do not disrupt the activity. If they are strongly resistant to role-play, we recommend offering an alternative assignment, e.g., watching the recorded demo video in this document and analyzing it according to the concepts in conflict transformation.

Finally, if your context permits, we recommend having one facilitator assigned to safety duties. For example, in some higher education institutions, you may be able to request a counselor join the session, whether sitting aside in a physical classroom or in the main room in a video conference while the small groups are in breakout rooms. This person can address anything that arises for players that needs to be processed in the moment, for example by taking them to a breakout room. In critical virtual exchanges, we also recommend having someone stay in the main room to handle any technical issues that arise, such as students arriving late or having internet issues who need to be moved to their breakout rooms. This person can also be responsible for safety if need be.

While in most situations, safety help will not be needed, clearly indicating to the students who they should contact if something emotionally overwhelming arises can help everyone feel safer engaging with these activities. For more information, see the Safety video later in this document.

ROCKET facilitation, safety techniques, and demos are explored in more depth in videos featured later in this document.

Core seeds for the role-playing scenarios

In the ROCKET project through collaboration with our advisory board, we identified several core seeds that often fuel conflicts relevant to diversity, equity, and inclusion. These seeds form the core of the scenes, which are often tied to the basic human needs. These core seeds allow anyone to adapt the details of the scenarios for different contexts as long as they keep the basic component the same, e.g., adapting situations more relevant to students for an admin staff training group.

The core seeds are the following:

- Issues with **group work dynamics**, e.g., being late, ghosting, not contributing work;
 - *Example human need involved:* Security.
- Issues with **power**, e.g., feeling overpowered, cut out of decision making, unfairly treated, talked over;
 - *Example human need involved:* Power.
- Issues with **rejection**, e.g., feeling overlooked, ignored, one's ideas being removed or not considered, one's culture critiqued, the “odd one out”;
 - *Example human need involved:* Belonging.
- Issues with **demands on time**;
 - *Example human need involved:* Freedom.
- Issues with **different belief systems**;
 - *Example human need involved:* Belonging.
- Issues with **different needs**, e.g., one person needs to be social (positive face) whereas another needs to get work done alone (autonomous face) (Goffman 1967).
 - *Example human need involved:* Fun.

Note that while we have suggested some human needs here, your participants should be invited to detail one or more human needs relevant to the situation for their characters, which they do in

the Hot Seat and debriefing exercises. Often, characters will have different human needs at stake, which offers insights that you can help them unpack during the debrief.

The scenarios are organized according to core seeds, as well as our assessment of the difficulty, i.e., whether they are basic or more advanced. By difficulty, we mean that some scenarios are more sensitive or feature more challenging content. We recommend only trying these scenarios in contexts where the students have high trust established with the facilitator(s) and each other and a certain degree of maturity to handle the content sensitively. You should also consider these matters when designing your own scenarios.

When in doubt, stick to the basic scenarios. Remember, the goal of these exercises is not to explore complex topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion or other sensitive topics. You might consider approaching such topics instead in a structured class discussion or reflection journal. We ask students to role-play so they can learn the basic skills that can help them in more complex situations in their daily lives.

If you are interested in adapting these scenarios for your own context or designing your own, we recommend playtesting your scenarios before piloting them in your courses, ideally with your target group, but if not, with your co-facilitators.

For more information about scenario design, see Josefin Westborg's "XX" video featured later in this document.

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Preparatory materials

Videos

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Additional materials

Videos

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ROLE-PLAYING SCENARIOS FOR STUDENTS



ROCKET role-playing scenarios for students

The scenarios are grouped based on the core seed of the conflict, as well as our assessment of whether they are basic or require more advanced engagement. Note that some scenes contain more than one core seed.

Scenarios about group work dynamics

Basic scenarios

* * *

There is no I in Team...

Three students are assigned to a team to put together a class project. **Student A** has been doing the majority of the work and confronts **Student B** and **C** at their next group work meeting. **Student C** is new to the group, while **Student B** has been there all semester.

Start phrase: *Teacher:* “Okay, class, you have thirty minutes to go over your research project with your group, starting now...”

* * *

This meeting could have been a text message...

Student A wants to work independently and communicate over text on their part of a group project, whereas **Student B** and **Student C** prefer to schedule meetings to discuss the project. **Student A** is confronting **Student B** and **Student C**.

Start phrase: *Teacher:* “Remember that all group work needs to be submitted by the end of the week...”

Advanced scenarios

* * *

Everyone is using it!

Student A believes the use of AI is unethical and is confronting **Students B** and **C**, who used generative AI to complete their parts of the group assignment. **Student B** thinks AI makes the work easier, while **Student C** thinks AI is necessary to get a good grade.

Start phrase: *Teacher:* “Remember that your group assignment must be at least 5000 words...”

* * *

Can I join too?

Student A missed the first sessions of class due to late registration. The teacher assigned **Student A** to a group with **Student B** and **C**, who are good friends from a previous class and have been meeting about the project without **Student A**. **Student A** is confronting **Student B**, who was supposed to send the details of the meeting.

Start phrase: *Teacher:* “Make sure you write down what each group member contributed to the assignment before turning it in next time!”

* * *

Stop ghosting us!

Student A is confronting **Student B** about not answering texts about their group project for weeks. **Student C** is concerned they will lose their student visa if they fail the project.

Start phrase: *Teacher:* “Remember that the deadline for your group project is in three days!”

* * *

Scenarios about power

Basic scenarios

* * *

I'm never dishonest!

Student A is upset about a failing grade they received from **Teacher B**. **Teacher B** says that **Student A** plagiarized their paper off the Internet, when **Student A** thought they were doing research properly. **Department Chair C** is observing the exchange at a meeting in their office.

Start phrase: *Administrative assistant:* "Your 3pm appointment is here..."

* * *

Advanced scenarios

It's too much work!

Student A is representing the entire class, who believe the homework is too extensive for the amount of hours allocated to the course. **Teacher B** has insisted to the students that the amount of homework is reasonable for the level of the class. **Director of Studies C** has called **Student A** and **Teacher B** into a meeting to listen to their feedback.

Start phrase: *Administrative assistant:* "I believe the Director of Studies is back from lunch now..."

* * *

Who put you in charge?

Student A is upset because **Student B** has been making decisions about the group work without consulting the other members. **Student B** believes the group needs a clear leader. **Student C** feels overwhelmed by the workload.

Start phrase: *Teacher:* "You have the next half an hour to discuss your group project..."

* * *

* * *

Is my work not good enough?

Student A contributed several hours worth of work to a group writing assignment, which Student B removed from the current draft because it didn't seem relevant. Student C is not sure whether or not to add new parts of their own.

Start phrase: *Teacher:* "You have some time to discuss your group project now..."

* * *

Scenarios about rejection

Basic scenarios

* * *

I feel like I'm missing out...

Student A is struggling in group work because **Student B** and **Student C** often switch to their native language, which **Student A** doesn't speak. **Student A** is confronting **Student B** and **Student C**.

Start phrase: *Instructor:* "You have 45 minutes to meet with your group starting now..."

* * *

Advanced scenarios

* * *

I was passed over for a permanent job!

Student Teacher A was doing a job in the department as a substitute for a colleague who left, but was not given the permanent position when one became available.

Supervisor B hired the other person instead of **Student Teacher A**. **Student C** is **Student Teacher A**'s friend who is there to provide support.

Start phrase: *Administrative Assistant:* "The supervisor is now back from lunch..."

* * *

You always talk over me!

Student A is often interrupted by **Student B** in class discussions. **Student B** is enthusiastic about the class material and enjoys contributing thoughts. **Teacher C** is overhearing the discussion.

Start phrase: *Teacher:* "Thank you for another excellent discussion today!"

* * *

* * *

Not everyone can afford to live like that....

Student B makes jokes about **Student A** still living with their parents far from campus, while **Student B** and **Student C** live near campus in a high-rent apartment. **Student A** is confronting **Student B**.

Start phrase: *Another student:* "Bye everyone! See you at the campus party Friday night."

* * *

Scenarios about demands on time

Basic scenarios

* * *

I need an answer!

Student A has been writing time sensitive emails about their project to **Student B** over the weekend needing a response as soon as possible. **Student B** does not check emails over the weekend. **Student C** cannot move forward with their work until **Student B** answers.

Start phrase: *Instructor:* “Now you have some time to talk about your project...”

* * *

Can we meet again this week?

Student A wants **Teacher B** to be accessible for meetings outside of their posted office hours because **Student A** needs more support. **Teacher B** believes strongly in work-life balance and keeps strong boundaries around their time. **Parent C** is joining the conversation but letting **Student A** handle most of the discussion.

Reminder: **Parent C** is mostly a witness and support to **Student A**.

Start phrase: *Administrative Assistant:* “The teacher is in their office hours now...”

* * *

Advanced scenarios

Can we take more breaks?

Student A needs more breaks during long class sessions. **Teacher B** has a lot of content to cover to prepare the students for their exam. **Student C** is worried about missing important content and failing the exam.

Start phrase: *Another student:* “The teacher is coming in now...”

* * *

* * *

I just couldn't make it to class...

Teacher A has asked for a meeting with **Student B** to discuss lack of attendance, which has been affecting **Student B's** grade. **Student B** has been struggling with mental health challenges that only **Student C** knows about. **Student C** also came to the meeting to be supportive.

Start phrase: *Administrative Assistant:* "The teacher's office is down the hall..."

* * *

Scenarios about different belief systems

Basic scenarios

* * *

Is that really appropriate?

Student A does not believe alcohol should be allowed on campus at university and is confronting **Student B**, who had a beer before class over lunch. **Student C** has health issues and cannot drink alcohol.

Start phrase: *Teacher:* "We'll start class again in 5 minutes!"

* * *

Advanced scenarios

* * *

My beliefs are valid!

Student A is religious and gets upset when **Student B** makes anti-religious comments in class. **Student B** is an atheist who has strong opinions about religion. **Student C** is culturally religious and takes part only in holidays.

Start phrase: *Teacher:* "See everyone again next class session!"

* * *

This class is outdated!

Student A is upset by some of the views presented in the course materials, which were written decades ago. **Teacher B** thinks everyone should read the foundational texts of the field, even if they are biased. **Student C** is not sure which parts of the course they should focus on for the upcoming test.

Start phrase: *Another student:* "See you all next class!"

* * *

* * *

We solved that a long time ago...

Student B is confronting **Student A**, who has been making comments in class discussions that they don't think there is a need for feminism in society anymore. **Student B** believes feminism is more needed than ever before. **Teacher C** wants to guide the discussion to remain constructive.

Start phrase: *Another student:* "Shh everyone! Class is starting."

* * *

Scenarios about different needs

Basic scenarios

* * *

It's too loud!

Student A needs quiet while studying and is confronting **Student B**, who often plays background music when studying in the same room. **Student C** is a friend listening in on conversation.

Start phrase: *Radio Announcer:* "You are listening to the Relaxing Tracks radio station..."

* * *

I need to do my best!

Student A needs to get the highest grade possible on a group project to keep their scholarship, while **Student B** only wants to complete enough work to obtain a minimal passing grade. **Student C** wants **Student B** to join them for a social activity that evening.

Start phrase: *Teacher:* "Remember to follow the assignment instructions carefully for your project this week!"

* * *

Advanced scenarios

I don't have time!

Student A is frustrated that **Students B** and **C** have not done more work on their group project. **Student A** has to commute from another city for class meetings. **Student B** has a young sibling to babysit at home. **Student C** works part-time.

Start phrase: *Teacher:* "You should be putting the final touches on your project this week..."

* * *

* * *

Can we get started already?

Student A needs a lot of structure and wants the group to work in advance before the deadline of their final assignment. **Student B** tends to prioritize other activities and turn in projects right before the deadline. **Student C** admires **Student A's** work ethic and wants to impress them.

Start phrase: *Teacher:* "Remember that in one month, your final group assignment is due."

* * *



Positions, Interests, Feelings, and Needs Role-playing Scenarios

Facilitation Instructions

Goals

- 1) Noticing one's own positions, interests, needs, and emotions when in conflict
- 2) Identifying and describing both feeling and thinking states
- 3) Hypothesizing the positions, interests, needs, and emotions of another person when in conflict

Group size

- 1 facilitator per 2-6 players
- **Ideally:** Each group member will play at least one character.
 - If fewer than 6, rotate so that players have the opportunity to play **Character A** and/or **B**. If only 2 players, remove **Character C**.

Time

- **Ideally:** 40 minutes total
 - 10 minutes for the facilitator Demo Scenario, 30 minutes for Scenarios I and II.
 - 10-15 minutes per Scenario, including pre-scene instructions and debrief.
 - If short on time, cut the Demo Scenario and/or Scenario II.



Meta Techniques

Used by facilitators:

- **Cut:** Cuts the scene, often before the conflict is “resolved.”
- **Pause:** Pauses the scene, usually to call for another meta technique or give instructions to the players.
- **Escalate:** Reminds participants to escalate the conflict in the scene.
- **Hot Seat / Monologue:** The player is asked to reveal briefly what their character is thinking. The players hear these thoughts, but the character does not.
- **Last Line:** The player is asked to end the scene by saying the last line that comes to their mind.

Safety Techniques

Can be used by both players and facilitators:

- **Softer:** Say “Softer” to ask participants to Soften their play.
- **Pause Check-in:** Say this to pause and check in with others.
- **X-Card:** Say or type “X” at any time to ask certain content to be removed or avoided. No questions asked. **Example:** “X for content around death.”
- **Cut:** Say “Cut” at any time to end the scene.
- **Opt-out:** Say or type “Opt-out” at any time to opt-out of the scene.
- **The Door is Always Open:** Players can leave at any time, but should let the facilitator know if they are not returning.
- **Emotional Support:** If possible, have one facilitator on standby available in the main room.
 - **If online:** Players can private message them to ask for a breakout room or chat.
 - **If in-person:** The facilitator should take the player somewhere more private if possible.



Demo Scenario

I need an answer!

Student A has been writing time sensitive emails about their project to **Student B** over the weekend needing a response as soon as possible. **Student B** does not check emails over the weekend.

Start phrase: *Instructor:* “Now you have some time to talk about your project...”

* * *

- 1) **If online:** Post the scenario in the chat.
- 2) Ask a participant if they are willing to play Student A. Do the same for B and C.

PRO TIP: If they opt-out or want a different character, adapt, e.g., by removing Character C, asking another group member to join, or offering a different character.

- 3) Have participants name their characters and add pronouns.
 - a) **If in person:** Write this information down somewhere all players can see it. Clearly mark A, B, and C.
 - b) **If online:** Have the players write this information in the chat along with A, B, or C.
- 4) Their **position** is provided in the scenario. They can further clarify as needed, but avoid long discussion about position.
- 5) Give a Silent Hotseat where you prompt the participants to consider silently the following questions. Pause for a few seconds before asking the next question to give the participants time to think:
 - What is your character’s position?
 - Why does this position matter to them?
 - How do they feel about this situation?
 - What needs feel threatened in this situation: security, fun, freedom, belonging, or power? (Make sure to read each need out loud slowly).
- 6) Play the scenario **once**, making sure each person plays at least **one (1) role** in **one (1) scenario**. **Remember** you can use **Pause**, **Monologue**, **Softer**, and **Last Line**.
- 7) **Debrief:** Debrief questions for each player are on **feelings** and **needs**. Ask each question separately, then ask the same person the follow up question before switching to the next person:



- a) "What did **your character** feel in this scene?"
- b) "What needs of **your characters** felt threatened? Remember the human needs are **security, fun, belonging, freedom, and power.**"

PRO TIP: Instruct participants to share only 1-2 sentences total as a guideline, **distilling the essence.**



Scenario I

I'm never dishonest!

Student A is upset about a failing grade they received. **Teacher B** says that **Student A** plagiarized their paper off the Internet. **Student A** thought they were doing research properly. **Department Chair C** is observing the exchange at a meeting in their office.

Start phrase: *Administrative assistant:* "Your 3pm appointment is here..."

* * *

- 1) **If online:** Post the scenario in the chat.
- 2) Ask a participant if they are willing to play Student A. Do the same for B and C.

PRO TIP: If they opt-out or want a different character, adapt, e.g., by removing Character C, asking another group member to join, or offering a different character.

- 3) Have participants name their characters and add pronouns.
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- 7) **Debrief:** Debrief questions for each player are on **feelings** and **needs**. Ask each question separately, then ask the same person the follow up question before switching to the next person:



- a) "What did **your character** feel in this scene?"
- b) "What needs of **your characters** felt threatened? Remember the human needs are **security, fun, belonging, freedom, and power.**"

PRO TIP: Instruct participants to share only 1-2 sentences total as a guideline, **distilling the essence.**



Scenario II

I need to do my best!

Student A needs to get the highest grade possible on a group project to keep their scholarship, while **Student B** only wants to complete enough work to obtain a minimal passing grade. **Student C** wants **Student B** to join them for a social activity that evening.

Start phrase: *Teacher:* “Remember to follow the assignment instructions carefully for your project this week!”

* * *

- 1) **If online:** Post the scenario in the chat.
- 2) Ask a participant if they are willing to play Student A. Do the same for B and C.

PRO TIP: If they opt-out or want a different character, adapt, e.g., by removing Character C, asking another group member to join, or offering a different character.

- 3) Have participants name their characters and add pronouns.
 - a) **If in person:** Write this information down somewhere all players can see it. Clearly mark A, B, and C.
 - b) **If online:** Have the players write this information in the chat along with A, B, or C.
- 4) Their **position** is provided in the scenario. They can further clarify as needed, but avoid long discussion about position.
- 5) Give a Silent Hotseat where you prompt the participants to consider silently the following questions. Pause for a few seconds before asking the next question to give the participants time to think:
 - What is your character’s position?
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- 6) Play the scenario **once**, making sure each person plays at least **one (1) role** in **one (1) scenario**. **Remember** you can use **Pause**, **Monologue**, **Softer**, and **Last Line**.
- 7) **Debrief:** Debrief questions for each player are on **feelings** and **needs**. Ask each question separately, then ask the same person the follow up question before switching to the next person:



- a) “What did **your character** feel in this scene?”
- b) “What needs of **your characters** felt threatened? Remember the human needs are **security, fun, belonging, freedom, and power.**”

PRO TIP: Instruct participants to share only 1-2 sentences total as a guideline, **distilling the essence.**

A stylized teal bird-like shape that forms the outline of a rocket, with a flame-like tail pointing downwards.

ROCKET

Positions, Interests,
Feelings, and Needs

An Erasmus+ Higher Education Cooperation Partnership
Göttingen University, Uppsala University, Groningen University
Student Virtual Exchange

Getting to Know Each Other

When you enter, please type the following in the chat:

- My name is _____.
- My pronouns are _____.*
- My university is _____.
- Fill in the blank on the Card for Connection:
 - “If I had unlimited creativity and support, I would _____”

*Consider including your pronouns with your name:
Participants → ... → Rename



If I had
unlimited
creativity &
support,
I would ____.

Image courtesy of Erin Hickok.
Cards for Connection available
at Gamesforhumanity.com

Your Facilitators

Name, Institution (acronym)

Name, Institution (acronym)

Name, Institution (acronym)

Name, Institution (acronym)

Name, Institution (acronym)

Name, Institution (acronym)

Community Group Norms

- **Facilitators: start and end on time; and answer your questions in a variety of mediums.**
- Participate as fully as possible.
- Consider what's shared by others confidential.
- Share “air time” with others when speaking. (We may take questions first from folks who haven't yet had the chance to speak).
- Remain muted during the session until you're about to speak.
- Keep video on throughout the session if possible.
- Please use the raise hand in Zoom feature to speak. Let's try it now!
- If you need to step away for more than a few minutes, inform facilitators in chat – impacts breakout groups.
- Minimize use of chat.
- Jot down quick notes to keep track of new concepts and ask questions.
- Please put your pronouns and your institution's acronym next to your name.
- Please do not share conflicts about people in this course or who are identifiable by others.

Journaling Exercise (5 min)

Personal reflection to be shared in pairs later:

Consider a *personal* conflict that occurred at in your educational journey, either in the past or present, that stands out for you.

or

Consider a conflict that occurred at work you have *witnessed* or can *imagine* taking place hypothetically.

- Briefly (5 minutes) journal using pen/paper or digital form.
- Later you will share your thoughts with your group.

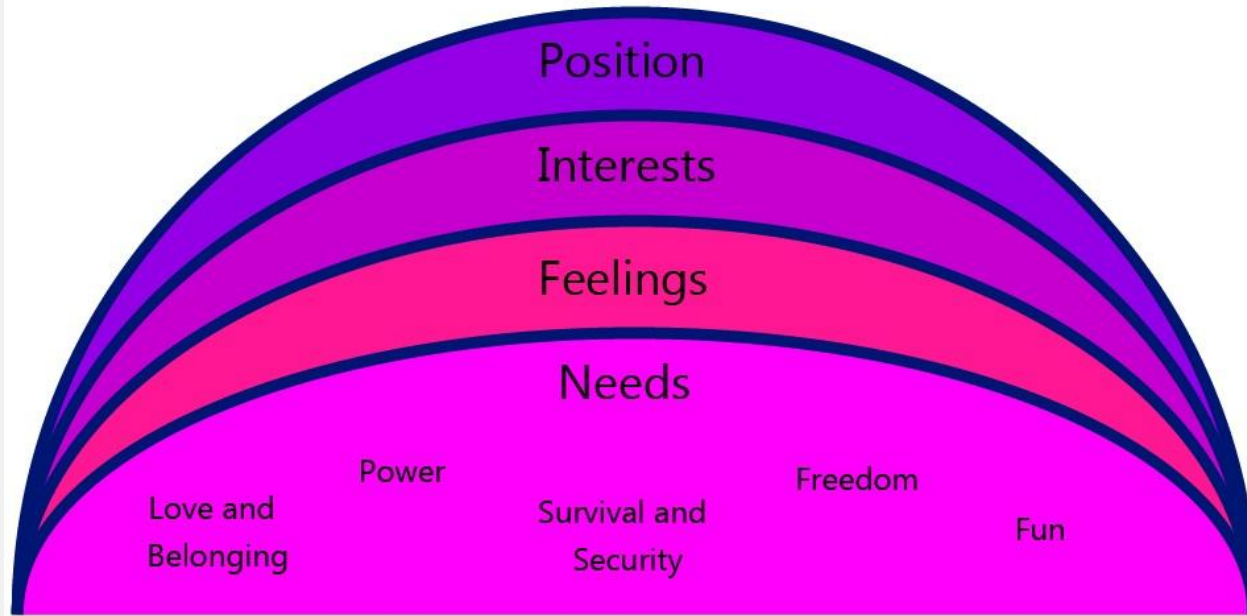
Note: You may use the same conflict as last time or a new one.

As we begin, it is helpful to know...

When we learn to *DO* something new, we go through about 7 stages.

1. Awareness
2. Knowledge and Information
3. Awkward Engagement
4. Phoniness and Artificiality
5. Mechanical Use
6. Routine and Customary
7. Creative and Innovative

The Psychology of Conflict



Some layers of a conflict are on the surface, whereas others are less obvious.

The Layers of Conflict

Positions: What you want to happen in this situation.

Ex. The break in between courses should be longer.

Interests: Why you want it to happen. **Ex.** What aspects of your life are impacted by this happening or not happening?

Ex. I need more time to visit my relatives in another country.

The Layers of Conflict

Feelings: What feelings are connected to this topic for you in the moment.

Ex. Anger, grief, longing, alienation.

Needs: What human needs feel threatened or at stake as a result of this not happening

- e.g., power, belonging, security, freedom, fun (Glasser 1998)?

Ex. **Belonging** with family may feel threatened, **freedom** to manage one's schedule as one chooses

Group Activity:

Let's try it with an academic argument:

Positions: What you want to happen in this situation.

Ex. All genders should be paid the same as cis-men for the same job.

Interests: Why you want it to happen. Ex. What aspects of your life are impacted by this happening or not happening?

Ex. ??

The Layers of Conflict

Feelings: What feelings are connected to this topic for you in the moment.

Ex. ??

Needs: What human needs feel threatened or at stake as a result of this not happening

- e.g., power, belonging, security, freedom, fun (Glasser 1998).

Ex. ??

With your partner, answer the following questions.

Make sure everyone has time to share (5 minutes per person):

Human needs: love/belonging, security/safety, power, freedom, fun

- My name is _____.
- My pronouns are _____.
- The conflict I chose is _____ (3 sentences).
- One (1) Human Need that may have been at stake in this conflict for one party was _____.
- One (1) Human Need that may have been at stake in this conflict for the other party was _____.
- Were the ways each party tried to get their needs met **appropriate** or
 - **harmful** to others?

Emotions and Conflict

- Emotions may be obvious and on the surface, indicating we are in conflict with someone.
- Other times, we may not be aware that emotions are driving our reactions.
- Emotions can escalate conflict and cloud our judgment.
 - Feelings are not facts.
- However, feelings also tell us when something is at risk that is important to us

Emotional Activation vs. Conscious Choice

When we feel **activated in conflict**, our emotions can overwhelm our conscious decision making processes.

To be activated is to become emotionally hijacked by the instinctive parts of our brain. We may feel compelled to:

- **Fight** someone or something in the situation, e.g. competing or escalating.
- **Flee** the situation, e.g. avoiding.
- **Freeze**, staying still, but completely unable to respond, e.g. feeling trapped in terror.
- **Fawn**, trying to appear non-threatening and appeasing, e.g. accommodating.

The Role of Anger in Conflict

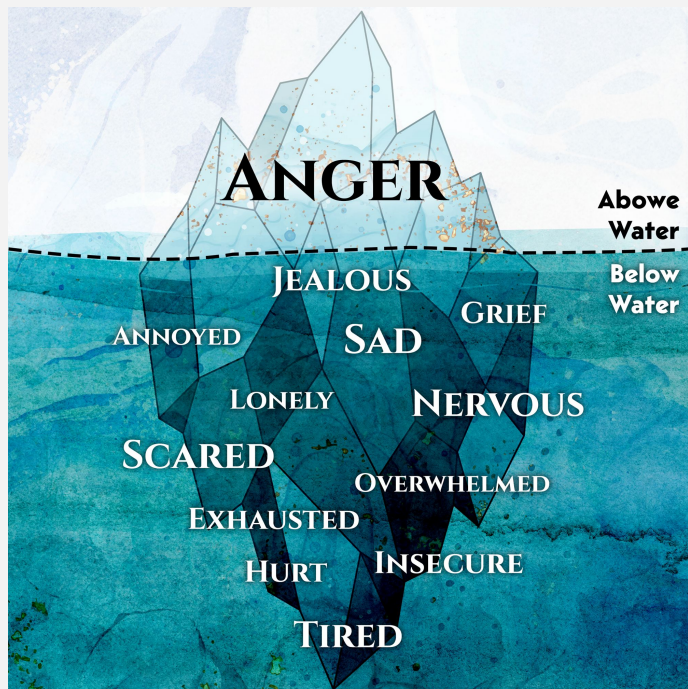


Image: Kate Blomgren and Daria Shpak for Evocative Games AB.

- Anger is sometimes the tip of the emotional iceberg.
 - Anger may be a natural emotion when we perceive our needs are being threatened.
 - A different emotion may come first and remain masked by anger (fear, grief, sorrow, etc).
 - Alternatively, some of us may feel disconnected from our anger.

Emotions and Conflict

- We can engage more constructively in conflict by **raising awareness** around and **observing** our emotions.
- If we feel safe enough, we can **voice our emotions** to others as they arise, allowing others to **validate** them.
- If we feel **safe enough**, we can **encourage others to voice their emotions** in constructive ways, helping them feel heard and valued.

Ultimately:

- Emotions are important signals that reveal our inner needs.
- We can acknowledge emotions and be curious about what they are communicating without letting them rule us.
- We can practice **emotional regulation** to avoid harming ourselves and others.
- Validating the emotions and experiences of others can help mitigate damage in conflicts.
- Respecting that everyone has unique emotional responses to conflict based on their experiences and cultural norms.

10 Minute Break

Why role-playing?

- Practice makes competent!
- Experience + reflection = learning
- Character and fiction give us personal distance
- Fun!

Emotions can aid in learning:

- It's totally normal to be nervous or unsure! You can't do this "the wrong way."
- Participants may embody characters or situations that are triggering or upsetting. We are here to support you!

Going Deeper with Positions, Interests, Feelings, and Needs

- We will role-play in small groups guided by a facilitator
- Over the course of the series, everyone will get a chance
- Observation is potent
- **Safety tools:** Role-playing can be surprisingly intense! Here are some tools you can use as needed:
 - **Softer:** You can ask participants to Soften their play by saying “Softer.”
 - **Pause Check-in:** You can pause for to check in with others.
 - **X-Card:** You can say or type “X” at any time to ask certain content to be removed or avoided. No questions asked. Example: “X for content around death”
 - **Cut:** You can call “Cut” at any time to end the scene.

Establishing Norms for Role-playing

- **Safety tools:**

- **Opt-out:** You can opt-out of a scene by saying or typing “Opt-out” at any time
- **Door is always open:** You can leave at any time, but please let your facilitator know if you are not returning.
- **Emotional Support:** If you need emotional support, Cora is available in the main room.
 - Private message them
 - Ask for a breakout room or chat

Establishing Norms for Role-playing

- **From facilitators:** You may hear the following words:
 - **Cut:** Cuts the scene, often before the conflict is “resolved”
 - **Pause:** Pauses the scene
 - **Monologue:** The player is asked to reveal briefly what their character is thinking
 - **Last Line:** The player is asked to end the scene by saying the last line that comes to their mind.

Role-playing Instructions

- Characters should NOT try to be good listeners or resolve the problem, at least not from the start. Escalate!
- Both characters will be asked to pause, then try the “I” Message script.
- We may ask for characters to refine their wording as we go. This is not a critique and will not affect your grade! We are all practicing.
- Please do not lean on stereotypes of marginalized groups in your role-play

Demo Role-playing Exercise

- The facilitators will role-play a scenario analyzing Positions, Interests, Feelings, and Needs and I-Statements

Breakout Groups

- 1-2 Scenarios (10-15 minutes each) with facilitator, Groups of 3-6
- 30 minutes
- If you're not in a scene, please observe quietly with camera on, participate in discussion

Big Group Discussion

- What did you find surprising or intriguing about this exercise?
- Was it difficult to use the I-Statement or identify the layers of conflict? Why or why not?
 - Questions?

References

Fisher, Roger, and William Ury. 1981. *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*. 1st Ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Glasser, William. 1998. *Choice Theory: A New Psychology of Personal Freedom*. Harper.

Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management and The Ohio Department of Education. 2000. *Let's Resolve Conflicts Together: Elementary School Classroom Activities*. Conflict Management Week, May 1-7, 2000. Retrieved from ERIC. [Link here](#).

Image: NaomiBooth on Pixabay.



Thanks!

Name, Institution (acronym), email address

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Name, Institution (acronym), email address



Conflict Styles Role-play Scenarios

Facilitation Instructions

Goals

- 1) Identifying different conflict styles
- 2) Practicing different conflict styles during escalating situations

Group size

- 1 facilitator per 2-6 players
- **Ideally:** Each group member will play at least one character.
 - If fewer than 6, rotate so that players have the opportunity to play **Character A** and/or **B**. If only 2 players, remove **Character C**.

Time

- **Ideally:** 55 minutes total
 - 10-15 minutes to take the Elements Conflict Styles Inventory (see end of this document)
 - Make sure students calculate their **most** and **least** used conflict styles in times of Calm and Storm. If tied, ask them to choose one.
 - 10 minutes for facilitator Demo Scenario, 30 minutes for Scenarios I and II.
 - 10-15 minutes per Scenario, including pre-scene instructions and debrief.
 - After the first scene is played with the player's **most used** conflict style, pause, then debrief. Then, run the scene again with the player's **least used** conflict style, then debrief again. Do not call for another Hot Seat to save time.
 - If short on time, cut the Demo Scenario and/or Scenario II.



Meta Techniques

Used by facilitators:

- **Cut:** Cuts the scene, often before the conflict is “resolved.”
- **Pause:** Pauses the scene, usually to call for another meta technique or give instructions to the players.
- **Escalate:** Reminds participants to escalate the conflict in the scene.
- **Hot Seat / Monologue:** The player is asked to reveal briefly what their character is thinking. The players hear these thoughts, but the character does not.
- **Last Line:** The player is asked to end the scene by saying the last line that comes to their mind.

Safety Techniques

Can be used by both players and facilitators:

- **Softer:** Say “Softer” to ask participants to Soften their play.
- **Pause Check-in:** Say this to pause and check in with others.
- **X-Card:** Say or type “X” at any time to ask certain content to be removed or avoided. No questions asked. **Example:** “X for content around death.”
- **Cut:** Say “Cut” at any time to end the scene.
- **Opt-out:** Say or type “Opt-out” at any time to opt-out of the scene.
- **The Door is Always Open:** Players can leave at any time, but should let the facilitator know if they are not returning.
- **Emotional Support:** If possible, have one facilitator on standby available in the main room.
 - **If online:** Players can private message them to ask for a breakout room or chat.
 - **If in-person:** The facilitator should take the player somewhere more private if possible.



Conflict Styles Character Descriptions

- If you have not already done so in the session, take turns reading these descriptions out loud to bring more voices into the room. If necessary, ask students to read one and pass along to the next.

The Competer

You have to fight to achieve your goals in life because others may try to take it from you, may not care about your needs, or may ignore the needs of others.

You **value** standing up for what you believe is right. You **fear** that others will ignore your needs or take advantage of you.

Note: The Competer can escalate situations quickly. Try to compete “softly” rather than aggressively. Remember anyone can call Softer to decrease the intensity of play.

The Avoider

You avoid conflict at all costs because you believe that conflict will inevitably lead to yourself or other people getting hurt.

You **value** your independence and privacy. You **fear** that conflict will harm you or others if discussed out in the open.

Note: To play the Avoider, try to avoid in ways that create play for others rather than shutting down. As examples, change the subject or minimize the importance of the conflict.

The Accommodator

You often seek to de-escalate by addressing conflicts by calming everyone down and adjusting the environment to make them (and you) more comfortable.

You **value** your relationships with others, as well as group tranquility and harmony. You **fear** that conflicts will escalate and will lead to more suffering for the people you love.



The Compromiser

You often consider ways for everyone to get some of their needs met in any given situation.

You **value** fairness and listening to all sides in a conflict. You **fear** that if conflicts are not addressed swiftly and reasonably, they will escalate beyond the point where they can be resolved and last longer than need be.

The Collaborator

You are not afraid to take the time it needs to gather information about everyone's perspectives and to brainstorm solutions that work for all parties.

You **value** teamwork and taking the time to find solutions that are both effective and fulfilling for everyone involved. You **fear** that one or more people in a conflict will stop being willing to collaborate on shared solutions.



Demo Scenario

Which system do I use???

Teacher A is confused about the new grading system and stressed due to an administrative deadline. **Staff Member B** is totally overworked. Teacher A goes to the help desk for clarification where **Staff Member B** is working.

- **Teacher A:** Compete
- **Staff Member B:** Avoid

Start phrase: *Administrative Assistant:* “Go ahead and make your way into their office and ask...”

* * *

- 1) **If online:** Post the scenario in the chat.
- 2) Ask a participant if they are willing to play Student A. Do the same for B and C.

PRO TIP: If they opt-out or want a different character, adapt, e.g., by removing Character C, asking another group member to join, or offering a different character.

- 3) Have participants name their characters and add pronouns.
 - a) **If in person:** Write this information down somewhere all players can see it. Clearly mark A, B, and C.
 - b) **If online:** Have the players write this information in the chat along with A, B, or C.
- 4) Ask them to **name their most used conflict style**. Check in to make sure they feel that style is playable.
 - a) **If needed, remind them how to play the Avoider:** Minimize the importance or change the subject.
 - b) **If needed, remind them how to play the Competer:** Compete more softly rather than aggressively.
- 5) **Hot Seat:** Ask each player to answer **a clarifying question** as their character, e.g.,
 - “Sally, what deadline is approaching that is causing you stress?”
 - “Charlie, how many people have asked you about this same issue this week?”
- 6) **Start the scene** with the **starting line** in the scenario (unless they start themselves), e.g. “The department chair will see you now...”
- 7) **Remember** you can use **Pause**, **Monologue**, **Softer**, and **Last Line**.



8) Play the same scenario **twice**. **Start** with the ***most used*** conflict style.

9) At the height of conflict, Pause.

10) **Ask debrief questions:**

- “How did it feel in your body to use this conflict style? Where in your body did you feel it?”

11) Ask them to **name their most used conflict style**. Check in to make sure they feel that style is playable.

- a) **If needed, remind them how to play the Avoider:** Minimize the importance or change the subject.
- b) **If needed, remind them how to play the Competer:** Compete more softly rather than aggressively.

12) Play the scene again with the ***least used*** conflict styles.

13) At the height of conflict, Cut.

14) **Ask debrief questions:**

- “How did it feel in your body to use this conflict style? Where in your body did you feel it?”

PRO TIP: Instruct participants to share only 1-2 sentences total as a guideline, **distilling the essence**.



Scenario I

There is no I in Team...

Student A has been doing the majority of the work for a group project. **Student A** confronts **Student B** and **C** at their next group work meeting. **Student C** is new to the group, while **Student B** has been there all semester.

Start phrase: *Teacher:* “Okay, class, you have thirty minutes to go over your research project with your group, starting now...”

* * *

- 1) **If online:** Post the scenario in the chat.
 - 2) Ask a participant if they are willing to play Student A. Do the same for B and C.
- PRO TIP:** If they opt-out or want a different character, adapt, e.g., by removing Character C, asking another group member to join, or offering a different character.
- 3) Have participants name their characters and add pronouns.
 - a) **If in person:** Write this information down somewhere all players can see it. Clearly mark A, B, and C.
 - b) **If online:** Have the players write this information in the chat along with A, B, or C.
 - 4) Ask them to **name their most used conflict style**. Check in to make sure they feel that style is playable.
 - a) **If needed, remind them how to play the Avoider:** Minimize the importance or change the subject.
 - b) **If needed, remind them how to play the Competer:** Compete more softly rather than aggressively.
 - 5) **Hot Seat:** Ask each player to answer **a clarifying question** as their character, e.g.,
 - “Sally, why is it so frustrating to you when the others don’t contribute as much?”
 - “Charlie, what has been happening in your life that makes it difficult to contribute to the project?”
 - 6) **Start the scene** with the **starting line** in the scenario (unless they start themselves), e.g. “The department chair will see you now...”
 - 7) **Remember** you can use **Pause**, **Monologue**, **Softer**, and **Last Line**.



- 8) Play the same scenario **twice**. **Start** with the ***most used*** conflict style.
- 9) At the height of conflict, Pause.
- 10) **Ask debrief questions:**
 - a) “How did it feel in your body to use this conflict style? Where in your body did you feel it?”
- 11) Ask them to **name their most used conflict style**. Check in to make sure they feel that style is playable.
 - a) **If needed, remind them how to play the Avoider:** Minimize the importance or change the subject.
 - b) **If needed, remind them how to play the Competer:** Compete more softly rather than aggressively.
- 12) Play the scene again with the ***least used*** conflict styles.
- 13) At the height of conflict, Cut.
- 14) **Ask debrief questions:**
 - a) “How did it feel in your body to use this conflict style? Where in your body did you feel it?”

PRO TIP: Instruct participants to share only 1-2 sentences total as a guideline, **distilling the essence**.



Scenario II

It's too loud!

Student A needs quiet while studying and is confronting **Student B**, who often plays background music when studying in the same room. **Student C** is a friend listening in on conversation.

Start phrase: *Radio Announcer:* "You are listening to the Relaxing Tracks radio station..."

* * *

15) **If online:** Post the scenario in the chat.

16) Ask a participant if they are willing to play Student A. Do the same for B and C.

PRO TIP: If they opt-out or want a different character, adapt, e.g., by removing Character C, asking another group member to join, or offering a different character.

17) Have participants name their characters and add pronouns.

a) **If in person:** Write this information down somewhere all players can see it. Clearly mark A, B, and C.

b) **If online:** Have the players write this information in the chat along with A, B, or C.

18) Ask them to **name their most used conflict style**. Check in to make sure they feel that style is playable.

a) **If needed, remind them how to play the Avoider:** Minimize the importance or change the subject.

b) **If needed, remind them how to play the Competer:** Compete more softly rather than aggressively.

19) **Hot Seat:** Ask each player to answer **a clarifying question** as their character, e.g.,

- "Sally, what deadline is approaching that is causing you stress?"
- "Charlie, why do you like to play music when you study?"

20) **Start the scene** with the **starting line** in the scenario (unless they start themselves), e.g. "The department chair will see you now..."

21) **Remember** you can use **Pause**, **Monologue**, **Softer**, and **Last Line**.

22) Play the same scenario **twice**. **Start** with the **most used** conflict style.



23) At the height of conflict, Pause.

24) **Ask debrief questions:**

- “How did it feel in your body to use this conflict style? Where in your body did you feel it?”

25) Ask them to **name their most used conflict style**. Check in to make sure they feel that style is playable.

- a) **If needed, remind them how to play the Avoider:** Minimize the importance or change the subject.
- b) **If needed, remind them how to play the Competer:** Compete more softly rather than aggressively.

26) Play the scene again with the **least used** conflict styles.

27) At the height of conflict, Cut.

28) **Ask debrief questions:**

- “How did it feel in your body to use this conflict style? Where in your body did you feel it?”

PRO TIP: Instruct participants to share only 1-2 sentences total as a guideline, **distilling the essence**.



Elements Conflict Styles Assessment

Instructions

Consider your common reactions when **something you want** is different from **what someone else wants**.

*For this exercise, consider how you would respond as a **student** at your university.*

- For questions A-J, **imagine your initial reactions** to a hypothetical situation.
- For questions K-T, imagine your reactions to the same situation **after the conflict has gotten more intense**.

Do not think too much about the questions. **Follow your first instinct**.

Circle a number between 1-5 for each of the questions:

A. I spend time listening to the other person's perspective instead of voicing my own.

Uncommon for me 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Common for me

B. I try to discuss multiple options with the other person to try to find a good solution for everyone.

Uncommon for me 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Common for me

C. I offer to give the person part of what they want in exchange for part of what I want.

Uncommon for me 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Common for me

D. I debate with the other person to convince them I am right.

Uncommon for me 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Common for me

E. I change the subject away from the issue so the situation does not become uncomfortable.

Uncommon for me 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Common for me



F. I tell the person what I think they want to hear to keep the situation under control.

Uncommon for me 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Common for me

G. I contact the person multiple times in an effort to resolve the situation in a way that primarily benefits me.

Uncommon for me 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Common for me

H. I try to make sure everyone feels heard when discussing the issue, then find a solution everyone will find acceptable.

Uncommon for me 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Common for me

I. I don't respond when the person attempts to contact me about the issue.

Uncommon for me 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Common for me

J. I take my time to explore all possible options to address the issue rather than moving forward with my initial thoughts.

Uncommon for me 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Common for me

K. I try to soothe the other person as much as possible and keep my own feelings to myself.

Uncommon for me 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Common for me

L. I avoid reading messages from the person about any topic.

Uncommon for me 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Common for me

M. I try to find ways to get what I want regardless of what the other person wants.

Uncommon for me 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Common for me

N. I negotiate with the person to find a quick solution that will resolve the issue for the time being.

Uncommon for me 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Common for me



O. I offer to give up something as long as the other person gives up something as well to be fair.

Uncommon for me 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Common for me

P. When this person is around, I try not to make eye contact or conversation.

Uncommon for me 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Common for me

Q. I tell the person exactly what I am thinking and feeling without softening my wording or tone, even if it upsets them.

Uncommon for me 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Common for me

R. I research solutions that might benefit us both over an extended period of time, returning to the person regularly to discuss these options.

Uncommon for me 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Common for me

S. I spend time considering ways to adjust the situation to avoid upsetting the other person.

Uncommon for me 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Common for me

T. I consistently consider and suggest new strategies to address the issue to help find a way for everyone to win.

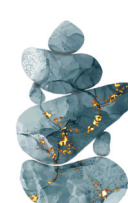
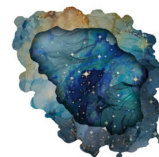
Uncommon for me 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Common for me

Now, **complete the instructions** on the next pages.

Place your score for each statement by its **corresponding letter**, e.g., D 4

Then, **add the two scores** together, e.g., D 4 + G 2 = 6

Place the total in the grey box below the box with the letters.

D __	M __	E __	L __	C __	N __	A __	K __	B __	R __
G __	Q __	I __	P __	H __	O __	F __	S __	J __	T __
Calm	Storm	Calm	Storm	Calm	Storm	Calm	Storm	Calm	Storm
Competing		Avoiding		Compromising		Accommodating		Collaborating	
									

The numbered questions refer to **specific conflict styles**,
e.g., Competing, Avoiding, Compromising, Accommodating, and Collaborating.

Place your totals for Calm under the first table **from high to low**.

Then, **write the corresponding conflict style** next to the score.

Do the same thing for Storm in the second table.

Calm			Storm		
Response based on your initial reaction to a conflict			Response when a conflict has persisted over time and intensified		
	Total Score	Conflict style		Total Score	Conflict style
1st			1st		
2nd			2nd		
3rd			3rd		
4th			4th		
5th			5th		



My **most used** common style in times of Calm is: _____

My **most used** common style in times of Storm is: _____

My **least used** common style in times of Calm is: _____

My **least used** common style in times of Storm is: _____

This inventory was co-created by Evocative Games AB and the Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnership Role-Playing Games on Conflict Transformation for Equity in Higher Education through Virtual Exchange (ROCKET). Content has been adapted from the Thomas-Kilmann Inventory (1974) and Ron Kraybill's *Style Matters* Inventory (2024).

References

Kraybill, Ron. 2024a. "Five Styles of Responding to Conflict." *Style Matters*. RiverHouse ePress.

Kraybill, Ron. 2024b. "How to Manage Your Storm Shift in Conflict Resolution." *Style Matters*. RiverHouse ePress.

Thomas, Kenneth Wayne, and Ralph H. Kilmann. 1974. *The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument*. Mountain View, CA: CPP, Inc.

Images by Kate Blomgren and Daria Shpak.



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"I" Statements Role-playing Scenarios

Facilitation Instructions

Goals

- 1) Noticing one's own positions, interests, needs, and emotions when in conflict
- 2) Identifying and describing both feeling and thinking states
- 3) Hypothesizing the positions, interests, needs, and emotions of another person when in conflict
- 4) Practicing nonviolent communication using "I" Statements

Group size

- 1 facilitator per 2-6 players
- **Ideally:** Each group member will play at least one character.
 - If fewer than 6, rotate so that players have the opportunity to play **Character A** and/or **B**. If only 2 players, remove **Character C**.

Time

- **Ideally:** 40 minutes total
 - 10 minutes for the facilitator Demo Scenario, 30 minutes for Scenarios I and II.
 - 15 minutes per Scenario, including pre-scene instructions and debrief.
 - If short on time, cut the Demo Scenario and/or Scenario II.



Meta Techniques

Used by facilitators:

- **Cut:** Cuts the scene, often before the conflict is “resolved.”
- **Pause:** Pauses the scene, usually to call for another meta technique or give instructions to the players.
- **Escalate:** Reminds participants to escalate the conflict in the scene.
- **Hot Seat / Monologue:** The player is asked to reveal briefly what their character is thinking. The players hear these thoughts, but the character does not.
- **Last Line:** The player is asked to end the scene by saying the last line that comes to their mind.

Safety Techniques

Can be used by both players and facilitators:

- **Softer:** Say “Softer” to ask participants to Soften their play.
- **Pause Check-in:** Say this to pause and check in with others.
- **X-Card:** Say or type “X” at any time to ask certain content to be removed or avoided. No questions asked. **Example:** “X for content around death.”
- **Cut:** Say “Cut” at any time to end the scene.
- **Opt-out:** Say or type “Opt-out” at any time to opt-out of the scene.
- **The Door is Always Open:** Players can leave at any time, but should let the facilitator know if they are not returning.
- **Emotional Support:** If possible, have one facilitator on standby available in the main room.
 - **If online:** Players can private message them to ask for a breakout room or chat.
 - **If in-person:** The facilitator should take the player somewhere more private if possible.



Demo Scenario

I can't concentrate...

Staff Member A has trouble getting their work done when **Staff Members B** chats with others in the office about random topics. **Staff Member A** is confronting **Staff Member B** about this issue.

Start phrase: *Supervisor:* "Reminder that lunch break is almost over..."

* * *

- 1) **If online:** Post the scenario in the chat.
- 2) Explain to the players, "In the first part of the scene, you should escalate and not solve the conflict. Then, I will call Pause, and we will do a short debrief. After that, I will ask you to take turns using the 'I' Statement as your character. Do not respond to each other, just practice the script.

Note that I may ask you to reword your statements, which does not mean that you're doing the statement 'wrong,' but rather that more optimal wording is possible. We are all practicing!"

- **If online:** Copy/paste the "I" Statement in the chat.
- If in-person: Place the "I" Statement somewhere visible for the players.
 - "I feel _____ (feeling) when _____ (neutral action) because _____ (how it affects you). I would like _____ (option for what to do differently)."

- 3) Ask a participant if they are willing to play Student A. Do the same for B and C.

PRO TIP: If they opt-out or want a different character, adapt, e.g., by removing Character C, asking another group member to join, or offering a different character.

- 4) Have participants name their characters and add pronouns.
 - a) **If in person:** Write this information down somewhere all players can see it. Clearly mark A, B, and C.
 - b) **If online:** Have the players write this information in the chat along with A, B, or C.
- 5) Their **position** is provided in the scenario. They can further clarify as needed, but avoid long discussion about position.
- 6) Give a Silent Hotseat where you prompt the participants to consider silently the following questions. Pause for a few seconds before asking the next question to give the participants time to think:



- What is your character's position?
 - Why does this position matter to them?
 - How do they feel about this situation?
 - What needs feel threatened in this situation: security, fun, freedom, belonging, or power? (Make sure to read each need out loud slowly).
- 7) Play the scenario **once**, making sure each person plays at least **one (1) role** in **one (1) scenario**. Remember you can use **Pause, Monologue, Softer, and Last Line**.
- 8) **Debrief:** Debrief questions for each player are on **feelings** and **needs**. Ask each question separately, then ask the same person the follow up question before switching to the next person:
- a) "What did **your character** feel in this scene?"
 - b) "What needs of **your characters** felt threatened? Remember the human needs are **security, fun, belonging, freedom, and power**."

PRO TIP: Instruct participants to share only 1-2 sentences total as a guideline, **distilling the essence**.

- 9) Tell the players, "Now, practice the 'I' Statement as each of your characters in turn. As a reminder, I have put the 'I' Statement here."
- a) **If online**, indicate the place in the chat.
 - b) **If in-person**, gesture toward the 'I' Statement.
 - "I feel _____ (feeling) when _____ (neutral action) because _____ (how it affects you). I would like _____ (option for what to do differently)."
 - c) If necessary, provide brief feedback to the players and ask them to try the script again, e.g., if they are using judgmental language.
 - Remind them that "I feel like..." and "I feel that..." are not feelings. Ask them to identify a feeling.
 - d) After all players have used the 'I' Statement, Cut the scene. They should not play out the resolution.
- 10) Ask these two debrief questions to each person in the scene at a time. Pause between each question, then move on when the player has answered both questions (or passed).
- "How did it feel in your body to use the I-Statement?"
 - How did it feel to have the I-Statement used to communicate with you?"



Scenario I

I feel like I'm missing out...

Student A is struggling in group work because **Student B** and **Student C** often switch to their native language, which **Student A** doesn't speak. **Student A** is confronting **Student B** and **Student C**.

Start phrase: *Instructor:* "You have 45 minutes to meet with your group starting now..."

* * *

- 1) **If online:** Post the scenario in the chat.
- 2) Explain to the players, "In the first part of the scene, you should escalate and not solve the conflict. Then, I will call Pause, and we will do a short debrief. After that, I will ask you to take turns using the 'I' Statement as your character. Do not respond to each other, just practice the script.

Note that I may ask you to reword your statements, which does not mean that you're doing the statement 'wrong,' but rather that more optimal wording is possible. We are all practicing!"

- **If online:** Copy/paste the "I" Statement in the chat.
- If in-person: Place the "I" Statement somewhere visible for the players.
 - "I feel _____ (feeling) when _____ (neutral action) because _____ (how it affects you). I would like _____ (option for what to do differently)."

- 3) Ask a participant if they are willing to play Student A. Do the same for B and C.

PRO TIP: If they opt-out or want a different character, adapt, e.g., by removing Character C, asking another group member to join, or offering a different character.

- 4) Have participants name their characters and add pronouns.
 - a) **If in person:** Write this information down somewhere all players can see it. Clearly mark A, B, and C.
 - b) **If online:** Have the players write this information in the chat along with A, B, or C.
- 5) Their **position** is provided in the scenario. They can further clarify as needed, but avoid long discussion about position.
- 6) Give a Silent Hotseat where you prompt the participants to consider silently the following questions. Pause for a few seconds before asking the next question to give the participants time to think:



- What is your character's position?
 - Why does this position matter to them?
 - How do they feel about this situation?
 - What needs feel threatened in this situation: security, fun, freedom, belonging, or power? (Make sure to read each need out loud slowly).
- 7) Play the scenario **once**, making sure each person plays at least **one (1) role** in **one (1) scenario**. Remember you can use **Pause, Monologue, Softer, and Last Line**.
- 8) **Debrief:** Debrief questions for each player are on **feelings** and **needs**. Ask each question separately, then ask the same person the follow up question before switching to the next person:
- a) "What did **your character** feel in this scene?"
 - b) "What needs of **your characters** felt threatened? Remember the human needs are **security, fun, belonging, freedom, and power**."

PRO TIP: Instruct participants to share only 1-2 sentences total as a guideline, **distilling the essence**.

- 9) Tell the players, "Now, practice the 'I' Statement as each of your characters in turn. As a reminder, I have put the 'I' Statement here."
- a) **If online**, indicate the place in the chat.
 - b) **If in-person**, gesture toward the 'I' Statement.
 - "I feel _____ (feeling) when _____ (neutral action) because _____ (how it affects you). I would like _____ (option for what to do differently)."
 - c) If necessary, provide brief feedback to the players and ask them to try the script again, e.g., if they are using judgmental language.
 - Remind them that "I feel like..." and "I feel that..." are not feelings. Ask them to identify a feeling.
 - d) After all players have used the 'I' Statement, Cut the scene. They should not play out the resolution.
- 10) Ask these two debrief questions to each person in the scene at a time. Pause between each question, then move on when the player has answered both questions (or passed).
- "How did it feel in your body to use the I-Statement?"
 - How did it feel to have the I-Statement used to communicate with you?"



Scenario II

Can we meet again this week?

Student A wants Teacher B to be accessible for meetings outside of their posted office hours because **Student A** needs more support. **Teacher B** believes strongly in work-life balance and keeps strong boundaries around their time. **Parent C** is joining the conversation but letting **Student A** handle most of the discussion.

Start phrase: *Administrative Assistant:* “The teacher is in their office hours now...”

* * *

- 1) **If online:** Post the scenario in the chat.
- 2) Explain to the players, “In the first part of the scene, you should escalate and not solve the conflict. Then, I will call Pause, and we will do a short debrief. After that, I will ask you to take turns using the ‘I’ Statement as your character. Do not respond to each other, just practice the script.

Note that I may ask you to reword your statements, which does not mean that you’re doing the statement ‘wrong,’ but rather that more optimal wording is possible. We are all practicing!”

- **If online:** Copy/paste the “I” Statement in the chat.
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- 3) Ask a participant if they are willing to play Student A. Do the same for B and C.

PRO TIP: If they opt-out or want a different character, adapt, e.g., by removing Character C, asking another group member to join, or offering a different character.

- 4) Have participants name their characters and add pronouns.
 - a) **If in person:** Write this information down somewhere all players can see it. Clearly mark A, B, and C.
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- 6) Give a Silent Hotseat where you prompt the participants to consider silently the following questions. Pause for a few seconds before asking the next question to give the participants time to think:



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 - How do they feel about this situation?
 - What needs feel threatened in this situation: security, fun, freedom, belonging, or power? (Make sure to read each need out loud slowly).
- 7) Play the scenario **once**, making sure each person plays at least **one (1) role** in **one (1) scenario**. Remember you can use **Pause, Monologue, Softer, and Last Line**.
- 8) **Debrief:** Debrief questions for each player are on **feelings** and **needs**. Ask each question separately, then ask the same person the follow up question before switching to the next person:
- a) "What did **your character** feel in this scene?"
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- 9) Tell the players, "Now, practice the 'I' Statement as each of your characters in turn. As a reminder, I have put the 'I' Statement here."
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 - c) If necessary, provide brief feedback to the players and ask them to try the script again, e.g., if they are using judgmental language.
 - Remind them that "I feel like..." and "I feel that..." are not feelings. Ask them to identify a feeling.
 - d) After all players have used the 'I' Statement, Cut the scene. They should not play out the resolution.
- 10) Ask these two debrief questions to each person in the scene at a time. Pause between each question, then move on when the player has answered both questions (or passed).
- "How did it feel in your body to use the I-Statement?"
 - How did it feel to have the I-Statement used to communicate with you?"

FACILITATING TRANSFORMATIVE RPGS



Watch this linked video, "[Facilitating ROCKET Educational RPGs](#)" by Sarah Lynne Bowman, to learn more about the role of the facilitator:



Note: Toggle the CC button for captions in English. Click on the gear button and choose higher resolution settings to best view the screen.

You can find the slides at the end of this document.

A stylized teal logo of a bird in flight, resembling a rocket, positioned in the upper right corner of the slide. The bird is facing left, with its wings spread wide and a flame-like tail. The background features abstract, swirling teal and blue patterns.

ROCKET

Positions, Interests,
Feelings, and Needs

An Erasmus+ Higher Education Cooperation Partnership
Göttingen University, Uppsala University, Groningen University
Student Virtual Exchange

Getting to Know Each Other

When you enter, please type the following in the chat:

- My name is _____.
- My pronouns are _____.*
- My university is _____.
- Fill in the blank on the Card for Connection:
 - “If I had unlimited creativity and support, I would _____”

*Consider including your pronouns with your name:
Participants → ... → Rename



If I had
unlimited
creativity &
support,
I would ____.

Image courtesy of Erin Hickok.
Cards for Connection available
at Gamesforhumanity.com

Your Facilitators

Sarah Lynne Bowman, Uppsala University (UU)

Alexandra Schreiber, Göttingen University (UGOE)

Kjell Hedgard Hugaas, Uppsala University (UU)

Cora Övermann, Göttingen University (UGOE)

Ricci Fulda, Göttingen University (UGOE)

Community Group Norms

- **Facilitators:** Start and end on time; and answer your questions in a variety of mediums.

All of us:

- Participate as fully as possible.
- Consider what's shared by others confidential.
- Share “air time” with others when speaking. (We may take questions first from folks who haven't yet had the chance to speak).
- Remain muted during the session until you're about to speak.
- Keep video on throughout the session if possible.
- Please use the raise hand in Zoom feature to speak. Let's try it now!
- If you need to step away for more than a few minutes, inform facilitators in chat – impacts breakout groups.
- Please put your pronouns and your institution's acronym next to your name.
- Please do not share conflicts about people in this course or who are identifiable by others.
- Do not record the session in any way, but you can take notes.

Journaling Exercise (5 min)

Personal reflection to be shared in pairs later:

Consider a *personal* conflict that occurred at in your educational journey, either in the past or present, that stands out for you.

or

Consider a conflict that occurred at work you have *witnessed* or can *imagine* taking place hypothetically.

- Briefly (5 minutes) journal using pen/paper or digital form.
- Later you will share your thoughts with your group.

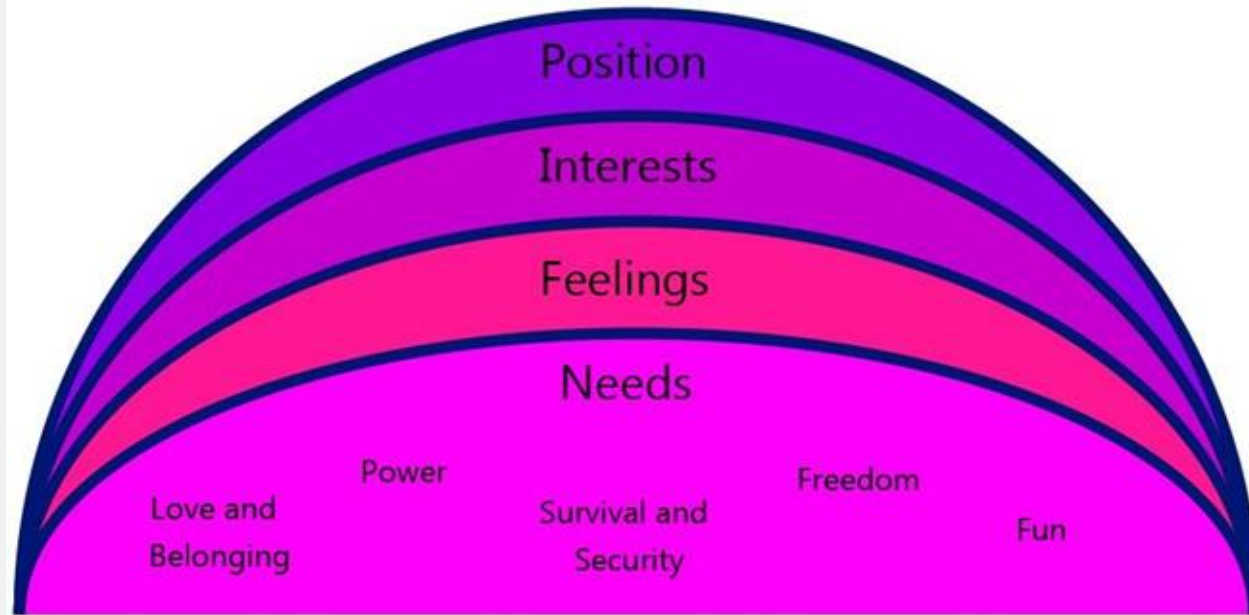
Note: You may use the same conflict as last time or a new one.

As we begin, it is helpful to know

When we learn to *DO* something new, we go through about 7 stages.

1. Awareness
2. Knowledge and Information
3. Awkward Engagement
4. Phoniness and Artificiality
5. Mechanical Use
6. Routine and Customary
7. Creative and Innovative

The Psychology of Conflict



Some layers of a conflict are on the surface, whereas others are less obvious.

The Layers of Conflict 1

Positions: What you want to happen in this situation.

Ex. The break in between courses should be longer.

Interests: Why you want it to happen. Ex. What aspects of your life are impacted by this happening or not happening?

Ex. I need more time to visit my relatives in another country.

The Layers of Conflict 2

Feelings: What feelings are connected to this topic for you in the moment.

Ex. Anger, grief, longing, alienation.

Needs: What human needs feel threatened or at stake as a result of this not happening

- e.g., power, belonging, security, freedom, fun (Glasser 1998)?

Ex. **Belonging** with family may feel threatened, **freedom** to manage one's schedule as one chooses

Group Activity:

Let's try it with an academic argument:

Positions: What you want to happen in this situation.

Ex. All genders should be paid the same as cis-men for the same job.

Interests: Why you want it to happen. Ex. What aspects of your life are impacted by this happening or not happening?

Ex. ??

The Layers of Conflict

Feelings: What feelings are connected to this topic for you in the moment.

Ex. ??

Needs: What human needs feel threatened or at stake as a result of this not happening

- e.g., power, belonging, security, freedom, fun (Glasser 1998).

Ex. ??

With your partner, answer the following questions.

Make sure everyone has time to share (5 minutes per person):

Human needs: love/belonging, security/safety, power, freedom, fun

- My name is _____.
- My pronouns are _____.
- The conflict I chose is _____ (3 sentences).
- One (1) Human Need that may have been at stake in this conflict for one party was _____.
- One (1) Human Need that may have been at stake in this conflict for the other party was _____.
- Were the ways each party tried to get their needs met **appropriate** or
 - **harmful** to others?

Emotions and Conflict 1

- Emotions may be obvious and on the surface, indicating we are in conflict with someone.
- Other times, we may not be aware that emotions are driving our reactions.
- Emotions can escalate conflict and cloud our judgment.
 - Feelings are not facts.
- However, feelings also tell us when something is at risk that is important to us

Emotional Activation vs. Conscious Choice

When we feel **activated in conflict**, our emotions can overwhelm our conscious decision making processes.

To be activated is to become emotionally hijacked by the instinctive parts of our brain. We may feel compelled to:

- **Fight** someone or something in the situation, e.g. competing or escalating.
- **Flee** the situation, e.g. avoiding.
- **Freeze**, staying still, but completely unable to respond, e.g. feeling trapped in terror.
- **Fawn**, trying to appear non-threatening and appeasing, e.g. accommodating.

The Role of Anger in Conflict

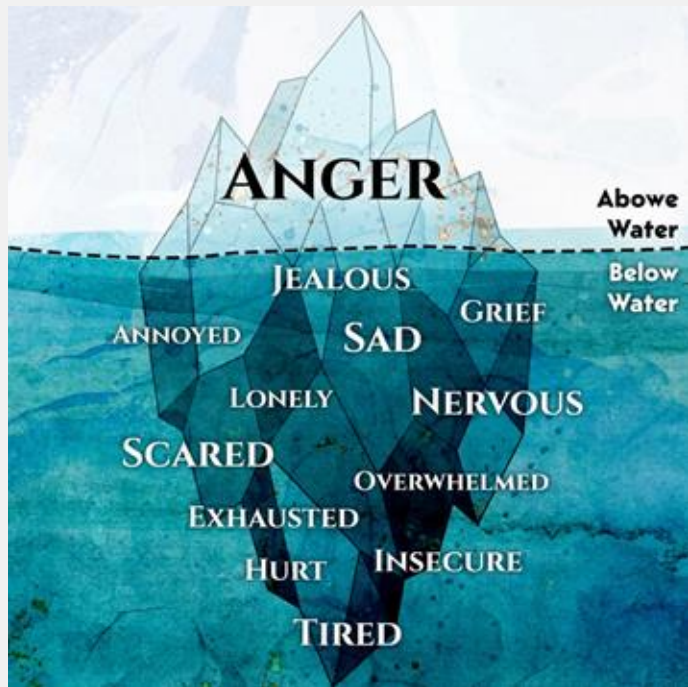


Image: Kate Blomgren and Daria Shpak for Evocative Games AB.

- Anger is sometimes the tip of the emotional iceberg.
 - Anger may be a natural emotion when we perceive our needs are being threatened.
 - A different emotion may come first and remain masked by anger (fear, grief, sorrow, etc).
 - Alternatively, some of us may feel disconnected from our anger.

Emotions and Conflict 2

- We can engage more constructively in conflict by **raising awareness** around and **observing** our emotions.
- If we feel safe enough, we can **voice our emotions** to others as they arise, allowing others to **validate** them.
- If we feel **safe enough**, we can **encourage others to voice their emotions** in constructive ways, helping them feel heard and valued.

Ultimately:

- Emotions are important signals that reveal our inner needs.
- We can acknowledge emotions and be curious about what they are communicating without letting them rule us.
- We can practice **emotional regulation** to avoid harming ourselves and others.
- Validating the emotions and experiences of others can help mitigate damage in conflicts.
- Respecting that everyone has unique emotional responses to conflict based on their experiences and cultural norms.

10 Minute Break





Role-playing

Why role-playing?

- We will role-play in small groups guided by a facilitator
- Practice makes competent!
- Experience + reflection = learning
- Character and fiction give us personal distance
- Fun!

Emotions can aid in learning:

- It's totally normal to be nervous or unsure! You can't do this "the wrong way."
- Participants may embody characters or situations that are triggering or upsetting. We are here to support you!

Establishing Norms for Role-playing 1

- **From facilitators** you may hear the following words:
 - **Cut:** Cuts the scene, often before the conflict is “resolved”
 - **Pause:** Pauses the scene
 - **Monologue:** The player is asked to reveal briefly what their character is thinking
 - **Last Line:** The player is asked to end the scene by saying the last line that comes to their mind.

Establishing Norms for Role-playing 2

- **Safety tools:**
 - **Emotional Support:** If you need emotional support, Kjell is available in the main room.
 - **Door is always open:** You can leave at any time, but please let your facilitator know if you are not returning.
 - **Opt-out:** You can opt-out of a scene by saying or typing “Opt-out” at any time

Establishing Norms for Role-playing 3

Safety tools:

Cut: You can call “Cut” at any time to end the scene.

Pause Check-in: You can pause for to check in with others.

Softer: You can ask participants to soften their play by saying “Softer.”

X-Card: You can say or type “X” at any time to ask certain content to be removed or avoided. No questions asked. Example: “X for content around death”

Role-playing Instructions

- Characters should NOT try to be good listeners or resolve the problem, at least not from the start. Escalate!
- We may ask for characters to refine their wording as we go. This is not a critique, we are all practicing.
- Please do not lean on stereotypes of marginalized groups in your role-play.

Demo Role-playing Exercise

The facilitators will role-play a scenario analyzing
Positions, Interests, Feelings, and Needs

Breakout Groups

- 1–2 Scenarios (10–15 minutes each) with facilitator, Groups of 3–6
- 30 minutes
- If you're not in a scene, please observe quietly with camera on, participate in discussion

Big Group Discussion

- What did you find surprising or intriguing about this exercise?
- Was it difficult to identify positions, interests, feelings, or needs?
 - Questions?

References

Fisher, Roger, and William Ury. 1981. *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*. 1st Ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

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Image: NaomiBooth on Pixabay.



Thanks!

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A stylized teal phoenix logo with its wings spread, positioned in the upper right corner of the slide.

ROCKET

Conflict Styles

An Erasmus+ Higher Education Cooperation Partnership
Göttingen University, Uppsala University, Groningen University
Student Virtual Exchange

Getting to Know Each Other

When you enter, please type the following in the chat:

- My name is _____.
- My pronouns are _____.*
- My university is _____.
- Fill in the blank on the Card for Connection:
 - “I enjoy expressing myself through _____”

*Consider including your pronouns with your name:
Participants → ... → Rename



I enjoy
expressing
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through ____.

Image courtesy of Erin Hickok.
Cards for Connection available
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Community Group Norms

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All of us:

- Participate as fully as possible.
- Consider what's shared by others confidential.
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- Please put your pronouns and your institution's acronym next to your name.
- Please do not share conflicts about people in this course or who are identifiable by others.
- Do not record the session in any way, but you can take notes.

Journaling Exercise (5 min)

Personal reflection to be shared in pairs later:

Consider a *personal* conflict that occurred at in your educational journey, either in the past or present, that stands out for you.

or

Consider a conflict that occurred at work you have *witnessed* or can *imagine* taking place hypothetically.

- Briefly (5 minutes) journal using pen/paper or digital form.
- Later you will share your thoughts with your group.

Elements Conflict Styles Assessment (15 minutes)

Link here: <https://tinyurl.com/2vvn7mwk>

As we begin, it is helpful to know...

When we learn to *DO* something new, we go through about 7 stages.

1. Awareness
2. Knowledge and Information
3. Awkward Engagement
4. Phoniness and Artificiality
5. Mechanical Use
6. Routine and Customary
7. Creative and Innovative

Conflict Styles 1

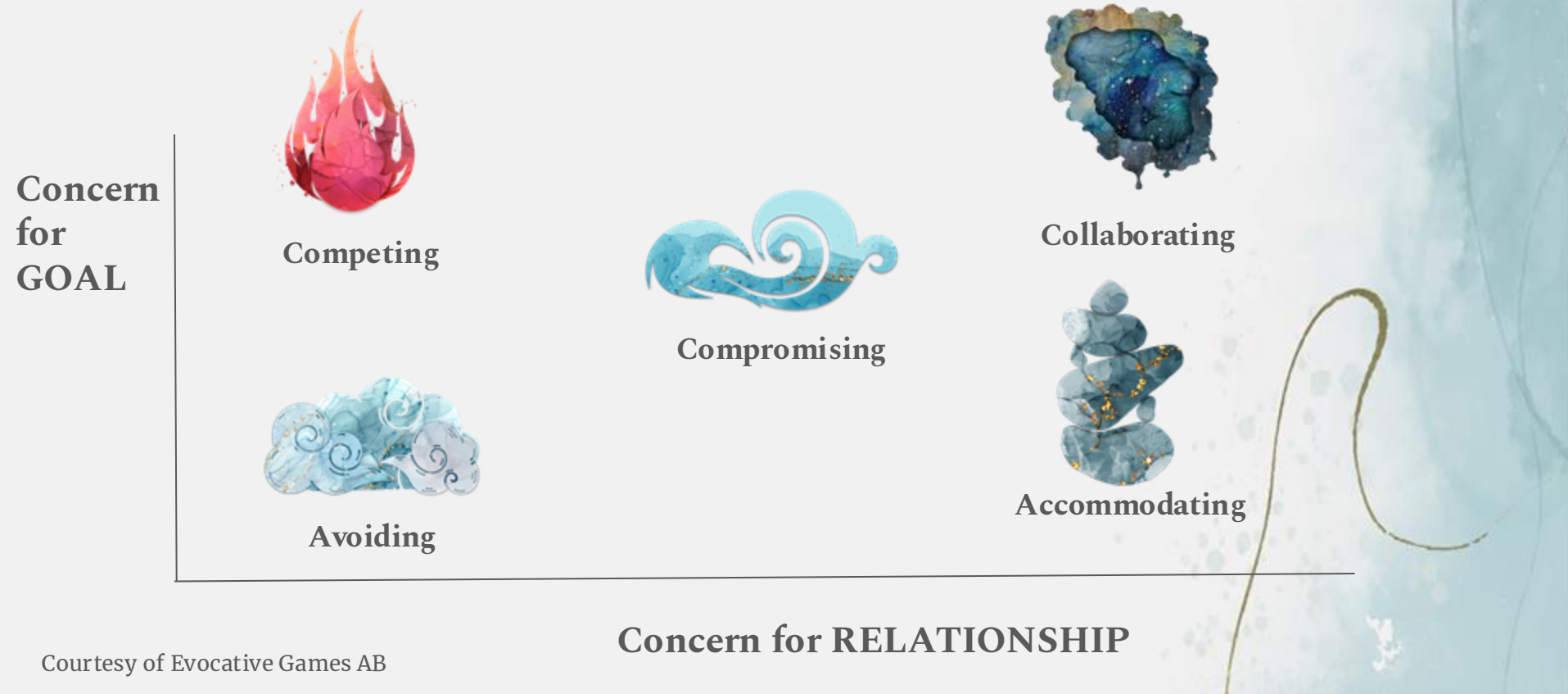
- Conflict styles (Thomas and Kilmann 1974) represent strong tendencies we each have when dealing with conflict.
- These conflict styles show varying degrees of:
 - a) **concern for the relationship**, or
 - b) **concern for the goal** (Kraybill 2011)
- While many people have one to two **most used** conflict styles, we may employ all styles at different times depending on the situation.

Conflict Styles 2

- People may also use different styles when relaxed in **times of Calm** than they do when stressed in **times of Storm** (Kraybill 2024a).
- However, we often do not realize we have options when engaging with conflict and feel trapped in one default mode of reaction.
- Learning about conflict styles can help us realize that we have many options in dealing with conflict.

What choices do we have when responding to conflict?

Figure 1: Our model uses **the elements** to visualize these different styles.



Conflict Styles 3

- Note that we are only using **one aspect** of these elements as a metaphor to help you remember a certain strategy for responding to conflict.
- The elements -- like us -- can change how they present themselves in the world.
- Also, these conflict styles may be invoked on behalf of someone else, for example, being competitive in order to advocate for someone's needs who we care about.
- If you have difficulty with metaphors, simply focus on the conflict styles.

What choices do we have when responding to conflict?

Our model uses **the elements** to visualize these different styles.



Competing

Competing occurs when someone values achieving their goal above all other concerns, or “winning,” accepting that the other person in the conflict might “lose.”

In this metaphor, **fire** burns up the surrounding environment to remain strong and lit.

Concern for RELATIONSHIP

Figure 1: What choices do we have when responding to conflict?

Our model uses **the elements** to visualize these different styles.

Concern
for
GOAL



Avoiding

Avoiding occurs when someone deflects attention away from a conflict or withdraws from the situation completely physically or psychologically, for example “ghosting.”

In this metaphor, **air** becomes less visible, holding stormy feelings inside rather than expressing them.

Concern for **RELATIONSHIP**

Figure 1: What choices do we have when responding to conflict? 1

Our model uses **the elements** to visualize these different styles.

Concern
for
GOAL

Accommodating occurs when a person sets their own goals aside in order to maintain their relationship with the other person, for example “sacrificing” oneself for others.

In this metaphor, **earth** is the grounding that provides support for others.



Accommodating

Concern for **RELATIONSHIP**

Figure 1: What choices do we have when responding to conflict? 2

Our model uses **the elements** to visualize these different styles.

**Concern
for
GOAL**

Compromising occurs when someone tries to give each person in the conflict part of what they want, but no one achieves their goal completely, for example “splitting the difference.”



Compromising

In this metaphor, **water** makes way for others but also fills the gaps left behind.

Concern for RELATIONSHIP

Figure 1: What choices do we have when responding to conflict? 3
Our model uses **the elements** to visualize these different styles.

**Concern
for
GOAL**

Collaborating occurs when a person works to problem solve in a conflict, brainstorming solutions that help everyone achieve their goals, for example “win-win.”

In this metaphor, **space** provides an blank canvas to imagine possibilities and create new solutions.



Collaborating

Concern for RELATIONSHIP

Each Conflict Style Has Downsides

Competing: Can risk damaging relationships

Avoiding: Can leave conflicts unresolved, causing them to get worse

Accommodating: Can lead to needs going unmet

Compromising: Can leave everyone feeling that they lost something

Collaborating: Can take a long time, not always efficient or practical

Paired Discussion

In your pairs, please discuss your conflict from earlier (10 minutes).

Each person will have 3-4 minutes to share.

- Which conflict style did the first person in the conflict use?
- Which conflict style did the second person in the conflict use?
- Would trying another style have been helpful? Why or why not?

10 Minute Break

Establishing Norms for Role-playing 1

- **From facilitators** you may hear the following words:
 - **Cut:** Cuts the scene, often before the conflict is “resolved”
 - **Pause:** Pauses the scene
 - **Monologue:** The player is asked to reveal briefly what their character is thinking
 - **Last Line:** The player is asked to end the scene by saying the last line that comes to their mind.

Establishing Norms for Role-playing 2

- **Safety tools:**
 - **Emotional Support:** If you need emotional support, Kjell is available in the main room.
 - **Door is always open:** You can leave at any time, but please let your facilitator know if you are not returning.
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The Competer

- **Facilitator 1 will read The Competer:** You have to fight to achieve your goals in life because others may try to take it from you, may not care about your needs, or may ignore the needs of others.
- You **value** standing up for what you believe is right.
- You **fear** that others will ignore your needs or take advantage of you.
- **Note:** The Competer can escalate situations quickly. Try to compete “softly” rather than aggressively. Remember anyone can call Softer to decrease the intensity of play.

The Avoider

- **Facilitator 2 will read The Avoider:** You avoid conflict at all costs because you believe that conflict will inevitably lead to yourself or other people getting hurt.
- You **value** your independence and privacy.
- You **fear** that conflict will harm you or others if discussed out in the open.

The Accommodator

- **Facilitator 3 will read The Accommodator:** You often seek to de-escalate by addressing conflicts as problems to be fixed by calming everyone down and adjusting the environment to make them (and you) more comfortable.
- You **value** your relationships with others, as well as group tranquility and harmony.
- You **fear** that conflicts will escalate and will lead to more suffering for the people you love.

The Compromiser

- **Facilitator 4 will read The Compromiser:** You often consider ways for everyone to get some of their needs met in any given situation.
- You **value** fairness and listening to all sides in a conflict.
- You **fear** that if conflicts are not addressed swiftly and reasonably, they will escalate beyond the point where they can be resolved and last longer than need be.

The Collaborator

- **Facilitator 5 will read The Collaborator:** You are not afraid to take the time it needs to gather information about everyone's perspectives and to brainstorm solutions that work for all parties.
- You **value** teamwork and taking the time to find solutions that are both effective and fulfilling for everyone involved.
- You **fear** that one or more people in a conflict will stop being willing to collaborate on shared solutions.

Big Group Discussion

- What did you find surprising or intriguing about this exercise?
- What conflict styles do you plan on exploring more in the future and why?
 - Questions?

Demo Role-playing Exercise

- The facilitators will role-play a scenario trying different conflict styles

Breakout Groups

- 1-2 Scenarios (10-15 minutes each) with facilitator, Groups of 3-6
- 30 minutes
- If you're not in a scene, please observe quietly with camera on, participate in discussion

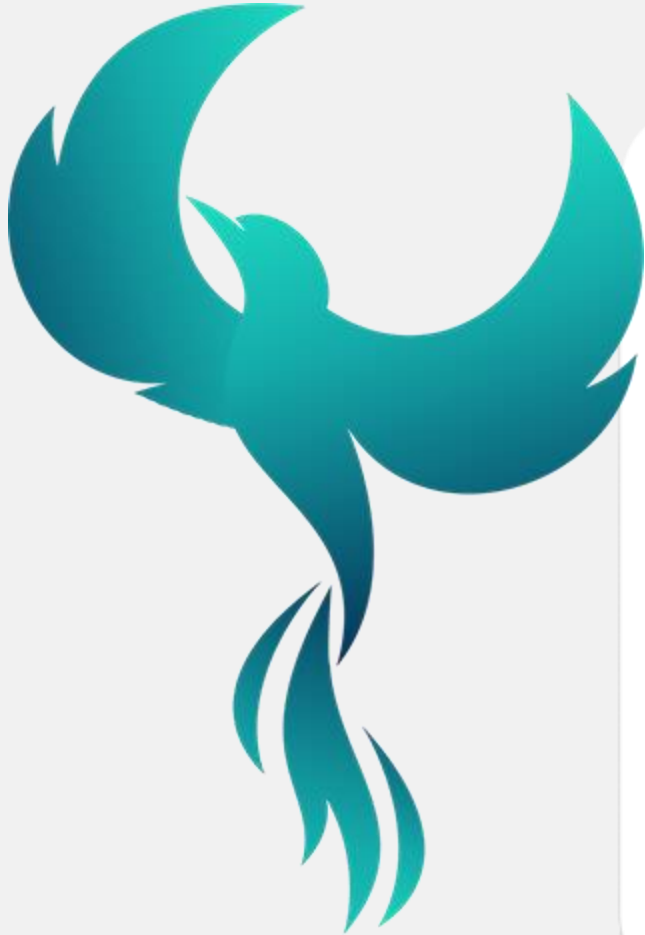
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A stylized teal logo of a bird in flight, resembling a rocket, with its wings spread wide and a flame-like tail. The background features abstract watercolor-style washes in shades of blue and green, with thin, flowing golden lines.

ROCKET

Culture, Reflective Listening, “I”
Statements

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Image courtesy of Erin Hickok.
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What is Culture?

- Broadly to be defined as the **expectations** and **ways of living** of a group of people, with the acknowledgment that individuals can belong to numerous groups (Deardorff 2022).

Examples:

- **Expectations** of care for how to be treated as a student while studying abroad, autonomous vs. accompanied through learning experience
- **Ways of Living:** How one communicates with a group of students in a project, task-oriented vs. relationship-oriented



Journaling Exercise Part 1 (5 min)

Take a few minutes to list out:

- List out the different **cultures** and **subgroups** to which you belong.
- (Don't overthink this – think of any group that you might have a culture that informs your view of the world.)
- We will share some of this information in small groups later.

Journaling Exercise Part 2 (5 min)

- Write for the next five (5) minutes:
- Choose one of the cultures or subgroups on the list you created.
- Describe a **conflict** in your life that was impacted by your **identification** with this **culture** or **subgroup**.

Reflective Listening

Reflective listening helps the other person “think out loud” by asking questions to invite deeper sharing.

It is not about offering suggestions, experiences, comments of your own.

Some suggested follow-up reflective questions:

- “You mentioned _____. Can you tell me more about that?”
- “Can you tell me more about how _____ affected you?”

Paired Exercise (15 minutes)

1. Briefly introduce yourself and describe your conflict in 3 sentences or less.

2. Consider:

- How does your culture/group inform or shape this conflict?
- How you view conflicts in general, and how do you relate to others in conflict?

3. The other person should engage in **reflective listening**.

- “You mentioned _____. Can you tell me more about that?”
- “Can you tell me more about how _____ affected you?”

Observations

- What was surprising or intriguing about this exercise?
- Was it easy or difficult to identify culture in your conflict? Why or why not?
- Do you have any questions?



10 Minute Break

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“I” Statements

- *I feel/am* _____ (Name feeling such as frustrated, embarrassed, worried. Don't use “I feel like/that”)
- *when* _____ (Explain the specific situation)
- *because* _____ (Explain how the specific behavior causes difficulty for you, what needs are at stake)
- *I would like* _____ (Share options for what you would prefer to see done differently)

Establishing Norms for Role-playing 4

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Establishing Norms for Role-playing 5

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Establishing Norms for Role-playing 6

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 - **X-Card:** You can say or type “X” at any time to ask certain content to be removed or avoided. No questions asked. Example: “X for content around death”

Role-playing Instructions

- Characters should NOT try to be good listeners or resolve the problem, at least not from the start. Escalate!
- Both characters will be asked to pause, then try the “I” Message script.
- We may ask for characters to refine their wording as we go. This is not a critique and will not affect your grade! We are all practicing.
- Please do not lean on stereotypes of marginalized groups in your role-play

Role-playing Exercise

- The facilitators will role-play a scenario identifying Positions, Interests, Feelings, and Needs and trying I-Statements

Breakout Groups

- 2 Scenarios (15 minutes each) with facilitator, Groups of 3-6
- 30 minutes
- If you're not in a scene, please observe quietly with camera on, participate in discussion

Big Group Discussion

- What did you find surprising or intriguing about this exercise?
 - Was it difficult to use the I-Statement or identify the layers of conflict? Why or why not?
 - Questions?

Big Group Takeaway

- Try to condense this experience into one word that you will take away from these sessions.



References

Deardorff, Darla K. 2022. “Communicating successfully across differences within COIL Virtual Exchange.” In *The Guide to COIL Virtual Exchange*, edited by Jon Rubin and Sarah Guth, 274 - 286. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing LLC.



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SAFETY IN EDUCATIONAL RPGS



Watch Sarah Lynne Bowman's linked "[Safety in Educational RPGs](#)" to learn more about safety in relation to facilitation:



Note: Toggle the CC button for captions in English. Click on the gear button and choose higher resolution settings to best view the screen.

You can find the slides at the end of this document.

FACILITATION DEMO



Watch Josefin Westborg facilitating a ROCKET scenario for Sarah Lynne Bowman and Kjell Hedgard Hugaas in the linked "[Example Role-play](#)" to see our techniques in action:

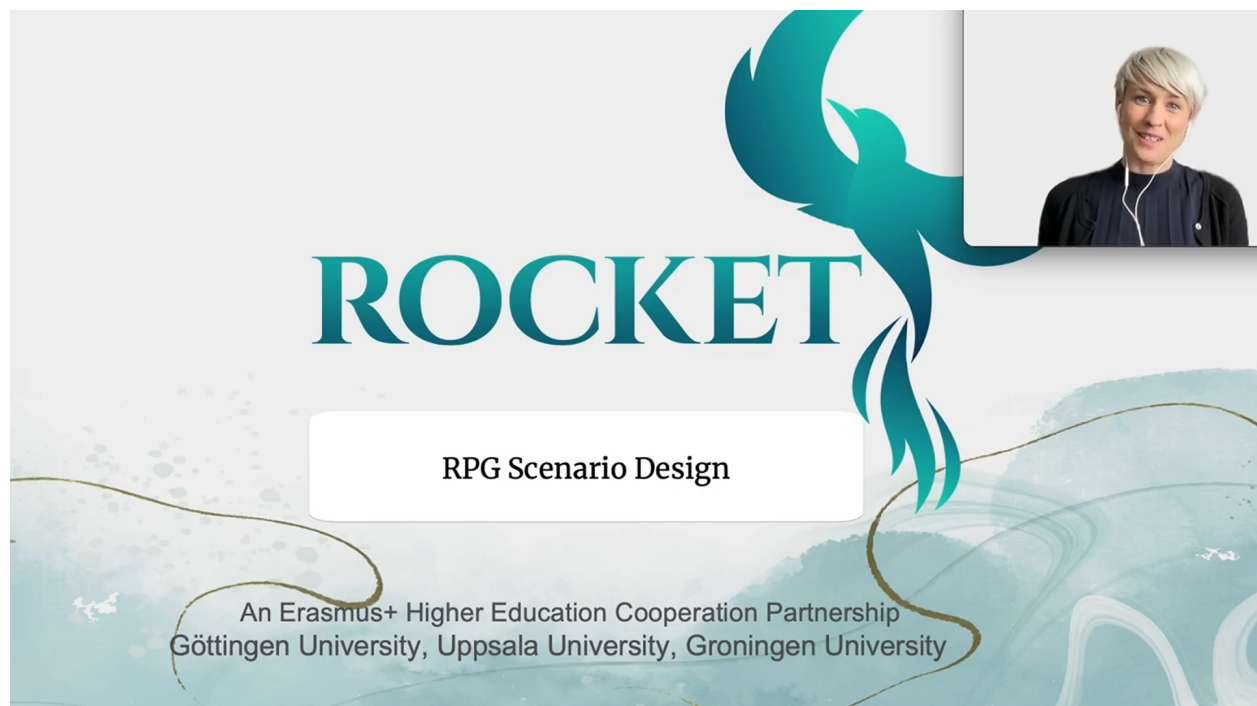


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DESIGNING ROLE-PLAYING SCENARIOS



Watch Josefin Westborg's linked "[Scenario Design](#)" video to learn how to design your own scenarios:



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