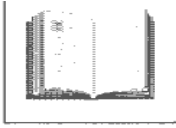


UNIT 1: THE NATURE OF CONFLICT AND ITS CAUSES



Read Text

INTRODUCTION

This Unit introduces you to the Module on Managing Conflict, which does not claim to provide ready made solutions to managing conflict. You, the manager, will be led through the understanding of conflict, as well as its causes.

Experienced education managers will admit that some form of conflict is inescapable in any institution or organisation and that the manager should be sufficiently prepared to handle it. Conflict is inevitable in any situation where individuals and groups with different viewpoints, personalities and emotional needs are all inter-acting closely in the same environment throughout the day.

As a manager, it is very important that you understand conflict and its causes so that you are able to deal with it in an effective way. According to Carl Jung (Sage Life Publication): The most intense conflict, if overcome, leaves behind a sense of security and calm that is not easily disturbed. It is just these intense conflicts and their fire which are needed to produce valuable and lasting results.

It is hoped that your understanding of the content of this Unit will assist you in dealing with conflict as you carry out your managerial tasks.

OBJECTIVES

After working through this Unit you should be able to:

- define conflict
- identify various causes of conflict, particularly in your work situation.



Read Text

CONTENT

DEFINITION OF CONFLICT

Conflict is part and parcel of working with people. The Collins English dictionary defines conflict as: 'collision, clashing of opposed principles, a fight or struggle, to be in opposition or disagreement with another person's wishes or point of view.'

Conflict is caused when an open disagreement takes place between two or more parties and revolves around people's emotions and objectives. Conflict is inevitable in all groups or organisations, including schools.

In every work situation there is interaction between different people, with different viewpoints, different cultures and frequently different aims, which at certain stages is sure to result in conflict situations. In other words, conflict and dispute are part of life and no society, community, organisation or personal relationship is totally immune to experiencing conflict at some time or another.

Wherever people or groups of people are engaged in activities involving competition or where there are goals which may be perceived to be different, or where the people themselves are incompatible, conflict is certain to arise.

As an education manager, you should bear in mind that conflict may have a profoundly negative effect on the parties involved if handled incorrectly by you, the manager or mediator. Conversely, it can lead to growth and productivity for your institution or organisation if it is correctly and sensitively handled and ultimately resolved.

Conflict is perhaps best defined as a clash of interests, ideas and aims between two or more people. It is their failure to agree and may have a variety of causes. The main cause may be an inflexible mindset of one of the parties.

Conflict may be seen as behaviour that seriously disrupts a situation and makes people or groups dysfunctional. It may even threaten the existence of organisations. Conflict occurs when rules break down and there is a no-win situation.

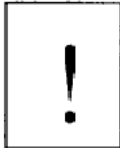


Self Evaluation

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 1.1

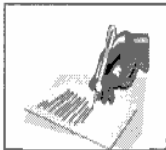
When you think about conflict, what words come to mind? Write down five words.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



Important-take note!

Possible answers to this activity can be found at the end of this Unit.



Self Evaluation

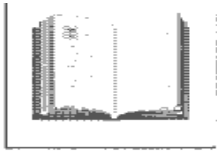
SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 1.2

Describe two incidents that occurred in your institution which led to conflict.



Important-take note!

Possible answers to this activity are given at the end of the Unit.



Read Text

CAUSES OF CONFLICT

Conflict situations can develop in any organisation where the tasks facing a manager are people-directed.

Circumstances leading to conflict can be more easily recognised by examining the causes of conflict which are often multiple rather than singular events.

Some of the major causes of conflict in education management situations and in particular as experienced by women managers are:

- jealousy of status and position
- resistance from colleagues
- religious differences
- language barriers
- gender inequality
- intolerance and bias in a male-dominated workplace
- differences in personal goals and values
- lack of co-operation
- sub-standard work performance
- misunderstanding
- personality clashes
- power struggle
- non-compliance with rules
- racism

Let us now expand on each of these ideas with some examples:

Jealousy of status and position:

You, as a newly appointed education manager, may experience jealousy from your colleagues, because you are younger than several members of your staff. You have been promoted to a managerial position and the older members of staff feel rejected or worthless.

Resistance from colleagues:

This is evident when members of your staff do not perform tasks assigned to them.

Religious differences:

A certain member of your staff may wish to observe a particular religious holiday and ask for time off. You may feel it is unnecessary.

Language barriers:

These occur when one party's lack of understanding of the language leads to misinterpretation or misunderstanding of instructions or expectations.

Gender inequality:

Your being a woman in an education management position, may give you a feeling of insecurity and you may therefore lack assertiveness.

Intolerance:

This may be a gender-related problem where you find male colleagues do not accept you as their manager just because you are a woman. Their disrespect and non-compliance will cause conflict.

Differences in personal goals and values:

This is when people, though doing the same work, have different goals. For example, in a school situation you may aim at assisting matric students to pass at the end of the year whilst a colleague aims at just finishing the syllabus.

Lack of co-operation:

This is when members of your team seem indifferent to the task at hand. They put very little or no effort into the work.

Misunderstanding:

When you do not give clear instructions, confusion results. As a manager, you must always make sure that your staff know and understand what you expect them to do.

Personality clashes:

Problems arise when two people simply do not get along. It is important to remember that differences in personality bring about conflict. For example, one person may do things in a clumsy and disorderly manner, whilst you are neat and orderly.

Power struggle:

This is not necessarily a gender-related issue. This will cause conflict when other people, male or female, feel they deserve to be in the managerial position that you occupy. In most cases they will make you feel that they resent having you as manager when they could have done better. Such resentment can take the form of gestures, actions or may even be verbalized.

Non-compliance with rules:

When people go against the set rules of the organisation, conflict arises.

Racism:

Much as we may hope that the problem of racism has ceased to exist, it remains prevalent in certain institutions.

- **In fact anything that the individual cares about may cause a conflict situation.**



Assessment Task

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

Identify at least four areas from the preceding information on the Causes of Conflict that you, in your role as education manager, may have experienced or been exposed to as mediator.



Important-take note!

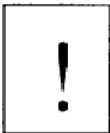
Answers to this activity are given at the end of the Unit



Practise Activiy

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Think back to the last time you found yourself in a conflict situation. List what you believe to be the causes of that conflict situation. What types of behaviour were displayed by both parties?



Important-take note!

Answers to this activity are given at the end of the Unit.



Summary

SUMMARY

In this Unit, you have been given the definition of conflict and its causes. It is hoped that with the knowledge you have gained so far, you are now ready to tackle the next Unit which deals with the types of conflict and the effects thereof.

To sum up, we can say that conflict:

- can take place between individuals or groups
- is usually an expression of differences between people or groups
- occurs when individuals or groups do not get what they want

- takes place when the wants and needs of two or more persons appear to be incompatible
- can exist below the surface without being visible.

This means that:

- you must accept that conflict can provide opportunities for learning and growth
- you must also accept that conflict is a natural result of working in groups
- you, as a manager, must develop the necessary skills to manage conflict in your organisation so that you can contribute to harmony and order in your organisation.



Reflection

REFLECTION

Having gone through this Unit, reflect on your role as education manager and whether you now have a broader understanding of the nature and causes of conflict within your organisation.



Unit Test

UNIT TEST

Having gone through this Unit, give one example in each case of a conflict situation you have experienced that was caused by the following:

- Misunderstanding
- Cultural differences



Important-note!

Suggested answers to the test questions are given at the end of the Unit.

SUGGESTED ANSWERS

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 1.1

The following are possible answers, but yours may be different.

Tension, disagreement, clashing of interests, anger, frustration, disunity, disharmony, differences of opinion, emotions, people, goals

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 1.2

Please note that the answers to this activity will vary depending on your experience as an Education Manager.

It is, however, important that your examples should reflect your understanding of the concept 'conflict.'

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

Please note that the answers to this activity depend on your experiences as Education Manager.

Your answers, however, must relate to some of the causes of conflict as discussed in the Unit content.

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Again the answers to this activity will vary depending on your experiences as Education Manager.

Types of behaviour displayed will be as you perceived them at that time.

UNIT TEST

Please note that the answers you give will vary depending on your experience as Education Manager. You may, however, consider the following in your answers:

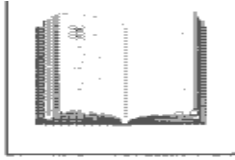
- ***Misunderstanding:***

Information or instruction may have been wrongly interpreted. The person supposed to perform the task may not have heard clearly or may not have heard at all.

- ***Cultural differences :***

The task set might require some action that is contrary to the person's cultural values.

UNIT 2: TYPES OF CONFLICT AND THEIR EFFECTS



Read Text

INTRODUCTION

Don Shula (Sage Life Publication –1999) says: Everything in life can't always be flowery. You have to be strong enough to take the attacks and to roll with the punches. Facing adversity and overcoming it is part of being a champion.

In the previous Unit, we identified conflict and examined the various causes of conflict. This Unit aims at highlighting some of the types of conflict that the education manager, at one time or another, experiences in the workplace. Conflict is for the most part seen in negative terms, however, if correctly managed may have definite advantages. Conflict situations are often seen as single events, however, this is not always so. Conflict consists of various stages and types which will be explained in more detail as we progress with this Unit.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- clearly assess the types of conflict facing the school manager
- examine the effects of conflict on the organisation.



Read Text

CONTENT

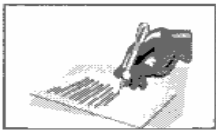
TYPES AND EFFECTS OF CONFLICT

In order to manage conflict successfully, it is important that the manager is able to first identify the various types of conflict and their causes.

Conflict which results from an honest difference of opinion (where a choice must be made between two alternatives) is unavoidable and can prove to be a valuable exercise, if it ensures that any future planning is done on the basis of the advantages and disadvantages which the alternatives offer.

Conflict is perhaps at its most dangerous when personal gain is the ultimate aim of one or both of the parties involved. Decision-making becomes problematic because neither of the parties is prepared to “give in” for fear that it may be regarded as a victory by the other party.

An immense amount of time is wasted when conflict drags on, causing severe damage to the institution itself. Still more dangerous and counter-productive is a situation where conflict is not allowed into the open. It then becomes a smouldering resentment which causes on-going damage to job satisfaction and productivity, further damaging the whole organisation.



Self Evaluation

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 2.1

Study the above-mentioned information carefully. List one positive effect of conflict and one negative effect of conflict that may result from conflict between people in an institution, as given in the information.



Important-take note!

Answers to this activity are given at the end of this Unit.



Read Text

TYPES OF CONFLICT

Let us now examine the various types of conflict.

- **Goal conflict:**

This arises with the introduction of new concepts and ideas and is largely based on the fear of and resistance to change. It is especially relevant if the one party has not participated in the initial planning process. This can exist even if you work at the same job. For example, a certain member of your staff may see teaching as just a job, whereas for you it may be a calling, causing vastly different and incompatible goals. Goal divergency may be between individuals or larger groups of people.

- **Cognitive conflict:**

Where one person's or group holds conflicting ideas or opinions, for example, old staff members and new staff members, or male staff members and female staff members. These pressures occur most often when someone in the organisational environment expects their ideas to prevail. Some managers, due to their perceived role expectations, are not open to negotiation or discussion on issues and often feel they automatically know best, even if this is not so.

- **Affective conflict:**

Where one person,s or group's emotions, feelings or attitudes differ from the others e.g. strong political, religious or cultural attitudes, within the same organisation.

- **Behavioural conflict:**

Where one person or group behaves in an unacceptable manner to the other.

- **Conflict caused by differences in personal preferences:**

This occurs when one person has different priorities from another or places greater importance on one outcome over others. Such preferences are not necessarily right or wrong but refer rather to individual choices. For example, a teacher who is familiar with and who prefers teaching in the junior primary phase, may object to teaching subjects in the senior primary phase. Differences in personal preferences are common occurrences in school settings.

- **Conflict caused by clashes of personality:**

Such conflict can occur when two or more people simply cannot relate to one another. Hopefully in a school situation such differences can be overlooked for the sake of promoting the smooth running of the institution. For example, as a school manager your personality may cause you to be neat, precise and organised, whereas your deputy, with whom you are required to work very closely, may have a personality which is spontaneous and casual. These basic differences in how the two of you approach the same job may bring about conflict.

- **Circumstantial pressures:**

This form of conflict arises when a situation dictates that only one solution is possible even though the parties involved may want different things. For example, the teachers on your staff may have decided for some reason that they would like a half day because they have completed the marking of exam papers, however, you as the school manager feel there is still other work to be done and so refuse their request. Quite clearly, circumstantial pressures can create conflict.

- **Conflict caused by differences in perception:**

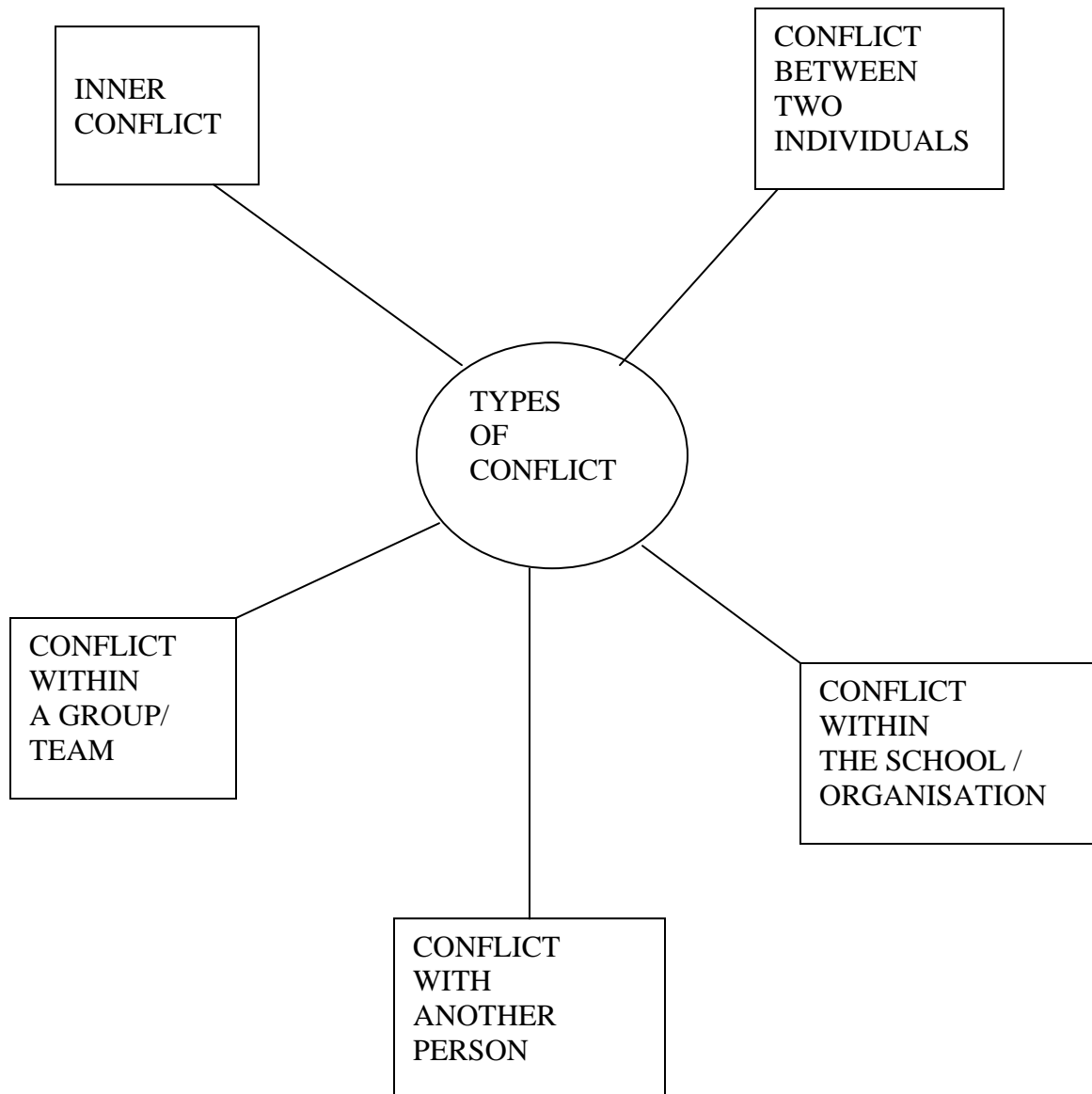
Differences of opinion can occur when individuals view the same circumstances in different ways. For example, two individuals looking at the same bucket of water may have different perceptions of the same bucket. One person viewing it may see it as half-full, whereas the other person may see it as half empty.

In a school situation, two or more learners involved in a discipline related matter, may perceive the exact same incident very differently. Perceptions drive an individual's explanation of reality/truth and such differences are bound to result in conflict.

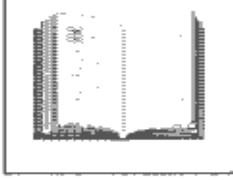
- **Conflict caused by threats to someone's status:**

This can happen in a situation where an individual or group feels they have a good idea or plan, but another person or group takes credit for the idea. This may occur with an insecure staff member or manager.

The diagram below illustrates where the various types of conflict may be found



Taken from Education human resource management and development. Towards effective school management and governance (Department of Education)



Read Text

Let us now further expand on each of these areas as found in the diagram:

INNER CONFLICT:

This may seriously affect the problem-solving skills of the manager when mediating, as her inner conflict may cloud her vision in certain areas.

Inner conflict may be caused by two opposing inner thoughts, namely:

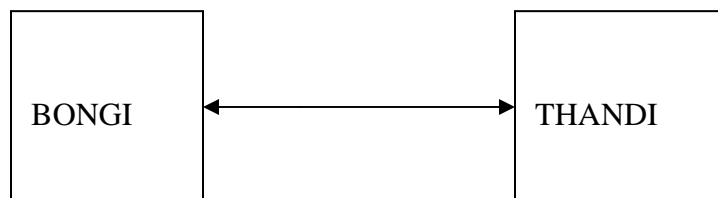
- what I want to do, as opposed to
- what I have to do and may be further explained by the following diagram:



As an education manager you may often have to decide between what you are expected to do in your particular role and what you really want to do as an individual.

CONFLICT BETWEEN TWO INDIVIDUALS:

There may be conflict between two of your staff members. One member, Thandi, comes to you to complain about the work ethics of her colleague , Bongi. You agree with Thandi, but then Bongi comes to you to complain about the work ethics of Thandi. You also agree with Bongi.

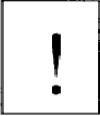




Self Evaluation

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 2. 2

Have you managed the conflict correctly by agreeing with both parties? Why do you say this?



Important-take note!

Possible answers to this activity may be found at the end of this Unit



Read Text

CONFLICT WITHIN A TEAM:

The members of your management team disagree on the best way to deal with the poor behaviour of some of your Grade 10 learners. There are four opposing views, namely:

- ignore them (A)
- report them to the School Governing Body
- communicate constructively with them (C) and
- fight with them (D)

Effective ways of dealing with this conflict would be to :

- bring the management team and learners together and praise any work which has been carried out positively and successfully
- offer an opportunity to discuss the conflict in the group
- talk to the people concerned and not about them. Concentrate on the action and not the person.

CONFLICT WITHIN THE ORGANISATION

This type of conflict usually occurs between two or more of the stakeholders in the organisation, for example, learners , educators, school management team, S.G.B. and parents.

For the benefit of the organisation, especially the learners, it is very important to resolve such conflicts as soon as possible. Conflicts within the organisation will seriously hamper the overall aim, namely the improvement of the culture of learning, teaching and productivity.

CONFLICT WITH ANOTHER PERSON:

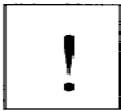
In all situations where individuals work together to achieve goals, this type of conflict occurs frequently. It is essential to manage this in a constructive manner. (Refer to Conflict Management Styles in Unit 4).



Practise Activiyy

PRCTICE ACTIVITY

You as an education manager, together with your management team, have decided to structure your curriculum and planning according to the Outcomes Based Education (OBE) approach. One of your older members of staff, who is not familiar with the system, has refused to co-operate. You insist that she conforms. By re-examining the above points on types of conflict, identify which types of conflict are displayed in this situation and the causes thereof.



Important-take note!

Answers to this activity are at the end of this Unit.



Read Text

EFFECTS OF CONFLICT

Unfortunately, conflict is most often seen as being rather negative. However, one only has to explore the concept of conflict in more detail to recognise the definite advantages that may also be gained from a conflict situation.

The dysfunctional consequences of conflict are often more evident in an organisation where negative conflict prevails. Tension is heightened and working conditions are strained, inhibiting maximum work-performance.

However, it has become clear in recent years, that not all conflict need be negative, hence the emergence of the terms 'conflict management' and 'conflict resolution.'



Important-take note!

The important thing to remember is that: successful management of the conflict situation and the outcome thereof remains the ultimate goal of any manager.



Read Text

POSITIVE EFFECTS OF CONFLICT

Conflict does serve several functions which may be healthy and advantageous to the parties involved, eg.

- At times it can draw people together and give each a sense of identity.
- In learning to deal with conflict, people automatically become better communicators and problem-solvers in stressful situations.
- Group norms and standards can be the result of dealing with conflict i.e. everyone has the same concept or understanding of what is expected.
- When conflict results in better quality decisions and productivity as opposed to mediocrity, conflict has been functional.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF CONFLICT

Conflict may, however, be regarded as dysfunctional when it:

- prohibits a person or group from completing the task at hand
- is personally destructive of a person or a group
- results in lower production levels; or
- threatens the survival of a person or a group.



Assessment Task

SELF ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

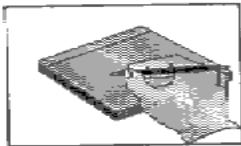
Think about some of the conflicts you have encountered as an education manager. Describe at least one major conflict in which you were involved. Answer the following questions:

- From what you have learnt, state what type of conflict it was.
- Explain your answer above.



Important-take note!

Suggested answers to this activity are given at the end of this Unit.



Summary

SUMMARY

In conclusion it must be realised that conflict has both positive and negative aspects and that the true source of conflict is most often to be found within the person and is closely linked to personality. Conflict situations are best dealt with in neutral terms and as the old English proverb suggests: 'When everybody thinks alike, nobody really thinks'.

Conflict then, as you have learned in this Unit, often occurs in institutions for a variety of reasons. Given that human beings, with differing needs and personalities, are interacting on a daily basis, together with the demands of the institution, it is little wonder then that conflict has been experienced by every manager at some time or another.

In the end, it is the way the manager handles conflict that will determine the success or failure of the particular institution.

“I was angry with my friend.”
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
“I was angry with my foe.”
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

“William Blake, ‘The Poison Tree’”

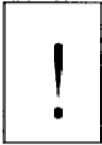
In the following Unit you will be guided in the development of a framework on which to build the skills that are necessary for successful conflict management.



Reflection

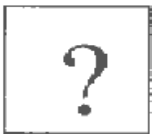
REFLECTION

Think back to two different conflict situations you have experienced recently as an education manager. Briefly explain the two situations and why the one had negative outcomes and the other positive. How did you feel after each situation? How did the other participants feel in each situation? Which do you feel had better results?



Important-take note!

The answers to this activity will vary depending on your various individual experiences.



Unit Test

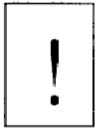
UNIT TEST

Carefully re-read this entire unit on the types of conflict and the effects thereof.

Now let's see what you remember!

Decide whether the following statements are true or false:

- (a) All conflict has a negative effect on a person or organisation.
- (b) When conflict arises from circumstantial pressures it is caused due to the fact that the parties involved have been given too many choices.
- (c) Two people may view the same situation very differently.
- (d) Most people dislike having their status challenged.
- (e) Conflict may be both functional and dysfunctional to an organisation.



Important-take note!

Answers to the Unit Test may be found at the end of the unit.

SUGGESTED ANSWERS

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 2.1

POSITIVE EFFECTS:

- (i) Future planning is more carefully considered by both parties, thus lessening the risks of future failure.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS:

- (i) Decision-making is affected.
- (ii) Productivity is disrupted.
- (iii) There is no job satisfaction

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 2.2

Your actions as described in the case study would not have been correct. It would have been acceptable if you had:

- brought the two people together to resolve the issue
- not taken sides with either and
- listened actively without commenting.

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Types of conflict displayed in this situation are:

- (i) goal conflict where the older member of staff is afraid of the challenge of new concepts and is resisting changing to an unfamiliar situation.
- (ii) cognitive conflict where you, the manager, are in favour of the new ideas and changes and feel they will be beneficial to the institution. The older staff member may feel that her opinion is not valued and that she was not consulted on the above issue.

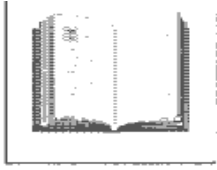
SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

Please note that the answer will depend on your experience as education manager. However, by revisiting the text, you will be able to state what type of conflict you experienced.

UNIT TEST ANSWERS

- (a) False
- (b) False
- (c) True
- (d) True
- (e) True

UNIT 3: THE PROCESS AND STRUCTURE OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION



Read Text

INTRODUCTION

Having learned in Units 1 and 2 what conflict is and its causes, types and effects, this Unit is now going to analyse conflict behaviour and try to assist you, as manager, to find ways of resolving conflict.

It is hoped that your understanding of how people behave and how situations or environments cause people to behave the way they do (coupled with your own experiences as education manager) will help you in your managerial position.

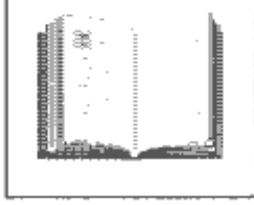
The following aspects will be discussed in this unit:

- analysis of conflict behaviour
- approaches to handling conflict

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this Unit you should be able to:

- understand conflict behaviour
- know about the approaches towards successful conflict management
- use the approaches you have learnt to resolve conflict.



Read Text

CONTENT

ANALYSING CONFLICT BEHAVIOUR

As an education manager you may have noticed that people behave differently in different situations. For instance, as a manager you may plan with your staff for an important occasion. In your planning you have delegated tasks to different people only to find at the eleventh hour that one member neglected to do the delegated task. This is bound to frustrate you. As a woman manager people might expect you to react hysterically. It is your understanding of conflict which will help you to resolve the situation and go on with your work in a productive way.

In this Unit you will be shown two models that were devised by Thomas (1967) for understanding conflict. These are

- The Process Model - This model gives five components that make up any conflict situation.
- The Structural Model - This model gives four variables that actually shape the conflict behaviour. As any of these variables changes, then behaviour also changes.



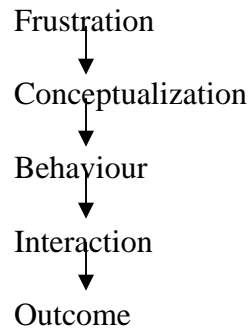
Read Text

THE PROCESS MODEL

The following are the components of the Process Model:

- Frustration
- Conceptualization
- Behaviour
- Interaction
- Outcome

This model shows you the various stages that you go through before you resolve any conflict situation. These are:



Now let us examine these five stages in more detail:

FRUSTRATION

An example of the first step listed above is where one member fails, through neglect or otherwise, to perform her duty and you as a manager become frustrated. You see all your planning going ‘down the drain’ because desires, needs or objectives will not be realised.

CONCEPTUALIZATION

Your perception of the situation will determine the action that you will take to remedy the situation.

BEHAVIOUR

Behaviour in this context refers to the strategies that you will use to resolve the conflict situation. These strategies will be discussed later in this Unit.

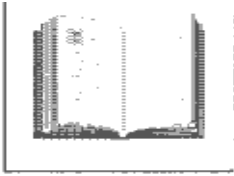
INTERACTION

In order for you to arrive at a point where you have resolved the conflict, interaction with one another is important. Poor communication and personal bias may aggravate or increase the conflict. This means that a solution will not be found. Open and honest discussion with other parties or team members will eventually lead to resolving the conflict.

OUTCOME

This is when you have resolved the conflict. Always remember that the outcome may be positive or negative. Not all the parties may be happy with the outcome. The outcome of the conflict may lead to further conflict because of, for instance, stirred up emotions and feelings.

As an education manager you should be able to know where you are during any conflict in terms of the Process Model and be able to work towards reaching a true solution to the issue at hand.



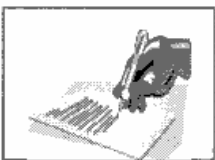
Read Text

THE STRUCTURAL MODEL

Thomas (1967) gives the following four elements as the variables in the Structural Model:

- Behavioural predispositions - These are characterised by a person's personality.
- Social pressures - These are pressures from outside the conflict situation. For example, pressures from political groups, unions, community, etc. which can have very powerful influences on any conflict resolution.
- Incentives - What one party stands to gain may have a great influence on the way conflict is managed or handled.
- Rules and procedures - Rules and procedures can limit the way people work towards resolving a conflict. These impose constraints on behaviour.

When dealing with conflict, it will be helpful if you understand how individual dispositions, social pressures, incentives and rules impact on the people who are involved in a conflict. It is your understanding of these elements which will assist you in determining which ones you can change in order to avoid dysfunctional conflict.



Self Evaluation

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 3.1

Think of a conflict situation that you, as an education manager, have experienced where it seemed your efforts in planning were about to be disrupted. How did you save the situation? Now, referring to the Process Model that you have learned about in this Unit, how would you go about saving the situation?



Important-take note!

Suggested answers to this activity are given at the end of the Unit.



Read Text

APPROACHES TO CONFLICT

There are various ways of handling conflict which may or may not work, depending on the nature of the conflict and the situation surrounding it.

Van der Westhuizen (1991) gives two dimensions in the behaviour of conflict. These are:

- the self-assertive dimension
- the co-operative dimension

The self-assertive dimension - one person or party will be powerfully self-assertive while another person or party may display poor self-assertion.

The co-operative dimension – one person or party involved in a conflict can have a very powerful sense of co-operation that may cause the other person or party to yield and co-operate.

You will now be exposed to some approaches to handling conflict. Basson, Van der Westhuizen and Niemann in: *Effective educational management*(1991:640-642) identify the following ways in which conflict can be approached, as the most important:

- The win-lose approach
- The win-win approach
- The contingency approach

These approaches are closely related to the strategies which may be utilised when solving conflict and which are discussed in Unit 4.

Let us now look at each of these approaches in more detail.

THE WIN-LOSE APPROACH

The attitude of the person in this approach is that of wanting to win regardless of the other person's or party's interests or concerns. This person does not consider any compromise even if personal relationships are endangered. This has a destructive effect on the organisation and it helps if the manager identifies it in time and defuses it.

To a person who has taken the win-lose stance, the solution of the conflict lies in three different actions:

- a power struggle – where both parties adopt this win-lose style
- the intervention of a third person with greater authority
- the casting of lots.

The win-lose approach has two outcomes:

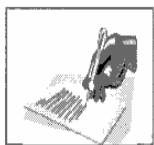
- it can cause antagonism and friction between the parties involved
- this type of conflict may lead to a fight for leadership, cause scepticism and put pressure on members to support decisions and to be loyal.

THE WIN-WIN APPROACH

In this approach both parties are willing to reach a compromise. The solution reached will not be coloured by personal opinion. In a win-win approach both parties win as long as they reach a compromise or a point of collaboration. (This strategy will be explained further in Unit 4).

THE CONTINGENCY APPROACH

The manager here should realise that there is no single correct way of dealing with conflict. The solution should be determined in conjunction with the conflict situation itself. As you deal with the conflict, you should look for alternative solutions which you should evaluate and eventually use in such a way that your organisation is strengthened. Both parties lose but the conflict is resolved in a way that is good for the organisation.

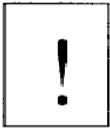


Self Evaluation

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 3.2

From your experience as an education manager, describe a conflict situation where you or a member of your management team and another party (with whom you were in conflict) adopted

a win-lose stance. What effect did this particular conflict have on your work afterwards? If you were in the same situation today, what approach would you take in resolving this conflict?



Important-take note!

Suggested answers to this activity are given at the end of the Unit.



Read Text

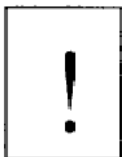
Whereas in the win-lose approach personalities of the conflicting parties play a big role, the win-win approach ensures that both parties reach a common understanding and both benefit. By compromising, the two parties should be prepared to give up their personal viewpoints and be prepared to co-operate.



Assessment Task

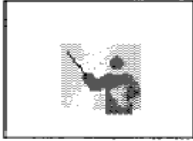
SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

You are an education manager. In your job you interact with people on a daily basis. Give an example of a situation that you experienced which you considered to be a conflict situation.



Important-take note!

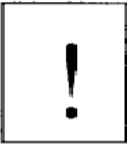
Suggested answers to this activity are given at the end of the Unit.



Practise Activiy

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

You are the manager of an institution. Two weeks ago you asked your deputy to organise for a staff meeting, by sending out notices with reminders that everybody should bring with them progress reports, as well as other important information that you have to submit to Head Office soon after the meeting. On the day of the meeting only three of the expected fifteen arrive. List the steps that this conflict will follow.



Important-take note!

Suggested answers are given at the end of this Unit.



Summary

SUMMARY

This Unit has attempted to lead you to an understanding of conflict behaviour and the Process Model as well as the Structural Model which were discussed. Three approaches towards solving conflict were also discussed. It is hoped that, armed with this knowledge, you are now on your way to managing conflict effectively.

Unit 4 will attempt to provide you with more information on managing conflict and the various strategies of conflict resolution.

By looking deep into yourself and reflecting on your various experiences and the experiences of other people, it is hoped that you will combine these experiences with what you learn from all the units in this module and be better equipped to deal with any conflict situation effectively.



Reflection

REFLECTION

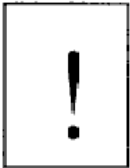
Having gone through this Unit and the preceding ones, think back to two incidents involving conflict that you have experienced. Think of the way you handled each. Now, with the knowledge you have gained so far, think of how you would approach each of the conflicts should it happen again.



Unit Test

UNIT TEST

- Having gone through this Unit, give the four variables of the Structural Model and cite examples from your experience of each of these.
- Of the three approaches to Conflict Resolution, which one do you prefer to use to solve conflict? Give the reason for your answer.



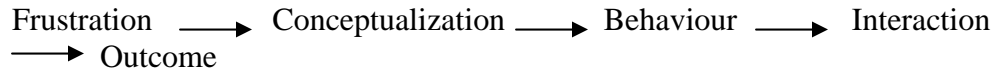
Important-take note!

Suggested answers to the unit test are given at the end of the Unit.

SUGGESTED ANSWERS

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 3.1

Please note that answers to this unit will vary depending on your experiences as education manager. However, you should consider the following steps of the Process Model:



SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 3.2

Please note that answers to this activity will vary depending on your experiences as education manager. You may have found an effective solution to the conflict. Consider the Process Model in your answer.

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

Please note that the answer to this activity depends on your experiences as an education manager.

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

You may consider the following steps for your answer.

- Frustration
- Conceptualization
- Behaviour
- Interaction
- Outcome

UNIT TEST ANSWERS

You may consider the following variables for your answer:

- Behavioural predisposition
- Social pressures
- Incentives
- Rules and procedures

Please note that the examples you cite for each of the variables will vary depending on your own experiences as education manager.

Out of the three approaches to conflict resolution discussed, you will choose one that will bring progress and productivity into the workplace. You may consider the following:

- The win-win approach where there is compromise or collaboration.
- The contingency approach where the situation surrounding the conflict is viewed with an open mind because the parties involved only want what is best for the organisation.

UNIT 4: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION



Read Text

INTRODUCTION

By now you should have gained a clear understanding of the definition of conflict and how it is caused.

You should also be able to identify the various types of conflict and the effects they may have on an individual, group or organisation such as a school.

In this unit, you will learn about managing conflict situations and will be exposed to conflict management strategies. You will also be given skills for resolving conflict situations which occur within your organisation.

Managing people and their behaviour is an accepted part of any manager's job. However, managing difficult people and difficult situations requires specific skills.

At times, it may seem easier for the manager to avoid or 'work around' a potential conflict situation. This is never a good long-term solution. If the manager has developed sound conflict management skills, it is possible to manage difficult situations effectively.

Effective leaders never avoid tricky management situations!

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this Unit you should be able to:

- explain the term 'conflict management'
- describe strategies for managing conflict situations
- suggest solutions to conflict situations in your organisation
- identify measures to avoid conflict.



Read Text

CONTENT

DEFINING CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict Management

This may be explained as an attempt to reduce or control a potentially explosive and destructive situation to a functional, constructive level. Conflict may be managed by means of avoidance tactics or denial. However, this does not allow it to be resolved, and could have a severely detrimental effect on the individual, group or organisation, as you have discovered from the previous units.

Conflict Resolution

This occurs when all the parties involved understand each other's situation accurately and are willing to discuss it because they want the conflict resolved, regardless of their former disagreements. Resolution can only occur when all parties reach a mutually satisfying agreement.



Self Evaluation

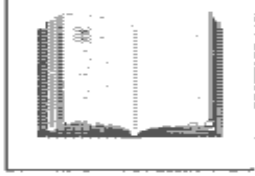
SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 4.1

Briefly explain what you understand as the difference between conflict management and conflict resolution.



Important-take note!

Possible answers to this question can be found at the end of this unit.



Read Text

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION

Ideally conflict should be identified and resolved as soon as possible to prevent it from becoming worse and to avoid the re-occurrence of a similar problem. When cases of conflict or dispute are noticed by the education manager, she should intervene as soon as possible by listening to the viewpoints of all parties involved, and ultimately bring the parties to a problem-solving stage.

Conflict management presents unique problems in a school situation where the education manager has to deal with dominant personalities, clashing of ideals and ideas (not necessarily bad, merely different) and a majority of people who are highly individualistic and creative.

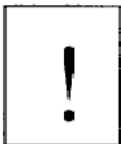
The true art of conflict management then lies in the manager's ability to handle potentially explosive situations and eventually guide all the parties in reaching a compromise.

Conflict and dispute, as you have seen in previous units, are part of life and no society, community, organisation or individual is immune. Conflict can become physically and emotionally damaging, or conversely, if correctly managed, can lead to growth and productivity for all concerned.

Conflict resolution is one of the activities to which an education manager is exposed on an almost daily basis and it is for the continued success of the organisation and all those in it, that problems must be solved.

There is no doubt that the most effective approach to conflict resolution is a problem-solving, democratic approach, which allows the affected parties to be involved.

Each one of us operates from a unique perspective. However, if we are to become effective leaders in our own organisations, we need to be able to manage and resolve conflict effectively, as we now know from previous units that conflict and disputes are part of life, and cannot be avoided.



Important-take note!

The important thing is how the mediator manages and ultimately resolves the conflict.

This Unit does not offer a final solution on conflict management and resolution, but deals with the skills and strategies available to the mediator to bring all parties closer to a solution.

The education manager should bear in mind that totally different conflict management skills would be needed in an educational institution from those of any other type of manager, as the people being dealt with in the school situation, tend to be intelligent, independent and questioning human beings.

Before we look at Conflict Management Strategies, it may be useful to do the following exercise, which, will later be repeated to see whether learning about Conflict Management Strategies has assisted you in becoming a more effective manager of conflict within your organisation.



Assessment Task

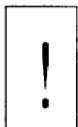
SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

Difficult people

List some difficult people you have to work with and identify their dominant, difficult behaviour characteristics

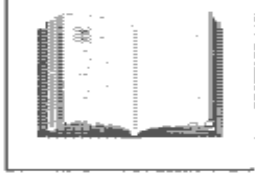
Person	Behaviour Characteristics
1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____
4. _____	4. _____

Now, review the strategies you have learnt about for each type of difficult person. Summarise how you can more effectively approach each of these people in the future. Has there been a difference in your approach?



Important-take note!

The answers to the self-assessment activity may vary according to the experiences you have had with people. Answers to this activity are given at the end of this unit.



Read Text

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The educational leader needs to bear in mind that it is often more challenging to solve conflict alone, especially when both parties feel the need to win. Conflict solving can be further complicated by implementing problem-solving strategies, which may be interpreted by one of the parties as a sign of weakness on behalf of the manager, or as a new and threatening strategy.

The way in which education managers respond to conflict is largely dependant on their own unique leadership styles. In view of the fact that most conflict in institutions is unexpected and escalates rather rapidly, it is often difficult for the manager to prepare for all the uncertainties of each situation.

Therefore, a set of strategies for dealing with conflict would undoubtedly be of great benefit to any manager in a crisis situation.

However, a few simple rules for reacting to conflict are suggested for diffusing a difficult situation before strategies are even considered:

- treat the other person with respect
- avoid insulting language and criticism
- listen, until you understand the other parties' points of view
- offer your point of view by stating your own views and feelings.

The following are a variety of strategies which you may find useful in managing conflict situations in your organisation:

Competing

This strategy requires facing conflict head on. It means being assertive, standing firm and rejecting other views and being able to argue well with legitimate authority. This strategy is useful when:

- a quick decision is vital
- unpopular ideas have to be implemented
- issues are vital to the organisation and you know you are right
- opponents would take advantage of non-competitive behaviour.

You may bear in mind, after having studied the previous Unit, that this particular strategy may have both positive and negative outcomes, as it may result in a win-lose situation, leaving the losing party feeling aggrieved and dissatisfied.

Avoiding

This involves deciding not to become involved in the conflict and requesting that it be solved elsewhere. It means being unassertive and sidestepping the issue. This strategy may be used when:

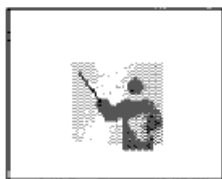
- the issues are trivial
- more important issues require your attention
- people need to cool down
- the potential destruction outweighs the benefits of the resolution
- first acquiring further information may be necessary
- someone else can resolve the conflict more effectively.

Again this strategy also needs to be used with caution, as it too, could result in a win-lose outcome.

Accommodating

This is the art of accepting the situation and agreeing to back down in conflict. It is the opposite of competing and is the result when someone neglects their own concerns to satisfy those of others. There is an element of self-sacrifice here and it requires great willingness to yield to others' views. Use the strategy when:

- you are wrong
- issues are more important to the other parties than to yourself
- you are outmatched.



Practise Activiy

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

With whom do you have or have you had a conflict? Use examples from both business and personal life?

- (a) _____
- (b) _____

(c) _____

What is or was the essence of the conflict?

(a) _____

(b) _____

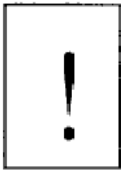
(c) _____

Describe the conflict resolution style which would have been most effective in the conflict you identified. Did you use it?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____



Important-take note!

Possible answers to this activity are given at the end of this unit.



Self Evaluation

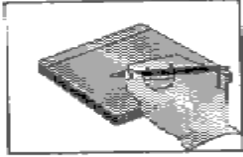
SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 4.2

- Which conflict management style do you regard as the best for managing your organisation?
- Why do you say this?
- What do you want to achieve for your organisation by managing conflict constructively?



Important-take note!

Answers to the self-assessment activity will be based entirely on your past experiences in managing and on what your new goals are. Suggestions may be found at the end of this Unit.

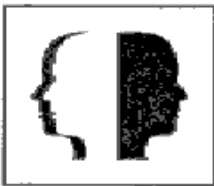


Summary

SUMMARY

In this unit you have learned the meaning of Conflict Management and Resolution and you should now be in a position to manage conflict effectively in your own organisation, having learned the various strategies which should assist you. Remember, it is difficult to manage conflict but, as a manager, you will be required to manage and resolve conflict situations on an almost daily basis.

In Unit 5, you will learn more about how a manager can become more effective in solving conflict, by using the strategies of **negotiation** and **mediation** and how to become an effective mediator during a conflict situation.



Reflection

REFLECTION

Having gone through this Unit, reflect on your role as Education Manager and how you will now go about managing and resolving conflict within your own organisation.



Unit Test

UNIT TEST

READ THE FOLLOWING CASE STUDY CAREFULLY

Thabo has been falling asleep in many of his classes. When this happened in Mrs Sithole's History lesson for the first time, she was very annoyed with Thabo, but she did not do anything about it. She did not even talk to Thabo to find out what the problem was. Ten days ago Thabo again fell asleep in her lesson. She was very angry because she felt that he found her boring as a teacher. She woke him up and shouted at him that he had no right to sleep during her lesson. Thabo was disorientated and told her to mind her own business because he had not been sleeping, he had only closed his eyes. Mrs Sithole became very angry and slapped Thabo's face.

Thabo then rushed out of the classroom and reported the incident to the president of the RCL during break. Thabo claimed that the teacher's behavior was totally unacceptable and that something had to be done.

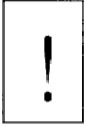
Thabo said that Mrs Sithole never talked to him about his problems to find out why he was so tired. He was working at night to bring in some money to help his mother. Sometimes he had to study for a test late at night after he had finished his night job. That was the reason why he sometimes fell asleep during the lessons. The deputy president of the RCL suggested that they call a meeting with all the interested parties, namely the principal, the teacher, Thabo and the RCL to discuss and find a solution to this conflict.

The RCL president disagreed with this suggestion and said that Mrs Sithole contravened the Constitution and the SA Schools Act. This type of action could not be tolerated and the best way to deal with the situation would be to boycott lessons until the teacher had been dismissed.

After a meeting had been held with all the members of the RCL to discuss the matter to come to some agreement, the learners refused to attend any lessons until the teacher had been dismissed.

(Adapted from GDE guide)

- Now, determine how you as mediator would handle this conflict situation, based on the skills and strategies you have learned in this unit.
- Give reasons for your choices.



Important-take note!

Possible answers may be found at the end of this Unit

SUGGESTED ANSWERS

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 4.1

Conflict Management means attempting to reduce or control an explosive situation.

Conflict resolution means solving the conflict or problem so that a mutual agreement is reached between both parties.

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

Answers here are largely dependent on your particular experiences, but remember, when dealing with strategies, you should have included at least some of the following: Avoiding, Compromising, Accommodating and Collaborating.

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Once again, answers here would be largely dependant on your previous experiences as a manager.

Some of the points you may have considered are:

- listening until you are sure of the facts
- using appropriate language
- treating all parties respectfully
- accommodating as a strategy

TO SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 4.2

- compromising – Half/Half
- competing – Win/Lose
- problem-solving Win-Win
- avoiding – Lose/Lose

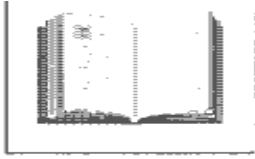
UNIT TEST ANSWERS

Some skills and strategies you may have considered in your answer are:

- listening carefully to both party's points of view
- offering your point of view

Again, consider the strategies of **collaborating**, **compromising** and **accommodating**.

UNIT 5: THE EDUCATION MANAGER AS CONFLICT MEDIATOR



Read Text

INTRODUCTION

I try to make pressure and tension work for me. I want the adrenalin to be flowing. I think sometimes we try so hard to be cool, calm and collected that we forget what we're doing. There's nothing wrong with being charged up if it's controlled.

Hale Irwin (Sage Life Publication 1999)

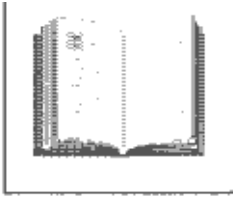
In Unit 4 you learned about conflict management and resolution and their associated strategies. In this Unit you will learn about the education manager as conflict mediator. The following topics will be included:

- managing internal conflict
- mediation
- effective communication
- dealing with difficult people

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this Unit, you should be able to:

- explain how to manage internal conflict
- outline characteristics of effective communication
- deal with anger in a positive way
- state the importance of understanding the various personality types of people.



Read Text

CONTENT

FUNCTIONS OF A MEDIATOR

As education manager you are expected to manage the following kinds of conflict:

- conflict within yourself
- conflict between two people for whom you are responsible – for example, two members of your staff
- conflict within the organisation - for example, the management team and the rest of the staff
- conflict within the group - for example, the management team
- conflict between you and another person.

Let us briefly examine five different ways of managing conflict that were discussed in Unit 4:

- avoiding : A person is faced with a problem but actually refuses to address the issues and the people causing the conflict.
- appeasing: Wanting to please even at the risk of forsaking your relationships and your goals.
- adapting: Behaving like a chameleon, seeking compromise by giving up part of your goals or persuading the other party to forsake part of theirs. In this strategy, though a solution may be found, both parties may not be satisfied with the outcome.
- attacking: Wanting to win at all costs. You do not care about relationships as long as your goals are achieved.
- Addressing: You seek a solution in an assertive, non-aggressive way. You see conflict as a means of improving relations by reducing tension between the conflicting groups.



Read Text

MANAGING INTERNAL CONFLICT

Before you can deal with any type of conflict, it is important to be able to manage any type of conflict that is within you. Inner conflict is closely linked to one's personality.

Quite often you experience this kind of conflict when:

- you 'wake up on the wrong side of the bed'
- you are emotionally disturbed
- you are in a dilemma where you have to make a choice between certain values.

Perhaps in your experience, you have heard members of staff complain about managers who take their problems to the work place and this contributes to the escalation of the conflict instead of diffusing the situation. As a manager, you should do some introspection to find out what your strengths and weaknesses are. Some education specialists, when asked what they believed to be the strengths of women managers, listed (amongst others) the following:

- diligence
- creativity
- task commitment
- kindness and sensitivity to problems encountered by subordinates
- being readily approachable
- caring
- patience, and many others

Amongst the weaknesses, the following were listed:

- intimidation by presence of males
- irritability
- being too bossy
- being timid
- entertaining gossip
- undermining other women
- being aggressive rather than assertive
- getting too emotional in times of crises, and many others

By looking into your inner self, you will recognise which of the strengths and weaknesses mentioned above, you identify with. You can even find more that are not mentioned here that relate to you. It is advisable that you be honest with yourself in identifying your personal strengths and weakness. You should then build on your strengths and develop ways to overcome your weaknesses.

Women are often branded as being too emotional, and being emotional is perfectly acceptable as long as you express your emotions appropriately. You should be able to identify exactly how you feel –whether you feel sad, angry, glad, scared or a combination of many. Having identified your feelings, use the ‘I’ word to express what you actually feel. For example, “I feel hurt....”

Look at the following vocabulary of emotions which will help you to better identify and express your feelings in a direct, open and honest manner:

Angry	Sad	Glad	Scared	Combination
irritated annoyed put down furious miffed upset cross	unhappy disappointed despondent blue hurt grieved down lonely	pleased happy joyful delighted effervescent comfortable high excited	anxious worried fearful concerned afraid nervous inhibited uncertain	guilty jealous frustrated embarrassed uncomfortable confused perplexed torn

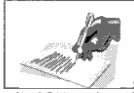
Add your own:

Angry	Sad	Glad	Scared	Combination

DEALING WITH ANGER THAT IS WITHIN YOU

Anger is one of the emotions which, when handled incorrectly, can be very damaging to the organisation. You should know that it is quite natural to express anger. You do not always have

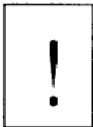
to 'turn the other cheek'. Sometimes, by expressing anger, you 'release steam' which might otherwise have resulted in a 'dangerous explosion.' Anger can work for or against you, depending on how you express it. You can use anger to gain attention especially when you act from a conviction for something that will benefit the organisation.



Self Evaluation

SELF –EVALUATION ACTIVITY 5.1

Think of a situation, in your experience as education manager, where a colleague behaved in a manner that made you very angry. How did you deal with your anger at the time? Did it help to resolve the conflict between you and the colleague?



Important-take note!

Suggested answers to this activity are given at the end of the Unit.



Read Text

When you feel angry, the following techniques might help you to deal with this emotion in a way that will yield positive results:

- admit your angry feelings to yourself
- take deep breaths to calm yourself
- do not be hasty to answer back
- if you feel you are losing control, take a break to regain your composure (leaving the room for a moment)
- prepare to confront the person or situation that caused you to feel angry
- if you happen to 'burst out' because you are angry, it is advisable that after 'cooling off' you apologise for your outburst and not for what you feel.

As you manage, the important thing is not just to manage but also to earn respect for yourself as leader and manager. The above techniques of coping with anger will help you earn the respect of your colleagues.

Whilst it is necessary to be firm in your management, it does not always mean you have to rule with an iron fist. Accept that other people also have emotions and are going to express them at some time or another.

As a manager, your colleagues will look upon you to mediate in conflict situations. You will be expected to have good interpersonal skills in order to deal with different types of people and to deal with criticism. You will also be expected to have good communication skills to be able to talk and listen to people.

The next section will deal with **interpersonal** skills and **communication** skills.



Read Text

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS:

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE:

What are difficult people?

A simple answer to this question would be that difficult people are people who cause difficulties for themselves as people or for other people, including you, the manager. These people may be causing difficulties to disrupt the organisation or to stop you from doing what you have to do.

You may be tempted to avoid or neglect difficult people but this is not a good long-term solution. A good leader will never avoid difficult people, but will assess their behaviour and deal with them effectively.

By understanding the following personality types of people, you will learn how to manage difficult people. For each type of person, the behaviour is described first and is followed by the action you can take to deal with the person.

ATTACKERS:

Behavior

Attackers are forceful in asserting their viewpoint. They want you to listen to what they say.

Your Action

Address the person by name quietly but firmly. Ask the person to sit. Listen carefully to what the person has to say. When the attacker is calm, suggest valuable solutions. Never return the attack.

EGOTIST:

Behaviour	Egotists also attack but they may be experts in the subject.
Your Action	Acknowledge their knowledge with honest respect. Do not be intimidated by their knowledge, instead you can gain useful information from them by asking questions. Compliment them on their helpful information but make sure they know that you are the manager and leader.

SNEAKS:

Behaviour	Sneaks usually use sarcasm when they speak.
Your Action	Confront them with direct questions and make sure that they know you do not appreciate their sarcasm. Be direct and try to steer them towards becoming team members.

VICTIMS:

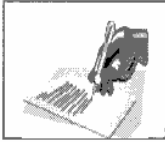
Behaviour	These people always see things negatively. They always complain about everyone and everything and want you to see them as defeated, powerless victims.
Your Action	Ask them for suggestions to improve the situation. Ask them to state the negative and address each logically and positively.

NEGATORS:

Behaviour	These people want to oppose everything and believe that their way of doing things is the only way. They are usually suspicious of those who are in authority.
Your Action	Monitor what they do and make sure they are not overworked.

UNRESPONSIVE PEOPLE:

Behaviour	These are the most difficult people to manage.
Your Action	When addressing them use open-ended questions that require more than a 'yes' or a 'no'. Wait for them to respond and do not finish their sentences for them. Give them assignments to present at future meetings.



Self Evaluation

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 5.2

Think of all the personality types you encounter in your position as education manager. How best can you deal with egotists?



Important-take note!

Suggested answers are at the end of the Unit



Read Text

COMMUNICATION AS A SKILL

As a manager, you are always inter-acting with people. It is therefore very important that you learn how to communicate well. What you say may be misunderstood and misinterpreted. You also can misunderstand and misinterpret what other people say.

Communication often goes wrong because:

- people hear what they want to hear – what another person heard may differ greatly from what you said
- people do not listen with their ears and heart to what others say

THE SKILL OF ACTIVE LISTENING

The following points are suggested to help you improve your listening skills:

- Support speakers: Allow people to say what they want to say without interrupting with your own thoughts, ideas or experiences. You can support by nodding agreement or saying “Yes, that sounds positive.”
- Clarify statements: Ask questions to clarify what the other person is saying.
- Confirm statements and decisions: Listen patiently and never look bored or irritated. Confirm statements by saying: “So we agree that...”
- Show empathy: Be aware of the other person’s feelings.
- Interpret statements: Be sure to understand what the other person is saying. Try to interpret by saying: “ So you are saying that...”



Assessment Task

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

At one time or another, you have experienced conflict where a colleague criticised your style of leadership. What emotions did this arouse in you? How did you deal with your emotions? Having gone through this Unit, do you think that, given the same situation, you could handle it differently? If the answer is yes, state how you could handle it.



Important-take note!

Suggested answers are at the end of this Unit.



Read Text

Before we conclude, let us examine the qualities of a mediator. As an education leader you should be able to identify problem areas and resolve problems before they grow too big and disrupt the organisation. This will enable you to plan positive, corrective actions and implement them.

- Never leave conflict unresolved as this will have a paralysing effect on the organisation .
- When a conflict situation arises, you should act immediately as mediator, otherwise the conflict will have negative effects.
- Diagnose the problem properly and involve your colleagues in finding the solution. They will assist you with ideas, suggestions and information. Sometimes you should ask junior staff members to form subcommittees to attend to certain issues.
- Never speak about people behind their backs. Rather speak openly and personally to the person.
- Stay in contact, as much as possible, with any individual whose viewpoint differs radically from yours.
- Discourage your personnel from taking a win-lose stance. You should continually strive to see both sides of an argument objectively.
- Avoid unnecessary conflict situations.
- Always reward true achievement.

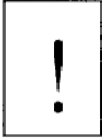


Practise Activiy

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

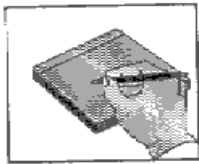
You had a bitter argument with your husband the previous night, about a family issue. You are seriously emotionally disturbed. When you arrive at work in the morning, you are confronted by two colleagues who are in conflict. One is crying and the other is very angry and is accusing even you of inefficiency. There is lots of crying and shouting.

Consider the emotions you are experiencing at the moment and explain how you would resolve this situation.



Important-take note!

Suggested answers are at the end of this Unit.



Summary

SUMMARY

This Unit has outlined to you ways of dealing with personal conflict as well as provided an understanding of various personality types which should now enable you to cope with difficult people.

In order to deal with a conflict situation, you have to understand the nature of the conflict. Clear communication is therefore necessary to get to the bottom of conflicts and find satisfactory solutions to problems.



Reflection

REFLECTION

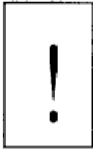
Having gone through this Unit, reflect on your performance as education manager in playing the role of conflict mediator. Think of how you would approach this role, given the insights gained from the Unit.



Unit Test

UNIT TEST

Having gone through this Unit, outline the techniques you would use to deal with anger. List the different personality types of people and say how you would deal with each.



Important-take note!

Suggested answers to the Unit test are given at the end of this Unit.

SUGGESTED ANSWERS

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 5.1

Please note that the answer will vary depending on your own experience as education manager.

However, you should consider the following :

- how you felt and did you admit your anger to yourself?
- did you lose your control?
- did you remain calm?
- did you reach a solution?

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 5.2

Please note that the answer to the first part of the question will depend on your experience as education manager.

For dealing with the egotist, consider the following:

- acknowledge their knowledge with honest respect
- do not let their knowledge intimidate you
- compliment them on their information
- ask questions to get more information from them
- make it clear to them that you are the manager

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

Please note that different people react differently to situations, so the answer will vary depending on your own experience.

However, for the last part of the question, assuming that you felt angry, the suggested steps for dealing with anger should be considered:

- admit your feelings
- calm yourself
- take a break
- regain composure
- confront the situation or person after cooling off
- apologise for your outburst

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

For your answer you may consider following the steps for dealing with anger that are given in the text. Do not let your personal problems, caused by the conflict at home, cloud your reasoning.

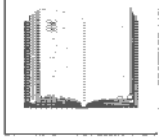
Also consider the action suggested for dealing with the attacker and with the victim.

UNIT TEST ANSWER

You may consider the following:

Personality type	Action
Attacker	- address by name, listen, suggest solution
Egotist	- acknowledge, ask questions, complement, remind that you are manager
Sneak	- confront with questions, steer towards being team member
Victim	- ask for suggestions, address their negatives positively
Negators	- let them use negativity in meetings and allow colleagues to express their views

UNIT 6: STRESS AS A RESULT OF UNRESOLVED CONFLICT AND HOW TO MANAGE IT



Read Text

INTRODUCTION

'The recognition that everything is dependant on our thoughts is the key to emotional health. Physical health depends on one's emotional well-being.'

Rambam (Sage Life Publication – 1999)

Unit 5 discussed mediation as a function of the education manager. Just as you encounter conflict in your everyday life, you are also sure to encounter stress along the way. Some managers handle stress well and others handle it poorly. You as an education manager, are faced with extraordinary demands, constraints or opportunities at work. All these take their toll on your emotions and sometimes also on your health, yet your health as a manager is critical for proficiency as indicated in the above quotation.

Just as the above quote implies, Unit 6 is going to deal with the stress you experience as you encounter conflict situations and leave the conflict unresolved. This Unit will define stress, give its causes and effects as well as try to clarify why some conflict remains unresolved.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this Unit, you should be able to:

- define stress
- explain what causes stress
- identify the effects of stress
- explain why conflict remains unresolved
- suggest how stress can be handled.



Read Text

CONTENT

WHAT IS STRESS ?

Stress, which is a major cause of work absenteeism, is defined in the Collins English Dictionary and Thesaurus as: ‘ mental, emotional or physical strain or tension’. E.M. Alberts (1996) defines stress as ... ‘a negative emotional experience or threat (internal or external) to which the individual will react in a certain manner.’

Work stress is stress that arises from factors within the work environment. Its nature and effects are similar to those of everyday. As said in the instant Manager (1994): The bow too tensely strung is easily broken.

WHAT CAUSES STRESS?

A number of sources in the workplace can lead to work stress. The following are some of the causes of stress:

- Unpleasant working conditions and environment such as:

Long working hours, congested office space or no office at all, which leads to documents being misplaced or lost.
- Job description:

When your work is not clearly defined and you end up doing too much work you become psychologically and physically exhausted. Too little work or work which is not challenging can also lead to boredom and frustration.
- Unrealistic task demands:

Sometimes you are asked to perform more tasks because of your abilities, or you are asked to do very little and are left without sufficient challenge.
- Role ambiguities:

You are not really sure what you are expected to do or how your work will be evaluated.

- Role conflicts:

You feel you are unable to fulfill various conflicting performance expectations.

- Interpersonal conflicts:

You experience upsetting relationships with others at work or work with people who experience such relationships.

- Intra-personal conflicts:

You experience conflict within yourself.

- Career development:

You find yourself in a situation where progress comes too fast and you feel that you can't perform to expectations, or it comes too slowly and you feel your career is blocked for some reason.

- Others:

Like time pressure, lack of or poor quality of supervision, insecure political climate, differences between values, change of any type, frustration and many others you can think of.

- Unresolved conflict:

This leaves conflict in the workplace for too long.



Read Text

EFFECTS OF STRESS ON THE EDUCATION MANAGER

Stress can have both constructive and destructive effects in the workplace. How to moderate levels of stress can enhance work performance. Excessively high levels of stress lead to the breakdown of a person's physical and mental system. Very often education managers suffer from nervous breakdowns and other related ailments. Other symptoms of stress are heart palpitations, dizziness, headaches and stomach cramps.

A person's reaction to stress may be clearly visible to the person himself or herself and to those with whom the person works or spends time. It may not be easily detected at first until an illness or disorder surfaces. Stress leads to low production levels. Stress cannot be totally removed. It is also true that some people are more productive when they are under stress.

Experts agree that it is the intensity and duration of stress, and not so much the nature of stress, that activates the negative implications thereof. (Van Der Westhuizen, 1991:330). It is also important that the education manager removes unnecessary and negative stress factors.

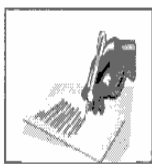
WHY DO CONFLICTS REMAIN UNRESOLVED?

There are many different answers to this question, like:

- postponement because you feel there are other pressing issues to attend to
- you postpone because your superiors tell you to leave everything and attend to what they feel is more important
- you just neglect or conveniently 'forget' to attend to the conflict
- you avoid it and hope it will simply disappear
- you feel you are too important to solve problems between employees
- you are an autocratic manager and the staff members must feel that your word is final.

Whatever your reason for leaving conflict unresolved, the fact remains that in most cases it will not go away. Instead a conflict situation can grow undetected by you until one day it 'erupts' with very negative results.

One of your colleagues may end up with these symptoms because of the tension that has been building up inside. It can also be you, because you have refused to address the conflict situation that you have been faced with.



Self Evaluation

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 6.1

Think of a conflict situation that you or somebody you know encountered which resulted in a stress situation. Why do you think the conflict remained unresolved?



Important-take note!

Suggested answers are given at the end of the Unit.

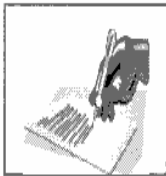


Read Text

COPING WITH WORK STRESS

From the foregone discussion on stress, you will agree that lack of control over one's work and difficulties in relationships cause great stress. Women managers are the most vulnerable because they often carry heavy workloads in the job as well as at home.

Before you go on to learn about some suggested ways of dealing with or managing stress, do the following evaluation of how stressed you are.



Self Evaluation

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 6.2

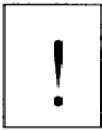
Waiting until you become affected by stress is extremely harmful, so here's a quick test to check your need to take corrective action.

	Yes	No
• Are you becoming preoccupied with your own thoughts when in the company of others, so that you find it hard to follow or engage in meaningful discussions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Is it difficult to shake off minor illnesses such as coughs and colds?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Are you becoming ill more often than before?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Are you seeing less of your family and friends than you used to?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Are you increasingly short-tempered with other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

people?

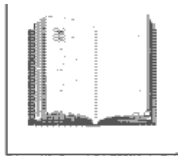
- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Do you become more irritable in company than you used to? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are you working longer hours but not accomplishing more? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are you missing deadlines and appointments without realising it? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Do you tire easily? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Have you stopped or cut back on your recreational or leisure activities and hobbies? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

(Adapted from Charney, C (1994):The Instant Manager)



Important-take note!

Suggested answers to this activity are given at the end of the Unit.



Read Text

Together with the understanding that stress is an unavoidable part of everyday life, you should also understand that each personality type responds differently to various stress levels. This understanding will enable you to reduce stress and avoid problems.

The following are some of the things you can use to reduce stress both for you and your subordinates or colleagues:

- Accept the fact that stress is part of modern life.
- Identify things that you enjoy doing most and build them into your daily routine.
- Break up your working day, get away from your desk for a while to refresh yourself and 'recharge your batteries.'
- Find time to exercise and remember the saying:
'A healthy mind dwells in a healthy body.'
- Get yourself a confidant (a good listener with whom you can discuss your problems). Bottling up your problems can lead to mental and physical illness.
- Avoid overworking yourself, trying to change things that cannot change.
- Take up a hobby to give yourself a mental break

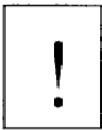
- Do not take criticism personally. Analyse it to establish its validity and work on it if needs be.
- Learn to manage your time effectively.
- Mind your diet. Caffeine can increase tension so avoid it, especially before bed.
- Beware of taking medication. Drugs or alcohol do not eliminate problems they only mask them temporarily.
- Learn to say 'NO' when others make demands that overload your time and ability.
- Meditate to achieve a relaxed state of mind. C. Charney (1994) suggests the following steps for meditation:
 1. focus on a pleasant image or word
 2. close your eyes and lie or sit in a comfortable position
 3. consciously relax all your muscles by focusing on each from you head to toes, allowing your body to 'sink'
 4. breathe slowly and naturally; imagine a pleasant scene or repeat a key word to yourself
 5. don't worry about your technique
 6. refocus and put other thoughts out of your mind
- Delegate more of your work so that you get more time to think and plan.
- Seek professional help. In extreme cases where illness has resulted because of stress, seek medication and professional help.
- Resolve conflicts.



Assessment Task

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

As education manager you have to understand stress and be in a position to deal with stress in the workplace. Having gone through the content in this Unit, do you think you are now in a position to cope with stress? How can you assist a colleague who has a mental breakdown?



Important-take note!

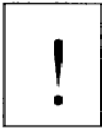
Suggested answers to this activity are given at the end of the Unit.



Practise Activiy

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Discuss the effects of stress in the workplace. Relating to your experience as education manager, explain how saying 'NO' can help to relieve stress.



Important-take note!

Suggested answers to this activity are given at the end of the Unit.



Summary

SUMMARY

In this Unit, you have learnt about the relationship between conflict and stress. Conflict leads to stressful situations which undermine your ability to work with people. Achieving the set objectives becomes very hard. You can avoid stress by dealing with its causes, one of which is unresolved conflict.

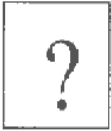
You will learn more about ways of resolving conflict in Unit 7 which deals with **negotiation** as a skill of conflict resolution.



Reflection

REFLECTION

Having gone through this Unit look back and reflect on your performance as education manager, faced with various stressful situations. Given the insights gained from this Unit, think of how you would successfully deal with stress in a way that will increase productivity at work.



Unit Test

UNIT TEST

- What do you understand by stress?
- Discuss how role conflicts can cause stress and cite an example from your own experience as education manager.
- What is the danger of leaving conflict unresolved?



Important-take note!

Possible answers to this Unit test are given at the end of the Unit.

SUGGESTED ANSWERS

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 6.1

Please note that the answer to this activity will depend on your experience as education manager.

However, consider some of the reasons given in the Unit for leaving conflict unresolved. These are:

- Postponement so as to attend to more pressing issues
- Postponement because superiors want you to do something else
- Neglect
- Avoiding
- Feeling more important
- Autocracy-your word is final.

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 6.2

Please note that the answers will depend largely on your personal experience, but consider the following:

More than seven Yes responses suggests that you should put into practise the ideas in managing stress.

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

Please note that the answers to this activity will depend on your experience as education manager. However consider the following:

As discussed in the Unit content, if the stress manifested itself as a mental breakdown, the person needs medication and professional help.

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

By saying 'no' you will avoid being overburdened with work which can or should be done by somebody else. However, when saying 'no' be assertive rather than aggressive. Also consider the importance of the task and if it should really be done by you.

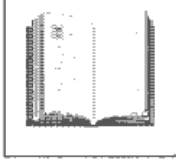
UNIT TEST ANSWERS

For your answers consider the following:

- Stress is a negative, emotional experience (mental, emotional or physical strain or tension).

- Role conflicts occur when you are unable to fulfill various conflicting performance expectations. Please note the example that you cite will depend on your experience as education manager.
- Unresolved conflict results in stress.

UNIT 7: THE PROCESSES OF NEGOTIATION AND MEDIATION AS FINAL STEPS IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION.



Read Text

INTRODUCTION

In Unit 6 you learned how unresolved conflict can lead to unnecessary stress over-load and you examined the various ways of managing stressful situations.

In this Unit we will focus on the art of Mediation and Negotiation, as final steps in conflict resolution, and will include the following aspects:

- negotiation – definition and skills
- process and art of mediating including strategies

These will assist in effective conflict resolution.

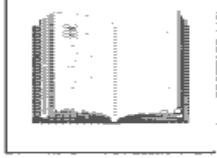
Learning negotiation skills is especially important for education managers today, and more especially for women managers, who are faced with many new changes and challenges.

If you are working with people on a regular basis, you will need negotiating skills. Negotiating is the act of bringing about a compromise between two parties whose goals are in opposition.

OBJECTIVES

After working through this Unit, you should be able to:

- define the terms **negotiation** and **mediation**
- describe the skills and processes involved in both
- act in the role of mediator in resolving conflict.



Read Text

CONTENT

WHAT IS NEGOTIATION?

One way of resolving conflict positively is through negotiation. Negotiation is an interaction process through which different persons or parties resolve conflicting issues. It is not the only method of resolving conflict as different parties may choose mediation, (see further on in this Unit), arbitration or court decisions to help settle their dispute.

However, it is important to note that:

- negotiation is the better/preferred method as lasting relationships are preserved.

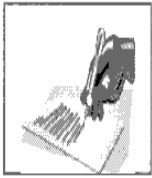
Negotiation may be defined as a transaction in which both parties have a say in the final outcome. In other words, each party in a negotiation has to consent to the outcome if it is to be implemented and each must have an interest in the other agreeing to it. Thus, by negotiating, a joint decision is made.

It can be clearly seen then, that negotiation is something we do every day in our personal and professional capacities.

Negotiation can occur directly between the two parties in the dispute or can also take place through a mediator who acts as a neutral go-between.

People may choose to negotiate over various issues which may be either personal or job-related, such as :

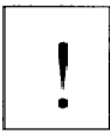
- salary increases
- relationships
- buying a house
- political issues, etc.



Self Evaluation

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY

Can you name at least two more issues in your personal life and two more issues in your professional life as an education manager over which negotiation may take place?



Important-take note!

The answers to this activity will depend on your own personal experiences, but some guidance will be offered at the end of this Unit.



Read Text

Negotiation is not always easy. Most people know only two methods of negotiation, namely, the gentle, soft approach, or the tough, hard approach.

APPROACHES TO SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATION

Before examining the strategies and methods of negotiation, let us study three crucial elements in the negotiation process as put forward by Cohen – *You Can Negotiate Anything* (1980):

- power
- time, and
- information

Power – refers to the number of aspects that can affect a negotiation. Understanding the needs of both parties is essential for avoiding win/lose situations and moving towards win/win collaborative negotiations (see Units 3 and 4). To persuade people to agree, you must be sure that both parties understand what you are saying. Then, the negotiator's evidence must be so

compelling that it cannot be disputed and most importantly, effective negotiation requires that the negotiator's ideas should meet the others' existing needs and desires.

Time – is always important, but the end of negotiations should always allow flexibility. Even if there is a set deadline, time should never be a restricting factor in reaching a successful conclusion.

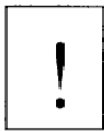
Information - must be collected prior to the face-to-face meeting. The key factors to successful negotiation are listening to and knowing both parties as well as communicating effectively.



Assessment Task

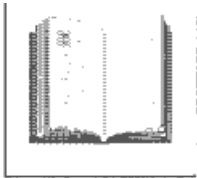
SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY 7.1

Briefly describe one area in your personal life and one area in your professional life as an education manager, where you have had to negotiate with another person. What was the outcome?



Important-take note!

Answers to this Activity will depend largely on your personal and work-related experiences.



Read Text

PRINCIPLED NEGOTIATION

One method of negotiation which is used successfully, is called Principled Negotiation and was developed at the Harvard Negotiation Project. Its success is based on the fact that it can be used everywhere, by anybody to negotiate anything.

In Principled Negotiation, the key is to decide issues on their merit as opposed to focusing on what each side wants, the emphasis being on areas of mutual gain. (Fischer and Clary (1981) Getting to Say Yes).

Now let us examine the strategies usually followed when employing Principled Negotiation.

STRATEGIES OF PRINCIPLED NEGOTIATION

In this method, each party takes up a position, defends it and makes a series of concessions until an agreement is reached, or negotiation breaks down because the parties could not agree any further.

One problem with this type of bargaining is that sometimes the main concern becomes the positions of the parties, rather than the issues which brought them together initially.

It can become a long process and be emotionally draining, but it can produce agreements which will be mutually acceptable to all parties in the best way possible.

The method consists of 4 points which deal with the basics of negotiation, namely:

- people
- interests
- options, and
- criteria

Let us now expand on each point:

People – It is important that people be separated from the problem. This is important because negotiators are people with their own emotions and beliefs, likes and dislikes, which may certainly affect the way they perceive the problem and how they seek a solution.

It is therefore important that negotiating parties identify the problem and work together to solve it, rather than focusing on the people involved and trying to change them. This requires much active listening.

Interests – This aspect focuses on interests rather than on the position and emphasises the importance of identifying and focusing on the negotiating parties' real interests as opposed to their positions.

In order to establish where the interests of all parties lie, ask the basic question, 'Why?' For example, if one learner wants all the windows open in the room and another wants them all closed because he hates draughts, then, opening the windows in one section of the room should satisfy both parties.

Options - This refers to examining a wide variety of possibilities before a solution is reached. A special time needs to be set aside whereby the parties are able to examine a wide variety of possible solutions to the problem. Both sides need to be creative here, and if possible, judgements should be postponed to allow for brainstorming and exploring each others' ideas.

Criteria – Finally, if conflict persists, selecting independent, objective, external criteria may assist in coming to an agreement and the utilisation of fair standards and fair procedures can enhance the trust necessary for positive outcomes, and ensure a fair solution.

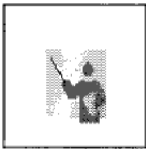
These four points are important and relevant throughout the negotiation process. It should be remembered that, in negotiating a solution, the aim of the resolution process should always be to strengthen the future relationship of the parties involved.

Successful negotiating then, requires several elements and managers should learn to focus on the needs of both sides and should not be hasty but allow sufficient time to reach mutually acceptable agreements and should separate individual positions from the real issues.



Important-take note!

There is no substitute for sound information and overwhelming evidence. (The Effective Principal, Volume 3-unit 15)



Practise Activiy

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Fischer and Ury indicate that there are four elements for any successful negotiation (separate people from problem, etc). Analyse a negotiation you were involved in. Describe how each of the elements were or were not addressed in the negotiation. Summarise why you feel your negotiation was successful or unsuccessful.



Important-take note!

Bear in mind that the answers to this practice activity will be directly related to your own experience as a negotiator, but some guidance may be found at the end of this Unit.



Read Text

THE PROCESS/ ART OF MEDIATION

Mediation may be defined as coming between hostile parties to assist them in moving towards a resolution.

There are two types of mediation, namely:

- formal mediation
- informal mediation

Let us briefly examine the difference between the two types:

Formal mediation:

Those are the formal structures that operate in society as an alternative to legal or other methods of dealing with disputes. Many professional organisations and institutions offer mediation services in cases of divorce, disputes between family members, or between landlords and tenants for example. Such organisations may employ a team of mediators, each an expert in a specific problem area.

Informal mediation

This is recognising when people involved in conflict are not coping well and that they require outside help. The effective manager should then be motivated to assist at the specific time when help is required.

In Informal mediation the manager may work with both parties separately and mediation may be so informal that it can be done without either party even being aware.

The mediator should:

- help parties to deal constructively with the conflict using a win/win approach (see Unit3)
- not get caught up in the conflict- always remain apart from the situation and neutral
- avoid offering advice-offer options, not directions. Leave the parties free to explore their own routes to a solution, even if it is quite different from the mediator's opinion
- assist parties in expressing their views/interests/needs constructively and to see each other's points of view to see how they can change the situation

- gather relevant information by talking to each party privately to gain as much information as possible and to identify common goals and interests. This will give the parties an opportunity to get to know and trust you
- seek a resolution by discussing some alternatives with both parties, emphasizing areas of agreement. Praise the parties if they offer positive suggestions and ensure that all involved understand the proposed resolutions and the consequences
- follow-up after the problem has been resolved, where you, as the mediator will later approach both parties to review their progress.



Important-take note!

Remember, be hard on the problem and not on the person!

Further back in this Unit, you saw how using negotiation to resolve conflict, provided a long-lasting solution to the problem and may even have preserved long-term relationships. However, when emotions run too high, or the situation appears to have reached a 'Stale-mate', mediation can then provide a neutral environment and a neutral third party to help resolve the situation through a win/win approach.

USEFUL SKILLS IN THE MEDIATION PROCESS

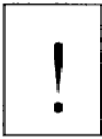
- Set the environment/situation so that both parties tackle the problem with a win/win approach.
- Use creativity to direct negative statements towards positive ones, as conflict tends to conceal unexplored possibilities .
- Show that you are neutral and empathetic and display clear signs that you are listening.
- Encourage the use of 'I' statements and assertiveness to express views, interests and needs of all parties.
- Use your role as mediator to direct parties towards the co-operative use of power, especially if one party has been coercing the other.
- Steer the parties so that they neither deny their emotions nor indulge them, by keeping calm and allowing the parties to express their emotions without blame taking over. Openly acknowledge the emotions of both parties.
- Ask for new suggestions or information. Suggest brainstorming new alternatives.



Assessment Task

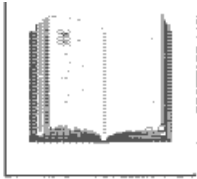
SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY 7.2

Think about your personal negotiating style. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the approaches you have been using? What are some circumstances when a school manager would need to be able to negotiate successfully with staff, students, parents, etc?



Important-take note!

The answers to this activity will be included at the end of this Unit.

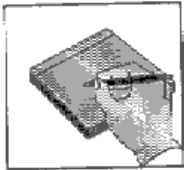


Read Text

The final step to successful mediation should then be the forming of some agreements between both parties.

These agreements should be written down and taken away by both parties for future reference.

Some form of acknowledgement should be given.



Summary

SUMMARY

Negotiation and mediation are a natural extension of good conflict resolution skills and are a valuable resource to any situation or organisation. (Independent Project Trust: Smart Teachers Resource Manual : 1996)

Effective negotiation and mediation is not easily achieved. It is hard work which requires dedication and patience and a genuine interest in and concern for all parties involved.



Reflection

REFLECTION

Having learned about negotiating and mediating skills in this Unit, do you feel that you are now better able to negotiate and mediate during conflict situations within your organisation?



Unit Test

UNIT TEST

Read each of the following statements carefully and indicate whether they are True or False. Consult the contents of this Unit again, if necessary. If the answer is false, say why.

- (a) Negotiation is useful in bringing together two parties who have common goals.
- (b) Power, time and information are three important elements in the negotiation process.
- (c) Negotiation and mediation are the same thing.
- (d) A mediator should focus on the problem rather than the people.
- (e) Principled negotiation is successful as it can be used by anyone.

SUGGESTED ANSWERS

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY

We hope that in thinking about your experiences in negotiating, you have now obtained a clear understanding of the process

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY 7.1

Do you think you will handle negotiation differently next time? If so, how?

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

You may have included some of the following points: people, interests, options, criteria.

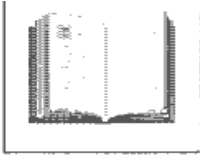
SELF -ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY 7.2

The answers to the first question will depend on your own experiences. Consider the following areas in the second question: curriculum, school fees, absenteeism, uniform, punctuality, etc.

UNIT TEST ANSWERS

- (a) False – Negotiation is required when parties have opposing goals
- (b) True
- (c) False - Negotiation is the act of bringing about a compromise between two parties with opposing goals. Mediation is coming between two hostile parties to bring them closer to a resolution.
- (d) True
- (e) True

UNIT 8: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AS A TOOL IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION



Read Text

INTRODUCTION

: ‘Coming together is the beginning
: Keeping together is progress
: Working together is success’
: **Henry Ford**
: **(Sage Life Publication 1999)**

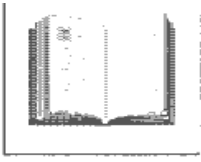
As you cannot escape from conflict in one form or another, effective communication is then one tool of conflict resolution you shouldn’t avoid. In your everyday education management tasks, as you interact with other people, you communicate, either verbally, in written form, or through actions, including gestures, body language and facial expressions.

The foregoing Units have introduced you to an understanding of ways of resolving or managing conflict. This Unit will take you through the skills and processes of communication in conflict management. Even as you read this Unit, something is being communicated to you. At the end it will be your understanding and the application of what you have learnt which will determine whether communication has been effective or not.

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this Unit you will be able to:

- understand effective communication
- communicate effectively
- use effective communication to resolve conflict.



Read Text

CONTENT

WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

- The science and practice of transmitting information (The South African Pocket Oxford Dictionary).
- The imparting or exchange of information, ideas or feelings (Collins English Dictionary and Thesaurus).

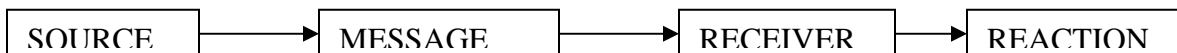
From the above definitions it is clear that the word 'information' either spoken or written, plays an important part in communication.

Communication is - an activity which takes place when a message is transferred satisfactorily from one party to another so that it can be understood and acted upon if necessary. (The Principles of Educational Management: 1994)

Communication is made up of four elements:

- (i) the source which can be a person or a book
- (ii) the message which can take the form of a question, an appeal or even a smile
- (iii) the receiver which is the person or people to whom the message is directed
- (iv) reaction by the receiver

This is illustrated by the simple model of communication below:



Communication is a two-way process. One person says something and the other person hears what has been said and responds. The different background of the listener can cause a gap between the speaker's intention and the listener's interpretation.

CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

Van der Westhuizen (1991:206) refers to three channels or directions in which communication moves from the sender to the receiver.

They are given below:

- Downward communication: When a message, (for instance, in a school) reaches the teachers via the heads of department. Autocratic managers usually use this type of communication .
- Upward communication: When messages are transmitted from the lower ranks (for instance, from the teachers to the manager).
- Horizontal communication: When communication occurs in the same department or between people at the same level. This flow of information is usually swift.

Sometimes there are other informal channels of communication apart from the three mentioned above. In many instances you as manager, may find that along the way the message or information became distorted. This happens because of the following reasons:

- there were many people through whom the message had to pass
- your message was not conveyed clearly enough.

Distortion of the message will be evident in the end result, especially in cases where some action had to be taken.



Self Evaluation

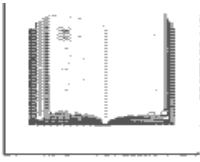
SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 8.1

How many times have you said something, meaning well, but it has been interpreted as criticism or that you have implied a totally different meaning? Why do some communications go wrong?



Important-take note!

Suggested answers to this activity are given at the end of the Unit.



Read Text

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is a skill that you should learn and practise so that you minimise or avoid conflict situations in your organisation.

The following are the skills that you should acquire in order to become a good communicator:

- Listen when people talk.
- Make sure people understand your message. Create a system so that people can indicate that they understand the message. Ask them to repeat what you have said or what they understand of your plan.
- Make sure that the time is right for your message. Do not communicate when people are doing something else or when there are other disturbances, like noise.
- Use the official channels of communication and do not rely on rumours or the grapevine for information.
- Pay attention to body language, it is an important part of communication. It is not only what people say but how they say it and what message their faces or hands reveal that will emphasise the real meaning of the message.
- Create special opportunities, like special meetings or a letter column in the school's newspaper, so that learners and teachers can express their ideas and feelings.
- Treat information as it is intended to be treated. If you receive information that is supposed to be personal or secret, you must keep it that way.

EFFECTIVE WRITING

Writing is one of the tools you often use as an education manager. This may take the form of, amongst others:

- memos
- letters
- notices
- circulars

Your basic knowledge of grammar, punctuation and spelling will come in handy but you also need to:

- write clearly
- be concise
- communicate the message accurately.

The basic rules for effective writing are:

- Avoid using long sentences as they are usually a sign of redundancy.
- Omit unnecessary words because they often make sentences long and redundant.
- Avoid stuffy language, (language that is artificial) use simple everyday words.
- Use strong verbs and avoid using the passive voice like: 'the school was visited by the Minister.'

Remember that when you write, you want to express thoughts, not impress the reader. For example, you should write 'my book' instead of 'a book of mine.'

ACTIVE LISTENING

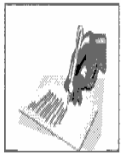
Effective communication also calls for effective or active listening. One of the causes of poor communication or communication breakdown is a lack of the skill of listening.

Active listening is a way of building trust between you, the manager or mediator and the other person or party in a dispute. This skill is also necessary to improve communication. If you use the skill of active listening you help the people to think through their problems and this reduces tension.

The following are the techniques of active listening:

- **Clarifying:** This helps you to find more information and clarify what is being said. You should ask 'when' and 'how' questions.
- **Restating:** Restating is the technique of checking your understanding of what is being said. You should restate the basic ideas and facts, by saying: "What you are telling me is..."
- **Reflecting:** This is a way of showing that you understand how the other person feels. You 'mirror back' the other person's feelings by saying, for instance: "You seem very angry/upset." This will help the person you are talking to evaluate her own feelings by hearing them being expressed by you.

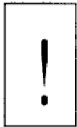
- **Validating:** Here you acknowledge the worth of the other person. Show appreciation of their efforts and actions and acknowledge the value of their views and opinions. For example, you can say: “You have really tried hard to make this work.”



Self Evaluation

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 8.2

In an organisation communication flows in different directions. What do you consider as the advantages and disadvantages of communication that flows in a downward direction and upward direction? What implications do these channels have for the proper functioning of the organisation?



Important-take note!

Suggested answers to this activity are given at the end of the Unit.



Read Text

COMMUNICATION AS A TOOL OF CAUSING CONFLICT

You may already be aware that communication, depending on the way it is used, can be effective in resolving conflict or in causing it.

HOW CAN COMMUNICATION CAUSE CONFLICT?

Imagine if you received a fax addressed to you and you only saw the words ‘very urgent’ at the top. The rest of the page was just blank or the words were a blur. You would definitely want to know what the message was and your inability to read it would cause you worry. The result would be conflict because communication was unsuccessful and you were left wondering what you had missed.

Think of a situation where you are working in your office. One of the employees bursts in with round 'eyes' and keeps pointing outside. No word is uttered but the expression on the face is a sight to see. That facial expression causes conflict because now you have to make out what the person wants to say. You also get the indication that immediate action, from your side, should be taken.

WHAT MAKES COMMUNICATION INEFFECTIVE?

So, we can regard the following as agents that act against successful communication:

- **Language barrier:** When one's knowledge of the language is so limited or non-existent that the message is misinterpreted or not heard at all.
- **Attitudes:** When the receiver's attitude is such that it affects and clouds the message and leads to misinterpretation, distortion or misunderstanding of what was said.
- **Different perceptions of the problem:** This can occur because of the following:
 - (i) Status which is often associated with titles, office size, furnishings or salary differences and these cause inefficient and ineffective relations between the higher and lower level officers.
 - (ii) Hearing what one wants to hear, thus interpreting differently from what was intended.
 - (iii) Filtering information as it passes through various people until the ultimate message is completely distorted from the original.
 - (iv) Premature evaluation of what is said.
 - (v) 'Wall of silence' between the sender and the receiver.
 - (vi) Poor choice of communication channels.
 - (vii) Fear or lack of confidence.

Other barriers to effective communication are noise, distortion, and interference in the normal flow of communication. The causes can be the static in the telephone lines, competing noises or confusing/misleading information.

One other thing that causes communication to fail, is lack of preparation. As an education manager, you will be expected to make speeches at certain functions or gatherings, chair meetings, give reports or facilitate workshops. If you do not prepare beforehand, your entire presentation will be doomed. The listeners will become frustrated, angry and may even shout you down or do something equally as damaging. Your self image and reputation will also be damaged.

Good preparation together with the way you present whatever it is you want to communicate are very important.



Assessment Task

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

Mrs Mathaba, a school principal, attends a workshop as one of the representatives from her region. She goes to the Superintendent of Education Management's (SEM) office to give the report. Her efforts end in frustration because the SEM keeps interrupting and giving his own opinions. In the end, she leaves the SEM's office. A week later, at a principal's meeting, the same SEM makes a comment about principals who attend workshops and meetings and never come back to report on them. He even mentions Mrs Mathaba.

Now answer the following questions:

Was the communication between Mrs Mathaba and the SEM effective or ineffective? Give a reason for your answer.

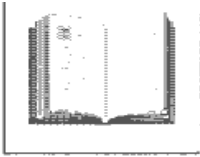
Give what you believe to be the causes for this communication to go the way it did.

If you were in Mrs Mathaba's place, how would you feel after the SEM's remark and what action would you take?



Important-take note!

Suggested answers to this activity are given at the end of this Unit.



Read Text

FORMAL AND INFORMAL COMMUNICATION

In this Unit you have learnt about formal communication. This can be in written or oral form and may be accompanied by gestures and facial expressions which are non-verbal.

Gestures, facial expressions and other body language can also transmit messages to the receiver who can then interpret it according to her perceptions.

There is also another form of communication which is informal. This is called the 'grapevine' and is common in all organisations. It is a communication channel on its own. The Pocket Oxford Dictionary defines grapevine as a 'means of transmission of rumour.' This way information is spread and received.

An education manager can use the grapevine within the organisation to her advantage. Women are often regarded as gossipers which gives a very negative meaning to the 'grapevine'. When she addressed the course writers for KwaZulu-Natal, the Minister of Education and Culture said that women should use their talking skills effectively. This implies that women should not use this skill to damage other people's images. They should, however, listen to the grapevine, understand the meaning or implications of what is said and act positively so as to improve on their image or build up other people's self-images. A good woman education manager will use the grapevine to pick up ideas, feelings, concerns and dissatisfactions of her staff. She should, however, be careful not to allow gossip, rumours and personal bias to ruin the organisation.



Practise Activity

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Identify a particular conflict situation in your organisation, which was the result of ineffective communication. List the possible stages in the development of this conflict from beginning to end.

Having gained information on effective communication from this Unit, list all the stages you would have followed to avoid conflict at the end.



Important-take note!

Suggested answers to this activity are given at the end of this Unit.

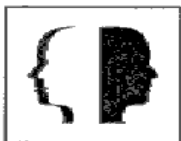


Summary

SUMMARY

You know now that communication is the exchange of information between the sender and the receiver. Communication involves transmission of a message from the sender to the receiver. It can be verbal or non-verbal. Through communication, conflict can be caused or resolved, depending on whether it was done effectively.

A good education manager should learn the skills of effective communication in order to overcome barriers and enhance the organisation's effectiveness.

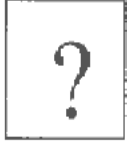


Reflection

REFLECTION

Reflect on your communication skills you have as education manager. Are they in line with what is suggested in this Unit?

Think of your past experiences where communication went wrong and how you can change your approach towards communication.



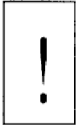
Unit Test

UNIT TEST

What communication channel do you most often use in your organisation ? How effective is it? Explain how you measure its effectiveness.

How could you make use of the grapevine to the benefit of your organisation? Briefly explain how the grapevine can damage relations in an organisation.

In what ways can effective or active listening lead to avoidance or resolution of conflict?



Important-take note!

Suggested answers are given at the end of the Unit.

SUGGESTED ANSWERS

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 8.1

- People hear what they want to hear. It is not what you think you have said, but it is what the other person has heard.
- Messages are misunderstood because people do not listen with their ears, eyes and heart.

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 8.2

Downward communication:

Advantages: it clarifies goals, provides a sense of mission

Disadvantages: not effective if follow-up is not done
normally does not allow for feedback
manager often gives an order
no interactive communication

Upward communication:

Advantages: provides information to management
alerts management about problem areas

Disadvantages: staff may withhold information to superiors because it might be damaging to the staff members' careers

If either is used as the only channel of communication, the organisation will not function effectively.

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

The communication was not effective. The SEM did not hear what Mrs Mathaba came to say.

The SEM does not have good or active listening skills:

- he kept interrupting
- he gave his own opinions

You may feel frustrated, angry, disappointed

The suggested action would be to go to the SEM after you have cooled down. Say: 'I felt angry when you.....'.

Please note that this might cause further conflict which could be triggered by your reaction or approach as well as the SEM's attitude.

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Please note that the answer will depend on your experience as education manager.

Consider the following stages for the last part of the question:

- communicate clearly giving brief concise messages
- avoid long sentences in written communication
- use the correct channels
- listen effectively

UNIT TEST ANSWERS

Please note that the answers to this question will vary depending on your own experience as education manager.

Consider the following for the question on the grapevine:

- use information to improve your management skills and to bring about effective communication
- if information gained through the grapevine is used to attack the staff it will be damaging

Through active listening the following can be achieved:

- clarity of information
- awareness of the other party's feelings
- clear interpretation and evaluation of the message
- correct feedback or response to the message

MODULE TEST

1. Analyse your present organisation of which you are the manager. What are the major conflicts it now faces?
2. Describe a plan of action you would formulate to address the conflict, which includes identifying the problems and why they exist.
3. Discuss how negotiation and communication will be used as part of your conflict resolution plan.
4. Discuss what you think the probable outcomes would be (both positive and negative) and what will emerge from your dealing with the conflict.
5. You give an instruction to your management team. List some of the ways in which you would know whether your communication to them has been effective or not.
6. Can you successfully define the following terms?
 - communication
 - mediation
 - negotiation
 - conflict
 - strategies
7. List four different causes of stress. Explain why they cause stress and how they could be avoided/ remediated.

GLOSSARY

ARBITRATION:	A voluntary process in which people in conflict request the aid of a neutral third party who makes a decision regarding the dispute. The outcome may be advisory or binding.
BRAINSTORM:	A process of decision-making during which all participants are required to throw in ideas without evaluating the suggestions until all proposals are exhausted.
COLLABORATION:	Working together with others, especially in a joint intellectual effort.
COMPROMISE:	A settlement of differences by mutual concession
CONFLICT:	A difference or disagreement, not necessarily negative, but which can lead to destructive outcomes if not resolved.
CONTRAVENTE:	Act in opposition to ; conflict with
DETRIMENTAL:	Causing harm/damage
DISPOSITION:	Setting in order; arrangement, a person's natural qualities of mind and character
DYSFUNCTIONAL:	Impaired or abnormal functioning of an organisation.
EGOTIST:	Someone who thinks and speaks too much of themselves.
GOALS:	Limits or boundaries, a similar marker, an end or aim.
MEDIATION:	An extension of the negotiating process involving the intervention of a neutral third party who assists parties in the process of voluntarily reaching their own mutually acceptable settlement.
NEGATOR:	Someone who opposes everything and believes their way is the <u>only</u> way.

PERCEIVE:	Become aware of, see or notice.
PRINCIPLED NEGOTIATION:	A method of collaborative negotiation which seeks to decide an issue on its merits by separating people from the problems.
PROCESS MODEL:	A component structure comprising Frustration, Conceptualization, Behaviour, Interaction and Outcome which make up any conflict situation.
RCL:	Representative Council of Learners
RESOLUTION:	Act of resolving, analysing, finding a solution.
SGB:	School Governing Body
STRATEGY:	A plan intended to achieve something, especially over a long period.
STRUCTURAL MODEL:	A four point structure as proposed by Thomas (1967) to explain the variables which may impact on people involved in conflict.

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