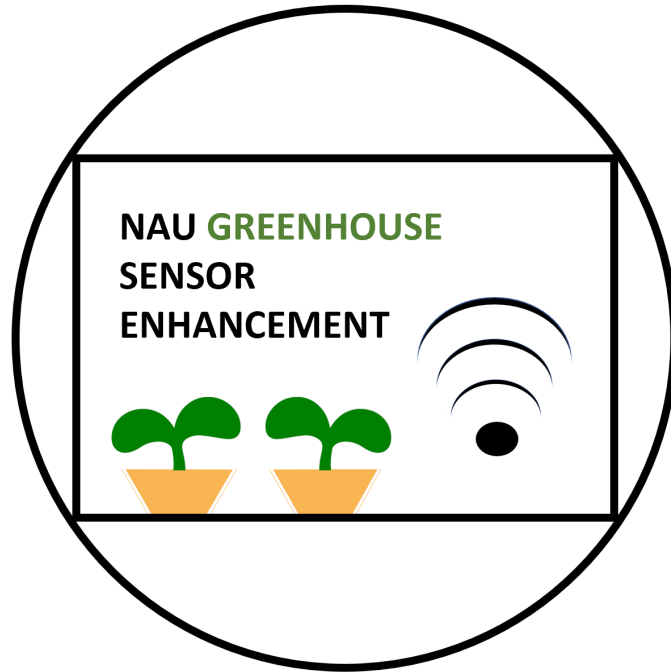


2021-2022 Capstone in Electrical Engineering: NAU Teaching Greenhouse



CONFLICT RESOLUTION PLAN

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The skill of handling other team members whom we may have a disagreement with, is an art in-and-of-itself. There are several dynamics to take into account to even approach a tricky situation; such characteristics to tackle are personality differences, cultural differences, personal beliefs, ability to recognize others emotions, and learning how to find the middle ground as a compromise are a few to name. Taking all these components into consideration, de-escalating a troublesome situation is difficult. In this overview, we will discuss how to approach each dynamic in order to get a more thorough analysis on how to approach difficult people and situations. Two such situations that need addressing are members that do not perform and individuals who do not show to a meeting.

The key to addressing a member who is not performing well is to understand why. Team members who are alerted by the poor performance of another, should not assign blame immediately. Those alerted should maintain peace at all costs and mention to the other team members the other's failings to meet the capstone's demands. If we agree with their poor performance, it would be best if we tell that individual right away, so he/she can boost his/her performance faster. These actions allow the poor performing member more time to create a game plan to improve, such as reflecting on what activities that can be dropped so he/she may have more time for capstone. After the team members conclude that the other individual needs more support, we should have only one individual approach him/her about his/her deficit in work. Having only one individual approach the struggling individual, allows the confronted member to feel more comfortable and creates the mindset that he/she is not to blame. An excellent example of why he/she may not be to blame is a case of a foreign exchange student. For example, if a member learned English as a second language; he/she may be struggling with the pace of the other members who speak English on a more fluent level. The ESL member may become distant and not engage in meetings. In this situation, the individual is only performing, since he/she is struggling to comprehend the language. The individual who notices his/her poor performance, should ask why he/she is not engaging, and here, the questioning member would learn that the ESL student simply cannot understand the pace. The rest of the team should be understanding of this necessary accommodation, and speak at a slower pace for the ESL student. In this example, the failing member was not to blame and needed more support so that he/she could understand the language better.

In the case of an individual who is not showing, team members should apply the same logic. A member may be working overtime at his/her job to afford school. The member that hears of this should work with him/her to see if he/she could reduce his/her hours or come up with some other solution. This failing individual may be embarrassed to admit that he/she has to do overtime to pay for his/her expenses, so this situation should be handled with care. This example really highlights how sensitive the members of the team need to be to others. We cannot control life, but we can control how we react to it. We need to be understanding of this philosophy and apply it to how we handle others. When we handle difficult situations, we always need to remind

ourselves of how it would be like to be in their shoes. Empathy is the solution to handling a lot of these situations. However, we also need to take into consideration how we approach those who are failing, since he/she simply does not care. For those individuals who do not care or after previously trying to rectify the situation, we should report the issue to Masha. If after Masha contacts the struggling member and the situation does not improve, the rest of the team members should arrange a separate meeting with just them and Masha to discuss his/her failing performance. During this meeting, we shall come up with a game plan to figure out how we may help or compensate for the other member's failing. If we cannot remedy the situation, Masha and/or the rest of the team should reach out to Dr. S. If we have reached this point that means that the team member is severely failing to meet demands. In this situation, the student would be at the judgement of Dr. S. This proposal for how to best rectify a situation with a difficult member is the best suited to the format and goals of our team.

There are two types of conflict that need addressing. These are professional and interpersonal conflicts. Professional conflict mostly refers to how we handle conflicts pertaining to design decisions such as what microcontroller to use. A classic example would be choosing between an Arduino and Raspberry Pi. Let's say one member prefers to use an Arduino, since we all have experience with an Arduino from our past classes, while another member wants to utilize a Raspberry Pi due to the fact that they are compatible with all coding languages. We should open up the conflict to all of the members to decide. Initially we should do some more research on the usefulness of each microcontroller such as its efficiency, rather or not we are familiar with, and how suitable the functionality of the microcontroller is with the other features, like sensors. If we cannot come up with a quick solution, we should draft up a chart of the pro's and con's to have a physical list drawn up of what is beneficial for each microcontroller. This way we have proof of which is better by being able to actively compare each microcontroller. If the other members still resist the decision, we have a physical document logged of why we choose that decision. This way it is unnecessary to debate this disagreement with Dr.S or Masha, since we already concluded logically and peacefully why that design decision is better. Meanwhile, interpersonal conflict is more difficult to tackle since there are more dynamics to take into consideration.

Interpersonal incorporates more components to approach for a successful resolution, such as personality differences and communication styles. One situation that we can look at is if one member is taking control of the assignments too much, not allowing the other members to contribute equally. This member may fear having others contribute to a project that he/she takes very seriously and not feel comfortable allowing others to contribute their fair share. As discussed, the other members should follow the established formality and vocalize their concerns of the other member's failure to meet the requirements of working with a team. If we feel there needs to be improvement, we should have one person approach this individual. We can discuss how we can make that individual more comfortable sharing the load of work and why they feel that they must do everything more proactively. If the failing member explains that they are

concerned about the other member's lack of work ethic, we can approach that individual as well. There is always a reason why, and the key to approaching these interpersonal situations is to ask why. We should never assume ideas such as that he/she is a control freak, but he/she may doubt the competency of another member. From here, we should find a solution. If not, we can set up a meeting with Mahsa to address this conflict.

From tardiness to poor work ethic, there are many scenarios that require analyzing to understand how best to approach difficult people and situations. Once the concerned individuals discuss their doubts, they should appoint a socially intelligent individual to approach the troubled member. The member that is approaching the failing member should remain calm and not make assumptions. The key is empathy to ensure a quicker resolution and to prevent less hiccups in the future. If this approach does not work, the rest of the members should contact Masha and then Dr. S. Members should also be aware of the differences in conflict before attempting to rectify a difficult situation. Professional and interpersonal are vastly different and require a thorough analysis of each situation in order to address. Overall, the avenue to achieving peace and fixing a difficult situation is learning to be understanding of others' circumstances and contrasting beliefs.