

# Online Collaboration: Using Roleplay to Develop Skills in Resolving Conflict

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## Abstract

The introduction of digital tools to a distance education environment often creates tensions due to students' past educational experiences and can require a shift in their concepts of the lecturers' and learners' responsibilities. The purpose of the study was to determine how well distance education students adapt to interactive online learning strategies requiring collaboration with peers. Data was collected via two surveys and analysis of student interaction with various digital tools such as chat, wiki, and virtual classroom environments. The results show that while there was some resistance initially to the use of collaborative strategies, most participants in this Early Childhood course reported benefits in using interactive tools for collaboration with their peers. Analysis of satisfaction in the end-of course survey showed that students strongly agreed with the premise that learning is enhanced by discussion and peer interaction, and can be achieved with online learning tools.

**Keywords:** online distance education, collaboration, roleplay, teamwork, curriculum-design, mind-mapping

## 1. Introduction

This paper discusses the strategies used with Higher Education students enrolled in a course about diversity and social justice issues in an Early Childhood context. The study, conducted at a regional university in Australia, focused on one assignment that dealt with conflict resolution. Survey and online participation data were collected to evaluate the participants' level of engagement and immersion in the task. This paper identifies and discusses the students' perspectives of using digital tools and collaborative strategies to complete the assignment. A comparison was made of the quality of their conflict resolution process, involvement in the online roleplay and mind mapping activity, and the participants' impressions of the value of the activity to their personal and professional development.

Diversity is a fact of nature. A key element of educational pedagogy is recognising and respecting diversity across cultures, languages, family and individual development. Planning and implementing inclusive curricula is identified as a responsibility of early childhood professionals. These educators often face significant challenges in dealing with diversity in their workplaces, and resolving conflicts that arise due to diverse perspectives. Children learn their biases from their environment, which is influenced by society and culture. Early childhood educators often make decisions about what they will do, and how they will interact, based on their own beliefs and value systems. These beliefs and values may be challenged by the diversity they experience within situations in their workplaces. Being able to recognise their own predilections and those of other key players enhances how conflict situations are resolved. To assist Early Childhood Education students - recognise and deal with issues leading to conflict, they were asked to engage in a roleplay and to use mind mapping to flesh out the issues involved in one of four possible scenarios.

## 2. Theoretical Background

### 2.1 Collaborative Learning

An important part of learning is engaging with other students, as well as with the lecturer. Through participation in small discussion groups, trust is built between members, and the process of working cooperatively on assignments supports the development of collaborative skills. This approach to learning refers to a variety of techniques where students work jointly on a task, contributing to each other's knowledge and ultimate understanding of the concepts involved. The perceived benefits are that collaborative engagement builds

self-esteem in students, enhances student satisfaction with the learning experience, promotes a positive attitude toward the subject matter, provides weaker students with extensive one-on-one tutoring, provides stronger students with the deeper understanding that comes only from teaching material [to others], and promotes learning goals rather than performance goals. (Jianhua & Akahori, 2001, p. 1)

Online collaborative learning is more than student cooperation in groups. Collaboration requires structured situations so that students within a group, work towards a common goal where each is responsible for their own actions, including respecting the abilities and contributions of others, and recognising a commitment to shared learning. Bruno (2003) discusses the importance of listening to other people's voices, irrespective of their language and values. Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010, p. 28) affirm this idea in stating: 'to be truly effective in creating more equitable education and other social systems, people also have to work together and in many different ways.' It is through sharing that students learn and extend their knowledge. Experiencing diversity is an inherent strategy for learning to respond appropriately to difference. When students are required to collaborate in a learning task as an assignment, it gives rise to intentional and contextualised learning.

### 2.2 Contextualising Assessment (Authentic Roleplay)

Outcomes from an international research project evaluating the authenticity of 20 online courses found that assessment and collaboration were the two weakest elements (Teras, Leppisaari, Myllyla, & Vainio, 2012). 'Authentic online education refers to learning in environments that provide learners with opportunities to exercise realistic work practices, methods and cognitive processes in authentic situations, and to make use of authentic sources and materials' (p. 2411). In formal learning environments, assessment is the main driver for students. The first question they ask in an online course is "*What are the assignments?*" Contextualising this key driver within the learning process maximises the learning outcomes. Susie Edwards suggests a strategy she labels as 'teaching through assessment' where 'technology and assessment are converged and used to create meaningful contexts for learning and teaching' (2011, p. 2). The key outcome being that students begin to use the theories they discussed *within* their practice, rather than just referring to the application of theory *to* practice. This approach emphasizes the process of making learning concrete and transferrable. The lecturers responsible for the Early Childhood degrees at the University of New England (Australia) have adopted the 'teaching through assessment' strategy, as the foundation of the design for the course discussed in this paper. While students were led through a process of theory-guided actions via the first three assignments, the fourth provided an opportunity through roleplay to put into practice and apply the concepts of respecting diversity in localised contexts and relationships.

### 2.3 Collaborative Assessment

In a three-year study of graduate level students, Brindley, Blaschke and Walti (2009) investigated assessment and participation in collaborative groups. These authors suggest that factors such as specific instructional strategies facilitating learner participation in small group projects will result in an enhanced sense of community, increased skill acquisition, and better learning outcomes. Such outcomes reinforce the need to ensure alignment of the learning task, the learning actions, and the structural components within the online learning environment (Edwards, 2011). Lombardi (2007) stresses that the learning/assessment task needs to be based on real-life problem solving within a meaningful context. These understandings reinforced the course designers' belief that by integrating these dimensions, their students would be reinforced in their mastery of theoretical knowledge *during* practical application, rather than (perhaps) temporarily gaining theoretical knowledge *for* some later application. Through practical application the learning becomes immediately usable. The course designers created an assignment involving online roleplay. The activity embodies Lombardi's identified need for long-term student engagement involving a variety of resources and perspectives. The course designers believed that by asking students to engage in open conversation to resolve a conflict, they would develop collaborative skills with their peers.

### 2.4 Online Roleplay

Wills and McDougall describe roleplay as 'situations in which learners take on the role profiles of specific characters or organisations in a contrived setting. Roleplay is designed primarily to build first person experience in a safe and supportive environment' (2009, p. 1). A variety of digital tools might be used for conducting the roleplay. As the synchronous (chat, virtual classroom, and 3-D world) and asynchronous (discussion forum, wiki, blog) tools become more sophisticated, it also becomes easier to replicate and improve upon strategies formerly used in face-to-face classrooms. Within the assigned roleplay scenario, students might experience a range of

emotions such as pride, frustration, anger, rejection, acceptance, or conflict; therefore, the learning/assessment task must also incorporate debriefing activities.

### *2.5 Mind mapping as a Debriefing Strategy*

Mind mapping was employed as a debriefing strategy for collaborating members of the conflict resolution roleplay. Students were asked to use mind mapping to analyse the conflict resolution process and resulting resolution from the stakeholder perspectives. Mind maps assist the developer to reflect on concepts and relationships between those concepts (Hay & Kinchin, 2008). Mind maps are visual representations of mental models, which are the

internal, conceptual and operational representations that humans develop while interacting with complex systems. [In a collaborative situation], these mental models are formed through engagement with the activity structures engaged in by learners, the identities and social relationships of the learners, the discourse they generate as problem solvers, and the artefacts employed in the processes. (Jonassen & Henning, 1996, p. 433)

An important function of the mapping process is to make the overall framework of the concepts and their relationships explicit. Kinchin, Hay and Adams (2001) suggest setting up groups where there is some differentiation between student perceptions to create an initial mindmap, thus promoting cognitive conflict. The course designers felt that a visual representation of the conflict relationships and perspectives would allow students to identify issues and challenges that might otherwise escape their consideration. It would also invite students to step out of their role and look objectively at the conflict resolution process. Debriefing is particularly important in complex tasks, such as given for the fourth assignment, as some students might be unable to integrate all the components to form a meaningful overview (Kinchin, et al., 2001). In 2007 Hay suggested the use of mindmaps to measure deep, surface, and non-learning outcomes; and recommended a grading process for doing so (Hay & Kinchin, 2008). Jankowska (2009) and Davis (2007) have reported on the use of mapping strategies to gain insight into personal development and cultural competence. Van Boxtel, van der Linden, Roelofs, and Erkens (2002) found mind mapping a useful strategy with collaborative groups where students articulated their thoughts and experiences. By explaining their own conceptions to others, they themselves gain greater conceptual clarity. These researchers also identified that learning was enhanced if individual preparation is an element of the collaborative task. Boxtel, Linden & Kanselaar (2000) state that students will generate more discussion questions following individual preparation. During this preparation phase in this study students had the opportunity to research and engage with the course information before representing their ideas in discussion with their group peers. By generating more conversation, they had an opportunity to build greater collaborative relationships.

## **3. Methodology**

### *3.1 Purpose of Study*

The purpose of the study was to investigate the perceived benefits of role-play and mind mapping in an assessment task; and to evaluate at what level the activity benefited students. The outcomes of the study would inform how the assignment might be adjusted to foster enhanced peer learning in the online environment. The course designers perceived that increasing student involvement would also further their collaborative skills. The qualitative research study asked:

- Did students use the online tools to engage in a collaborative roleplay?
- How effective were the tools?
- Did students collaborate to identify and resolve the areas of conflict by engaging in the mindmapping task?

### *3.2 Participants*

All students in the Early Childhood degree study by distance using digital technologies to complete their course work. Initially there were 104 students enrolled from across Australia with one international student. As a consequence of attrition 81 were involved in the fourth assignment. Seventy-nine successfully completed the course of whom all but one were females, which mirror their dominance in early childhood education.

### *3.3 The Course Purpose*

This course supports students during their investigation and creation of socially just and inclusive learning environments. They examine current research and thinking on prejudice and bias in a world of diversity. Students explore indicators of bias regarding children with exceptional development, ethnicity, gender, language,

and race in relation to their origins in adults and young children. Using the ‘teaching through assessment’ philosophy, the course designers asked students to complete four assessment tasks directed towards the goals of:

- Recognising and discussing student’s philosophical and educational base within a wider cultural framework;
- Analysing a range of attitudes and beliefs about current Australian social policies and social systems;
- Critiquing various ways of establishing inclusive practices for diverse children and families;
- Creating inclusive early childhood curricula; and
- Demonstrating effective standards of communication and professional responsibility.

### *3.4 Assessment Tasks*

Leading up to their final assignment, the students explore one area of diversity that had affected them personally. In doing so, they are asked to reflect and explore the issues involved. During the second assignment, students research and explore the use of language and how expression might be used as a tool for social inclusion or exclusion. The third assignment asks students to examine research about when, and how, different forms of bias become evident in child development. These tasks culminate with the final assignment where students are asked to create mindmaps, tables and/or diagrams to analyse the issues and challenges in a conflict situation. They were also asked to provide a report of the conflict resolution process and strategies implemented to resolve the issues.

### *3.5 Assignment 4—Mindmapping a Conflict Roleplay*

Students formed study groups of four. In these groups each member took on the role (child, staff, director/principal, parent, sibling or community member) of a person involved in the conflict. In role they worked through a recommended process for resolving the conflict (see Appendix 1). Each group was expected to present a report, supported by references, of the process from the perspective that each role (involved stakeholder) adopted. The lecturer suggested the use of mind-mapping strategies to identify the issues and challenges in the chosen scenario. The participating stakeholders first documented their own perspective; then met (in role) with other stakeholders to discuss the conflict, and in the process used the suggested model to work through their resolution process. Each group made one joint assignment report (submission) to reflect all points of view and document how the perspectives of others were respected. Four students chose to complete the assignment individually. These four students were expected to analyse and present all perspectives suggesting a possible resolution with justification of strategies proposed.

## **4. Data Collection**

### *4.1 Group Formation*

Participants contributed to discussion forums, group wikis, and used the Adobe Connect virtual classroom to conduct analysis and discussion of the process and resolution for their chosen conflict scenario. Seventeen groups of four students and three groups of three ultimately submitted the last assignment. Four students opted out of their group and elected to complete the assignment individually due to health related problems.

### *4.2 Surveys Used in Study*

Data collected from two surveys, both using Likert scale, were analysed and are reported in this article. One general post course evaluation was administered by the university. The second survey was an online assignment specific questionnaire administered by the course designers following the completion and marking of Assignment 4. This survey was constructed to elicit student responses in relation to six types of involvement students might experience in an online environment. “*Involvement* is a psychological state experienced as a consequence of focusing one’s energy and attention on a coherent set of stimuli or meaningfully related activities and events” (Witmer & Singer, 1998, p. 227 cited in Cram, Hedberg, & Gosper 2011). All responses to the survey were anonymous. The results and individual comments collected have been used to form an evaluation of student perceptions of collaboration and participation in the roleplay assignment.

### *4.3 Survey Respondants*

Twenty-nine students completed the course designers’ assignment survey following the completion and final marking of all assignments—a response rate of 35.4%. The same number completed the general university end of course evaluation. There is no way of knowing if these were the same students as all responses were made anonymously. All respondents were female between the ages of 20 and 65 years, with the median in the 36-45 range. All respondents were employed in Early Childhood contexts.

#### 4.4 Analysis

The survey responses were analysed to determine: (1) what type of media students used to complete the collaborative assignment and how they ultimately used the tools available; (2) how familiar they were with mind mapping and how well prepared they were to use this strategy; (3) how they prepared leading up to the roleplay event; (4) how engaged they became within the roleplay activity; and (5) their impressions of collaborative engagement as a learning strategy.

### 5. Results

#### 5.1 Student Experience in Using Digital Learning Tools

When asked how experienced they were in the use of the digital tools, few (20%) students were familiar with a virtual classroom, with a majority (80%) having never experienced the environment. The philosophy adopted by the course designers was that time dedicated to initially teaching one nominated member of each group how to manage the virtual classroom environment would pay dividends with that person teaching other members of their group. This proved to be beneficial when 17 students were trained to organise and host online meetings in the virtual classroom tool. Seven of the twenty groups (33%) used the virtual classroom environment for some part of their assignment preparation; and survey responses indicated that 55% of the students responding to the survey had used this system for working on the assignment.

The students appeared to be equally familiar with asynchronous discussion board and wiki technologies, more so than with synchronous communication, where only 40% reported occasional use, and 60% reported having never used chat, Skype or equivalent. The authors believe this may be due to the increasing use of discussion and wiki tools for all of the courses within the Early Childhood degrees.

Each group identified the most useful strategy for their group as indicated by this student's response: *"We found as a group the best course of action was to correspond through Facebook (open chat), leaving messages; and through passing on joint emails to build the document and discuss features. This worked for us due to the time we had available and from how we discuss our roles rather than acting them out per se"* (SR20). This also reflects the increased use of social media in the learning process.

#### 5.2 Media Chosen to Complete Assignment

Table 1. Digital tools used to plan Assignment 4

Tool	Wiki	Email	Telephone	Face-to-face	Adobe Connect	Chat	Facebook	Other
Responses	22	22	8	5	16	3	11	7

These figures represent the responses of 29 students who answered the survey. More than one tool may have been used by each student/group.

Table 1 indicates that the digital tools used by students engaged in planning and implementing Assignment 4 were diverse. The following sections incorporate text comments added to the survey responses (SR). The students appeared to be more comfortable using the tools with which they were familiar. However, the implementation and subsequent usage of a completely new tool—Adobe Connect—was agreeable to some of the students.

##### 5.2.1 Wiki Most Used

The Wiki tool, where students are able to change the text constructed by other group members as well as comment on contributions, proved to be the most useful tool in collaboration. Most respondents (76%) reported using the Wiki available in the learning management system. *"We used the wiki discussion page in assignment three, for our assignment 4 discussion. My group thought that the wiki was easy to use to put thoughts on the same page. We [treated it] as a growing document"* (SR20). This tool is also used for activities in other courses these students do as part of their degree, so it is not surprising that they were familiar with it. Only 14% of the students had reported never using a Wiki previously.

##### 5.2.2 Other Discussion Tools

The Wiki was supplemented by email (76%), and facebook (38%) as a discussion medium. It was assumed that all students would know how to make good use of email and chat. However, Chat (10%) appears to have been

used by few to actually conduct their roleplays. No online data was available for the usage of facebook as there were no links within the Moodle environment. The more conventional tool, the telephone, was used by only 28% of the students.

Five respondents (17%) indicated their group/s had organised face-to-face meetings. These students considered personal contact vital, as indicated by these comments. *'We were lucky enough to live local so we got together and acted out the various roles. We fell into the roles easily and felt passionate about our particular standpoints'* (SR1). *'We had to meet face to face several weeks in a row as well as telephone calls and email'* (SR4). Where students preferred face-to-face contact, the personal profile tool in the learning management system facilitated contact between students. Individual users could post personal details in a secure environment allowing peers to know their locale, thereby making it possible to contact other students who lived within driving distance.

### 5.2.3 Adobe Connect

A virtual classroom (Adobe Connect) was introduced in 2011 for the first-time to the University of New England teaching and learning environment. In this course, the students were offered an opportunity to be trained in the use of the tool. Thirteen of the twenty groups (65%) received training in this virtual classroom. Students were offered personalised training in the tool, and elected one of their group members to act as 'host' in the virtual classroom. Engagement in the chat tool was problematic for some students thus they used the virtual classroom instead as indicated by this respondent: *"We initially planned a time in the chat room to discuss how to approach the task. We did find however that there were other groups in there at the same time and it was quite confusing. We would have liked to be able to go into a different chat room as we have been able to do in other units"* (SR20). It had been assumed by the course designers that students would use the Adobe Connect tool in preference to the chat, so they had not made group-based chat rooms available. This will be rectified in future.

### 5.3 Familiarity with Mind Mapping

In a similar way, students were not frequent users of digital mind mapping tools (e.g. Inspiration, Cmaps). Occasional use of mind mapping was reported by 60% of the students; of the remainder 31% had never used them. No students reported being skilled in mind mapping. As an analysis strategy mind mapping was equally divided between individual construction and collaborative construction. A small group of students (27%) required extra assistance from the lecturer in the application and construction of mind maps. Otherwise, this skill was developed individually (30%), and collaboratively (46%) with 15% undecided. Mind mapping was used for both individual and collaborative work, as a tool for preparation and as a tool for analysing the results of the roleplay. A majority of the respondents (84%) believed that the visual representation created during mind mapping assisted in the resolution of, and subsequent analysis of the conflict scenario. Responses from the students indicated that more careful structuring of information for this activity was required. *"After researching how to mind map I used this information to collate my map. Even mapping the information was interpreted in many ways and may need to be clarified further"* (SR24).

### 5.4 Preparing for and Conducting the Online Roleplay

As a learning activity students provided mixed responses; some reported they received good support from their collaborators, while others were dissatisfied with their ability to work as a team. *"The planning and preparing for this assignment [was] very difficult due to some [group] members not participating in any communication. I sent multiple emails, did the adobe connect training, contacted the lecturer and had chats with some pod members, as well as did the readings"* (SR12). Group processes and the need to complete a task proved difficult for this student. *"I found the assignment question had too much information, with the original question plus the steps plus the formats. And these were not always consistent with the others. Each [group] member had their own interpretation of the question and this also led to problems"* (SR12) Personal commitments or preferred learning habits led other students to choose to work individually. Choosing to work alone *"I just left it til the day before it was due no prep at all really."* (SR8) which negated the implicit goal of building conflict resolution skills in practice. It would be questionable as to how much this student learned about the practicalities of working with communities and resolving conflict.

Where groups established strategies for working together, clear benefits were recognized. *"One member took the initiative to choose a scenario and we agreed, then she drew our names out for the roles we were to play. After we did the roleplay, we agreed who would do what and divided the responsibility of the different questions asked. One member agreed to coordinate everything. We were lucky to be supportive of each other"* (SR15). Preparation for most groups involved a combination of individual and group strategies, *"Read our readings and text and used the mind map, which helped me prepare and look at the scenario from my selected roles view. Also discussed with our group via our discussion space"* (SR17) and involved *"Lots of posts on the wiki, taking on*

*responsibility for certain things and others then responded in kind. We followed the steps as outlined in the task description and moved on after completing each step—A few chats on the link.—Two of us corresponded via FaceBook—Two sessions on Adobe Connect” (SR16).*

### 5.5 Collaborative Engagement

Achieving collaborative status in groups received mixed responses. A majority (80%) of participants indicated positive outcomes from the assignment activity. However, slightly less (71%) [Strongly agree-46%; Agree-25%] indicated that they had worked together as a group to complete the assignment. Eleven percent (11%) were ambivalent about whether their group had been collaborative, and 18% said they had not worked as a group. As indicated by some responses, *“I would have benefited if it were possible to have feedback about how I could have collaborated better with [group] members. Online is impersonal and that’s ok but if we need to collaborate its probably good to know how to improve at a personal level. I believe that I have an introverted temperament (sic) and probably have a certain communication style. But if I know how to improve collaboration I would take this on board” (SR5).* These results suggest that more attention might be paid to building collaboration skills.

Some groups established cooperative relationships and created strategies for working together. *“We emailed each other and then Adobe Connect and then we put all our mind maps up and ideas and e-mailed it to each other to add our thoughts and ideas. This was the best way then we all did certain parts of the assignment to get it ready for marking. Group worked really well together and gave each other lots of support” (SR13).* In one situation, although the group did work together, it also created extra work for some members. For one member, it resulted in feelings of being burdened by responsibilities she did not want to take on. *“In our group there was a student who was not producing professional work and on both occasions, when we collated our work, we had to proof read and make grammatical changes and rearrange her work to try and make it sound more professional ... I acknowledge the importance of working in groups and even getting feedback and suggestions from peers but when a grade relies heavily on a collaborative effort...that is challenging!” (SR61).*

### 5.6 Student Perceptions of Learning Quality

Eighty percent (80%) of respondents strongly agreed (59%) or agreed (21%) the assignment clarified their thinking regarding diversity and conflict resolution. Sixty-three percent (63%) believed the strategy engendered more learning than an essay assignment. *“I put myself in the role and thought about how I would react. I reacted accordingly. When I finished I understood more clearly how hard the job is in real life” (SR11).* *“I enjoyed the role and feel more confident when placed in that situation” (SR1).* While 23% were undecided about the value of the activity, a majority of respondents (63%) felt emotionally prepared to deal with conflict in the future, and 76% believed they would transfer their new knowledge to unknown situations. Fourteen percent (14%) would have preferred a conventional assignment.

## 6. Discussion

The responses from these students encouraged continuation of the roleplay strategy. However, due to the overall low response rate it is difficult to know if only the students who benefited from the course completed the survey. Clearly, at least one student was highly dissatisfied and reported such. However, from the course designers’ point of view the use of online roleplay and mindmapping proved to engage the students in a real-life problem-solving task situated within a meaningful context. Although one respondent reported last minute and individual completion of the assignment with no online engagement, most students found the activity useful and eye opening. The lecturer confirmed that the learning outcomes for this course were achieved at a more in depth level than in previous implementations, although no direct links can be drawn. To establish the effectiveness of the roleplay and mindmapping activity, a comparative study with an ability to match activity to learner outcome would be needed. Although the course designers were disappointed in the degree of collaborative engagement between students in many of the groups, it was evident that the structure of the online environment, tools available and the task, supported better learning outcomes. We believe with increased support and awareness of the affordances of social media tools, students will become more adept at building their online partnerships. It would appear from the analysis of the survey results that the mind-mapping component did contribute to group processes and debriefing. Although students reported having very little prior experience with the strategy, they found it helpful to their reflective analysis of conflict.

The feedback also indicated that the assignments could be more clearly stated. An analysis of how the assessments have been written to support the students in completing the activities has been conducted and amended as well as providing additional information about the use of the digital tools such as mind-mapping and the use of Google Docs for collaborative work. It is viewed as imperative to provide explicit online information for organising and managing group work. Descriptive strategies for building collaborative relationships using the

digital technologies would provide additional student support and may enable greater group cohesion. While distance learning introduces time and access barriers these can be overcome with adequate guidance in managing group relationships. Of the two activities—roleplay and mind mapping—it would appear that the mindmapping strategy provided students with greater cognitive development. Conclusive evidence regarding the use of roleplay to achieve affective outcomes remains to be established. Over half (57%) of respondents indicated that they felt more emotionally prepared to work in a situation involving conflict resolution. As a primary goal of the course designers is to provide affective learning to deal with conflict which arises from diversity issues and challenges, then in future more attention should be made to structuring the learning design to support the group work and create additional opportunities for establishing collaborative relationships.

## 7. Conclusion

This paper identified and discussed the student perspective of using digital tools and collaborative strategies to complete an assessment activity involving roleplay and mind mapping. Ultimately, the purpose of the assignment was to engage students in a holistic experience of dealing with conflict arising through diversity. The course design endeavoured to combine distance learning, technology and a learning task to reinforce mastery of theoretical knowledge *within* practical applications, rather than temporarily gaining theoretical knowledge *for* use at another time and place. The course designers are positive about the advantages of teaching through assessment and the melding of digital tools to create collaborative learning experiences from which students will be reassured of practical application within professional contexts. We acknowledge the need to refine our strategies further, and to provide additional structure and guidance in use of tools where students are required to work collaboratively. The advantages of engaging learning activities within the professional context are being made easier by the digital tools now available. As one respondent shared, “*I also found it interesting to learn about new technology/programs that related to this activity—moodle, adobe connect and cmap. Even though it was overwhelming at first these tools made completing the requirements of the course more efficient*” (SR44).

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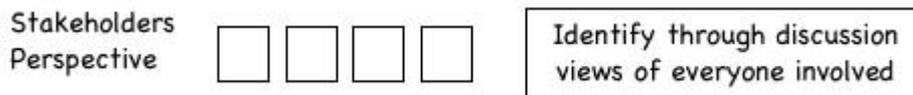
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### Appendix 1. Stepping Through Conflict

1. Begin by mapping what is known from the scenario – include mind map in appendix using words and/or pictures of background to the conflict.



2. Identify and explain each stakeholder's perspectives, set aside your assumptions, to enable the identification and explanation of each stakeholder's views. Use an approach, such as Bruno's (2003:58-60) 'Ask and Listen', to identify the range of possible values and beliefs for each person. Describe the possible conflicts that could arise.



3. Discuss the challenges and ethical dilemmas these conflicting values can create.



4. Provide a summary of what is now known.



5. Discuss the possible strategies that could be trialled immediately, in an attempt to address the issues in the short term [that is, within a few weeks].

**Review Information**

Analyse information and consider several strategies to trial

6. List these short-term strategies in the order they will be trialled.

**Prioritise**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
 4. \_\_\_\_\_

List of options for solving immediate problem in priority

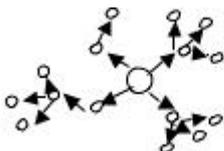
7. Explain what outcomes are expected from the planned actions.

**Evaluation** 

If no, trial next strategy and evaluate

8. Indicate how you will evaluate whether or not the strategies have been successful.

9. Update the original mind map with new information to visualise the whole experience. [Include both mind maps – start and finish – in the appendices].

**Visualising Whole** 

Keep adding to mind map throughout

10. Critically discuss long term [i.e. at least three months] aims and strategies for change that will:

- Address the issues to help prevent a reoccurrence
- Improve practices, communications and relationships with diverse others
- Establish and promote an awareness and understanding of differing values and beliefs in staff, children, families and community.
- Deal with barriers, challenges or dilemmas that may arise whilst implementing inclusive practices.