

## Abstract

Interpersonal conflict resolution is crucial in the workplace to make it a healthy and happy work environment people want to work in. Without effective conflict resolution, it would be hard for people to get along, quality work wouldn't get done, and it would be difficult to communicate effectively between employees, teams, and departments without there being a conflict. This report will focus on the different underlying causes of conflict at the individual level and what strategies are used to solve these conflicts. The information collected for the report has been conducted through surveys with students at Winona State. This study offers ways to find the best strategies to overcome interpersonal conflict.

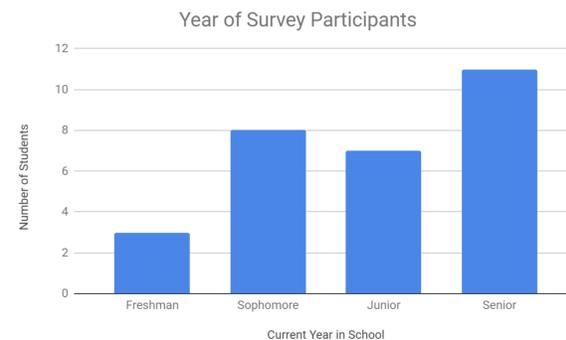
## Method

As a group we surveyed WSU students about different conflict that they have in group work. We surveyed all different majors and grade levels. We distributed it to two different organizations on campus, Delta Sigma Pi and UPAC. Between these two different organizations we obtained 29 different responses.

## Questions

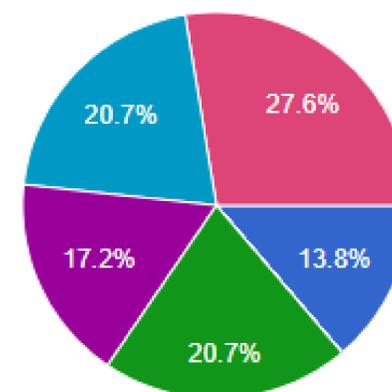
- What year are you at Winona State university?
- What is your major?
- On average how many times a semester do you have a conflict with another group member?
  - 0 times, 1-3 times, 3-5 times, 6+ times
- How do you usually solve these issues?
  - Confrontation, involving a third party, competing, collaborating, avoiding, accommodating, compromising, and other
- What do you think is the most common cause of conflict between you and your group mates?
  - Task conflict, relationship conflict, process conflict, leadership conflict, group conflict, and other
- Have you escalated the conflict to talking to the professor, if so why and how was it handled?

## Findings



- We collected a spread of majors in business, education, movement science, nursing, RTTR, literature and language, and social work.
- 86.2% of the subjects stated they had 1-3 instances where there was conflict with *another* group member within an assignment. 3.9% said that 3-5 of the times that they have group assignment there is conflict involved. 6.9% of the surveyors said that they have conflict 6+ times that they have had group assignments.
- As shown on the pie chart there are a variety of responses of ways that are used to solve problems.

- Collaborating
- Avoiding
- Accommodating
- Compromising
- Confrontation



- Of the 29 responses 65.5% of the subjects stated that the most common cause of the group conflict was group conflict: conflict with other group members and how they are handling the work. 24.1% stated that process conflict: disagreement how the work is being done is what causes their conflict. The remaining 10.3% stated task conflict: conflict on the goal or the focus of the work was what caused their conflict.

Of our 29 responses 6 of the subjects stated that they have talked to a professor about the conflict that was happening. The main reasons that people stated they went to the professor were about a group member that was not doing the work expected of them.

## Conclusions

The most common cause of conflict that we found was group conflict which is defined as conflict with other group members and how they are handling the work. We found it interesting how there was no favored way to solve conflict. None of our participants said that their preferred way to solve conflict was involving a third party and competing. Competing is defined by seeking to satisfy your own interests regardless of the impact of other parties. These results show that our surveyors are not likely to ask a professor as well because many stated that they try to solve the conflict on their own and did not want to involve the professor. By the variety of responses, it shows that one major solution to resolve conflict is not necessarily better than the rest depending on the situation and the personalities of the people involved.

## Key Definitions

**Confrontation:** going up to a person to address the issue

**Collaborating:** the parties involved desire to satisfy the concerns of all parties

**Avoiding:** desire to withdrawal yourself from the conflict

**Accommodating:** willingness to give up your own interests to satisfy the other parties

**Compromising:** each party is willing to give up something to find a solution

**Task conflict:** conflict on the goal or focus of the work

**Relationship conflict:** personal issues between coworkers

**Process conflict:** disagreement on how the work is being done

**Group conflict:** conflict with other group members and how they are handling the work

## References

Robbins, Stephen P., and Timothy Judge. *Organizational Behavior*. 16th ed., Pearson, 2015