



# Teamwork and Conflict

ICOM5047

Design Project in Computer  
Engineering

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# How I act in conflict

- Self evaluation exercise



# Individual Reflection

- Write the word conflict in the center of a blank piece of paper and draw a circle around it. Quickly jot down all the words and phrases you associate with the word *conflict* by arranging them around the circle.
- Review your list of associations and categorize them as positive, negative or neutral. Count the total number of positive, negative and neutral associations, and calculate the percentage that are positive.
- Did you have more than 90% positive?



Do you know what percentage of people normally has higher than 90% positive associations?

- Less than 5%!
- Most people get lower than 50%
- Many have lower than 10%



# Contents

- What is Conflict?
- Conflict Management
- Conflict resolution



# What is conflict?

- Natural occurring process that occurs when people come together and
  - perceive differences
  - invasion among them
- People live in a state of negotiation

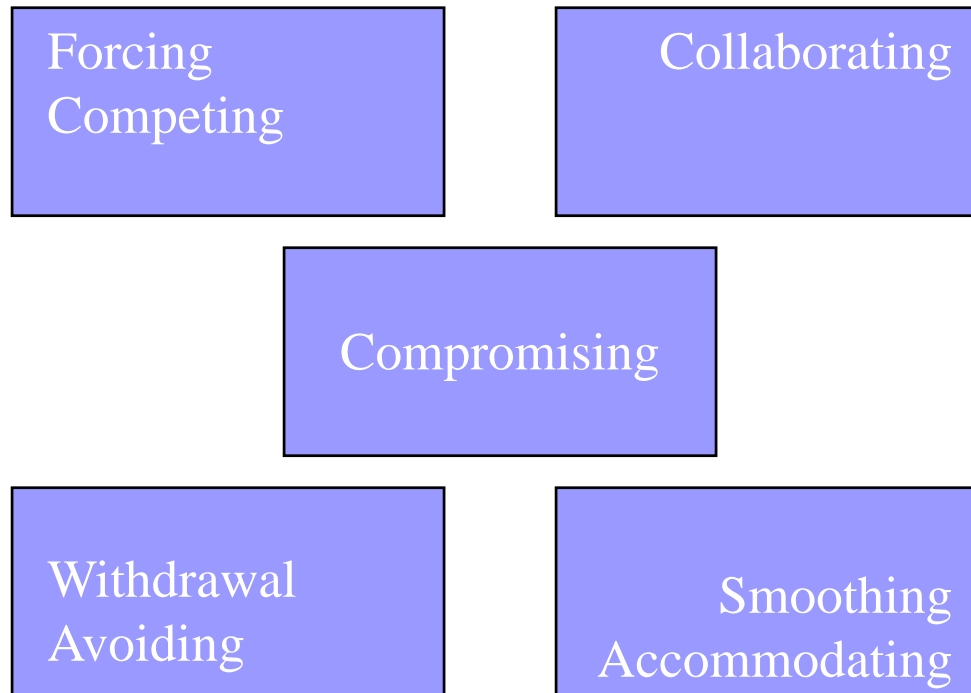


# What is conflict?

*Conflict is a process that begins when one of the parties to an interaction perceives that another has frustrated, or is about to frustrate one of his/her needs or concerns*

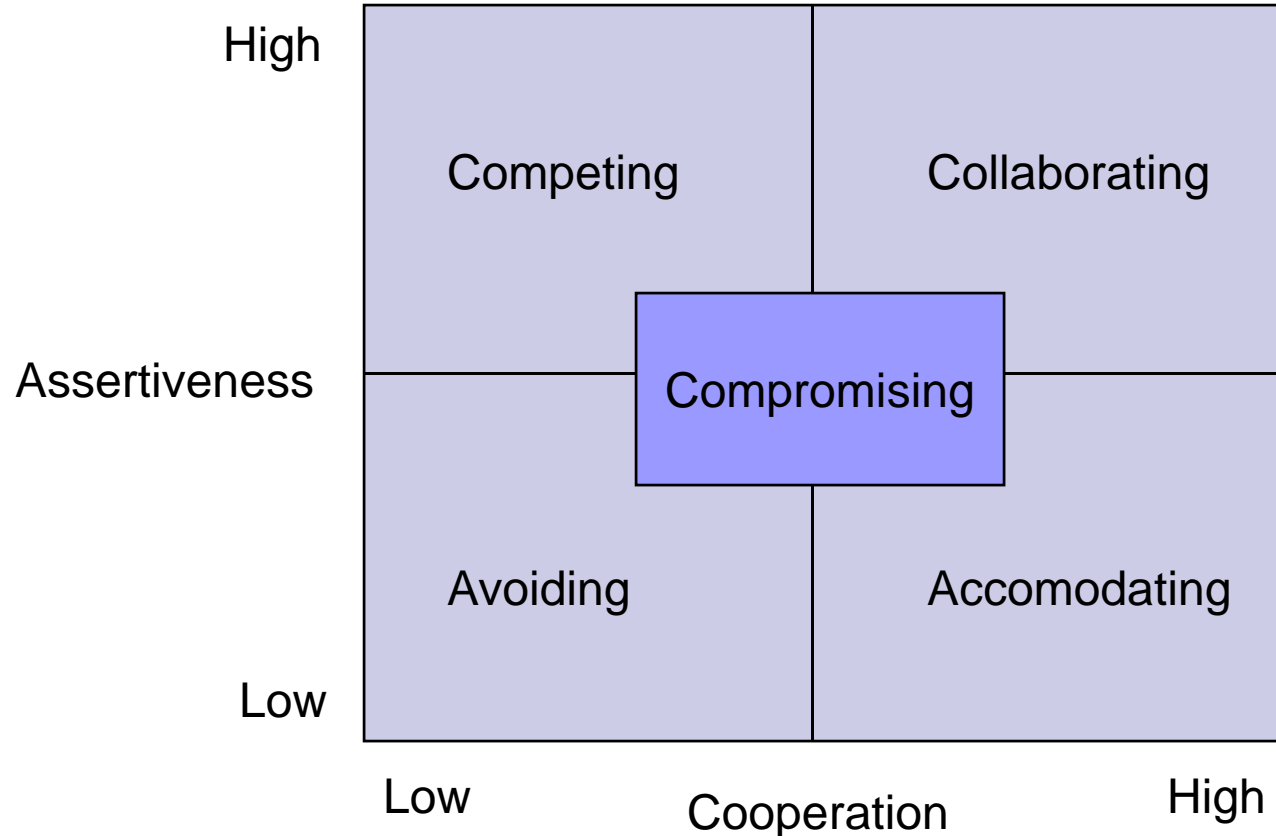
Thomas 1976

# The five conflict-handling modes






# Based on Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument






# Teamwork challenges and Problems

- What are some of the most common challenges and problems you've had working in teams? Reflect for a moment. Make a list.
- Has a professor ever had you this in your teams?
- What is in your list?




# List of some of the challenges and problems working in teams

- Members who don't show up for meetings or who show up unprepared
- Members who dominate the conversation
- Members who don't participate in the conversation
- Time wasted by off-task talk
- Members who want to do the entire project themselves because they don't trust others



# List of some of the challenges and problems working in teams

- Group meeting scheduling difficulties
- No clear focus or goal
- Lack of clear agenda, or hidden agendas
- Subgroups excluding or ganging up on one or more members
- Ineffective or inappropriate decisions and decision-making processes



# List of some of the challenges and problems working in teams

- Suppression of conflict or unpleasant flare-ups among group members
- Members not doing their fair share of the work
- Lack of commitment to the group's work by some members



# Identifying challenges, difficulties and barriers to effective group work

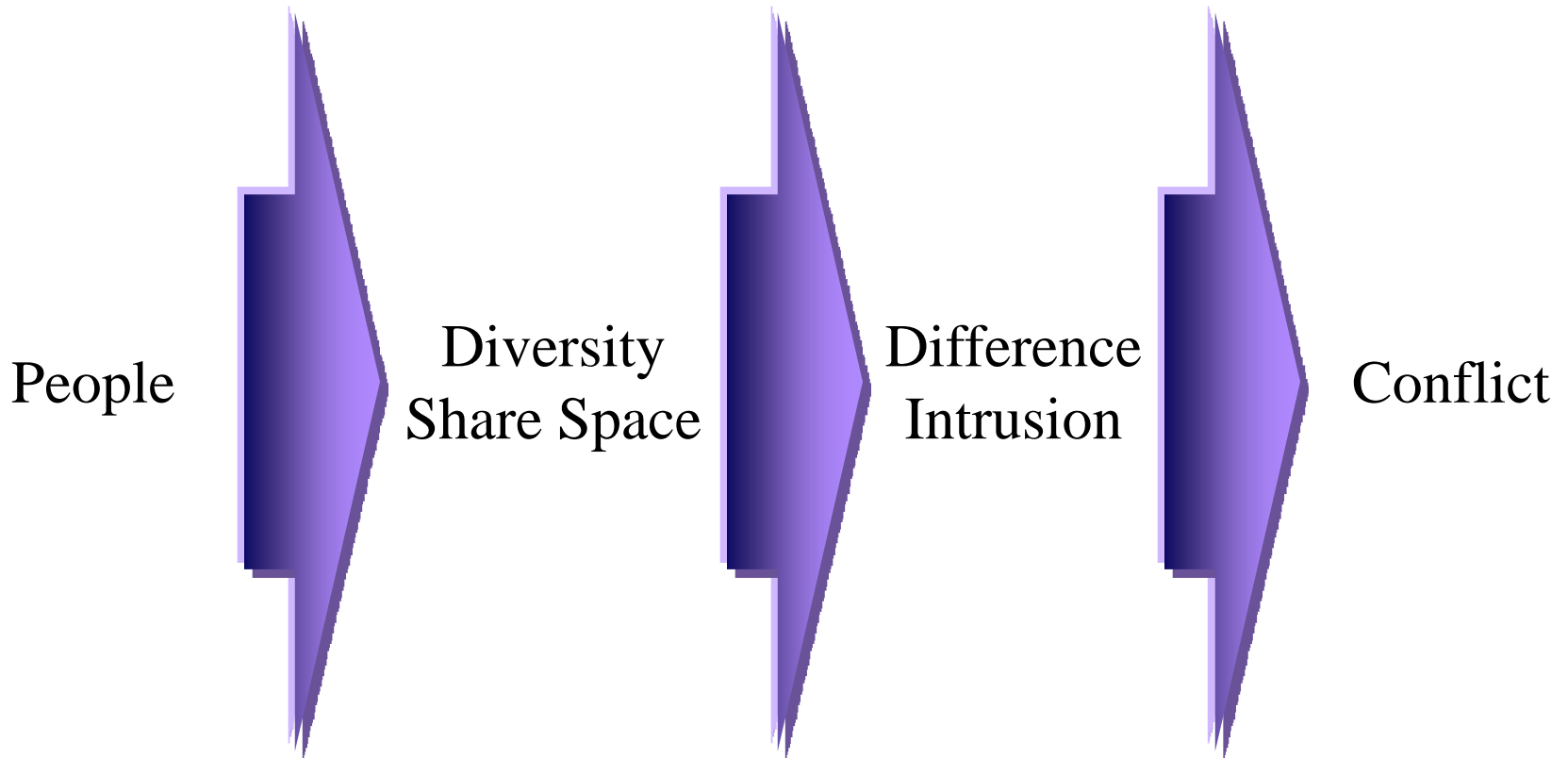
- Reflect individually for a moment and start a list of challenges, barriers, or problems facing your current group. If more than one group is involved, list challenges, barriers, and problems for all groups
- Share the individual list and create a joint list that includes at least one item from each group member
- Be realistic and specific
- Work cooperatively



# Addressing barriers, challenges and problems

- Each group should select one item from the list
- Clarify and make sure you have a common understanding of what the item means or represents
- Identify three possible actions that will solve or eliminate the barrier
- Prioritize the possible solutions: Plan A, Plan B, Plan C.
- Focus on what will work; be positive and constructive
- Implement the solutions; report back; celebrate and extend the ones that are effective

# Conflict



**SOLUTION:** Communicate, Confront, Question [expecting answer],  
Tolerate





# Conflict Management

*To keep conflict productive and at the very least to prevent it from becoming destructive.*

Morton Deutsch



# Nature of Conflict

- Conflict is a natural process
- Can be positive or negative
- Some conflict is good: it lays issues on the table, which brings more information to deal with the situation



# How can conflict be positive?

- Prevents stagnation
- Presents divergent views enriching constructive experiences
- Calls attention to systematic problems: bring diversity of opinions; ideal for brainstorming and leading the team to think-out-of-the-box



# 5-Step Conflict Resolution

- Assessment
- Acknowledgement
- Attitude
- Action
- Analysis



# 5-Step Conflict Resolution

- Assessment -collect appropriate information regarding the problem
- Acknowledgement -each party attempts to hear out the other
- Attitude - try to remove the foundation for pseudo-conflict. Stereotypical assumptions about different, culturally-based behaviors are uncovered.
- Action - actively implement the chosen conflict-handling mode
- Analysis - participants decide on what they will do, and then summarize and review what they have agreed upon