**Observational Exercise**

Managing Conflict

Purpose

1. To become aware of the dimensions of interpersonal conflict

2. To explore how to use Fisher and Ury’s (1981) method of principled negotiation to address actual conflict

Directions

1. For this exercise, you are being asked to observe an actual conflict. Attend a public meeting at which a conflict is being addressed. For example, you could attend a meeting of the campus planning board, which has on its agenda changes in student parking fees.

2. Take notes on the meeting, highlighting the positions and interests of all the people who participated in the

meeting.

Questions

1. How did the participants at the meeting frame their arguments? What positions did individuals take at the

meeting?

2. Identify and describe the interests of each of the participants at the meeting.

3. Discuss whether the participants were able to be objective in their approaches to the problem. Describe how

the people involved were able to separate themselves from the problem.

4. In what ways did the participants seek to find mutually beneficial solutions to their conflict?

**Reflection and Action Worksheet**

Managing Conflict

Reflection

1. How do you react to conflict? Based on the Conflict Style Questionnaire, how would you describe your conflict

style? How has your past history influenced your conflict style?

2. This chapter describes three kinds of relational conflict (i.e., esteem, control, affiliation). Of the three kinds, which

is most common in the conflicts you have with others? Discuss.

Action

1. Briefly describe an actual conflict you had with a family member, roommate, or coworker in the recent past.

Identify the positions and interests of both you and the other person in the conflict. (Note: Individuals’ positions

may be easier to identify than their interests. Be creative in detailing your interests and the other person’s.)

2. Describe how you could fractionate the conflict.

3. Using Fisher and Ury’s (1981) methods, describe how you could separate the person from the problem and how

you could work together to address the conflict. During your discussions, how could you help the other party in

the conflict save face? How could the other party help you save face?